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Odyssean Perspectives on Trauma

GARDNER, MELISSA,JOANNE

ODYSSEAN PERSPECTIVES ON TRAUMA

BY

MELISSA JOANNE GARDNER

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ABSTRACT: The question of whether trauma has a place in studies of the ancient world deserves fresh consideration. In the past, scholars such as Tritle (2000; 2014) have argued for a universal view of trauma based on human physiology. Others (Konstan, 2014; Monoson, 2014; James, 2014) believe a universalist position is useful for understanding ancient behaviour. On the other side of the debate, scholars such as Melchior (2011) and Crowley (2014) have highlighted some of the cultural and environmental factors that could have caused different rates of traumatisation and resilience in ancient and modern populations. However, these arguments have not adequately considered the issue of how people in ancient societies understood their own experiences of extreme suffering. My thesis addresses the issue of how early Greek hexameter poetry, and the *Odyssey* in particular, portrays experiences of suffering after overwhelming events, paying particular attention to the impact that suffering has on identity.

In Part I of my thesis, I look at the language that this poetry uses to describe overwhelming events and the language it uses to describe emotional responses to them. My discussion establishes how suffering typically affects characters in the aftermath of overwhelming events and how the language that characters use to describe their experiences shapes their responses to them. In Part II of my thesis, I narrow my focus to the *Odyssey* and consider how it portrays the ways in which suffering has an impact on individual, collective and multigenerational aspects of identity. I argue that the *Odyssey* exhibits a strong interest in charting how suffering affects characters' worldviews and identities. By combining modern trauma research with perspectives on suffering found in early Greek hexameter poetry, my thesis re-examines the concept of trauma and reformulates the lines of the debate on its place in studies of the ancient world.

Contents

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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Introduction

i. Modern trauma, ancient authority

This thesis considers the place of trauma in studies of the ancient world. Much literature on trauma treats it as a timeless concept. Researchers call on evidence from a variety of ancient authors to support this position, often citing them as authorities rather than treating them as sources to be evaluated. A typical example may be found in Philippe Birmes *et al.*'s claim that

> In ancient literary sources, the vast majority of all pathological conditions pertain to traumatology, in view of the heroic nature and tragic affects in the aftermath of violence. The most famous work of Mesopotamia…already stresses the traumatic intensity experienced when facing violent death. During a grief reaction some time afterwards, this traumatic event is persistently re-experienced with recurrent and intrusive recollections of Enkidu's death and a great many questions about Gilgamesh's own possible death…A feeling of detachment with a sense of a foreshortened future is then observed, eventually leading to aimless roaming, leaving the hero feeling helpless. These criteria, including persistent distressing recollection of the event and numbing of general responsiveness, reflect those of the current definition of PTSD in the American Psychiatric Association classification (APA, 1994).[1]

In this overview of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the authors rewrite the epic narrative in the terminology of their field. They match Gilgamesh's behaviour and states of mind to the diagnostic criteria of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and either misrepresent or ignore the epic's context of production and early reception. After this introduction, the authors cite a range of ancient literature, including Homer, Herodotus, Lucretius and Pliny, alongside more modern literature, jumping between such varied works as Shakespeare, Pepys, and the biographies of Charles XI and Florence Nightingale. Odd as this use of textual evidence is, many of these works already have an established place in the history of trauma studies as they are regularly called on to justify universalising approaches to the

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[1] Birmes *et al.,* 2003: 18.

condition.[2] Although the trend might seem innocuous, this approach to trauma presents trauma as a 'normal' response to overwhelming events when it is not: trauma is an extreme response to an event and only a small percentage of people who experience an event become traumatised.[3] The tendency to begin texts on PTSD with an appeal to ancient literature, and to see modern experiences of trauma in the context of these ancient experiences, affects how researchers interpret modern evidence for PTSD, and how practitioners view and treat patients.

The perception that trauma is an ancient and universal condition has also reached the general public through texts aimed at PTSD sufferers and their communities. The best-known of these are Jonathan Shay's books *Achilles in Vietnam* (1994) and *Odysseus in America* (2002). As the titles suggest, each book relates Homer's characterisation of an Achaean hero to the experiences of Vietnam War veterans with PTSD. Shay claims:

> My principal concern is to put before the public an understanding of the specific nature of catastrophic war experiences that not only cause lifelong disabling psychiatric symptoms but can *ruin* good character…to promote a public attitude of *caring* about the conditions that create such psychological injuries, an attitude that will support measures to prevent as much psychological injury as possible.[4]

Shay aims to inform his readers about PTSD and encourage compassion for the condition. With regard to his use of Homer, he states that 'I will not glorify Vietnam combat veterans by linking them to a prestigious "classic" nor attempt to justify study of the *Iliad* by making it sexy, exciting, modern, or "relevant",' and the tone of his text adheres to this

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[2] Shay's article 'Learning about Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*' (1991) seems to be the source of the claims about ancient literature. Van der Kolk *et al.* cited Shay's work in the influential book *Traumatic Stress* (1996: 47), and their work was reprinted in Friedman *et al.*'s *Handbook of PTSD* (2007: 19). Young's *The Harmony of Illusions* (1995: 3-4) cites Shay and van der Kolk *et al.*, albeit in a critical manner. Several papers have since been published reaffirming ancient literature's place in the history of trauma, most notably by Birmes *et al.*, 2003; 2010 and Ben-Ezra, 2004; 2011. This work has also found a place in *The Encyclopaedia of Psychological Trauma* (Reyes *et al.*: 2008). Brief allusions to Homer's place in the history of trauma are found frequently in books and articles on the subject, all of which reference these few texts. For other literature, see O'Brien, 1998: 5-8, which also explains why many professionals believe that placing PTSD in a historical context benefits patients.

[3] Were it an ordinary state of mind, it would not require a medical diagnosis. O'Brien, 1998: 4-5 discusses perceptions of 'normal' responses to 'extremely unpleasant events' in the modern world and the circumstances that lead to clinicisation.

[4] Shay, 1994: xiii.

mission.[5] Yet despite Shay's caveats, the Homeric warrior inevitably bestows some of his cultural capital on veterans in the minds of non-veteran readers. This is all the more likely since Shay begins with the statement that 'Homer has seen things that we in psychiatry and psychology have more or less missed,' which puts Homeric epic in a position of authority over modern medical research on trauma.[6] The idea that PTSD has been experienced throughout history, and that poets and audiences have recognised and respected trauma sufferers, is not neutral. Shay's hope, it would seem, is that it enables his readers to adopt positive attitudes towards the condition and come to accept and empathise with the veterans of an unpopular war.

Since the publication of Shay's books, the public has increasingly come to associate modern survivors of traumatic events with mythical figures in ancient texts. Artists and activists with no background in psychiatry have begun to use adapted passages from ancient literature in semi-therapeutic community settings. The groups that create these performances avoid making specific connections with PTSD and the treatment of it, but promote their work as having public health and community healing benefits. One such group is the American *Theater of War* project, which adapts Athenian tragedy for performances to veterans and their communities.[7] This group performs dramatic and emotional scenes from, for example, Sophocles' *Ajax* with performances introducing group discussions about topics, such as the effects of combat, that affect members of the watching community. This effort spawned a second project, *Outside the Wire,* which addresses a range of community issues and performs both ancient and modern literature. In his book aimed at a general readership, Brian Doerries, the founder and co-founder of these projects states:

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[5] *Ibid.* xx.
[6] *Ibid.* xiii.
[7] 'Overview' at Theater of Shock. Meineck, 2012 discusses '*Ancient Greeks/Modern Lives*,' a project with similar aims that operated out of local cultural venues such as libraries and arts centres. He argues that these performances can offer insight into the original reception of the ancient plays (7-8), although he recognises that modern audiences bring different knowledge and experience to the performances (13; 20).

The goal of this book is not to make easy connections between the ancient past and the present, but to listen closely to ancient tragedies and ask, "What do we recognize of ourselves and our struggles in these stories?" This is a book about how and why Greek tragedies can help us face some of the most complex issues of our time, shedding light on universal human experiences, illuminating the moral and spiritual dimensions of trauma or loss…If these ancient tragedies can teach us anything today, it's how to listen to one another without judgement, how to grow from our experiences and mistakes, and how to heal as one community.[8]

Like Shay, Doerries disregards the cultural context of the ancient texts to focus on the 'universal human experiences' they represent to him. The *Queens of Syria* production at The Young Vic, London in 2016, on the other hand, showed a great deal more discernment in its use of ancient material. This project used Euripides' *Trojan Women* to structure the personal accounts of female Syrian refugees who performed on stage.[9] The reference to classical literature was deliberately chosen to attract audiences and to establish some of the play's dramatic conventions (e.g. the use of chorus speeches), but the play's subject matter was readily abandoned in favour of the stories of the women involved. The intertextuality associated the Syrian women with Euripides' female Trojan captives. The play's audience took the place of the Greeks as onlookers and aggravators of the women's suffering: Western audiences, the dramatization emphasised, had no right to feel any easy ownership of these stories.[10] Anecdotal evidence suggests that community performances can benefit audiences (and possibly actors) by encouraging them to confront issues, create narratives and bear witness to experiences that they may otherwise ignore.[11] However, it appears to be the distance involved in engaging with these ostensibly safe texts rather than any unique quality of the ancient narratives that produces this result. Whilst these projects must be commended for the services they provide for communities, we must question their

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[8] Doerries, 2015: 8; 258.

[9] 'Queens of Syria.' The Aquila Theatre's *Warrior Chorus* programme is set to follow this new trend by putting veterans on stage, describing itself as a project which 'creates and shares art that includes modern stories anchored by the shared experience of classical works.' See 'Our Warrior Chorus.'

[10] *Queens of Syria* was particularly successful in provoking empathetic unsettlement in its audience. For discussion of this concept, see my section 'The "turn towards trauma" in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.'

[11] Doerries, 2015; Meineck, 2009 and Woodruff, 2014 describe their personal experiences of viewing these plays and the conversations that followed.

universalising attitudes to trauma and the role that decontextualizing ancient literature serves in supporting them.

The debate over whether trauma is a universal or a historically and culturally situated phenomenon thus has a demonstrable impact on how ancient texts are read in the twenty-first century.[12] Arguments for trauma's universality are often articulated in classical research on trauma, as I shall discuss, as well as being popular among the general public. In this thesis, I argue for adopting a historically and culturally situated approach to trauma, using the *Odyssey* to demonstrate that ancient works can and do portray the relationship between suffering and identity in a culturally specific manner. I will set out the terms of my engagement with the epic, but, first, I shall explain what the term trauma means in this context.

ii. Trauma and trauma studies

What is trauma?

I begin my answer to the question of what trauma is by establishing a distinction between the concept of trauma and the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The word 'trauma' comes from Ancient Greek τραῦμα and became a term for psychological damage through metaphorical application of its normal use to describe physical damage.[13] Twenty-first century definitions of trauma are broad and are not necessarily clinical: Michelle Balaev's definition of trauma as 'a person's emotional response to an overwhelming event that disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self and the standards by which one evaluates society' is representative of how trauma studies currently uses the term.[14] This definition is the product of two centuries of research into trauma-related phenomena, in which time ideas about what constitutes trauma have gone through

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[12] Meineck, 2009: 175-7 briefly considers how the 'Theater of War' context changes the way audiences engage with these plays, but the phenomenon has otherwise attracted little attention.
[13] See Phillips, 2007: 74-5 for τραῦμα and associated words in Ancient Greek.
[14] Balaev, 2008: 150. For further discussion, see pp. 29-30.

many iterations. In contrast, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a medical diagnosis with set diagnostic criteria that were first drawn up in 1980. The diagnosis is designed to help medical professionals in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century identify people who have experienced trauma through the symptoms they exhibit or report. In this section, I discuss both trauma and PTSD, as both are relevant to the study of trauma in classical antiquity. My discussion relies on the reader's recognition that the two concepts are not synonymous.

Medical interest in trauma began in the late nineteenth century.[15] Roger Luckhurst has demonstrated that the concept of trauma developed as a response to the technological advances of modernity.[16] Luckhurst argues that the origins of trauma lie in 'nervous shock,' a concept he sees as 'self-consciously produced by Victorian doctors seeking for a third term to lie between the organic and the mental realms.'[17] These doctors diagnosed ailments such as 'railway spine,' a supposed injury to the spinal cord resulting from the shock of railway accidents.[18] At the turn of the twentieth century, psychologists including Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud moved the focus of traumatic injury to the mind with their concepts of 'traumatic neuroses.'[19] Freud's work linked trauma research with

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[15] I am aware that this history is primarily one of trauma's development in Britain, France and the USA. I focus on this scholarship because it will help the reader understand the current interdisciplinary work on classics and trauma, and because I have found it useful in constructing my arguments. Attitudes towards trauma are not universal, as I emphasise throughout my work, and using Western models of traumatisation on non-Western subjects may prove more damaging than helpful. See Beneduce, 2002 for a knowledgeable discussion of this topic.

[16] Luckhurst, 2008 provides a comprehensive overview of trauma's history. It builds on a range of studies, which provide more detail on significant moments in this history, but do not demonstrate how social, cultural and political trends have shaped the concept of trauma over the last two centuries. For a history of traumatic memory, see Young, 1995. For more detail on the period 1870-1930, see the collection of essays by Michale & Lerner, 2001. For the contributions of notable figures including Freud, Caruth and van der Kolk, see Leys, 2000. For an excellent article arguing that retrospective diagnoses are not valid before the late nineteenth century, see Metzger, 2014.

[17] Luckhurst, 2008: 3.

[18] Luckhurst, 2008: 26-34 provides a history of railway accidents, 'railway spine' and insurance claims as motivation in early research on trauma.

[19] Freudian psychoanalysis is an influential but outdated approach to trauma. Freud developed his thoughts on trauma over several publications, most notably *The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence,* (1894); *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, (1896); and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, (1920). He also published *Studies in Hysteria* (1895) with Josef Breuer, which includes some influential case studies. Janet's primary treatment of the subject is *Psychological Healing* (1919). Strachy, 2001-4; Paul & Paul, 1925 provide translations. Herman 1992: 10-20 gives an overview of the works of Freud, Janet and Charcot in their social and political context, which puts Freud's work in perspective. Leys, 2000: 18-40 emphasises Janet's undervalued contribution to the field and

psychoanalysis, and continues to influence both the language that describes trauma and the treatments available for it. The First World War reformulated 'traumatic neurosis' as 'shellshock,' since doctors initially hypothesised that exposure to shell bombardment caused lesions in the brain.[20] In the First World War, military culture still required doctors to find physical causes for illnesses,[21] but technological advances and greater understanding of psychological illness in the Second World War meant that shellshock no longer seemed an appropriate diagnosis. Patients were instead diagnosed with 'battle fatigue' or 'exhaustion.'[22] The Vietnam War produced the PTSD diagnosis,[23] and PTSD can now also be diagnosed after a range of experiences unrelated to combat if a patient exhibits the required symptoms.[24] Ongoing research considers neurological explanations for trauma, which explore how traumatic events affect the brain as well as the mind.[25] As this overview shows, trauma has assumed many forms throughout its history. Explanations for its causes have affected what sufferers interpret as symptoms and where they locate them in every period.[26] Consequently, we must acknowledge that people in different times and places experience the persistent effects of overwhelming events in different ways.

Since 1980, the standard diagnosis for trauma in the USA has been PTSD, as described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*).[27] This diagnosis has the greatest influence on research into trauma in the ancient world, which is why I reference it

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Luckhurst, 2008: 34-49 discusses four nineteenth-century psychodynamic theories (including Freud's and Janet's) that shape modern concepts of trauma.

[20] Luckhurst, 2008: 51-2.

[21] *Ibid.*: 52.

[22] *Ibid.*: 58.

[23] Other diagnoses in the *DSM-5* (e.g. Acute Stress Disorder) also recognise traumatic stress/shock. However, classical scholarship tends to discuss only PTSD. I believe that this is a product of classics' and trauma studies' history of interdisciplinary study. Ancient evidence gives us no reason to prioritise one modern diagnosis over another.

[24] *DSM-5*, 2013: 274-5. Jones & Cureton, 2014: 264 discuss the changes in the definition of the traumatic experience, the 'four-factor' approach that recategorised PTSD symptoms in the *DSM-5* and the number of symptom patterns (an estimated 600,000 combinations) that exist as a result.

[25] Leys, 2000: 229-65 evaluates the most influential literature on this subject. Sherin & Nemeroff, 2011 provide an overview of the field.

[26] Metzger, 2014: 44-5. Herman, 1992: 7; 24 aptly describes trauma's history as one of 'episodic amnesia.' She argues that periods of disinterest in trauma following major crises allowed (or required) each new generation to reformulate the concept when new crises arose.

[27] PTSD was not included in *DSM-I* or *DSM-II*, but was introduced with the publication of *DSM-III* (1980). It has remained in all subsequent versions, including the latest, *DSM-5* (2013).

here, despite the fact that not all healthcare systems use it for diagnosing patients.[28] *DSM-5* focuses on behavioural symptoms for PTSD, separating these into four categories: re-experiencing (spontaneous memories of the traumatic event; recurrent dreams; flashbacks; any intense/prolonged psychological distress); avoiding (avoidance of distressing memories/thoughts/feelings/external reminders of the event); negative cognitions and mood (persistent/disordered sense of blame of self/others; estrangement from others; diminished interest in activities; inability to remember key aspects of the event); and arousal (aggressive/reckless/self-destructive behaviour; sleep disturbances; hyper-vigilance). As I discuss below, some classicists view ancient texts through the framework of the *DSM*'s PTSD criteria. However, as the regular revisions to this diagnosis show, the symptoms associated with an individual's response to an overwhelming event differ according to their historical context. Given how much the diagnosis of PTSD has changed within four decades, there is a danger that applying its latest formulation to the ancient world can tell us little about ancient experiences of what we would now refer to as traumatisation.

Although the PTSD diagnosis is almost forty years old, there is no consensus on the best treatment for the disorder. Treatment covers a range of psychotherapeutic approaches, including methods from cognitive science, psychology and psychoanalysis. Each approach provides a different rationale for its intervention: some aim to treat symptoms and others to effect a full cure.[29] Cognitive methods of treatment attempt to treat problematic emotional states by teaching patients to control or alter their responses to them. Behavioural therapies attempt to treat behaviour symptoms of PTSD by exposing individuals to stimuli associated with their traumatic event. Exposure desensitises a patient and deconditions their responses. Psychoanalysis and other psychodynamic therapies use conversation

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[28] The UK, for example, uses the World Health Organisation's *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (*ICD-10*) for the equivalent diagnosis.

[29] Young, 1995: 176-9. As Young explains, some approaches support therapeutic intervention with medication, while others purposefully omit it.

between patient and therapist to uncover a patient's traumatic memories, which are often perceived as repressed or dissociated, and integrate them into their personal history. The aim is to help individuals understand the memory of the traumatic event and its significance for them. Psychodynamic therapies receive most attention from the humanities because they share the humanities' interest in narrative construction. Indeed, the formulation of trauma as PTSD, with its distinctive symptoms and narrative approaches to treatment, has shaped the cultural response to trauma in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The 'turn towards trauma' in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries

In the 1980s and 1990s, trauma became a cultural force. As a result of its links with identity politics in the 1960s, Luckhurst suggests, trauma became 'a paradigm…a repertoire of compelling stories about the enigmas of identity, memory and selfhood that have saturated Western cultural life'.[30] The phenomenon of the trauma testimony was among the first to attract attention.[31] A series of high profile and controversial court cases in the USA, which presented recovered memories as evidence, made trauma testimony a matter of public concern.[32] Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony* (1992) attempts to theorise the practice of testimony and its role in the recovery from trauma. It has since been interpreted as a form of testimony itself.[33] Felman, a literary critic, and Laub, a psychoanalyst and Holocaust survivor, look at how personal accounts and artistic representations convey survivor testimonies, and consider the responsibilities of someone listening and responding to a testimony, whether expert or audience member. Listeners, they argue, enable witnesses to tell their stories and giving testimony is an interactive

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[30] Luckhurst, 2008: 80.

[31] Classicists are now beginning to undertake research in this area, although most of it is only tangentially relevant to my thesis. Raudnitz, 2017 explores classical texts with a view to the modern concept(s) of testimony, whilst Allen-Hornblower, 2016 considers characters in ancient Greek literature that move from agent to witness/commentator positions.

[32] As Luckhurst, 2008: 32-3 explains, recovered memories are memories of traumatic events that victims recover with the aid of a therapist. They are unknown/inaccessible to the victim before therapeutic intervention.

[33] Goodhart, 1992: 211-2.

experience that changes both listener and speaker.[34] In the same year, Judith Herman published *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). Like Felman and Laub, she emphasises that the listener 'must affirm a position of solidarity with the victim' in order for testimony to facilitate recovery.[35] Some aspects of these works have been criticised; Thomas Trezise, in particular, argues that, because testimony performs multiple functions, it should be interpreted through multiple frameworks (historical, psychoanalytic, etc.).[36] With these frameworks, he contends, audiences can engage respectfully with testimony narratives, rather than accept them unquestioningly. The role and representation of trauma testimony and the duties of witnesses thus remain important questions within trauma studies.

In the late twentieth century, psychoanalytic approaches dominated representations of trauma in scholarship. Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) in particular defined most of the humanities' engagement with trauma. Taking inspiration from Freud, she describes trauma as a

> breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world…an event that…is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.[37]

Caruth's interpretation of trauma as an unknowable 'breach' in the mind shaped the way that critics engaged with texts. Her analysis, strongly influenced by Derrida and deconstruction, focuses on the ways that texts bear witness to the unknown through the use of devices such as fragmentation, belatedness, aporia and repetition. As with other early trauma scholarship, her work focused on texts, including films, that acted as testimony to events surrounding the rise of Nazism, the Second World War and the Holocaust, including Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras' film *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) and Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). Caruth's work changed how readers approach

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[34] Felman & Laub, 1992: xvii.
[35] Herman, 1992: 135.
[36] Trezise, 2008: 24-31. Trezise's article makes valuable points about types of testimony. Laub's response (2009) offers equally useful insights into the process of conducting and writing about testimony interviews.
[37] Caruth, 1996: 4.

texts about suffering by showing how the form, structure and language of a text may convey experiences of trauma.

Caruth and other scholars engaged with texts that were the products of 'high' culture. However, the 1980s and 1990s also saw interest in trauma and testimony spreading through Western popular culture. During this period, PTSD and psychoanalytic models of trauma dominated popular representations of traumatic experience. Luckhurst observes a 'memoir boom' at this time, during which a great many autobiographical accounts of traumatic events were published for general audiences.[38] Laurie Vickroy argues that this period also saw the rise of the trauma novel. Trauma novels, as she states, 'reshape cultural memory through personal contexts' using 'the individual as representative of a social class or group.'[39] A widely-read example of this type of novel is Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), which explores the collective trauma of slavery in America and its multigenerational repercussions through the characters of Sethe and Denver. Art Spiegelman's *Maus I* and *II* (1986; 1991) were also produced as a response to intergenerational trauma. These volumes collect together Spiegelman's comic strips, a form generally associated with popular culture at the time, which bear witness to his father's testimony about Auschwitz and include a metanarrative depicting Spiegelman's own struggle to respond to his father's stories and silences.[40] Popular films, including works such as *Platoon* (1986) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and music, most notably the work of Jonny Cash and Bruce Springsteen, also explored themes of trauma and resonated with audiences of Vietnam veterans.[41] Public awareness of trauma enabled the voices of silenced individuals and communities to find audiences and bear witness to traumatic experiences.

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[38] Luckhurst, 2008: 120.
[39] Vickroy, 2002: 5. Balaev, 2008 provides an overview of approaches to trauma in twentieth and twenty-first century fiction.
[40] Kolář, 2013: 227-33.
[41] Tritle, 2000: 162-3 and Palaima, 2014: 270-9 argue that these popular media and Athenian tragedy play a similar role in allowing combat veterans to articulate experiences of war in civilian environments.

Trauma narratives in popular culture encouraged identification with trauma victims. However, the question arose as to how audiences could feel compassion for victims without appropriating or universalising their experiences. Dominic LaCapra, whose work following *Representing the Holocaust* (1994) shows a significant turn towards trauma, argues that central psychoanalytic concepts (transference, denial, repression, acting-out and working-through) inform audiences' responses to trauma narratives. He suggests that identifying with the subject in a trauma narrative is a form of acting-out caused by transference between narrator and audience.[42] In *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), he develops the concept of 'empathetic unsettlement' to describe the ideal response to trauma narratives. He argues:

> It is dubious to identify with the victim to the point of making oneself a surrogate victim who has a right to the victim's voice or subject position. The role of empathy and empathetic unsettlement in the attentive secondary witness does not entail this identity; it involves a kind of virtual experience through which one puts oneself in the other's position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place.[43]

With the concept of empathetic unsettlement, LaCapra questions the idea of the founding trauma, which he defines as 'a trauma that should, and (in the best of all circumstances) does, raise the question of identity as a very difficult question, but that…itself becomes the basis of an identity.'[44] He suggests that historical events should not be allowed to become founding traumas, but should 'instead be seen as posing the problematic question of identity and as calling for more critical ways of coming to terms with both their legacy and problems such as absence or loss.'[45] LaCapra advocates a reflective and critical stance among people writing about victims and traumatic events in order to prevent vicarious re-experiencing of, or unjustified identification with, these experiences. His work demonstrated the need for a cautious approach to trauma and testimony, and paved the way for comprehensive research into all forms of trauma in the twenty-first century.

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[42] LaCapra, 1994: 12.
[43] LaCapra, 2001: 78.
[44] *Ibid.*: 161.
[45] *Ibid.*: 81.

By the early twenty-first century, trauma studies had established its foundations as an interdisciplinary field. New trauma scholarship began challenging the dominant models of trauma and testimony put forward by Caruth, and Felman and Laub. The twenty-first century also brought a new series of traumatic events. It opened with the attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11th 2001. These, along with the attacks in London on July 7th 2005, established links between terrorism, trauma and identity in Western thought and stimulated artistic responses in a range of media that attempted to process these events. New wars, mass shootings, refugee crises and climate change have also been identified as traumatic events in the twenty-first century. It has become clear that recovery after such events is bound up with social, political and cultural factors: even whilst writing this thesis, the aftermath of the Manchester Arena bombing and the Grenfell Tower fire have shown respectively how a sense of community, sometimes channelled through art, can aid recovery, while political inertia and social inequality can hinder people's opportunity to bear witness to trauma and prevent their recovery.[46] As new events have occurred, and as critics have considered the manifold issues around elevating the Holocaust to the level of a singular or 'sublime' trauma,[47] trauma scholarship has begun to engage with a range of traumatic events.

New traumatic events demanded that scholars adapt their responses. As critics engaged with literature by marginalised or non-Western artists, they found that Western models of psychoanalysis and PTSD either did not reflect the experiences portrayed in non-Western literature, or required substantial modification.[48] These texts also challenged the idea that the techniques used to represent trauma in modernist and postmodernist literature (closely

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[46] See, for example, the different tones of the BBC news articles: 'One Love Manchester: Joy shines through pain at benefit concert' and 'Grenfell fire: Worrying number of PTSD cases among survivors and locals.'

[47] Alexander, 2004: 12-27 examine potentially traumatising events from across the world and argue why collective trauma narratives have often been more successful in Western countries. LaCapra, 1994: 3-4 suggests that giving an event 'sublime' status puts it beyond ethics and 'can unintentionally have apologetic functions.'

[48] The *DSM-5* first recognised that a patient's cultural background may affect the symptoms they report (278). There is now scholarship on a range of traumatic events from across the globe. The essays in Buelens *et al.*, 2014 offer diverse perspectives on this topic, examples from modern contexts and further bibliography.

related to psychoanalytic understandings of trauma's effects on the mind) were the only, or indeed the best, way in which to express traumatic experience. The influences of postcolonialism have provoked a move away from Freudian language in literary criticism and have stimulated greater interest in how traumatic experience is connected to culture and identity, prompting further research into expressions of trauma through, for example, representations of place or of the human body.[49] This development is important for classicists' engagement with trauma: although classical texts are not postcolonial, and are often afforded a privileged place in literary studies as canonical Western texts, they were created before psychoanalytic modes of thought shaped Western perceptions of the mind. In this sense, they belong rather to the category of non-Western literature where trauma is concerned. Engagement with these texts has allowed recent work in trauma studies to recognise that trauma is a historically and culturally situated phenomenon.

Other traumatic events required scholars to expand their view beyond the individual. Sociological case studies, such as Kai Erikson's *Everything in its Path* (1976), drew on research carried out on behalf of legal firms, which assessed the impact of devastating events on local communities. In his report, Erikson postulates the existence of 'collective trauma,' in which events harm entire communities in a manner analogous to that in which they harm individuals.[50] Following developments in the field of collective memory in the 1990s,[51] Jeffrey Alexander reconstituted 'collective trauma' as 'cultural trauma' in the influential work *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (2004). Alexander argues that cultural trauma occurs once a society has identified an event that disrupts its usual patterns of behaviour and threatens its members' sense of collective identity. As communities do not have a conscious mind, cultural trauma occurs as a result of collective narrative

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[49] Balaev, 2008: 159-61 discusses fiction that explores how trauma affects the ways in which characters relate to place. Kabir, 2014 explores the role of embodied (non-narrative) experiences after trauma in non-Western cultures. Visser, 2014 examines the power relations that accompany discussions of trauma and culture in the twenty-first century.

[50] Erikson, 1976: 154.

[51] Including the publication of Assmann's 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity' (1995) and the translation of Halbwach's *On Collective Memory* (1992).

building.[52] Alexander's work has allowed literary critics to explore representations of collective trauma in texts, to challenge claims that the twenty-first century world is 'post-traumatic,'[53] and to begin to consider the ways in which texts present the relationships between individual and collective trauma.

Alongside the idea of cultural trauma, the twenty-first century brought an increased interest in multigenerational trauma legacies. Miri Scharf and Ofra Mayseless provide an overview of the psychiatric literature on this subject: early work often described the children of traumatised parents as suffering 'secondary traumatisation,' but, once it became clear that a third generation could also be affected, the terms 'transgenerational trauma' or 'intergenerational trauma' became more prevalent.[54] Psychoanalytic approaches have proven useful for exploring how children respond to their parents' traumatic symptoms, whilst other therapeutic approaches consider how collective identity interacts with intergenerational traumatisation.[55] As evidence for intergenerational trauma accumulated in the psychiatric community, scholars in the Humanities began to consider how intergenerational responses to traumatic events differed from individual responses. Intergenerational trauma has influenced research in a range of fields, including history, international relations, film studies and literary criticism.[56] Literary critics, in particular, have found internalization, a process associated with the transmission of trauma, useful for exploring representations of subject positions.[57] Additionally, Marianne Hirsch's concept

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[52] Alexander, 2004: 10.
[53] That is, in a universal and constant state of crisis and traumatisation. Farrell, 1998: 30-3 is an important early voice arguing for the emergence of a 'post-traumatic culture' at the end of the twentieth century.
[54] Scharf and Mayseless: 2011: 1539.
[55] Volkan *et al.*, 2002 adopt a psychoanalytic approach to treatment; Kidron, 2003 takes a psychological approach; and Danieli, 1998 offers an approach with psychoanalytic and non-psychoanalytic aspects.
[56] For typical examples of how each of these fields utilises intergenerational trauma, see: Shapiro, 2009 (history); Volkan, 1999 (international relations); Berdes, 2016 (film studies); Atkinson, 2017 (literary criticism).
[57] Vickroy, 2002: 26-7; 39-40.

of postmemory has proven enlightening for understanding the ways in which later generations bear witness to traumatic events in both individual and collective dimensions.[58]

As an interdisciplinary research area, trauma studies has thus developed substantially over the last forty years. Its initial phase focused on theorising individual trauma and was heavily influenced by psychoanalytic models and postmodernist ideas. Literary critics interested in trauma focused on a few canonical texts. Since the turn of the century, scholarship has broadened in scope to consider the links between trauma and identity. Challenging the narrow focus of early research, literary critics now engage with a wide range of texts and explore collective and intergenerational as well as individual aspects of trauma. As I explain further below, I see my thesis as a product of this current phase, where trauma has become a problematic concept and one that is inextricably bound up with questions of identity. More immediately, however, this overview provides a context for understanding how classics has engaged, or in many cases failed to engage, with wider discussions about trauma.

Classics and trauma

Unlike other humanities fields, classics did not arrive at trauma studies through Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995). Instead, its initial terms of engagement with trauma were set a year earlier with Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam* (1994). In this book, a practicing psychiatrist draws comparisons between Vietnam veterans suffering from PTSD and Achilles in the *Iliad*. Shay sees similarities in their battlefield experiences and behaviour, contextualising his comparison with a discussion of the PTSD criteria in the *DSM-III-R*. His second book, *Odysseus in America* (2002) found parallels in the challenges faced by Vietnam veterans returning to the USA and the trials encountered by Homer's

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[58] The term 'postmemory' refers to the relationships that people build with traumatic events that happened outside of their personal experience. Postmemory is an important concept in the study of intergenerational trauma. However, it is not particularly relevant to this thesis, because it focuses on memories attached to physical artefacts. The term 'post-memory' first appears in Hirsch, 1992-3, and the concept of postmemory is most fully explored in Hirsch, 2012.

Odysseus during his return home. Initial responses to both books praised the vivid testimonies and other descriptions of soldiers' experiences during and after the Vietnam War, which classicists saw as bringing new depth to readings of the Homeric epics.[59] However, Peter Tooley questioned Shay's methodology, seeing significant differences between Homeric warriors and American soldiers in Vietnam that Shay did not address.[60] Some critics also objected to seeing Homer '*clinicized,*' particularly through Shay's loose translation of Greek words such as θυμός, and the fact that he rarely accounts for 'authorial or at least textual direction.'[61] Despite these criticisms, Shay's books had a significant impact on the direction of classical research. They introduced trauma as a new research theme and PTSD as a subject for comparative study.

Since the early 1990s, classicists' engagement with trauma has developed in several directions that are useful to review here. A small amount of work has been produced on narrative and traumatic memory, some of which references the latter concept's link to psychoanalysis. David Quint, Robin Mitchell-Boyask and Marilyn Skinner each apply psychoanalytic models of trauma to Virgil's *Aeneid*.[62] Alan Sommerstein discusses how Athenian comedy represses experiences of war, whilst Gary Morrison argues that acknowledging trauma's disruptive effects helps reconcile differing accounts of Alexander's campaigns.[63] Alain Gowing explores conflicting urges to create narrative and to repress memories after overwhelming events described in Roman histories and John Dugan examines what he interprets as a compulsion to repeat in some of Cicero's writings after his exile.[64] Taking a different approach to traumatic memory, Sebastian De Vivo considers how two material objects, the Corinthian helmet and the *tropaion*, disrupt or

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[59] Tooley, 1996; Thalmann, 1997; Farrell, 2004; Zaborowski, 2004: 557-9. Shay's work was also reviewed by a range of other publications, which offered the same positive comments and picked up the methodological issues less consistently.
[60] Tooley, 1996: 162.
[61] Farrell, 2004: 137; Tooley, 1996: 163.
[62] Quint, 1993: 50-90; Mitchell-Boyask, 1996; Skinner, 2013. Whilst psychoanalysis offers a well-developed language to talk about trauma, I believe its usefulness is limited in study of the ancient world, because it does not provide insight into ancient perspectives on experiences of suffering.
[63] Sommerstein, 2014; Morrison, 2001.
[64] Gowing, 2010; Dugan, 2014.

facilitate soldiers' ability to build coherent narratives about battlefield combat.[65] By considering the role of memory in narrative construction, these readings introduce new ways of thinking about textual construction and material evidence. The question remains, however, as to how far psychoanalytic approaches to trauma can provide insight into ancient experiences of overwhelming events.

Other work extends Shay's comparison between PTSD sufferers and individuals or groups in the ancient world. Sharon James argues that the plot of the *Aspis* acts as a form of wish fulfilment for the families of Athenian soldiers returning from war, whilst Sara Monoson argues that Socrates becomes an 'archetype of resilience' in war through Plato's references to his military service and the links he creates between Socrates and mythical heroes.[66] William Race focuses on the text of the *Odyssey* rather than ancient performance contexts.[67] Starting from the modern relationship between therapist and patient, he argues that Odysseus' stay with the Phaeacians can be interpreted as a period of rehabilitation. His discussion of the *Odyssey* is insightful and addresses some of the issues with Shay's presentation of the Phaeacians as 'rich…self-indulgent…*civilians*.'[68] However, he does not explore the complexities of relationships between therapists and patients, which are often a topic of discussion in trauma studies.[69] He also fails to draw comparisons with any specific methods of treatment, which prevents him from explaining how the relationship between Odysseus and Alcinous is therapeutic. Ultimately, Race and other scholars struggle to shed light on ancient practices because they, like Shay, prioritise twenty-first century norms over their sources' ancient contexts.

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[65] De Vivo, 2014.

[66] James, 2014; Monoson, 2014. Modern psychiatric literature investigates resilience as an alternative response to traumatisation for individuals under stress. The concept has received little attention in classics. I discuss it in my section 'τλάω/τολμάω.'

[67] Race, 2014.

[68] Shay, 2002: 13-4.

[69] Herman, 1992: 133-61 describes the relationship between patient and therapist and outlines its role in treatment.

The most prominent debate in classics and trauma studies, however, continues to address the question of whether trauma is a universal or a historically and culturally specific phenomenon. Positions taken in this debate are often extreme and, with terminology frequently ill-defined, contributors tend to end up talking past one another. Lawrence Tritle is the most vocal supporter of the universal nature of PTSD. Like Shay, he compares modern case studies of PTSD sufferers with reports of phenomena in ancient literature that he interprets as symptoms of trauma.[70] He sets his arguments against what he reads as Allan Young's 'scepticism' about PTSD,[71] marshalling neurochemical studies emphasising the consistent physiology of the human body for the last 200,000 years in support of his argument.[72] Corinne Pache uses a similar comparative approach to explore the experiences of female support soldiers working on battlefields in Iraq and the experiences of Homeric women during the Trojan War.[73] These studies provide valuable insight into the realities of war and make visible the type of institutional issues that seem to contribute to the development of PTSD in serving members of the armed forces. However, as scholars such as Jean-Christophe Couvenhes suggest, they tend to acquaint us with modern experiences of suffering without elucidating ancient behaviour any further.[74] Ultimately, neither Tritle nor Pache are able to demonstrate how the evidence they present reveals new insights into ancient perspectives on war or its effects on combatants.

On the other side of the debate, Jason Crowley has made a serious attempt to address some of the shortcomings with the argument that PTSD is a universal phenomenon. Taking up

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[70] I remain doubtful whether references to modern diagnostic criteria can promote our understanding of ancient texts and ancient medical sources are too late to be relevant for this thesis. Ferrari's (2010: 171-92) discussion of panic attacks in Sappho demonstrates how readings based on such sources, when at their best, can suggest new interpretations of texts. However, his argument shares the same weakness as Tritle's, which is that he has no body of contemporary evidence to support his interpretation. I aim to overcome this weakness with my approach.

[71] Tritle, 2014: 96, although Tritle does not represent Young's position accurately. Young, 1995: 5-6 acknowledges PTSD's reality. His work investigates the ways in which the diagnosis and the accompanying concept of traumatic memory gained cultural legitimacy.

[72] Tritle, 2000 also promotes the universality of PTSD on similar grounds. In this context, it is worth reading Shay's criticism of Young's *The Harmony of Illusions*, which condemns the neuroscientific section of the book on the basis that Young speaks too confidently about what Shay, 1996: 709 describes as 'our current ignorance of how the brain constructs and reconstructs experience.'

[73] Pache, 2014.

[74] Couvenhes, 2005: 431.

the criticism of Shay's methodology found in early reviews, he addresses the differences between the American infantryman in the Vietnam War and the Athenian hoplite, which he views as its functional equivalent in the ancient world.[75] Pointing out that trauma 'results from the interaction of two variables, namely the human being and his or her environment,' he argues that Athenian hoplites had low susceptibility to combat trauma, being 'effectively immunized' by their cultural practices, whilst soldiers in the Vietnam War were placed in an environment that made them 'critically vulnerable' to traumatisation.[76] Crowley provides a sound and much-needed corrective to Shay's broadly a-historical approach and successfully argues against the universality of the soldier's experience. However, although he argues that ancient soldiers were less susceptible to experiencing shock in combat, his work does not prove that people in the ancient world did not suffer after overwhelming events and so does not prove that trauma has no place in classical research. We are thus left with the questions of where, if not in the PTSD model developed in response to the Vietnam War, we can find a model of trauma applicable to study of the ancient world, and how, if not through direct comparative study, we can use the concept of trauma. These are among the questions that I hope to answer in this thesis.

Finally, some scholars are moving away from the PTSD concept to explore the effects of overwhelming events on individual identity in the ancient world. Nancy Sherman compares how Sophocles' *Philoctetes* represents, and how American soldiers experience, situations involving trust and moral injury.[77] By focusing on this one aspect of traumatisation, Sherman successfully builds on Shay's work on moral injury whilst sidestepping some of the methodological issues of his overall approach. Luigi Spina similarly abandons PTSD to argue for the importance of collective forgetting in breaking

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[75] Crowley, 2014. Crowley, 2012 offers a more detailed psychological profile of the Athenian hoplite. Melchior, 2011 makes a similar argument comparing Roman soldiers and American soldiers in Vietnam.

[76] Crowley, 2014: 106-17. In the same publication, Raaflaub, 2014 provides a brief survey of the social impact of war in ancient Greece. Rabinowitz, 2014 discusses how Athenian tragedy presents war's impact on women. Elsewhere, Seibert, 1995 argues that the Roman Republic could conceivably have experienced trauma as a result of multiple invasions.

[77] Sherman, 2014. Sherman, 2005; 2015 provides further discussion of the place of ethics in ancient and modern warfare.

stasis in conflict and forging amnesties in ancient Greece.[78] His approach begins to consider issues associated with creating cultural trauma narratives on behalf of communities. Sherman and Spina's approaches both focus on one effect of overwhelming events and consider its representation in the ancient world. My thesis will contribute to this area of trauma studies in classics by focusing on the ways in which overwhelming events alter worldviews in the *Odyssey*.

My overview of classical scholarship on trauma shows that this theme engages the interest of scholars from a variety of specialisms. However, there is currently little in the way of consensus on any point. Although the PTSD model of trauma dominates discussion, some scholars are still producing work based on psychoanalytic concepts. In turn, the PTSD diagnosis continues to be used despite attracting strong criticism, partly due to the (undoubtedly important) moral imperative not to deny the very real and painful experiences of individuals with PTSD in the modern world. Other work links trauma to the themes of memory, identity and narrative, but the context of this work is spread over such a wide range of time periods and cultures that it has generated little consensus, or even debate. My thesis aims to rectify this by focusing on the *Odyssey*, a text that Shay's work has already established as a subject of research on trauma. It also contributes to two areas of research into classics and trauma: it adds to the ongoing debate about the universality of trauma by arguing for a historically and culturally specific view of trauma, and it shows how modern research into types of traumatisation can shed light on representations of identity in the *Odyssey*. In order to realise these contributions to research on trauma in the ancient world, I now set out the models and terminology I work with in this thesis.

Trauma models and terminology

As the previous section has shown, scholars of trauma work with multiple models of trauma and a range of terminology. This section sets out the definition of trauma that I

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[78] Spina, 2009: 194-8.

adopt in this thesis. Above all I draw my terminology from Balaev's definition of trauma, which I have given in full above.[79] Balaev incorporates two elements into her definition, the most important of which is her description of trauma as 'a person's emotional response to an overwhelming event.'[80] This first element of Balaev's definition emphasises that the relationship between the 'overwhelming event' and a person's emotional response to it is an integral part of trauma. There is a difference between Balaev's term 'overwhelming event' and the term 'traumatic event,' which is often found in trauma studies. The term 'traumatic event' suggests that the event in question is perceived as traumatising from the perspective of the person considering the event. It is now closely connected to the PTSD diagnosis: the *DSM-5* recognises that PTSD results from directly experiencing, witnessing, learning about or experiencing repeated exposure to a traumatic event.[81] The *DSM-5* restricts traumatic events to events involving 'actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence,' removing events such as serious illness and psychosocial stressors (e.g. divorce; job loss) from consideration.[82] I find the term 'overwhelming event,' preferable, however, because it suggests only that the event in question is one which disrupts a person's normal perspective on the world to provoke a powerful response. It does not require that the person experiencing the event, or the creator of a text in which a character experiences such an event, has a concept of trauma. It can thus be applied to characters in early Greek hexameter epic on the basis of the available evidence. For these reasons, I use the term 'overwhelming event' rather than 'traumatic event' in this thesis and understand the 'overwhelming event' as a potential cause of trauma.

My thesis concentrates on the ways in which these overwhelming events affect Homeric characters' sense of self. This focus comes from the twenty-first century's turn towards the

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[79] See p. 12.
[80] Balaev, 2008: 150.
[81] *DSM*-5: 271. As early as 1995, Young argued that the traumatic event is a problematic construct when used in diagnosis and in therapeutic settings (124-8).
[82] *DSM*-5: 274-5. Pai *et al.*, 2017: 2 provide further detail on the implications of this revision. The change leaves the traumatic event associated with diagnosis out of step with the traumatic event in research, which had considered such events traumatic under previous criteria. Whilst not attempting to comply with the PTSD diagnostic criteria, the events I consider all fall within the new restrictions.

effects of suffering on identity, which Balaev captures in the second element of her definition, where she states that trauma 'disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self and the standards by which one evaluates society.'[83] This focus is justified by the *Odyssey's* clear interest in the ways that suffering impacts identity, as Part I of my thesis demonstrates. The Homeric epics represent their characters' sense of their inner selves in a way that is unfamiliar to trauma studies; characters hold a loose notion of an inner self comprised of multiple psychic entities (νόος; θυμός; ἦτορ; κῆρ; καρδία; φρήν; πραπίδες) and, crucially, have no sense of subconscious or unconscious mind.[84] Characters also have a sense of self that is based on membership of certain groups.[85] Since the Homeric epics have this distinctive view of the self, I work with Ronnie Janoff-Bulman's model of trauma from her monograph *Shattered Assumptions* (1992), which predates Caruth's heavily psychoanalytic approach to trauma. Janoff-Bulman considers the ways in which traumatic events shatter an individual's assumptions about the world. She argues that people have

> a conceptual system, developed over time, that provides us with expectations about the world and ourselves. This conceptual system is best represented by a set of assumptions or internal representations that reflect and guide our interactions in the world and generally enable us to function effectively.[86]

Traumatisation happens, she argues, when one or more of three universal assumptions are violated. These assumptions are that the world is benevolent, the world is meaningful and the self is worthy.[87] While I explore her work more thoroughly in Chapter 3, I shall say here that this model of trauma is, I believe, more compatible than others with the study of the ancient world, because, while underpinned by psychological research, it does not rely on individuals holding a culturally-specific view of the mind (as psychoanalysis does),

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[83] Balaev, 2008: 150.

[84] Many scholars have discussed the Homeric representation of the mind. Among these, Sullivan, 1995: 14-8 posits something of a traditional separation of body and mind. She argues that each psychic entity has a distinct and specialised function. More recently, Clarke, 1999: 53-4 argues that the Homeric character is an indivisible human whole and that the language used to describe the various psychic entities is largely interchangeable (with the exception of νόος).

[85] E.g. Higbie, 1995: 6-23 explores how naming patterns create identity and Raaflaub, 1993: 49-52; 2016: 129-31 examines the role of the city in establishing identity.

[86] Janoff-Bulman, 1992: 5.

[87] *Ibid.*: 6.

provided that they have a sense of self separate from their perception of the outside world. Moreover, it allows for culturally specific interpretations of these three assumptions, whose value in a society can be verified with primary sources. For these reasons, and because it is the model best suited to the questions raised in this thesis, Janoff-Bulman's trauma model will influence my understanding of how trauma shapes identity.

I complement my exploration of how overwhelming events shatter characters' assumptions in the Homeric epics with a discussion of how characters rebuild their shattered assumptions. For this discussion, I now explain how I use the two words 'meaning' and 'significance' in this thesis, in which they have specialist meanings over and above the normal usages of the words. The word 'meaning' is associated with the process of understanding and contextualising memories of overwhelming events. Attributing meaning to an event is a common stage in psychodynamic therapies: in therapy, this often takes the form of constructing a trauma narrative in order to integrate the overwhelming event into an individual's conceptual framework of the world.[88] The *Odyssey* also makes use of narration as a way for characters to attribute meaning to overwhelming events. The word 'significance' is associated with the process of recognising that an overwhelming event has had an impact on an individual's sense of self, and with determining the ways in which it will continue to shape their identity in the future. Recognising the full significance of an event is a late stage in the recovery process that comes after attributing meaning to the event. As I will show, significance in the *Odyssey* is often closely bound up with a character's sense of their individual κλέος. Having established my thesis' place in relation to the history and key concepts associated with trauma studies, I now position it in relation to the relevant concepts from Homeric studies in the following section.

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[88] Janoff-Bulman, 1992: 52-3; 108-10; 161-5. The collection of essays edited by Kauffman (2002) addresses specific aspects of this process.

iii. Homer and the *Odyssey*

The Homeric Question

The outline of my approach to the Homeric epics must begin with a discussion of the so-called 'Homeric Question.' The tag 'Homeric Question' acts as shorthand for the debates that arose in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries about the provenance of the Homeric epics. Histories of the debate begin with Wolf's *Prolegomena* (1795), which argued that the Homeric epics were originally oral, and that later hands had a significant role in restructuring and revising the poems when assembling them in written form.[89] Wolf's work inspired a fierce debate throughout the nineteenth century between Analysts and Unitarians. The former saw the epics as the products of multiple authors and attempted to identify interpolations in order to return to the original text. The latter saw each epic as the product of one poet and argued for viewing the poems as cohesive works. Heinrich Schliemann's archaeological discoveries in the late nineteenth century appeared to lend support to the Unitarians' position.[90] However, Milman Parry's work in the early twentieth century reformulated the terms of the debate.

Although scholars had previously suggested that the Homeric poems had an oral origin, Milman Parry was first to propose a fully developed theory of oral composition. This theory argues that the use of traditional formulas enabled singers to compose epic as they sang.[91] Parry provided evidence in support of his theory from fieldwork with South Slavic bards, or *guslars*. These men used their knowledge of traditional phrases, type scenes and plot lines to compose songs about popular heroes and events as they performed. Parry's work, and particularly his ideas about formulaic economy, initially met with some resistance from classicists who believed that his approach prevented criticism regarding the

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[89] Grafton, Most & Zetzel, 1985: 45-6; 131. See Grafton, Most & Zetzel, 1985: 91 for Wolf's view that the Homeric epics would not have been composed if a written medium was not available to record them. See Fowler, 2004; Turner, 1997 for the history of Homeric Question scholarship since Wolf.
[90] Turner, 1997: 139.
[91] Parry's original theory on Homer's traditional art was presented in his dissertation *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (1928). The results of his subsequent fieldwork on oral epic went into publication in 1930 and were collected in *The Making of Homeric Verse* (1971).

aesthetic qualities of the poems.[92] Since then, the idea that the poems derive from a long tradition of performance has become generally accepted. The current debate focuses on how oral composition accounts for the surviving epics. Some believe that poems about traditional heroes and events were composed anew in each performance and that the surviving epics record the efforts of a particularly skilled poet.[93] Others believe that the poems underwent a process of 'crystallization' through multiple performances, and that the poems we have now are a product of these multiple performances.[94] While these views stand in opposition to each other, they both stress the importance of traditional elements in the composition of epic.

For the purposes of this thesis I accept the basic premise that the Homeric poems grow directly out of a tradition of oral performance. Whether they are the product of one poet or many is not relevant to my thesis, so I refrain from taking a position on that question within this work. Any use of 'Homer' or 'the poet' within my thesis can be read to refer to a process of crystallization or to a single poet. John Foley's use of the term 'orally-derived' to classify the Homeric epics seems to me particularly useful, because it recognises that the poems come from an oral tradition, but also reflects the fact that recording the poems in writing may have affected their final form. In any case, it is important, I believe, given the problematic relationship between Homeric studies and trauma studies, to emphasise that the traditional hallmarks of oral poetry remain present in the epic and provide the best explanation for the poet's use of repeated phrases, type-scenes and traditional themes. Having established my position that the Homeric poems are orally-derived, I now turn to the relationships between the *Iliad,* the *Odyssey* and other early Greek hexameter poetry.

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[92] Combellack, 1959. For the subsequent argument against this position, see Nagler, 1967 (expanded in Nagler, 1974); Visser, 1988; Bakker & Fabbricotti, 1991 (expanded in Bakker, 2005). Holoka, 1991 provides an overview of this scholarship.

[93] West, 2014: 2 states that each epic was the work of one poet, but places each at the end of a development process. Foley, 1990; 14-5 also sees the surviving poems ultimately as the product of one poet, and suggests that we see them as 'orally derived' texts, because we do not know how much the recording hand shaped the poems. See also Foley, 1991; 1995 for further elaboration.

[94] Nagy, 1999: 53-8.

The Iliad, the Odyssey and early Greek hexameter poetry

Modern scholarship generally classifies two texts, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as 'Homeric epic.' The attribution of these two epics, and only these two epics, to Homer, appears to have originated in the C5th or even C4th BCE and can be considered a reflection of the prestige that the poems held at that time.[95] It is far from clear, however, that the two poems were composed by the same poet. Richard Janko's statistical analysis of the language used in early hexameter poetry (including the epics attributed to Hesiod and the so-called Homeric Hymns) suggests that the *Iliad* is older than the *Odyssey*, because its language exhibits significantly more archaic features.[96] At the same time, it seems that the two poems were composed to bear some relation to each other: Monro's Law states that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* do not duplicate any material, which suggests that the later poem, or possibly both poems, consciously avoided duplication.[97] These two poems, then, possess a close relationship to each other, and this informs my discussion of the *Odyssey* in Part II of my thesis.

The close relationship between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* also informs my analysis in Part I. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are not the only surviving examples of early Greek hexameter poetry; as mentioned above, the Homeric Hymns and some of the works attributed to Hesiod also survive. While these texts do not treat the subject of the Trojan War, they can be grouped with the Homeric epics on the basis of their shared use of the epic *Kunstsprache* (an artificial artistic language that mixes Ionic, Aeolic and some other dialect forms),[98] and their composition in dactylic hexameter.[99] On the basis of his analysis, Janko argues that the Hesiodic works are later than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and

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[95] Graziosi, 2002: 4.

[96] Janko, 1982 provides Janko's original analysis. His updated figures can be found in Janko, 2012.

[97] Monro, 1901: 325. The topic has been much discussed since. Nagy, 1999: 20-21 offers an important argument as to why this provides evidence of a relationship between Iliadic and Odyssean poetic traditions, countering previous arguments that interpreted this as evidence that the poems were unknown to each other. Clay, 1983: 241-6 offers further reflections on the specific relationships between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

[98] Hainsworth, 1993: 24; Holoka, 1991: 457. Bakker, 2005: 73 highlights the term's dual meaning of 'artistic' and 'artificial'. Jones, 2012: 45-8 discusses the relationships between these dialects in epic poetry.

[99] Clay, 1989: 7 suggests that epic, theogonic and hymn poetry may all have been performed at the same type of occasion.

that the Homeric Hymns are likely to be later still.[100] In Part I of my thesis, I analyse several key words connected to suffering. This analysis draws on all instances of the words as they occur in the Homeric and Hesiodic epics and the Homeric Hymns. I utilise all the available evidence for this analysis, because, as modern readers, we do not have the traditional background knowledge required to comprehend the full connotations of language in the Homeric epics. The hexameter poetry that survives represents only a small portion of oral epic and I believe it is important to consider it all in order to recover as much of the traditional context as possible. At the same time, I am aware that epic language continued to develop as these orally-derived texts were produced. For this reason, my approach to the language will be cautious; I will focus predominantly on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and view the instances of these words in the other texts as augmenting our understanding of how these words could be used.

While my focus will be on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it is worth noting that many other epic songs on the subject of the Trojan War also existed. As the later paraphrases associated with Proclus show, the entire period of the Trojan War and its aftermath was represented in orally-derived epics as part of the epic cycle.[101] For early audiences, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would not have been isolated from these other epics as they are now; indeed, during the C6th and C5th BCE, several of the cyclic poems were also attributed to Homer.[102] Neoanalytic scholarship argues that the *Iliad*'s composer drew inspiration from the rest of the epic cycle and pairs extant Iliadic scenes, such as Patroclus' death, with reconstructions of cyclical scenes, such as Achilles' death in the lost *Aethiopis*.[103] These intertextual relationships provide some insights into the composition process for the Homeric epics,

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[100] Although bards may have consciously archaised some features of the *Homeric* Hymns, as Janko, 2012: 27-32 explains.

[101] See Severyns, 1963 for Proclus. Burgess, 2001 argues that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* developed out of the same mythological tradition as the poems now referred to as the Cyclic epics. Whilst he follows Nagy and others in arguing that the poems formed through a process of continuous recomposition (10), he does not believe that the Homeric epics were influential enough at this early stage to shape the tradition (5-6).

[102] Graziosi, 2002: 4.

[103] Willcock, 1997 offers an overview of Neoanalysis and also specifically examines the relationship between the *Iliad* and *Aethiopis*. Kullmann, 1960: 227-357 discusses the relationship between the *Iliad* and Proclus' summaries.

but, with so little evidence remaining of the lost epics, any conclusions remain highly speculative. Nonetheless, I emphasise that there was a close relationship between the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and the epic tradition that the cyclical poems represent in order to highlight that the Homeric epics are not formal trauma narratives in the modern sense, and their choice of subject matter should not be given undue significance. That choice, it must be remembered, was traditional, and no part of the Trojan War escaped poetic description.

Traditional referentiality and resonance

Neoanalysis in its classic formulation works on the assumption that intertextuality occurs between the named texts of the epic cycle. For this to be possible, they need to hold a fixed temporal relation to each other: the *Aethiopis*, for example, must already exist in a stable (and probably written) form for the *Iliad* to allude to it through repetition of a particular scene and for that repetition to gain additional meaning through the allusion. Yet models of oral composition, such as those I discussed in my section on the Homeric Question, suggest that stable versions of the cyclic epics may not have existed while the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were being composed. In this case, intertextuality (strictly as references between texts) does not seem an adequate concept to describe the relationship between these epics. Moreover, intertextual reference does not provide for the *Iliad*'s and *Odyssey*'s many allusions to the wide body of mythical knowledge held by their audience members. For these reasons, Foley's concept of traditional referentiality is, I believe, a useful way to set the Homeric epics against the background of traditional knowledge.

Foley adopts the concept of traditional referentiality to explain how epics use their audiences' knowledge of traditional myth. This can happen in two ways. On the one hand, epics can invite audiences to remember the details of traditional myths by making reference to figures or events. The *Odyssey* does this repeatedly in, for example, the catalogue of heroines whom Odysseus encounters in Hades. On the other hand, the Homeric epics continuously make use of traditional language, type-scenes and motifs.

Foley argues that 'if traditional phraseology and narrative are conventional in structure, then they must also be conventional in their modes of generating meaning;' in other words, each traditional element of orally-derived epic conveys a particular meaning to audiences familiar with that element's use in oral epic.[104] Thorough study of the contexts in which a traditional element occurs can unlock that additional layer of meaning for audiences unversed in the patterns of oral epic.

Graziosi and Haubold expand on Foley's traditional referentiality with their discussion of resonance in the epic poems. Foley accentuates the 'traditional' in traditional referentiality; his discussion of Achilles, for example, emphasises that the epic tradition uses the epithet 'swift-footed' to recall the full weight of Achilles' traditional heroic character every time it is used.[105] Graziosi and Haubold go further by also taking into account the ways in which traditional elements work with or against the *Iliad*'s overall narrative. For them, the use of 'swift-footed' with Achilles does not just call to mind his essential heroic character, but also retains its particularised meaning, reminding the audience of all the times his actions have not been either 'swift-footed' or traditionally heroic in the *Iliad*.[106] Their application of the principles of traditional referentiality suggests that dissonance can be created alongside resonance for poetic effect.

These ideas about traditional referentiality and resonance demonstrate what must anyway be clear, namely, that the early audiences of orally-derived epic interpreted the poems through a completely different body of knowledge than twenty-first century readers. When it comes to themes, such as traumatic suffering, that are topical or controversial in the twenty-first century, I argue that we must make a strenuous effort to reconstruct the original interpretative strategies in order to avoid imposing our own values onto the poems. The concepts of traditional referentiality and resonance will determine my approach to

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[104] Foley, 1991: 6. Foley, 1999: 13-34 also addresses the concept of traditional referentiality.
[105] Foley, 1991: 140-3.
[106] Graziosi & Haubold, 2005: 51-3.

linguistic analysis in Part I, where I explore the traditional implications of the words I consider. These concepts will continue to inform my readings in Part II, where they remind the reader that epic audiences have traditional knowledge *of a certain kind* concerning the events represented in the *Odyssey*. My interpretation of these epics thus differs from previous traumatic readings of the *Odyssey* by taking into account how the traditional language, type-scenes and themes of epic poetry contribute to its representation of overwhelming events and the suffering that they cause. It also differs from the approaches of twentieth century trauma theorists to modern literary works, which treated the formal and stylistic elements of the texts they discussed as the primary means of representing traumatic experience. Traditional referentiality leaves much unspoken and unrepresented, but, I argue, in a markedly different way to trauma narratives that represent traumatic symptoms, such as repression and dissociation, through gaps in the text.[107] By highlighting tensions between Homeric scholarship and existing research on trauma, I challenge previous attempts to read the *Odyssey* as a straightforward trauma narrative in the mode of a twenty or twenty-first century trauma novel and lay the groundwork for a new approach that is sensitive to the poetic textures of early Greek epic.

iv. Odyssean perspectives on trauma

Aims and structure

From the perspective of Homeric studies, the *Odyssey* is thus a complicated text, and, from the perspective of trauma studies, it is an extraordinary one. On the one hand, we have an orally-derived text that makes use of a range of traditional features of oral poetry and makes constant reference to a body of mythical knowledge that would have been familiar to early audiences, but that the twenty-first century reader must reconstruct. On the other hand, we have a research concept which dominates twenty-first century readers' interpretations of suffering, but which must be adjusted before it can be applied to any text

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[107] In only one instance (*Od.* 8.516-31) does a narrative gap both refer the audience to their traditional knowledge and conceal a traumatic event. I discuss this passage in pp. 178-9.

created before the late nineteenth century, operating in conjunction with an area of study that typically regards it as 'all but axiomatic that traumatic experiences can only be adequately represented through the use of experimental, (post)modernist textual strategies.'[108] This being the case, how can trauma studies shed light on the *Odyssey*? How can Homeric epic shed light on the concept of trauma? My thesis addresses these two questions. I demonstrate that trauma is a historically and culturally situated concept that cannot be mapped directly onto ancient texts; the case study of the *Odyssey* illustrates the ways in which Homeric society shapes how characters experience and resolve suffering after overwhelming events. Conversely, I contribute to trauma studies' current mission by exploring a text that explores the ways in which overwhelming events shape identity without the use of a PTSD framework or a psychoanalytic concept of trauma. By finding a way to consider twenty-first century understandings of trauma alongside Homeric representations of suffering, I hope to enable twenty-first century readers to approach the *Odyssey*'s central theme of suffering in ways that are both sensitive to their original context and helpful to us today.

With this aim in mind, I adopt a two-part structure for my thesis. Part I engages in close analysis of Homeric concepts and ideas and consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 looks at Homeric words for overwhelming events whilst Chapter 2 looks at emotional responses to these events. This part of my thesis aims to build up a historically and culturally specific interpretative framework from the language of epic. Part II then uses this framework to explore the relationship between suffering and identity in the *Odyssey*. It consists of three chapters, each of which addresses a different facet of an individual's identity that can be shaped by suffering in Homeric epic. Chapter 3 considers individual identity, Chapter 4 looks at forms of collective identity and Chapter 5 explores identities that are

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[108] Craps & Buelens, 2008: 5.

multigenerational in scope. I finish with a conclusion summarising the findings of my work and indicating potential directions for future research.

Part I of my thesis establishes that the Homeric epics recognise certain events as overwhelming for the individuals who experience them and that these overwhelming events provoke an emotional response. My focus on the language of suffering allows me to explore an element of the Homeric texts that Shay was not able to address, and which does not easily map onto the modern concept of trauma. In Chapter 1, I argue that ἄλγος, πῆμα and related verbs describe overwhelming events that continue to hold significance for those that experience them after the event has taken place. In Chapter 2, I argue that ἄχος, πένθος and related verbs can indicate unusual and extreme emotional responses to overwhelming events, whilst verbs such as τλάω and τολμάω describe unusual acts of endurance when faced with a potentially overwhelming event. I argue that this network of language and ideas amounts to a complex model of suffering that is comparable to the modern concept of trauma: as characters in epic regularly perceive events that cause suffering as significant; and often interpret the emotions they inspire as overwhelming and the behaviours they provoke as extraordinary. My analysis here provides a framework for understanding when and how overwhelming events cause suffering in the Homeric epics, what conditions are required to end suffering, and what attitude the epics expect characters to adopt in order to cope with suffering in the meantime.

Part II of my thesis then explores the ways in which suffering shapes identity in the *Odyssey* and draws extensively on modern trauma research. Chapter 3 considers how characters' worldviews are shattered and rebuilt in response to overwhelming events. Taking inspiration from feminist literature on trauma, which recognises that men and women generally experience trauma in different contexts, I broaden the scope of research into trauma and Homeric epic from its singular focus on combat trauma to evaluate the differences between male and female experiences of suffering as a result of a range of

overwhelming events.[109] I argue that male and female characters in the *Odyssey* experience the same emotions in response to overwhelming events and find the same means of overcoming suffering effective. Homeric characters overcome suffering by taking immediate action after overwhelming events and by creating narratives about their suffering. These narratives provide overwhelming events with significance and meaning, thus restoring a character's sense of agency and allowing them to rebuild their shattered assumptions. Interactions with communities that allow characters to bear witness to events contribute to their efforts to find significance in their experiences. However, female characters are often unable to access these means of overcoming suffering due to the environments in which their experiences take place and the social expectations that govern their behaviour. They must often find alternative and creative means of alleviating their suffering or risk social censure.

In Chapter 4, I turn to the effect of overwhelming events on human communities in the *Odyssey*. Taking Ithaca as a case study, I look at the different collective identities active among the island's population. Finding common ground with Alexander's concept of cultural trauma, I consider how the two assemblies on Ithaca question the meaning of Ithacan identity in the wake of particular events.[110] Events are only considered overwhelming on a collective level, I argue, when the Ithacan assembly can construct a narrative that demonstrates the ongoing significance of that event for the community, and thus its power to shape collective identity. Members of the community can produce conflicting narratives about the significance of an event and the success of a particular narrative can determine whether a community is able to organise a collective response to an event. Odysseus' loss is not successfully presented as an overwhelming event in the first Ithacan assembly, but the loss of his companions and the destruction of the suitors are

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[109] As I stated above, Pache and Rabinowitz consider the topic of women and trauma. However, Pache focuses on women's roles on and around the battlefield, whilst Rabinowitz interprets women's experiences as a reflection of men's combat experiences. Female experiences have thus primarily been considered in relation to combat. In this thesis, I look at how female characters respond to a range of overwhelming events.
[110] Alexander, 2004: 1.

accepted as overwhelming events in the second assembly, leading to a collective military response. I also suggest that the gods are portrayed as holding the ultimate power over narrative construction in the Homeric epics, which complements the idea that suffering comes from the gods. Understanding the ways in which suffering affects collective forms of identity, I argue, can allow us to interpret better the significance of variations between these resonant scenes.

Chapter 5 moves on to the issue of multigenerational legacies of suffering. Here, I show that the *Odyssey* explores two ways in which overwhelming events that have occurred in one generation can continue to hold significance for a later generation. First, I look at Telemachus' story not simply, as it is often read, as a complementary reflection of Odysseus' homecoming journey, but as a response to Odysseus' absence in its own right. I argue that the *Odyssey* explores the dynamics between two characters, Telemachus and Penelope, who are responding to the same overwhelming event over different generations. The epic shows that successive generations take different perspectives on the same overwhelming event and that members of each generation construct their own narrative about the event in order to integrate it into their personal worldview. I then turn to Odysseus and the Phaeacians. I suggest that the epic presents the Phaeacians, and particularly Alcinous' family, as the inheritors of an identity that foregrounds a significant overwhelming event from a previous generation; the conflict with the Cyclopes that prompted a migration to Scheria. When they meet Odysseus, whose identity as an Achaean is shaped by his participation in the Trojan War, the epic demonstrates the legacies of suffering from two separate overwhelming events coming into contact for the first time. In this case, the older trauma legacy gives way to the new, and this conflict of narratives within the epic reinforces the status of the Trojan War as an event that defines identity in the post-Trojan War world.

Throughout my thesis, I contend that classics and trauma studies will both find a sustained period of mutual engagement enriching. Michael Rothberg notes that 'we can only maintain trauma as a theoretical category by recognising overlaps and similarities across the historical and cultural contexts we track,' indicating that scholars researching trauma must remain open to perspectives on trauma from other fields in order to continue developing their understanding of trauma in the twenty-first century.[111] Classical scholars too, I argue, must engage seriously with new perspectives on ancient texts in order to continue refining their approaches to these texts and to ensure that their interpretations of them remain relevant and accessible to twenty-first century readers. Ultimately, my work on the *Odyssey* convinces me that there is a future for fruitful work informed by trauma studies in the field of classics, but only if scholars go beyond applying mechanically modern concepts to the ancient world and work with ancient evidence on its own terms, as advocated here. With that in mind, I now turn to the Homeric epics.

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[111] Rothberg, 2014: xiii.

Part I: The Language of Suffering in Early Greek Hexameter Poetry

Introduction

As the introduction to my thesis established, I understand trauma as a person's emotional response to an overwhelming event that disrupts their usual worldview and sense of self. Early Greek hexameter poetry does not explicitly acknowledge a concept that can be categorised as traumatic in the way that, for example, shellshock or PTSD are named forms of trauma. Instead, Part I of my thesis looks for evidence of overwhelming events and emotional responses to them in the language of this poetry.[112] Gregory Nagy claims, uncontroversially, that 'the diction of archaic Greek poetry is a most accurate expression of its themes;' in other words, the themes of early Greek hexameter poetry are expressed through the poet's language selection and placement.[113] I use Part I of my thesis to investigate how the choice and context of particular words shapes the relationship between overwhelming events and emotional responses to them in early Greek hexameter poetry, including the *Homeric Hymns* and Hesiodic corpus,[114] in order to determine whether the nature of this relationship could be categorised as traumatic.

At the root of my argument is the observation that epic poetry has several words to describe an overwhelming event and a selection of words to describe the emotional responses that events provoke.[115] I treat the words for overwhelming events in Chapter 1, and the words for emotional responses to these events in Chapter 2, giving each word its own section within its chapter. This often turns out to be a rather artificial arrangement, but

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[112] My thesis focuses on overwhelming events and the emotional responses they provoke. While these sometimes take physical form, I avoid speculation on the ways in which epic might represent changes to chemical and neurological processes in the body, which would involve imposing twenty-first century conceptions of the body on ancient epic. I also acknowledge that the divide between emotional and psychological responses barely exists in Homeric epic. See Cairns, 1993: 145 for the problems involved in interpreting ancient emotions.

[113] Nagy, 1999: xiii.

[114] See pp. 34-6.

[115] Homeric epic uses many words to express suffering. However, I analyse only those that retain a clear link to an overwhelming event, because I am interested in Homer's portrayal of the relationship between overwhelming events and emotional responses. I include both nouns and verbs with the same root where both have a strong link to suffering, and note instances where I omit the verb from consideration.

I hope that it may help orient the reader. Albert Rijksbaron's second article on the language of suffering assisted me with my selection of words for overwhelming events in Chapter 1.[116] Rijksbaron engages with John Lyons' theory of first-, second- and third-order grammatical entities,[117] and, although he does not develop his analysis very far, uses it to make a distinction between words designating publicly observable causes of suffering that can be psychologically located in three-dimensional space (πῆμα); words designating events that cause suffering located in time (ἄλγος); and words designating, in the broadest terms, reasons for suffering that exist outside space and time (κῆδος).[118] In the first chapter, I advance on Rijksbaron's observations by exploring how the spatial and/or temporal specificity of the first two terms (πῆμα and ἄλγος) affects the ways in which the poem describes how a character perceives, experiences and explains suffering.

In Chapter 2, I turn to the emotions characters experience in response to overwhelming events in this poetry. Ioannis Anastassiou and Francine Mawet published surveys of the language of grief in the Homeric epics in the 1970s. These surveys described the processes that characters undergo when they experience certain emotions in remarkably similar terms to the most influential trauma and recovery models that emerged in the 1990s.[119] The relevant Greek terms (such as ἄχος and πένθος) unite reactions that the English language separates into several independent physical and emotional responses, but which can be considered interconnected aspects of a response to an overwhelming event. I therefore explore these terms with an interest not in their role in grief and mourning, which is the context in which Anastassiou and Mawet discuss them, but as complex descriptors of responses to suffering. I pay particular attention to the ways in which these emotions are presented as both ordinary and unusual reactions to overwhelming events, looking at the

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[116] Rijksbaron, 1997. This article builds on Rijksbaron, 1991, in which he argues that the notion of ἄλγεα as 'possessions' sheds light on questions of the ownership and transference of ἄλγεα within the Homeric epics.
[117] Lyons, 1977: 442-5.
[118] Rijksbaron 1997: 225-6; 230.
[119] The surveys of Homeric language for grief are Anastassiou, 1973 and Mawet, 1976. See pp. 17-8 for Herman's and Caruth's trauma models.

effects that they have on a character's sense of self, their worldview and their interactions with their environment while they are experiencing them, as well as the different ways in which characters attempt to overcome their emotions. I then expand my discussion to consider how characters can respond positively to potentially traumatising events by exhibiting attitudes of endurance (indicated by the verbs τλάω and τολμάω) that are akin to the modern concept of resilience.

Chapter 1: Overwhelming Events in Early Greek Hexameter Poetry

1.1. ἄλγος/ἀλγέω

Introduction

I begin my study of the language for overwhelming events in early Greek hexameter poetry with ἄλγος. Basic translations of the noun ἄλγος range from 'pain' to '"physical suffering" or "suffering" in general' to 'a suffering that one undergoes,' reflecting its role in indicating both experiences of suffering and the events that cause them.[120] The verb ἀλγέω, which I also discuss here, shares a root with ἄλγος and translates as 'to suffer/feel pain.'[121] As Mawet suggests, it acts as the equivalent of the phrases ἄλγεα ἔχω and ἄλγεα πάσχω.[122] In her study of ἄλγος, Mawet makes several claims about the central characteristics of ἄλγος in epic. She argues that ἄλγος designates pain in which physical and psychological elements are, for all practical purposes, indivisible. She also notes that the gods are often portrayed as the cause of ἄλγος, where a cause is portrayed, and argues that the word ἄλγος maintains a distance between the event and the sufferer that makes it suitable for describing the allotted suffering of mankind.[123] I agree that the use of ἄλγος to describe mankind's suffering is central to how we understand the term; indeed, this usage epitomises the difference between ἄλγος and the word πῆμα, which I discuss in the second half of this chapter. However, I argue that the poems also make a distinction between ordinary human experiences and unusual experiences of ἄλγεα, which proves important to how we understand experiences of suffering in early Greek hexameter poetry.

In this section, I adopt a thematic approach in my treatment of ἄλγος. I first outline the evidence in the epic tradition for reading ἄλγος either as a quintessentially mortal experience or as a response to an unusual event in human history. Gods in Homer, I argue,

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[120] These definitions can be found in *LfgrE*: 457; Chantraine, 1968: 55; and Mawet, 1976: 138 respectively. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
[121] Chantraine, 1968: 55.
[122] Mawet, 1976: 225.
[123] *Ibid.*: 138.

experience ἄλγος only to give them a momentary sense of human vulnerability. Next, I consider how the poet presents the human experience of ἄλγος, including how others perceive those experiencing ἄλγος and how characters respond to the emotional state. I then turn to instances in which characters claim exceptional ἄλγος. Characters use these claims, I argue, to articulate that certain experiences and characters are worthy of special narrative attention, and to explore how ἄλγεα become a source of pleasure through oral narrative once their suffering has ended. Overall, I argue that the word ἄλγος can in some contexts indicate an exceptional form of suffering that forms part of a character's life story.

1.1.1. ἄλγεα as an event: a 'usual human experience'?

Until recently, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-III-R*) defined a traumatic event as 'outside the range of usual human experience.'[124] This requirement provoked opposition from psychiatrists who argued that a 'usual' human experience was a subjective matter.[125] The *DSM-5* now defines a traumatic experience as one involving actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violence, but retains a sense that the traumatic event must be unexpected, so that another's death, for example, is only considered traumatic if the death was 'violent or accidental.'[126] I take this debate as my starting point here, because many of the questions it raises are similar to the most urgent questions that occur in my discussion of ἄλγος and ἀλγέω: Are these experiences usual or unusual for characters in Homeric epic? Are they shocking? Is the suffering that characters experience in the Trojan War treated like other ἄλγεα? Do characters' perceptions of ἄλγεα as usual or unusual affect how they experience or respond to these events? In answering these questions, I uncover two attitudes towards suffering in the Homeric epics, one which treats ἄλγεα as a fact of human existence and one which treats them as unique events in human history.

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[124] *DSM-III-R*: 250.
[125] Brown, 1995 provides an excellent overview of the issues associated with determining 'usual human experience.'
[126] *DSM-5*: 274.

i. ἄλγεα as a fact of human existence

I begin this section with a brief example of the general perspective on human suffering in the Homeric epics. I will then demonstrate how ἄλγεα both reflect common perceptions and apply them to specific events against this background in later paragraphs. In general, the Homeric epics promote a view of human existence in which mortal men receive a mixed fortune from the gods. In *Iliad* 24, Achilles accepts his mortality and describes his perspective on mortal life to Priam. He says:

> ὡς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι,
> ζώειν ἀχνυμένους· αὐτοὶ δέ τ᾽ ἀκηδέες εἰσί.
> δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει
> δώρων, οἷα δίδωσι, κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἐάων.
> ᾧ μέν κ᾽ ἀμμίξας δώῃ Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος,
> ἄλλοτε μέν τε κακῷ ὅ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ ἐσθλῷ·
> ᾧ δέ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δώῃ, λωβητὸν ἔθηκε,
> καί ἑ κακὴ βούβρωστις ἐπὶ χθόνα δῖαν ἐλαύνει,
> φοιτᾷ δ᾽ οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν.

> For thus the gods spun it for unfortunate mortals,
> that we live experiencing grief; but they are without sorrows.
> For there are two *pithoi* that are set in Zeus' threshold,
> one of them gives unhappy gifts, and the other good.
> He to whom Zeus who delights in thunder gives them,
>   having mixed them,
> lights at one time upon evil, and at another time good;
> but he to whom [Zeus] gives only baneful things, setting him in
>   degradation,
> an evil ravenous hunger drives him across the heavenly earth,
> and he wanders, valued by neither gods or men.[127]

Achilles tells what appears to be a traditional tale to explain good and bad fortune.[128] He uses two words (κακός and λυγρός) to refer to general evils experienced by mortals without reference to specific events that cause them. The gods are 'without sorrow'

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[127] *Il.* 24.525-33. I use van Thiel's texts of the *Iliad* (1996) and *Odyssey* (1991). Texts for Hesiod follow Merkelbach and West, 1967 or Solmsen, Merkelbach & West, 1970. Texts for the *Homeric Hymns* are those of Allen, Halliday & Sikes, 1936.

[128] See MacLeod, 1982: 132-5; Richardson, 1993: 330-2; Brügger, 2009: 187-90 for a discussion of this tale and references to it in other literature. MacLeod, 1982: 34-5 emphasises the parallels between this scene and Achilles' treatment of Phoenix in the embassy in *Iliad* 9. Phoenix's speech (*Il.* 9.496-512) offers many of the same themes that Achilles draws on in this tale. MacLeod, 1982: 135-6 also sees parallels between this scene and Odysseus' encounter with Circe, which I discuss on pp. 70-1 and p. 154.

(ἀκηδέες), a word that again indicates that they are free from suffering generally and thereby distinct from mortals.[129] Mortals have a fortune determined on the 'threshold' of Zeus, a detail which emphasises that an apportioned fortune is one of the characteristics separating mortals from immortals. This worldview anticipates and accepts that all mortals experience pain in their lifetimes, but creates a distinction between the fortunate and the unfortunate in the extent of suffering they experience. Mortal men always receive some bad fortune, although it is often mixed with good; only those least fortunate receive an entirely bad lot, and these men are characterised by their 'ravenous hunger,' their wandering and their ostracism from society. From this perspective, individual misfortune is not shocking in itself. However, since a man cannot know in advance what his lot will be, changes in his fortunes can be shocking and ruinous. We see this, for example, in Glaucus' account of his ancestor Bellerophontes.[130] His sudden turn in fortune shocks not just him, but also all who hear his story thereafter. Thus even men who have experienced divine favour can experience changes in fortune, and all men must accept, or so the epics argue, the unpredictability of their fate.

Homer's use of the word ἄλγος is connected to this traditional perspective on divinely dispensed fortune. When Eumaeus tells Odysseus his life story, including his abduction and purchase as a slave, Odysseus replies:

> "Εὔμαι', ἦ μάλα δή μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸν ὄρινας
> ταῦτα ἕκαστα λέγων, ὅσα δὴ πάθες ἄλγεα θυμῷ.
> ἀλλ' ἦτοι σοὶ μὲν παρὰ καὶ κακῷ ἐσθλὸν ἔθηκε
> Ζεύς,

> "Eumaeus, truly you have stirred the spirit in my breast
> by telling me each of these things, as many ἄλγεα as you have suffered
>   in your heart.

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[129] For κήδεα as third-order entities, see Rijksbaron, 1999: 225. For an overview of the Homeric gods' relationship to fate, see Duffy, 1947. See also Griffin, 1980; Kullmann, 1985; Yamagata, 1994 and Allan, 2006 for the relationship between fate and justice in Homer.
[130] *Il.* 6.155-205. Graziosi & Haubold, 2010: 120-37 discuss this passage with references to further literature.

<center>But beside the sorrow Zeus has set some good for you,[131]</center>

Odysseus determines that the swineherd has received a mixed portion from Zeus. He applies the same language of divinely dispensed good and evil that Achilles uses in the tale about Zeus' *pithoi* to Eumaeus' narrative about his personal ἄλγεα. Although Eumaeus focuses on his childhood ἄλγεα,[132] Odysseus extends Eumaeus' narrative to incorporate his adult experiences on Ithaca. He points out that Eumaeus has plentiful sustenance and a permanent home in a kind man's house, in contrast with him, who wanders without ties to city or people.[133] Odysseus uses the traditional perspective on divinely dispensed fortune to reinterpret Eumaeus' narrative. He thereby shows that this aspect of identity based on a character's perception of their allotted suffering is unstable and undergoes reassessment as new events are experienced.

By raising questions about a character's identity, ἄλγος shows that it has the potential to be a traumatic concept. When characters speak of ἄλγος as a fact of human existence, it does not immediately shatter their worldview. However, it does force characters to reassess whether they are in receipt of a mixed or a bad lot from Zeus with each experience of suffering, as this typical example shows:

<center>τότε δή ῥα κακὴ Διὸς αἶσα παρέστη
ἡμῖν αἰνομόροισιν, ἵν' ἄλγεα πολλὰ πάθοιμεν.</center>

<center>The dispensation from Zeus that was present was bad
for dire-fated us, so that we suffered many ἄλγεα.[134]</center>

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[131] *Od.* 15.486-9.

[132] ἄλγεα: *Od.* 15.401; 487.

[133] *Od.* 15.489-92. Eumaeus' story is unlikely to be a traditional component of the Trojan War myth; it is not an integral part of Odysseus' return and follows a basic narrative pattern found elsewhere in the Homeric epics. The poet has perhaps incorporated it into his narrative to flesh out Eumaeus' character, fill the time while Telemachus returns from his journey and provide this opportunity for Odysseus to highlight the low ebb in his fortune. As such, it illustrates well the traditional usage of ἄλγεα to indicate events that provoke suffering as part of mortal men's divinely dispensed lot. For interpretations of Eumaeus and his story, see Rose, 1980; Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 255-61; Olson, 1995: 120-39; and Newton, 2015.

[134] *Od.* 9.52-3.

Here, Odysseus reflects on his encounter with the Lastrygonians. His description involves no sense of shock and there is no sense that he is reassessing his understanding of the world or the gods. Instead, the passage is full of language taken from the traditional concept of suffering dispensed by Zeus. Odysseus raises the issue of his and his comrades' identity by using the phrase 'dire-fated us' (ἡμῖν αἰνομόροισιν). This phrase suggests that by the time Odysseus tells his story to the Phaeacians he has determined that he and his companions belong to the group of mortals who have received a bad lot from Zeus. Since the extent to which a Homeric character suffers ἄλγεα may cause them to transfer themselves to this group, I argue that ἄλγος has the potential to be a traumatic concept if experienced repeatedly over time. I return to this idea below, but first, I look at ἄλγεα associated specifically with the Trojan War.

ii. ἄλγεα associated with the Trojan War

Alongside the tradition in which Zeus arbitrarily allots suffering to mortals runs another tradition in which Zeus plans the Trojan War as a unique event to devastate humankind. An extant Hesiodic fragment describes Zeus' plan as a source of ἄλγος for mortals:

> δὴ γὰρ τότε μήδετο θέσκελα ἔργα
> Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, †μεῖξαι κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν
> τυρβάξας,† ἤδη δὲ γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
> πολλὸν ἀϊστῶσαι σπεῦδε πρ[ό]φασιν μὲν ὀλέσθαι
> ψυχὰς ἡμιθέω[ν ....] οισι βροτοῖσιν
> τέκνα θεῶν μι[...].[..]ο.[ὀφ]θαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶντα,
> ἀλλ' οἳ μ[ὲ]ν μάκ[α]ρες κ[.......]ν ὡς τὸ πάρος περ
> χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀν[θ]ρώπων[βίοτον κα]ὶ ἤθε' ἔχωσιν
> το [..]ε. εαλ [ἀθα]νάτω[ν τε ἰδὲ] θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων
> ...[   ] καὶ ἄλγος ἐπ' ἄλγει

>   For high-thundering Zeus was devising
> wondrous deeds then, to stir up trouble on the boundless earth;
> for he was already eager to destroy most of
> the race of human beings, avowedly to destroy
> the lives of the half-divine men, [   ] to mortals
> children of the gods [   ] seeing with eyes,
> but that the blessed ones [   ] as before
> apart from human beings should have [life and] habitations.

<div style="text-align:center">

[   ] for immortals and for mortal men

[   ] pain upon pain[135]

</div>

This fragment displays a different perspective on Zeus' role in causing pain to that displayed in the passages that I have discussed above. ἄλγεα come from Zeus, but he is no longer a distant figure dispensing suffering to mortals at random. Instead, the events (ἔργα) of the Trojan War are divinely driven (θέσκελα) and are designed to obliterate (ἀϊστῶσαι) humankind.[136] The immediate context for the phrase ἄλγος ἐπ᾽ ἄλγει is missing, but the surrounding text suggests that the line described the warfare that Zeus creates as causing ἄλγος ἐπ᾽ ἄλγει for mortals, immortals or both alike. The fragment identifies Zeus as an active perpetrator of the Trojan War. In this context, his dispensation of ἄλγεα is not part of normal human life, but rather marks a break in human history that cannot easily be reconciled with the view that men suffer only their apportioned lot of personal suffering.

Evidence for the Trojan War as Zeus' plan is limited in Homer, but the epics do refer to this tradition several times.[137] These references are compatible with Zeus' motives in the Hesiodic fragment above. Arguably the most important can be found in the two proems, which serve as mission statements of sorts for each poem.[138] The *Iliad* proem presents Achilles' wrath (μῆνις) as the instrument of Zeus' plan.[139] Achilles' μῆνις is both his personal response to experiencing the ἄλγεα of losing Briseis to Agamemnon, and also a cause of ἄλγεα for the Achaeans.[140] The proem states that as a result of the Trojan War 'many strong souls of heroes were sent forth to Hades' (πολλὰς δ᾽ ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄιδι

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[135] Hes. fr. 204 M-W. 96-105. Most's translation (2006) with some modifications based on González, 2010. For the rationale of changing 'a pretext' to 'avowedly' in line 99, see González, 2010: 377-82. Cf. *Cypria*, fr. 1, which claims that Zeus planned the Trojan War to end overpopulation. See Burgess, 2001: 149-50; Clay, 2003: 169-70; Barker, 2008 for further discussion.

[136] I also follow González, 2010 in reading no distinction between the demi-gods and mortal men (348; 382-91). Both Homeric epic and Ancient Near Eastern mythological literature use suffering as a way to emphasise and explore the divide between mortals and gods; for an overview of the relevant works, see Holm, 2005: 273-8. For the reduction of mankind motif in Ancient Near Eastern epic, see Lambert & Millard, 1969: 9; George, 2003: 519.

[137] *Il.* 6.357-8; *Od.* 8.81-2; 14.235-6.

[138] Wheeler, 2002 discusses the function and origins of epic proems. Redfield, 1979 demonstrates how the *Iliad*'s proem defines the poem's central themes with references to earlier literature.

[139] See Redfield, 1979: 97-8 for μῆνις as thematic in the *Iliad* proem.

[140] Briseis' loss causes Achilles ἄλγεα: *Il.* 16.55. Achilles' μῆνις causes the Achaeans ἄλγεα: *Il.* 1.2.

προΐαψεν //ἡρώων) and 'Zeus' plan was accomplished' (Διὸς δ᾽ ἐτελείετο βουλή).[141] These consequences parallel Zeus' intentions in the Hesiodic fragment; he devastates the human race and sends the ἥρωες, the Homeric counterpart to Hesiod's ἡμίθεοι, to Hades.[142] In viewing the Trojan War through Achilles' unusual emotional response to ἄλγεα, the proem to the *Iliad* uses the personal pathos of ἄλγεα as a divinely yet arbitrarily dispensed lot to amplify the traditional perspective of the Trojan War as a uniquely devastating event in human history.

The *Odyssey* proem likewise focuses on ἄλγεα. It begins with the initial word 'man' (ἄνδρα);[143] although the man in question goes unnamed, the poet hints at Odysseus' identity by using his characterising epithet 'much-wandering' (πολύτροπον).[144] The proem emphasises the significance of the epithet with an expansion on, and explanation of, its meaning through enjambment with the phrase 'who wandered very much' (ὃς μάλα πολλὰ //πλάγχθη).[145] Pointing back towards the sack of Troy as a significant moment in Odysseus' past and a temporal point by which the audience can orient themselves, it then combines the theme of Odysseus' wanderings with the concept of ἄλγεα in the lines 'and he suffered many pains in his heart on the sea, striving to win his own life and the return of his companions' (πολλὰ δ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν, //ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων).[146] Odysseus is thus introduced as a man of πολλὰ ἄλγεα by virtue of his experiences in and after the Trojan War. His experiences include not just the

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[141] *Il.* 1.1-5.

[142] With the exception of *Il.* 12.23, where Homer uses the word ἡμίθεοι. Nagy, 1999: 159-61 and Haubold, 2000: 5-9 argue that the use of the words ἡμίθεοι and ἥρωες reflect the epic's perspective on the events it recounts. Gazis, 2018: 26-34 suggests that Hades is portrayed as the place where Zeus' plan sends the heroic race.

[143] Kahane, 1992 explores ἄνδρα as a theme word in the *Odyssey* proem.

[144] The epithet is not used in the *Iliad*, but the *Odyssey* scholia recognise both of its potential meanings (much-travelled and well-versed) and contrast Odysseus' wandering with the simple (ἁπλοῦς) nature of Achilles and Ajax (Schol.ad. Hom. *Od.* 1.1 Porph. I 313 (Pontani)). In leaving the physical space of Troy, Odysseus acquires this polytropic aspect to his identity as a physical manifestation of his characteristic mental trickery. For discussion of the *Odyssey* proem and epithets, see Rüter, 1969: 28-49; Pucci, 1982; Clay, 1983: 25-34; Nagler, 1990; Goldhill, 1991: 1-5.

[145] *Od.* 1.1-2. See Clay, 1983: 25-34 for discussion of this epithet and comments on the initial suppression of Odysseus' name. Stanford, 1950 provides an overview of all the πολυ-compound epithets ascribed to Odysseus. De Jong, 2001: 4-7 lists other relevant works on the epithet and the thematic content of the proem.

[146] *Od.* 1.4-5.

general ἄλγεα of mortal men (as we have seen) but also, more specifically, the ἄλγεα of the Trojan War. There is a tension between these two conceptions of ἄλγεα, which the poet explores throughout the *Odyssey*.

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* therefore both introduce the Trojan War as a devastating event initiated by Zeus. As a divinely orchestrated catastrophe that causes suffering to mortals, it generates ἄλγεα that can no longer be seen as generic to the human condition and/or arbitrarily dispensed. While Homeric characters normally speak about ἄλγεα as part of the mortal lot, the Trojan War stands out as a unique break in human history, and is accordingly described as a shocking and unusual form of ἄλγεα. Moreover, whereas the Hesiodic fragment discussed above takes a distant view of events in order to draw attention to the multiplicity of ἄλγεα that the Trojan War creates, the Homeric epics combine the narrator's voice with select individual voices in an attempt to represent both the meaning and significance of the whole Trojan War at the same time as it describes the experiences of individual characters. Juxtaposing these two conceptions of ἄλγεα allows the poet to explore a number of emotional responses to divinely dispensed suffering, ranging from horror and anger to fear, despair or resignation. Since ἄλγεα relating to the Trojan War are shocking, disruptive and intended to alter significantly the circumstances and identity of the human race, they seem a likely candidate for a traumatic concept.

iii. Attributing ἄλγεα to other gods

All the passages that I have considered so far have presented Zeus as the primary source of ἄλγεα. Yet not all ἄλγεα are attributed to Zeus in epic poetry, although most are attributed to divine entities.[147] Before I consider the other characters and forces presented as the cause of ἄλγεα, I will first comment on the language used to attribute ἄλγεα to a source, which has occasioned some debate among scholars, and which has important implications

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[147] Along with Zeus, characters sometimes attribute their suffering to 'the gods' generally. These two attributions fulfil similar functions in the Homeric epics. Clay, 1983: 133-70 discusses the relationship between gods and mortals, whilst Dietrich, 1983 and Turkeltaub, 2007 look at the ways in which mortals perceive gods.

for the connections we see between sources of ἄλγεα. Mawet recognises that epic poetry uses four verbs (δίδωμι, τίθημι, φέρω and τεύχω) to indicate that a subject causes a character ἄλγος.[148] She argues that the verb δίδωμι is more spiritually and poetically "charged" than other verbs, such as τίθημι, because it is used only to identify gods as the source of suffering.[149] She then claims that the use of δίδωμι has a religious aspect that is closely linked to a legal and "contractual" value.[150] Whilst Rijksbaron agrees that δίδωμι is only used when ἄλγεα originate with the gods, he disputes that there is an element of reciprocity in Mawet's so-called "contractual" exchange of ἄλγεα between gods and men.[151] He also argues that τίθημι used with ἄλγεα should be interpreted as meaning to 'create ἄλγεα for someone' or to 'cause someone to receive/have/feel ἄλγεα.'[152]

Rijksbaron makes some important corrections to Mawet's argument, but is not yet fully convincing in his characterisation of ἄλγεα. In fact, both he and Mawet share an important oversight in their discussion of how ἄλγεα are passed from a source to a recipient, an oversight which results from their piecemeal approach to the issue. *Pace* Mawet, passages that combine ἄλγεα with τίθημι are not marked out from the rest by their lack of engagement with the divine: as the subject, both Zeus and 'the gods' each appear once; Achilles' anger, which is an instrument of Zeus' will, appears once; and Achilles himself, another instrument of Zeus' will and a character treated like a god by his enemies,[153] also appears once. This compares closely to the usages of ἄλγεα with δίδωμι, of which three attribute their suffering to Zeus, three to 'the gods' and one to Apollo. More importantly, *Il.* 18.431 has Zeus give ἄλγεα to Thetis with a form of δίδωμι. Thetis, although closely associated with mortals, is not mortal and does not hold the same relationship to Zeus that

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[148] Mawet, 1976: 138. For ἄλγεα & δίδωμι: *Il.* 1.96; 2.375; 18.431; 19.264; 24.241; *Od.* 4.722; 14.39; Hes. *Op.* 741; & τίθημι: *Il.* 1.2; 2.39; 5.384; 22.422; & φέρω: *Od.* 12.47; & τεύχω: *Il.* 1.110; 13.346.
[149] Mawet, 1976: 140.
[150] *Ibid.*: 141-2.
[151] Rijksbaron, 1991: 185.
[152] Rijksbaron, 1997: 215.
[153] See Graziosi & Haubold, 2010: 197 & 200 for passages that draw parallels between Achilles and Apollo and attribute unusual status to Achilles in Trojan speech.

mortals do.[154] Conversely, gods twice give ἄλγεα to other beings with forms of τίθημι.[155] It follows that the verb does not tell us anything significant about the type of transaction that takes place when characters experience ἄλγεα. What the relevant passages do tell us is that both characters and the narrator overwhelmingly attribute their ἄλγεα to Zeus, or to 'the gods' more broadly, whichever verb they use.

In the few instances where characters attribute ἄλγεα to someone other than Zeus (or 'the gods'), they usually attribute them to another immortal.[156] Heavenly forces other than Zeus can be named responsible for ἄλγεα when they act as instruments of Zeus' divine will and the attribution emphasises that the ἄλγεα are part of Zeus' plan for the Trojan War. The *Odyssey*'s claim that the south wind causes Odysseus ἄλγεα, for example, follows a vivid description of how Zeus manipulates the weather to destroy Odysseus' ship and companions.[157] As a continuation of this description, 'the south wind comes on swiftly, bringing ἄλγεα to [Odysseus'] heart' (ἦλθε δ' ἐπὶ νότος ὦκα, φέρων ἐμῷ ἄλγεα θυμῷ).[158] Elsewhere, the narrator names both Zeus and Poseidon as the source of battlefield ἄλγεα for the Trojans and Achaeans.[159] In this case, the poet opposes Zeus with another divine entity, his brother Poseidon, to magnify the earthly battle to the level of a cosmic struggle. The divine struggle underpinning the mortal battle marks it as an event whose significance extends beyond the range of anticipated ἄλγεα. The surrounding context again puts the focus on Zeus' plan for the Trojan War whilst Poseidon works in secret.[160] Thus in this case, as with the south wind, naming another immortal character as the cause or co-cause of ἄλγεα draws attention to how Zeus' will is being accomplished.

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[154] Slatkin, 1991: 53-84 explores Thetis' traditional 'power' in the cosmic order.
[155] *Il.* 2.39; 5.384.
[156] In Hes. *Theog.* 621, Ἄλγος is anthropomorphised as the daughter of Strife, who is daughter of Night. Night gives birth to entities such as Death, Nemesis and the various forms of fate. Strife also gives birth to Toil, Forgetfulness, Hunger, Combat, Murder, Slaughter, Lies, Lawlessness and the (false) Oath.
[157] *Od.* 12.403-28. For details of the shipwreck, see Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 141.
[158] *Od.* 12.427.
[159] *Il.* 13.345-6.
[160] *Il.* 13.347-60. Janko, 1992: 90-3 explores the imagery and significance of this passage.

Finally, the epic twice holds other characters responsible for ἄλγεα without linking them directly to Zeus. The first of these ἄλγεα is Apollo's plague. The prophet Calchas states that 'on account of [Chryseis' abduction], the far-shooter gave us ἄλγεα' (τοὔνεκ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἄλγε᾽ ἔδωκεν ἑκηβόλος).[161] The narrator supports Calchas' interpretation of events with his description of Apollo's attack on the Achaeans several lines earlier.[162] The plague, which initiates the events of the *Iliad*, is a punishment for a wrong done to Apollo, and Apollo's μῆνις, as Robert Rabel argues, prefigures the μῆνις of Achilles, who emulates the gods' behaviour after the death of Hector.[163] This later emulation of Apollo's μῆνις is the only occasion upon which a mortal character is named as a source of ἄλγεα, and is the second instance in which ἄλγεα are not attributed directly to Zeus. It occurs when Priam says that Achilles has a father:

> Πηλεύς, ὅς μιν ἔτικτε καὶ ἔτρεφε πῆμα γενέσθαι
> Τρωσί, μάλιστα δ᾽ ἐμοὶ περὶ πάντων ἄλγε᾽ ἔθηκε·
>
> Peleus, who begot and reared him to be an affliction
> on the Trojans, and to me especially he brings ἄλγεα beyond all others;[164]

This passage portrays Achilles as a divine agent.[165] The reference to Peleus reminds the audience that Zeus was instrumental in arranging Thetis' marriage to Peleus, a story she told Hephaestus shortly before Hector's death.[166] Achilles, as the product of this match, can be considered a product of Zeus' will that works to enact his plan. His importance to the Trojan War narrative is highlighted by the description of him as a πῆμα.[167] The claim that Achilles causes ἄλγεα is appropriate because it brings out the parallels between

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[161] *Il.* 1.96.
[162] *Il.* 1.43-52.
[163] Rabel, 1990: 429-32.
[164] *Il.* 22.421-2.
[165] He is, of course, also portrayed as a divine agent in the *Iliad* through his μῆνις. Others' portrayals of him as a divine agent are quite the reverse of his own attitude towards divinely dispensed suffering in *Il.* 24.525-33, for which see pp. 49-50.
[166] *Il.* 18.429-35, where Thetis claims that Zeus has given her ἄλγεα. The traditional story is that Thetis was destined to bear a son greater than his father. Zeus therefore gave her to a mortal in marriage rather than marry her himself, although these details are not explicit in the version Thetis tells Hephaestus. See Slatkin, 1991: 53-75 for Thetis' mythical background.
[167] See pp. 84-5.

Achilles' and Apollo's actions whilst emphasising that Achilles is instrumental for Zeus' plan. Instances in which ἄλγεα are attributed to characters other than Zeus are thus always connected to Zeus' plan for the Trojan War and may be considered to have the same traumatic capacity as those directly attributed to Zeus.

1.1.2. ἄλγος as an emotional response

In the previous section, I discussed ἄλγεα as events that cause suffering. When the word ἄλγος refers to an event, it usually occurs as a (generally plural) object in the sentence. I now turn to the second use of ἄλγος, where it refers to the suffering that characters experience as a result of such an event. In these instances it frequently occurs as a (generally singular) subject in the sentence.[168] In this section, I look at the range of emotional reactions that ἄλγος denotes. I argue that the emotional responses associated with ἄλγος, which range from resignation to shock and often take on tones of anger or despair, suggest that experiences of ἄλγος can be both disruptive and overwhelming, and that the poet employs ἄλγος when a character's mortality becomes an important focus of their characterisation.

i. Perceiving ἄλγος in others

To get a sense of what features Homeric characters associate with experiences of ἄλγος, I begin with passages in which characters perceive ἄλγος in another character. ἄλγος becomes a discernible state in the figure of the wandering beggar. Other characters recognise beggars as men experiencing ἄλγεα sent by Zeus and feel compassion for them. Philoetius, for example, determines that Odysseus is experiencing ἄλγεα when he is disguised as a beggar.[169] He bases his assessment on the beggar's attire, his unclear origin and his status as a homeless wanderer.[170] Philoetius relates Odysseus' state to the idea of a man experiencing a bad dispensation from Zeus and questions why, when mortals are his

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[168] Rijksbaron, 1997: 239.
[169] *Od.* 20.201-3. The sight affects Philoetius deeply and he says (*Od.* 20.204) 'I sweat, when I see you' (ἴδιον, ὡς ἐνόησα).
[170] *Od.* 20.191-6. Murnaghan, 2011: 5-13 discusses how Odysseus' disguise as a beggar shapes his identity.

creations, Zeus subjects them to such suffering.[171] There is both an element of resentment in his claim that Zeus neglects his charges, and an element of resignation as Philoetius recognises that this is the way the world works. The *Odyssey* certainly suggests as much in the many descriptions of displaced characters it includes; the strict rules it gives the treatment of beggars; and its portrayal of Irus/Arnaius, the resident beggar at Ithaca.[172] In Homeric epic, one character's appearance and situation thus allow another to determine that they are experiencing a poor dispensation of ἄλγεα from Zeus.

While appearance is a good guide to those who suffer ἄλγεα in epic poetry, it does not ensure that other characters will feel sympathy for them. Despite Philoetius' good-hearted assessment of the disguised Odysseus, epic does not treat all men with a poor appearance kindly. In the *Iliad*, Odysseus strikes Thersites, the 'ugliest' (αἴσχιστος) man at Troy, with a sceptre.[173] Thersites experiences pain (ἀλγήσας) as a result:

> ὃ δ᾽ ἰδνώθη, θαλερὸν δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε δάκρυ·
> σμῶδιξ δ᾽ αἱματόεσσα μεταφρένου ἐξυπανέστη
> σκήπτρου ὕπο χρυσέου. ὃ δ᾽ ἄρ ἕζετο τάρβησέν τε,
> ἀλγήσας δ᾽ ἀχρεῖον ἰδὼν ἀπομόρξατο δάκρυ.

>   and he doubled up, and he left fall stout tears;
> and a blood-red bruise started up from his back
> under the golden sceptre. And he sat and was terrified,
> and, suffering pain, he, looking aimlessly, wiped away tears.[174]

Thersites' pain has a strong physical component that is not always prominent in descriptions of ἄλγος. Alongside that, we see what might be indicators of an emotional response. His unsettled gaze suggests he is experiencing terror or shock. His tears, which often accompany experiences of ἄλγος, may result from his physical pain or may reflect shame, since they continue until attention moves away from his situation. While his

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[171] See Russo *et al.*, 1992: 118, who chart the potential development of the 'do not destroy what you have created theme' from Mesopotamian and Old Testament texts.

[172] *Od.* 18.1-7. Thalmann, 1998: 100-7 discusses Irus and the cultural context of the beggar's appearance. Beggars are often characterised by their stomachs, which can also be a source of ἄλγος (*Od.* 15.345).

[173] αἴσχιστος: *Il.* 2.216.

[174] *Il.* 2.266-9.

appearance is not at first a result of his ἄλγος, his looks match those of men accustomed to experiencing ἄλγεα when he reaches this state.[175] Unlike Philoetius looking upon Odysseus, however, the audience is not expected to feel sympathy for Thersites, who is portrayed as a coward hated by both Achilles and Odysseus.[176] By the end of this interlude, Odysseus ensures that Thersites' fortunes match his appearance and, by doing so, restores a sense of order to the Achaean camp.

Zeus himself identifies ἄλγος using appearance-based criteria, albeit in a rather different context. As Philoetius observes, the god is not moved to pity by mortal suffering. However, he exhibits regret when he perceives Achilles' immortal horses experiencing ἄλγος at Patroclus' death:

> "ἆ δειλώ, τί σφῶι δόμεν Πηλῆι ἄνακτι
> θνητῷ, ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ᾽ ἀθανάτω τε;
> ἦ ἵνα δυστήνοισι μετ᾽ ἀνδράσιν ἄλγε᾽ ἔχητον;
> οὐ μὲν γάρ τί πού ἐστιν ὀιζυρώτερον ἀνδρὸς
> πάντων, ὅσσα τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει τε καὶ ἕρπει.

> Wretched ones, why did we give you to the son of lord Peleus,
> a mortal, and you are ageless and immortal?
> Only so that among unhappy men you also might have ἄλγεα?
> Since among all things that breathe and crawl on the earth
> there is not anywhere anything more wretched than man.[177]

In this case, the horses' dishevelled appearance and their behaviour indicate to Zeus that they are experiencing ἄλγος.[178] He perceives that they are mourning, as they are motionless, dragging their manes in the dirt and weeping.[179] When Zeus gives them strength (μένος) to lift their despondency, it first makes them shake the dust from their

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[175] For work that interprets the Thersites scene and the role Thersites' looks play in both representing his character and shaping the audiences' response to him, see: Rose, 1988; Thalmann, 1988; Nagy, 1999: 261-3; Brügger *et al.*, 2003: 69-87; Marks, 2005.
[176] *Il.* 2.220-1.
[177] *Il.* 17.443-7.
[178] Elsewhere, animals do not usually experience ἄλγεα, although the verb ἀλγέω describes the purely physical pain of a horse and an eagle at *Il.* 8.85 and *Il.* 12.206 respectively.
[179] *Il.* 17.434-40.

manes (τὼ δ’ ἀπὸ χαιτάων κονίην οὐδασδὲ βαλόντε).[180] Achilles’ horses are more like the

anthropomorphised gods than human beings, since they too are immortal. Like Thetis, they

experience ἄλγος as a result of their exposure to mortal life, their ἄλγος characterises them

only fleetingly and its effects are quickly shaken off.[181] External appearance and attitude

are thus taken as a mark of a character’s internal state in the Homeric epics. They indicate

that characters are experiencing ἄλγος, set them within a resonant system that emphasises

their mortal vulnerabilities, and determine how others characterise and relate to them.

ii. ἄλγος as an emotional state

Whilst a dishevelled appearance indicates that a character is experiencing ἄλγος, the

internal experience of ἄλγος is harder to identify. More often than not, epic poets use the

term to indicate that a character is experiencing emotional and/or physical pain without

elaborating further.[182] However, when the poet does elaborate on a character’s experience

of ἄλγος, he often uses language that suggests the experience overwhelms and shocks

them, and disrupts their worldview or sense of identity, as in this passage:

> οὔ σ’ ἔτ’ ἔπειτα ἴδον, κούρη Διός, οὐδ’ ἐνόησα
> νηὸς ἐμῆς ἐπιβᾶσαν, ὅπως τί μοι ἄλγος ἀλάλκοις.
> ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ φρεσὶν ᾗσιν ἔχων δεδαϊγμένον ἦτορ
> ἠλώμην, εἵως με θεοὶ κακότητος ἔλυσαν·

> After that point, I did not see you, daughter of Zeus, nor did I perceive
> you boarding my ship in order that you might ward off ἄλγος from me.
> But always my heart being torn in two in my chest
> I wandered, until the gods released me from my wretchedness;[183]

Here, Odysseus refers to his homecoming, in which Athena played no part before he

reached Scheria.[184] He exhibits anger and grief at Athena’s behaviour, and complains that

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[180] *Il.* 17.457.

[181] Clay, 1983: 140 notes that this is a trait of gods who experience physical or spiritual wounds. For Thetis experiencing ἄλγος: *Il.* 18.431. For other gods experiencing ἄλγος to give them an appearance of vulnerability usually associated with mortals, see: *Il.* 5.384; 5.394; 5.895; 18.395; 18.397; Hes. *Theog.* 621.

[182] Instances in which the narrator notes that characters experience ἄλγος without additional information: *Il.* 2.667; 2.721; 3.157; 17.375; *Od.* 4.164; 5.13; 5.302; 5.362; 5.395; 9.121; 11.275; 11.279; 11.582; 11.593; 13.310; 14.32; 15.232; 16.189; 17.142; 20.211; 22.177; 24.27; Hes. *Op.* 133; 211.

[183] *Od.* 13.318-21. Odysseus’ use of ἄλγος does not make it clear whether he refers to an event or his emotional response, suggesting that the poet was not concerned with drawing a distinction between the two meanings.

his heart was 'torn in two' (δεδαϊγμένον) by his experiences.[185] In Athena's absence, Odysseus seems to have exhibited indecisiveness and a lack of direction, purpose and agency that is wholly unlike his usual resourceful attitude. The external signs of Odysseus' ἄλγος, his wanderings, both reflect and enact his internal experience of ἄλγος. Odysseus' language shows that he was overwhelmed by his misfortunes and his attitude suggests that he was shocked by Athena's betrayal, resulting in a period of time in which his usual worldview and sense of self was under threat and in which he was left both vulnerable and helpless.

Odysseus confronts Athena on the shoreline, a place which becomes a typical setting for the *Odyssey* to show characters overwhelmed by experiences of ἄλγος. We first see him sitting alone on the shore of Calypso's island:

> ἀλλ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, ἔνθα πάρος περ,
> δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων
> πόντον ἐπ᾽ ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

> But he was sitting out on the beach, crying, as before then,
> breaking his heart in tears and groans and ἄλγος,
> as weeping tears he looked out over the barren water.[186]

Odysseus' ἄλγος, which here receives outward expression through groans and weeping, overwhelms his heart.[187] Instead of the verb δαίζω, which suggests a tearing action, θυμός here goes with ἐρέχθω, which occurs in contexts in which things are hit repeatedly,[188] and which contributes to the impression that Odysseus' circumstances overwhelm him.

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[184] Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 184 suggest that this is because Athena played no part in the original folk tales that inspired *Odyssey* 9-12. Alternatively, Clay, 1983: 44-53 emphasises the importance of Athena's wrath in causing this period of absence. Whatever the reason for her absence, Athena is aware of Odysseus' experiences during this period, as she reminds Zeus of Odysseus' ἄλγεα at *Od.* 5.13 & 5.83.

[185] *Od.* 8.182, which describes both Odysseus' return journey and his experiences at war as ἄλγεα (cf. *Il.* 24.7-8, which uses a similar formula). See also *Od.* 2.343; 13.90; 13.263; 19.170; 19.483; 20.339; 23.352 for Odysseus' journey as ἄλγεα.

[186] *Od.* 5.82-4. *Od.* 5.83-4=5.157-8. See also *Il.* 13.670; 16.55; *Od.* 17.13; Hes. *Op.* 799 for θυμός affected by ἄλγεα.

[187] See Clarke, 1999: 63-9 for the θυμός in Homeric epic. ἄλγεα seem to be more bearable when a person's θυμός less agitated (*Il.* 24.522; 24.568; *Od.* 21.88). Sleep brings relief to those who, like Penelope and Priam, are suffering intense ἄλγεα (*Il.* 24.522ff.; *Od.* 4.722ff.).

[188] See *Il.* 23.317 for a ship buffered by winds; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 358 for a snake writhing in waves of pain. For ἐρέχθω, see *LfgrE*: 692.

Although there is no sense of shock in this case, Odysseus' ἄλγος again renders him purposeless and helpless, leaving him sitting alone on the shore with no plan to escape. Odysseus' behaviour on Calypso's island is in many ways similar to Menelaus' behaviour on Pharos. Eidothea, Proteus' daughter, meets Menelaus whilst he is wandering alone on the island.[189] She says to him:

> "νήπιός εἰς, ὦ ξεῖνε, λίην τόσον ἠδὲ χαλίφρων·
> ἠὲ ἑκὼν μεθίεις καὶ τέρπεαι ἄλγεα πάσχων;
> ὡς δὴ δήθ᾽ ἐνὶ νήσῳ ἐρύκεαι, οὐδέ τι τέκμωρ
> εὑρέμεναι δύνασαι, μινύθει δέ τοι ἦτορ ἑταίρων."

> "Are you a fool, stranger, and so very thoughtless,
> or do you willingly give up, and enjoy suffering ἄλγεα?
> At any rate, you are detained on the island for a long time, and cannot find
> an end to it, and the hearts of your companions waste away."[190]

Eidothea recognises that Menelaus' behaviour has lost purpose and she suggests that he is in a state of mind in which he is no longer capable of thinking clearly. She sees his state as the result of ἄλγεα; the only other option, as she mockingly suggests, is that he enjoys his helplessness. In reply, he states 'but I must have offended the gods' (ἀλλά νυ μέλλω //ἀθανάτους ἀλιτέσθαι).[191] Unusually, this response implies that his ἄλγεα are not just the result of divine dispensation, but also the result of divine punishment. Menelaus, like Odysseus, is clearly overwhelmed by his circumstances, and, while experiencing ἄλγος, reassesses his relationship with the gods.

The passages I have discussed thus far focus on the negative emotions that result from experiencing ἄλγος. I finally turn to one atypical representation of ἄλγος in Homeric epic, which shows a character still shocked and overwhelmed, but also experiencing joy alongside ἄλγος. Eurycleia responds to the revelation of Odysseus' identity in the following manner:

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[189] *Od.* 4.367. The epic disposes of his companions for this meeting by sending them to fish, an indicator of their dire situation (see Heubeck *et al.,* 1988: 216 for further details).
[190] *Od.* 4.371-4.
[191] *Od.* 4.377-8.

ἐν δὲ λέβητι πέσε κνήμη, κανάχησε δὲ χαλκός,
ἂψ δ᾿ ἑτέρωσ᾿ ἐκλίθη· τὸ δ᾿ ἐπὶ χθονὸς ἐξέχυθ᾿ ὕδωρ.
τὴν δ᾿ ἅμα χάρμα καὶ ἄλγος ἕλε φρένα, τὼ δέ οἱ ὄσσε
δακρυόφιν πλῆσθεν, θαλερὴ δέ οἱ ἔσχετο φωνή.

And his leg fell in the basin, and the bronze rang,
and it sloped back to the other side; and the water poured out on the floor.
And joy and ἄλγος seized her mind together, and both her eyes
filled with tears, and the full voice was held within her.[192]

This passage is highly unusual, because Eurycleia experiences ἄλγος in response to an event that does not cause her to suffer. The moment is made more unusual by the 'oxymoron' of her simultaneously experiencing ἄλγος and joy (χάρμα).[193] Her joy is easily explained; she is glad to see Odysseus return safely. The ἄλγος is more ambivalent. It might result from a sudden perception of the danger they would all be in should the suitors find out Odysseus has returned. Alternatively, Eurycleia may feel ἄλγος as a form of dread, anticipating the violence that will accompany his return;[194] or she may be re-experiencing the emotions associated with the flashback narrative explaining the origins of Odysseus' scar. Finally, her ἄλγος might simply be an empathetic response to perceiving her lord in his beggar's guise. Whichever option the reader prefers, it is clear that this is a rare use of ἄλγος to describe a violent and vivid emotion. Indeed, nowhere else is it used in circumstances which would encourage a reader to associate it with hyperarousal or intrusive memory-like symptoms or the representational techniques, such as fragmentation and analepsis, familiar from modern trauma narratives. Yet from these examples that address emotional states, it is clear that experiences of ἄλγος in Homeric epic are frequently overwhelming. They also show some capacity to shock or disrupt a character's sense of self or worldview. Claims to exceptional ἄλγος deal with this latter issue more directly, as I now discuss.

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[192] *Od.* 19.469-72. See de Jong, 2001: 474-9 for the structure of the recognition scene; Murnaghan, 2011: 27-9 for its narrative purpose.
[193] Russo *et al.*, 1992: 98.
[194] For other instances of specific ἄλγεα anticipated, see *Il.* 6.450; 6.462; 18.224; 21.585; *Od.* 2.193; 6.184; Hes. *Op.* 200.

iii. Claims to exceptional ἄλγος

As the first section of this chapter showed, Homeric characters believe that all mortals should expect to experience some ἄλγεα in their lives. Experiences of ἄλγος are thus generally unremarkable. When the poet wants to mark out a character's experience of ἄλγεα as extraordinary, he has them claim to have experienced exceptional ἄλγος. When characters claim to have experienced exceptional ἄλγος, they mean that they have experienced more ἄλγεα than usually dispensed by the gods. Characters use these claims to indicate that their ἄλγεα are outside the range of usual human experience, and therefore shocking and disruptive. Near the beginning of the *Odyssey*, Zeus identifies a certain type of mortal that blames the gods (θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται) for 'ἄλγεα beyond their due' (ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε᾽), but which he ascribes to 'their own arrogance' (σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν).[195] The gods' enmity and the resulting ἄλγεα put the experiences of these characters outside of the normal range of mortal experiences.[196] In doing so, these characters frequently find a place in stories as an example and a warning to others, as Aegisthus is in the *Odyssey* and as Agamemnon worries he will become if he returns to Argos prematurely in the *Iliad*. Claims to exceptional ἄλγεα therefore evidence a special category of ἄλγεα in which normal human suffering takes on unusual significance and comes to shape a character's identity.

At the level of narrative, claims to exceptional ἄλγεα can thus become a means by which the poet articulates the intensity of a central character's experiences. Menelaus, Priam, Andromache and Thetis in the *Iliad*, and Odysseus, Penelope and Telemachus in the *Odyssey* all claim to suffer beyond others.[197] Priam, Andromache and Thetis each claim ἄλγος when the death of either Hector or Achilles has been determined. Menelaus claims

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[195] *Od.* 1.32-4. For further discussion of Zeus' speech and divine punishments, see Clay, 1976: 315-7; Segal, 1992: 507-18; Olson, 1995: 24-8; 205-23.

[196] Divine attention acts as a mark of distinction (see, for example, Nestor's speech about ἄλγεα and divine attention at *Od.* 3.232, although in this instance Athena protects Odysseus from ἄλγεα, rather than dispensing them), but does not furnish a character with κλέος. A reputation for unprofitable suffering is δυσκλεής (e.g. *Il.* 2.114-22; 9.21-2). Griffin, 1980: 179-83; 195-7 discusses mortals as a spectacle for the gods.

[197] *Il.* 3.97; 18.431; 22.53-4; 24.742; *Od.* 2.41; 4.722; 7.212. I focus on the three Odyssean characters' experiences of suffering in Part II.

to be most deeply affected of all Achaeans and Trojans by the ἄλγος of Helen and Paris'
betrayal. Odysseus, Penelope and Telemachus claim ἄλγος as a result of Odysseus'
absence from Ithaca. Of these, Odysseus makes the greatest claim to ἄλγεα:

> οὕς τινας ὑμεῖς ἴστε μάλιστ᾽ ὀχέοντας ὀιζὺν
> ἀνθρώπων, τοῖσίν κεν ἐν ἄλγεσιν ἰσωσαίμην·
> καὶ δ᾽ ἔτι κεν καὶ πλείον᾽ ἐγὼ κακὰ μυθησαίμην,
> ὅσσα γε δὴ ξύμπαντα θεῶν ἰότητι μόγησα.

> Whomever you know to bear exceptional misery
> among men, such are they whom I would equal for ἄλγεα endured;
> and I could tell of still even more evils,
> as many as all together I suffered by the will of the gods.[198]

Odysseus claims ἄλγος that exceeds anything the Phaeacians have encountered. His claim
goes unchallenged although the Phaeacians have themselves experienced suffering in the
past.[199] With this claim, Odysseus creates a competitive atmosphere for ἄλγεα narratives
during his stay on Scheria. The challenge acts as a prelude to his extensive account of his
ἄλγεα, which extends over the course of the next few books and shapes his identity
thereafter. The use of 'anyone' (τινας) in this context is especially effective, because it
emphasises that these other men who may have suffered ἄλγεα have remained nameless,
not memorialised in song, whilst the tales of Troy are already known to the Phaeacian
bard.[200] Odysseus' account emerges, first in pieces and later as a developed narrative, from
the competitive environment the Phaeacians cultivate.[201] As this case shows, claims to
exceptional ἄλγεα can initiate reflection on ἄλγεα and act as a means to justify attention on
one individual among all potential subjects of human suffering, encouraging testimony
narratives to form.

In poetic terms, such claims to exceptionalism are necessary because they support the
structures of epic song. Only Achilles makes no claims to exceptional ἄλγεα, but his status

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[198] *Od.* 7.211-4.
[199] *Od.* 6.1-12; 7.56-67; 8.564-71; 13.143-87. pp. 257-63 explores this topic.
[200] Songs of Troy: *Od.* 8.72-82; 9.499-520.
[201] Odysseus tells fragmentary narratives (*Od.* 8.178-85; 8.204-33) in the lead up to his account of his journey
in *Odyssey* 9-12.

among mortals is assured due to his unique relationship with fate and mortality.[202] However, he does comment on the connection between ἄλγεα and reward in the following passage:

> ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι·
> ἐν δὲ ἰῇ τιμῇ ἠμὲν κακὸς ἠδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός.
> κάτθαν’ ὁμῶς ὅ τ’ ἀεργὸς ἀνὴρ ὅ τε πολλὰ ἐοργώς.
> οὐδέ τί μοι περίκειται, ἐπεὶ πάθον ἄλγεα θυμῷ,
> αἰεὶ ἐμὴν ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος πολεμίζειν.

> Our portion is equal when one waits and if one really fights;
> and we are in one honour, both the bad and the good.
> A man who has been idle dies like one who has done much.
> nothing is laid by for me, since I have suffered ἄλγεα in my heart,
> always risking my life in war.[203]

Achilles claims that he receives no benefit from suffering ἄλγεα for the Achaeans, because all are treated equally. He protests this common lot, which does not allow him to rise above the other Achaeans. In this connection, he regrets his lack of 'treasures/things stored up' (κειμήλια) as recompense for his ἄλγεα.[204] Achilles approaches mortality from a different perspective to other men. His mother assures him that he will have undying glory (κλέος ἄφθιτον) if he fights at Troy, or need only return home to forfeit noble glory (κλέος ἐσθλόν) for a long life.[205] He thus claims ἄλγεα to remind the Achaeans that he is, despite his reputation, mortal.[206] Ironically, this makes his claim more like those instances in which immortals are said to suffer ἄλγεα in order to endow them with momentary human vulnerabilities than those instances in which mortals claim exceptional ἄλγος. Nevertheless, Achilles' claims to ἄλγεα and disdain for equal rewards reinforce the basic principal that experiences of exceptional ἄλγεα come to shape a Homeric character's sense of self and their place in the world.

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[202] *Il.* 9.410-6. For Achilles' unusual relationship with fate and mortality, see Griffin, 1980: 81-102; Slatkin, 1991: 18-23.
[203] *Il.* 9.318-22.
[204] *Il.* 9.330.
[205] *Il.* 9.412-6.
[206] *Od.* 20.339.

iv. ἄλγος and oral narratives

A claim to exceptional ἄλγεα is thus a claim about the significance of an experience of suffering to the character that experiences it, and often marks that experience out as one that shapes a character's identity.[207] Most claims about ἄλγεα are made during reflection after they have passed. Indeed, past ἄλγεα are a rich source of entertainment for Homeric characters. Characters enjoy speaking about ἄλγεα they have endured and other characters are pleased to listen to, respond to and disseminate these accounts. A character's perspective on events determines how disruptive they are: the importance of perspective is illustrated, for example, in the statement that the ideal marriage is 'many ἄλγεα to your enemies and joys to your well-wishers' (πόλλ᾽ ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι, //χάρματα δ᾽ εὐμενέτῃσι), where a single event causes pleasure or pain depending on the perspective of those witnessing it.[208] When characters reflect on their suffering with hindsight, a similar change in perspective takes place, as this statement from Eumaeus explains:

> νῶϊ δ᾽ ἐνὶ κλισίῃ πίνοντέ τε δαινυμένω τε
> κήδεσιν ἀλλήλων τερπώμεθα λευγαλέοισι
> μνωομένω· μετὰ γάρ τε καὶ ἄλγεσι τέρπεται ἀνήρ,
> ὅς τις δὴ μάλα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ πόλλ᾽ ἐπαληθῇ.

> But we two, eating and drinking in the hut,
> let us enjoy ourselves remembering our sad sorrows;
> for afterwards a man takes pleasure even in his ἄλγεα,
> one who has suffered very much and wandered much.[209]

The conversation between Eumaeus and Odysseus occurs when Odysseus has achieved his goal of returning to Ithaca.[210] It marks a brief pause in his adventures, and a rare moment for reflection and storytelling. The stories that the two men tell are, purportedly at least, memories of their own suffering. The passage quoted above suggests that Eumaeus sees

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[207] See J. Foley, 1995: 5 for the 'extratextual' nature of the characters of mythical figures, which are, in a sense, timeless; in the minds of audience members, a well-known character is always the sum of all his adventures, even when those adventures have not yet occurred in the narrative to which they are listening.
[208] *Od.* 6.184-5.
[209] *Od.* 15.398-401. We also see how the narrator can revise the meaning of suffering in the simile at *Od.* 16.19.
[210] The language here recalls that of the *Odyssey* proem.

this as a normal response to κήδεα/ἄλγεα, and places their personal accounts of suffering within a wider tradition of speaking about ἄλγεα.[211] The domestic setting, the friendly company and the opportunity for storytelling provide the ideal conditions for Odysseus to recover from and reflect on his ἄλγεα at the end of his wanderings, integrating his experiences of suffering into his sense of self and allowing them to shape the character he presents to the community he is about to enter.

Whilst Eumaeus shows his warmth towards his guest through his offer to share memories over food and drink, Circe initially refuses to listen to ἄλγεα as part of her hospitality.[212] After transforming Odysseus' companions back into human shape, she says:

> μηκέτι νῦν θαλερὸν γόον ὄρνυτε. οἶδα καὶ αὐτή,
> ἠμὲν ὅσ᾽ ἐν πόντῳ πάθετ᾽ ἄλγεα ἰχθυόεντι,
> ἠδ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἀνάρσιοι ἄνδρες ἐδηλήσαντ᾽ ἐπὶ χέρσου.
> ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετ᾽ ἐσθίετε βρώμην καὶ πίνετε οἶνον,
> εἰς ὅ κεν αὖτις θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι λάβητε,
> οἷον ὅτε πρώτιστον ἐλείπετε πατρίδα γαῖαν
> τρηχείης Ἰθάκης. νῦν δ᾽ ἀσκελέες καὶ ἄθυμοι,
> αἰὲν ἄλης χαλεπῆς μεμνημένοι· οὐδέ ποθ᾽ ὕμιν
> θυμὸς ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ, ἐπεὶ ἦ μάλα πολλὰ πέποσθε."

> Don't now still awaken rich lamentation; even I myself know
> both how many ἄλγεα you suffered on the fish-rich sea,
> and how much hostile men hurt you on land.
> But come, eat food and drink wine,
> until you regain the spirit in your breasts
> such as it was when you first left your fatherland,
> rugged Ithaca. Now you are shrivelled and spiritless,
> remembering always your difficult wandering, and your spirit
> never has any merriment, since you have suffered so very much."[213]

Circe provides food and drink, but prevents Odysseus from giving voice to his ἄλγεα. Her knowledge of his affairs precludes the necessity of an explanation. That knowledge, we

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[211] Rijksbaron, 1997 suggests that the epics use κήδεα to refer to suffering that is abstract in nature whereas they use ἄλγεα to refer to suffering that is better defined. In the example above, it seems natural for κήδεα to become ἄλγεα when they take spoken form.
[212] Her manner is more accommodating when they return from Hades (*Od.* 12.16-35). At that point, she allows him to recount his journey before explaining the trials he will encounter ahead.
[213] *Od.* 10.457-65.

must assume, comes from her otherworldly arts, and thus indicates that Odysseus remains outside the boundaries of the mortal world.[214] Even though the atmosphere is comfortable and festive, Circe's blunt words about the effects of the men's ἄλγεα and her refusal to let them engage in storytelling as the final release from suffering suggest that the danger for them has not yet passed.

For his part, Odysseus also deviates from his traditional role as the recipient of hospitality in his initial meeting with Circe. Although Circe makes an oath not to harm him, he refuses to eat or drink when he first sits at her table. Instead, Odysseus recalls that 'his mind saw evil things' (κακὰ δ᾽ ὄσσετο θυμός) and as a result 'hateful sorrow held [him]' (στυγερὸν δέ με πένθος ἔχοντα).[215] Circe questions his behaviour and attitude, commenting: 'you sit like one who is speechless, eating your heart, but do not touch food or drink' (κατ᾽ ἄρ ἕζεαι ἶσος ἀναύδῳ, //θυμὸν ἔδων, βρώμης δ᾽ οὐχ ἅπτεαι οὐδὲ ποτῆτος;).[216] The colloquial phrase 'eating one's heart' (θυμὸν ἔδων) can be used to express a behaviour that involves reflecting on ἄλγεα. The phrase balances the pleasure of eating with the idea that the action is turned upon the self, potentially becoming destructive. As Circe notes, Odysseus does not eat, drink or talk like one who is feasting; a stranger would be expected to eat and drink, but then to entertain his hosts with stories about his past.[217] Odysseus explains that he cannot feel at ease until he has seen his men returned to their original form. By not participating in the feasting and by presenting to his host the attitude of a man experiencing suffering, Odysseus signals to Circe that, despite her oath, he feels that the danger of his situation remains in place.

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[214] However, her refusal does not stem purely from the fact that she is not mortal, as other immortals do listen to tales of men's suffering (e.g. Thetis at *Il.* 18.79-93 and Athena at *Od.* 13.256-86; 312-28).
[215] *Od.* 10.374; 376.
[216] *Od.* 10.378-9.
[217] Odysseus intentionally presents this attitude to Circe. Among the Phaeacians, he exhibits the behaviours of a man experiencing extreme ἄλγεα unintentionally and cannot fulfil his obligations as a guest. For further discussion of Odysseus' behaviour there, see Murnaghan, 2011: 112-4. For Odysseus' encounter with Circe, see Wohl, 1993: 23-7; Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 61-4.

Odysseus uses the same concept of eating one's heart to structure his account of his suffering when speaking to the Phaeacians. In this account, he uses the formulaic line 'we sat, eating our hearts in ἄλγεα and weariness together' (κείμεθ', ὁμοῦ καμάτῳ τε καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἔδοντες) as a pause between episodes in his journey.[218] The line occurs between the encounters with the Ciconians and the Lotus-Eaters during a pause in which Odysseus and his companions put in at the mainland. It also occurs between the encounters with the Lastrygonians and Circe as the crew make camp on Aeaea. Both of these occurrences mark instances in which Odysseus and his companions reach land safely before the end of their journey. Since they have not completed their return, they do not find pleasure in their experiences of suffering. Instead, this line marks the brief opportunity that Odysseus and his companions have to digest the ἄλγεα they have already experienced before the next ones approach. In this moment, ἄλγεα change from being deeds done or endured into memories that can be kept silent or spoken. For the internal and implied audiences, it also provides an opportunity to comprehend and evaluate the significance of the ἄλγεα that they have just witnessed. The short line enables reflection without sacrificing the pace of the narrative or the building sense that Odysseus has endured ἄλγεα beyond measure. The categorisation within Odysseus' narrative of these events as ἄλγεα emphasises the self-reflective nature of the whole section, ensuring that audiences do not forget that Odysseus is speaking about his suffering to entertain his hosts at a Phaeacian feast.

In a sense, then, the brief pauses for reflection work in a similar way to the long, self-reflexive narrative that he delivers among the Phaeacians, but there are also differences: Odysseus differentiates his earlier adventures among strange people, which have become sources of ἄλγεα to him, from his current sojourn amongst the Phaeacians. Instead of offering further suffering, the Phaeacians provide the opportunity for Odysseus to compose

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[218] *Od.* 9.75=10.143.

a narrative about his ἄλγεα and to perform it in front of an audience. Like those previous pauses, Odysseus' stay among the Phaeacians allows contemplation and recuperation. However, this pause marks a more significant moment of reflection on his experiences than those he describes in his narrative and is his primary opportunity to integrate his wanderings into his sense of self before he returns to Ithaca, where more experiences of suffering await. Whilst he tells his story again to Penelope at their reunion,[219] it is this moment among the Phaeacians that establishes his epic identity as a wanderer, as I shall explore further in Part II.

Conclusion

The word ἄλγος describes the essential human experience of suffering in early Greek hexameter poetry. Zeus and the other gods dispense ἄλγεα to mortals, who expect to experience ἄλγεα as part of their mortal lot. For audiences of Homeric and Hesiodic epic, the word is also used to codify the Trojan War, which is portrayed as the overwhelming event that determines the nature of human experience in later times.

In being able to indicate both an overwhelming event and a character's emotional response to an overwhelming event, ἄλγος is an unusual word in the epic *Kunstsprache*. Characters in epic can identify another character who is experiencing ἄλγος by their dishevelled and wasted appearance, an unmistakable sign that Homeric characters are often overwhelmed and occasionally shocked by experiences of ἄλγος. Experiences of exceptional ἄλγος also cause characters to reassess their identities, leading them to claim that they suffer exceptional ἄλγος or are among the men who receive a wholly bad lot from Zeus. Because it is the extent rather than the type of suffering that makes ἄλγος exceptional, claims to exceptional ἄλγος become part of competitive dialogues between characters, acting as a mark of distinction to highlight the exploits of a few notable heroes. Characters integrate

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[219] *Od.* 23.300-43.

their experiences of ἄλγεα into their sense of self through oral narratives once their suffering has passed.

Experiences of ἄλγος overwhelm characters and, when they occur with sufficient gravity, are perceived as extraordinary experiences that disrupt a character's sense of self and worldview. ἄλγος can thus be seen, I argue, as a traumatic concept within Homeric poetry.

1.2. πῆμα

Introduction

The Homeric concept of πῆμα shares some characteristics with that of ἄλγος. Like ἄλγος, epic hexameter poetry uses πῆμα to indicate a painful event, and indeed it refers to some events as both ἄλγεα and πήματα. In these cases, and in some others, the epics trace the origin of πήματα back to the gods or to Zeus. However, the word πῆμα differs from ἄλγος in that it refers only to painful events and never to the emotional state caused by those events.[220] It is often translated as 'harm,' 'disaster,' 'evil,' or 'misfortune.'[221] These translations show that epic uses πῆμα to indicate destructive events of some magnitude. Rijksbaron notes that 'πῆμα often refers to something concrete,' and recognises it as a first-order entity: something that can be located in time and space, and is publicly observable.[222] For him, this distinguishes it from ἄλγεα, which, as second-order entities, can be experienced but not necessarily perceived.[223] Mawet further argues that characters use the word to describe suffering from which they have achieved some psychological distance.[224] πῆμα is thus qualitatively different from ἄλγος and requires its own examination.

I began my discussion of ἄλγος by considering some of the qualities that define a traumatic event in the twenty-first century. Some of the questions raised there remain pertinent to the

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[220] A property that both Anastassiou, 1973: 181-2 and Mawet, 1976: 101 discuss.
[221] These definitions are found in *LfgrE*: 1227-8 and Mawet, 1976; 76.
[222] Rijksbaron, 1997: 223; 230.
[223] *Ibid.*: 226.
[224] Mawet, 1976; 107. She suggests that characters accept events they present as πήματα as part of human destiny but does not link them to the epic tradition, as I do.

study of πῆμα: What types of event are designated πήματα in Homeric epic? Do characters perceive πήματα as usual or unusual? Do πήματα shock characters? And what responses do they provoke? Recent debate in trauma studies has questioned whether the practice of identifying a single event as the cause of traumatisation arises out of psychoanalytic ways of conceptualising trauma.[225] My study of ἄλγος above suggested that the overall portion of suffering is more important to Homeric characters than any single event, which lends support to the idea that the focus on single events as a cause of traumatisation is a modern concern. However, unlike ἄλγος, the word πῆμα does focus on the single event as a cause for suffering and I consider the implications of this below. The comparison with ἄλγος within epic poetry raises some final questions: Do characters speak about πήματα in a different manner to ἄλγεα? And how do πήματα fit into the (religious and poetic) worldview in which ἄλγεα are found? In answering these questions, I determine that πήματα have traumatic qualities in epic poetry.

The Homeric poet, I argue, does not portray πήματα as a usual part of mortal life. I begin by looking at the use of πῆμα with κυλίνδω in epic poetry. This language establishes that πήματα can be characterised as unique, destructive and unavoidable events that both overwhelm and shock characters. Whilst πήματα are often attributed to the gods, I show that epic has a much greater propensity to see mortals as the ultimate cause of πήματα than was the case with ἄλγεα. I then explore characters' experiences of πήματα. The Homeric epics do not associate any characteristic emotional response with πήματα. Instead, I argue, πήματα are events that shape characters' identities and act as fixed points in the tradition of the Trojan War. Finally, I consider the role πῆμα plays in characters' discourse around overwhelming events. The word πῆμα is always spoken by characters in Homeric epic,[226]

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[225] Young, 1995 gives an overview of the history (5) and discusses how it affects practice (185).

[226] With the single exception (in forty-seven instances) of *Il.* 11.413 where the narrator uses it as part of an extended metaphor comparing the Trojan ranks to a wounded boar. As Richardson, 1990: 64-6; Minchin, 2001: 42-3 recognise, the extended simile pulls the audience out of the 'storyworld' and back into the 'realm of performance', where the bard speaks in his own voice. In this way, the extended simile has a spoken quality to it despite not being in direct speech.

and it tends to be used in a fatalistic manner. I argue that characters do not claim to suffer πῆμα, they assert that a πῆμα has occurred; unlike ἄλγεα, other characters do not challenge the identification of an event as a πῆμα. Characters use πῆμα to identify painful or destructive events that have significant ramifications in the Homeric epics. The word is therefore connected to issues of remembering and narrating painful events, and thus plays a role in re-establishing a character's worldview after experiences of suffering.

1.2.1. Conceptualising an approaching πῆμα (with κυλίνδω)

In epic poetry, the word πῆμα always refers to a specific event. πήματα have a strong physical quality that ἄλγεα lack, as the formulaic language used with πῆμα shows. The word πῆμα frequently occurs with the verb κυλίνδω, meaning 'to roll.' The Homeric epics use κυλίνδω to describe the motion of various objects, including waves onto shore and helmets onto the ground; one of its most poignant uses occurs when Apollo knocks Achilles' helmet off Patroclus' head into the dirt for Hector to wear.[227] While κυλίνδω often occurs with tangible things, it sometimes occurs in contexts expressing pain, misery or misfortune, such as when characters roll in the dirt in mourning.[228] The epics also use the verb in descriptions of stones travelling from inclined ground to flat. Many of these are metaphors, but Sisyphus' punishment stands out as being a specific and affective use of the image and its connotations of inevitability or fate.[229] These other instances of κυλίνδω resonate with the verb's use with πῆμα and give a distinct character to πήματα as significant overwhelming events.

In the Homeric epics, πήματα roll down on people as stones roll down on plains. Several aspects of this metaphorical phrase are worth drawing out. The first is that, although πήματα appear to descend from a height, their precise origin is generally unspecified; in

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[227] For waves, see: *Il.* 11.307; *Od.* 5.296; 9.147; 14.315; helmets: *Il.* 13.579; 16.794. Odysseus' bones are envisioned as rolling in the waves at *Od.* 1.162.
[228] κυλίνδω with characters in pain or misfortune: *Il.* 22.414; 24.165; 24.640; *Od.* 4.541; 10.499. For animals or monsters rolling in pain or struggling: *Il.* 8.86; 11.147; 14.411; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 359; *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 119.
[229] Stones with κυλίνδω: *Il.* 13.142; *Od.* 11.598; Hes. [*Sc.*] 378; 438.

most instances, the narrator is not interested in their origin as much as the effects they cause. Second, the image of a rolling πῆμα, like a rolling stone, connotes an unanticipated, unstoppable and overwhelming force; characters cannot prevent πήματα once they have been set in motion, and indeed most are only identified as πήματα retrospectively. Finally, the metaphorical language emphasises that πήματα are destructive. One metaphor compares men struck down in battle to oaks, pines and poplars shattered by the passing of a rolling stone, and this language resonates throughout the Homeric epics, in which warriors are frequently compared to trees as they perish.[230] These qualities make the use of πῆμα with κυλίνδω suitable for describing particular overwhelming events, as this passage illustrates:

τότε γάρ ῥα κυλίνδετο πήματος ἀρχὴ
Τρωσί τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς.

For at that point the beginning of the πῆμα rolled on
for both the Trojans and the Danaans through the plan of great Zeus.[231]

Here, the narrator uses πῆμα to indicate a specific event, the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, in the Trojan War. The use of πῆμα rather than ἄλγεα allows the narrator to emphasise different aspects of the event. The word ἀρχή gives the πῆμα a defined quality that ἄλγεα never achieve; πήματα have clear and perceptible boundaries, whilst ἄλγεα can persist as a condition or state of mind. In using κυλίνδω, the narrator also reinforces the identification of the πῆμα as a consequence of Zeus' plan, emphasising its unstoppable quality. The metaphor also brings a concreteness to the event that ἄλγεα do not share; unlike subjectively experienced ἄλγεα, everyone can identify this event as a πῆμα in the tradition of the Trojan War. Thus, whilst describing events as ἄλγεα emphasises the suffering they cause specific characters or groups, πῆμα with κυλίνδω attributes innate concrete, overwhelming and destructive qualities to an event.

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[230] Hes. [*Sc.*] 377-8. See Rood, 2008: 24-41 for an excellent analysis of warriors described as trees and the crafting processes their bodies undergo.
[231] *Od.* 8.81-2. The Trojan War is, of course, established as Zeus' plan within the epic tradition.

Whilst πήματα, as in the passage above, have a divine origin, a great deal of emphasis is put on the role played by mortal characters in bringing them about. As I have discussed, the only mortal described as causing ἄλγεα in the Homeric epics is Achilles. In contrast, any character could play a role in executing a πῆμα under the right conditions, such as those laid out here:

> ὁππότ᾽ ἀνὴρ ἐθέλῃ πρὸς δαίμονα φωτὶ μάχεσθαι
> ὅν κε θεὸς τιμᾷ, τάχα οἱ μέγα πῆμα κυλίσθη.
>
> when a man chooses to fight against divinity with a man,
> whom a god honours, quickly a great πῆμα rolls down on him.[232]

Menelaus claims that divine support in battle, which he determines from his perception of a man's combat ability, makes a man a πῆμα to other men.[233] The gods give a relentless and deadly energy to a warrior's attack, turning encounters with him into unstoppable and destructive events. Like Menelaus, Halitherses relies on his perception of (present and future) events to determine whether an event is a πῆμα. He says:

> μνηστῆρσιν δὲ μάλιστα πιφαυσκόμενος τάδε εἴρω.
> τοῖσιν γὰρ μέγα πῆμα κυλίνδεται· οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
> δὴν ἀπάνευθε φίλων ὧν ἔσσεται,
>
> but I say these things, making them especially clear to the suitors.
> For a great πῆμα rolls down upon them; for Odysseus will not
> long be far away from his loved ones,[234]

Halitherses uses his prophetic skill to attribute the status of a πῆμα to Odysseus' homecoming. When Odysseus does return, Athena's support ensures that he is able to take vengeance on the suitors. In all these cases, the gods support the mortal character who performs the act and who is recognised as responsible for it. These encounters and the resulting designation of a character as a πῆμα to others contribute to their reputation and tend to have a significant impact on the future shape of the narrative.

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[232] *Il.* 17.98-9.

[233] Alternatively, see Mawet, 1976: 98-9 for Menelaus' claim about divine intervention as a rhetorical pretext for his behaviour; Edwards, 1991: 73 for other instances in which characters use this kind of language as an excuse to retreat.

[234] *Od.* 2.162-4.

The Homeric epics rarely designate a character a πῆμα rolling down on their enemies. Whilst the *Odyssey* describes Odysseus as a πῆμα to the suitors, the *Iliad* describes only Hector with the full formulaic language.[235] Menelaus' statement in the paragraph above categorises Hector, whom he declares 'fights with support from the gods' (ἐκ θεόφιν πολεμίζει), as the type of warrior who becomes a πῆμα to his enemies.[236] Diomedes also describes 'mighty Hector' (ὄβριμος Ἕκτωρ) as a 'πῆμα rolling down on us two' (νῶϊν…πῆμα κυλίνδεται) to Odysseus.[237] These instances in which Hector is referred to as a πῆμα resonate with Menelaus' instructions to Antilochus:

> ἤδη μέν σε καὶ αὐτὸν ὀίομαι εἰσορόωντα
> γινώσκειν, ὅτι πῆμα θεὸς Δαναοῖσι κυλίνδει,
> νίκη δὲ Τρώων· πέφαται δ᾽ ὤριστος Ἀχαιῶν,
> Πάτροκλος, μεγάλη δὲ ποθὴ Δαναοῖσι τέτυκται.
>
> Already I think that you yourself, looking,
> perceive that a god rolls a πῆμα on the Danaans,
> and that victory belongs to the Trojans; and the best of the Achaeans
>   has been struck down,
> Patroclus, and a great longing has arisen among the Danaans.[238]

Hector secures his status as a πῆμα to the Achaeans when he kills Patroclus, who here takes on the title of 'best of the Achaeans' in Achilles' place.[239] Patroclus' death is a significant and shocking event that, as the *Iliad* portrays it, shapes the future course of the Trojan War. In this case, the poet highlights the Danaans' emotional response (μεγάλη ποθή) to the πῆμα. Achilles' reaction to Patroclus' death is a particularly extreme example of these feelings of loss and one which shapes events throughout the poem thereafter. The full designation of a character as a πῆμα rolling down on his enemies thus highlights the significant effect he has on the wellbeing of characters and the direction of the narrative. Overall, the metaphorical use of πῆμα with κυλίνδω justifies, I argue, its categorisation as a

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[235] pp. 80-5 deals with instances in which character are described as πήματα without κυλίνδω.
[236] *Il.* 17.101.
[237] *Il.* 11.347.
[238] *Il.* 17.687-90.
[239] Nagy, 1999: 32-3 explores the implications of describing Patroclus as 'best of the Achaeans.'

traumatic concept within Homeric epic; the word πῆμα clearly describes an unanticipated, destructive and overwhelming event that is outside the usual range of mortal experience.

1.2.2. Designating a person, object or event a πῆμα

Alongside the metaphorical approach to πήματα outlined above, epic poetry uses πῆμα on its own to indicate that certain events are significant. The word πῆμα often occurs in direct discourse when characters designate a single person, object or action a πῆμα and thereby assign to them a special status within the text as a source of suffering. When a character designates something a πῆμα, they usually indicate from whose perspective the thing in question is a πῆμα. As with ἄλγεα, πήματα are often πήματα only to a specific community, such as the Trojans, the Achaeans, mortal men, or the gods.[240] All characters may agree that some events are observably and indisputably πήματα, but characters that are not harmed by the πῆμα in question may experience positive emotions, such as joy, as a result of the event.[241] Thus the epic poet does not portray events designated πήματα as inherently traumatic – traumatisation does not inevitably occur as a result of perceiving any πῆμα portrayed in Homeric epic – but the poet does use πῆμα to distinguish specific events as unusual sources of suffering.

Gods are never designated a πῆμα, but πήματα are sometimes attributed to the gods. When men attribute πήματα to the gods, the epic tends to include a scene where the god sets the πῆμα in motion.[242] A notable instance of this occurs when Hector claims that his victory in reaching the Achaean ships is a πῆμα to the Danaans. He says:

> γινώσκω δ' ὅτι μοι πρόφρων κατένευσε Κρονίων
> νίκην καὶ μέγα κῦδος, ἀτὰρ Δαναοῖσί γε πῆμα.

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[240] To Trojans or Greeks: *Il.* 3.50; 3.160; 6.282; 10.453; 22.288; 22.421; *Od.* 11.555; 17.597. To mortals or immortals: *Od.* 12.125; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 304; 306; 352; Hes. *Theog.* 223; 329; 529; 792; 874; *Op.* 56; 82.
[241] E.g. *Il.* 3.50-1.
[242] This trend is less clear in Nestor's speech, as he is not present to see the event he designates a πῆμα contrived by Zeus unfold (*Od.* 3. 151-2) and because the events he relates do not take place within the Odyssean timeline. Nevertheless, the poet nods towards the conventional presentation of πήματα by having Nestor note that he left (*Od.* 3.166): 'since I saw that the god was devising evils' (ἐπεὶ γίνωσκον, ὃ δὴ κακὰ μήδετο δαίμων).

> But I perceive that the son of Zeus has readily nodded assent
> to my victory and great glory, but a πῆμα for the Danaans.[243]

Hector's comments above come after the narrator has described how Zeus thunders thrice as a sign to the Trojans of their impending victory.[244] Additionally, in *Iliad* 1, the narrator described the moment when Zeus nodded his head to Thetis, ensuring that this change in fortune would happen.[245] It is clear that Zeus has set this event in motion, although Hector misinterprets Zeus' intentions.[246] Unusually, and perhaps significantly, it is Hector rather than his enemies that refers to his achievements as a πῆμα; although he troubles the Achaeans for a time, this does not prove to be the type of significant and destructive threat that would cause the Achaeans to designate him a πῆμα themselves. Other πήματα attributed to gods have scenes that similarly confirm the attribution: when Hector claims that the Olympian let Paris live to be a πῆμα to the Trojans, the narrator has already described the moment when Aphrodite, as the daughter of Zeus, spirited him away from single combat with Menelaus; and when Antinous asks which god brought Odysseus to be a πῆμα to them, the narrator has already depicted Athena transforming Odysseus' appearance and planning his revenge.[247] This use of πήματα marks a distinction from events described as ἄλγεα; unlike the latter, the former are unusual events that are only attributed to the gods when a god plays an active role in their execution.

The *Iliad* presents almost all the πήματα attributed to the gods in this way. In only one instance does a character refute the connection between a πῆμα and the divine when another character asserts that such a connection exists. Achilles asserts that the Trojan War is a πῆμα resulting from divine intervention. He tells Priam:

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεί τοι πῆμα τόδ᾽ ἤγαγον Οὐρανίωνες,

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[243] *Il.* 8.175-6. At *Il.* 9.229, Odysseus also refers to the potential πῆμα of losing the ships and Zeus' part in it whilst addressing Achilles as 'nourished by Zeus' (διοτρεφές), a common title that may adopt connotations of bitterness or irony in this context.

[244] *Il.* 8.170-1.

[245] *Il.* 1.528-30.

[246] Hector ignores further portents indicating Zeus' intentions (*Il.* 12.208-44) but eventually comes to realise the extent of his delusions (*Il.* 22.294-303).

[247] Hector describes Paris as a πῆμα: *Il.* 6.282; Antinous describes Odysseus as a πῆμα: *Od.* 17.446.

<p style="text-align: center;">αἰεί τοι περὶ ἄστυ μάχαι τ' ἀνδροκτασίαι τε.</p>

> But then the gods brought this πῆμα to you,
> there is always combat and slaughter around your city.[248]

Achilles believes the Trojan War to be a πῆμα to the Trojans and designates the gods as its cause. He takes the fighting and the death around the city, the gods' part in which the poem has described in detail, as his evidence. However, Achilles' attribution of this πῆμα to the gods contradicts Hector's earlier statement about the gods' will when he first took hold of an Achaean stern in *Iliad* 15. There, he says:

> νῦν ἥμιν πάντων Ζεὺς ἄξιον ἦμαρ ἔδωκε
> νῆας ἑλεῖν, αἳ δεῦρο θεῶν ἀέκητι μολοῦσαι
> ἡμῖν πήματα πολλὰ θέσαν, κακότητι γερόντων,
> οἵ μ' ἐθέλοντα μάχεσθαι ἐπὶ πρύμνῃσι νέεσσιν
> αὐτόν τ' ἰσχανάασκον ἐρητύοντό τε λαόν.

> Now Zeus has given it to us, a day worth all the rest,
> to take the ships, which, coming here against the will of the gods,
> gave rise to many πήματα for us, through the cowardice of the old men,
> who did not wish me to fight besides the ships' sterns,
> but to stay back there and to check my men.[249]

Hector recognises that the Achaeans are a πῆμα to the Trojans, but claims that the Achaean ships came to Troy against the gods' will.[250] Such a thing would be impossible in the Homeric world and is a sign of Hector's delusion. Indeed, the poet of the *Iliad* assures its audience that the Achaean ships had divine support before they sailed with mention of the portent they received at Aulis.[251] Malcolm Willcock argues that contradictions come about either as a result of a tendency towards formulaic language or because the poet is focusing on describing a specific scene.[252] I believe this statement can be considered an intentional

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[248] *Il.* 24.547-8.

[249] *Il.* 15.719-23.

[250] There is a further contradiction between this passage and others regarding why Hector has not fought before (cf. *Il.* 9.352-3). Willcock, 1977: 48 suggests that this contradiction arises out of the context of the passage, in which Hector is attacking.

[251] *Il.* 2.301-32. Kirk, 1985: 148-9 examines the omen's meaning; Haft, 1992 discusses its role in the assembly in *Iliad* 2, which bears a resemblance to the Ithacan assembly in *Odyssey* 2.

[252] Willcock, 1977: 45.

contradiction of the latter sort. Until this point, Hector has been interpreting Zeus' signals correctly, but has not been aware of Zeus' intentions to bring Achilles glory through this Trojan victory. After this point, his good fortune begins to end as the Trojans set fire to the first ship, an act which signals the end of Zeus' support to the audience.[253] The poet gives Hector the incorrect statement about πήματα and divine will to emphasise his delusion regarding divine intention. Achilles' statement above corrects Hector's mistake during the negotiations over his rival's dead body and illustrates his superior knowledge of divine motivation regarding the Trojan War.

In the *Odyssey*, some events described as πήματα and attributed to the gods occur outside the temporal span of the poem, making it impossible for the epic to include a scene verifying the attribution. One such instance is when Nestor claims that 'Zeus was arranging a πῆμα of hardship' (ἐπὶ γὰρ Ζεὺς ἤρτυε πῆμα κακοῖο) to explain why arguments broke up the returning Achaean fleet.[254] Whilst the epic provides no further verification for Nestor's claim, this πῆμα is a prominent and fixed event in the tradition of the Trojan War.[255] Another event described in the *Odyssey* as a πῆμα suggests that this sort of relationship between different parts of the epic tradition was possible. When Odysseus meets Ajax's spirit in the underworld, he says:

> "Αἶαν, παῖ Τελαμῶνος ἀμύμονος, οὐκ ἄρ᾽ ἔμελλες
> οὐδὲ θανὼν λήσεσθαι ἐμοὶ χόλου εἵνεκα τευχέων
> οὐλομένων; τὰ δὲ πῆμα θεοὶ θέσαν Ἀργείοισι.
> τοῖος γάρ σφιν πύργος ἀπώλεο·

> "Ajax, son of noble Telemon, could you not then
> even when you had died forget you anger with me
> on account of that cursed armour? The gods made it a πῆμα to the Argives.

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[253] *Il.* 16.1-167.
[254] *Od.* 3.152.
[255] Information about the *Nostoi* suggests that it was depicted in that epic; see Danek, 2015 for a thorough overview. The poems of the Epic Cycle were probably composed after the *Odyssey*. However, as Burgess, 2001: 7 argues, they 'reach back to the Archaic Age, when the tradition of the Trojan War was still a living one.' Central elements such as the quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus probably reflect elements of the oral tradition about the Trojan War upon which Homer also drew. See also Davies, 1989; Burgess, 2004 for further discussion on this topic.

for, being so great a defence to them, you perished;[256]

Here, Odysseus unusually applies the word πῆμα to an object that symbolises a fixed event rather than a character. The argument between Ajax and Odysseus over Achilles' armour is a well-known event in the epic tradition that takes place after Achilles' funeral: the *Iliad* establishes the unique character of Achilles' armour and shield as an artefact through its description of its appearance and manufacture,[257] and the *Little Iliad* likely described how divine intervention secured Achilles' armour for Odysseus.[258] πήματα thus work with traditional referentiality to highlight the events that shape the Trojan War narrative. By designating an event a πῆμα, especially when they attribute it to the gods, characters indicate that it holds significance beyond its immediate context and relate it to the wider framework of suffering in the Trojan War.

Characters in the mortal world can also be designated a πῆμα by their enemies. When applied to a warrior, the title indicates that they cause their opponents a great deal of damage. These characters tend to inspire fear or panic in those who encounter them on the battlefield as well as causing physical harm. The *Iliad* describes only prominent warriors, primarily Hector and Achilles, as πήματα to their opponents; these men kill warriors on the battlefield, but their continued designation as πήματα is also due to the grief their actions continue to cause friends and relatives of their enemies.[259] Hector also describes Paris as a πῆμα to Priam and the city on account of the destruction his actions have brought against Troy.[260] The Trojans consider Helen a potential πῆμα, because of the violence and grief that the Achaeans will cause them in her name.[261] Similarly, in the *Odyssey*, Eumaeus

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[256] *Od.* 11.553-6.
[257] *Il.* 18.468–613. Becker, 1995 discusses Achilles' shield, the role of *ekphrasis* in epic poetry and gives references to further literature.
[258] See n.255 for literature on the Epic Cycle.
[259] *Il.* 22.287-8; 22.421-1. For Odysseus as a πῆμα, see *Il.* 11.413. At *Il.* 10.453, Diomedes describes Dolon, a minor character, as a πῆμα to the Argives. Some scholars have suggested that the Doloneia is likely to have been inserted into the *Iliad* at a late stage (see Danek, 1988 for a thorough discussion of this question). I believe that its use of πῆμα is an anomaly that is not representative of the *Iliad*'s general use of πῆμα.
[260] *Il.* 3.49-50.
[261] *Il.* 3.159-60.

considers the suitors a potential πῆμα and prays that Zeus destroy them before they prove themselves so.[262] Telemachus has already described them as a cause of ἄλγος,[263] but, with the introduction of their plot to murder Telemachus, they become responsible for an event that would change the course of the epic tradition were it to succeed.[264] On Odysseus' journey, the monster Scylla is additionally described as both a 'πῆμα for [Odysseus'] companions' (πῆμ᾽ ἑτάροισιν) and a 'πῆμα for mortals' (πῆμα βροτοῖσιν), perhaps indicating a reputation in the broader mythic tradition as well as her role in Odysseus' return.[265] The epics thus designate as πήματα the characters, and more widely the events, that shape the Trojan War narrative through the unique instances of suffering that they cause.

1.2.3. Speaking about experiences of πήματα

While the word πῆμα indicates a significant event in the Trojan War tradition, Greek epic hexameter poetry allows characters, for the most part, to avoid exploring the emotional impact of πήματα. Voices in epic designate events as πήματα, but do not tend to discuss their impact or significance. Odysseus' reference to his πήματα during his supplication of Arete is typical:

> αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ πομπὴν ὀτρύνετε πατρίδ᾽ ἱκέσθαι
> θᾶσσον, ἐπεὶ δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πήματα πάσχω."
>
> But urge for escort to return me to my fatherland
> more quickly, since already I have suffered πήματα away from
>   my dear ones for a long time."[266]

Odysseus focuses on the practical aid he requires and only briefly indicates that he has experienced numerous painful events.[267] At this stage in the narrative, where Odysseus still

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[262] *Od.* 17.597.
[263] *Od.* 2.41-50.
[264] *Od.* 17.596. Homeric epic frequently points to other directions that the narrative could take; see Lang, 1989; Morrison, 1992: 11-22; Louden, 1993 and de Jong, 2004: 68-81. Odysseus' Cretan tales perform a similar function (Reece, 1994), although see Haft, 1984; Clay, 1983: 84-9 for alternative readings of these stories.
[265] For an exploration of Scylla's role in the *Odyssey,* see Hopman, 2012: 23-51. Odysseus also extracts an oath from Calypso and Circe to ensure that they do not intend to cause him πήματα and thereby disrupt his journey: *Od.* 5.179; 5.187; 10.300; 10.334.
[266] *Od.* 7.151-2.

displays wariness towards the Phaeacians, the word πήματα allows him to indicate that he has suffered events that rendered him helpless and in need of assistance without requiring him to expand on their emotional impact. He does not specify what those πήματα are; and when, as I have discussed, he later provides an account of his experiences, he introduces the same events as ἄλγεα. When a character speaks about their experiences, the word πῆμα allows them to adopt an ostensibly objective perspective on events, allowing them to delay discussion of the events' impact until a more suitable time.

The objective qualities of πῆμα allow characters to adopt an authoritative position when describing events they have experienced to other characters. This position allows characters to provide an overview of events without entering into their own emotional responses. Odysseus again provides a typical example in his stories to Eumaeus. He states:

> ἔνθ᾽ ὅ γέ μ᾽ ἠνώγει πέμψαι βασιλῆι Ἀκάστῳ
> ἐνδυκέως· τοῖσιν δὲ κακὴ φρεσὶν ἥνδανε βουλὴ
> ἀμφ᾽ ἐμοί, ὄφρ᾽ ἔτι πάγχυ δύης ἐπὶ πῆμα γενοίμην.
> ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε γαίης πολλὸν ἀπέπλω ποντοπόρος νηῦς,
> αὐτίκα δούλιον ἦμαρ ἐμοὶ περιμηχανόωντο·

> There [Pheidon] urged [the Thesprotian men] to convey me kindly
> to King Acastus; but an evil plan pleased their hearts
> concerning me, so that I should still entirely experience
>   the πῆμα of misfortune.
> And when the seafaring ship had sailed a great way from the mainland,
> at once they cunningly devised the day of slavery for me;[268]

In this passage, Odysseus interposes his purported experience of πῆμα between two descriptions of other people's actions. The brief mention of the πῆμα expresses Odysseus' perspective on the event without disrupting the flow of the narrative by holding up the action in reflection on the event's emotional impact. In other instances where characters describe an event they have personally experienced as a πῆμα, they do so in a similar manner.[269] These instances show that, whilst the Homeric epics do use the word πῆμα to

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[267] For the use of πῆμα with πάσχω, which probably developed out of the use of ἄλγεα with πάσχω, see Mawet, 1976: 111-2.
[268] *Od.* 14.336-40.
[269] Brief mentions of πῆμα: *Od.* 14.257; 14.312; 17.444.

indicate destructive events, characters do not find it difficult to identify πήματα and, unlike with traumatic events, epic does not expect recognition of a πῆμα in characters' speech to play any sort of therapeutic role.[270]

In a similar vein, characters do not engage others in conversation about their πήματα in order to facilitate their recovery. Instead, characters recognise that others have suffered πήματα and sometimes ask questions about them in pursuit of their own agendas. Telemachus, for example, asks about πήματα pertaining to the Trojan War, having journeyed for the purpose of collecting information on Odysseus. Whilst on the mainland, Telemachus says first to Nestor and then to Menelaus:

> μηδέ τί μ᾽ αἰδόμενος μειλίσσεο μηδ᾽ ἐλεαίρων,
> ἀλλ᾽ εὖ μοι κατάλεξον ὅπως ἤντησας ὀπωπῆς.
> λίσσομαι, εἴ ποτέ τοί τι πατὴρ ἐμός, ἐσθλὸς Ὀδυσσεὺς,
> ἢ ἔπος ἠέ τι ἔργον ὑποστὰς ἐξετέλεσσε
> δήμῳ ἔνι Τρώων, ὅθι πάσχετε πήματ᾽ Ἀχαιοί,
> τῶν νῦν μοι μνῆσαι, καί μοι νημερτὲς ἐνίσπες."

> Do not, having regard for me, say soothing things, and do not pity me,
> but lay out for me correctly how you came to observe everything.
> I beg you, if ever my father, noble Odysseus,
> undertook and completed any word or deed for you
> in the land of Troy, where you Achaeans suffered πήματα,
> remember it for me now, and speak to me truly."[271]

In this case, and in the case where Euryalus recognises that Odysseus has suffered πήματα, direct addresses exclude the speaker from the group of people that have experienced suffering.[272] Telemachus does not describe himself as an Achaean here, although he does elsewhere; his turn of phrase, which includes reference to the 'land of Troy', respectfully makes a distinction between those Achaeans who suffered πήματα and those who did not,

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[270] Herman, 1992: 175-8 describes how identification of traumatic events plays a therapeutic role in the recovery process after trauma.

[271] *Od.* 3.96-101=4.326-31.

[272] At *Od.* 8.411, Euryalus acknowledges that Odysseus has suffered πήματα in language similar to that which Odysseus used about himself in *Od.* 7.151-2. By doing so, he achieves a reconciliation with Odysseus, who begins speaking about his suffering shortly afterwards. At *Od.* 15.345, Odysseus uses the word πῆμα in a gnomic statement about life in conversation with Eumaeus in order to prompt the latter to enquire about his personal suffering.

and thereby recognises that the πήματα characters experienced at Troy had a significant impact on their identity.[273] The warriors each respond with an account of their troubles; while Nestor uses πῆμα to refer to the significant moment of the army's split upon leaving Troy, Menelaus refers to his experiences only as ἄλγεα in his account.[274] The different terminology reflects the comparative significance each event holds in the story of the Trojan War, with πῆμα indicating the fixed points in the tradition and ἄλγεα holding more scope for variation between versions. Nevertheless, Telemachus' preoccupation with his own ability to access these tales suggests that, unlike ἄλγεα, narrative after πήματα addresses the needs of the audience more than those of the speaker.

The onlooker's perspective is also predominant in the warnings and threats that characters deliver about the πήματα that others might suffer in the future. Tiresias and Circe both warn Odysseus about the πήματα that he will experience on his return to Ithaca. Tiresias speaks prophecy, indicating that these events are unavoidable, whilst Circe gives warnings intended to allow Odysseus to prepare for the πήματα and mitigate their effects.[275] Once again, the πήματα to which they refer, including Odysseus' encounter with Scylla and sojourn on Thrinacia, are defining points on his return home.[276] The word πῆμα indicates their significance whilst allowing any further description to be deferred until Odysseus' account reaches the point at which the events occur. In contrast, Antinous' threat to Odysseus describes a πῆμα that is not fixed. After telling the story of the Centauromachy, he says:

> ὣς καὶ σοὶ μέγα πῆμα πιφαύσκομαι, αἴ κε τὸ τόξον
> ἐντανύσῃς· οὐ γάρ τευ ἐπητύος ἀντιβολήσεις
> ἡμετέρῳ ἐνὶ δήμῳ, ἄφαρ δέ σε νηὶ μελαίνῃ
> εἰς Ἔχετον βασιλῆα, βροτῶν δηλήμονα πάντων,
> πέμψομεν· ἔνθεν δ᾽ οὔ τι σαώσεαι.

> Thus also I declare a great πῆμα for you, if you string

[273] At *Od.* 4.243, Helen, who was at Troy but not among the Achaeans, uses the same phrasing.
[274] Menelaus' use of ἄλγεα: *Od.* 3.152; 4.372.
[275] Tiresias: *Od.* 11.100-5; Circe: *Od.* 12.25-7.
[276] Although competing traditions may have existed. Reece, 1994: 157-8 suggests an alternative itinerary for Odysseus' return home based on the evidence of his tales to Eumaeus about a journey to Crete.

the bow; for you will not meet with any kindness
in our land, but straightaway we will send you in a black ship
to King Echetus, bane of all mortal men,
and you will not come away safe from there; [277]

The epic plays with the use of πῆμα in prophecy to exhibit Antinous' arrogance and ignorance. Odysseus' stringing of the bow is indeed a πῆμα, albeit for the suitors rather than Odysseus. Both the story of the Centauromachy and the reference to King Echetus, whose reputation as a mutilator has previously been used to scare the beggar Irus, introduce the theme of hospitality transgressions and hint at the bloodshed to come.[278] This passage emphasises Antinous' distorted perspective on his role in events on Ithaca and in the narrative that Odysseus' return will produce. Thus, even in the context of a misguided and unfulfilled threat, the word πῆμα alludes to the fixed and fated events that shape Odysseus' return.

Finally, the Homeric epics use conversations between characters outside the mortal realm to plan the beginning or the end of mortals' πήματα. These conversations refer primarily to the πήματα that Odysseus suffers on his return journey, but occasionally address other suffering resulting from the Trojan War.[279] These passages use largely formulaic language to mark the major points where the gods intervene, including: the Cyclops' request to Poseidon; Athena's appeal to Zeus on Odysseus' behalf; Zeus' orders to Hermes; and Alcinous' promise in assembly to return Odysseus home.[280] The repeated use of the word πῆμα in these passages charts the changes in Odysseus' fortunes, emphasising the shifting tones of hostility and pity in the speeches of the characters he encounters as the narrative advances. The use of place to locate Odysseus' suffering in each passage (sea-girt island; firmly-bound raft; another's ship) marks the progress of his journey, breaking up the

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[277] *Od.* 21.305-9.
[278] Previous reference to Echetus: *Od.* 18.82-7.
[279] *Il.* 15.110 refers to the πῆμα Zeus' plan brings Ares with the death of his son. *Od.* 1.190 describes the πήματα Laertes suffers in similar terms to those used to describe Odysseus' πήματα.
[280] *Od.* 9.534-5; 1.48-50; 5.33-4; 7.193-7 respectively. Zeus' orders are repeated to Odysseus almost *verbatim* by Tiresias at *Od.* 11.114-6.

πήματα into individual episodes of πῆμα that can be located in time and place.[281] Together, these conversations act as a metanarrative, showing how the gods plan, structure and order the narrative of Odysseus' return home. Thus, while the word ἄλγεα accounts for characters' perspectives on the suffering they have encountered, these usages of the word πήματα emphasise not individual characters' perspectives on the events they undergo, but rather the traditional perspectives on the events that have come to shape and define the tradition of the Trojan War.

Conclusion

The word πῆμα thus designates an event that is both destructive and significant. Homeric πήματα are perceived as concrete, in that they can be located in a specific time and place; and unusual, in that they are not considered part of the general lot of mortals. When describing πήματα, the poet tends to focus on the event itself rather than characters' emotional responses to these events. As a result, there is no characteristic reaction associated with experiencing πήματα. Despite this, characters easily identify πήματα in speech, showing that they recognise the significance of these events, which tend to correspond to fixed points in the narrative tradition of the Trojan War.

Having considered how the poet uses both ἄλγεα and πήματα in Homeric epic, I argue that the two represent substantially different perspectives on events that cause suffering. There are some obvious similarities: both can be attributed to the gods and both are used in attempts to recount overwhelming experiences. For these reasons, they sometimes refer to the same event. However, their dissimilarities in these areas are much more significant. πήματα approach characters as a destructive force rolling down upon them, whilst ἄλγεα cover characters and tear at their heart and spirit. While ἄλγεα often seem to be arbitrarily dispensed to all mankind, gods personally plan and execute πήματα for specific individuals. Culpability for ἄλγεα tends to rest with the gods, whereas culpability for

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[281] See pp. 87-8 for Telemachus' use of the same technique. For a personal account that uses place to situate pain in the immediate aftermath of an event, see *Il.* 5.885-7.

πήματα tends to be attributed to an earthly cause. Mortal characters can thus be designated πήματα to their enemies. When characters can convince others that they have experienced ἄλγεα, they enjoy telling tales of their suffering once they know they are safe. In contrast, when characters assert they have suffered πήματα, although their assertion of the event's significance is always accepted, the telling does not bring relief. Epic poetry thus uses πήματα and ἄλγεα to convey to audiences subtle differences in characters' perspectives on overwhelming events.

In this chapter, I have shown that early Greek hexameter poetry uses the concepts of ἄλγος and πῆμα (as well as related verbs) to indicate specific overwhelming events. Like the traumatic event of modern theory, Homeric πήματα and exceptional ἄλγεα are shocking and unanticipated and, as a result, shape a character's identity – although a certain portion of ἄλγος is anticipated as part of the mortal lot and does not therefore affect a character's sense of identity. Having examined the language used to describe events that cause suffering in Homer, I now turn to the impact the event has on the character who perceives it. Chapter 2 thus explores the language Homeric epic uses to describe characters' emotional responses to overwhelming events.

Chapter 2: Emotional Responses to Overwhelming Events

2.1 ἄχος and related verbs

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that epic hexameter uses two main concepts (ἄλγος and πῆμα) to indicate an overwhelming event. I argued that characters in epic designate events πήματα or claim to have suffered exceptional ἄλγεα when their experiences have had a significant impact on their identity. This argument is based on the premise, drawn from modern psychological theory, that for an event to alter a character's identity, it must be shown to change either the way they view their world or the way they view themselves. Janoff-Bulman argues that 'our basic beliefs do not exist independent of emotions; rather, positive feelings are inextricably tied to our fundamental assumptions.'[282] Conversely, negative emotions are closely bound up with the shattering of our basic assumptions. In this chapter, I consider the emotional effects of overwhelming events that alter a Homeric character's sense of identity. I ask: What emotions do characters experience after overwhelming events in epic poetry? What reactions do these emotions motivate? And what language and other techniques does epic poetry use to represent these emotions and reactions? The answers to these questions form the basis of my discussion of how events shape identity in the *Odyssey* in Part II of my thesis.

I start my discussion with ἄχος, a characteristic response to overwhelming events in Homeric epic. The basic meaning of the word ἄχος is best captured by Mawet's definition of it as 'a designation of pain as an upheaval of emotion, following the sudden perception of an unfortunate event.'[283] What this emotional upheaval corresponds to in terms of modern emotional states (e.g. grief, anger, fright, etc.) depends on the context in which ἄχος occurs. Verbs formed from the same root, which I also consider in this section, have a

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[282] Janoff-Bulman, 1992: 12.
[283] Mawet, 1976: 291.

similar semantic breadth.[284] Representations of ἄχος are interesting for the purposes of this investigation, because, as I demonstrate, they follow a set pattern in which a character's perception of an overwhelming event triggers an emotional response and then a physical reaction. The physical reaction aims to rid the character of feelings of ἄχος. When this formulaic representation is interrupted, I argue, characters enter into a troublesome state of persistent ἄχος.

I organise this section around the ways that ἄχος affects a character. First I look at the ways in which epic conceptualises ἄχος, and the sources from which it originates. I then consider how ἄχος acts on characters. Existing scholarship suggests that ἄχος takes two forms.[285] First, ἄχος can be an 'effective force' that causes a character to take action. I recognise that ἄχος has this property in early Greek epic, but argue that we should rather speak of ἄχος as an 'ordinary human response to danger.' I take this designation from Herman's work and use it to draw a contrast between epic representations of ἄχος which follow the anticipated pattern and those which break the usual pattern before retaliation is complete. Rijksbaron suggests that all Homeric ἄχος has the potential to become permanent unless action is taken to alleviate it, and he sees this as the second form of ἄχος.[286] Whilst my research broadly confirms this assessment, I argue for an important qualification, which is that ἄχος becomes persistent rather than permanent. Finally, I consider how and why Homeric characters choose to make claims about experiencing ἄχος. Speaking about ἄχος, I argue, does not ease a character's experience of ἄχος, but does account for any unusual behaviour they might exhibit.

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[284] Mawet, 1976: 317; 321-2 notes that these verbs can take on connotations of misery, regret, indignation, revulsion, anger, dejection, helplessness or humiliation. See *Il.* 5.24; 5.364; 8.207; 11.702; 18.29; 19.312; 24.550 for each connotation respectively. In this section, I use the partial translation 'experience ἄχος' with these verbs before interpretation in line with my treatment of the noun ἄχος.

[285] Mawet, 1976: 268-88 focuses on ἄχος as an instantaneous emotional response. Anastassiou, 1973: 55-75 and Rijksbaron, 1997: 233 recognise its instantaneous and 'permanent' aspects, and the *LfgrE*: 1774-8 organises its entry around it as a result. See Nagy, 1999: 69-83 for how the theme of ἄχος relates to Achilles.

[286] Rijksbaron, 1997: 233.

2.1.1. Origins of ἄχος

Unlike ἄλγος, which arises in response to a series of painful experiences, ἄχος occurs in response to a single overwhelming event. Priam's ἄχος, for example, is for Hector rather than his other sons, and Menelaus feels ἄχος for the loss of Odysseus above all the warriors at Troy.[287] Homeric ἄχος descends on characters when they witness an overwhelming event. Several verbs indicate that ἄχος overwhelms a character from outside, including ἱκάνω ('come over'), καλύπτω ('cover'), and βεβόλημαι ('be stricken').[288] As this passage shows, ἄχος particularly affects the eyes:

> Αἰνείας δ᾽ ἐάλη καὶ ἀπὸ ἕθεν ἀσπίδ᾽ ἀνέσχε
> δείσας· ἐγχείη δ᾽ ἄρ ὑπὲρ νώτου ἐνὶ γαίῃ
> ἔστη ἱεμένη, διὰ δ᾽ ἀμφοτέρους ἕλε κύκλους
> ἀσπίδος ἀμφιβρότης. ὃ δ᾽ ἀλευάμενος δόρυ μακρὸν
> ἔστη, κὰδ δ᾽ ἄχος οἱ χύτο μυρίον ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
> ταρβήσας ὅ οἱ ἄγχι πάγη βέλος.

> And Aeneas crouched down and held the shield away and above him
> in fright, and the spear went over his back and crashed its way
> to the ground, and stood there, after tearing apart both circles
> of the man-covering shield. But Aeneas, having avoided the long spear,
> stood still, and enormous ἄχος poured over his eyes,
> and fear that the weapon had hit the ground so close to him.[289]

Here, we see that Aeneas at first fights instinctively to defend himself from the oncoming spear. After he evades this threat, he experiences ἄχος. His ἄχος arises with his fear at the spear's proximity, which he did not appreciate during the fight. His ἄχος thus results from his new perspective on the danger, and the narrator conveys this by having ἄχος 'pour' over his eyes. Whilst the instance above is without exact parallel in Homer, I believe it is suggestive of a broader trend in which the parts of the body affected by ἄχος are those

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[287] Priam: *Il.* 22.424.; Menelaus: *Od.* 4.104. Similarly, one aspect of an event can provoke ἄχος, as when Eurymachus experiences ἄχος because the suitors are weaker than Odysseus, not because he cannot marry Penelope (*Od.* 21.250-5).

[288] ἀμφικαλύπτω: *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 243; ἀμφιχέω: *Od.* 4.716; ἀμφιβαίνω: 8.541; βιάω *Il.* 10.145; βεβόλημαι: *Il.* 9.9; 16.22 *Od.* 10.247; γίγνομαι: *Il.* 1.188; 12.392; 13.86; 13.417; 14.458; 14.486; 16.508; 16.581; *Od.* 11.208, 21.412; εἰμί: *Od.* 16.87, 17.470, 22.345 ἱκάνω; *Il.* 2.171; 8.147; 15.208; 16.52; 19.307; 23.47 *Od.* 18.274; *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 90; δύω: *Il.* 19.367; *Od.* 18.348, 20.286 αἱρέω: *Il.* 13.581; *Od.* 21.299; καλύπτω: *Il.* 17.591; 18.22; *Od.* 24.315; Hes. [*Sc.*] 457; Hes. fr. 33a 24; λαμβάνω: *Il.* 14.475; 16.599; *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 40; τύπτω: *Il.* 19.125; χέω: *Il.* 20.282.

[289] *Il.* 20.278-83.

involved in witnessing and processing an event that provokes ἄχος.[290] ἄχος affects characters when they perceive overwhelming events and remains in their thinking organs until it is expelled.

Experiencing ἄχος is, like experiencing ἄλγεα, an essentially mortal trait. Achilles stresses that the difference between mortals and immortals is that the former are victims and the latter perpetrators of suffering. He tells Priam:

> ὣς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι,
> ζώειν ἀχνυμένους· αὐτοὶ δέ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσί.
>
> For thus the gods span the lot for wretched mortals
> to live experiencing ἄχος; but they themselves are free from care.[291]

This passage characterises mortals by their suffering caused by the gods, and the gods by their own lack of cares (ἀκηδέες).[292] Thetis offers the same thought when she says of Achilles 'while I see him alive and he looks upon the sun, he experiences grief' (ὄφρα δέ μοι ζώει καὶ ὁρᾷ φάος ἠελίοιο //ἄχνυται); from Thetis' viewpoint, mortality is defined by experiences of ἄχος.[293] Gods may find it advantageous to claim ἄχος in imitation of mortals and, in some cases may actually experience these emotions: Thetis, for example, claims ἄχος when she aligns her interests closely with her son's;[294] and other gods both experience and claim to experience ἄχος from watching or participating in combat with mortals, or in situations where life on Olympus imitates life on earth.[295] However, these experiences are fleeting and do not generally define immortal characters in the way that they define mortals who experience them.

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[290] See the following passages, in which adjectives work with ἄχος to suggest a destructive effect on organs that perceive and process overwhelming events: θυμοφθόρος: *Od.* 4.716; ὀξύς: *Od.* 11.208; or emphasise the severity of ἄχος felt in those organs: αἰνός: *Il.* 8.124; 8.147; 8.316; 15.208; 16.52; 17.83; 22.43; *Od.* 18.247.

[291] *Il.* 24.525-6. See also *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 147-8; 216-7 for this distinction between gods and men.

[292] *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 56 and 77 have Demeter sorrowing for the loss of Persephone. Demeter's case is unusual because, for all intents and purposes, a goddess has died, and there is no comparable instance in the Homeric epics. Unlike other immortals, Demeter is often defined by this loss in the epic tradition.

[293] *Il.* 18.61-2=18.442-3.

[294] *Il.* 24.91. See Slatkin, 1991: 93-6 for Demeter and Thetis' experiences of ἄχος.

[295] Gods experiencing/claiming ἄχος: *Il.* 1.588-9; 5.364; 5.399; 5.869; 12.179; 15.133; 19.8.

Both ἄχος and ἄλγος are therefore essentially mortal experiences. However, Rijksbaron notes that gods neither create nor dispel ἄχος.[296] This suggests that, unlike other emotions that can be inspired in a person instantly, the Homeric poems consider the relationship of ἄχος to the event that inspired it to be an integral property of the emotion. Accordingly, deities do not allot it directly but instead manipulate situations to encourage or discourage the rise of ἄχος; Athena, for example, allows the suitors to increase Odysseus' ἄχος to ensure their deaths.[297] The description of the night of terror in *Iliad* 9 shows the extent to which the poet observes the precept that gods cannot create ἄχος directly. The poet describes a divine storm; as the two winds (βορέης καὶ ζέφυρος) agitate the waters, 'Divine Panic, companion of chilling Terror, gripped the Achaeans' (Ἀχαιούς //θεσπεσίη ἔχε φύζα, φόβου κρυόεντος ἑταίρη).[298] Whilst these are not Olympic deities, they are treated as personified divine beings in this context. The poet, however, separates ἄχος felt by the Achaeans from even these minor divinities, using πένθος to describe Panic's immediate effects on the army.[299] Agamemnon responds to events with ἄχος only once Panic has moved on and the leader has regained his senses.[300] At that point, Agamemnon experiences ἄχος upon witnessing the effects of the storm, which spurs him into action to mitigate the disaster's damage. Thus, the poet is careful to ensure that ἄχος arises only from events and never directly from deities.

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[296] Rijksbaron, 1997: 220. He notes that 'the scantiness of the material makes it impossible to ascertain where the ἄχεα come from,' citing only *Od.* 20.167 'You have given me ἄχος' (ἦ μέν μ' ἀχέεσσί γε δώσεις) as possible evidence. Here, Odysseus claims that Penelope, or possibly, I suggest, Penelope's questioning of him, is the source of his ἄχος.

[297] *Od.* 18.347-9=20.285-7. For the ἄχος process, see the following section. See also *Il.* 17.83; 17.591 for other instances of divine manipulation.

[298] *Il.* 9.1-7.

[299] At *Il.* 9.3. See the section on πένθος for further discussion. ἄχος could conceivably have described fear (e.g. *Il.* 20.282) if the poet did not have another reason to use πένθος here.

[300] *Il.* 9.9-12.

2.1.2. ἄχος as an 'ordinary human response to danger'

As previous studies have shown, ἄχος is one of many emotional responses to overwhelming events in Homeric epic.[301] When looking at ἄχος with a view to trauma studies, however, the question remains as to whether this is a usual or unusual response to an event, and thus whether it can be classed as a traumatic reaction. Herman says:

> The ordinary human response to danger is a complex, integrated system of reactions, encompassing both body and mind. Threat initially arouses the sympathetic nervous system, causing the person in danger to feel an adrenalin rush and go into a state of alert. Threat also concentrates a person's attention on the immediate situation. In addition, threat may alter ordinary perceptions: people in danger are often able to disregard hunger, fatigue, or pain. Finally, threat evokes intense feelings of fear and anger. These changes in arousal, attention, perception, and emotion are normal, adaptive reactions. They mobilize the threatened person for strenuous action, either in battle or in flight.
>
> Traumatic reactions occur when action is of no avail. When neither resistance nor escape is possible, the human system of self-defense becomes overwhelmed and disorganised. Each component of the ordinary response to danger, having lost its utility, tends to persist in an altered and exaggerated state long after the actual danger is over.[302]

Herman makes a distinction between the 'ordinary human response to danger' and the 'traumatic reaction.' She argues that the ordinary human response to danger includes physical, psychological and emotional components that prepare the individual for defensive action. Any immediate response to danger which exhibits these features should be considered usual. Traumatic responses to danger differ from ordinary responses only in that the states activated by the threat persist after the danger has passed. They persist because action was not an adaptive response to the threat. Whilst other scholars posit alternative factors as causes of traumatic responses,[303] Herman's argument sheds light on the way that the Homeric epics represent ἄχος.

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[301] Anastassiou, 1973: 50-75; Mawet, 1976: 268-88 and Rijksbaron, 1997 all discuss ἄχος within the context of other emotional responses.
[302] Herman, 1992: 34.
[303] Van der Kolk *et al.* 1996: 6, for example, claim that 'the critical element that makes an event traumatic is the subjective assessment by victims of how threatened and helpless they feel.'

In Homeric epic, characters experience ἄχος as a force that provokes action. In a typical representation of ἄχος, the narrator says of Bathycles' death:

> δούπησεν δὲ πεσών. πυκινὸν δ᾽ ἄχος ἔλλαβ᾽ Ἀχαιούς,
> ὡς ἔπεσ᾽ ἐσθλὸς ἀνήρ· μέγα δὲ Τρῶες κεχάροντο.
> στὰν δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ αὐτὸν ἰόντες ἀολλέες· οὐδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ Ἀχαιοί
> ἀλκῆς ἐξελάθοντο, μένος δ᾽ ἰθὺς φέρον αὐτῶν.

> and he fell with a thud. And thick ἄχος seized the Achaeans,
> when the noble man fell; but the Trojans rejoiced greatly,
> and coming together they stood around him; but the Achaeans did not
> forget their strength either, but brought their fighting spirit straight against
> them.[304]

This passage exhibits several features of the human response to danger noted by Herman. At the sight of their fallen companion, the Homeric warriors experience a sudden, overwhelming emotional response (ἄχος). At the same time, they are also alert and ready for battle (οὐδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ Ἀχαιοί //ἀλκῆς ἐξελάθοντο).[305] Their reaction contrasts with the Trojans' joyful response to the same sight.[306] Upon feeling ἄχος, the Achaeans mobilise their fighting spirit (μένος δ᾽ ἰθὺς φέρον αὐτῶν) and take successful action against the threat they face, after which their ἄχος has dispersed. In this passage ἄχος acts as an ordinary human response to danger. The Achaean warriors experience no significant or lasting effects as a result of Bathycles' death; it is one of many insignificant deaths in the *Iliad* and is never mentioned again.

This pattern in which a character perceives an overwhelming event, experiences ἄχος and takes retaliatory action occurs repeatedly in epic poetry. Perception involves witnessing an event, hearing about it, or a combination of the two, as in formulaic boasting scenes such as this:

> "ἀλλὰ κασίγνητος Ἀντήνορος ἱπποδάμοιο
> ἢ παῖς· αὐτῷ γὰρ γενεὴν ἄγχιστα ἐῴκει."
> ἦ ῥ᾽ εὖ γινώσκων, Τρῶας δ᾽ ἄχος ἔλλαβε θυμόν.

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[304] *Il.* 16.599-602.

[305] For μένος, see Bremmer, 1983 57-60 and Redfield, 1994: 171-4. Brügger, 2018: 156 provides an overview of further literature. Louden, 2006: 18-9 discusses μένος in battle.

[306] For instances in which characters contrast experiences of ἄχος with joy or other positive emotions, see also: *Il.* 2.270; 13.343-4; 17.636-7; *Od.* 4.548-9; 8.478; *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 37.

<div align="center">ἔνθ' Ἀκάμας Πρόμαχον Βοιώτιον οὔτασε δουρί,</div>

> "but this is the brother of horse-taming Antenor,
> or his son, for he seems nearest in appearance to him,"
> Thus he spoke, knowing it well, and ἄχος seized the heart in the Trojans.
> Then Acamas stabbed the Boeotian Promachus with his spear,[307]

Here, Archilochus' killers identify his body in a boastful exchange with his former companions. Upon hearing the Achaean warriors identify Archilochus, the Trojans experience ἄχος. In this case, the narrator's comment, which suggests that the Achaeans already knew (εὖ γιγνώσκων) their victim's identity, gives the impression that they were attempting to provoke ἄχος in their enemies. Retaliatory action is duly taken, an Achaean is killed and the Trojans take up the boasting. The formulaic pattern associated with ἄχος makes it an effective device for structuring battle scenes comprised of obscure warriors whose motivations are otherwise unknown.[308] Outside the boasting context, warriors such as Menelaus and Hector also experience ἄχος in battle for their dead companions; Menelaus seeks revenge, whilst Hector, in keeping with his characterisation, responsibly seeks a new charioteer.[309] While the pattern is prominent in these battle scenes, we can, I believe, go so far as to say that the usual pattern of perceiving an event, experiencing ἄχος and reacting resonates with every instance of ἄχος in the Homeric epics.

Surges of emotion play an important role in prompting immediate retaliatory action. In the *Iliad*, the losses of Chryseis and Briseis drive the narrative before Patroclus' death. Achilles' ἄχος at the loss of Briseis involves anger and humiliation alongside grief, and his decision making during this period is driven by emotion.[310] Similar impulses characterise Agamemnon's ἄχος when Calchas asserts that he must give up Chryseis:

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[307] *Il.* 14.473-6.
[308] For ἄχος in battle scenes see also: *Il.* 13.403; 13.417; 14.458; 14.475; 14.486; 17.539. Fenik, 1968; Tsagarakis, 1982: 104-33; Stoevesandt, 2004: 159-227 discuss typical battle scenes. Fenik, 1986: 39-41 comments on this passage and its immediate context. See Martin, 1989; Mackie, 1996; Stoevesandt, 2004: 305-28 for the role of speech in boasting exchanges on the battlefield.
[309] Menelaus: *Il.* 13.581. Hector: *Il.* 8.124-5; 8.316-7.
[310] As Achilles' speech at *Il.* 19.56-8 shows.

ἥρως Ἀτρείδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
ἀχνύμενος· μένεος δὲ μέγα φρένες ἀμφὶ μέλαιναι
πίμπλαντ᾽, ὄσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι ἐίκτην.

the hero son of Atreus, wide ruling Agamemnon,
experienced ἄχος, and his black heart filled full
with spirit, and his eyes shone like fire.[311]

This passage emphasises the anger associated with Agamemnon's ἄχος. His initial emotional response (ἀχνύμενος) quickly develops into stubborn determination (μένεος), which fills his heart and is expressed through his shining eyes. This reaction drives him to exact retribution for his loss from Achilles; Achilles is the wrong target for Agamemnon's anger, but he cannot take action against the gods. Emotion plays a similar part in the meeting between Achilles and Priam. Although Achilles intends to return Hector's body, he has his attendants take it out of sight, as the narrator says:

μὴ ὃ μὲν ἀχνυμένῃ κραδίῃ χόλον οὐκ ἐρύσαιτο
παῖδα ἰδών, Ἀχιλῆι δ᾽ ὀρινθείη φίλον ἦτορ,

Lest [Priam] not keep his anger in his grieved heart,
seeing his child, and the dear heart in Achilles be stirred,[312]

Again the passage emphasises the link between ἄχος, anger and retaliation. It suggests that the ἄχος of the two characters, which moments before had encouraged empathy between them, could transform into anger and retribution if they are reminded of their respective losses. Surges of emotion are therefore an important component of a character's ἄχος, particularly when there is a perpetrator against whom the excess energy can be directed.

Moreover, with ἄχος, as with Herman's description of ordinary human responses to danger, retaliatory action disperses negative affect. Anastassiou recognises that epic presents the necessity for characters to respond to ἄχος or become oppressed by it.[313] When a character cannot dispel ἄχος through retaliatory action, ἄχος remains in the body and

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[311]*Il.* 1.102-4. *Il.* 1.103-4=*Od.* 4.661-2, where Antinous expresses his anger that Telemachus found a ship.
[312] *Il.* 24.584-5. At Hes. [*Sc.*] 435, Ares attacks Heracles in anger and grief over his dead son. See also Hephaestus' anger and shame at catching Ares and Aphrodite in bed (*Od.* 8.314) and Menelaus' anger in the funeral games (*Il.* 23.443; 566). These last two are some of the few loss events (the loss of honour/the loss of a race position under unfair circumstances) in Homer in which the loss is not that of a person.
[313] Anastassiou, 1973: 58.

amasses in the thinking organs. This is evident in the phrase, 'I hold confused ἄχεα in my heart' (ἔχω δ᾽ ἄχε᾽ ἄκριτα θυμῷ).[314] *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* depicts the ideal release of ἄχος when Demeter and Persephone reunite.[315] In this instance alone, ἄχος stops, because Demeter reverses the loss that caused her ἄχος. Outside of these extraordinary circumstances, warriors kill for revenge, which effectively releases their ἄχος, as several characters state. Automedon, for example, claims when he kills Aretos: 'now I have relieved my heart a little of ἄχος for the death of the son of Menoiteus, though I have killed a lesser man' (ἦ δὴ μὰν ὀλίγον γε Μενοιτιάδαο θανόντος //κῆρ ἄχεος μεθέηκα χερείονά περ καταπεφνών).[316] Although he cannot take revenge on Patroclus' killer, action against any Trojan releases some of his ἄχος.[317] Thus, characters experience ἄχος as an ordinary human response to overwhelming events when they can release the emotion through action. When they are not able to do so, ἄχος moves into the realm of traumatic responses.

The character of Achilles has an unusual relationship with ἄχος as an ordinary human response and as a persistent state. As Nagy has shown, Achilles is a focal point for ἄχος in the *Iliad*, both experiencing it himself and giving rise to it in others.[318] Nagy argues that Briseis' removal brings 'instantaneous' ἄχος for Achilles, which is then 'made permanent by the death of his surrogate Patroclus.'[319] Briseis' removal, I agree, causes Achilles instant ἄχος that does not end because she is returned. However, I argue that Achilles' ἄχος is unusual from the moment he first experiences it in *Iliad* 1. Instead of following the usual urge to retaliate, Achilles pauses for internal deliberation.[320] He is the only character to do so when experiencing ἄχος; this type of scene normally occurs with τλάω as a response to

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[314] *Il.* 3.412=24.91.
[315] *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 435-7.
[316] *Il.* 17.538-9. See also e.g. *Il.* 19.312-3 where the narrator notes that Achilles' heart would not be comforted 'until he plunged into the mouth of bloody battle' (πρὶν πολέμου στόμα δύμεναι αἱματόεντος).
[317] At *Il.* 12.178; 13.419 and 17.459, the epic notes that characters continue to fight despite their grief. This may indicate that they suppress their desire to get revenge against the person that caused their grief because they are already engaged with the enemy.
[318] Nagy, 1999: 78-83 discusses the thematic association between Achilles and ἄχος in the *Iliad*, including the proposed derivation of Ἀχιλλεύς from ἄχος.
[319] *Ibid.*: 80.
[320] *Il.* 1.188-92.

suffering. Achilles faces a choice between an instant violent reaction to dispel his ἄχος or restraint to protect the camp. When Athena nudges him away from action, Achilles chooses restraint. However, as the son of Thetis, Achilles has avenues for retaliation that are not open to other mortals. Once the assembly disperses, Achilles calls on his mother to intercede on his behalf with Zeus.[321] Her successful intervention allows him to take revenge on Agamemnon and therefore to dispel his ἄχος, albeit in an unconventional manner. Since Achilles' choice not to act against Agamemnon in the assembly does not force him into a position of helplessness, his ἄχος does not become persistent.[322] His subsequent withdrawal from the fighting affirms rather than threatens his identity in the first instance.

However, Achilles' position alters when Patroclus dons Achilles' armour, enters the battle on his behalf and is killed by Hector. Patroclus' death prompts immediate ἄχος-reactions on the battlefield, and it is said that 'he caused great ἄχος to the Achaean people' (μέγα δ᾽ ἤκαχε λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν).[323] Patroclus' death also causes a great deal of ἄχος for Achilles, who is still withdrawn from the fighting due to his quarrel with Agamemnon. The Trojans mistake Patroclus for Achilles because of the armour that he is wearing, armour which Hector then loots from Patroclus' body.[324] As a result of this mistaken identity, Achilles is put into a position of real helplessness for the first time; he is unable go onto the battlefield to avenge Patroclus' death because his armour, a mark of his status as a warrior, is in the hands of the enemy. He once again calls on his divine mother to aid him, but she is not able to procure divine armour from Hephaestus immediately. Achilles is left attempting to intimidate the Trojans from the side-lines of the battlefield and is unable to dispel his ἄχος in an immediate and effective manner.

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[321] *Il.* 1.393-412.
[322] Although Achilles only formally recognises the end to his ἄχος with Agamemnon at *Il.* 18.112=19.65.
[323] For other endings, see Janko, 1992: 275.
[324] *Il.* 17. 125-131.

I therefore argue that Patroclus' death, rather than making Achilles' existing ἄχος permanent as Nagy suggests, inspires true feelings of helplessness in Achilles for the first time. This helplessness, which stems from his inability to avenge his companion's death, makes Achilles' ἄχος persistent. He then takes extreme measures in an attempt to rid himself of this ἄχος when his mother alleviates his helplessness and restores his identity as a warrior with a gift of divine armour. The narrator describes Achilles' response to receiving the armour in this manner:

> ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ
> δῦν' ἄχος ἄτλητον· ὃ δ' ἄρα Τρωσὶν μενεαίνων
> δύσετο δῶρα θεοῦ,

> And unendurable ἄχος
> plunged into his heart; and he, raging at the Trojans,
> put on the gifts of the gods,[325]

The language of this passage suggests that Achilles is experiencing persistent ἄχος by the time he receives his divine armour. The use of the modifier 'unendurable' (ἄτλητον) to describe the ἄχος caused by Patroclus' death emphasises the force of Achilles' ἄχος, which he can no longer contain,[326] and the idea that he is 'raging' (μενεαίνω) suggests the strength of his feelings towards the Trojans.[327] The repetition of the verb δύω at the beginning of the two consecutive lines in a figurative and then a literal sense emphasises that ἄχος motivates Achilles' actions. By this point, he is not content with simply killing Hector, which he does in *Iliad* 22, but must also mutilate his body and drag it around the city in the dust.[328] Achilles is an exceptional example of reactions to ἄχος, both in the resources available to him and the lengths he goes to in an attempt to overcome feelings of helplessness. Yet it still confirms that the crucial factor in determining whether ἄχος works as an ordinary human response to danger or becomes a persistent state is the opportunity for action when a character first perceives an overwhelming event. Immediate retaliatory

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[325] *Il.* 19.366-8. Achilles also explicitly experiences ἄχος resulting from Patroclus' death at *Il.* 18.319-20.
[326] The other extant use of this phrase in epic is of Hercules in Hes. fr. 33a 24, in broken context.
[327] See Schol. T *ad.* Hom. *Il.* 19.367 (Erbse) for the meaning of μενεαίνων.
[328] *Il.* 22.344-66; 375; 395-404; 23.20-26.

action releases ἄχος, whilst inaction reinforces feelings of helplessness and introduces ἄχος as a persistent state.

2.1.3. ἄχος as a persistent state

Characters experience ἄχος as a persistent state when they do not take retaliatory action after events that cause ἄχος. Persistent states of ἄχος can continue long after the event that provoked the ἄχος ends, and, as I explore in this section, share some characteristics with traumatic reactions. Herman associates traumatic responses with persistent feelings of 'helplessness and terror'.[329] She also emphasises that the 'terror and rage' an individual experiences after a traumatic event 'are qualitatively different from ordinary fear and anger. They are outside the range of ordinary emotional experience, and they overwhelm the ordinary capacity to bear feelings.'[330] Homeric characters experience extreme and overwhelming feelings of helplessness, terror and rage after overwhelming events to which they do not respond with action. By differentiating between ἄχος in the immediate aftermath of an event and ἄχος as a persistent state, I explain why ἄχος covers such a variety of emotional and behavioural responses in the Homeric epics. Throughout this discussion, however, it is important to remember that, while we can perceive differences in the characteristics of ἄχος depending on its duration, epic uses ἄχος and its related verbs without distinction.

Since retaliatory action is an important part of dispelling ἄχος, characters feel something beyond the normal sense of ἄχος when they feel helpless to retaliate. A character's inability to act can cause or exacerbate ἄχος. Achilles highlights the relationship between ἄχος and helplessness when he makes this oath:

> ἦ ποτ᾽ Ἀχιλλῆος ποθὴ ἵξεται υἷας Ἀχαιῶν
> σύμπαντας· τότε δ᾽ οὔ τι δυνήσεαι ἀχνύμενός περ
> χραισμεῖν, εὖτ᾽ ἂν πολλοὶ ὑφ᾽ Ἕκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο
> θνήσκοντες πίπτωσι· σὺ δ᾽ ἔνδοθι θυμὸν ἀμύξεις

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[329] Herman, 1992: 34.
[330] *Ibid.*: 42.

χωόμενος ὅτ᾽ ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲν ἔτισας.''

> Someday longing for Achilles will come to the sons of the Achaeans,
> all of them; and then, you will not be able to help, though grieved,
> when many men before man-slaughtering Hector
> fall and die; and you will tear the heart within you
> angry that you did not honour at all the best of the Achaeans.[331]

In this passage, Achilles warns Agamemnon that he is making himself helpless by dishonouring Achilles. Longing (ποθὴ) here indicates a loss, the loss of Achilles, which shows that the Achaeans are in a position of helplessness and contributes to the ἄχος Achilles imagines Agamemnon experiencing. The violent image of Agamemnon tearing his heart suggests that Achilles envisions him experiencing an unusually strong and disruptive response to this ἄχος. When Achilles' warning is fulfilled, the narrator first notes that the Achaeans 'fled in unearthly terror before father Zeus and Hector' (θεσπεσίως ἐφόβηθεν ὑφ᾽ Ἕκτορι καὶ Διὶ πατρί), emphasising the overwhelming nature of the Achaeans' emotions.[332] The epic then repeats the language of Achilles' warning as Hector begins killing men, noting that '[the Achaeans] could do nothing, though grieved, to help their companion, for they were very afraid of godlike Hector' (οἳ δ᾽ οὐκ ἐδύναντο, καὶ ἀχνύμενοί περ ἑταίρου, //χραισμεῖν· αὐτοὶ γὰρ μάλα δείδισαν Ἕκτορα δῖον).[333] The epic uses a form of ἄχνυμαι with πέρ to indicate that the Achaeans instinctively wish to act in response to their ἄχος even as it notes their inability to act (οὐκ ἐδύναντο).[334] Their response is governed by fear and Hector is compared to a god, strengthening the disparity between their respective power and agency in the event. The Achaeans' extreme terror and helplessness disrupts the usual patterns of perception, ἄχος, and response, and paves the way for the unusual state of persistent ἄχος.

Although this prominent example occurs on the battlefield, Homeric characters are most likely to experiences persistent states of ἄχος away from the battlefield. Outside of combat,

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[331] *Il.* 1.240-4.
[332] *Il.* 15.637.
[333] *Il.* 15.651-52.
[334] See also *Il.* 18.62; 18.443 for Thetis' similar claims of helplessness.

characters still perceive painful events, such as the deaths of loved ones or threats to their camp or city.[335] When characters hear about these events, which they are more likely to do than witness them directly, they may experience ἄχος with any or all of the components I have discussed.[336] However, they are unlikely to be able to take retaliatory action to remove a threat or avenge a death. As a result they experience persistent ἄχος, as Priam does in this passage:

> σχέτλιος· αἴθε θεοῖσι φίλος τοσσόνδε γένοιτο
> ὅσσον ἐμοί· τάχα κέν ἑ κύνες καὶ γῦπες ἔδονται
> κείμενον· ἦ κέ μοι αἰνὸν ἀπὸ πραπίδων ἄχος ἔλθοι.

> Wretched man; would that he was as dear to the gods
> as he is to me; quickly then the dogs and vultures would eat him
> as he lay dead; and terrible ἄχος would go from my heart.[337]

Here, Priam expresses hatred and rage at Achilles whilst feeling terror at the prospect of Hector fighting Achilles alone. The epic uses the context of supplication to convey his extreme sense of helplessness, and his vulnerability as an old man who cannot participate in combat. Although Priam wishes for a dishonourable end for Achilles, he cannot act to dispel the ἄχος Achilles' actions have caused him during the war. Priam's example shows that events on the battlefield can prompt ἄχος off it, and that characters that experience ἄχος outside combat are more likely to experience persistent ἄχος because they are unable to take retaliatory action on their own behalf.

Characters who cannot retaliate sometimes instead participate in ritual expressions of their ἄχος. The poet describes Achilles' reaction upon hearing of Patroclus' death and Laertes' reaction to a report of Odysseus in these words:

> τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα.
> ἀμφοτέρῃσι δὲ χερσὶν ἑλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
> χεύατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς,

> and a black cloud of ἄχος covered him.

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[335] Odysseus' absence, a subject I treat in Part II, is one such event. For persistent ἄχος relating to this event, see: *Od.* 1.235-7; 14.376; 14.169-70; 16.148-9; 18.256; 19.129; 21.115.
[336] For passages that emphasise hearing as a form of perception before ἄχος, see *Il.* 14.37-9; 16.12-6.
[337] *Il.* 22.41-3.

> And seizing black dust in both hands,
> he poured it down over his head,[338]

Each man receives news, experiences ἄχος and covers himself with dirt. The narrator conceptualises ἄχος as a 'black cloud' (νεφέλη…μέλαινα) in this context, which emphasises its intensity.[339] Achilles cannot retaliate at this point in the *Iliad* because he has no armour. Instead, he expresses his grief at Patroclus' death through ritual behaviour that corresponds to the image of ἄχος overcoming him.[340] His actions do not dissipate his ἄχος.[341] Instead, they illustrate that it remains in his body in a persistent state. Laertes responds in the same way to new evidence of his son's loss.[342] Joseph Russo *et al.* rightly focus on the context of this passage, arguing that it illustrates a 'sudden peak' of emotion, which Odysseus orchestrates to 'bring about an inner change in his father…releasing him from the paralysis of emotion, lethargy, and apathy.'[343] By prompting Laertes to experience new heights of ἄχος, Odysseus' words provide an opportunity for him to express the persistent ἄχος he is experiencing. The behaviour that the two characters exhibit in this passage allows them to express the extent of their suffering. However, it is no substitute for retaliatory action; ultimately, it is Achilles' revenge and Odysseus' return that release Achilles and Laertes respectively from their emotional states.

Persistent states of ἄχος are often evident as the dead are prepared for burial. As characters experience ἄχος when they perceive the dead, this emotional response frequently occurs when warriors collect their companions' corpses. The Paphlagonians, for example, experience ἄχος as they retrieve Harpalion's corpse during battle, and both the Achaeans

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[338] *Il.*18.22-4=*Od.*24.315-7. The portions of lines *Il.* 18.24 and *Od.* 24.317 that I do not include here are not identical.

[339] The same single line formula for ἄχος is used at *Il.* 17.591, when Hector hears of Podes' death. Podes may have been Hector's brother-in-law: see Edwards, 1991: 118; Zarker, 1965 for arguments for and against the identification. Elsewhere the adverb πυκινῶς (*Il.* 19.312; *Od.* 11.88; 19.95; 23.360) or the neuter adjective πυκινόν (*Od.* 15.361) is used to convey the intensity of ἄχος.

[340] Edwards, 1991: 144-5 explores this image.

[341] Cf. Althea's ἄχος at her brother's death (*Il.* 9.566-71). She weeps, beats her hands on the ground, calls on Hades and Persephone, and curses her son as a form of limited retaliatory action.

[342] Laertes' response: *Od.* 24.309-10.

[343] Russo *et al.*, 1992: 396-7.

and the Trojans experience ἄχος during the truce for retrieving the dead in *Iliad* 7.[344] Characters continue to experience ἄχος during funeral rites. Achilles, the other mourners and even his horses experience ἄχος whilst participating in Patroclus' funeral; Helen claims to experience ἄχος in her lament for Hector; and Odysseus and his companions grieve when they burn Elpenor's body.[345] These instances show characters experiencing persistent ἄχος in contexts in which the emotion is not debilitating; as a form of grief, ἄχος is an appropriate emotion for funerals and does not prevent characters from participating in them as it prevents them from engaging in everyday activities. Achilles claims that such practices do not dispel ἄχος:

<div align="center">

ἄλγεα δ' ἔμπης
ἐν θυμῷ κατακεῖσθαι ἐάσομεν ἀχνύμενοί περ·
οὐ γάρ τις πρῆξις πέλεται κρυεροῖο γόοιο.

But nevertheless we will let
our sorrows rest in our heart, though we are grieved;
For there is no action in chilling lamentation.[346]

</div>

Achilles argues that ἄχος requires action rather than lamentation to dissipate. His claim is supported by the example of the Ithacans in *Odyssey* 24, who enter the assembly 'hearts grieved' (ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ) after burying their dead.[347] However, whilst funerary practices may not resolve ἄχος, expressions of ἄχος in a funerary context tend to bring portrayals of persistent ἄχος (e.g. Achilles' ἄχος for Patroclus, the Trojans' ἄχος for Hector) to a natural conclusion in the epic; with the exception of the Ithacans, these instances of ἄχος no longer affect the narrative after they have been expressed in a funerary context. I therefore argue that expressions of suffering are often an important turning point in recovery after ἄχος and generally mark a move away from thoughts of retaliatory action.

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[344]*Il.* 13.657-8; 7.428 and 7.431 respectively.

[345] See *Il.* 23.136-7; 23.165; 23.284; 24.773-5 and *Od.* 12.12. In *Il.* 23.222-5, the epic uses a simile comparing Achilles to a father burning his newly married son's bones when he is burying Patroclus. This simile aligns Achilles with the traditional image of fathers experiencing ἄχος for their sons in Homeric epic. At the same time, it creates dissonance; Achilles is a young warrior whose own son has not yet reached a marriageable age, and Achilles is not destined to live long enough to see him do so (although as a spirit he is keen to find out about his son's prowess in *Od.* 11.492-4). Grieving (ἄχνυμαι) is also mentioned in connection with funerary contexts at *Od.* 11.558 and 24.420.

[346]*Il.* 24.522-4. See also *Il.* 24.550 for a further mention of πρῆξις.

[347] *Od.* 24.420.

Characters also express persistent states of ἄχος through their physical behaviour in other contexts. A striking example is Eurylochus' response to losing his companions:

> οὐδέ τι ἐκφάσθαι δύνατο ἔπος, ἰέμενός περ,
> κῆρ ἄχεϊ μεγάλῳ βεβολημένος· ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε
> δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὠίετο θυμός.
>
> He was not at all able to speak out a word, though eager,
> stricken as he was with great ἄχος in his heart; and his eyes
> were filled up with tears, and his spirit was intent on lamentation.[348]

The passage highlights the event's emotional impact on Eurylochus' heart (κῆρ) as the cause of his involuntary physical responses. The verb form βεβολημένος, associated through βάλλω with physical strikes from airborne missiles, shows how shock has both emotional and physical impact. Physiological responses affect his eyes and mouth, which damage his ability to comprehend or describe his situation, leave him isolated, and put his shipmates in danger of repeating his experience with Circe. His spirit (θυμός) then becomes responsible for the voluntary expressions of his grief (γόος). Elsewhere, the poems record other physiological responses to ἄχος, including characters collapsing or lying on the ground for long periods of time, their skin turning pale, and bouts of crying that can leave their cheeks wasted.[349] Persistent ἄχος also discourages characters from participating in routine activities, such as eating, drinking, washing, working or conversing, with characters instead spending their time 'mourning and grieving' (ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχεύων).[350] This range of voluntary and involuntary behavioural responses to ἄχος provides further evidence that persistent ἄχος is an extraordinary response to overwhelming events and is thus comparable to experiences of trauma.

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[348] *Od.* 10.246-8.

[349] For physiological responses, see: *Il.* 2.694; 2.724; 18.461; *Od.* 4.716; 8.530-1; 11.195; 20.83-4; 21.412; Hes. *Theog.* 98-9. See also Andromache's reaction to the thought of Hector's death at *Il.* 6.406-39, which Hector uses the verb ἀκαχίζεο to describe at *Il.* 6.486-7.

[350] Routine activities disrupted: *Od.* 4.553; 7.297; 15.359; 15.361-2; 16.139-45. *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 50; 433. Mourning and grieving: *Il.* 24.128-30; *Od.* 2.23; 4.100. The phrase has connotations of 'profitlessly', as in *Il.* 9.612-3 and *Od.* 14.40-1, and also indicates a state of grief. See Monsacré, 1984: 215-41 for the language and gestures associated with expressing grief.

In extreme cases, persistent ἄχος leads to death. The Homeric epics portray two types of death resulting from ἄχος.[351] In unusual circumstances, characters kill themselves as a result of their ἄχος. Odysseus describes how in one such instance Epicaste hanged herself 'in the grip of her ἄχος' (ᾧ ἄχεϊ σχομένη) when the gods reveal that she married her son.[352] In Odysseus' telling, Epicaste becomes one of few female characters to take retaliatory action to end her ἄχος. However, that action is directed towards herself as the perpetrator of her own ἄχος.[353] ἄχος also kills characters that enter into a state of such severe persistent ἄχος that their bodies waste away. Thetis describes the period that Achilles spent inactive on Briseis' behalf as one in which 'he wasted his heart in grieving' (ἤτοι ὃ τῆς ἀχέων φρένας ἔφθιεν).[354] Anticlea's death serves as an example of how persistent ἄχος becomes terminal over time.[355] Her fate illustrates the extent of the risk posed to Laertes, Priam and Peleus by the loss of their sons.[356] In this respect, ἄχος differs from ἄλγος; whilst characters experiencing ἄλγος may face dire circumstances and potentially life-threatening events, they are never put at risk by their response to events.

Given the danger associated with remaining in a persistent state of ἄχος, few characters choose inaction when able to take action. Indeed, only Paris claims that he does so. When Hector asks why he does not fight Menelaus, Paris replies: 'I wished to give myself up to ἄχος' (ἔθελον δ' ἄχεϊ προτραπέσθαι).[357] Paris' choice to indulge in ἄχος, which presumably arises as fear of single combat, aligns him with the vulnerable members of Homeric society who cannot expel ἄχος through action. However, even those characters do not embrace their helplessness. Paris' claim contributes to the unmanly image of Paris that

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[351] ἄχος also appears to be the normal emotional state of the dead. Agamemnon's spirit grieves for itself (*Od.* 11.388; 24.21) and Odysseus grieves with it (*Od.* 11.466) when he is in Hades. *Od.* 11.542 suggests that the dead are in a constant state of grief as a result of their manner of death. Odysseus' companions cry out 'hearts grieved' (ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ) one final time (*Od.* 12.250), suggesting that they feel this emotion as they die. This is comparable to Hes. *Theog.* 623, where Obriareus, Cottus and Gyges grieve because Zeus has bound them under the earth, an immortal equivalent to death.
[352] *Od.* 11.271-9.
[353] *Od.* 11.272-3.
[354] *Il.* 18.446.
[355] For Anticlea's fate, see *Od.* 11.279; 15.358-61.
[356] Cf. the states of Peleus: *Il.* 19.335-6; Priam: *Il.* 22.425 and Laertes: *Od.* 15.353-7.
[357] *Il.* 6.335-6.

the epic creates in this exchange with Hector.[358] Whilst Paris presents himself as weak to excuse his behaviour to Hector, his actions leave the Trojans' cause vulnerable to further censure. Poseidon, for example, asks 'but why now does this blameless man [Aeneas] suffer sorrows for no reason, for the sake of others' ἄχος' (ἀλλὰ τίη νῦν οὗτος ἀναίτιος ἄλγεα πάσχει //μὰψ ἕνεκ' ἀλλοτρίων ἀχέων).[359] The Trojans' purpose is discredited when they perform retaliatory action on behalf of people who choose not to pursue action themselves. Paris' unusual choice to embrace a persistent state of ἄχος does not, it seems, endanger him personally because it does not leave him feeling helpless. Instead, his choice not to act renders others helpless, perpetuating ἄχος among the Trojans.[360] Persistent ἄχος is therefore presented as not only destructive for the individual experiencing it, but also for communities through which it spreads.

While persistent ἄχος is found on and around the battlefields of Troy, it also becomes one of the prominent themes that unite the episodes in Odysseus' narrative of his return. Odysseus and his companions are made helpless many times on their journey, during which they frequently leave their companions to die without the opportunity to offer aid or retribution. When telling his story, Odysseus uses the phrase 'And then we sailed on, grieved at heart' (ἔνθεν δὲ προτέρω πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ) as a transition between episodes of danger. He uses it five times, and thrice it is followed by the line 'glad to be away from death, but having lost our dear companions' (ἄσμενοι ἐκ θανάτοιο, φίλους ὀλέσαντες ἑταίρους), a line which expresses their inner conflict between self-preservation and their duty to the rest of their party.[361] He also uses the phrase ἀκαχήμενος ἦτορ to mark transitions between minor actions, such as when he chooses to follow Circe into her

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[358] See Graziosi & Haubold, 2010: 42-3; 173 for these themes in the conversation between Helen and Paris and for the absence of Aphrodite in Paris' explanation. Cf. *Od.* 19.167 where, although a beggar, Odysseus warns Penelope against provoking ἄχος with her questions.
[359] *Il.* 20.297-8.
[360] E.g. Hector: *Il.* 6.523-5.
[361] *Od.* 9.62; 9.105; 9.565; 10.77; 10.133.

house alone.[362] The ἄχος theme is further perpetuated through prophecies and warnings of future suffering, to which Odysseus and his companions respond by entering a state of ἄχος that continues as long as they feel terror or helplessness.[363] Persistent ἄχος becomes a unifying motif in these anecdotes, tying together disparate experiences into one coherent narrative with the speaker's sense of helplessness in the face of sudden and overwhelming events.

2.1.4. Claiming experiences of ἄχος

As I have shown, then, ἄχος initially arises as an ordinary human response to danger. Epic uses a pattern of perceiving an event, experiencing ἄχος and engaging in retaliatory action to show how ἄχος can be dissipated. When this pattern is broken, ἄχος becomes a persistent state and acts on characters in more destructive ways. The question then arises as to what role claims about ἄχος play in epic, given that ἄχος is often dispelled almost as soon as it occurs. I argue that claims about ἄχος take two forms. When ἄχος occurs with forms of εἰμί (e.g. ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἄχος ἔσσεται αἰνόν),[364] it works much like a claim about ἄλγος or πῆμα, marking a current or future event as one that is both overwhelming and significant from the speaker's perspective. However, it is more common for characters to use other verbs in claims about ἄχος and these claims are almost always retrospective. Only Diomedes, answering Nestor's call to escape, speaks of the 'terrible ἄχος' (αἰνὸν ἄχος) that comes over him when he imagines Hector boasting that he caused Diomedes to flee.[365] Diomedes uses ἄχος to explain his reluctance to follow Nestor's advice, which he ignores

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[362] *Od.* 10.313; cf. the suffering narratives at *Od.* 13.286 and 15.481.
[363] ἀχνύμενοι, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες: *Od.* 10.570; 11.5. Terror at the prospect of death is also found at *Od.* 22.188. See Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 75-6; Tsagarakis, 2000; Gazis, 2018: 95-102 for discussion of Odysseus' journey to Hades. ἀχνύμενος κῆρ: *Od.* 12.153; 12.270. Odysseus also experiences this emotional response to his companions' actions on his journey at *Od.* 10.67. Emotional responses to prophecies and warnings precede the event, as also seen at *Od.* 21.314-9, and are particularly strong because divine knowledge cannot be challenged in Homeric epic. Cf. Hesiod's instruction to Perses (*Op.* 399-400) to work 'lest someday with your wife and children, heart grieved, you seek sustenance among your neighbours' (μή ποτε σὺν παίδεσσι γυναικί τε θυμὸν ἀχεύων //ζητεύῃς βίοτον κατὰ γείτονας), an event which action now may prevent in the future.
[364] *Od.* 16.87: Telemachus considers the beggar's reception by the suitors.
[365] *Il.* 8.147-9. Diomedes does however adopt a perspective in which current events are viewed retrospectively when he speaks about his ἄχος.

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in favour of retaliatory action. Diomedes' failure to follow rational advice when under threat leads me to the main purpose of claims to ἄχος in Homeric poetry: they are, I argue, primarily used to explain and excuse unusual or irrational behaviour.

Characters use claims about experiencing ἄχος with a form of εἰμί to mark an event as significant. When ἄχος is with a present (or implied present) form of εἰμί, the character often uses it to designate an event that has just happened as a cause of ἄχος to them. Eurymachus, for example, uses this formulation when he fails to string Odysseus' bow (ὢ πόποι, ἦ μοι ἄχος περί τ' αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ πάντων) and Poseidon uses it when he sees Achilles press Aeneas in battle (ὢ πόποι ἦ μοι ἄχος μεγαλήτορος Αἰνείαο).[366] Unlike uses of ἄχος outside of characters speech, in which narrative focus is on the process of experiencing and releasing ἄχος, these speeches focus on the emotional experience of ἄχος. They highlight the character's perspective on the event that causes ἄχος and in some cases follow the thought process that draws him or her into retaliatory action.[367] When the verb is in the future tense characters express their misery that an ἄχος still continues indefinitely, as when Menelaus considers his grief at Odysseus' loss (τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἔμελλεν //αὐτῷ κήδε' ἔσεσθαι, ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος αἰὲν ἄλαστον);[368] or they look anxiously on events that they would wish to avert, such as when Agamemnon contemplates Menelaus' death (ἀλλά μοι αἰνὸν ἄχος σέθεν ἔσσεται, ὦ Μενέλαε, //αἴ κε θάνῃς).[369] These statements establish what type of emotional response an event will provoke, and often see characters explore the routes they may take to avert or resolve impending ἄχος. Like claims about ἄλγος or πῆμα, claims about present or future ἄχος assert the significance of a character's experience. However, claims about ἄχος do so with particular regard for the emotional pain they cause.

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[366] Eurymachus: *Od.* 21.249; Poseidon: *Il.* 20.293. See also *Il.* 5.759; 16.55 for other events designated a cause of ἄχος.

[367] Poseidon's speech and subsequent action is a clear example (*Il.* 20.293-320).

[368] *Od.* 4.108.

[369] *Il.* 4.169. See also *Il.* 6.413; 9.249-50; *Od.* 16.87; 22.345 for similar occasions.

In this connection, it is worth considering the role of assertions that characters make using verb forms with the same root as ἄχος. These assertions identify a perpetrator's active intention to cause ἄχος. Since ἄχος tends to arise from events, it is usually clear against whom retaliation should be aimed. In some cases, however, the *Odyssey* explicitly identifies characters as the perpetrators of particular events. Two extant examples are connected to the suitors.[370] In the first instance, Penelope reminds Antinous that his father once 'hurt the Thesprotians; and they were our allies' (ἤκαχε Θεσπρωτούς· οἱ δ' ἥμιν ἄρθμιοι ἦσαν).[371] By holding Antinous' father responsible for the harm he caused, she intends to remind Antinous that his position and reputation among the Ithacan people exists as a result of Odysseus' intervention on his father's behalf. She then notes that Antinous 'would murder [Odysseus'] son and pain me greatly' (παῖδά τ' ἀποκτείνεις, ἐμὲ δὲ μεγάλως ἀκαχίζεις).[372] Here, Penelope blames Antinous for the pain she would feel after an event that she anticipates might happen in an attempt to persuade Antinous to change his plans. Characters therefore make assertions using verb forms with the same root as ἄχος in order to claim that others are the cause of particular overwhelming events and hold them to account for their actions. Like claims with εἰμί, the focus is on the emotional impact of ἄχος rather than the process of experiencing and dispelling it.

Since ἄχος is associated with suffering, characters also claim to experience it to solicit special consideration from others. They may claim such consideration for themselves or others may claim it for them. Such claims are linked to examples of unusual behaviour that require explanation, which can be anything from extreme forms of mourning to out of character actions: Achilles gives his ἄχος as a reason for cutting his hair and not eating when mourning Patroclus; Alcinous attributes ἄχος to Odysseus to explain his weeping at a

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[370] Other examples occur when one character hurts another by dying (*Il.* 16.822; 23.223; *Od.* 15.357). Failure also hurts the suitors at *Od.* 16.342.
[371] *Od.* 16.427.
[372] *Od.* 16.432.

mealtime; and Aphrodite equates it with falling into bed with a mortal.[373] Elsewhere, ἄχος is used along with the plea not to resent a certain type of behaviour (μὴ νεμέσα) and show special consideration in exceptional circumstances; Nestor uses it to justify waking Odysseus in the night given the proximity of the Trojans to the Achaean ships; and Patroclus uses it to justify the time it took to deliver Achilles' message given the number of Achaean leaders wounded.[374] In all of these situations, the listener grants leniency out of deference to the claim that the character in question experiences ἄχος.

Conversely, characters sometimes evoke ἄχος in antagonistic situations to make use of the exceptional consideration customarily granted to those experiencing ἄχος. While disguised as a beggar, Odysseus accuses Antinous of causing him ἄχος and curses him, which is highly unusual behaviour in a guest.[375] Antinous dismisses his words, but the rest of his audience 'felt exceeding resentment' (ὑπερφιάλως νεμέσησαν) with Antinous.[376] Odysseus' claim to ἄχος provides a context within which his words are allowable and Antinous then carefully integrates a claim to ἄχος in the Centauromachy tale, with which he later threatens Odysseus.[377] A character's claim that they experience ἄχος as a result of another's behaviour can therefore give them more freedom in speech and behaviour than they would otherwise have. This trend notably benefits characters, such as the beggar Odysseus is playing, who would otherwise be limited in their actions by their position in society.

For similar reasons, even powerful characters who find themselves in a subordinate or otherwise precarious position may resort to claiming ἄχος in order to assert themselves. Both Achilles and Poseidon use the line 'but this thing comes as a terrible ἄχος to my heart and spirit' (ἀλλὰ τόδ' αἰνὸν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἱκάνει) in antagonistic situations

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[373] See *Il.* 19.307; 23.47; *Od.* 8.541 and *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 199 respectively.
[374] *Il.* 10.145; 16.22.
[375] *Od.* 17.470-6. See pp. 120-1 for analysis of this passage; Reece, 1993: 29-30 for the usual blessing with which a visitor provides his host.
[376] *Od.* 17.478-81.
[377] *Od.* 21.295-310.

before launching into a complaint that their superior (Agamemnon and Zeus respectively) does not treat them with due respect.[378] They use ἄχος as an excuse for their insubordination, implying that they were not in full control of themselves.[379] This claim helps them preserve their dignity when they retreat from their anger immediately thereafter. Penelope uses the same line to complain about the suitors' past behaviour.[380] She employs the line not to excuse her own actions based on ἄχος but to emphasise that the suitors' unusual behaviour has caused her ἄχος. In this way, she prevents the suitors from adopting a victim position, as they have done in other speeches,[381] and manipulates them into bringing her presents, as proper suitors should. Claims to ἄχος therefore allow characters greater freedom of expression in both speech and behaviour. This freedom enables them to defend past actions and to persuade others into actions or viewpoints that benefit them.

Conclusion

The word ἄχος describes a complex emotional response to witnessing an overwhelming event. It covers a variety of negative reactions from anger and outrage, to grief, anxiety, fear and remorse. ἄχος compels characters into immediate action in order to dispel the emotional response. Representations of this process in its early stages build the audiences' expectations for future action, increasing the dramatic tension leading up to pivotal moments in the text. The pattern can occur on a small or large scale within the narrative with the most notable large-scale example being Achilles' experience of ἄχος at the loss of his honour. As with this example, epic sometimes suspends resolution, relying on audience expectation to create narrative tension. ἄχος compels some characters to exhibit unusual behaviour, leading them to justify their past actions by claiming that they acted

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[378] *Il.* 15.208; 16.52.
[379] Agamemnon uses a similar technique to limit his responsibility for his argument with Achilles. His apology takes the form of an allegory of Zeus feeling ἄχος at Delusion's manipulations (*Il.* 19.125-36).
[380] *Od.* 18.274.
[381] In, for example, the assembly in *Odyssey* 2, as I discuss in pp. 219-22. When ἄχος occurs in epic, the narrator is always adopting an empathetic position towards a victim by articulating their response to an event as part of the narrative.

involuntarily. Other claims about ἄχος may support a character's plea to tolerate unusual behaviour without censure or bolster their attempt to sway others toward taking a preferred course of action. Claims to ἄχος are therefore important as assertions of the right to act, and of the right to compassionate consideration, from epic audiences.

The process associated with ἄχος, the conceptualisation of it as an emotional state and the steps taken to resolve it, deserve fuller recognition than they have hitherto received. They provide evidence of the Homeric poems' awareness of, and deep thematic interest in, the ways in which suffering affects individuals physically and emotionally. The work of Anastassiou, Mawet and others in the 1970s, which focused on ἄχος and grief, made important progress in identifying the ways in which characters responded to ἄχος with action. When approached with modern psychological research in mind, it is clear that their models bear similarities to models, such as those of Herman and Janoff-Bulman, which describe the stages of psychological trauma. In this section, I have built on these earlier studies, using insights from trauma studies to focus on the different experiences that occur when ἄχος is released immediately and when ἄχος persists. I have identified instances in which experiences of ἄχος have little impact on characters and instances in which they have significant impact. I have thus been able to argue that ἄχος becomes more damaging and more dangerous the longer a character experiences it. Whether resolved immediately or persisting over a longer term, however, I have emphasised that ἄχος is closely connected to the event that inspired it. πένθος, another emotional response to overwhelming events, holds a looser connection to the event that inspired it, as I discuss in the next section.

2.2 πένθος

Introduction

Much like ἄχος, the Homeric epics use πένθος to denote an emotional response to an overwhelming event. Previous scholarship glosses πένθος with translations such as 'grief,'

'sorrow' and 'pain.'[382] However, this work rarely recognises the significance of πένθος within the Homeric language of suffering. Despite the fact that ἄχος and πένθος behave in similar ways, there are several characteristics that distinguish them. Mawet characterises πένθος as a more enduring, but no less intense, emotional response.[383] Yet it is not in the duration of the emotion that the difference lies; as we have seen, ἄχος can extend over time, and the length and depth of a character's πένθος is often a matter of conjecture.

Instead, I argue, the most significant feature of πένθος is the distance in epic texts between πένθος as an emotional response and the event that inspires it. In other words, the event, and the character's initial perception of it, often fades from view, and, unlike ἄχος, πένθος does not inspire action. Instead, epic attributes πένθος to characters in order to focus on their emotional state. These features make πένθος more suited to some situations than others; Anastassiou recognises that groups and individuals acting on behalf of others often respond to events with πένθος,[384] and I suggest that its focus on emotional response rather than mitigating action makes it suitable for this role. However, this also raises questions: What is the nature of the relationship between πένθος and the event that produces it? What role does πένθος play in epic narrative? Can it be categorised as a traumatic reaction? I address these questions in this section.

I begin by examining the evidence for the origins and manifestations of πένθος as a normal response to a loss. I look at the gap that arises between overwhelming events and experiences of πένθος in epic, and consider how this affects representations of πένθος. Since some events provoke both πένθος and ἄχος, I then dedicate some space to exploring the similarities and dissimilarities between these two emotional responses. I conclude that ἄχος and πένθος show different traumatic qualities. Whilst ἄχος focuses on actions driven

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[382] See *LfgrE*: 1149-51; Chantraine, 1968: 861; Anastassiou, 1973: 179; Mawet, 1976: 234 and Morenilla-Talens, 1992: 289 for these translations. The verb πάσχω does not strongly connote 'suffer' in Homeric epic (Mawet, 1976: 230-233; 252-3) and often simply means 'experience,' so I exclude it from consideration here.
[383] Mawet, 1976: 239.
[384] Anastassiou, 1973: 190.

by emotional responses to overwhelming events, severe πένθος, I argue, marks alterations in characters' identities. πένθος can thus, I argue, be categorised as a traumatic response.

2.2.1. Origins of πένθος

Characters in early Greek hexameter poetry experience πένθος after loss events. The most common loss event in Homeric epic is the death of a loved one. This form of loss occurs frequently in the *Iliad*, where warriors die on the battlefield in front of companions or family members and news of Trojan deaths travels swiftly to the city.[385] Loss events also take other forms. In the *Odyssey*, Laertes and Penelope experience Odysseus' absence as a loss, although Penelope refuses to recognise the likelihood that he is dead.[386] Similarly, in Hesiod's *Theogony,* Rhea feels πένθος when Cronus swallows her children, and other Titans experience πένθος when they are exiled to the ends of the earth.[387] Other characters in the *Odyssey* provoke πένθος when they harm vulnerable members of society in contexts where they should keep them safe.[388] Even the stomach can be a cause of πένθος when hunger drives characters into uncertain or dangerous situations.[389] In general, characters experience πένθος when they lose anything to danger, whether that is a loved one or their own sense of security.

The point at which a character first experiences πένθος, however, is often not represented in the poems. The Homeric epics often depict both the event that causes πένθος and a character's experience of πένθος, but the latter occurs independently with only a general reference to the event that inspired it. There is thus little evidence for how πένθος acts. Forms of (καθ)ικνέομαι suggest that πένθος enters the body from outside.[390] πένθος also appears to overcome characters from above in the line 'and πένθος took the Trojans from

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[385] E.g. *Il.* 11.249; 16.548.
[386] Penelope's response: *Od.* 1.342; 11.195; Laertes' response: *Od.* 24.231-3.
[387] Hes. *Theog.* 467; 623.
[388] E.g. *Od.* 17.489.
[389] *Od.* 7.218; 17.470-4.
[390] (καθ)ικνέομαι with πένθος: *Il.* 1.362; 18.64; 18.73; 24.708; *Od.* 6.169; 13.42. See also *Il.* 1.254=7.124, where it comes (ἱκάνει) to the Achaean land. Only at *Il.* 9.3 does a violent verb of motion (βεβόλημαι) describe the movement of πένθος. Andromache also accuses Hector of 'inspiring' (ἔθηκας) πένθος in his parents at *Il.* 24.741.

the head down' (Τρῶας δὲ κατὰ κρῆθεν λάβε πένθος).[391] More often, Homeric epic describes how πένθος 'holds' (ἔχω) characters or their φρένες, with πένθος already inside characters.[392] Once inside the body, πένθος increases (ἀέξω) in characters, their hearts (ἐν κραδίῃ) or their chests (ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν).[393] It can also wear away (τείρω) a character or their θυμός.[394] The verbs used to describe πένθος show that the poet is more concerned with representing characters experiencing πένθος than with representing the moment at which an event inspires πένθος.

Characters in a state of πένθος rarely attribute their emotions to the gods. Losses occur in the mortal realm, where characters can generally identify the event that caused their πένθος and rarely find further value in attributing that loss to a god. In one instance, Penelope claims of her πένθος that 'some god gave it to me' (ἐμοὶ…πόρε δαίμων).[395] Penelope's choice of the imprecise term δαίμων to indicate a divine being suggests that she means only to say that she does not know the full reason for her πένθος, which is caused by Odysseus' absence. In this speech, Penelope's interest lies rather in her experience of πένθος than in its cause. Characters only otherwise attribute their πένθος to the gods when the action of the poem takes place in the divine realms. A consideration of divine origins for πένθος in other circumstances would move the focus from a character's experience of their emotional response back to the event that caused it, which is not how epic employs the term. Whilst the event is not entirely forgotten in descriptions of πένθος, characters experiencing πένθος tend to dwell on what they have lost rather than the manner in which they lost it.

As with ἄχος, context and perspective determine whether an event causes πένθος. Odysseus illustrates the role of context in this general statement about ἄχος and πένθος:

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[391] *Il.* 16.548.
[392] ἔχω with πένθος: *Il.* 24.105; *Od.* 7.218-9; 24.233. Hes. *Theog.* 98; 467; 623; *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 207. θυμός and καρδία are only used with ἔχω in the *Theogony*.
[393] *Il.* 17.139; *Od.* 11.195; 17.489.
[394] *Il.* 22.242; *Od.* 2.70.
[395] *Od.* 19.512.

οὐ μὰν οὔτ᾽ ἄχος ἐστὶ μετὰ φρεσὶν οὔτε τι πένθος,
ὁππότ᾽ ἀνὴρ περὶ οἷσι μαχειόμενος κτεάτεσσι
βλήεται, ἢ περὶ βουσὶν ἢ ἀργεννῆς ὀΐεσσιν·
αὐτὰρ ἔμ᾽ Ἀντίνοος βάλε γαστέρος εἵνεκα λυγρῆς,
οὐλομένης, ἣ πολλὰ κάκ᾽ ἀνθρώποισι δίδωσιν.

There is not any ἄχος in the heart or any πένθος,
when a man fighting for his own possessions
is struck, either for cattle or for white sheep;
but Antinous struck me on account of my wretched belly,
cursed thing, which gives many evils to men.[396]

In this passage, πένθος is not an automatic response to a painful blow. It arises out of the context in which the blow is unfair and unwarranted. When a man fights for his possessions, he is a man with property, and thus with standing within a community who he can call upon for aid, defending something valuable to both himself and his attackers. In contrast, Odysseus implies that Antinous' attack caused ἄχος and πένθος because he committed violence for fun and spectacle when Odysseus looked to fill a human need.[397] His blow hurt Odysseus, whose life as a beggar is only valuable to himself, and with it Antinous broke the secure trust that members of Homeric society have in the protection afforded by hospitality traditions. Characters watching the violence in Odysseus' house also respond to it in different ways. Telemachus, who can rarely take action against the suitors, feels πένθος,[398] whilst the other suitors feel indignation (νεμέσησαν) at their peer's violent behaviour.[399] They recognise that an injustice has been done, but they feel no πένθος because they perceive no danger or risk of loss to themselves. Thus, a key characteristic of an event that inspires πένθος is that it leaves characters viewing themselves as vulnerable.

Once a character begins experiencing πένθος, they rarely resolve it within the epic. Indeed, characters do not generally attempt to alleviate πένθος, although, as I discuss in more detail

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[396] *Od.* 17.470-4.
[397] The emotional responses it inspires need not be synonymous - ἄχος may indicate an immediate response and πένθος lasting damage – but the speaker does not differentiate between the two.
[398] *Od.* 17.489-10.
[399] *Od.* 17.481.

later, some characters participate in mourning rituals when they experience πένθος at a death.[400] As Laertes' example shows, mourning does not dispel πένθος and indulging in πένθος does not prevent the emotion from increasing.[401] Similarly, πένθος does not compel, or seem to be alleviated by, retaliatory action. After Sarpedon's death, warriors on the Trojan side experience πένθος,[402] but their action to defend Sarpedon's honour in death is inspired by Glaucus' speech.[403] ἄχος motivates Glaucus' own desire for revenge, which sets this series of events in motion. Menelaus' πένθος for Patroclus' death also increases steadily, as far as the epic portrays it, without being affected by the surges of more or less successful action he takes to defend Patroclus' body from mutilation.[404] As losses that inspire πένθος are generally permanent, πένθος holds a permanent quality in narratives and characters continue to experience πένθος whilst they feel the loss that provoked it. The epic provides no means to alleviate or dispel the emotional response while the loss is still felt.

2.2.2. πένθος and ἄχος

πένθος thus has distinctive traits as an emotional response. However, while πένθος and ἄχος each have defining characteristics, they often occur as the result of the same events. The poet, I argue, acknowledges characters' emotional responses (whether ἄχος or πένθος) to overwhelming events as the narrative requires. ἄχος occurs in contexts in which characters' responses to events drive narratives of revenge. When characters do not retaliate, they experience either persistent ἄχος, which includes feelings of anger, revenge or regret, or πένθος, which focuses on feelings of grief and loss. Characters that experience πένθος tend to be either too far removed from danger to engage in retaliatory action, too vulnerable or both, as this passage illustrates:

"νῦν μὲν δή, Μενέλαε διοτρεφές, ἦ μάλα τίσεις

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[400] πένθος used in mourning/lament contexts: *Il.* 17.37; 22.483; 24.708; 24.741; *Od.* 11.195; 19.512; 24.231.
[401] *Od.* 11.195; 24.231.
[402] Trojans: *Il.* 16.548. Glaucus: *Il.* 16. 508.
[403] *Il.* 16.544-5.
[404] *Il.* 17.139.

γνωτὸν ἐμόν, τὸν ἔπεφνες, ἐπευχόμενος δ᾽ ἀγορεύεις·
χήρωσας δὲ γυναῖκα μυχῷ θαλάμοιο νέοιο,
ἄρρητον δὲ τοκεῦσι γόον καὶ πένθος ἔθηκας.
ἦ κέ σφιν δειλοῖσι γόου κατάπαυμα γενοίμην,
εἴ κεν ἐγὼ κεφαλήν τε τεὴν καὶ τεύχε᾽ ἐνείκας
Πάνθῳ ἐν χείρεσσι βάλω καὶ Φρόντιδι δίῃ.

Then, Zeus-nourished Menelaus, you must now pay the penalty
for my brother, whom you killed, and boasting you declare it;
and made his wife a widow in the depth of a new bridal chamber
and set unspeakable lamentation and sorrow on his parents.
Yet I might stop the lamentation of these unhappy people,
if I, bringing your head and your armour,
throw them into Panthous' hands and those of divine Phrontis[405]

Here, there is a disparity between Euphorbus' response to his brother's death, and the response he imagines from his parents and sister-in-law. Euphorbus expects his family at home to respond to the news with 'lamentation and πένθος.' In its focus on the expression of the family's πένθος through lamentation, this phrase emphasises that they cannot perform retaliatory action. Euphorbus' narrative establishes a contrast between their response and his own, as he can still take action against Menelaus and thereby stop their lamentation (γόος) if not their grief (πένθος).[406] Indeed his exchange with Menelaus brings the scene into the realm of boasting exchanges, in which ἄχος motivates characters to fight.[407] The πένθος in Euphorbus' narrative shows the value of his brother's life, but, by confining it to a narrative and not claiming to experience it himself, he reserves the possibility of taking the retaliatory action required by the battle scene.

As with the example above, the battlefield context may sometimes blur the usual boundaries between representations of πένθος and ἄχος. Euphorbus there speaks of other characters' πένθος in a context closely associated with ἄχος. The prelude to Coon's attack on Agamemnon goes one step further, using the usual pattern of perception, emotional

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[405] *Il.* 17.34-41. *Il.* 17.37=24.741.
[406] Anastassiou, 1973: 187 argues that πένθος is a separate phenomenon from mourning behaviour marked by γόος.
[407] *Il.* 17.24-32 with Hyperenor's death at *Il.* 14.516-9. See p. 98-9 for the role of ἄχος in boasting scenes.

response and retaliatory action associated with ἄχος whilst stating that Coon experienced πένθος:

> τὸν δ᾽ ὡς οὖν ἐνόησε Κόων ἀριδείκετος ἀνδρῶν
> πρεσβυγενὴς Ἀντηνορίδης, κρατερόν ῥά ἑ πένθος
> ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐκάλυψε κασιγνήτοιο πεσόντος.
> στῆ δ᾽ εὐρὰξ σὺν δουρὶ, λαθὼν Ἀγαμέμνονα δῖον,
> νύξε δέ μιν κατὰ χεῖρα μέσην ἀγκῶνος ἔνερθεν·

> But when Coon, glorious among men, perceived him,
> the first-born son of Antenor, strong πένθος
> covered his eyes on account of his fallen brother.
> And escaping notice, he stood to one side of godlike Agamemnon
>   with his spear,
> and he stabbed him in the middle of his arm below the elbow;[408]

As Coon perceives his brother Iphidamus' killer, πένθος covers his eyes, as strong ἄχος does. The sight of Agamemnon provokes πένθος and compels Coon to stab Agamemnon, fulfilling the usual pattern associated with ἄχος. These events happen at a significant moment in the narrative and are not indicative of usual practices with πένθος. The epic predicates its narration of Iphidamus' death with an invocation of the Muse asking her to relate who first attacked Agamemnon.[409] The injury Coon inflicts on Agamemnon leads him to withdraw from the fighting, making him the first of the great Achaean warriors to withdraw before Patroclus' *aristeia* and death. By using the usual structural pattern for ἄχος with an emotional response labelled πένθος, the epic shows the extraordinary quality of Coon's reaction without compromising narrative pace. The unusual combination draws attention to the significance of this unique moment in which the leader of the Achaeans receives a dangerous wound in battle.

Outside of battle, the distance between an event and a character's perception of it tends to be much greater. Characters frequently experience πένθος for events that the epic narrated

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[408] *Il.* 11.248-52.
[409] *Il.* 11.218-20. Invocations, including this one, occur six times within the *Iliad* and only once within the *Odyssey*. As Minchin, 1995: 28 recognises, these appeals occur before a 'special moment in performance…to comment on, or draw attention to, some aspect of the tale or its telling.' See also Minton, 1960; 1962; Murray, 1981: 89-92; on Muse invocations in the Homeric epics; Ford, 1992: 31-9 for bardic attitudes towards the Muses and their craft.

several books earlier. Eupeithes' πένθος for his son's death, for example, is first mentioned in a passage in *Odyssey* 24, whereas the event itself is narrated in *Odyssey* 22. Rumour (Ὄσσα) delivers news of the massacre to the townspeople in *Odyssey* 24, but by the time the epic mentions Eupeithes' πένθος, it is already 'laid up in his heart' (ἐνὶ φρεσὶ…ἔκειτο).[410] In the assembly, Eupeithes argues for the Ithacans to take retaliatory action whilst experiencing 'unforgettable πένθος' (ἄλαστον…πένθος) for Antinous.[411] The action he proposes is the result of meditation on the event rather than an immediate and instinctive response and thus is unlike retaliation after ἄχος. In this experience of πένθος, as with others, the epic lays less emphasis on the moment of perception that causes the emotional response and more on the character's experience of πένθος and the choices that it presents.

This distance between the original narration of an event and a character's recognition of the πένθος it caused is common in Homeric epic. In several cases, this means that one event provokes ἄχος immediately following the event and πένθος in later contexts that focus on characters' emotions and other consequences of the event. Thus Priam's reaction to Hector's death in *Iliad* 22 is described as ἄχος, but Andromache claims that his parents suffer πένθος during her ritual lament in *Iliad* 24.[412] The narrator also moves from Andromache's anticipated ἄχος at becoming a widow in *Iliad* 6 to a description of her πένθος once Hector is dead.[413] However, there is no need to posit a development from ἄχος to πένθος in these instances. ἄχος and πένθος often occur simultaneously in a text and, in those instances fulfil different narrative functions. When characters experience ἄχος, the relationship between an event and a character's reaction comes under scrutiny. When πένθος occurs, the epic foregrounds the event's ramifications rather than the event itself. Moreover, while any vulnerability afflicting characters can persist if ἄχος is not released

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[410] Rumour: *Od.* 24.412-9. Eupeithes' πένθος: *Od.* 24.413.
[411] *Od.* 24.422-4.
[412] ἄχος: *Il.* 22.43; 22.425; πένθος: *Il.* 24.741.
[413] ἄχος: *Il.* 6.406-39; πένθος: *Il.* 22.482-4.

after a threat, πένθος attests to the fact that characters face increased vulnerability as a result of a loss. Thus ἄχος and πένθος work together in complementary roles to expresses different aspects of emotional responses to overwhelming events.

2.2.3. πένθος and lament

The word πένθος thus, I argue, focuses attention on a character's emotional state after an overwhelming loss. When considering the defining features of trauma and trauma narratives, Caruth argues that a person finds an event traumatic for two reasons. She identifies what she terms a '*crisis of death*,' which is a person's response to 'the unbearable nature of an event.' Alongside this, she sees a '*crisis of life*,' which she describes as 'the unbearable nature of its survival.'[414] Survival is 'unbearable,' because a person finds it difficult to reconcile the experience of having survived a traumatic event with their life before the event.[415] Caruth suggests that trauma narratives display an 'oscillation' between these two experiences, and I believe we see a similar 'oscillation' in representations of πένθος in lament. Lament in epic poetry addresses both the experience of a loss and the significance of surviving the loss for the character speaking. It often emphasises the continued vulnerability of the speaker. It is in this context, I argue, that πένθος begins to exhibit some traumatic characteristics.

Laments are an integral part of epic's portrayal of πένθος. As a genre, lament is 'a subversive element within epic that can work against what epic is trying to achieve.'[416] Epic exists to promote κλέος and its characters engage in the pursuit of κλέος in order to be memorialised through song. Lament affords a similar opportunity for warriors to be memorialised, albeit through the πένθος they inspire. κλέος and πένθος represent two ways

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[414] Caruth, 1996: 7. Caruth's observations shed useful light on sufferers' perspectives on overwhelming events, but do not need the Freudian interpretation she gives them. Homeric characters experiencing πένθος adopt these perspectives on overwhelming events without exhibiting any of the psychoanalytic symptoms that Caruth associates with the traumatic 'break' (repression, repetition compulsion, etc.).
[415] Janoff-Bulman casts her argument in terms of shattered assumptions when she explores why the latter is problematic.
[416] Murnaghan, 1999: 203. See also Alexiou, 2002: 4-14; 161-85; Tsagalis, 2004:1-48 for types of lament and their prominent themes; Dué, 2002: 67-81 explores the function of female lament in epic.

of turning a response to an event into narrative,[417] as Agamemnon, for example, demonstrates when describing the different reactions of the Trojans and the Achaeans when Menelaus is shot.[418] Whether an event creates κλέος or πένθος depends on the perspective that the speaker adopts when relating that event.[419] The Homeric epics frequently choose to focalise the Trojan War through the victims of its violence, and the *Iliad*'s largely even-handed treatment of victims on both sides of the war is part of what distinguishes its narrative voice.[420] Experiences of πένθος do not inspire action, but they often inspire lament. As a means by which characters give voice to πένθος, lament memorialises both a warrior's deeds and a mourner's emotional response in a way that, in prioritising experiences of suffering, is antithetical to the overall intent and tone of epic poetry as a form of κλέος.

Returning now to Caruth's argument that trauma narratives are comprised of a 'crisis of death' and a 'crisis of life,' I argue that these two antagonistic themes are found in Homeric laments arising out of πένθος. Indeed, oscillation between these themes is typical of lamentation. In Andromache's first lament, for example, she often alternates between the pain of Hector's loss and the ways in which his loss alters the identities of those who survive him. Although her lament marks and memorialises Hector's departure to Hades (the 'crisis of death'),[421] Andromache frames the event in such a way as to express simultaneously the 'crisis of life' that she faces as she is 'left behind' (ἔρχεαι) whilst he continues on into 'the secret places of the earth' (ὑπὸ κεύθεσι γαίης).[422] Their separate identities as victim and survivor blur in Andromache's speech and she claims that they

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[417] See Easterling, 1991: 147-9; Murnaghan, 1999: 204 for discussion of κλέος and lament narratives.
[418] *Il.* 4.196-7=4.206-7. See Anastassiou, 1973: 190-2 for κῦδος and κλέος in opposition to πένθος.
[419] See also *Od.* 18.324, where the poem draws attention to a character's positive perspective on an event that causes others πένθος. Pantelia, 2002 argues that the poet considers characters' perspectives on κλέος when he orders voices in the laments for Hector.
[420] Graziosi, 2013: 25-7 discusses the perspectives the narrator takes on the battlefield and how his position influences the narratives he produces.
[421] *Il.* 22.482-3; 85-6; 505-10.
[422] *Il.* 22.482-4.

were 'both born to one fate' (ἰῇ ἄρα γεινόμεθ᾽ αἴσῃ //ἀμφότεροι).[423] Andromache recognises that Hector's death brings about a change in her identity, transforming her from royal wife into widow and putting her status as a mother under threat.[424] Much of her speech dwells on how Hector's death will also alter Astyanax's position among the Trojans.[425] Andromache's lament shows that πένθος occurs when a loss is so significant that it shatters identity, and it is in this shattering of identity that πένθος exhibits traumatic features as a reaction to overwhelming events.

Other Homeric laments also show evidence of oscillation between crises of life and death. The final lament for Hector is created out of three voices with passages from Andromache, Hecuba and Helen. Andromache's portion focuses on the 'crisis of life' facing her and the Trojans as a result of Hector's death.[426] Hecuba then uses details about his death (e.g. the bronze that took his life; the way Achilles dragged Hector's body around Patroclus' tomb) to represent the 'crisis of [his] death' and Helen returns to the 'crisis of life theme' with memories of his kindness to her.[427] Briseis also combines both elements in her short lament for Patroclus. She describes her experience of his loss, saying 'I left you alive…but now I find you dead' (ζωὸν μέν σε ἔλειπον ἐγὼ…νῦν δέ σε τεθνηῶτα κιχάνομαι), augmenting this central shock with memories of his kindness and her hopes of marriage to Achilles that have been lost with his death.[428] With the phrase 'thus evil upon evil awaits me always' (ὥς μοι δέχεται κακὸν ἐκ κακοῦ αἰεί), she shows that Patroclus' death has shattered her worldview, which his kindness had been rebuilding after her family's death.[429] Oscillation

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[423] *Il.* 22.477-8. Richardson, 1993: 158 interprets Andromache's comment to mean that her fate relies on Hector's. Zarker, 1965 understands it to mean that Thebes' and Troy's fates are intertwined. Alternatively, Murnaghan, 1999: 215-6 argues that Andromache places herself within a community of suffering, as Dué, 2002: 67-81 also argues that Briseis does at Patroclus' death.
[424] And her identity as a Trojan, as other speeches considering her capture in war suggest. See Murnaghan, 1999: 214-17 for her laments and for the themes of gender and identity in lamentation. See Maiullari, 2016 for an interpretation of how Andromache's major speeches express her post-traumatic state.
[425] *Il.* 24.487-504.
[426] Andromache: *Il.* 24.725-45.
[427] Hecuba: *Il.* 24.747-59; Helen: *Il.* 24.761-75.
[428] *Il.* 19.288-9.
[429] *Il.* 19.290-300. See Edwards, 1991: 267-71; Dué, 2002: 72-6; Coray, 2016: 133-40 for discussion of this passage, its relation to other laments and for references to further relevant literature.

between 'crisis of death' and 'crisis of life' themes characterises Homeric lament and comes to represent the extreme nature of a character's πένθος.

Speeches with lament themes occasionally precede loss events. Andromache and Hector's discussion of Hector's death in *Iliad* 6 explores Andromache's feelings of helplessness and vulnerability before the loss event takes place. That dialogue contrasts with the one between Achilles and Thetis after Patroclus' death. Thetis visits Achilles, assuming that he is experiencing πένθος when she notices him weeping rather than taking retaliatory action on Patroclus' behalf.[430] Elsewhere, Patroclus' death is only said to inspire ἄχος in Achilles, who intends to take retaliatory action against Hector. In their conversation, Achilles instead discusses Thetis' πένθος for him:

> νῦν δ᾽ ἵνα καὶ σοὶ πένθος ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μυρίον εἴη
> παιδὸς ἀποφθιμένοιο, τὸν οὐχ ὑποδέξεαι αὖτις
> οἴκαδε νοστήσαντ᾽, ἐπεὶ οὐδ᾽ ἐμὲ θυμὸς ἄνωγει
> ζώειν οὐδ᾽ ἄνδρεσσι μετέμμεναι, αἴ κε μὴ Ἕκτωρ
> πρῶτος ἐμῷ ὑπὸ δουρὶ τυπεὶς ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὀλέσσῃ,

> And now there must be infinite πένθος in your heart
> for your dying child, for you will not welcome him back,
> him having returned home, since my spirit does not urge me
> to live or to be among men, if Hector does not
> first, stricken by my spear, lose his life. [431]

Achilles imagines Thetis' πένθος at his death, which will follow his revenge against Hector.[432] Thetis will not be able to take retaliatory action on Achilles' behalf. His speech explores the significance of his death for Thetis, who will never welcome her victorious child home, alongside the crisis of life he envisages for himself if he does not kill Hector. In this passage, as in the others I have considered, lament allows characters to express the unbearable nature of both the loss and survival that they encounter when they experience πένθος. Together, they convey the traumatic aspect of πένθος that occurs when an overwhelming event shatters a character's worldview.

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[430] *Il.* 18.64; 18.73. Thetis also describes his emotional response to the loss of Briseis as πένθος (*Il.* 1.362).
[431] *Il.* 18.88-92.
[432] As fated (*Il.* 18.95-6).

2.2.4. πένθος and the shattering of identity

Severe experiences of πένθος have a marked impact on identity. This impact is often expressed by the use of an adjective. One example, as Carmen Morenilla-Talens argues, is πένθος at the death of a child, which employs distinctive formulations (πένθος ἄλαστον and ἄρρητον πένθος) that speak to the traumatic nature of the loss.[433] The adjective ἄλαστον, she argues, 'expands the durative characteristic of πένθος…into infinity,' making it a severe form of πένθος.[434] Epic poetry shows a powerful juxtaposition of πένθος as unforgettable yet also unknowable in Tros' reaction to Ganymede's disappearance:

> Τρῶα δὲ πένθος ἄλαστον ἔχε φρένας, οὐδέ τι ᾔδει
> ὅππῃ οἱ φίλον υἱὸν ἀνήρπασε θέσπις ἄελλα·
>
> But Tros was gripped by unforgettable πένθος in his heart, and
> he did not know
> where the divine whirlwind had abducted his dear child.[435]

Tros both knows and does not know the circumstances of Ganymede's loss. His knowledge that a divine whirlwind snatched away his son reflects the abduction as it is portrayed in this passage. However, this phrase also often acts as a euphemism for a character disappearing under a variety of circumstances including death in epic poetry. Tros' 'unforgettable πένθος', especially combined with this moment of 'knowing and not knowing' that the passage portrays, suggests that his reaction to Ganymedes' loss borders on the traumatic.[436] The 'unforgettable' nature of πένθος associated with the death of a child attests to the irreversible impact that a child's death has on a parent's identity.

The other phrase Morenilla-Talens associates with the death of a child is 'unspeakable πένθος' (ἄρρητον πένθος). This phrase occurs only twice in early Greek hexameter poetry, most notably from Andromache:

> τῶ καί μιν λαοὶ μὲν ὀδύρονται κατὰ ἄστυ,
> ἄρρητον δὲ τοκεῦσι γόον καὶ πένθος ἔθηκας,

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[433] Morenilla-Talens, 1992: 290-292; 296-8.
[434] *Ibid.*: 290.
[435] *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 207-8.
[436] Caruth, 1996: 3.

Ἕκτορ·

> Thus people grieve for him throughout the city,
> and you set mourning and unspeakable πένθος on your parents
> Hector;[437]

Andromache incorporates the πένθος Hector's parents feel into her own lament. She describes their πένθος as 'unspeakable' (ἄρρητον), an attribute that is applicable, Morenilla-Talens suggests, 'either because it exceeds the mode of expression in the language or because it is taboo.'[438] Since expressing πένθος is never taboo in any other context, Morenilla-Talens' first suggestion seems more likely.[439] The concept of an experience exceeding the possibilities of spoken representation is a recurring trope in trauma narratives, and one that defined trauma for many early theorists.[440] Barry Stampfl observes that 'the assertion that language cannot possibly do justice to the enormity of atrocity in itself creates a tension likely to summon forth further attempts at exploration and communication.'[441] Andromache's description of Hector's parents' 'unspeakable πένθος' similarly begins the Trojan women's attempts at representing Hector's death and its significance for them through their fragmented lament. Thus, the two adjectives ἄλαστον and ἄρρητον attest to the severe nature of πένθος at the death of a child and indicate the traumatic effects that such events can have on survivors' identities.

Whilst the phrase πένθος ἄλαστον tends to refer to a parent's πένθος at the death of a child, the *Odyssey* once uses it to mark Penelope's experience of πένθος as unusually severe. Penelope describes her πένθος as 'unforgettable' (using both πένθος ἄλαστον and the expansion ποθέω μεμνημένη αἰεί) and 'beyond measure' (πένθος ἀμέτρητον).[442] Both emphasise the severe nature of Penelope's πένθος, and show that it is disproportionate to

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[437] *Il.* 24.740-2. *Il.* 24.741=17.37.
[438] Morenilla-Talens, 1992: 296-7.
[439] Although we cannot draw strong conclusions from one example.
[440] See Caruth, 1995: 152-4; 1996: 3-5; Leys, 2000: 266-7; Roth, 2012: 77-84; Stampfl, 2014: 15-25 for the trope of unspeakability in trauma and trauma narratives.
[441] Stampfl, 2014: 22.
[442] πένθος ἄλαστον...ποθέω μεμνημένη αἰεί: *Od.* 1.342-3; πένθος ἀμέτρητον: *Od.* 19.512. Cf. Hes. *Theog.* 98-103, in which the narrator claims that a poet can make even 'one holding πένθος in his freshly-grieved spirit...forget his sorrows' (πένθος ἔχων νεοκηδέι θυμῷ...οὐδέ τι κηδέων //μέμνηται).

the loss of a husband, as Morenilla-Talens argues, because it prevents her from remarrying.[443] Odysseus' loss disrupts Penelope's sense of self throughout the *Odyssey*. Following a passage describing her behaviour as a result of her πένθος,[444] she notably explores her unstable identity through the myth of the nightingale, whose loyalties to husband and son come into conflict in myth.[445] She considers the relationships that govern her behaviour and questions whether her obligations to her husband or son should take precedence. Her speech shows that the loss of her husband has fragmented the integrity of her identity as wife and mother; two complementary aspects of female identity in the Homeric world have come into conflict with Odysseus' loss. Severe πένθος thus marks suffering that disrupts identity, which is a key quality of a traumatic response.

Finally, the epic uses one further adjective, 'unendurable' (ἄτλητος), to mark experiences of severe πένθος. In *Iliad* 9, the Achaeans experience a night of terror that disrupts their sense of collective identity:[446]

> θεσπεσίη ἔχε φύζα, φόβου κρυόεντος ἑταίρη,
> πένθεϊ δ' ἀτλήτῳ βεβολήατο πάντες ἄριστοι.

> Divine Panic, companion of chilling Terror, gripped them,
> and all the best were stricken with unendurable πένθος.[447]

The epic indicates the strength of the Achaeans' πένθος with the use of the violent verb βολέω as well as the adjective ἄτλητος. In this instance, the adjective marks the breakdown of collective identity as a result of this overwhelming event, leading to a re-evaluation of the Achaeans' purpose in the following assembly.[448] The mention of Panic's relationship to Terror emphasises the irrationality of the men's response and the overwhelming nature of their emotions; indeed, if this can still be called a loss event, πένθος is a response to a loss

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[443] Morenilla-Talens, 1992: 292-3.
[444] *Od.* 19.513-7.
[445] *Od.* 19.518-34. Russo *et al.*, 1992: 100; Felson, 1994: 30-1; Anhalt, 2001-2; Levaniouk, 2011: 214-28 discuss the significance of the nightingale myth. Anhalt, 2001-2: 148-9 and Levaniouk, 2011: 214-20 note that Penelope's reference to the nightingale refer to stories about Aedon or Procne.
[446] For other instances in which πένθος is said to affect all the Achaeans, see *Il.* 1.254; 7.124. For an instance in which, according to Deiphobus, πένθος would affect Agamemnon if the Achaeans are slain, see *Il.* 4.417.
[447] *Il.* 9.2-3.
[448] See 4.2 for assemblies as a response to events that challenge collective identity.

of reason.[449] The word πένθος thus serves as a suitable emotional response to this event as it conveys a sense of the vulnerability and helplessness that overwhelms the Achaeans, leaving them incapable of action or rational response.

Conclusion

Homeric πένθος generally describes a persistent emotional state after an overwhelming event. Greek hexameter poetry rarely describes the moment at which πένθος is first experienced. Instead πένθος occurs in contexts that explore an event's impact on a character's identity. This makes it difficult to characterise the behaviour associated with πένθος or trace its origins. However, the evidence suggests that πένθος works upon characters in notably different ways to ἄχος. While ἄχος is an effective force, πένθος does not compel a character to action. πένθος focuses the narrative on a character's emotional state and often occurs in performative contexts that explore the impact of a loss on a character's identity, such as laments. With πένθος fulfilling a different role in the narrative, ἄχος and πένθος sometimes occur together and can both be used to refer to emotional reactions in the aftermath of one and the same overwhelming event. More severe forms of πένθος are indicated by the use of adjectives emphasising the persistent or disruptive elements of the emotional response, and it is these qualities along with its ability to shatter identity that allow πένθος to be categorised with other traumatic reactions.

2.3 τλάω/τολμάω

Introduction

In the previous sections, I discussed ἄχος and πένθος as emotional responses to overwhelming events, which are sometimes indicated by such words as πῆμα and ἄλγος. I argued that epic portrays some instances of ἄχος and πένθος as ordinary human responses to suffering and others as unusual or severe responses. In the final section of this chapter, I consider endurance, indicated by the verbs τλάω and τολμάω, as one further response to

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[449] For other instances in which πένθος occurs in response to mental images or other overwhelming emotions, see *Od.* 10.374-6 and *Od.* 23.223-4 respectively.

overwhelming events. I discuss these verbs in conjunction with an idea that has thus far received almost no recognition in discussions of trauma in the ancient world:[450] the concept of resilience.

Resilience is a non-pathological response to events that others might perceive as traumatic. Although the term is used in various ways, Luthar *et al.*'s description of it as a 'dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity' has underpinned most research on resilience in the twenty-first century.[451] Before this point, resilience was often considered an innate quality belonging to an individual.[452] In this section, I consider whether epic uses τλάω or τολμάω to describe an innate trait that characters possess or an attitude that characters adopt when faced with adverse circumstances.

Resilience is, of course, a modern concept and, like traumatisation, is not exactly equivalent to any single concept in the Homeric epics. However, Luthar *et al.*'s definition of resilience quite accurately describes the role that verbs denoting endurance play in epic poetry. Both τλάω and τολμάω indicate a character's response to an event that could potentially be overwhelming. Their meanings range from 'endure/bear' and 'stand firm' to 'dare' and 'bring oneself to do something.'[453] Homeric characters, I argue, often experience sociocultural pressure to present an attitude of endurance when faced with a potentially overwhelming event. The verb τλάω mostly occurs in speech, where characters make claims about their own or others' ability to adopt this attitude and internal audiences

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[450] Only Melchior, 2011 and Crowley, 2014 have begun to engage with questions related to resilience in classics, and only Crowley uses the use the word 'resilience' (115), although this is the psychological term for the process he describes. I believe that it is important to acknowledge the concept of resilience alongside that of traumatisation in order to recognise how sociocultural factors can positively affect, as well as negatively influence, the perception of events.

[451] Luthar *et al.*, 2000: 543.

[452] See Ungar, 2011; 2013 and Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012 for definitions of resilience and overviews of relevant literature.

[453] For these definitions, see *LfgrE*: 553-8 (τλάω); 575 (τολμάω). The form τλάω is not attested in hexameter epic, but I refer to the dictionary form for clarity's sake. See Chantraine, 1968: 1088-1090 for etymology and meaning. Pucci, 1987: 46-9 emphasises that words with the τλα- / τλη- root can have the meaning 'dare,' and that this meaning predominates in the *Iliad*. In the *Odyssey*, the meaning 'endure' seems more common.

judge them on their success. Gods, men and women all make claims about endurance, but different characters are held to different standards. Characters also exhort others or themselves to endure in times of trouble. Those characters that successfully endure potentially overwhelming events tend to adopt perspectives that normalise those events. They then experience fewer negative emotional reactions to them.

2.3.1. Exhibiting endurance with τλάω/τολμάω

The verbs τλάω and τολμάω indicate a character's response to an overwhelming event. Unlike ἄχος and πένθος, this response is not an emotional one. Instead, epic poetry uses these verbs to indicate that characters have adopted an attitude of forbearance in the face of adversity. On the battlefield, characters adopt such an attitude in response to severe physical threats, as when, for example, Diomedes engages in a strategic partnership with Odysseus with the words 'I will stand and endure with you' (ἤτοι ἐγὼ μενέω καὶ τλήσομαι).[454] Odysseus perceives the threat that the Trojans will take the Achaean ships and makes Diomedes aware of the danger. Diomedes agrees to stand and fight using the verbs τλάω and μένω in a phrase that pairs the attitude of forbearance with a sense of physically remaining in the same place.[455] Both characters are aware that they expose themselves to further danger by remaining in place. Characters thus use the verb τλάω to indicate an attitude of endurance, and the behaviour that such an attitude requires, when faced with an overwhelming event.

As in the example above, these verbs often occur in character speech. Speech is an important medium for attitudes of forbearance, because it points to the social context that regulates such attitudes, as this passage shows:

> τῷ οὐ νεμεσίζομ᾽ Ἀχαιοὺς
> ἀσχαλάαν παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔμπης
> αἰσχρόν τοι δηρόν τε μένειν κενεόν τε νέεσθαι.
> τλῆτε, φίλοι, καὶ μείνατ᾽ ἐπὶ χρόνον, ὄφρα δαῶμεν,

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[454] *Il.* 11.317.
[455] For the Iliadic character of this phrase, see Pucci, 1987: 66-7.

εἰ ἐτεὸν Κάλχας μαντεύεται ἠὲ καὶ οὐκί.

> Therefore I am not angry with the Achaeans
> that they are impatient beside the curved ships, but all the same
> it is disgraceful to wait a long time and return home empty handed.
> Endure, friends, and stay for a time so that we may learn
> whether Calchas prophesies truly or not.[456]

In this speech, Nestor perceives and acknowledges a threat to Achaean interests, which in this case the Achaeans themselves pose. In having Nestor do so, the epic shows that endurance is not, like ἄχος or πένθος, an instinctive response to an event. Endurance, again represented by a combination of τλάω and μένω, is a learned attitude and behaviour that allows characters to meet a threat, although it may also put them in further danger. Nestor reinforces his argument with a reminder of the social judgement associated with failure in war.[457] This indicates an attitude that is not instinctively part of a character's response to danger, but is valued within Homeric society.

Characters can win themselves respect among both allies and enemies by exhibiting endurance in the face of danger. Endurance is valued by all cultures in Homeric epic and in fact, as I discuss further below, is a defining characteristic of humankind. Men increase or decrease their glory in their own eyes (κῦδος) or the respect they receive from others (τιμή) by how much endurance they demonstrate.[458] Athena, for example, promises 'glory and gratitude from all the Trojans' (πᾶσι…Τρώεσσι χάριν καὶ κῦδος) to the man that dares (τλαίης) shoot Menelaus, and Hector promises that a man would be 'winning glory for himself' (αὐτῷ κῦδος ἄροιτο) if he dared (τλαίη) to scout the Achaean camp.[459] As Hector prepares for his final battle with Achilles, he tells Deiphobus/Athena: 'I intend even now still more to honour you in my heart, who on account of me…dared to come out from the walls' (νῦν δ' ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον νοέω φρεσὶ τιμήσασθαι, //ὃς ἔτλης ἐμέῠ εἴνεκ'…τείχεος

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[456] *Il.* 2.296-300.
[457] Conversely, at *Il.* 13.829-30, Hector threatens Ajax with death if he displays a forbearing attitude.
[458] See Anastassiou, 1973: 190-1; Redfield, 1994: 33-4; and Scodel, 2008: 25-6 for the meaning of κῦδος. A link between honour and endurance also occurs during oath swearing: *Od.* 5.178; 10.343; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 79; *Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 518.
[459] Athena: *Il.* 4.94-5; Hector: *Il.* 10.307-8.

ἐξελθεῖν).[460] The respect conveyed by τιμήσασθαι is not the same as κῦδος, but emphasises the personal value Hector places on his brother's actions.[461] Similarly, a man 'who dares to come opposite [Achilles]' (ὅ μευ ἔτλης ἀντίος ἐλθεῖν) prompts the renowned warrior to enquire after his name and fatherland, earning him some small measure of glory.[462] Moreover, Priam and Achilles both acknowledge the old king's exceptional daring and endurance when he visits Achilles in his camp.[463] All mortals of good character recognise the value of endurance and judge those that display it well.

Further supporting the idea that Homeric endurance is a socially valuable response to an overwhelming event is Achilles' reaction to Patroclus' death. As discussed in previous sections, Patroclus' death is an overwhelming event for Achilles and causes him to experience severe ἄχος that he cannot dispel through retaliatory action. During this period, Achilles claims he is displaying endurance:

> μή με πρὶν σίτοιο κελεύετε μηδὲ ποτῆτος
> ἄσασθαι φίλον ἦτορ, ἐπεί μ᾿ ἄχος αἰνὸν ἱκάνει.
> δύντα δ᾿ ἐς ἠέλιον μενέω καὶ τλήσομαι ἔμπης."

> Don't urge me first to satisfy my dear heart
> with food or drink, since terrible ἄχος comes over me,
> but all the same I will stay and endure until the sun sets.[464]

In this passage, Achilles exhibits staying power (μένω and τλάω again) despite refusing food and drink. His endurance does not prevent him from experiencing severe ἄχος; the two coexist as responses to a single event. Instead, Achilles' attitude of forbearance in this passage acts as a tribute to honour Patroclus and many prominent Achaean leaders stay (μενέτην) with him as a mark of respect for both men.[465] These other Achaean leaders do not experience the same depth of ἄχος or perform such extreme acts of endurance as

[460] *Il.* 22.235-7.
[461] See Scodel, 2008: 12 for this passage. For the honour code in Homeric epic, see Cairns, 1993: 48-146; Yamagata, 1994: 121-232; Redfield, 1994: 113-9; Scodel, 2008: 1-30.
[462] *Il.* 21.150.
[463] Priam: *Il.* 24.519; Achilles: *Il.* 24.505-6.
[464] *Il.* 19.306-8.
[465] Although they all eat (*Il.* 19.225-34) and only the Achaean leaders stay after the meal (*Il.* 19.310-2). See Griffin, 1980: 15-17 for fasting as an expression of extreme grief in epic.

Achilles. The passage thus confirms that endurance is not a replacement for other emotional responses to an overwhelming event, but a behaviour that members of Homeric communities choose to exhibit in order to cope with such an event.

Mortal characters often adopt an attitude of forbearance as a response to divinely sent suffering. As I have discussed previously, Homeric characters consider suffering inevitable when it is attributed to the gods. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter,* two characters exhibit their understanding of the proper mortal attitude towards suffering in conversation with Demeter, who is disguised as an old female servant:

> Μαῖα θεῶν μὲν δῶρα καὶ ἀχνύμενοί περ ἀνάγκη
> τέτλαμεν ἄνθρωποι· δὴ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰσιν.

> Mother, the gifts of the gods, though distressed and against our will
> we human beings endure; for they are better indeed by far.

> ἀλλὰ θεῶν μὲν δῶρα καὶ ἀχνύμενοί περ ἀνάγκη
> τέτλαμεν ἄνθρωποι· ἐπὶ γὰρ ζυγὸς αὐχένι κεῖται.

> But the gifts of the gods, though distressed and against our will
> we human beings endure; for a yoke lies on our neck.[466]

Characters adopt an attitude of forbearance in response to painful events that provoke an emotional response (here ἀχνύμενοι) and a feeling of helplessness (the event happens ἀνάγκη).[467] In this case, events that cause suffering are reframed as 'gifts' (δῶρα) from the gods, casting mortals as blessed recipients of divine favour. The characters rationalise their attitude towards such events in two ways; the gods, who send such gifts are superior (πολὺ φέρτεροι) to mortals, and men are held under constraint (ἐπὶ γὰρ ζυγὸς αὐχένι κεῖται).[468] This perspective allows characters to give overwhelming events meaning; suffering may be painful and unfairly distributed, but it is part of being mortal. By suffering, and by adopting the conventional attitude of forbearance in response, characters indicate that they

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[466] *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 148-9; 217-8. The *Odyssey*'s Eurycleia is a similar figure also characterised by her age and experiences of suffering (*Od.* 16.346-7).
[467] See *Od.* 16.275 for a similar sentiment: Odysseus counsels Telemachus to endure in the face of behaviour that might provoke νέμεσις.
[468] At *Od.* 3.209 and 6.190, the epic also uses χρή with an infinitive to express compulsion to endure without specifying an agent.

are part of the mortal community. In these contexts, the speakers recognise the shared misery of human suffering to establish a relationship with a stranger, and their devout and forbearing attitude marks them in turn as people of good character.

Odysseus similarly uses the Homeric perception of forbearance as a valuable attribute to establish himself as a man of good character. When Odysseus gives an account of his suffering to the Phaeacians, he highlights the critical moments where he chooses to exhibit endurance:[469]

> αὐτὰρ ἐγώγε
> ἐγρόμενος κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονα μερμήριξα,
> ἠὲ πεσὼν ἐκ νηὸς ἀποφθίμην ἐνὶ πόντῳ,
> ἦ ἀκέων τλαίην καὶ ἔτι ζωοῖσι μετείην.
> ἀλλ’ ἔτλην καὶ ἔμεινα,

> And I indeed,
> awakening, pondered in my blameless heart,
> whether, falling out of the ship, I should perish in the sea,
> or endure in silence and continue remaining among the living.
> But I endured and remained,[470]

Odysseus presents this moment of danger as a choice between death or endurance and thereby frames the scene as proof of his good character under pressure. This heightens the dramatic potential of the moment for his audience, although the effect is somewhat limited by the fact that Odysseus narrates the story as he is safe and well among the Phaeacians.[471] He presents himself as facing a choice between drowning at sea and enduring in silence.[472] His use of the verb τλάω suggests that he deliberately adopted an enduring attitude and behaviour and, when Odysseus repeats the verb at the moment that he makes his choice, he suggests that he has actively contributed to his own survival. He thus takes a moment in which events rendered him helpless and converts it into a heroic story of survival in which

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[469] A character's choice to endure contributes to their good character (e.g. Telemachus at *Od*. 1.288 and 2.219). When a character must endure out of necessity (e.g. Odysseus' encounter with Alcinous at *Od*. 11.350), it highlights their helplessness and the extent of their suffering.

[470] *Od*. 10.49-53.

[471] Although his death-defying journey to the Phaeacians did also include a moment when Odysseus was required to show endurance to ensure his safety (*Od*. 5.361-4). See Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 45 for an overview of deliberation scenes.

[472] Although as de Jong, 2001: 252 notes, it follows the normal order of internal deliberation scenes by presenting first the emotional and then the rational option.

he can be admired for his steadfast attitude.[473] Odysseus' presentation of this moment shows both the value of an enduring attitude in Homeric poetry and that Odysseus recognises the value of presenting himself as a man capable of enduring overwhelming events.

Odysseus' talent for viewing events as opportunities for exhibiting endurance feeds into his characterisation as a man with an unusual capacity for endurance. The epic most frequently characterises Odysseus as 'much-enduring' (πολύτλας), an epithet that emphasises his ability to not respond to events with emotional and instinctive actions.[474] This ability then complements his other major epithet, 'of many devices' (πολύμητις), which enables him to take positive and rational action when faced with a potentially overwhelming event.[475] When Odysseus speaks about his endurance, he gives an indication of the basis for his unusual ability in that area:

> εἰ δ' αὖ τις ῥαίῃσι θεῶν ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ,
> τλήσομαι ἐν στήθεσσιν ἔχων ταλαπενθέα θυμόν·
> ἤδη γὰρ μάλα πολλ' ἔπαθον καὶ πολλ' ἐμόγησα
> κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ· μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω."

> And if one of the gods shall wreck me again on the wine-dark sea,
> I will endure, bearing in my breast a spirit patient in woe;
> for already I have suffered very much and toiled much
> in the waves and in battle: and let this be with that."[476]

Here, Odysseus looks towards the danger that awaits him when he leaves Calypso. He states that he will adopt an attitude of forbearance if danger occurs, claiming that he has a 'spirit patient in woe' (ἔχων ταλαπενθέα θυμόν). Odysseus never applies the epithet

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[473] As Pucci, 1987: 71 argues, Odysseus' account 'amplifies what must have been, at the moment, a bitter gesture of silent resignation and give vocal and ethical magnitude to a silence and stillness that must then have been signs of utter defeat.'

[474] The *Iliad* does not use the epithet πολύτλας, but instead describes Odysseus as 'enduring Odysseus…for the spirit in his breast was always daring' (ὁ τλήμων Ὀδυσεὺς…αἰεὶ γάρ οἱ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἐτόλμα), using τολμάω to explain the meaning of the epithet τλήμων (*Il.* 10.231-2). See also *Od.* 9.322, where the poet uses τολμάω to characterise Odysseus' attitude in the attack on the Cyclops.

[475] See *Od.* 18-24, where Odysseus tells himself to endure as he endured in the Cyclops' cave until cunning (μῆτις) led him out. For μῆτις and πολύμητις, see Detienne & Vernant, 1978: 18; 30-3; Pucci, 1987; Goldhill, 1991: 32-6 for their application in the *Odyssey*.

[476] *Od.* 5.221-4.

πολύτλας to himself,[477] but the passage I have just quoted resonates with that epithet. The compound ταλαπενθέα, which comes from the same roots as τλάω and πένθος, suggests a personal perspective on the more usual πολύτλας; while the latter focuses on Odysseus' endurance, the former also signals the suffering that follows an overwhelming event.[478] Odysseus rationalises his endurance in several ways. He points to the gods as the cause of his suffering (and glosses the event as one of many ἄλγεα when it occurs),[479] interpreting the event in a context in which suffering is inevitable and out of his control unless he chooses to endure.[480] He also categorises his suffering as one of a kind.[481] In characterising himself as the type of man who endures, Odysseus makes experiencing suffering integral to his identity. His ability to endure becomes a source of resilience in times of danger, nullifying any individual event's potential to shatter his identity.

Odysseus' ability to endure becomes an important part of his identity in the oral accounts of his deeds circulating in the Homeric world. Homeric epic defines itself as the 'deeds of gods and men, which the singers celebrate' (ἔργ᾽ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, τά τε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί).[482] Singers, inspired by the Muses, sing about the notable actions of courageous men. As the bardic songs amongst the Phaeacians show, Odysseus' actions in the Trojan War have earned him a place in the bardic tradition.[483] Ruth Scodel argues for seeing a strong distinction between bardic and non-bardic oral narratives; bardic song, she asserts, is a dispassionate record of men's deeds that comes from the gods, whilst non-bardic narratives are by nature subjective and limited perspectives on events told with a particular

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[477] The epithet is applied to Odysseus in relation to this event at *Od.* 5.171; 354 & 486. It is used five times of Odysseus in the *Iliad* and thirty-seven times in the *Odyssey*.

[478] For the compound ταλαπενθής, see Mawet, 1976: 256-7; for πένθος, pp. 117-33 above.

[479] *Od.* 5.302.

[480] Mawet, 1976: 257 claims that there is an opposition between the idea of voluntary choice in lines 221-2 and passive suffering in lines 223-4. While I would agree that this passage represents a moment of choice, I believe Odysseus' acceptance and normalisation of suffering suffuses all four lines.

[481] In Homeric epic, the concept of waves and battle, which is used to describe Odysseus' suffering throughout the poem (*Od.* 8.182-3 with τλάω; *Od.* 17.285 with τολμάω; *Od.* 13.91; 13.246 as a claim about ἄλγεα), can be read as a metapoetic synecdoche for all human experience: Achilles demonstrates its use as synecdoche when he applies it during mourning to mean everything he and Patroclus have experienced together (*Il.* 24.8).

[482] *Od.* 1.338. See Scodel, 1998 for an overview of bardic narrative in epic poetry and other key passages.

[483] Bardic songs featuring Odysseus: *Od.* 8. 73-82; 499-520.

motive.[484] These non-bardic personal testimonies, I suggest, also differentiate themselves from bardic narratives by placing instances of endurance on a par with the heroic deeds of bardic song.[485] When they recount Odysseus' exploits at Troy, Helen and Menelaus speak of the things that Odysseus 'did and endured' (ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη).[486] Their eyewitness accounts include their personal experiences of suffering that find no place in bardic song. In the passage quoted above, Odysseus says that he has 'suffered much and toiled much' (πολλ' ἔπαθον καὶ πολλ' ἐμόγησα).[487] Just as Odysseus approaches the traditional characterisation of himself as πολύτλας from a personal perspective using non-traditional phrasing, he similarly uses his personal account to introduce his experience of suffering into the epic tradition. Endurance becomes thematic in the *Odyssey*, and a notable human exploit in itself, due to the amount of personal testimony incorporated into the epic.

As the *Odyssey* presents Odysseus' ability to endure as his defining characteristic, so the epic itself comes to be defined by the value it places on suffering and endurance. In a scene pitching Iliadic values against Odyssean ones, Odysseus' endurance sets him apart from the Iliadic heroes he meets in the underworld. Achilles, the most prominent Iliadic warrior, asks him:

> σχέτλιε, τίπτ' ἔτι μεῖζον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μήσεαι ἔργον;
> πῶς ἔτλης Ἄϊδόσδε κατελθέμεν, ἔνθα τε νεκροὶ
> ἀφραδέες ναίουσι, βροτῶν εἴδωλα καμόντων;"

> Unwearying man, what even greater deed will you contrive in your mind?
> How could you dare to come down to Hades, where the senseless
> dead dwell, phantoms of mortals that have toiled?[488]

Achilles describes Odysseus' descent into the underworld as a greater 'deed' (ἔργον) than those he completed at Troy, highlighting the amount of endurance such a feat would require. With this act, Odysseus overcomes the boundary between life and death that

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[484] Scodel, 1998: 186.
[485] Bardic song can find it difficult to speak about what a character endured as well as what they achieved (e.g. *Od.* 8.517-20). For further discussion of this passage, see pp. 176-7.
[486] Helen: *Od.* 4.242; Menelaus: *Od.* 4.271.
[487] *Od.* 5.223.
[488] *Od.* 11.474-6.

Achilles struggled against in the *Iliad*. This passage suggests that Odysseus achieves greater deeds in the *Odyssey* through endurance than the heroes of the *Iliad* did through action.[489] Moreover, Odysseus narrates this story to the Phaeacians as a response to Alcinous' request to hear more 'if you could endure to tell me…about your suffering' (ὅτε μοι σὺ //τλαίης…τὰ σὰ κήδεα μυθήσασθαι).[490] The whole episode contained within Odysseus' personal account of his suffering and events in Hades can only be narrated because Odysseus has descended into that realm and returned to give his eyewitness testimony.[491] Odysseus' ability to endure distinguishes him from other epic heroes of his generation and, although not a bard, gives him the power to shape narratives about his exploits.

The evidence thus far suggests that endurance is a characteristic of human beings. Mortals value other characters that exhibit endurance in the face of suffering sent by the gods. An attitude of endurance marks characters out as members of the mortal community; and, whilst the bardic song that originates with the gods values deeds (ἔργα), mortal characters view their suffering as an integral part of their testimonies about their personal experiences. The gods, however, occasionally adopt this essentially mortal register when they want to emphasise the challenges they too must face. Hephaestus begs Hera to endure Zeus' behaviour 'though being distressed' (κηδομένη περ) during the domestic feasting scene in *Iliad* 1.[492] Thetis presents her forbearance as a response to the κήδεα and ἄλγεα Zeus caused her with her marriage to a mortal.[493] These instances illustrate that Zeus' authority over the gods is as absolute as the gods' authority over mortals,[494] a message that Iris reinforces when she warns Athena against showing an attitude of daring that

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[489] Odysseus' daring puts him into the company of such notable men as Heracles, who previously entered the underworld whilst still alive with divine aid (*Od.* 11.601-26). See Nagy, 1999: 34-41 for competition between rival Trojan War traditions.

[490] *Od.* 11.375-6. See also *Od.* 11.350-1 for finishing the story as an act of endurance.

[491] Gazis, 2018: 92-4 argues that Homer allows epic to see into Hades, which the gods (and Muse) cannot usually do, by allowing Odysseus to enter and return with an eyewitness account.

[492] *Il.* 1.586.

[493] *Il.* 18.433. See Slatkin, 1991: 55-6 for a discussion of this passage and Thetis' relationship to mortals.

[494] Zeus endures only when Hera rebukes him for giving birth to Athena without her (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 322), an action which reinforced Zeus' power and the cosmic order, as Brown, 1952 and Clay, 1989: 11-3 discuss.

contravenes Zeus' will.[495] After the scene in which Diomedes wounds Aphrodite, the epic

plays with the inverted power dynamic by having Dione counsel her daughter thus:

> τέτλαθι, τέκνον ἐμόν, καὶ ἀνάσχεο κηδομένη περ.
> πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ τλῆμεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες
> ἐξ ἀνδρῶν, χαλέπ' ἄλγε' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι τιθέντες.
>
> Endure, my child, and bear it, though you are distressed.
> For many of us who have homes on Olympus must bear them
> from men, the difficult ἄλγεα which we set on each other.[496]

Dione adopts the language and tone of mortal speech about suffering, taking the usual

tropes about the mortal lot and applying them to the gods. She reverses the normal

relationship, bestowing on mortals the power to dispense ἄλγεα and defining the immortals

as those who receive ἄλγεα from mortals, citing times when this has happened before.[497]

Yet, even in this moment of light relief in the midst of battle, Dione acknowledges that the

ultimate source of ἄλγεα for gods is other gods. When Ares seriously asks Zeus why gods

must bear injury from mortals, he is swiftly and severely rebuked.[498] Discussion about

endurance among the gods thus serves to reinforce rather than challenge usual mortal

attitudes towards suffering and endurance.

2.3.2. Exhibiting endurance 'with enduring heart' (τετληότι θυμῷ)

The formulaic phrase 'with enduring heart' (τετληότι θυμῷ) encapsulates the attitude of

forbearance I have explored in the section above. It indicates a socially valued and socially

situated attitude of forbearance that mortal characters adopt when they experience an

overwhelming event. The attitude does not prevent characters from experiencing pain, but

does suggest that they have adopted a resilient perspective on events that prevents their

worldview from shattering. The phrase, which always appears at the end of a line, is

unique to the *Odyssey*, reinforcing the idea that forbearance takes on a significant thematic

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[495] *Il.* 8.421-4. Kirk, 1990: 330-2 examines this passage in detail.
[496] *Il.* 5.382-4.
[497] ἄλγεα in Dione's speech: *Il.* 5.384; 394. See Kirk, 1990: 99-104 for details of the parallels Dione cites; Sammons, 2010: 24-38 for an interpretation of how Dione's speech, which he interprets as a catalogue, helps to define the epic narrative.
[498] *Il.* 5.872-4.

role in that epic. Some characters consider it to signal a personal attribute that characterizes their behaviour. At the same time, the phrase serves to indicate the process of perceiving a threat, choosing to endure and facing the threat with this attitude in place. When indicating the process a character undergoes when choosing to display resilience, this phrase refers in a condensed form to episodes that have been fully elaborated elsewhere.[499] By presenting endurance as both an innate characteristic and an attitude a character adopts, this phrase shows the versatility of endurance as a response to an overwhelming event.

The phrase τετληότι θυμῷ describes a mortal attitude towards suffering adopted as a response to overwhelming events. This passage, in which Odysseus confronts Amphinomos whilst disguised as a beggar, illustrates the various relationships that govern it:

> οὐδὲν ἀκιδνότερον γαῖα τρέφει ἀνθρώποιο
> πάντων, ὅσσα τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει τε καὶ ἕρπει.
> οὐ μὲν γάρ ποτέ φησι κακὸν πείσεσθαι ὀπίσσω,
> ὄφρ᾽ ἀρετὴν παρέχωσι θεοὶ καὶ γούνατ᾽ ὀρώρῃ·
> ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ καὶ λυγρὰ θεοὶ μάκαρες τελέωσι,
> καὶ τὰ φέρει ἀεκαζόμενος τετληότι θυμῷ.
> τοῖος γὰρ νόος ἐστὶν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων,
> οἷον ἐπ᾽ ἦμαρ ἄγῃσι πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

> Nothing weaker does the earth rear than man
> of everything that breathes and walks upon the earth.
> For he thinks that he will not ever suffer evil hereafter,
> while the gods grant him excellence and his knees have power to move;
> but when the blessed gods also have executed miserable things,
> even this he bears against his will with enduring heart.
> For such is the mind of men upon the earth,
> as the father of gods and men leads it by the day.[500]

This passage provides justification for the opening statement that mortal men are the weakest creatures on earth. The justification rests on the speaker's perception of the relationship between men and gods. As usual within the framework of mortal suffering, the gods bestow good and evil upon men, who can only respond to the fate that is meted out to

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[499] The concept of 'resonance', which I discuss on p. 37, explains how such links work in epic poetry.
[500] *Od.* 18.130-7.

them. The speech presents mortals as miserable, because they are helpless in the face of divine power and must meet whatever each day brings with equanimity.[501] When times are good, the speaker claims, mortals cannot imagine the misery that will undoubtedly follow. When misery (κακόν; λυγρά) strikes, the only tool at mankind's command is endurance. Men are helpless to change their fate in either case, but may change their disposition to match what the gods send. The phrase τὰ φέρει ἀεκαζόμενος briefly asserts man's natural reluctance at this state of affairs, before returning to passive acceptance with τετληότι θυμῷ and the emphasis on the distance between mortals and Zeus in lines 136-7. The passage thus presents the attitude described by the phrase τετληότι θυμῷ as both a characterising trait of humankind and an essential response to divinely dispensed suffering, a matter that is particularly close to Odysseus' heart as he confronts the interlopers in his house.

Whilst Odysseus uses the phrase to indicate the attitude of mortals to suffering in the passage above, only three individual characters (Odysseus, Penelope and Menelaus) act 'with enduring heart' (τετληότι θυμῷ) in the epic. With so few characters displaying this attitude towards suffering, it becomes a significant characteristic. With Odysseus, who is characterised by his enduring attitude throughout the *Odyssey*, the epic uses the phrase to evoke stories of endurance that are fully elaborated elsewhere, as this passage shows:

> αὐτὰρ ὁ τέως μὲν ἐτόλμα ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἑοῖσι
> βαλλόμενος καὶ ἐνισσόμενος τετληότι θυμῷ·
>
> He for a time endured in his own halls
> being struck and reproached with enduring heart.[502]

The suitors' spirits use the phrase to indicate all of Odysseus' experiences narrated in *Odyssey* 17-21. Odysseus himself uses τετληότι θυμῷ in a similar way when narrating his escape from the Cyclops:

> αὐτὰρ χερσὶν ἀώτου θεσπεσίοιο

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[501] See Russo *et al.,* 1992: 55-6 for a discussion of this passage.
[502] *Od.* 24.162-3.

νωλεμέως στρεφθεὶς ἐχόμην τετληότι θυμῷ.

But twisted in my hands its wondrous fleece
I held unceasingly with enduring heart.[503]

In this instance, τετληότι θυμῷ occurs as a gloss before Odysseus later recalls the episode in more detail during a conversation with his heart that marks the moment he chooses to endure the suitors' behaviour. At that later point, he reminds his heart how it 'endured until cunning led you out of the cave thinking that you would die' (σὺ δ᾽ ἐτόλμας, ὄφρα σε μῆτις //ἐξάγαγ᾽ ἐξ ἄντροιο ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι) and his heart responds by 'enduring unceasingly' (τετληυῖα //νωλεμέως).[504] The extensive use of τλάω and τολμάω, and the repeated use of νωλεμέως in the same position in the line resonate with the earlier version of the story, highlighting the fact that this is a direct retelling of the Cyclops story. When used to describe Odysseus' attitude, this language is valuable for the links it makes between episodes in Odysseus' *nostos*, reinforcing his characterisation as a man of exceptional endurance.

When used to describe Penelope's attitude, on the other hand, the same language establishes a link between her character and her husband's. Using the language of endurance to describe Penelope shows the relationship between her story and the lives of the other participants in the Trojan War. Penelope exhibits endurance when she is beset by suitors in Odysseus' absence; while Odysseus is away laying siege to Troy, she is under siege at home on Ithaca. Anticlea's spirit and Eumaeus both describe Penelope as exhibiting endurance whilst waiting for Odysseus:

καὶ λίην κείνη γε μένει τετληότι θυμῷ
σοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν·

That woman also for a long time waits with enduring heart
in your halls; [505]

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[503] *Od.* 9.434-5.
[504] *Od.* 20.20-1; 20.23-4. See Pucci, 1987: 74-7; Russo *et al.*, 1992: 108-10; Barnouw, 2004: 7-15 for discussions of this internal deliberation scene.
[505] *Od.* 11.181-2=16.37-8.

Jeffrey Barnouw recognises that 'the use of this phrase [τετληότι θυμῷ] associates the external actions of heroes and Penelope's patience.'[506] The verbs μένω and τλάω, together evoking an Iliadic description of combat, give a sense of the real danger Penelope faces and highlight the 'unity of mind' (ὁμοφροσύνη) that Odysseus insists should exist between husband and wife in the ideal marriage.[507] Penelope retains her forbearing attitude after her reunion with Telemachus and Odysseus, leading them to question her response when her fortune has improved:

> οὐ μέν κ' ἄλλη γ' ὧδε γυνὴ τετληότι θυμῷ
> ἀνδρὸς ἀποσταίη, ὅς οἱ κακὰ πολλὰ μογήσας
> ἔλθοι ἐεικοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν·

> No other woman with such an enduring heart
> would stand apart from her husband, who, having suffered many evils,
> returned in the twentieth year to his fatherland;[508]

Endurance is not an absolute good but must be judged in relation to an individual's circumstances. Penelope's endurance beyond the return of Odysseus is in danger of isolating her from socially acceptable standards of behavior, on the one hand. On the other hand, her caution allows the epic to continue exhibiting her similarities with Odysseus, who remained wary upon his return to Ithaca,[509] and provides the opportunity for her to test Odysseus' identity.[510] Just as Odysseus is πολύτλας and πολύμητις, so Penelope remains forbearing until she has proven her husband's identity. Thus, the use of the formula τετληότι θυμῷ allows the epic to reflect upon the socially bounded nature of endurance while at the same time promoting recognition of the similarities between the characters and experiences of Penelope and Odysseus during their reunion.

The *Odyssey*, then, uses the phrase τετληότι θυμῷ to describe two of its most prominent characters. The third and final character to whom the epic applies this phrase is Menelaus.

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[506] Barnouw, 2004: 93.
[507] *Od.* 6.181-4. For ὁμοφροσύνη, see Garvie, 1994: 127.
[508] *Od.* 23.100-2=168-70.
[509] As displayed in his encounter with Athena (*Od.* 13.250-95).
[510] *Od.* 23. 181. Felson, 1994: 54-63 discusses the like-mindedness that exists between Odysseus and Penelope. Murnaghan, 1995: 72-4; 120 explores the like-mindedness between Odysseus and Athena alongside that between Odysseus and Penelope.

Menelaus is an eminent figure in the *Iliad* due to his role as Helen's husband and Agamemnon's brother, but his role in the *Odyssey* is limited to the stories he tells Telemachus. In speaking about his return home, he twice applies the phrase τετληότι θυμῷ to himself:

> πᾶσαν δ' ἠοίην μένομεν τετληότι θυμῷ·
>
> And all morning we waited with enduring heart;

> ἡμεῖς δ' ἀστεμφέως ἔχομεν τετληότι θυμῷ.
>
> And we held [Proteus] firm with enduring heart.[511]

The *Odyssey*'s Menelaus adopts the testimony style that is characteristic of this epic, describing his exploits in terms of what he endured as well as what he did. However, as with other prominent Iliadic characters, his success in Odysseus' poem is limited. The first of the two lines quoted above has echoes of Iliadic battle language with its combination of μένω and τλάω, whilst the second employs an essentially Iliadic understanding of endurance as a character's ability to stand their ground in combat. Whilst Menelaus attempts to represent himself as a heroic warrior, his subject matter undermines his efforts. In the latter passage, Proteus is an enemy who fights with tricks not force, switching form as Menelaus applies brute strength. In the former passage, it is not danger that threatens these warriors' ability to endure, but the smell of the seals! Menelaus prevails against Proteus, but his awkward employment of the phrase τετληότι θυμῷ shows how ill-suited he is to the post-Iliadic world in which he finds himself. His application of the phrase τετληότι θυμῷ in this almost comedic context contrasts with the epic's serious application of it to Odysseus and Penelope, thus promoting standards of heroism based on the ability to endure as well as the ability to act.

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[511] *Od.* 4.447; 459.

2.3.3. Failing to endure with τλάω

Endurance is thus a positive response to overwhelming events that some characters adopt to lessen an event's traumatic impact. However, not all characters are capable of displaying endurance. I now consider when and why epic poetry describes characters' failure to endure. As with positive instances of τλάω, negative instances often occur in situations where a character perceives a threat, as this example highlights:

> οὐδέ τις αὐτὸν
> ἔτλη ἐς ἄντα ἰδὼν σχεδὸν ἐλθέμεν οὐδὲ μάχεσθαι·

> and no one
> who looked at him would dare to go near him or fight him;[512]

This passage compares Heracles to a lion as he stands opposite Ares.[513] Whilst Heracles shows unusual endurance in standing against the god, this simile draws attention to the fact that no mortal would dare to face even Heracles. The moment of choice involved in adopting an attitude of endurance occurs simultaneously with the perception of the threat, here represented by the phrase ἄντα ἰδών. The decision of whether to endure or not is connected to a character's assessment of the danger involved in the threat they face,[514] as this passage also illustrates:

> οὔτε ποτ᾽ ἐς πόλεμον ἅμα λαῷ θωρηχθῆναι
> οὔτε λόχονδ᾽ ἰέναι σὺν ἀριστήεσσιν Ἀχαιῶν
> τέτληκας θυμῷ· τὸ δέ τοι κὴρ εἴδεται εἶναι.

> you do not ever endure in your heart to arm for war
> with the troops or to go in ambush with the best of the Achaeans;
> but to you these things seem to be like death.[515]

Here, Achilles accuses Agamemnon of failing to participate in the dangerous aspects of war, including battlefield combat and covert operations. Achilles claims that Agamemnon's lack of endurance is a result of the likelihood of death that he perceives

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[512] Hes. [*Sc.*] 432. See Hes. fr. 25, 10 for a similar response to Meleager.
[513] Cf. *Il.* 17.65-9 where no one dares (οὔ…ἐτόλμα) to face Menelaus, who is also compared to a lion.
[514] The narrator highlights this aspect when describing horses, who he claims (*Il.* 12.50-2) did not dare (οὐδέ…τόλμων) to cross when faced with an obstacle 'for the trench frightened them off' (ἀπὸ γὰρ δειδίσσετο τάφρος).
[515] *Il.* 1.226-8.

resulting from these actions. Perception of risk is thus an important element in the depiction of characters choosing not to endure when faced with threats.

Often characters respond to danger in different ways as some adopt an attitude of endurance and others do not. In such cases, epic poetry first indicates that the majority of characters choose not to endure before highlighting exceptions, as here:

> οἳ δὲ μάλ᾽ ἐτρόμεον καὶ ἐδείδισαν, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη·
> ἀλλ᾽ ἐμὲ θυμὸς ἀνῆκε πολυτλήμων πολεμίζειν

> But they were all afraid and trembling, and no one endured,
> but my much-enduring heart impelled me to fight[516]

Nestor emphasises the courage he displayed in fighting Ereuthalion by first describing his companions' reactions to the challenge. The old warrior emphasises the contrasting responses by using the epithet 'much-enduring' (here πολυτλήμων) to describe his own behaviour. He casts his endurance as an innate quality of his θυμός, which leaves him no choice but to fight, whilst noting his companions' emotions and expressions of fear.[517] Epic poetry repeatedly uses this technique to highlight one person or thing's valour when faced with danger: Achilles is the only Achaean who dares approach Hephaestus' divine armour; Delos is the only island that dares to accept Leto; Antinous is the only Ithacan who dares to respond to Telemachus' accusations of maltreatment.[518] In each case, the initial emphasis on those who do not endure magnifies the action of the one who then does endure to do the thing in question.

Epic can also vary the usual presentation of a character's endurance in order to magnify the sense of danger that an event produces. The *Iliad* does this at a point of particular danger for the Achaeans:

> θάμβησαν, καὶ πάντας ὑπὸ χλωρὸν δέος εἷλεν.
> ἔνθ᾽ οὔτ᾽ Ἰδομενεὺς τλῆ μίμνειν οὔτ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων,

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[516] *Il.* 7.151-2.
[517] For other instances in which characters flee due to lack of courage, see: *Il.* 5.21; 9.373; 17.153; 17.166; 17.490; 18.246; 19.14; 24.35; 24.565 and Hes. [*Sc.*] 73.
[518] See *Il.* 19.14; *Od.* 2.82 and *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 47 respectively.

οὔτε δύ’ Αἴαντες μενέτην θεράποντες Ἄρηος
Νέστωρ οἶος ἔμιμνε Γερήνιος οὖρος Ἀχαιῶν,
οὔ τι ἑκών, ἀλλ᾽ ἵππος ἐτείρετο, τὸν βάλεν ἰῷ
δῖος Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἑλένης πόσις ἠυκόμοιο,

They were stunned, and pale terror took hold of all of them.
Then Idomenus dared not stand his ground, nor Agamemnon,
nor did the two Ajaxes stand, the attendants of Ares.
Geranian Nestor alone stood, guardian of the Achaeans,
not at all willingly, but his horse was distressed, which
godlike Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, had hit
   with an arrow,[519]

As Nestor's speech above showed, characters that do not endure danger often experience extreme fear or terror. This passage describes the warriors' shock when they perceive a thunderbolt and their terror as they register it as a sign from Zeus. Nestor is the only one of the named Achaeans to stand his ground, as he boasts that he did in his youth. However, this is not because he perceives less threat or has adopted an attitude of forbearance, but rather that, with his horse hit, he cannot flee.[520] By initially suggesting that a character would choose to endure a danger and then showing that they would not, the poet increases the perceived threat associated with that event. This example shows that a character's ability to adopt an enduring attitude is not entirely a matter of character, as Nestor's speech originally suggested, but also depends on context.

Characters also make an effort to show their responses to overwhelming events in a favourable light. Whilst the ability to endure is valued by Homeric society, characters experience less shame at not showing endurance when they are able to trace their fear back to Zeus. When describing events in which characters did not endure, the speaker sometimes traces their fear to the gods to mitigate their dishonour:

ἐν δὲ Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος
φύζαν ἐμοῖς ἑτάροισι κακὴν βάλεν, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
μεῖναι ἐναντίβιον· περὶ γὰρ κακὰ πάντοθεν ἔστη.

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[519] *Il.* 8.77-82.
[520] Cf. *Il.* 13.394-6, where a cornered Trojan charioteer, who is described as 'struck from the wits that he had before' (πλήγη φρένας ἃς πάρος εἶχεν), stands his ground because 'he did not dare…to turn back the horses' (οὐδ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐτόλμησεν…ἂψ ἵππους στρέψαι).

<div align="center">
and Zeus delighting in thunder
threw an evil panic among my companions, and none endured
to stand their ground; for the evils stood all around.[521]
</div>

Odysseus claims that his companions did not exhibit a forbearing attitude when Zeus brought dangers upon them, but instead panicked and were routed. This representation brings less dishonour on Odysseus and his (fictional) companions than any other source of danger.[522] Even the gods themselves do not endure when Zeus confronts them; they defer to his authority in order to preserve the divine hierarchy.[523] When mortal characters do not endure without the excuse of divine intervention, others may rebuke them for their lack of courage. Odysseus' story ensures that his reputation will not be diminished in this way. Thus a character's perception of divine intervention can both alter their own response to an overwhelming event and the way it is perceived by others.

With or without divine intervention, the choice not to endure tends to create further suffering. As the passage above shows, whole communities can be affected when some of their members fail to endure. Odysseus, for example, reproaches Laertes for the inhospitable response he purportedly received from a man on Ithaca who, he claims, 'did not bring himself to tell me each thing and to hear my speech, as I asked' (ἐπεὶ οὐ τόλμησεν ἕκαστα //εἰπεῖν ἠδ' ἐπακοῦσαι ἐμὸν ἔπος, ὡς ἐρέεινον).[524] Laertes feels obliged to repair Ithaca's reputation in the eyes of the stranger. Since a community's reputation can be based on an individual's behaviour, characters who do not endure often earn themselves a reproach from other community members. When a character uses this verb as a reproach of another's behaviour, it provokes a strong reaction. Both instances of τλάω under these circumstances follow the same pattern:

<div align="center">
οὐδέ μοι ἔτλης,
πρὶν ἐλθεῖν μνηστῆρας ἀγήνορας ἐς τόδε δῶμα,
νόστον σοῦ πατρὸς σάφα εἰπέμεν, εἴ που ἄκουσας."
</div>

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[521] *Od.* 14.268-70. *Od.* 17.437-9 repeats this passage, substituting στῆναι (line 438) for μεῖναι (line 270).

[522] Cf. the narrator's presentation of *Il.* 21.608-9, where Apollo separates Hector from the Trojans as they are routed and head for the city. Their failure to endure leaves Hector vulnerable and leads to his death.

[523] See both *Il.* 1.534-5 and 15.164-5.

[524] *Od.* 24.261-2.

<div align="center">153</div>

<div align="center">and you did not bring yourself,</div>

before the arrogant suitors came to this house,
to speak plainly of the return of your father,
<div align="center">if perhaps you heard anything."</div>

ὃς νῦν ἀλλοτρίοισι παρήμενος οὔ τί μοι ἔτλης
σίτου ἀποπροελὼν δόμεναι· τὰ δὲ πολλὰ πάρεστιν."

You who are now sitting at another man's table do not bring yourself,
having taken some, to give me bread; though there is much present."[525]

In the first passage, Penelope chastises Telemachus for not delivering important news before anticipated visitors interrupted. In the second, Odysseus challenges Antinous on the hypocrisy of sitting at another man's table and refusing to offer a needy man bread. Both provoke strong reactions in the accused as they attempt to counter the accusations. Telemachus launches into a detailed narrative of his travels, while the suitor launches a footstool at the beggar's head. A third reproach occurs as a question. Odysseus asks Circe:

"ὦ Κίρκη, τίς γάρ κεν ἀνήρ, ὃς ἐναίσιμος εἴη,
πρὶν τλαίη πάσσασθαι ἐδητύος ἠδὲ ποτῆτος,
πρὶν λύσασθ᾽ ἑτάρους καὶ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι;

Circe, what man, who is righteous,
would bring himself to taste food and drink,
before he had set free his companions and seen them with his eyes?[526]

Wary of social condemnation, Odysseus behaves like a righteous (ἐναίσιμος) man throughout this episode. He politely rebukes his hostess for the position she has put him in, which would open him up to reproach in the future, using a rhetorical question rather than the more common direct negation with τλάω to connote constraint.[527] Odysseus employs these verbal devices to avoid condemnation and manoeuvre Circe into releasing his companions. Again we see that a failure to endure may prompt a powerful rebuttal. Showing the correct attitude to endurance is a central concern in Homeric society.

When a character fails to display endurance, the experience is generally too shameful for that person to acknowledge. Many of these instances, unlike the positive instances of τλάω,

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[525] *Od.* 17.104-6; 456-7.
[526] *Od.* 10.383-5.
[527] Bredlow, 2011: 293.

are therefore reported in the words of the narrator; most characters do not depict themselves in such a dishonourable way. Hector, however, is an exception. Before his death, he fails to endure against Achilles:

> Ἕκτορα δ᾽, ὡς ἐνόησεν, ἕλε τρόμος· οὐδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἔτλη
> αὖθι μένειν, ὀπίσω δὲ πύλας λίπε, βῆ δὲ φοβηθείς.

> And trembling took Hector, when he perceived him, and he did not still endure
> to stand there, but left the gates behind and went, having fled in fear.[528]

Hector panics at the sight of Achilles. The verbs τλάω and μένω indicate that he should have stood against his enemy, as usual in battle. Hector is depicted as an honourable warrior throughout the *Iliad*, and this presentation of him is unusual, increasing and extending the tension before his death scene. Before his final fight, he recovers his usual character, saying:

> οὔ σ᾽ ἔτι, Πηλέος υἱὲ, φοβήσομαι, ὡς τὸ πάρος περ
> τρὶς περὶ ἄστυ μέγα Πριάμου δίον, οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἔτλην
> μεῖναι ἐπερχόμενον. νῦν αὖτέ με θυμὸς ἀνῆκε
> στήμεναι ἀντία σεῖο· ἕλοιμί κεν ἤ κεν ἁλοίην.

> I will no longer flee you in fear, son of Peleus, as even before
> I fled thrice around the great city of Priam, and did not ever endure
> to stand your attack. But now my spirit urges me
> to stand against you; I will slay you or be slain.[529]

With this speech, Hector recognises that he displayed an ignoble response to fear by not enduring to stand and fight. He decides to reverse his behaviour in full knowledge of the dangers it poses and thus redeems his honour as a warrior. Hector acknowledges his earlier failure to endure without dishonouring himself, because he can claim a change in his behaviour. The fact that only Hector, who is perhaps the noblest warrior in the Trojan

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[528] *Il.* 22.136-7. See Richardson, 1993: 121-44; de Jong, 2012: 94-154; for close analysis of Hector and Achilles' final encounter.
[529] *Il.* 22.250-3.

War,[530] can admit to a momentary lack of endurance illustrates the value placed on endurance in battle.

Equally, Homeric society judges female characters on their ability to endure. As my discussion of Penelope above shows, female characters can and do adopt the behaviours and attitudes associated with endurance. However, whilst male characters are fully expected to endure, characters in epic often doubt female characters' ability to endure, as in this passage:

> "ἦ μάλα δή τις ἔγημε πολυμνήστην βασίλειαν·
> σχετλίη, οὐδ' ἔτλη πόσιος οὗ κουριδίοιο
> εἴρυσθαι μέγα δῶμα διαμπερές, ὄφρ' ἂν ἵκοιτο."

> "Truly indeed someone has married the much courted queen;
> cruel one, she could not bring herself to watch over the great
> house right through for her wedded husband, until he might return."[531]

Although the Ithacans know that Penelope has held off the suitors for years with her stratagems, they assume that she has not waited for her husband when they hear the noise of the massacre masked as a wedding. The community's supposition leads them to accuse Penelope of behaving inappropriately (σχετλίη), which they justify by noting that she did not endure (οὐδ' ἔτλη) until her husband returned. Penelope's ties to the Ithacan community have become precarious in Odysseus' absence, and the community assumes that Penelope has chosen to prioritise her own interests above those of her husband's household, disrupting and endangering the community. Penelope has, in fact, endured,[532] but this passage demonstrates how quickly the reputation of a female character can deteriorate if other characters perceive them as failing to endure.

Distrust of female endurance, even in virtuous women, pervades representations of female characters. Although Penelope exhibits endurance, she doubts her own ability to endure. She justifies her marriage bed trick, which is a test of Odysseus' identity, by claiming that

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[530] For thorough discussions of Hector's character and role in the *Iliad*, see Redfield, 1994; Haubold, 2000: 83-95; and Graziosi & Haubold, 2010: 34-6; 205.
[531] *Od.* 23.149-51.
[532] Although she has not always maintained a steadfast attitude of endurance (e.g. *Od.* 4.716).

she feared being tricked by another man or a god. She cites Helen as an example of a mortal woman tricked into a 'shameful deed' (ἔργον ἀεικές) by a god.[533] Clytemnestra, another unfaithful wife, is also accused of failing to endure:

> ἡ δὲ κυνῶπις
> νοσφίσατ᾽ οὐδέ μοι ἔτλη, ἰόντι περ εἰς Ἀίδαο,
> χερσὶ κατ᾽ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑλέειν σύν τε στόμ᾽ ἐρεῖσαι.

> And the dog-eyed one
> did not endure, though I was going to Hades,
> to press shut my eyes and mouth with her hands.[534]

In this case, the verb τλάω does not refer to Clytemnestra's relationship with Aegisthus, but to the fact that she did not complete basic funeral rites for her husband. Her actions show that she put her personal emotions ahead of her commitment to her husband and community. In the rest of his speech, the spirit of Agamemnon calls Clytemnestra's actions inappropriate (ἔργον ἀεικές) and says that she 'calls down shame upon women…even those who are doing good' (κατ᾽ αἶσχος ἔχευε… καὶ ἥ κ᾽ ἐυεργὸς ἔῃσιν).[535] Again the epic shows that a female character's reputation rapidly deteriorates when others suspect her of not enduring; and that it is much easier for women to earn infamy through their inability to endure than fame for their actions. Odysseus' reply realises the link between Helen and Clytemnestra as he recognises a pattern of female unfaithfulness that colours his interactions with Penelope.[536] Epic poetry thus uses the verb τλάω to incorporate women into the system of deeds and suffering that constitutes epic poetry. However, their experiences of overwhelming events take on a different form to men's experiences, leaving them to be portrayed as a group characterised by their inability to endure.

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[533] *Od.* 23.222.

[534] *Od.* 11.424-6. See also *Od.* 11.143, where Odysseus questions his mother's behaviour in Hades, thinking that she chooses not to acknowledge him rather than that she cannot.

[535] *Od.* 11.429; 433-4. See Cairns, 1993: 50-64 for further discussion of ἀεικής and αἶσχος.

[536] *Od.* 11.436-9. De Jong, 2001: 288 suggests that Odysseus limits Agamemnon's view in his response by commenting only on how poorly women had treated the 'sons of Atreus.' This may be correct, but once the narrative pattern has been established, it remains as a possibility in the epic.

Conclusion

The verbs τλάω and τολμάω mark moments at which characters display an enduring or daring attitude or behaviour. Homeric epic depicts endurance as an attitude that characters adopt when they perceive an overwhelming event. Some claim endurance as an innate trait, particularly with the phase τετληότι θυμῷ – but in practice their ability to endure is never simply a given, not even when it is as central to their identity as it is in the case of Odysseus. When characters adopt an attitude of endurance in times of danger, they often interpret the event in a way that limits its significance. This can include attributing suffering to the gods, which may involve interpreting overwhelming events as ἄλγεα. Characters may also acknowledge the dishonour they would experience if they chose not to endure. Homeric society pressures its members to exhibit forbearance in the face of overwhelming events. However, few characters are actually able to do so. Those that can are rewarded with glory and renown. Those that cannot earn themselves a poor reputation and frequently come to an unfortunate end. Characters in the *Odyssey* consider women's capability to endure with some suspicion, but endurance is one of the traits that can win women renown.

Homeric endurance does not necessarily prevent characters from suffering. Characters can display endurance and simultaneously feel ἄχος or πένθος. In this respect, endurance as Homer describes it shares some qualities with the modern concept of resilience, which is generally viewed as a process (or characteristic) that lessens the intensity of negative responses to overwhelming events and prevents pathological traumatisation. Endurance is valued by Achaeans and Trojans alike and plays a role in ensuring social cohesion in these Homeric societies. Since the language of endurance indicates a character's attitude towards suffering, it is clear that it has an important place in discussions of Homeric suffering. When viewed alongside ἄχος and πένθος as emotional responses, τλάω and τολμάω highlight the various pressures acting on characters, which arise both from the

overwhelming event and from existing societal norms. My discussion throughout this chapter has shown that overwhelming events can produce a range of responses in Homeric epic. How a character perceives their relationship to an event determines whether they experience a traumatic shattering of their worldview and a significant alteration to their identity. I take the topic of identity transformation as a result of suffering as my focus in Part II.

Part II: Suffering and Identity in the *Odyssey*

Introduction

In Part I of my thesis, I argued that Homeric epic exhibits an interest in the relationship between events that cause suffering and the ways in which mortals respond to suffering. The poet sees two main types of event that cause suffering; those that the gods send in various quantities to all mortals (ἄλγεα) and those more unusual destructive events that most people would consider painful (πήματα). Whilst πήματα are always significant, ἄλγεα can seem either commonplace or unusual and may or may not have a lasting effect on a person. At the same time, the poet shows that characters tend to feel helpless after overwhelming events and can deal with that helplessness in various ways. Some characters use aggressive retaliation to rid themselves of pain (ἄχος); some remain in a state of helplessness and focus on outward expression of that pain (πένθος); and some use their ability to endure to reassert their agency (τλάω/τολμάω). The type of response which characters exhibit is affected by their character and circumstance but also by poetic concerns, such as traditional characterisation, narrative pace and narrative focus.

As I move into Part II of my thesis, I take up one of the prominent themes that emerged from my discussion in Part I: that of how suffering shapes identity. Whilst the poet works with traditional characters and events, the way that he depicts his material concentrates the audience's attention on characters' experiences of suffering. The *Odyssey* in particular elevates experiences of suffering to the level of heroic deeds and allows both deeds and suffering to shape characters' identities. In Part I, I asked: How do overwhelming events affect characters in epic? I now ask: How do Odyssean characters attempt to incorporate their experiences of overwhelming events into their identity? How successful are they? And what does the poet's depiction of these processes contribute to the epic? In order to answer these questions, I bring scholarship on the ways in which the Homeric epics

construct identity into contact with trauma scholarship that attempts to understand the ways in which overwhelming events alter identity.

Part II is comprised of three chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of identity found in the *Odyssey*. Chapter 3 explores the ways in which characters incorporate experiences of suffering into their identities as individuals. I divide this chapter into two sections to reflect the way that gender governs Homeric experiences of suffering. The first half focuses on the experiences of male warriors, who often travel away from their communities to experience suffering in combat. The second half focuses on the experience of female characters, whose suffering always tends to occur in domestic settings. Male and female characters, I argue, use different means to integrate experiences of suffering into their identity. Chapter 4 considers the ways in which characters incorporate experiences of suffering into collective identities. Taking the Ithacan community as a case study, I look at the different types of collective identity active in the *Odyssey*. I consider what events shatter collective worldviews and how communities give meaning and significance to events in their aftermath. Chapter 5 then turns to transgenerational experiences of overwhelming events. In these cases, characters (re)construct identities that have been shattered by events in earlier generations. Throughout all three chapters I argue that the *Odyssey* shows interest in the means by which characters incorporate suffering into their identity and explores this interest through culturally specific modes of working through suffering.

Chapter 3: Individual Suffering and Identity

I begin my chapter on individual suffering and identity in the Homeric epics with a brief discussion of the relationship between suffering and identity in the modern world. One prevalent view holds that trauma occurs when suffering significantly alters an individual's sense of identity. Janoff-Bulman sees this as a result of a shattered worldview. Janoff-Bulman argues that people inherently believe certain things about the world they inhabit in order to cope with threats posed by everyday life.[537] According to her, we tend to construe the experiences we have and the people with whom we interact as essentially benevolent, assume that events are meaningful or can be explained with hindsight, and convince ourselves that we ourselves are essentially good people. The particular modalities of what Janoff-Bulman calls our 'assumptive world,' and the ways in which they are expressed, depend on factors such as individual character and wider culture.[538] When an event happens that forces a person to view one or more of their assumptions as false, they experience traumatisation. Recovery requires them to create a new assumptive world that can accommodate the traumatising experience. This trauma model is conceptualised as a shattering model; 'shattering' captures the shock involved in experiencing an overwhelming event and acts as a metaphor for the impossibility of restoring the old assumptive world in its aftermath.

Janoff-Bulman's assumptive world, and the model of trauma as a process of shattering that world, is, I believe, useful for exploring the relationship between suffering and identity. Since restoration of an assumptive world is impossible once it has been shattered, traumatic experience is, without exception, a loss experience.[539] Recovery can, and does, take place, but involves a person adapting to a loss rather than the loss being erased or reversed as though it had never taken place. The 'shattering' model of trauma also

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[537] Janoff-Bulman, 1992: 3-25.
[538] *Ibid.*: 116-8.
[539] Kauffman, 2002: 2.

highlights the important role that testimony plays in recovery.[540] Individuals work through their experiences of traumatic events in order to rebuild assumptive worlds, and it is through the creation and articulation of coherent narratives about traumatic experiences that meaning and understanding are restored. Finally, the assumptive world model bases experiences of overwhelming events on an individual's perception of the world. This is, for example, a requirement of a feminist approach to trauma, which will be relevant to the second half of this chapter.[541] Although we cannot speak of traumatic experience in Homeric texts without careful qualification, I use this chapter to test whether the *Odyssey* also views the relationship between suffering and identity as one in which a worldview is shattered and rebuilt. Where I find positive evidence that this takes place, I look at how epic depicts this process.

The chapter is in two parts. Using the concepts of the assumptive world and shattered assumptions, I first explore the ways in which experiences affect characters and discuss how the epic signposts their impact on them.[542] I then consider how characters respond to suffering through different types of narrative, in front of different audiences and in different places. Throughout, I separate my discussion along gender lines, and focus on Odysseus and Penelope as the characters undergoing the most extreme experiences of suffering encountered by each gender respectively. Homeric characters, I argue, find relief from long-term suffering in the narration of their experiences to a trusted audience of compassionate listeners. The process of narration helps them to order events, find meaning and significance in their experiences and restore their assumptive worlds.

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[540] Herman, 1992: 183 for the therapeutic benefits of testimony. 'Testimony' in this sense refers to an oral or written account of a person's experiences of an overwhelming event.

[541] Brown, 1995: 100-3 explores how feminist perspectives contribute to trauma studies.

[542] Throughout Part II, I take a direct approach in my discussion of epic characters. I recognise that these characters are not real people and that it is unlikely that Homer was in a position to produce characters with great psychological depth. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how consistently Homeric characters appear to act from complex motivations and how well they respond to such an approach.

3.1. Bardic song and eyewitness knowledge: Odysseus and male narratives

Introduction

As the tales about Agamemnon's family demonstrate, Homeric characters can acquire knowledge of suffering in various ways. First, there are the rumours and stories circulating among the Homeric community about the events that unfolded in Mycenae; Athena, for example, asks Telemachus: 'have you not heard what glory godlike Orestes seized?' (ἦ οὐκ ἀίεις οἷον κλέος ἔλλαβε δῖος Ὀρέστης) and Menelaus tells how Proteus passed on news of his brother's death.[543] In these cases, knowledge of events at Mycenae comes from narratives circulating within the community. They are all informative, but claim no particular source. Speakers tell them in order to advise, explain or emphasise other points, or to entertain in a communal setting. In Odysseus' halls, the poet depicts another type of oral narrative when Phemius sings about the 'mournful return of the Achaeans' (Ἀχαιῶν νόστον…//λυγρόν), the full scope of which would theoretically include Agamemnon's story.[544] In this case, knowledge of suffering comes from the Muse. Finally, there is Agamemnon's personal account of his death delivered to Odysseus in Hades.[545] He describes the scene in vivid detail, including the shattering of his assumptions about his homecoming and the emotions that Odysseus would have felt if he had been present to witness his companion's final moments.[546] When he attempts to find a moral in the treachery of women, he falters, and returns to a description of his pain at never seeing his son.[547] In this case, knowledge of Agamemnon's suffering comes from an eyewitness, who speaks so that the listener can bear witness to his suffering. Three distinct types of oral

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[543] *Od.* 1.298; 4.512-45. See Olson, 1995: 1-23 for the oral narratives circulating in the Achaean community; Katz, 1991: 32-53 for further discussion of stories around Agamemnon's death.

[544] *Od.* 1.326-7.

[545] A traditional understanding of traumatization would not acknowledge the dead as capable of being traumatised. However, Homeric epic treats the dead as counterparts of their mortal beings (see Clarke, 1999: 129-228). Their perspective often shows a significant shift as a result of their final experiences in life, and most spirits desire to share a testimony of their last moments. The combination of a loss event leading to a shattered assumptive world (represented as a move to a different physical world) means they meet my main criteria for having experienced an overwhelming event. See Gazis, 2018: 125-56; 167-206 for a detailed discussion of underworld personal testimony narratives.

[546] *Od.* 11.405-424. Gazis, 2018: 167-74 discusses the significance of this personal account.

[547] *Od.* 11.441-53.

narrative (rumour, bardic song and eyewitness account) deal with experiences of suffering in the *Odyssey* and contribute to a character's reputation within a community.

In the *Odyssey*, characters that experience an overwhelming event often respond to it through narrative testimony. Action against the event's perpetrator is frequently impossible; perpetrators are often too remote or powerful for characters to take action against them. Instead, characters respond with narrative. Male characters prefer to perform tales of their suffering in domestic settings that resemble their own communities where their control over their narratives is unchallenged. These narratives, I contend, attempt to contextualise events in order to draw out their meaning and significance for those affected; these things can often not be grasped during an ordeal and, until fully understood, can impede the reconstruction of assumptive worlds. They also allow other characters to bear witness to their experiences. By creating narratives in the style of epic, male characters turn their experiences of overwhelming events endured into stories of deeds completed and thus create glory and renown out of their suffering. I use Odysseus' experience to illustrate this argument. His long return reduces his opportunities for narrative creation and thus increases his suffering. The presence of the suitors, a characteristically rowdy audience, further delays his final narrative by introducing violence into his household and forcing him to conceal his identity. He attempts to tell his story on multiple occasions, and his suffering ends when he tells his final narratives about his overwhelming experiences and restores his individual identity.[548]

3.1.1. Odysseus' experience of overwhelming events

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus suffers as a result of his participation in the Trojan War. The Trojan War itself is not generally presented as an overwhelming event for Odysseus; it did

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[548] Scholars, both ancient and modern, have argued that the *Odyssey* originally ended with Odysseus' reunion with Penelope and account of his adventures to her, in part because it seems such a significant moment in the recovery of his individual identity. For discussion of the continuation's authenticity, see Russo *et al.*, 1992: 342-6; 353-4; West, 1989; Sourvinou-Inwood, 1995: 97-107; Rutherford, 1996: 76-7.

not shatter any prior assumptions held by the character about warfare or combat.[549] Indeed, in the *Iliad*, Odysseus is the most pragmatic of the Achaean soldiers when faced with the reality of warfare; he is an efficient fighter, a good tactician and offers useful advice to his companions outside of battle.[550] In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus appears to have a similarly grounded view of war. Penelope remembers him assessing the likelihood of his return as he leaves in the following manner:

> ὦ γύναι, οὐ γὰρ ὀίω ἐυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
> ἐκ Τροίης εὖ πάντας ἀπήμονας ἀπονέεσθαι·
> καὶ γὰρ Τρῶάς φασι μαχητὰς ἔμμεναι ἄνδρας,
> ἠμὲν ἀκοντιστὰς ἠδὲ ῥυτῆρας ὀιστῶν
> ἵππων τ᾽ ὠκυπόδων ἐπιβήτορας, οἵ κε τάχιστα
> ἔκριναν μέγα νεῖκος ὁμοιίου πτολέμοιο.
> τῶ οὐκ οἶδ᾽, εἴ κέν μ᾽ ἀνέσει θεός, ἦ κεν ἁλώω
> αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ· σοὶ δ᾽ ἐνθάδε πάντα μελόντων.

> "Lady, I think that the well-greaved Achaeans will not
> depart from Troy all entirely unhurt;
> for also, they say, the Trojans are fighting men,
> both in hurling javelins and drawing bows
> and in mounting swift-footed horses, which most swiftly
> decide the great struggle of dreadful war.
> Therefore, I do not know whether the gods will bring me back
>   or I will be taken
> there in Troy; but let all things here be a care to you.[551]

While Odysseus was prepared for the dangers that awaited him and the other Achaeans in combat, he did not consider the dangers that he could encounter on his homecoming; this description only allowed for a world in which the possible outcomes were either death at Troy or a safe return home facilitated by the gods.[552] His return journey in the *Odyssey* challenges this prior assumption.

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[549] However, see the exceptional events below, where shock comes from having the domestic intrude into the battlefield during the sack of Troy.
[550] Odysseus in combat: *Il.* 4.493-504; 5.676-82; 6.30; 11.321-35; 11.401-88. Odysseus offering pragmatic advice: *Il.* 10.340-8; 19.154-83; 19.215-37.
[551] *Od.* 18.259-66.
[552] At *Il.* 2.252-3, he does inject a note of caution, saying that the Achaeans do not know whether the return will go well or badly. However, he makes this argument to persuade the Achaeans to stay at Troy and the general view in the *Iliad* is that the Achaeans choose either to sack Troy or return home unsuccessful.

In *Odyssey* 9-12, Odysseus and his companions become gradually aware that they might die during the return from Troy. Initially, Odysseus and his men are careless on their journey. They sack the Ciconian city and, although Odysseus claims some discomfort at the idea, they stay to feast and share their plunder as though still at war.[553] This carelessness gets six men per ship killed.[554] Odysseus is more wary on the Lotus Eaters' island, where he sends out a small number of scouts.[555] When these come to harm, he quickly retreats 'lest someone eat the lotus and forget his return' (μή πώς τις λωτοῖο φαγὼν νόστοιο λάθηται).[556] Only at this point in his journey does he begin to fear that his return might not happen. He approaches the Cyclopes more carefully still, anchoring his ships on a deserted island and scouting himself, yet this encounter, with its breaches of hospitality customs and Polyphemus' curse, makes his safe return a distant possibility.[557] With each new episode in this section of his journey, Odysseus and his companions move further away from their route home and experience greater fear and despair when faced with challenges.[558] Their aspirations narrow as they progress, turning from raiders into hungry men too afraid and weary to seek food.[559] As Troy becomes more remote, Odysseus and his companions experience a slow destruction of their identity as successful warriors.[560]

Odysseus' expectations for his return diminish as his suffering continues without his companions. Despite reassurance from characters such as Tiresias and Circe that he will reach Ithaca if he follows certain rules,[561] Odysseus barely believes it possible by the time

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[553] *Od.* 9.40-6.

[554] *Od.* 9.60-1.

[555] *Od.* 9.90.

[556] *Od.* 9.102.

[557] *Od.* 9.166-76; 475-566.

[558] E.g. *Od.* 10.198-202. Clay, 1983: 114-5 focuses on Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops as the reason his 'thirst for adventure and curiosity…diminished.' Whilst the Cyclops adventure is a significant event on Odysseus' return, I believe his worldview is under threat from his earliest encounter with the Ciconians.

[559] *Od.* 10.140-77 illustrates the extent of their deprivation. Roessel, 1989; Alexander, 1991; Scodel, 1994 provide interpretations of this feast's significance. See *DSM-5*: 275 for negative expectations about the future as a response to traumatic events.

[560] For Odysseus' journey and the destruction (and then recreation) of his identity, see Hartog, 2001: 15-8. Dougherty, 2001: 169 speaks about the need for Odysseus to perform a 'kind of re-foundation' upon his return to Ithaca to reclaim his social and personal identity.

[561] Tiresias: *Od.* 11.100-17; Circe: 12.137-41. See Clay, 1983: 151-4 for types of knowledge informing prophecy.

he reaches Scheria. During his first meal among the Phaeacians after his death-defying raft journey, his horizons have become so limited that he declares 'may life leave me when I have seen my possessions, my slaves, and my great, high-roofed house' (ἰδόντα με καὶ λίποι αἰὼν //κτῆσιν ἐμήν δμῶάς τε καὶ ὑψερεφὲς μέγα δῶμα).[562] Odysseus no longer anticipates a true return and reintegration to his family and community, but wants only to realize the barest reflection of his original ambition. His limited expectations also prevent him from recognising Ithaca when he does return; he finds it easier to believe that the Phaeacians have reneged on their promise of safe conduct and left him alone on a foreign shore.[563] Eventually he recognises the landscape and exclaims: 'Naiad nymphs, daughters of Zeus, I did not ever think to see you again' (Νύμφαι Νηιάδες, κοῦραι Διός, οὔ ποτ᾽ ἐγώγε //ὄψεσθ᾽ ὑμμ᾽ ἐφάμην).[564] In his relief, Odysseus shows the extent to which his experiences during his return have shattered his worldview.

The dangers Odysseus meets on his journey provoke a crisis of meaning for him as he finds the usual means of warding off danger inadequate or actively harmful. His expectations are built on his knowledge of the beliefs and regulations surrounding hospitality and the gods among his own community, and his assumption is that he and his companions will be treated in the same manner wherever they travel.[565] This assumption proves incorrect and the crisis it provokes is reflected in the questions he learns to ask at each new stage of his journey:

> "ὤ μοι ἐγώ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἱκάνω;
> ἦ ῥ᾽ οἵ γ᾽ ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,
> ἦε φιλόξεινοι καί σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής;

> "Alas, who are the mortals to whose land I have now come?
> Are they insolent and wild and not civilised,
> or are they hospitable and their minds god-fearing?[566]

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[562] *Od.* 7.224-5. The life literally leaves Argus at the end of his period of endurance waiting for Odysseus to return; see Rose, 1979; Scodel, 2005 for the parallels between Odysseus and Argus.
[563] Goldhill, 1991: 5-12 discusses this passage.
[564] *Od.* 13.356-7.
[565] Reece, 1993: 5-12; 17-40 for hospitality conventions in Homer.
[566] *Od.* 6.119-21. See also similar questions at *Od.* 9.89-90; 9.174-6; 10.100-1; 13.200-204.

Odysseus' questions reflect his confusion at finding himself in a world where the usual rules of mortal society do not protect him and his companions from danger. Familiar patterns or practices, such as smoke that suggests habitation or a girl collecting water from a well, portend some entirely unfamiliar scenario: the bread-eating men they hope to find are man-eating giants; the smoke indicates the home of an uncivilised monster.[567] Rules of hospitality and supplication designed to protect wanderers are subverted (Cyclops), ignored (Lastrygonians) or must be enforced by the guests (Circe). Communities that do not honour the gods are blessed with plenteous lands,[568] whilst Odysseus' men must choose between starvation, which Eurylochus describes as 'the most miserable way to die' (οἴκτιστον θανέειν), or death at sea.[569] Odysseus' assumptions concerning his safety whilst travelling are shattered during his early encounter with the Cyclops, who calls him a 'fool' (νήπιος) to emphasise his childlike naivety before eating his companions.[570] Each new subversion of a familiar setting provokes a shock in Odysseus that is compounded into overwhelming grief by the loss of his companions.[571]

Odysseus' loss of his companions exacerbates his suffering by reinforcing his helplessness. Odysseus feels most helpless when faced with a challenge that cannot be conquered by wits or combat, as when he faces the dual challenge of Scylla and Charybdis. He tells his companions that Charybdis is 'no greater evil' (οὐ μεῖζον κακόν) than the Cyclops, whom he outwitted with cunning, and says: 'I think that this will surely be remembered' (που τῶνδε μνήσεσθαι ὀίω), giving them hope for survival.[572] As he speaks, he knows that he cannot outwit these inhuman threats, electing not to tell his companions about Scylla, since

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[567] *Od.* 9.166-7 and 10.100-17 respectively.
[568] E.g. Cyclopes: *Od.* 9.105-11.
[569] *Od.* 12.342; 350-1.
[570] *Od.* 9.273-4.
[571] Segal, 1994: 65-84 makes a similar argument, which he frames in terms of 'ritual,' and provides thorough comparisons of key moments in Odyssean hospitality scenes.
[572] *Od.* 12.209; 212. As Heubeck & Hoekstra, 1989: 129 note, the encounter kills as many men as the encounter with the Cyclops. Neither of these events is as destructive as the encounter with the Lastrygonians.

she is a 'trouble against which nothing can be done' (ἄπρηκτον ἀνίην).[573] Odysseus'

helplessness makes it all the more terrible for him to encounter her. Indeed, he says:

> οἴκτιστον δὴ κεῖνο ἐμοῖς ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι
> πάντων, ὅσσ᾽ ἐμόγησα πόρους ἁλὸς ἐξερεείνων.
>
> That was the most pitiable thing I saw with my eyes
> of all the things I suffered exploring the ways of the sea.[574]

As leader, Odysseus feels responsible for his men and is most affected by situations in

which he cannot protect them.[575] In this case, he finds it impossible to follow Circe's

'grievous command' (ἐφημοσύνης ἀλεγεινῆς) not to attempt 'deeds of war' (πολεμήια

ἔργα), even though his attempt to assert agency might result in more deaths.[576] When he

fails to protect his companions on Thrinacia, he expresses his feelings of helplessness

through his rage at Zeus for sending him to sleep at the critical moment.[577] Shay blames

Odysseus and the poet for the 'heartlessness' with which they approach these episodes.[578]

However, I would argue that both take quite the opposite position. The poet takes pains to

show that Odysseus' sense of responsibility for his men means that those instances in

which he is unable to protect them have a greater detrimental effect on his identity than

those events that threaten him alone.

The epic also demonstrates that the loss of his companions has a lasting impact on

Odysseus. When the men reach Circe's island, Eurylochus claims that Odysseus'

recklessness caused the deaths of his companions at the Cyclops' hands.[579] Odysseus

describes his response thus:

> αὐτὰρ ἐγώγε μετὰ φρεσὶ μερμήριξα,
> σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ
> τῷ οἱ ἀποτμήξας κεφαλὴν οὖδάσδε πελάσσαι,
> καὶ πηῷ περ ἐόντι μάλα σχεδόν.

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573 *Od.* 12.223. See de Jong, 1992: 5 for the subjective nature of this qualification.
574 *Od.* 12.258-9.
575 See Olson, 1995: 48-64 for an alternative interpretation in which Odysseus narrates these episodes with
the intention of absolving himself from blame for the loss of his companions' lives.
576 *Od.* 12.226; 116.
577 *Od.* 12.370-3.
578 Shay, 2002: 61-2.
579 The narrator, in contrast, blames Odysseus' companions for their deaths (*Od.* 1.7-8).

> and I debated in my mind,
> whether, having drawing my keen sword from beside by stout thigh,
> I should strike off his head and bring it to the ground,
> even though he was a very near kinsman by marriage.[580]

Odysseus' instinct is to respond disproportionately to this accusation with aggressive action. This impulse is unconstructive in this instance, as attacking Eurylochus would increase the number of his dead companions and prove Odysseus' recklessness. However, this response is similar to irrational responses to pain caused by ἄχος. The passage shows that Odysseus' experiences have had a detrimental effect on his confidence in his ability and his image of himself as a leader. His companions' view of him as their leader has also shattered and they no longer believe that he will protect them. Finally, it shows that their experiences have broken the social bonds between them, so that Eurylochus will challenge, and Odysseus will contemplate murdering, a close kinsman. Odysseus' emotional response to the loss of his companions, which may include aspects of guilt alongside grief, sets him further apart from his surviving community and makes communalisation of their suffering through narrative impossible.

Odysseus' experiences of overwhelming events also lead him to question the significance of his own life. Male characters in Homeric epic draw significance from the interaction of their personal narratives with the narratives of other major figures.[581] Odysseus does not find empathy among the companions with whom he shares his suffering. By the time Odysseus undergoes the raft journey from Ogygia to Scheria, the only overwhelming event during his wanderings that he experiences directly in the epic, he is entirely alone. On this journey, he has multiple close encounters with death and asks:

> "ὤ μοι ἐγὼ δειλός, τί νύ μοι μήκιστα γένηται;
> δείδω μὴ δὴ πάντα θεὰ νημερτέα εἶπεν,
> ἥ μ᾽ ἔφατ᾽ ἐν πόντῳ, πρὶν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἱκέσθαι,
> ἄλγε᾽ ἀναπλήσειν· τὰδὲ δὴ νῦν πάντα τελεῖται.

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[580] *Od.* 10.438-41.

[581] See, for example, Odysseus' description of the underworld, which feature the spirits of many notable heroes (*Od.* 11.565-635), his discussion of his aptitude with a bow (*Od.* 8.219-29), or the biography of any noble figure (e.g. Theoclymenus: *Od.* 15.223-58).

οἵοισιν νεφέεσσι περιστέφει οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν
Ζεύς, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον, ἐπισπέρχουσι δ᾽ ἄελλαι
παντοίων ἀνέμων· νῦν μοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.
τρὶς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότ᾽ ὄλοντο
Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, χάριν Ἀτρείδῃσι φέροντες.
ὡς δὴ ἐγώγ᾽ ὄφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν
ἤματι τῷ ὅτε μοι πλεῖστοι χαλκήρεα δοῦρα
Τρῶες ἐπέρριψαν περὶ Πηλείωνι θανόντι·
τῷ κ᾽ ἔλαχον κτερέων, καί μευ κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί·
νῦν δέ λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ εἵμαρτο ἁλῶναι.”

"Alas, I am wretched, what now will happen to me at last?
I fear lest all the goddess said was true,
when she told me that on the sea, before I returned to my fatherland,
I would fill full my measure of pain; and now all that is
     being accomplished.
In such a way does Zeus enwreathe the broad heavens with
clouds, and he stirs the sea, and gusts of
all kinds of winds come rushing on; now utter destruction is sure for me.
Thrice blessed Danaans, and four times, who then perished
in broad Troy for the sake of the sons of Atreus.
Would that I had died and encountered my fate
on that day when the most Trojans threw bronze-tipped spears
upon me around the dead son of Peleus;
then I would have received funeral gifts and the Achaeans would have
     conveyed my fame;
but it was decreed that I perish now by a wretched death.[582]

When Odysseus is faced with death, he questions the significance of his life.[583] He concludes that his exploits mean little without a community to transmit them and that the Achaean community that fought around Achilles at Troy would be best placed to contextualise his exploits in a manner that would bring him glory and renown. Conversely, death at sea will leave him nameless, so that not even his family are certain of his fate.[584] Other male characters who fought at Troy also express the wish that they and their companions could have died and been buried together there as a community when they narrate their experiences.[585] The male dominated setting for combat, along with the

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[582] *Od.* 5.299-312.
[583] For discussion of this passage, see Clay, 1983: 110-1.
[584] See Telemachus' comments at *Od.* 1.239-41.
[585] E.g. Agamemnon: *Od.* 24.30-40.

battlefield virtues of glory, action and male companionship, make war ideal for the acquisition and recognition of significance in the life of a male Homeric character.

Despite the shocks and crises of meaning Odysseus undergoes as a result of his overwhelming experiences, his belief in the gods does not fundamentally alter. He designates the overwhelming events he experiences as πήματα, ἄλγεα and, to a lesser extent, κήδεα, which each play a role in conveying their fixed nature, divine nature or their personal significance for him. Endurance, along with acceptance of his fate, tends to characterise his response to suffering, rather than action that challenges the portion he has been dealt.[586] However, the presence or absence of the gods still plays an important role in the narratives he creates to explain his suffering. During their reunion on Ithaca, Odysseus tells Athena, who has been absent during much of his return journey:

> τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐγὼν εὖ οἶδ᾽, ὅτι μοι πάρος ἠπίη ἦσθα,
> ἕως ἐνὶ Τροίῃ πολεμίζομεν υἷες Ἀχαιῶν·
> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ Πριάμοιο πόλιν διεπέρσαμεν αἰπήν,
> βῆμεν δ᾽ ἐν νήεσσι, θεὸς δ᾽ ἐκέδασσεν Ἀχαιούς,
> οὔ σ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἔπειτα ἴδον, κούρη Διός, οὐδ᾽ ἐνόησα
> νηὸς ἐμῆς ἐπιβᾶσαν, ὅπως τί μοι ἄλγος ἀλάλκοις.
> ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ φρεσὶν ᾗσιν ἔχων δεδαϊγμένον ἦτορ
> ἠλώμην, εἵως με θεοὶ κακότητος ἔλυσαν·
> πρίν γ᾽ ὅτε Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν ἐν πίονι δήμῳ
> θάρσυνάς τε ἐπέεσσι καὶ ἐς πόλιν ἤγαγες αὐτή.

> And I know this well, that before you were kind to me,
> as long as we sons of the Achaeans fought in Troy;
> but when we sacked the lofty city of Priam,
> and we embarked in our ships, and the god scattered the Achaeans,
> then I did not see you, daughter of Zeus, nor did I perceive you
> come upon my ship, so that you might ward off some pain for me.
> But always having a divided heart in my breast
> I wandered, until the gods released me from misery;
> before in the rich land of the Phaeacian men,
> you cheered me with words and led me into the city yourself.[587]

Odysseus confidently asserts that Athena was present during the Trojan War, and he claims her reappearance as the end of his divinely dispensed suffering. When Athena is absent,

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[586] See p. 139-43 for Odysseus' endurance.
[587] *Od.* 13.314-23.

Odysseus suggests that his actions are less effective. His account of his wanderings corroborates this statement, as he often meets moments of crisis with uncertainty that leads to internal deliberation. This internal deliberation then often results in a decision to endure rather than positive action. The endurance that Odysseus displays in each minor instance of suffering is here employed on a grander scale as something akin to faith in opposition to the full portion of misery brought against him by the gods in Athena's absence. When Athena meets him on Ithaca, she rewards his endurance with approval. She claims that she never lacked faith in him, helps him to find meaning in his suffering by explaining that it was due to Poseidon's wrath, and provides guidance for the next portion of his return.[588] Their conversation reinforces the interpretation of his sufferings that Odysseus began among the Phaeacians and directs him as he takes control of narratives of suffering upon his return to his household.

3.1.2. Odysseus' expression of overwhelming events

Male characters in the *Odyssey* have limited means of responding to overwhelming events. Unlike their Iliadic counterparts, these men are rarely able to take aggressive action to end their suffering. Consequently, emotional responses to suffering generally last longer and require vocalisation before they can be integrated into characters' identities. Initially, male characters often lament; this grief, unlike that of female characters, tends to be wordless, and, although sometimes collective, takes place in a personal and non-performative capacity.[589] Menelaus describes the fleeting pleasure that lament brings male characters:

> ἄλλοτε μέν τε γόῳ φρένα τέρπομαι, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ αὖτε
> παύομαι· αἰψηρὸς δὲ κόρος κρυεροῖο γόοιο.
>
> At one time I cheer my heart with weeping, but at another again
> I cease; and soon is satiety of chilling weeping.[590]

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[588] *Od.* 13.330-43. For Athena's relationship with Odysseus, see Murnaghan, 1995: 64-78.
[589] This is not the case of all laments in Homer, see e.g. Pucci, 1993 commenting on Achilles' lament for Patroclus (*Il.* 19.314-337). Easterling, 1991 and Murnaghan, 1999 discuss the public and performative aspects of female lament.
[590] *Od.* 4.102-3.

Here, Menelaus describes his response to his companions' deaths at Troy. Odysseus and his men also grieve their lost companions on their journey and lament in response to shocking news, such as Circe's revelation that they must visit Hades.[591] In almost all cases, this type of lament is spontaneous, ephemeral and conveys no information about the characters or the loss; only after the fight with the Ciconians, where Odysseus insists on three shouts for each man killed, is there a hint of performance and, perhaps, verbal commemoration.[592] Male characters therefore do not use lament as a narrative format to articulate their responses to overwhelming events in the *Odyssey*.

Moreover, the epic emphasises the ineffectiveness of lament as a strategy for the expression of male suffering. The earliest glimpses of Odysseus offered by the *Odyssey* depict Odysseus alone on the shore, weeping and staring out to sea.[593] After seven years on Calypso's island, he is no longer a man of action and bears little resemblance to the Iliadic hero seen performing great deeds on the Trojan battlefields. Instead he is, as Athena says, a man who 'longing also to see smoke leaping from his land, desires to die,' (ἱέμενος καὶ καπνὸν ἀποθρώσκοντα νοῆσαι //ἧς γαίης, θανέειν ἱμείρεται).[594] The goddess says that Calypso charmed Odysseus to forget Ithaca, but it seems that his isolation has rather sapped his spirit. When Calypso goes to speak to Odysseus, the description of his state again focuses on his apathy; the narrator says that 'his sweet life ebbed away in mourning for his return' (κατείβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν //νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ) and Calypso demands that he 'not let [his] life waste away' (μηδέ τοι αἰὼν //φθινέτω).[595] Whilst Odysseus remains on the island, he cannot participate in a male community or speak of his experiences before an interested audience.[596] As Carol Dougherty argues: 'If he cannot sail successfully to Phaeacia, his story, the story of his adventures, will not be told and his heroic journey will

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[591] Odysseus' companions grieving on their journey: *Od.* 9.62-3; 9.105-6; 9.565-6; 10.77; 10.133-4; 10.496-8; 10.566-8.
[592] *Od.* 9.64-6.
[593] *Od.* 1.56-7; 5.82-4.
[594] Od. 1.58-9.
[595] Od. 5.152-3; 5.160-1.
[596] Calypso wishes to isolate him and exhibits jealousy when he speaks of his wife and home: *Od.* 5.203-13.

remain forever unsung.'[597] Lamentation does not assist him in achieving his goals or understanding his experiences, so it neither mitigates his grief nor promotes his recovery.

Instead, male characters use storytelling as an effective means to respond to overwhelming events. At one end of the scale, this produces the professional bardic song. With bardic song, male characters perform songs about 'the deeds of men' (κλέα ἀνδρῶν).[598] Homeric bards, such as Phemius and Demodocus in the *Odyssey*, perform popular songs about the gods and heroic men of old alongside newly composed songs about the recent deeds of men that find favour with audiences.[599] In the *Odyssey*, bardic performances take place in domestic settings to feasting audiences of male and female hosts and guests.[600] Men act as patrons to bards, bringing them in when they want to listen to stories, setting the themes and rewarding the songs they like with food and drink.[601] For the majority of listeners, hearing these songs is a pleasurable experience; as Charles Segal has recognised, the distance between the audience and the subject of the song allows listeners to derive enjoyment from them.[602] Although oral, bardic song is ostensibly composed with the Muses' aid and is therefore not directly a form of testimony narrative; a bard does not sing about his personal experience and does not use narrative to find meaning or significance in events that otherwise lack meaning or significance for him.[603] Instead, these songs transmit traditional narratives that convey the meaning and significance of events experienced by others to new and broader audiences.

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[597] Dougherty, 2001: 36-7.
[598] *Il.* 9.189; 9.524; *Od.* 8.73.
[599] *Od.* 1.337-8; 350-2.
[600] See Dougherty 2001: 50-57, which also draws a distinction between the bards installed in aristocratic courts and travelling storytellers, such as Odysseus.
[601] *Od.* 8.69-70; 8.477-83.
[602] Segal, 1994: 120-2.
[603] Scodel, 1998: 172; 180 characterises bardic song as 'essentially disinterested' in contrast to non-bardic song, which is 'sharply goal-directed.' We can see this in, for example, Phoenix's version of the story of Meleager (*Il.* 9.524-5). It is not clear how he knows the story; it forms part of the traditional bardic repertoire, but also happened recently in relation to the Trojan War (Hainsworth, 1993: 131-2). However, Phoenix clearly shapes his version of the story to give it relevance to Achilles' situation.

Although bards do not have eyewitness knowledge of events, bardic skill in storytelling can convey events so vividly to audience members that they provoke personal responses from some characters. As Scodel notes, whilst singers do not intend to add any particular meaning or significance to their songs, the songs can take on 'special significance' for individual audience members with personal connections to the events.[604] In some cases, a song's subject matter spurs discussion of particular topics, as when Telemachus and Athena discuss Odysseus' homecoming whilst Phemius sings about the return of the Achaeans.[605] In others, listeners respond to the accuracy of the song and re-experience old emotions. Demodocus' songs repeatedly move Odysseus to tears due to how well they represent the Trojan War.[606] Bardic songs do not usually elicit this response, which tends to be reserved for eyewitness accounts. Odysseus tells Demodocus:

> λίην γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἶτον ἀείδεις,
> ὅσσ᾽ ἔρξαν τ᾽ ἔπαθόν τε καὶ ὅσσ᾽ ἐμόγησαν Ἀχαιοί,
> ὥς τέ που ἢ αὐτὸς παρεὼν ἢ ἄλλου ἀκούσας.

> For very rightly you sing of the fate of the Achaeans,
> as much as the Achaeans did and experienced, and as much as
>   they suffered,
> as though you had either been there yourself or had heard it from another.[607]

Odysseus compliments Demodocus by comparing the bard's songs to an eyewitness account, emphasising that he has communicated the subjective suffering as well as the objective deeds that happened at Troy. Odysseus' response suggests that various types of oral narrative can become intertwined in Homeric society. Bardic song inspired by the Muses cannot speak about the present, but can prompt oral accounts that show the relationship of the past to the present. When an audience member experiences a personal connection to events from bardic song, the conventions of epic song can help speakers and audiences interpret experiences in personal accounts. Here, Odysseus adopts the language

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[604] Scodel, 1998: 172.
[605] *Od.* 1.150-326.
[606] *Od.* 8.83-95; 521-34. On Odysseus' tears, see Rose, 1969: 402; Race, 2014: 51-7; Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 381.
[607] *Od.* 8.489-91.

and style of epic (κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἶτον…ἔρξαν τ᾽ ἔπαθόν τε) to describe his own experiences when speaking to Demodocus. His words bridge the gap between oral narratives as personal accounts and oral narratives as histories of society by highlighting that his experiences have a place in traditional epic. Bardic narratives in Homer can also therefore play a role in initiating meaning-making processes after overwhelming events by prompting amateur narrative performance of personal testimonies.

However, bardic narrative alone does not help characters integrate their personal experiences of suffering into broader narrative traditions. When Demodocus sings about the sack of Troy, Odysseus responds emotionally but not with his own narratives. The narrator reports Demodocus' song, which tells the story of the Trojan horse and then points at Odysseus and Menelaus going to Deiphobus' house to find Helen.[608] As the bardic narrative enters the house, the details of events are obscured from public view, with the narrator commenting 'in that place, he said, he endured a most terrible battle and won victory' (κεῖθι δὴ αἰνότατον πόλεμον φάτο τολμήσαντα //νικῆσαι).[609] What is striking here is that the subject of φάτο is not Odysseus (or Menelaus) but rather the bard, who constructs a public narrative about the Trojan War. Yet the unusual phrasing invites the audience to consider this as Odysseus' perspective on the battle, even as it highlights that his account of what took place inside the house is still conspicuously absent from public narratives. The song certainly provokes a severe emotional response from Odysseus, whose reaction is presented through the reverse simile comparing Odysseus to a captured woman. The woman runs into the streets to mourn her husband and is taken into slavery.[610] Whereas Demodocus' song does not venture into the domestic sphere, Odysseus' response

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[608] *Od.* 8.500-18.

[609] *Od.* 8.519-20.

[610] *Od.* 8.521-31. See Foley, 1978 for reverse similes. This simile is remarkable for the role reversal involved in portraying Odysseus as a victim of the siege. Although it cannot be traced to a specific moment in Odysseus' history, the simile resonates with Andromache's portrayals of women widowed by the siege in the *Iliad* and thus has the feel of a vivid flashback. However, it must be noted that analepsis is not a technique Homer uses to imitate experiences of suffering, although such techniques are familiar to twenty-first century audiences from Modernist trauma literature. See also Windslow, 2004 for the role that figurative language plays in modern attempts to indicate (and overcome) the indescribable quality of overwhelming events.

has the domestic intrude into public space. The vivid metaphor, which has a memory-like quality, follows the reported bardic narrative and so blurs the boundaries between bardic narrative and personal account.[611] Odysseus re-experiences a sense of helplessness that he associates with the mixing of combative and domestic spheres as the siege broke. However, since he does not speak, this portion of his story remains untold,[612] and he does not incorporate the experience into his reconstructed identity.[613] This episode supports the idea that hearing bardic song is not enough for characters to overcome suffering; they must take ownership of their own identities through narration after overwhelming events in order to overcome feelings of helplessness.

Performances of personal accounts, on the other hand, do help characters to overcome suffering. They allow male characters to articulate their experiences, assign meaning to these experiences and consider their significance in relation to other notable events.[614] The distance between characters and their suffering during performance allows them to reinterpret events in relation to their wider context, as Odysseus' narratives about his journey show.[615] The new contexts in which these events are remembered and related distance characters from their immediate emotional responses and allow these narratives to bring pleasure as a form of entertainment. In narrating their stories, characters move from positions of helplessness to positions of control.[616] By speaking aloud, they also integrate or reintegrate themselves into communities. Audiences come to recognise and respect the deeds and suffering a speaker has undergone away from the community. They prize and attempt to emulate the qualities of characters who suffer, often seeing the act of listening to

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[611] A good Homeric narrative is one that is in good order (κατὰ μοῖραν; κατὰ κόσμον); the disorder of the layers in this narrative reflects the shock Odysseus still experiences.

[612] He passes over the sack of Troy in his own narrative (*Od.* 9.37-8).

[613] That Odysseus' Phaeacian narrative focuses on reconstructing his identity is clear from his opening statements about his name and homeland (*Od.* 9.19-36).

[614] The role of narratives in shaping the meaning and significance of Homeric encounters can be seen in, for example, the encounter between Glaucus and Diomedes (*Il.* 6.119-236). See Barker & Christensen, 2011 for the role of Diomedes' family history in the *Iliad*.

[615] Odysseus first speaks about his departure from Calypso (*Od.* 7.241-66). He then integrates this story into the narrative of his return (*Od.* 12.447-50). The longer narrative puts his recent experiences in perspective.

[616] For the move from helplessness to active agent, see Janoff-Bulman, 1992: 142-3; Herman, 1992: 196-7.

a narrative about suffering as an act of endurance that they perform.[617] By speaking about suffering, male characters often form strong empathetic relationships with their audiences and begin to look towards the future. They often win support in achieving their next goals, as when the Phaeacians provide Odysseus with gifts and convoy to Ithaca or Eumaeus gives Odysseus food and a recommendation to Penelope.[618] Thus male characters use public accounts to earn recognition of their suffering and their endurance, and to work through the meaning and significance of the events they have experienced.

On his travels, however, Odysseus struggles to identify suitable spaces and audiences in which to perform narratives about his experiences. Few of the communities he encounters care about the Trojan War, a topic that is popular among the Achaeans.[619] When he first begins to travel, he introduces himself several times in connection with Troy, as when he says to the Cyclops:

> "ἡμεῖς τοι Τροίηθεν ἀποπλαγχθέντες Ἀχαιοὶ
> παντοίοις ἀνέμοισιν ὑπὲρ μέγα λαῖτμα θαλάσσης,
> οἴκαδε ἱέμενοι, ἄλλην ὁδὸν ἄλλα κέλευθα
> ἤλθομεν· οὕτω που Ζεὺς ἤθελε μητίσασθαι.
> λαοὶ δ᾽ Ἀτρείδεω Ἀγαμέμνονος εὐχόμεθ᾽ εἶναι,
> τοῦ δὴ νῦν γε μέγιστον ὑπουράνιον κλέος ἐστί·
> τόσσην γὰρ διέπερσε πόλιν καὶ ἀπώλεσε λαοὺς
> πολλούς.

> "Truly we are Achaeans driven away from Troy
> by all the winds across the great depths of the sea,
> going homeward, by another road on other ways
> we come as doubtless Zeus wished to contrive it.
> And we profess ourselves to be men of Agamemnon, son of Atreus,
> whose fame is now indeed greatest under heaven;
> for he sacked so great a city and destroyed many
> people. [620]

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[617] De Jong, 2001: 286 discusses long nights and narratives, a trope also found at *Od.* 11.367-76; 15.392-5 and 23.240-353.

[618] Phaeacians: *Od.* 13.4-15; Eumaeus: *Od.* 14.510-1; 17.513-27. Dougherty, 2001: 56-9 explores rates of exchange for storytelling.

[619] As Telemachus' exchange with Penelope on Ithaca (*Od.* 1.344) makes clear.

[620] *Od.* 9.259-266.

Here, Odysseus portrays himself as an Achaean warrior. The Cyclops meets this attempt to speak about his experience 'with ruthless spirit' (νηλέι θυμῷ) and, as I have explained above, shatters his assumptions about the dangers he faces outside war.[621] He also shatters Odysseus' assumptions about his reception on the basis of his participation in the Trojan War; the experience that defines Odysseus' identity has no value for the Cyclops. Throughout the rest of this episode, Odysseus finds it too dangerous to claim any identity, calling himself 'Nobody' (Οὖτις), but the success of his tricks and his escape encourage him to complete his success with the reckless re-establishment of his identity as 'Odysseus, sacker of cities' (Ὀδυσσῆα πτολιπόρθιον) as he leaves.[622] The Cyclops' uncivilised nature, his lack of interest in male community, his inability to listen or communicate clearly, and his want of compassion make him a poor choice of audience.

Most other audiences that Odysseus approaches on his journey are more promising, but these encounters do not produce fully articulated and contextualised narratives. Odysseus' month-long sojourn with Aeolus initially seems to be ideal for narrative construction, as Aeolus provides a domestic space for performance with a welcoming, attentive audience that respects hospitality rules. Odysseus states:

> μῆνα δὲ πάντα φίλει με καὶ ἐξερέεινεν ἕκαστα,
> Ἴλιον Ἀργείων τε νέας καὶ νόστον Ἀχαιῶν·
> καὶ μὲν ἐγὼ τῷ πάντα κατὰ μοῖραν κατέλεξα.

> For a whole month he welcomed me and asked me each thing,
> about Ilios and the Argives' ships and the return of the Achaeans;
> and I related everything to him in due order.[623]

However, the endogamous marriages in Aeolus' household are a cause for concern: oral accounts cannot spread if the audience has no links outside of the performative space. Moreover, once the tale is told, it becomes clear that Odysseus' suffering is not complete when his companions release the winds within sight of Ithaca. When Odysseus returns,

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[621] *Od.* 9.272.
[622] Οὖτις: *Od.* 9.366; Ὀδυσσῆα πτολιπόρθιον: *Od.* 9.504.
[623] *Od.* 10.14-16.

Aeolus betrays his trust by refusing to host him on the grounds that the gods must despise him considering the bad luck he has endured, the full extent of which Aeolus knows only because Odysseus has narrated it to him.[624] After these two experiences, Odysseus does not attempt to speak about Troy for some time: Circe already knows his name and history when they meet, thus pre-empting the necessity of following the usual hospitality rules around identity.[625] In her presence, Odysseus is not compelled to speak, but also makes no moves towards reconstructing his identity. During this portion of his journey, Odysseus takes on the role of audience rather than speaker. He seeks direction from Circe and Tiresias, he acts as audience to the shades in Hades, and he listens to the tales of the Sirens, who offer a tempting opportunity to contextualise his knowledge of the Trojan War.[626] Whilst Odysseus' Achaean companions are the ideal audience with whom to share his experiences, the space in which he encounters them, the realm of the dead, does not lend itself well to narration; as an adventurer in an unknown place, Odysseus is prevented from speaking as much as he wished by wanting to see things for himself.[627] Until Odysseus' suffering ends, he continues to experience rather than narrate events.

The Phaeacians provide Odysseus with the first setting conducive to recovery on his travels. Indeed, this episode is generally accepted as the point in Odysseus' journey at which he turns towards reintegration into the mortal world.[628] One way he achieve this move is through storytelling. Odysseus speaks about his suffering to entertain the Phaeacians, but he also speaks to establish his identity within the Phaeacian community. He reconstructs his identity by constructing a new narrative identity including episodes of suffering that have not featured in any previous narrative he has told. However, *pace* Race, the relationship between Odysseus and the Phaeacians is not best compared to the modern

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[624] *Od.* 10.28-75. De Jong, 2001: 250-3 discusses the variations in hospitality produced by Odysseus' two encounters with Aeolus.
[625] *Od.* 10.330-2.
[626] Sirens: *Od.* 12.189-90; Achilles: *Od.* 11.505-37; Ajax: *Od.* 10.541-67. For further discussion of the Sirens and their role in the *Odyssey*, see Pucci, 1979; Segal, 1994: 100-6; Doherty, 1995a: 81-92 and Shay, 2002: 86-7.
[627] *Od.* 12.565-7.
[628] Segal, 1962 put forward a convincing case for this perspective and it has been generally adopted since.

therapeutic relationship between therapist and patient.[629] As Herman notes, the 'sole purpose' of a therapeutic relationship 'is to promote the recovery of the patient;' the relationship exists to promote the patient's recovery through the telling and bearing witness to a narrative testimony.[630] This is not the case when Odysseus speaks about his journey,[631] and the relationship between Odysseus and the Phaeacians does not therefore resemble a modern therapeutic relationship. Rather, Odysseus and the Phaeacians enter into a reciprocal ξενίη relationship, which remains in place when Odysseus leaves Scheria.[632] In return for the gifts Odysseus receives,[633] he promises Alcinous and the Phaeacians κλέος and prayers.[634] The relationship thus exists within limits defined by hospitality, and does not exist purely for Odysseus' benefit. The narrative that this relationship produces provides the Phaeacians with enjoyment, prestige and a place in future retellings of Odysseus' journey,[635] as well as allowing him to reconstruct his identity.

However, the Phaeacians' interest in Odysseus' ordeals is also not damaging. As Herman notes, the therapeutic relationship 'is by no means the only or even the best relationship in which recovery is fostered;' community remains vital to recovery.[636] Shay's claim that the narrator portrays the Phaeacians as 'self-indulgent' civilians 'avid in the pursuit of luxury and entertainment' does not reflect their reception of Odysseus' tale or the benefits they offer Odysseus as an audience.[637] Among the Phaeacians, Odysseus meets many noble men, both young and old, who are willing to act as an audience when he speaks. The Phaeacian welcome, where Odysseus is treated 'like a brother' (ἀντὶ κασιγνήτου) and even offered the opportunity to become part of Alcinous' family through a marriage with

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[629] Race, 2014: 48.
[630] Herman, 1992: 134.
[631] It is important to recognise that the Phaeacians are not a benevolent audience in any straightforward sense. For approaches that view the Phaeacians as ambivalent, hostile or a danger for Odysseus, see Rose, 1969, Most, 1989: 26-30; Reece, 1993: 101-21.
[632] *Od.* 8.542-7.
[633] *Od.* 5.38-9; 12.135-8.
[634] Prayers to gods on the Phaeacians' behalf (or to Nausicaa as a god): *Od.* 7.331-3; 8.413-5; 8.465-8; κλέος among mortals: *Od.* 8.100-3; 8.250-3; 8.430-2; 8.497-8.
[635] E.g. Odysseus' account to Penelope (*Od.* 23.339-41).
[636] Herman, 1992: 134.
[637] Shay, 2002: 13.

Nausicaa, shows a considerate attempt to fulfil the needs of a character who has lost his community.[638] Moreover, Phaeacian society is shaped by a historical trauma, an encounter with the Cyclopes, who also account for much of Odysseus' own overwhelming experience.[639] This history allows the Phaeacians to act as a knowledgeable and empathetic audience, facilitating Odysseus' recovery. The bonds Odysseus forms with members of Alcinous' family, while not strictly therapeutic, are therefore still beneficial in that they give him status as a valued guest within the Phaeacian community.

Odysseus' performance among the Phaeacians employs elements from bardic song and personal testimony to convey his experiences of suffering in a manner appropriate to his setting. In its introduction, Odysseus articulates some of the decisions he makes when shaping his experiences into narrative. He notes that Alcinous' questions about his troubles (κήδεα) will cause him, who is grieving, to grieve still more, and introduces the theme of his troubles originating with the gods.[640] He considers the structure of his narrative in a formulaic line comprising two rhetorical questions asking what to put first and what last, a common bardic conceit, and then determines to reveal his identity followed by his experiences.[641] The narrative itself combines accounts of Odysseus' personal suffering with commemoration of his lost companions, a theme that would normally be taken up by lament. He explores the significance and meaning of his experiences in order to create a coherent narrative, using his knowledge of the divine to provide an explanation for acts that would otherwise be incomprehensible. As the only survivor, he also gives voices to his dead companions, especially in matters upon which they disagreed with him. Odysseus' narrative is engaging, emphasises his subjective narrative position, but also, positions his speech as absolute knowledge with such phrases as 'I will speak…so that you may know'

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[638] *Od.* 8.546 and 7.311-5 respectively. Murnaghan, 2011: 70-2 discusses the difference between the proposed marriage and the accepted guest relationship Odysseus forms with the Phaeacians.
[639] See pp. 257-64.
[640] *Od.* 9.13-5.
[641] *Od.* 9.14-28.

(μυθήσομαι, ὄφρα καὶ ὑμεῖς //εἴδετ᾽).[642] With formulaic phrases such as this, Odysseus calls upon his audience to bear witness to his suffering and to the loss of his companions, participating in their commemoration. Odysseus thus distances himself from his previous suffering, reclaims his individual identity and emerges as an active agent as he returns to Ithaca.

Conclusion

In the *Odyssey*, a number of male characters, including Odysseus, his companions and Menelaus, experience and respond to overwhelming events. Unlike in the *Iliad*, where characters often respond quickly to ἄχος incurred on the battlefield, most male characters in the *Odyssey* experience suffering as a series of overwhelming events. In particular, Odysseus experiences several overwhelming events on his journey that shatter his assumptions about the world. He is not able to respond with aggressive action against the perpetrators of his suffering, which he tends to attribute to the gods. Instead he exhibits endurance and, afterwards, creates narratives to take control of his experiences and share them with other characters.

Male characters create narrative in performance to work through their experiences of overwhelming events and rebuild shattered assumptions. Several types of public male narrative performance circulate in the Homeric world. Bardic song claims an immortal source and shares tales of great deeds and acts of suffering as a form of entertainment. Whilst it provides a context against which characters can understand their experiences, it does not itself help characters recover from their experiences. Personal accounts stem from mortal knowledge and eyewitness testimony. Male characters that experience suffering use personal accounts to order their experiences, attribute meaning to events and understand their wider significance. These narratives help their speakers establish strong relationships with their listeners, who often choose to aid them with material goods, helpful advice or

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[642] *Od.* 9.16-7. He also stakes his authority on his name, his prominence among men and his reputation (*Od.* 9.19-20).

useful connections. Narratives are typically created when characters have emerged from danger and returned to their homes and communities. Odysseus' extended return delays his final narration and thus increase his suffering. He attempts to tell his story multiple times during his travels, finally succeeding in finding an appropriate audience in the Phaeacian household. As a result, he emerges as an active agent looking towards the future and ready to face the challenges waiting at home.

3.2. Overwhelming experience in the οἶκος: Penelope and female voices

Introduction

In the *Odyssey*, the οἶκος exists as a focal point for representations of overwhelming experience.[643] It is a flexible space, because it acts as a meeting point of the public and the private, of male and female, and of people of all different occupations, opinions and ages. In Odysseus' house on Ithaca, these qualities are exaggerated to unusual proportions, showcasing encounters and conflicts that might otherwise go unseen. For Odysseus, his house functions as the ultimate symbol of hope: it signifies the end of his journey, and acts as a place of (idealised) memory and a marker of his identity that sustains him through his worst periods of suffering. For Penelope, however, whilst it is a place of memory and an identity marker, Odysseus' house is primarily a site of suffering. In the assembly, Telemachus states that 'two evils have fallen upon my house' (ὅ μοι κακὰ ἔμπεσεν οἴκῳ, //δοιά); the loss of Odysseus and the arrival of the suitors.[644] Both of these are overwhelming events for Penelope and cause her pain for as long as both she and the suitors are in the house and Odysseus is not. As a female character, her wishes are almost entirely suppressed before the requirements of family duty and social pressure, causing her internal struggle and external conflict as she attempts to process these overwhelming events.

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[643] Schein, 1995 discusses the role of the οἶκος in epic.
[644] *Od.* 2.45-6.

In this section, I discuss Penelope's experiences of suffering within Odysseus' house. Penelope shows the same emotions of ἄχος and πένθος in response to her loss as Odysseus and the other warriors do on the battlefield and on their journeys home.[645] However, her response to these experiences is one that only a female character would produce. I draw from feminist approaches to trauma to consider the social forces in her community that cause her to experience events as overwhelming and direct her methods of expression afterwards. The private, domestic nature of female characters' overwhelming experiences, I argue, requires them to continue occupying their usual social roles and prevents them from expressing their responses to these events in adequate ways. Despite this, Penelope finds means of narrating her experience, rebuilding her assumptive world, and becoming an active agent, facilitating Odysseus' return.

3.2.1. Penelope's experience of overwhelming events

Penelope experiences suffering in a different setting to male characters. Unlike male experiences of overwhelming events, threats made towards Penelope take place in the house and continue over a long period of time. However, the element of danger often present in male experiences of overwhelming events is not absent from her experience; the suitors are frequently violent and threaten both her and her family.[646] Penelope's first experience of an overwhelming event is the loss of her husband, which causes her πένθος.[647] Although Odysseus' loss also affects the Ithacan community,[648] only Penelope has the experience of losing her husband with all that entails in Homeric society.[649] Penelope's experience must be considered within its social context, because it is the crisis of social identity as well as personal identity that makes Odysseus' loss so overwhelming for Penelope. Odysseus' loss and the occupation of his house by the suitors both happen

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[645] See Chapter 2.
[646] Threats towards Penelope: *Od.* 2.110. Odysseus: *Od.* 2.246-51; Telemachus: *Od.* 4.697-701; 16.409-12; 16.435-448.
[647] The word 'event' can refer to a single instance or to a situation that continues over an extended period of time. For Penelope's πένθος, see: *Od.* 1.342; 19.512; 23.224.
[648] See Chapter 4.
[649] Penelope risks losing her home, her family, her status and her position within the Ithacan community. See Felson and Slatkin, 2004: 91-114 for gender in Homer; Katz, 1991: 35-40 for Penelope's position.

before the narrative begins. During the epic, Penelope experiences the loss of her son, which causes her ἄχος, as an additional overwhelming event.[650] Whilst this turns out to be a temporary loss, it devastates her, representing as it does the end of Odysseus' line and thus any hope for the future.[651] Telemachus' loss therefore has a great impact on Penelope's assumptive world at a time when she is already weakened by her previous experiences. Nevertheless, she displays endurance to keep faith with Odysseus throughout her ordeals, and is recognised for her 'enduring heart' (τετληότι θυμῷ) upon his return.[652] Since Penelope experiences the same emotional responses to overwhelming events as male characters, differences in how she expresses her response can be attributed to the difference in her situation resulting from her gender.

The loss of a husband is a uniquely female form of overwhelming event; no male character in Homeric epic experiences domestic instability at the loss of a partner or is courted against his will in his own home.[653] Laura Brown argues that women and other non-dominant groups in societies experience a greater range of traumatic events than early PTSD diagnoses recognised; these diagnoses responded to events such as combat and natural disasters, which were the type of event dominant groups experienced, but did not see ongoing situations, such as abuse or workplace injury, as legitimate sources of PTSD.[654] Homeric epic shows evidence of a similar phenomenon. In the *Odyssey,* Penelope's experience is exacerbated by the suitors, who are the dominant group in her society, but is not recognised by them. Indeed, they blame her, telling her son in the assembly:

> σοὶ δ᾽ οὔ τι μνηστῆρες Ἀχαιῶν αἴτιοί εἰσιν,
> ἀλλὰ φίλη μήτηρ, ἥ τοι πέρι κέρδεα οἶδεν.
> ἤδη γὰρ τρίτον ἐστὶν ἔτος, τάχα δ᾽ εἶσι τέταρτον,
> ἐξ οὗ ἀτέμβει θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν Ἀχαιῶν.

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[650] *Od.* 4.716. At *Od.* 18.274, Penelope also claims ἄχος to encourage the suitors to bring gifts.
[651] For the importance of an unbroken male line in the οἶκος, see Murnaghan, 1995: 78.
[652] *Od.* 23.100; 168.
[653] The loss of a son is common to both men and women. I therefore focus on the loss of Odysseus here.
[654] Brown, 1995: 100-3.

> But the suitors of the Achaeans are not to blame,
> but your dear mother, who knows tricks beyond any.
> For already it is three years, and soon it will be four,
> in which she has cheated the hearts in the breasts of the Achaeans.[655]

Antinous, as representative of the suitors, claims that, contrary to appearances, they are the injured party and Penelope is in control. The suitors warn the Ithacans not to interfere with their self-confessed 'grievous courtship' (μνηστύος ἀργαλέης); the community in turn chooses to ignore the public testimony Telemachus gives to Penelope's situation in the private sphere of her house.[656] The community consistently rejects Penelope's perspective, whether presented by her or by someone speaking on her behalf. With no established mechanism for the assembly to interfere in domestic affairs, the Ithacans choose to ignore Penelope's suffering and avoid conflict with the suitors.[657]

Penelope's loss of Odysseus shatters her assumptive world. One result is an acute crisis of meaning at a social level.[658] The suitors' declaration of themselves as suitors has left Penelope's personal status and relationship to Odysseus in doubt: is she his wife or widow? Is she a widow or a bride? While he is absent, Penelope often emphasises her relationship with him as her husband, but others rarely recognise this status.[659] At points, she doubts it herself, saying:

> ἀλλά μοι ὧδ᾽ ἀνὰ θυμὸν ὀίεται, ὡς ἔσεταί περ·
> οὔτ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς ἔτι οἶκον ἐλεύσεται, οὔτε σὺ πομπῆς
> τεύξῃ, ἐπεὶ οὐ τοῖοι σημάντορές εἰσ᾽ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ,
> οἷος Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔσκε μετ᾽ ἀνδράσιν, εἴ ποτ᾽ ἔην γε,

> But I think in my heart thus, just how it will be;
> neither will Odysseus still come home, nor will you meet with
> an escort, since there are no such leaders in the house

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[655] *Od.* 2.87-90.

[656] *Od.* 2.199. DePrince & Freyd, 2002: 79 discuss the role of betrayal perspectives in trauma.

[657] See p. 208-16 for Homeric society and the role of the Ithacan assembly.

[658] Felson, 1994: 3 sees Penelope's various identity formations as 'glimmers of understanding' with which the poet 'teases' the audience by presenting possible plot-types into which Penelope might fall. Felson's approach is convincing in some respects, but does not account for the fact that Penelope's suffering alters her sense of identity.

[659] See *Od.* 1.344; 4.724; 4.814; 18.204; 18.253; 19.126; 19.530. Around the time of Telemachus' journey, she refers to him more frequently as her son's father or simply Odysseus.

as Odysseus was among men, if indeed he ever existed,[660]

Penelope begins to doubt her memories of Odysseus. With Odysseus' status uncertain, her own relationship to him is constantly questioned. Along with her status in the community goes the question of her safety: if Penelope is not Odysseus' wife, what rights does she have to the house and to its substance as a source of livelihood? Penelope controls it in Odysseus' absence as his wife, but with his death a man should retake ownership.[661] Both questions of identity and of ownership torment Penelope, because she knows that her good reputation relies on her acting in accordance with her role in Homeric society.[662] Societal pressure to remarry comes from the suitors' presence, their impact on Odysseus' estate, Telemachus' age, her parents' wishes and Odysseus' last words to her concerning how long she should wait.[663] Penelope's loss of Odysseus thus causes a crisis in her social identity.

The suitors' behaviour compounds the uncertainties around Penelope's identity: are they suitors offering legitimate marriage or are they invaders operating outside of normal social practice? Penelope notes that they behave in a different manner to suitors of earlier times,[664] and when Mentes visits the house, he cannot tell from their behaviour whether he is at a festival or a wedding.[665] Throughout, the suitors behave like raiders, wasting food supplies and taking women from the house.[666] The similarities between the situation on Ithaca and the siege at Troy become explicit in Odysseus' conversation with Athena, where Odysseus compares planning revenge on the suitors to the final stage of the Trojan War.[667] As I have discussed, Odysseus showed distress when Demodocus' speech reminded him of this moment, in which combative and domestic spheres similarly came together with

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[660] *Od.* 19.312-5.
[661] See Katz, 1991: 60-72 for issues surrounding ownership of Odysseus' house.
[662] As *Od.* 18.254-6 illustrates.
[663] Odysseus sets a limit on how long she should wait: *Od.* 18.257-80; the suitors expect Penelope to choose: *Od.* 18.285-9; Penelope claims that her parents and son are impatient for her to remarry: *Od.* 19.157-61. See H. Foley, 1995: 99-104 for questions of Penelope's autonomy.
[664] *Od.* 18.274-80.
[665] *Od.* 1.225-9.
[666] As their behaviour at *Od.* 2.46-63; 14.91-5; 18.274-80 and 20.304-19 demonstrates.
[667] *Od.* 13.383-8.

devastating effect. Penelope, however, does not show concern when the house becomes the site of a massacre. For her, the house had been a site of suffering since the suitors arrived. She feels disbelief, quickly followed by relief, when she hears that they are dead and asks to witness the scene to reassure herself that the longed for outcome has been achieved.[668] Odysseus' presence and actions, both in the household and afterwards in the community, resolve the questions posed by Penelope's experiences of suffering, restoring her safety and status as his wife.

At a very different level, the shattering of Penelope's assumptive world creates a personal crisis of meaning for her. As part of the process of rebuilding an assumptive world, Penelope exhibits self-consciousness about the naïve beliefs she held prior to her overwhelming experiences. She explains the expectations that were shattered by Odysseus' loss when they are reunited:

> θεοὶ δ᾽ ὥπαζον ὀϊζύν,
> οἳ νῶϊν ἀγάσαντο παρ᾽ ἀλλήλοισι μένοντε
> ἥβης ταρπῆναι καὶ γήραος οὐδὸν ἱκέσθαι.

> But the gods gave us misery,
> they envied that we two, staying beside one another,
> would rejoice in our youth and come to the threshold of old age.[669]

Here, Penelope suggests that when she married Odysseus, she expected to live to old age alongside him. This expectation has been shattered by Odysseus' long absence during the Trojan War. Her statement, however, shows that she has found a meaning in the shattering of her worldview by framing it as a purposeful intervention by the gods in the life that she had anticipated. In this way, she can believe that her original assumptions that her marriage would be long and successful were correct; the future would have been exactly as she had anticipated were it not for divine envy.[670] By attributing her suffering to the gods, she fits it

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[668] *Od.* 23.11-84. Russo *et al.,* 1992: 315-21 examine how this passage exhibits Penelope's prudent character and how it portrays the gods' role in Odysseus' vengeance.
[669] *Od.* 23.210-2.
[670] See also *Od.* 23.222-4; 23.258-9, where Penelope attributes both the Trojan War and Odysseus' return to the gods.

into the usual Homeric frameworks for understanding suffering as a way to separate gods and mortals.[671]

Penelope's faith in the gods similarly plays an important role in allowing her to adjust to other losses. Upon hearing that Telemachus has left, another element of Penelope's worldview is shattered; Penelope exhibits endurance to preserve Telemachus' inheritance, and she had asked the gods to preserve her family in her husband's absence.[672] After her initial shock, she questions those around her, asking why Telemachus is gone, noting that it was not necessary for him to leave, and wondering whether it was 'so that truly he would not even leave his name here among men?' (ἦ ἵνα μηδ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι λίπηται;).[673] This last question begins to perceive divine motives behind her son's actions. The epic validates her belief in the gods by having Athena visit her in a dream epiphany. The goddess reveals her identity and informs Penelope that Telemachus will return safely.[674] Penelope's faith in the gods ultimately provides her with a robust view of suffering, which also enables her to accept the necessity of Odysseus' second departure and even find hope in the promise of a 'better old age' (γῆρας ἄρειον) and an eventual 'escape from evils' (κακῶν ὑπάλυξιν).[675] Athena in her role as a protective deity for Odysseus and his loved ones, and Penelope's personal faith in the gods unite to find meaning and significance in the overwhelming events that Penelope has experienced.

3.2.2. Penelope's expression of overwhelming events

Penelope thus experiences several overwhelming events during the *Odyssey*, to which she responds with ἄχος and πένθος. Like Odysseus, she also exhibits endurance, relying on her faith in the gods to give meaning and significance to suffering. In the section above, I began to consider how Penelope reinterpreted events to endure them. I now explore the full

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[671] See pp. 49-55 for the Homeric frameworks I have previously discussed.
[672] *Od.* 18.175-6.
[673] *Od.* 4.707-10. Penelope also finds out that her worldview does not match that of her attendants, who have kept Telemachus' departure secret (*Od.* 4.730-2; 4.745). This contributes to the severe shock she receives.
[674] *Od.* 4.795-841.
[675] *Od.* 23.286-7.

range of ways in which Penelope and other female characters respond to overwhelming events. Whilst many Homeric characters attempt to contextualise their suffering after overwhelming events, some avenues for contextualisation are only open to female characters. As Pat Easterling argues, lamentation and weaving allow female characters to express an emotional response and provide commentary on events they experience.[676] She emphasises their role in 'articulating the issues at stake' after such events for the benefit of the community and the audience.[677] Whilst the political and narratorial functions of these and other female activities are important, I focus on their role as expressions of emotional responses to overwhelming events. In particular, I consider how these activities allow women to give voice to their suffering before public audiences, and how they use them to integrate their experiences into their individual identity.

Female lament is the most public form of female storytelling in Homeric society. Lament is typically led by female characters, and female laments follow different themes from those which male characters use when grieving. Male lament tends to express anger and pity, using the occasion to assign responsibility for a companion's death and express the intent to exact revenge.[678] In contrast, female lament dwells on what the living have lost. Female characters recall memories of the dead whilst they were still alive, imagine things that will never happen as a result of their death and speak about how their lives will be affected by the loss. In Part I, I discussed how lament acts as an expression of loss after experiences of πένθος, addressing both the pain of another person's death and the pain of surviving them. The process also generates κλέος for the dead,[679] and allows female characters to gather in public and draw on their personal experiences to contribute to collective meaning making processes.[680] Creating meaning through lament thus allows

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[676] Easterling, 1991: 147. This subject has since attracted much commentary. Karanika, 2014: 22-3 discusses female lament in epic poetry and offers a recent bibliography of the most relevant works.
[677] Easterling, 1991: 149.
[678] Felson & Slatkin, 2004: 97. See Monsacré, 1984 for in-depth analysis.
[679] Especially when incorporated into epic poetry.
[680] I discuss female lament at pp. 126-9.

female characters to work through emotional accounts of their personal experiences, establish connections between their experiences and other significant events, and present their narratives to empathetic audiences of male and female listeners.

Lament, however, is an ephemeral form of commemoration. Women's stories can easily be lost if an empathetic audience does not hear and remember the lament, or if grief is not publicly performed as lament at all. Unlike the Iliadic passages above, for example, Penelope's grief in the *Odyssey* is often wordless and private. Since Odysseus' family do not recover his body, Penelope never performs a lament for her husband during funerary rites. Funerary rites play an important role in establishing the meaning and significance of a death, as Homeric characters recognise. Telemachus wishes that Odysseus had died in Troy so that he might have won great renown (μέγα κλέος) for himself and his family instead of disappearing without fame (ἀκλειῶς), unseen (ἄιστος) and unheard of (ἄπυστος).[681] Telemachus recognises the importance of providing clarity in ambiguous circumstances when he tells Eumaeus:

> "ἄττ᾽, ἦτοι μὲν ἐγὼν εἶμ᾽ ἐς πόλιν, ὄφρα με μήτηρ
> ὄψεται· οὐ γάρ μιν πρόσθεν παύσεσθαι ὀίω
> κλαυθμοῦ τε στυγεροῖο γόοιό τε δακρυόεντος,
> πρίν γ᾽ αὐτόν με ἴδηται·

> Father, I am going to the city, so that my mother
> will see me; for I do not think that before then she will cease
> from her miserable weeping and tearful wailing,
> before indeed she sees me;[682]

Telemachus relieves Penelope of her grief on his behalf, which cannot take the form of public lament while his fate is unknown, by informing her of his return. Penelope has no such encounter with Odysseus until after he kills the suitors. During this encounter, they enjoy exchanging their tales of suffering and recognise the endurance that each has

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[681] *Od.* 1.240-2. Odysseus wishes for this fate himself at *Od.* 5.308-12. See Sourvinou-Inwood, 1995: 109-39 for Homeric funerary practices.
[682] *Od.* 17.6-9.

displayed.[683] Before this, lament, although often a powerful way for female characters to give testimony and comment on events in epic, is of little use to Penelope, and her private suffering tends towards wordless and incoherent grief.

Along with lament, scholars recognise weaving as a form of female storytelling. In the *Iliad*, female characters use weaving to convey their perspective on the siege of Troy. Andromache and Helen both weave images into the cloth they make. As a dutiful wife, Andromache is working on a patterned robe in her chambers when she finds out about Hector's death.[684] When she hears the sounds of mourning, she drops the shuttle and runs out of the house, an act, as Andromache Karanika notes, which indicates the depth of the crisis that has occurred.[685] After she has seen Hector's body dishonoured, she promises to burn the stores of cloth in the house, which were intended for his funeral.[686] For Andromache, weaving and fabric tell the story of her identity in relation to Hector; as his wife, she works to fill his household and, as his widow, she uses this work to honour him.[687] The destruction of the fabric also comes to symbolise the destruction of their future married life. Andromache performs her identity as Hector's wife through her weaving and use of fabric, using the symbol of domesticity and duty to express her grief publicly in a socially acceptable way.

Like Andromache, Helen presents herself as a dutiful wife by weaving whilst the men fight. Although Helen's status as Paris' wife is insecure,[688] weaving allows her to cultivate the image of a good wife. Thus, she is twice found weaving in the *Iliad*: Iris finds her at her loom when she is required to witness the duel between Menelaus and Paris,[689] and

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[683] *Od.* 23.301; 350-58.
[684] *Il.* 22.440-61.
[685] Karanika, 2014: 82-3.
[686] *Il.* 22.510-515.
[687] Easterling, 1991: 149 discusses the authority that this gives women.
[688] As *Il.* 3.46-51; 3.128 and 3.399-405 illustrate.
[689] *Il.* 3.125-38.

Hector finds her overseeing her women's weaving when he looks for Paris after the duel.[690] Helen also uses her work to express her unique perspective on the war:

ἣ δὲ μέγαν ἱστὸν ὕφαινε,
δίπλακα μαρμαρέην, πολέας δ᾽ ἐνέπασσεν ἀέθλους
Τρώων θ᾽ ἱπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων,
οὕς ἑθεν εἵνεκ᾽ ἔπασχον ὑπ᾽ Ἄρηος παλαμάων.

> and she was weaving a great web,
> a gleaming one in double folds, and she wove in the many struggles
> of the Trojans, tamers of horses, and the bronze-clad Achaeans,
> who, on account of her, suffered at the hands of Ares.[691]

Here, Helen works images of combat into her weaving. Pache claims that 'Helen bears witness to the carnage she has caused and is observing from a distance…her storytelling is so private that it is addressed to no audience but herself; and while she depicts events that she notionally caused, she is noticeably absent from the scene she creates'.[692] However, weaving is not a private act for Helen: it is the product of the identity she adopts as Paris' wife in Troy. Helen may not depict herself, but she preserves her perspective on the suffering caused in her name in this textile. Weaving gives Helen power over how she is remembered, and she exerts this power when she offers Telemachus a robe as a gift in the *Odyssey*. She describes the robe as 'a memory of Helen's hands' (μνῆμ᾽ Ἑλένης χειρῶν), giving it as a reminder of the story that she tells him.[693] Helen tells Telemachus to give it to his mother for his future bride, so that 'the product of one woman's work becomes the locus of memory making and, even more, a device of communication with another.'[694] Weaving allows Helen to take a role in public narrative building and exert influence over how later generations remember her and the Trojan War.

Penelope's weaving should be considered alongside these other representations of weaving. Like Andromache and Helen, Penelope uses weaving to present herself as a

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[690] *Il.* 6.323-4. Hector finds Paris working on his armour (*Il.* 6.321-2). Both characters act out the roles they would like to be known for, but fail to live up to.
[691] *Il.* 3.125-8.
[692] Pache, 2014: 74.
[693] *Od.* 15.126.
[694] Karanika, 2014: 39.

dutiful wife.[695] Penelope weaves to maintain her status as Odysseus' widow once the community has determined that Odysseus must be dead, claiming that she is afraid of earning a poor reputation if she leaves Laertes without a shroud.[696] Penelope's stratagem plays with the image of the dutiful wife weaving; the picture she presents as she works industriously during the day satisfies the suitors that she is acting properly, but she shows her true loyalty to the house and to Odysseus as she unpicks her work at night. Under the threat of remarriage, Penelope's idea of a dutiful wife has broken with that of Homeric society, allowing her to deceive the suitors by presenting herself in a way that meets their expectations. However, as responses to an overwhelming event, weaving and unpicking are ineffective. Penelope cannot express her pain at Odysseus' loss through this medium and her identity fractures. Moreover, when the trick is uncovered, the suitors take ownership of the story, interpreting it as an act of deceit rather than as one of endurance, as Penelope understands it.[697] Ultimately neither Penelope nor the suitors determine the story's meaning: the spirit of Agamemnon hears Amphimedon's rendition, which includes nothing of Penelope's personal perspective, and pronounces that it demonstrates Penelope's virtue.[698] Weaving therefore does not allow Penelope to express her suffering or control her identity.

Female characters encounter similar issues when they engage with traditionally male narrative formats, such as epic poetry. Scodel argues that 'hearers who feel personally touched may be deeply moved' by bardic song, but this can be problematic when female characters struggle to exert control over bardic narratives.[699] Male characters travel and hear songs of their deeds far from where they occurred. They are consulted on the type of entertainment at feasts and can request a topic of song. In contrast, female characters

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[695] E.g. *Od.* 1.357; 17.96-7; 21.350-1. See Karanika, 2014: 45 for weaving associated with married women.
[696] *Od.* 2.96-102.
[697] The story of Penelope's weaving is told at *Od.* 2.193-110; 19.137-156 and 24.121-150. Felson, 1994: 26-8 discusses these accounts.
[698] *Od.* 24.192-198.
[699] Scodel, 1998: 173.

frequently remain at the site of their overwhelming events and are often still experiencing suffering when they listen to bards. This is the case when Penelope begs Phemius to sing another song in the following passage:

> “Φήμιε, πολλὰ γὰρ ἄλλα βροτῶν θελκτήρια οἶδας,
> ἔργ᾽ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, τά τε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί.
> τῶν ἕν γέ σφιν ἄειδε παρήμενος, οἱ δὲ σιωπῇ
> οἶνον πινόντων· ταύτης δ᾽ ἀποπαύε᾽ ἀοιδῆς
> λυγρῆς, ἥ τέ μοι αἰεὶ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλον κῆρ
> τείρει, ἐπεί με μάλιστα καθίκετο πένθος ἄλαστον.
> τοίην γὰρ κεφαλὴν ποθέω μεμνημένη αἰεί
> ἀνδρός, τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος.”

> “Phemius, for you know many other means of soothing mortals,
> the works of men and gods, which singers celebrate.
> Sing one of those when you sit here, and let them
> drink wine in silence; but leave off this mournful song,
> which always wears out my dear heart in my chest,
> since unforgettable pain comes down upon me especially.
> For I long for such a head, remembering always
> a man, whose fame spreads across wide Greece and middle Argos.[700]

Penelope objects to this song because it reminds her of Odysseus. Although Odysseus' departure affected other Ithacans, other audience members have since moved on; the suitors have entered his house and Telemachus has aged significantly.[701] The song inspires pain in Penelope because she is not protected by the normal distance between subject and audience. Although the bard performs in his usual domestic setting, that setting is also the site of Penelope's loss. Moreover, the bard performs to please the suitors, who contribute to her suffering. The individual nature of Penelope's loss does not lend itself well to communalisation through epic in front of an unsympathetic male audience, and the location of suffering and epic performance in the same space makes public oral narrative an ineffective tool for women to use in expressing and analysing overwhelming events in their aftermath.

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[700] *Od.* 1.337-344.
[701] For the suitors' experience, see sections 4.1 and 4.2. For Telemachus' experience, see section 5.1.

Instead, Penelope and other female characters find non-traditional performance spaces and audiences to bear witness to their personal accounts. The Ithacan community's lack of sympathy for her position poses a problem for Penelope; although many of Odysseus' serfs remain loyal to him, few characters are loyal to Penelope and she cannot rely upon anyone to support her interests above all others.[702] As a wife in her husband's house, Penelope has no companions of the same gender and status, and limited contact with her own family. The epic recognises Penelope's isolation when Athena, needing to restore Penelope's faith after Telemachus' departure, disguises herself as Penelope's sister Iphthime in order to approach her in a dream. Penelope chides Iphthime for living so far away and not visiting, suggesting that she has felt the lack of companionship. She then gives an emotional account of her suffering and her fears for her son.[703] This dream conversation, which cheers her heart, is the most reassuring interaction in which Penelope participates before her husband returns.[704] On this occasion, Athena creates a space and audience designed to suit Penelope's needs. However, Athena's intervention emphasises that, as a result of the network of loyalties, betrayals and other relationships in which Penelope is largely an outsider, Penelope cannot generally find a compassionate audience within the Ithacan community.

Unlike male characters, Penelope cannot resolve the situation by travelling. If Penelope leaves the οἶκος, she forfeits her rights to her married property and must either return to her father or go to a new husband. Both scenarios would provide her with new forms of identity, but would require a further betrayal of Odysseus' memory. Instead, Penelope prays for a type of mythic journey, which she envisions as a way to escape her home and her impending marriage:

> "Ἄρτεμι, πότνα θεά, θύγατερ Διός, αἴθε μοι ἤδη
> ἰὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι βαλοῦσ᾽ ἐκ θυμὸν ἕλοιο

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[702] Betrayal by female attendants: *Od.* 4.729-31; 19.154-5; Betrayal by Telemachus: *Od.* 2.373-6; Distance from serfs: *Od.* 15.356-79.
[703] *Od.* 4.810-23.
[704] As *Od.* 4.841-2 illustrates.

αὐτίκα νῦν, ἢ ἔπειτά μ᾽ ἀναρπάξασα θύελλα
οἴχοιτο προφέρουσα κατ᾽ ἠερόεντα κέλευθα,
ἐν προχοῇς δὲ βάλοι ἀψορρόου Ὠκεανοῖο.
ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε Πανδαρέου κούρας ἀνέλοντο θύελλαι·

Artemis, lady goddess, daughter of Zeus, would that for me at once,
casting an arrow into my breast, you would take away my life
at once now, or then, snatching me up, the storm winds
might go and carry me off across the gloomy ways,
and cast me into the mouth of back-flowing Ocean.
Just as the storm winds snatched away the daughters of Pandareus;[705]

Penelope envisages a journey that would leave her lost at sea like the daughters of Pandareus, who were snatched away before their wedding days.[706] No character chooses to be taken by storm winds in epic; it is a mark of the depth of her suffering that Penelope longs for this journey, which is a poetic version of her request for death in the lines before.[707] Penelope's request is a response to a vivid vision of Odysseus.[708] Her pleasure was so great that, upon waking and discovering that it was only a dream, she experienced his loss a second time. Since she finds her state unendurable, Penelope wishes to achieve the same fate as Odysseus, missing at sea without being confirmed dead, and in this way be reunited with him.[709] Thus, whatever the circumstances under which Penelope left the house, the journey would mean the destruction of her identity and possibly her death.

Indeed, most women who travel outside of marriage suffer and, in some cases, die. Their travels make them the subject of narrative between men, who use the suffering of characters such as Helen, Cassandra and the Sidonian woman, to illustrate their own misfortune.[710] I deal with the latter two of these first, and take Helen separately, as she is a special case. Cassandra and the Sidonian woman are both low status characters who die as a result of their travel. Cassandra, although a Trojan princess, is a war prize in the *Odyssey*,

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[705] *Od.* 20.61-6.
[706] See Felson, 1994: 34-6 for further discussion of this passage.
[707] Cf. *Il.* 6.345-8 in which Helen wishes she had been snatched away by a whirlwind at birth. Graziosi & Haubold, 2010: 175 suggest that it is a typical and effective rhetorical move for Helen to assert her guilt early in her speech. Penelope's use of this motif seems more sincere, as she speaks to herself.
[708] *Od.* 20.83-90.
[709] *Od.* 20.81-2.
[710] Eumaeus briefly mentions (*Od.* 15.364-8) that Odysseus' sister Ctimene went in marriage to Same, but he does not present this journey as one that involves suffering.

and the Sidonian woman is a slave. Each woman's story is incorporated into a male narrative in order to illustrate the extent of male suffering: the spirit of Agamemnon speaks of Cassandra's death alongside his own in the underworld and Eumaeus describes how Phaeacian pirates threw the Sidonian woman overboard, leaving him, whom she had kidnapped, to be sold to Laertes.[711] The primary difference in their stories is the reason for their travel. Cassandra travels against her will after experiencing an overwhelming event and in the company of her male captor. Her journey as a war prize places her in a well-known and approved position in society, and so she does not appear in Agamemnon's narrative until the moment of her death. When she does appear, she only emits 'a most pitiable voice' (οἰκτροτάτην ὄπα), a brief and wordless sound heard by Agamemnon in his dying moments.[712] The Sidonian woman's journey, on the other hand, is described in full as she plots against her master and re-enacts in the role of abductor her own abduction by Taphian pirates as a child.[713] However, she travels as a fleeing female slave alone with her lover, which is not a socially sanctioned role and is punished for her transgression. Her punishment and Eumaeus' subsequent good fortune act as evidence in his narrative that Zeus mixes good and bad fortune.[714] The examples of these two women show that travel for reasons other than legitimate marriage makes female characters vulnerable and allows their stories to be told without enabling their words to be heard.

Helen, however, holds a unique position with regards to narratives about her experiences abroad. She is the ultimate example of a woman whose unsanctioned travel with her lover becomes the subject of narrative and a cause of suffering for herself and others. In the *Odyssey*, Helen's travels are over and she has returned home to Sparta, where her daughter Hermione and Menelaus' son Megapenthes are both now embarking on their own

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[711] *Od.* 11.405-26; 15.403-84. Olson, 1995: 133-7 discusses how Eumaeus' tales shape his identity
[712] *Od.* 11.421.
[713] *Od.* 15.403-84.
[714] *Od.* 15.487-91.

marriages.[715] In returning to the οἶκος, Helen must find a way to reconcile her old life with her new worldview, which is the product of her experiences in the Trojan War. Penelope acknowledges Helen's difficult position when she states that Helen would not have left if she had known that she would return.[716] Helen manages this break between her old and new selves by confronting the disruption, referring to the Trojan War, for example, as the time 'when on account of shameless me the Achaeans went beneath Troy, engaging in bold war' (ὅτ᾽ ἐμεῖο κυνώπιδος εἵνεκ᾽ Ἀχαιοὶ //ἤλθεθ᾽ ὑπὸ Τροίην πόλεμον θρασὺν ὁρμαίνοντες).[717] Helen joins public male conversations about the war, challenging interpretations of central characters and actions, and recounting her own deeds and contributions to the Achaean victory.[718] She does not find storytelling as easy as men generally do and uses a φάρμακον from Egypt to prevent conflict when she introduces her own interpretation of events.[719] Nevertheless, she chooses oral narrative as a way of communalising her experiences of suffering and having others bear witness to her experiences. In sharing her experiences among men, she ensures that her words become part of the epic narrative. While other women resist becoming the subject of epic, Helen embraces it, aware that her actions have already put her outside of the respectable social norms for her gender.[720]

Penelope's solution to the problem of finding an audience and place to speak about her experiences is neither as drastic as Helen's nor as ineffectual as that of other female characters in the *Odyssey*. Penelope chooses to act as a patron of wanderers: she brings outsiders of low status into her home and engages them in private audiences. In this space, she hears their stories and asks about her husband. She also talks about her own

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[715] *Od.* 4.3-14. Hermione's marriage may have been delayed by the Trojan War. Megapenthes, whose name reflects Menelaus' grief at losing Helen, is also marrying. There is a sense that those in Sparta are putting the past behind them. See Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 193-4 for the name and delay.
[716] *Od.* 23.218-21.
[717] *Od.* 4.145-6.
[718] *Od.* 4.235-66.
[719] *Od.* 4.220-7.
[720] Helen's status as daughter of Zeus may give her more license than other women. See *Il.* 3.199; 418; 426; *Od.* 4.184; 219; 227; 23.218 for references to her patrimony when she speaks or acts. See Doherty, 1995a: 86-8 for Helen as narrator.

experiences and mourns Odysseus in company. In many ways, these conversations are akin to modern encounters between therapist and patient.[721] Penelope's status as a grieving wife and willingness to pay allows her to set the agenda and tone of the encounters, whilst the wandering men contribute specialist skill in storytelling and knowledge from their travels.[722] These men create a relationship with Penelope that exists only for the purpose of these conversations and depart once the conversation is complete. Eumaeus describes Penelope's interactions with these men:

> ὃς δέ κ᾽ ἀλητεύων Ἰθάκης ἐς δῆμον ἵκηται,
> ἐλθὼν ἐς δέσποιναν ἐμὴν ἀπατήλια βάζει·
> ἡ δ᾽ εὖ δεξαμένη φιλέει καὶ ἕκαστα μεταλλᾷ,
> καί οἱ ὀδυρομένῃ βλεφάρων ἄπο δάκρυα πίπτει,
> ἣ θέμις ἐστὶ γυναικός, ἐπὴν πόσις ἄλλοθ᾽ ὄληται.

> And any wanderer who might come to the land of Ithaca,
> going to my mistress does speak deceitful things;
> and she, receiving him well, welcomes him and asks about each thing,
> and, in lamenting [Odysseus], tears fall from her eyes,
> as is right for women when their husbands have perished elsewhere.[723]

Penelope does not respond to these private narratives with pleasure, as when men tell or hear oral narratives: her response is grief, but, in this context, onlookers consider that appropriate. By reaching out beyond the Ithacan community, Penelope finds hope for the future. The meetings allow her to gather news and understand the circumstances around her loss as well as express her emotional reaction to it in front of an audience. In turn, these encounters also become circulating narrative, as stories of Penelope's virtuous efforts to connect with her husband spread. Eumaeus shows wary approval of his mistress' behaviour. Although he does not trust the men, he claims that Penelope behaves in the appropriate way for a woman who has lost her husband abroad. He even encourages her to listen to the beggar Odysseus when he himself has heard and enjoyed the visitor's

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[721] Cf. pp. 174-85; 264-71.
[722] For a discussion of the relationship between travel narratives and truth telling in the *Odyssey*, see Dougherty, 2001: 61-78.
[723] *Od.* 14.126-30.

storytelling.[724] By talking to wandering strangers, Penelope finds a socially acceptable way of exploiting the benefits of travel and the narrative it produces whilst simultaneously expressing her emotion in a private and domestic setting.

After the one encounter of this type that takes place in the *Odyssey*, Penelope shows an improvement in her emotional state.[725] As she does not know that she speaks to Odysseus, it is the conversation in which they engage that restores her. Penelope first introduces herself and describes her suffering, indicating its origin and its impact on her behaviour and identity.[726] The wanderer then tells his tale and explains his connection to Odysseus before Penelope grieves as the wanderer watches.[727] As a reward, he receives offers of bedding and a bath.[728] This would be the end to their encounter were Odysseus any other wanderer: each participant has told their story, the wanderer has received payment and Penelope has expressed her suffering. In rejecting the offer of food, bath and bed in favour of more modest rewards, Odysseus sustains their encounter beyond its natural end.[729] The second half of their discussion, occurring after his footbath and recognition by Eurycleia, turns towards the future. Penelope expresses doubts about her next actions and requests the wanderer's interpretation of her dream, at which point she receives reassurances and the suggestion that she begin the bow contest.[730] The wanderer appears to offer disinterested but knowledgeable advice, which is the sort of advice Penelope could not receive from any other source. Having earlier allowed her to mourn and borne witness to her suffering, Odysseus now points Penelope towards the future. With her identity as wife acknowledged, she takes control of her identity as a bride, challenges the suitors and organises the contest.

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[724] *Od.* 17.514-21.
[725] In particular, Katz, 1991: 140 notes a shift towards formal lament as a result of this encounter.
[726] *Od.* 19.103-360.
[727] *Od.* 19.221-50.
[728] *Od.* 19.317-28.
[729] *Od.* 19.336-48. Russo *et al.*, 1992: 93 suggest that Odysseus rejects the gifts in order to preserve the distinction between him and the suitors. I agree that it is in the act of rejecting these gifts that he creates a unique relationship with Penelope. Murnaghan, 2011: 83-4 discusses Penelope's reluctance at allowing Odysseus to move between the roles of guest and husband.
[730] *Od.* 19.511-99.

Conclusion

Female characters experience the same emotional responses to overwhelming events as male characters. However, overwhelming events for women tend to occur in domestic settings. When homes become part of the battlefield, as during the siege of Troy, usual social norms are suspended and female characters have unusual freedom to express their response to overwhelming events. In contrast, when female characters experience overwhelming events at home that do not affect the rest of the community, little allowance is made for their suffering. Homeric expectations concerning a woman's role in society limit the ways in which female characters can express their suffering.

Penelope's behaviour is regulated by the expectations of compassionate characters, such as Telemachus, Eumaeus and Eurycleia, and unsympathetic characters, such as the suitors, the maids and the Ithacan community. She finds limited use for weaving, laments and dreams as expressions of her emotional responses, and does not find enjoyment in listening to epic song at the site of her suffering. As she cannot travel, she questions visitors to Ithaca and has them bear witness to her suffering before sending them away. Community members approve of her method of inquiry, whilst, in contrast, women who travel feature as suffering figures in men's narratives about their own suffering. Penelope's need to remain at the site of her suffering and the limits placed on her ability to narrate her own story, both of which arise out of her social and cultural context, make it difficult for her to reconstruct her assumptive world. Nevertheless, with a focus on private testimony rather than public accounts, she is able to grieve and construct narratives in order to overcome her personal suffering as male characters do. Towards the end of the *Odyssey*, she recovers her role as an active agent, manipulating her tormentors and preparing for the future with the contest of the bow.

Chapter 4: Collective Suffering and Identity

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that suffering affects individual identity in the *Odyssey* by breaking down characters' assumptive worlds. Characters that have their assumptive world shattered by suffering afterwards reconstruct their worldview and their identity using the narrative modes at their disposal. However, individual identity is not the only important aspect of a character's identity in Homeric epic. Each character also has collective aspects to their identity because they each belong to communities within the Homeric world. The poems depict characters as part of a society of loose city-state communities comprised of household estates.[731] People in these city-states share similar modes of living and religious rites; similar economic, social and military practices; and similar types of law and justice. Within these communities, the poet identifies some smaller and more volatile community groups based on characteristics such as gender, age or occupation. Characters therefore often recognise one or more collective aspects to their identity.

Just as overwhelming events can shatter an individual's view of themselves, they can also change how members of a group construct their collective identity. Modern literature on collective trauma acts as a starting point for my investigation. Kai Erikson first identified the concept of collective trauma when he recognised that communities suffer a 'blow to the basic tissue of social life' as a result of overwhelming events. He believed this was analogous to the 'blow to the psyche' suffered by individuals experiencing trauma.[732] In response to Erikson's study, Alexander developed the concept of cultural trauma. Alexander states that cultural trauma

> occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a
> horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group

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[731] For Homeric society and the οἶκος, see Finley, 1954; Halverson, 1985; Donlan, 1989; 2007; Raaflaub, 1993; 1997; and Osborne, 2004. For Homeric conception of the boundary between πόλις and ἀγρός, see Edwards, 1993: 27-48. Gottesman, 2014: 33n.7 provides further bibliography that addresses specific elements of Homeric society, such as class and kingship.

[732] Erikson, 1976: 153-4.

consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.[733]

Alexander's definition marks several important advancements on Erikson's work. Alexander emphasises that perception determines whether an event is designated traumatic by a community; as he states elsewhere, '[e]vents are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution.'[734] Although a controversial claim at the time of publication, it has become well accepted since.[735] Alexander's definition also applies only to community members choosing to act as a community. Neil Smelser draws out this aspect of cultural trauma by elucidating the difference between a mass response, where many people respond to an event in an uncoordinated manner, and a collective response, where responses are coordinated on behalf of a community.[736] In addition, Alexander argues that a community must determine that their memories and identity have been fundamentally and irrevocably altered before a cultural trauma can be said to have taken place, which means that they must undergo narrative building and meaning making processes. Finally, Alexander's cultural trauma is not as comprehensive as Erikson's collective trauma; a significant portion of the phenomena that Erikson noted would now be described as social trauma, which Smelser defines as affecting 'society's social structures.'[737] The lack of attention paid to the relationship between cultural and social trauma is an unfortunate corollary of separating the original concept in two. Overall, however, Alexander's cultural trauma is a valuable concept that offers important insight into representations of collective responses to overwhelming events.

In this chapter, I use Alexander's concept of cultural trauma to shed light on how suffering alters collective identities in Homeric epic. First, I discuss some of the main community

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[733] Alexander, 2004: 1.
[734] *Ibid.*: 8.
[735] Eyerman *et al.*, 2011: xiii-xiv.
[736] Smelser, 2004: 48-50. Collective responses channel individual emotional responses into authorised narratives. Mass responses often come before collective responses and indicate the need for a collective response on behalf of the affected community.
[737] *Ibid.*: 37.

groups in the *Odyssey* and consider how membership of each group defines a character's identity. I then examine how shared experiences of suffering affect groups in the *Odyssey* using Ithaca as a case study. I explore how some events, such as the massacre of the suitors, shatter collective identities, whilst others, such as the loss of Odysseus, have a less significant impact. I also consider how community groups reconstruct identities that have been shattered using public spaces, such as the assembly, for narrative building. Ultimately, Alexander's model of collective trauma is, I argue, a useful lens through which to examine how overwhelming events alter collective identity in the *Odyssey*.

4.1 Community identity in the Odyssey

The Homeric epics recognise several layers of collective identity in Homeric society. As the catalogues in *Iliad* 2 show, the city-state is an important marker of collective identity.[738] Quite correctly, however, Edith Hall recognises that there is a 'complex plurality of groups to which individuals belong.'[739] Characters in Homeric epic also define themselves by their alliance in the Trojan War, their kinship group, their gender, their age or their occupation. Hall notes that, in interactions with others, people pick an identity marker in response to the degree of diversity they perceive in the opposite number.[740] As she considers interactions between Greeks and non-Greeks, however, her discussion of identity does not account for antagonistic interactions between two members of a community contesting the boundaries of a shared group identity. These interactions occur several times in Homeric epic as identities are reformulated in response to changing social and political circumstances. In the *Odyssey*, new community groups emerge out of war and internal disruption. The language with which characters present themselves to members of their communities, especially when several groups lay claim to identities simultaneously, can reveal their allegiance, intentions, priorities or emotional states. Here, I lay out the

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[738] Achaeans: *Il.* 2.484-759; Trojans: *Il.* 2.815-877.
[739] Hall, 1989: 6.
[740] *Ibid*.: 7-8.

main terms of community identification in the *Odyssey*, their significance and their relationship to each other.

Odysseus' membership of the Ithacan community makes Ithacan identity central to the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus claims his identity among the Phaeacians, he does so in these terms:

> εἴμ' Ὀδυσεὺς Λαερτιάδης, ὃς πᾶσι δόλοισιν
> ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει.
> ναιετάω δ' Ἰθάκην εὐδείελον· ἐν δ' ὄρος αὐτῇ,
> Νήριτον εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἀριπρεπές· ἀμφὶ δὲ νῆσοι
> πολλαὶ ναιετάουσι μάλα σχεδὸν ἀλλήλῃσι,
> Δουλίχιόν τε Σάμη τε καὶ ὑλήεσσα Ζάκυνθος.
> αὐτὴ δὲ χθαμαλὴ πανυπερτάτη εἰν ἁλὶ κεῖται
> πρὸς ζόφον, αἱ δέ τ' ἄνευθε πρὸς ἠῶ τ' ἠέλιόν τε,
> τρηχεῖ', ἀλλ' ἀγαθὴ κουροτρόφος· οὔ τοι ἐγωγε
> ἧς γαίης δύναμαι γλυκερώτερον ἄλλο ἰδέσθαι.

> I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, who on account of my wiles
> am an object of interest to all men, and my fame reaches heaven.
> And I dwell in far-seen Ithaca: and on it is a mountain,
> Neriton with quivering foliage, conspicuous; and around the island
> lie many other islands very near to one another,
> Dulichium and Same and wooded Zachinthus.
> And Ithaca itself lies low farthest from land in the sea
> towards the darkness (the others lie away and towards dawn
> and the sun),
> jagged it is, but a good nurse of young men. Indeed, I cannot
> see anything so sweet as this land.[741]

Ithaca features prominently in Odysseus' description of his personal identity alongside his name, his patrimony and his wily nature. Odysseus describes Ithaca using its island features; its distinctive mountain, its position in relation to nearby islands and its rocky aspect that shapes the lives of its people.[742] Generally, the epithets used for Ithaca (κραναός; ἀμφίαλος; εὐδείελος; τραχύς; παιπαλόεις) promote its island qualities,[743] and the island's physical features also play a prominent role when others mention Ithaca as a place

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[741] *Od.* 9.19-28.

[742] Telemachus famously refuses Menelaus' gift of horses (*Od.* 4.601-8) because they are not suited to the rugged islands of his father's kingdom.

[743] Only once is ἐυκτίμενος used (*Od.* 22.52), and this can also be used with νῆσος (e.g. *Od.* 9.130).

of origin; both Telemachus and the Catalogue of Ships define Ithaca in relation to its mountain.[744] The epic also uses the name Ithaca (Ἰθάκη) to refer to the settlement upon the island,[745] and the collective term Ithacans (Ἰθακήσιοι) strictly delimits the people living on the island. Thus, Laertes uses the term to stress the dangerous proximity of the local population in contrast to the less imminent danger of the Cephallenian men on the other islands, to whom the Ithacans might send messages.[746] Members of the Ithacan community therefore define themselves by reference to their geographical location and physical proximity to each other. As the name for a remote community settled within the defined boundaries of an island, the term retains a strong sense of place.

In the *Odyssey*, the Ithacans come together as a community in assemblies. There is little evidence for social organisation or governing bodies on Ithaca apart from the assembly, although the Ithacans do separate public business from private business.[747] In the city, the assembly deals with local business and outside news that affects local interests. The Ithacan ruler participates in the assembly and perhaps takes a leading role in calling meetings, since it has not been called during Odysseus' absence.[748] However, other men seem to be able to call the assembly if they have business for the Ithacans, since Telemachus initiates the first Ithacan assembly in the *Odyssey*. The term Ithacans is used frequently in the assembly, as speakers attempt to persuade community members through appeals to their sense of collective identity.[749] Admittance appears to extend to any man resident on the island; the first assembly is dispersed with a command for the men to return

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[744] Perhaps giving an indication of how it looks from the sea. *Il.* 2.632; *Od.* 3.81.

[745] Phrases such as ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκη (e.g. *Od.* 1.386) emphasise Ithaca's island qualities. However, the epic also uses phrases such as Ἰθάκης ἐνὶ δήμῳ (e.g. 1.103) to signal the entire land/district and Ἰθάκης κατὰ ἄστυ (e.g. 22.223) to signal the island's main city. The fact that the epic does not see a distinct boundary between island and city can be seen in the lines 'some men came from sea-girt Ithaca itself, whilst other men came from the other cities' (αἱ μὲν ἐν αὐτῇ //ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκη, αἱ δ' ἄλλῃσιν πολίεσσιν·). These lines identify Ithaca using its island qualities, but at the same time equate it with other nearby cities.

[746] *Od.* 24.354.

[747] *Od.* 2.25-45 for the assembly as public body primarily concerned with public matters. See Hammer, 1998 for an overview of positions on political institutions in Homer. Finley, 1954: 77-81; Geddes, 1984: 31-4; Raaflaub, 1993: 46-59; 1997, 629-33; Raaflaub & Wallace, 2007: 28-9 discuss assemblies and the public sphere in Homer.

[748] *Od.* 2.14; 26-7.

[749] 'Ithacan' used as a form of address in the assembly: *Od.* 2.25; 2.161; 2.229; 24.443; 24.454.

to their properties, illustrating the speaker's conviction that he speaks to an audience of his neighbours.[750] The Ithacan assemblies foster a sense of collective identity among those present and ensure that each man may directly influence community decision making.

However, the Ithacans' perception of local residence as a factor in community membership proves problematic when Odysseus is absent beyond the term required for the Trojan War. Odysseus retains his sense of Ithacan identity abroad, and envisions his journey home as a return to house and fatherland,[751] city and fatherland,[752] or simply fatherland.[753] These phrases all reflect the two elements, physical place and community, that Odysseus aims to recover with his return. His status as an Ithacan is less certain in Ithaca. Odysseus is the only man that other Ithacans describe as Ithacan (Ὀδυσεὺς Ἰθακήσιος);[754] in particular, the suitors' use of 'Ithacan' in the context of their insults highlights that his membership of the community has been called into question by his absence and his loss of property.[755] The people have instead begun to look to other community members, such as Eurymachus, as leaders, as Telemachus acknowledges:

> Εὐρύμαχον, Πολύβοιο δαΐφρονος ἀγλαὸν υἱόν,
> τὸν νῦν ἶσα θεῷ Ἰθακήσιοι εἰσορόωσι·
> καὶ γὰρ πολλὸν ἄριστος ἀνὴρ μέμονέν τε μάλιστα
> μητέρ᾽ ἐμὴν γαμέειν καὶ Ὀδυσσῆος γέρας ἕξειν.

> Eurymachus, splendid son of wise Polybus,
> whom now the Ithacans look upon as equal to a god;
> for he is by far the best man and he wishes most eagerly
> to marry my mother and to carry off the wealth of Odysseus.[756]

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[750] *Od.* 2.252, which the people then fulfil at 2.258.
[751] *Od.* 4.476; 5.42; 5.115; 6.315; 7.77; 9.533; 10.474-5; 15.129; 23.259.
[752] *Od.* 10.416.
[753] *Od.* 5.301; 7.151; 7.333; 9.79; 10.29; 10.33; 11.359; 13.328; 16.206; 19.484. 21.208; 23.170; 23.353; 24.322. Halverson, 1985: 140 discusses the difference between this longing for family and homeland, and later *polis* ideology.
[754] *Od.* 2.246. Eurymachus later uses it to challenge Odysseus (*Od.* 22.45). In the *Iliad*, the narrator describes Eurybates as Ithacan when the Achaeans are in turmoil (*Il.* 2.184), emphasising his loyalty in the crisis.
[755] Halverson, 1986 makes a strong case for viewing Odysseus as the most powerful man in the region rather than a hereditary king. With Odysseus' disappearance, the leadership crisis stems from the ambiguity over who is the most powerful (and influential) member of the Ithacan community. See Andreev 1975; 1979; and Geddes, 1984: 28-36 for kingship and nobility in Homeric poetry.
[756] *Od.* 15.519-22. See Chantraine, 1968: 216 for the connotations of γέρας in Homer.

Telemachus recognises that the community identifies Eurymachus as its most prominent member. He is also marked out as a potential leader by his ambitions to assume Odysseus' role within the city by marrying Penelope and taking control over Odysseus' property. In order to reclaim full ownership of his house and property, and thereby re-establish his identity, Odysseus has to instigate a violent massacre, which causes great damage to the Ithacan community. As a result of their narrow terms of membership, then, the community is vulnerable to disagreement about the boundaries of Ithacan identity in unusual circumstances.

At the same time, the Ithacans also belong to other groups. Although city-state identity is the most important collective identity in the Homeric epics, as Hall notes,[757] other forms of collective identity exist alongside it. The title 'Cephallenes' (Κεφαλλῆνες) is one such form. The title refers to a group subject to Odysseus' command, as the Catalogue of Ships passage shows:

> αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἦγε Κεφαλλῆνας μεγαθύμους,
> οἵ ῥ᾽ Ἰθάκην εἶχον καὶ Νήριτον εἰνοσίφυλλον,
> καὶ Κροκύλει᾽ ἐνέμοντο καὶ Αἰγίλιπα τρηχεῖαν,
> οἵ τε Ζάκυνθον ἔχον ἠδ᾽ οἳ Σάμον ἀμφενέμοντο,
> οἵ τ᾽ ἤπειρον ἔχον ἠδ᾽ ἀντιπέραι᾽ ἐνέμοντο·
> τῶν μὲν Ὀδυσσεὺς ἦρχε Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος·

> But Odysseus led the great-hearted Cephallenes,
> who held Ithaca and Neriton with quivering foliage,
> and inhabited Crocylea and jagged Aegilips,
> and who held Zacynthus and who dwelt around Same,
> and who held the mainland and inhabited the lands opposite;
> these Odysseus led, like to Zeus in counsel;[758]

The term Cephallene encompasses a broad community across a selection of island and mainland city-states. The composition of this excerpt reflects other passages in the Catalogue of Ships where contingents are organised by ethnic group and it is likely that

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[757] Hall, 1989: 8. See also Donlan, 1985; Raaflaub, 1997: 629-41 for other forms of collective identity.

[758] *Il.* 2.631-6. Dulichium, an island city-state settled by men from Elis, sends a separate contingent under their leader Meges (*Il.* 2.625-30). The distinction between men from Ithaca and men from the islands off Elis is reinforced in *Od.* 21.346-7. See Page, 1959: 163 for the different lands under Odysseus' control in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* the problems this causes, and possible solutions.

these islands act as one contingent on the basis of shared ethnicity.[759] However, the reason for Odysseus' leadership is not made clear: the poet does not state that the Cephallenians are all subject to Ithacan rule, only that Odysseus led their forces.[760] It may perhaps be assumed that leadership functions in much the same way as leadership over the Ithacans, an assumption which is supported by Laertes' description of how he took Nericus whilst 'ruling over the Cephallenes' (Κεφαλλήνεσσιν ἀνάσσων).[761] The Cephallenes are mentioned primarily in military contexts; they fight for Laertes and Odysseus, and are considered ready to respond to the massacre in Ithaca with further violence.[762] The young suitors, generally characterised as arrogant and excessively manly, are praised as the 'best of the Cephallenes' (Κεφαλλήνων ὄχ' ἀρίστους) after their deaths.[763] Unlike Ithacan collective identity, this community identity seems to exist to allow disparate city-states to respond to catastrophes as one strong force. In times of crisis, it supersedes more vulnerable city-state identities.

In the Homeric epics, crises forge new collective identities at multiple levels. As well as the Cephallenean identity, Achaean identity exists as a response to crisis in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. I am not here concerned with the word's etymology, which may trace back to an ethnic group, because Homeric characters do not see the group as one defined by ethnicity.[764] Instead, the group defines itself by its opposition to the Trojans, having come into existence to lay siege to Troy. One example illustrates the importance of the Trojans as enemies. When constructing a fake identity, Odysseus states:

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[759] As Hall, 1997: 19 emphasises 'ethnic identity is *socially constructed and subjectively perceived*.' Donlan, 1985: 294-5 provides an overview of the term ἔθνος as it is used in Homer; Hall, 1997: 2 discusses the concept of ethnicity and its relevance for the ancient world.

[760] See *LfgrE*: 1397 for the suggestions that Homeric epic uses both Ithacans and Cephallenians because Ithaca is a royal seat or to distinguish different traditions. For an alternative interpretation of the term's use in *Odyssey* 22, see Russo *et al.*1992: 118.

[761] *Od.* 24.378.

[762] In addition to the above instance, in which they fight for Laertes, they fight for Odysseus at *Il.* 4.330. They are considered ready to respond to the massacre at *Od.* 24.352-5. The only real exception is when Eumaeus states (Od. 20.210) that Odysseus made him responsible for the cattle in the Cephallenian lands. It may perhaps be noted that the cattle themselves have become a major point of contention with the suitors.

[763] *Od.* 24.429.

[764] See *LfgrE*: 1734-45 for the term 'Achaeans.' See Hall, 2002: 53-5; Nagy, 1999: 83-93 for speculation on the name's origins.

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Τροίης ἐπιβήμεναι υἷας Ἀχαιῶν,
εἰνάκις ἀνδράσιν ἦρξα καὶ ὠκυπόροισι νέεσσιν
ἄνδρας ἐς ἀλλοδαπούς,

For before the sons of the Achaeans embarked for Troy,
nine times I was a leader of men and swift ships
against foreign men,[765]

From Odysseus' description it is clear that old battles and old enemies do not define their participants' identities in the same way that the Trojan War does. Here, the names of the men and the places that Odysseus fought have faded into insignificance. It is also interesting that Odysseus refers to the force at Troy as Achaeans, but refers to the other forces as men (ἄνδρες). Nestor uses the term in a similar way, applying it to Agamemnon's force, but not those he fought with in his youth.[766] Indeed, characters rarely apply the term 'Achaeans' to forces fighting before the Trojan War.[767] It seems that participation in the Trojan War has prompted an unusual movement of identity formation that supersedes previous feats and comes to define its participants both during and after the war. The significance of this event extends so far in Homeric epic, in fact, that the 'Achaean' identity marker is also adopted by members of the city-state communities that sent men to the war.[768] The Achaean community in the *Iliad* can thus be considered to be created from a collective trauma; it comes about from the recognition of Helen's suitors' as a bounded community,[769] and the interpretation of Paris' abduction of Helen as a violation of their shared set of cultural values that merits a response such as the Trojan War.

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[765] *Od.* 14.229-31.
[766] Nestor's exploits: *Il.* 1.260-73; 11.669-761.
[767] However, characters do employ it to describe other notable wars that required the formation of a large-group identity, e.g. At *Il.* 6.223, Diomedes speaks of 'that time when the Achaean people perished in Thebes' (ὅτ' ἐν Θήβῃσιν ἀπώλετο λαὸς Ἀχαιῶν).
[768] Unlike the terms 'Danaans' (Δαναοί) and 'Argives' (Ἀργεῖοι), which refer strictly to the men present at Troy. Nagy, 1999: 83 claims that these terms are essentially synonymous with 'Achaeans'. Whilst all three describe the Greek force at Troy, the term 'Achaean' is the most common designator for this group. It is also adopted by non-fighting members of the communities that sent warriors to Troy in the *Odyssey*. See Drews, 1979: 120-1 for these as designators for the fighting men at Troy; Pucci, 1998: 172 for discussion of Danaans as people of the past.
[769] Ormand, 2014: 80 discusses the oath that Helen's suitors take as a moment when her suitors 'become part of a social whole with a common purpose and common understanding.'

The *Odyssey* provides evidence to support the hypothesis that Helen's departure was turned into a trauma narrative. The *Odyssey* suggests that Agamemnon and Menelaus created a persuasive trauma narrative out of this event in order to gather an army. In this speech, Agamemnon's spirit remembers his visit to Ithaca to persuade Odysseus to fight.

> ἦ οὐ μέμνῃ ὅτε κεῖσε κατήλυθον ὑμέτερον δῶ
> ὀτρυνέων Ὀδυσῆα σὺν ἀντιθέῳ Μενελάῳ
> Ἴλιον εἰς ἅμ᾽ ἕπεσθαι ἐυσσέλμων ἐπὶ νηῶν;
> μηνὶ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ οὔλῳ πάντα περήσαμεν εὐρέα πόντον,
> σπουδῇ παρπεπιθόντες Ὀδυσσῆα πτολίπορθον."

> Do you not remember when I came down there to your house,
> with godlike Menelaus in order to urge Odysseus
> to follow along with us to Ilios in the well-benched ships?
> And then for a whole month we crossed all the wide sea
> having scarcely won over Odysseus, sacker of cities.[770]

Agamemnon and Menelaus turned Menelaus' personal loss into a collective trauma. They targeted influential figures in other city-state communities who were known to uphold the same values as themselves, promoting a narrative of loss in order to gain allies for war. In turn, Helen's suitors, once persuaded, spread this narrative within their own communities to gather men and ships. The idea that the Trojans had offended shared values made the war a collective concern, but also introduced the idea that those fighting were one community. Thus, although Menelaus' personal loss ended, Achaean identity endured and would theoretically do so for as long as the values that united the community remained relevant. Thus, members of city-states who participated in the Trojan War but were not at Troy can offer legitimate interpretations of Achaean identity on the basis of their shared values and their stake in the collective identity.

As well as creating new communities, crises can fracture communities into new groups. In the *Odyssey,* the suitors emerge as a sub-group within the Ithacan community. Unlike other small groups that appear briefly in the epic, such as Penelope's attendants or Odysseus' serfs, the suitors (μνηστῆρες) have this distinct identity both within the community and

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[770] *Od.* 24.115-9.

amongst themselves. Their sense of community comes from their shared courtship of Penelope, an occupation that exists because Odysseus is absent. The suitors make decisions together, and one member can act or speak for the community. They adopt behaviours, attitudes and aims that are distinct from, and occasionally counter to the values of, the wider Ithacan community; outsiders perceive them as arrogant, shameless, foolish, overbearing and excessively masculine (ἀγήνωρ; ἀναιδής; ἀφραδής; ὑπερφίαλος; ὑπερηνορέων).[771] Yet the Ithacans still recognise them as part of the Ithacan community. The suitors die when Odysseus returns, and the reason for the community's existence disappears. Yet, whilst it exists, its members can claim and manipulate all four tiers of community identity I discuss here. The suitors therefore have a disproportionate amount of power when creating collective narratives about overwhelming events, as we see from their behaviour in the first Ithacan assembly.

4.2 Social disruption or cultural trauma: the first Ithacan assembly

Ithacans in the *Odyssey* thus have several layers of collective identity, some of which have been formed from, and some of which have been thrown into crisis by, Ithaca's participation in the Trojan War. Odysseus' absence has altered the *status quo* on Ithaca and caused a great deal of social disruption. The question remains, however, whether the events depicted in the epic go beyond social disruption to the point where they have a significant impact on how Ithacans understand Ithacan identity, thereby constituting a cultural trauma. To answer this question, I consider the *Odyssey*'s depiction of the Ithacan assembly. Previous considerations of the assembly have viewed it as a political institution.[772] Instead, I view the Ithacan assembly as the space in which members of the Ithacan community create and debate narratives about their shared identity.[773] Viewed in this way, Alexander's

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[771] Ctesippus also describes the suitors as ἀγήνορες once (*Od.* 20.292). See Graziosi & Haubold, 2003 for the negative connotations of this type of manliness.

[772] *Od.* 2.26-7. See Finley, 1954: 77-81; Geddes, 1984: 31-4; Raaflaub, 1993: 46-59; 1997: 629-33; Gottesman, 2014: 34-5 for discussion of this topic. See also Barker, 2009: 93-107, who reads the first Ithacan assembly as demonstrating the futility of debate in the *Odyssey*.

[773] Section 5.1 deals with Telemachus and complements this discussion (and *vice versa*).

concept of cultural trauma sheds light on the processes occurring in the assembly, explaining why the first produces no convincing collective narratives and the second is more successful.

The first Ithacan assembly begins by highlighting the impact of Odysseus' absence on the Ithacan community. In addition to the consequences of Odysseus' departure stated above, the loss of Odysseus' men has altered the demographics of the community. Old men do young men's work, many young men spend time in leisure, and the best noblemen court the widow of an earlier generation, marrying nobody and ignoring the eligible women of their own time. The epic demonstrates how the absence of Odysseus and his men has had an impact on Ithacan life through the biography of Aegyptus:

> τοῖσι δ᾽ ἔπειθ᾽ ἥρως Αἰγύπτιος ἦρχ᾽ ἀγορεύειν,
> ὃς δὴ γήραϊ κυφὸς ἔην καὶ μυρία ᾔδη.
> καὶ γὰρ τοῦ φίλος υἱὸς ἅμ᾽ ἀντιθέῳ Ὀδυσῆι
> Ἴλιον εἰς εὔπωλον ἔβη κοίλης ἐνὶ νηυσίν,
> Ἄντιφος αἰχμητής· τὸν δ᾽ ἄγριος ἔκτανε Κύκλωψ
> ἐν σπῆι γλαφυρῷ, πύματον δ᾽ ὡπλίσσατο δόρπον.
> τρεῖς δέ οἱ ἄλλοι ἔσαν, καὶ ὁ μὲν μνηστῆρσιν ὁμίλει,
> Εὐρύνομος, δύο δ᾽ αἰὲν ἔχον πατρώια ἔργα·
> ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὣς τοῦ λήθετ᾽ ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχεύων.

> And then the warrior Aegyptus was the first to speak in the assembly,
> who was stooping with old age and knew countless things.
> And even his own dear son had gone with godlike Odysseus
> to Ilios of the good horses in the hollow ships,
> the warrior Antiphus; but the savage Cyclops slaughtered him
> in his hollow cave, and made him his last evening meal.
> But he had three others, and one consorted with the suitors,
> Eurynomus, and two always worked their father's lands;
> but not even so could he, mourning and grieving, forget the other.[774]

The passage describes the fortunes of Aegyptus and his four sons. Antiphus, who accompanied Odysseus, is lost, and the passage references him at both beginning and end to emphasise his father's constant pain at his absence. The occupations of Aegyptus' other sons indicate the impact of Odysseus' absence on the community; one son has joined the

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[774] *Od.* 2.15-23. Odysseus appointed a representative for his private affairs, but not his public duties, in his absence. See *Od.* 2.14 for Telemachus taking Odysseus' chair; *Od.* 2.225-7 for Mentor's remit.

suitors and spends his time idle, leaving only two of the four to work the land and take care of their property. These losses point to social disruption through damaged relationships and community members' impaired sense of communality.[775] However, whilst this passage documents a shift in the behaviour of male Ithacans, it does not recognise any change in Ithacan values: and, Alexander argues, 'for traumas to exist at the level of the collectivity, social crises must become cultural crises.'[776] Ultimately, Aegyptus' biography views social disruption from a personal perspective. In the nineteen years since the Ithacan military contingent departed for Troy, this passage suggests, the Ithacan people's individual experiences of suffering have not coalesced into a collective trauma narrative.

The Ithacan assembly provides the opportunity for characters' individual responses to become a collective response. Telemachus calls the assembly to persuade the Ithacans to provide assistance with either removing the suitors from his house or making the journey to the mainland to gather news. He identifies two 'evils' (κακά) that he suffers, the loss of Odysseus and the suitors' invasion of his house, and attempts to create a narrative that casts his personal suffering as a collective trauma.[777] He encourages the Ithacans to identify with him by stating:

> τὸ μὲν πατέρ᾽ ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσα, ὅς ποτ᾽ ἐν ὑμῖν
> τοίσδεσσιν βασίλευε, πατὴρ δ᾽ ὣς ἤπιος ἦεν·

> I have lost my noble father, who at one time
> was king among you here, and was gentle as a father;[778]

Telemachus attempts to transfer his loss experience, the loss of his father, to the community by placing them in the same relationship to Odysseus as him. The image of Odysseus as a kind patriarch is compelling for the Ithacans; other characters use it in their speeches and the shattering of this image with the massacre of the suitors may contribute to

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[775] Erikson, 1976: 154 and this chapter, pp. 206-7. Such social disruption may encourage communities to build narratives of shattered worlds. See Nagler 1990: 343 for the view that this passage is 'meant to represent the situation [on Ithaca] paradigmatically.'

[776] Alexander, 2004: 10.

[777] Aegyptus differentiates between public and private business (*Od.* 2.29-32), but Telemachus unites them.

[778] *Od.* 2.46-7. See Heubeck *et al.,* 1988: 133; West, 2007: 421; Gottesman, 2014: 36 for the father simile.

the depth of that later crisis. Yet, whilst Telemachus' attempt at an emotional transfer initially holds most of the community in silence, it does not work on the suitors, who cannot be persuaded to view Odysseus as a father but are instead concerned with their relationship to Telemachus' mother.[779] Moreover, although Telemachus appeals to his audience's sense of decency and their Achaean identity when supplicating them, he fails to identify how the loss of Odysseus or the suitors' actions constitutes a threat to the integrity of Achaean collective identity.[780] Overwhelmed by anger, he does not succeed in drawing on either the well-developed sense of social crisis among the Ithacan people or his personal suffering in order to create a persuasive collective trauma narrative.

In contrast, Antinous, who speaks for the suitors, takes ownership of Achaean cultural identity. In his speech, Telemachus used the term Achaean once to indicate his audience as independent arbitrators judging the validity of his claim, and did not include either himself or the suitors in their number.[781] Conversely, Antinous aligns Achaean identity with the suitors' identity by using the term repeatedly in his speech and creating, alongside the more common 'Achaeans' (Ἀχαιοί) and 'sons of the Achaeans' (υἷας Ἀχαιῶν), the unusual title 'the Achaean suitors' (μνηστῆρες Ἀχαιῶν).[782] This latter title helps portray the suitors' behaviour as an expression of Achaean cultural values, even when the two otherwise appear antithetical. At the same time, Antinous presents Penelope as a threat to Achaean marital values. By claiming Achaean collective identity for the suitors, Antinous can insinuate that Penelope's tricks, and even her unprecedented intelligence among Achaean women, betray Achaean values because they contravene the suitors' ambitions for marriage. In positioning the suitors as the moderate group standing against the threat posed by Penelope, Antinous prevents any further development of trauma narratives by Penelope's supporters within the assembly.

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[779] As *Od.* 2.80-8 illustrates.
[780] Appeals to collective identity and morality: *Od.* 2.64-74.
[781] *Od.* 2.72.
[782] *Od.* 2.85-128.

Subsequent discussion largely leaves behind the question of the meaning and significance of events on Ithaca. The exception is Halitherses' speech, where, with a claim to prophetic knowledge, Halitherses designates Odysseus' return a πῆμα for the suitors and a κακόν for the Ithacan community.[783] This moment is interesting for what it reveals about Homer's understanding of how overwhelming events affect a community. Alexander argues that

> The attribution [of traumatic status to an event] may be made in real time, as an event unfolds; it may also be made before the event occurs, as an adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction.[784]

Whilst the assemblies naturally allow attributions of traumatic status to be made during or after an event, prophetic statements such as Halitherses' mean that attributions can also be made before events occur.[785] In his speech in the first assembly, Halitherses claims that Odysseus' return will have a significant impact on the Ithacan people and offers an interpretation of how it will affect the community. His speech lays the foundations for his interpretation of Odysseus' return in the second assembly. However, with the suitors refusing to acknowledge the possibility of Odysseus' continued existence and offering competing narratives, his early warning goes ignored here.

Finally, as the assembly draws to a close, Mentor, Odysseus' old companion, returns to Telemachus' image of Odysseus as a paternal figure. He says:

> μή τις ἔτι πρόφρων ἀγανὸς καὶ ἤπιος ἔστω
> σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, μηδὲ φρεσὶν αἴσιμα εἰδώς,
> ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ χαλεπός τ᾽ εἴη καὶ αἴσυλα ῥέζοι,
> ὡς οὔ τις μέμνηται Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο
> λαῶν, οἷσιν ἄνασσε, πατὴρ δ᾽ ὣς ἤπιος ἦεν.

> Do not still let any sceptre-bearing king readily be
> gentle and kind, and don't let him know right in his heart,
> but always be harsh and do evil things,
> since no one remembers divine Odysseus

[783] *Od.* 2.163-7.
[784] Alexander, 2004; 8.
[785] See Peradotto, 1990: 60-89; Gartziou-Tatti, 2010 for Homeric prophecy. Crotty, 1994: 110-2; Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 142 discuss Halitherses' speech in this assembly.

of the people over whom he ruled, and he was kind as a father.[786]

Mentor believes that the Ithacans have forgotten Odysseus' good qualities and attempts to remind them of their absent leader. This type of narrative is diametrically opposed to the concept of cultural trauma, in which identity changes occur when group members perceive certain memories as indelible.[787] Odysseus' absence, it turns out, is not in itself significant enough within the community for the memory of his loss to develop from an individual to a collective trauma. In the rest of his speech, Mentor rebukes the silent Ithacan community for not challenging the suitors;[788] the wider community does not have the suitors' motivation to forget Odysseus, but they allow him to be forgotten and his legacy destroyed. Mentor's speech is not an attempt to create a trauma narrative, but highlights some of the reasons why the Ithacan community fails to treat the social disruption it experiences as a cultural trauma.

Ultimately, the first Ithacan assembly is not successful for Odysseus' supporters and Telemachus does not manage to establish Odysseus' absence as a public concern. Homeric scholars have often explained this failure by pointing to his inexperience or the weakness of collective decision-making in Homer.[789] I have here argued that the primary issue is rather with Telemachus' manipulation of the group's collective identities (both Ithacan and Achaean). Telemachus rarely uses the language of collective identity in his speech and fails to frame his aims as a collective concern, despite compelling evidence from the narrator that the information he gathers may benefit community members awaiting news of family members. In contrast, the suitors take ownership of the terms 'Ithacan' and 'Achaean' to represent their own interests in the public space. They use these terms to construct persuasive public narratives portraying themselves as guardians of Achaean values in order to bolster their authority in the community. Alexander's work on social

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[786] *Od.* 2.230-4.
[787] Alexander, 2004: 1.
[788] *Od.* 2.235-41.
[789] Telemacus' inexperience: Allan, 2010; Beck, 1998-9; D'Arms & Hulley; 1946; Heath, 2001. Weakness of collective decision making: Finley, 1954: 77-80; Morris, 1986: 101-2; Allan & Cairns, 2011; Elmer, 2013.

disruption, cultural trauma and trauma narratives has proven useful in elucidating how narratives of victimhood develop and are disrupted in the first Ithacan assembly. Whilst no trauma narrative is created as a result of the first Ithacan assembly, the second assembly does depict the development of a cultural trauma. I turn to it now.

4.3 Development of a cultural trauma: the second Ithacan assembly

The second Ithacan assembly occurs in response to Odysseus' massacre of the suitors. It differs from the first Ithacan assembly in several key ways. First and foremost, Odysseus' opponents use the assembly to establish a collective narrative about the meaning and significance of the massacre for the Ithacan community. Although they do not receive wholesale support, they persuade the majority of the community to respond to the massacre with violent action. In this section, I look at the differences in the narratives created in *Odyssey* 2 and *Odyssey* 24 to determine what factors encourage the establishment of a collective trauma narrative. I then consider the problems the epic faces with a cultural trauma narrative established against its protagonist and the way that it deals with this issue in *Odyssey* 24.

Narrative creation around the suitors' massacre begins when Odysseus and his men, the perpetrators, begin forming narratives in its immediate aftermath. Odysseus fears that the massacre will prompt a coordinated collective response from the community.[790] Noting that a man flees his country when he has killed even one man, he acknowledges that the suitors were 'the stays of the city, the very best of the young men in Ithaca' (ἕρμα πόληος… οἳ μέγ' ἄριστοι //κούρων εἰν Ἰθάκῃ).[791] Odysseus understands that this event has the potential to be interpreted as significant for the community due to the suitors' status and connections, although he does not experience it as overwhelming himself. He thus broadcasts his own narrative to conceal the slaughter, telling Telemachus:

αὐτὰρ θεῖος ἀοιδὸς ἔχων φόρμιγγα λίγειαν

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[790] See p. 207 for 'mass' and 'collective' responses.
[791] *Od.* 23.117-22.

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ἡμῖν ἡγείσθω φιλοπαίγμονος ὀρχηθμοῖο,
ὥς κέν τις φαίη γάμον ἔμμεναι ἐκτὸς ἀκούων,
ἢ ἀν᾿ ὁδὸν στείχων ἢ οἳ περιναιετάουσι.
μὴ πρόσθε κλέος εὐρὺ φόνου κατὰ ἄστυ γένηται
ἀνδρῶν μνηστήρων,

But let the divine singer holding his clear lyre
lead the way for us through the merry dancing,
so that anyone hearing from outside would think it to be a wedding,
either someone going along the road or those dwelling nearby.
Don't let the far-reaching rumour about the slaughter of the suitors
go through the city, [792]

Odysseus manipulates the narrative received by the Ithacan community, covering up evidence of the massacre with the sounds of a wedding.[793] Penelope's marriage is a cunning cover, since it provokes outrage in those nearby, which encourages them to stay away.[794] As he intends, Odysseus' narrative, powerful in its reliance on the listener's own interpretation of the sounds they hear, hinders the spread of the narrative that portrays him as the perpetrator of a damaging attack on the community.

Despite Odysseus' trick, the Ithacans soon hear news of the massacre. Rumour, which is conceptualised as a messenger passing through the city, 'speaks the hateful death and fate of the suitors' (μνηστήρων στυγερὸν θάνατον καὶ κῆρ ἐνέπουσα᾿).[795] In this way the community begins to revise Odysseus' false interpretation of events. The new narrative is more precise about what has occurred (θάνατον καὶ κῆρ᾿) and attaches an initial negative interpretation (στυγερόν) to the event. Smelser argues that a cultural trauma can be defined as

> a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is a) laden with negative affect, b) represented as indelible, and c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions.[796]

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[792] *Od.* 23.133-38.

[793] Odysseus uses marriage as an indicator of social order. See Osborne, 2005: 10-8 for marriage and social order in epic hexameter poetry.

[794] As *Od.* 23.150-1 illustrates. Russo *et al.* 1992: 325-7 comments on this passage.

[795] *Od* 24.414.

[796] Smelser, 2004: 44.

By this definition, we can see that this rumour is not a trauma narrative. Whilst it begins to fulfil criterion a), it has not yet progressed as far as criteria b) and c). These latter criteria require a public platform upon which members of the group interpret memories of events as indelible and threatening. This rumour gives no indication of what significance the massacre might hold for the Ithacans in the future. Instead, the epic's portrayal of Rumour's passing seems to mark a moment of shock of the type that Alexander's model avoids recognising, but which Ericson's model indicates as the beginning of the onset of trauma for individuals in the community and thus by extension for the collective.[797] The news triggers individual responses (e.g. μυχμῷ τε στοναχῇ) in characters.[798] These individual responses lead to an uncoordinated mass response in which those with ties to the suitors retrieve their dead and send the dead without family on Ithaca home.[799] These initial responses form the basis of the collective response in the second assembly.

The second Ithacan assembly convenes so that the Ithacans can negotiate a collective interpretation of the massacre. Unlike the first assembly, which was called by Telemachus, the second assembly convenes spontaneously when the people 'grieved at heart went to the assembly-place in crowds' (αὐτοὶ δ' εἰς ἀγορὴν κίον ἀθρόοι, ἀχνύμενοι κῆρ).[800] As members of the assembly speak, different interpretations of the massacre emerge. These voices are best explored as what Alexander, following Max Weber, terms 'carrier groups.'[801] Carrier groups are 'agents of the trauma process,' who 'have particular discursive talents for articulating their claims – for what might be called "meaning making" – in the public sphere.'[802] In other words, these are the influential people or groups in the community who have an interest, whether material or idealistic, in creating or upholding a particular interpretation of events. In the first assembly, the suitors and

[797] Erikson, 1976: 153-5.
[798] *Od.* 24.416.
[799] *Od.* 24.415-9.
[800] *Od.* 24.420.
[801] Alexander, 2004: 11. See also Weber, 1968: 468-517.
[802] Alexander, 2004: 11.

Telemachus both acted as carrier groups; the suitors wanted support to pressure Penelope into marriage whilst Telemachus required resources for his voyage. In the second Ithacan assembly, proponents of Odysseus' narrative stand to benefit if Odysseus is reinstated into the community, whilst members of the suitors' families want vengeance. Eupeithes represents the latter group in the assembly and, as his name suggests, promotes a persuasive narrative.

Eupeithes speaks from personal experience of suffering, as his son Antinous was the first suitor slain by Odysseus.[803] Personal experience is not necessary for someone speaking on a carrier group's behalf. However, in this instance, Eupeithes' indelible suffering (indicated by the phrase ἄλαστον πένθος) gives him integrity and authority when he speaks before other Ithacans who have also lost family members.[804] Eupeithes opens with the statement that he wants the community to believe: 'Friends, truly this man has devised a great deed against the Achaeans' (ὦ φίλοι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ἀνὴρ ὅδε μήσατ᾽ Ἀχαιούς).[805] He uses community markers (φίλοι; Ἀχαιούς) to make the matter a question of identity. He then describes the twofold evil Odysseus has inflicted on the Ithacans:

> τοὺς μὲν σὺν νήεσσιν ἄγων πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς
> ὤλεσε μὲν νῆας γλαφυράς, ἀπὸ δ᾽ ὤλεσε λαούς,
> τοὺς δ᾽ ἐλθὼν ἔκτεινε Κεφαλλήνων ὄχ᾽ ἀρίστους.
>
> Some men both many and good, having led them away in his ships -
> well, he has destroyed the hollow ships and has lost the people -
> and others he has slain after coming back, the best by far of the
>   Cephallenes,[806]

Eupeithes' statement introduces the idea that Odysseus is responsible for his companions' deaths. The proem introduced this idea to the epic and Odysseus acknowledged feelings of guilt in his own account, but the Ithacans do not consider this interpretation themselves before this point. Eupeithes reformulates the narrative about the loss of Odysseus'

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[803] *Od.* 24.423-4.
[804] See pp. 130-33 for discussion of the phrase πένθος ἄλαστον.
[805] *Od.* 24.426.
[806] *Od.* 2.427-9.

companions in order to increase Odysseus' guilt in the eyes of the Ithacan community.[807]

By holding Odysseus to account for a broader range of actions, Eupeithes' new narrative of how Odysseus damaged the community engages a greater proportion of the Ithacans in his mission for revenge, to which his speech now turns:

> ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετε, πρὶν τοῦτον ἢ ἐς Πύλον ὦκα ἱκέσθαι
> ἢ καὶ ἐς Ἤλιδα δῖαν, ὅθι κρατέουσιν Ἐπειοί,
> ἴομεν· ἢ καὶ ἔπειτα κατηφέες ἐσσόμεθ᾽ αἰεί.
> λώβη γὰρ τάδε γ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι,
> εἰ δὴ μὴ παίδων τε κασιγνήτων τε φονῆας
> τισόμεθ᾽· οὐκ ἂν ἔμοιγε μετὰ φρεσὶν ἡδὺ γένοιτο
> ζωέμεν, ἀλλὰ τάχιστα θανὼν φθιμένοισι μετείην.

> But come, before this man goes swiftly either to Pylos
> or even to heavenly Elis, where the Epeans rule,
> we must go; or we will be forever disgraced.
> For this is an outrage even for those who will be to learn,
> if we do not take vengeance for the murders of our sons and
> brothers; indeed to me in my heart it would not be sweet
> to live, but dying the quickest way I would rather be among the dead. [808]

As this passage demonstrates, constructing a trauma narrative is part of holding Odysseus responsibile for his actions.[809] Eupeithes worries about Odysseus passing into another community where Ithacan calls for revenge have no authority. He outlines the significance of this for the Ithacan community; future generations would inherit narratives about unresolved offences, which would have a detrimental effect on the community's reputation and self-image.[810] Finally, he presents his individual response to the idea of not taking vengeance for his son's death and exhorts his audience to action. Eupeithes' narrative drawn from his personal suffering is more effective than Telemachus' attempt in the first Ithacan assembly, because he represents the impact that the event will have on Ithacan cultural identity, fulfilling all of Alexander's requirements for a successful trauma narrative in the process.

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[807] See Haubold, 2000: 107-9 for how Eupeithes rewrites this narrative; Nagler, 1990 for Odysseus' guilt.
[808] *Od.* 24.430-6.
[809] Alexander, 2004: 27 explores the link between trauma narratives and accountability.
[810] See Chapter 5.

Other assembly speakers do not speak from personal experiences of loss. Phemius and Medon, for example, draw their authority from their eyewitness accounts of the massacre. The narrator reminds the audience that Phemius and Medon survived the massacre thanks to Odysseus' mercy, a fact that strongly colours their perspective, and that Phemius helped construct the sounds of a marriage celebration with his lyre.[811] Medon gives his account of the massacre:

> "κέκλυτε δὴ νῦν μευ, Ἰθακήσιοι· οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ἀθανάτων ἀέκητι θεῶν τάδε μήσατο ἔργα·
> αὐτὸς ἐγὼν εἶδον θεὸν ἄμβροτον, ὅς ῥ᾽ Ὀδυσῆος
> ἐγγύθεν εἱστήκει καὶ Μέντορι πάντα ἐῴκει.
> ἀθάνατος δὲ θεὸς τοτὲ μὲν προπάροιθ᾽ Ὀδυσῆος
> φαίνετο θαρσύνων, τοτὲ δὲ μνηστῆρας ὀρίνων
> θῦνε κατὰ μέγαρον· τοὶ δ᾽ ἀγχιστῖνοι ἔπιπτον."

> "Hear me now, Ithacans; for Odysseus did not
> contrive this deed against the will of the immortal gods;
> I myself saw the immortal god who stood near
> Odysseus and looked entirely like Mentor.
> And at one time the immortal god would appear before Odysseus,
> encouraging him, and at another, agitating the suitors,
> the god would charge through the house; and they fell in heaps."[812]

Medon's account does not overtly aim to persuade the assembly, although he does contribute to the meaning making process. His account downplays the bloodshed to focus on his experience of the divine as an awe-inspiring and violent force during the massacre.[813] By having a god orchestrate events, the herald absolves Odysseus of responsibility for his actions. Within Homeric society, this interpretation allows the community to give meaning to the event without requiring it to hold traumatic significance for future generations. As lines 443-4 show, his speech moves the debate away from questions of human responsibility and into the realms of divinely dispensed suffering and

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[811] Od. 24.439-41. At *Od.* 22.344-60, Phemius supplicates on the basis of his skill at singing. Cf. *Od.* 22.312-25, where Leodes is killed for his narrative skills.
[812] *Od.* 24.443-9.
[813] See pp. 173-4 for the divine and individual suffering.

punishment. His account thus inspires 'green fear' (χλωρὸν δέος) in his listeners,[814] and primes them to hear Halitherses' narrative.

Halitherses then competes against Eupeithes' narrative with an alternative interpretation of events. His interpretation draws authority from his age and his wisdom; the narrator's introduction to his speech states that 'he alone saw what was ahead and behind' (ὃ γὰρ οἶος ὅρα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω).[815] This language resonates with other instances of wise advice proffered by elderly members of Homeric communities,[816] and also evokes descriptions of prophets such as Calchas in the *Iliad*, who is described as knowing the things that are, will be and were before (ὃς ᾔδη τά τ᾽ ἐόντα τά τ᾽ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ᾽ ἐόντα).[817] Halitherses says:

> "κέκλυτε δὴ νῦν μευ, Ἰθακήσιοι, ὅττι κεν εἴπω.
> ὑμετέρῃ κακότητι, φίλοι, τάδε ἔργα γένοντο·
> οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ πείθεσθ᾽, οὐ Μέντορι ποιμένι λαῶν,
> ὑμετέρους παῖδας καταπαυέμεν ἀφροσυνάων,
> οἳ μέγα ἔργον ἔρεξαν ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῇσι,
> κτήματα κείροντες καὶ ἀτιμάζοντες ἄκοιτιν
> ἀνδρὸς ἀριστῆος· τὸν δ᾽ οὐκέτι φάντο νέεσθαι.
> καὶ νῦν ὧδε γένοιτο, πίθεσθέ μοι ὡς ἀγορεύω·
> μὴ ἴομεν, μή πού τις ἐπισπαστὸν κακὸν εὕρῃ."

> "Hear me now Ithacans, what I have to say.
> By your own cowardice, friends, have these deeds happened;
> for you would not be persuaded by me, nor by Mentor,
>   shepherd of the people,
> to put an end to your sons' foolish behaviour,
> who committed a great deed with evil recklessness,
> wasting possessions and dishonouring the wife
> of a noble man; and they thought that he would no longer return.
> And now let it be thus, obey me as I speak;
> don't go, lest doubtless someone will find an evil drawn upon
>   themselves."[818]

Halitherses' interpretation of events blames the Ithacans for the massacre. He refers to his speech in the first assembly, where he declared that Odysseus' return would be a μέγα

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[814] *Od.* 24.450.
[815] *Od.* 24.452.
[816] E.g. *Il.* 1.343; 3.109; 18.250. Krieter-Spiro, 2015: 51 offers an overview of this type of speech and further bibliography.
[817] *Il.* 1.70.
[818] *Od.* 24.454-62.

πῆμα for the Ithacans if they did not stop the suitors. He argues that the Ithacans are responsible for the massacre because they ignored his first speech. These are people who would, in Eupeithes' narrative, be among the victims of the event. The old man takes an authoritative moral stance on the basis that his previous prediction has proved accurate, and prophesies more pain for community members that seek revenge.[819] Halitherses does not include himself amongst the people harmed by the massacre. Indeed, he takes the opposite track to Eupeithes, and, by referring to the suitors as 'your sons' rather than 'our sons and brothers' in line 457, suggests that the event only affects a small portion of the community, limiting its significance for Ithaca as a whole. In laying the blame with the suitors' families, refusing to accept the event's significance for the entire Ithacan community and basing his authority on the gods, Halitherses ends negotiations over the meaning of the massacre.

As the assembly ends, neither Eupeithes nor the joint efforts of Mentor and Halitherses have persuaded the entire community. Initially, Eupeithes' narrative appears to be the more successful; 'more than half the people sprang up with great cries of woe' (οἳ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀνήιξαν μεγάλῳ ἀλαλητῷ //ἡμίσεων πλείους) to follow him into battle against Odysseus.[820] Eupeithes leads the Ithacans off in one narratorial direction, where the suitors' massacre becomes a significant event in Ithaca's history and shapes their identity thereafter. However, this narrative is not compatible with the epic's wider narrative of Odysseus as a hero reclaiming his position in Ithacan society.[821] The narrator begins to undermine Eupeithes' vengeance as soon as it begins, noting with detachment the irony that he went to take revenge for murder but would be murdered himself.[822] He carefully notes that 'the others assembled stayed where they were' (τοὶ δ᾽ ἀθρόοι αὐτόθι μεῖναν).[823] These men represent an alternative narratorial direction where the massacre does not become a

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[819] *Od.* 24.455-6; 461-2.
[820] *Od.* 24.463-4.
[821] See Haubold, 2000: 108; Gottesman, 2014: 35-6.
[822] *Od.* 24.471-2.
[823] *Od.* 24.464.

significant part of Ithacan identity, and this is ultimately the route that the epic pursues. With the narrator firmly on Odysseus' side throughout the matter of the massacre, it is interesting that he represents the alternative interpretations at all. By depicting the meaning making process, the epic shows what is at stake in Odysseus' return home; his return is not simply a matter of recovering his wife and property, although these are important elements of it, but also of recovering his place in the community without leaving a traumatic legacy for the community at large. The debate in the second assembly produces the final hurdle in the form of Eupeithes' forces which Odysseus must overcome to reclaim this last aspect of his identity.

The final confrontation between Odysseus and Eupeithes' Ithacans re-establishes Odysseus as the dominant voice within the Ithacan community. Athena calls for Zeus to determine the final path of the narrative, asking whether the two sides shall experience peace or war.[824] Zeus replies:

> ὅρκια πιστὰ ταμόντες ὁ μὲν βασιλευέτω αἰεί,
> ἡμεῖς δ᾽ αὖ παίδων τε κασιγνήτων τε φόνοιο
> ἔκλησιν θέωμεν· τοὶ δ᾽ ἀλλήλους φιλεόντων
> ὡς τὸ πάρος, πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη ἅλις ἔστω."

> Having all taken a solemn oath, let [Odysseus] be king forever,
> and let us inspire them to forget the murder of
> their sons and brothers; and let them love each other,
> as before, and let there be peace and wealth in abundance."[825]

Zeus uses his divine authority to overrule the collective narrative of suffering produced by the second Ithacan assembly.[826] He takes away the community's capacity to remember the murder of their sons and brothers,[827] and with it he takes the knowledge that Odysseus has violated the community's values. Zeus' actions resolve the conflict, leaving Odysseus free to reclaim his collective identity. The narrative can then reinstate Odysseus as Ithacan

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[824] *Od.* 24.473-6.
[825] *Od.* 24.483-6.
[826] Barker, 2009: 131-2 explores this final suppression of dissent. With this erasure of the community's memories, the ending remains somewhat problematic (although some commentators would disagree, see e.g. Russo *et al.,* 1992: 418; de Jong, 2001: 586). Some positive readings might be considered a reaction against the suggestion that the ending is a later addition, for which, see Rutherford, 1996: 74-81.
[827] See Haubold, 2000: 125-6 for this aspect of the narrative.

leader without requiring either Odysseus or the Ithacan community to undergo substantial changes to their identities as a result of this transgression. In place of the trauma narrative, Zeus imposes a narrative of timeless peace and prosperity 'as before' with Odysseus as king 'forever.' The *Odyssey* ends with Zeus shown to be the ultimate source of meaning for mortals,[828] shaping the significance of the events in their lives and endorsing or alleviating suffering as he chooses.

Conclusion

The *Odyssey* features several important community identities. The broadest community group, the Achaeans, forms in the *Iliad* in response to the Trojan War, whilst the Cephallenian community exists as the result of old wars and alliances. City-states, such as Ithaca, are an important identity marker within alliances. Members are united by their settled status within the city-state and their shared cultural values. Smaller groups also exist within city-states. Those that are based on markers such as age, gender or occupation tend to be stable, whilst those that form in response to crises within the wider community, such as the suitors, may become volatile and disruptive. Members of these communities value their collective identities as part of their personal identity.

In times of social disruption, collective identities can come under threat. Alexander's cultural trauma concept provides a powerful model for how groups of individuals come to consider overwhelming events significant. As I have argued here, his discussion sheds light particularly on the Ithacan assemblies in the *Odyssey*. The Ithacan assemblies respond to overwhelming events and allow the Ithacan community to negotiate the meaning and significance of these events. Whilst the second assembly produces a trauma narrative, the first assembly dismisses the event under consideration as a private matter. When an assembly determines that an event has had a significant impact on the community, it also enables the community to take coordinated action in response. The Ithacan assemblies are

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[828] *Od.* 24.487-547 again uses the divine epiphany (see pp. 173-4; 199) to alleviate suffering by having Athena/Mentor restore the fractured community.

therefore an important mechanism for creating and maintaining a sense of Ithacan identity in the *Odyssey*.

The *Odyssey*'s ending explores some of the tensions that arise between individual and collective aspects of identity when characters' worldviews are shattered. In order to reclaim his individual identity, Odysseus violates the values of the Ithacan community. Odysseus values both elements of his identity and requires both for his return home to be successful. The *Odyssey* uses the divine to restore order and erase the memories supporting collective trauma narratives arising from the suitors' massacre. Thus the relationships between suffering and identity at both individual and collective levels play a significant role in the epic's resolution. The resolution shows how impermanent interpretations of overwhelming events can be, as they are reshaped and revised to fit the needs of the moment. With this in mind, I now turn to my final chapter, which explores how suffering impacts identity across generations.

Chapter 5: The Multigenerational Impact of Suffering

In the previous two chapters, I explored two types of suffering, individual and collective, that affect people who experience overwhelming events. These types of suffering are the best understood and most frequently discussed in modern literature, but they are not the only types that a person can experience. A third type of suffering can affect people when an overwhelming event has occurred in a prior generation. Members of the second generation after the event may endeavour to understand and resolve the challenges posed by the traumatic event, or may pass it on to a third.[829] In modern research, this phenomenon is described either as intergenerational or transgenerational trauma.[830] As members of later generations hold different relationships to the event and exist in different environments, the challenges posed by the traumatic experience are not identical to those faced by the first generation. Intergenerational trauma therefore deserves consideration apart from the issues of individual and collective trauma, and I devote this chapter to an exploration of the multigenerational impact of suffering in the *Odyssey*.

Before I consider the specific scenarios in the *Odyssey*, I will first note some features of the transmission process. A traumatic event can be transmitted from an individual or a community. Transmission from an individual is particularly effective when it occurs between parent (or other influential care-giving figure) and child.[831] In a community, dominant interpretations of events determine whether they hold traumatic status.[832] In both cases, an overwhelming event in the past has a significant impact on the later generation's sense of self, their worldview and their behaviour. This later generation experiences every

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[829] Current research suggests that traumatic experience can affect the second and third generations after an event, and may have further-reaching effects if the trauma remains unresolved (see Lev–Wiesel, 2007). My discussion of intergenerational suffering in the *Odyssey* remains within the range of two to three generations.
[830] The term 'transgenerational trauma' is common in early work, which tends to view a single event as causing symptoms that are inherited or picked up by later generations. This work often has more pronounced psychoanalytical tendencies: eg. Volkan *et al.*, 1999. As research shifted to focus on the ways that each new generation established their own relationship to the traumatic event, the terms 'intergeneration trauma' or 'intergenerational transmission of trauma' seemed more apt: for these, see e.g. Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Mucci, 2013. I use 'intergenerational trauma' in this sense. However, this is a developing area of research, and the terms occur together where approaches to multigenerational trauma are discussed: e.g. Danieli, 1998.
[831] Danieli, 1998: 9; 669-70; Rosenheck & Fontana, 1998: 240; Volkan *et al.*, 2002: 25.
[832] Danieli, 1998: 673-80.

aspect of traumatisation although they have not lived through the event; as Michelle Ancharoff *et al.* argue, people in this position are 'compelled' and 'their choices…narrowed' by the event because their worldviews and identities are shaped by those whose own worldviews have been shattered by trauma.[833] Large-scale traumatic events can become established as founding traumas for communities and endure as identity markers for generations,[834] and Yael Danieli goes so far as to see transmission of trauma as a process present in all societies, which helps define family and cultural identity and determine the questions that members of a group return to over time.[835] Recent and remote experiences of suffering may therefore have an impact on a person's identity, although with greater or lesser urgency depending on cultural context and other environmental factors.

In this chapter, I consider how the *Odyssey* explores the intergenerational effects of suffering through its representations of different generations in the Achaean and Phaeacian societies. The two legacies of suffering I examine are very different. First, I explore Telemachus' relationship to Odysseus' loss. Telemachus was an infant when Odysseus left for Troy and everything that he knows about his father comes from his mother or other Ithacan caregivers. In the *Odyssey,* Telemachus separates his viewpoint on this event from his mother's with Athena's aid, thereby demonstrating the epic's interest in the impact of overwhelming events on later generations. Secondly, I examine the Phaeacians' reception of Odysseus in the context of their legacy of suffering, which stems from memories of being raided by the Cyclopes and their subsequent migration. This legacy, I argue, shapes the way that the Phaeacians respond to guests and can result in miscommunication with guests from other cultural backgrounds. In considering the multigenerational effects of

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[833] Ancharoff *et al.*, 1998: 263. The effect Ancharoff *et al.* describe is well-evidenced and deserves serious consideration. It does not yet have the same medical recognition as individual trauma. However, their research also suggests that intergenerational trauma increases an individual's likelihood of developing PTSD.
[834] LaCapra, 2001 uses the term 'founding traumas' to describe 'traumas that paradoxically become the valorized or intensely cathected basis of identity for an individual or a group' (23). The founding trauma concept is relevant to Phaeacian society, but we may also note that narratives about Helen's abduction and the Trojan War form the basis of collective identities in this epic and in later literature.
[835] Danieli, 1998: 1-9; 669-80.

overwhelming events on Odyssean characters, this section completes my discussion of the *Odyssey*'s treatment of overwhelming events and the suffering they produce.

5.1 Telemachus and intergenerational trauma

Introduction

In order to place this section in a workable analytical framework, I start my discussion from the distinction between 'loss' and 'absence' that LaCapra draws.[836] The first is a type of traumatic event experienced by an individual: many of the overwhelming events I have already explored from the *Odyssey* have been loss events. Beyond that, there is the concept of an 'absence,' which can be defined as partial knowledge of a past loss, and which LaCapra describes as 'a movement of identity formation.'[837] The knowledge of that past loss can only ever be partial, because only the significance of the loss can be known, and not the significance of the thing lost. LaCapra's distinction between a 'loss' and an 'absence' is a useful way into discussing primary and secondary traumatisation as the two components of intergenerational trauma.[838] Primary traumatisation happens when a person experiences an overwhelming event, such as a loss, directly. Secondary traumatisation happens when a person experiences the effects of an overwhelming event from the past in the present; in other words, they become aware of an absence that needs to be resolved. Intergenerational trauma is a type of secondary traumatisation.

Primary and secondary traumatisation help us to understand the ways in which individuals suffer in the *Odyssey*. According to the epic, Telemachus was an infant when Odysseus left Ithaca. He was present for the loss of Odysseus, but was too young to remember his father or understand the significance of his loss, meaning that he did not experience primary traumatisation. His youth at the time of Odysseus' departure allows the epic to focus instead on Telemachus' experience of Odysseus' absence in the *Telemachy*; and indeed,

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[836] LaCapra, 2001: 44-53. Balaev, 2008: 152-3 offers useful further discussion of LaCapra's concept.
[837] LaCapra, 2001: 65.
[838] Ancharoff *et al.*, 1998: 261-3 discuss primary and secondary traumatisation.

Telemachus experiences Odysseus in the *Odyssey* as an 'absent father' (πατρὸς ἀποιχομένοιο).[839] In this section, I first explore the impressions of Odysseus and the significance of losing him that Telemachus receives from his caregivers on Ithaca. I then consider how Telemachus' journey opens up new ways for him to think and speak about Odysseus and his absence. Finally, I discuss Telemachus' return to Ithaca and the role that Telemachus' narrative building plays in Odysseus' return.

5.1.1. The effect of Odysseus' absence on Telemachus

Since Odysseus has been absent from Telemachus' infancy, Telemachus relies on others for knowledge of his father. Telemachus addresses this point in one of his first speeches, saying 'my mother tells me that I am his, but I myself don't know' (μήτηρ μέν τε με φησι τοῦ ἔμμεναι, αὐτὰρ ἐγώγε //οὐκ οἶδ').[840] Telemachus is aware that his knowledge of his father comes from Penelope. However, he neutralises the stark truth of this statement in his own case by clarifying 'for no one knows for certain his own parentage' (οὐ γάρ πώ τις ἐὸν γόνον αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω).[841] From the son of Penelope, a woman renowned for her loyalty to her husband, this may be thought an unnecessary qualification. However, it shows an interesting attempt on Telemachus' part to normalise the unusual reliance he has on his mother for knowledge about his father due to his father's absence. The comment conveys Telemachus' discomfort with the situation, which, while probably not connected to doubts about his parentage, is still very real: he is aware that a significant event in his life, which in the context of his speech must be Odysseus' departure, happened before he was aware of it and that he relies on his mother for knowledge of it. Telemachus follows his comment with a wish that his father had been 'a blessed man, whom old age came upon among his own possessions' (μάκαρός…//ἀνέρος, ὃν κτεάτεσσιν ἑοῖς ἔπι γῆρας ἔτετμε) rather than 'the most ill-fated of mortal men, whose [son] they say I am' (ἀποτμότατος…θνητῶν

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[839] *Od.* 1.135.
[840] *Od.* 1.215-6.
[841] *Od.* 1.216.

ἀνθρώπων //τοῦ μ᾽ ἔκ φασι γενέσθαι).[842] Telemachus does not deny his parentage. Rather, his comments suggest that he regrets and perhaps resents knowing his father only through the reports of others.

In fact, Telemachus knows more about the significance of his father's absence than he does about his life and character. In his speeches and conversations on Ithaca, all Telemachus says about Odysseus' life before his departure is that he was king on Ithaca, that he was a kind king and that he had many foreign visitors.[843] These details relate to his public persona and do not demonstrate that Telemachus has accurate knowledge of his father. In contrast, Telemachus speaks in detail about the effects of Odysseus' absence. He states that the house was in better condition, being both more prosperous and above reproach, before Odysseus left.[844] He claims that Odysseus' departure left pain and lamentation for him personally.[845] He knows that Odysseus fought in Troy and believes that he lost the opportunity to win great fame for himself and his son.[846] He claims that Odysseus is ill-fated.[847] He states that Odysseus' return would rid the house of the suitors,[848] that Odysseus is a better man, being well-versed in combat, than any remaining on Ithaca and so could do this,[849] but that the hope of Odysseus' return is not realistic and that all remaining in the house suffer as a result.[850] Telemachus, it would seem, has constructed a detailed narrative about the significance of Odysseus' absence. This narrative has been strongly influenced by an image of an idealised past passed down by older members of the

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[842] *Od.* 1.217-20. See Murnaghan, 1992: 257-9 for further discussion of Telemachus' comments about Odysseus.
[843] *Od.* 1.176; 2.46-7.
[844] *Od.* 1.231-5.
[845] *Od.* 1.242.
[846] *Od.* 1.236-40.
[847] *Od.* 2.219.
[848] *Od.* 1.163-5.
[849] *Od.* 2.59-61.
[850] *Od.* 1.166-8.

household.[851] The most vocal proponent of this narrative within the epic is Penelope, and it is her views that Telemachus engages with most closely.

Interactions between Telemachus and Penelope demonstrate the conflict between their experiences of suffering. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Penelope cannot create public narratives that help her resolve her suffering. A concept which helps us discuss Penelope's public failure to address her loss is Danieli's 'conspiracy of silence.'[852] Danieli uses this term to refer to the phenomenon of silence among members of communities after overwhelming events. Traumatised individuals may put pressure on themselves to remain silent about overwhelming events if they feel that it is dangerous to speak about the past or they want to forget the past and build a new life. Pressure can also originate in the individual's community, where a variety of emotional responses to an event might make community members unreceptive to narratives about suffering. Between these pressures to remain silent, knowledge about overwhelming events can be lost. Intergenerational trauma occurs as a result of this silence because, whilst the first generation's silence marks an event as significant, later generations do not inherit a narrative explaining why the event is significant to their parents and so cannot decide if it holds significance for themselves. Without information about the event, they may also struggle to understand behaviours and worldviews that have been shaped by that event. Penelope and the Ithacan community appear to be engaged in a conspiracy of silence after Odysseus' loss insofar as Penelope's courtship prohibits a full acknowledgement of the circumstances surrounding it.[853] As a result of this silence, although Penelope is Telemachus' main source of information about

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[851] See Olson, 1995: 65, who argues that '[Telemachus] is trapped from the first between the exemplary κλέος of his father and who he knows (or thinks) he himself is, and stranded in an imperfect and apparently pointless world which seems incapable of being restored to how it once supposedly was.' For the idea that Telemachus is heavily influenced by other the perspectives of other characters, see Allan, 2010: 21, who notes that 'even given the formulaic nature of epic poetry, it is remarkable how often Telemachus' speeches are composed of thought sequences he has appropriated from others.'

[852] Danieli, 1981 introduced this term, which was subsequently clarified and expanded upon in Danieli, 1982 and 1984.

[853] It is interesting that Athena's first instructions to Odysseus upon returning to Ithaca (*Od.* 13.309-10) include an order that he must 'suffer many pains in silence' (ἀλλὰ σιωπῇ //πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλά).

his father, Telemachus knows very little about Odysseus and does not understand Penelope's behaviour or worldview.

As a member of the next generation, however, Telemachus does not feel the same pressures to preserve the silence concerning the loss of Odysseus. Instead, Telemachus breaks the silence in several ways. In Book 1, he supports Phemius in performing songs about the return journey of the Achaeans that originate outside the Ithacan community, saying:

> "μῆτερ ἐμή, τί τ᾽ ἄρα φθονέεις ἐρίηρον ἀοιδὸν
> τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται; οὔ νύ τ᾽ ἀοιδοὶ
> αἴτιοι, ἀλλά ποθι Ζεὺς αἴτιος, ὅς τε δίδωσιν
> ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστῇσιν, ὅπως ἐθέλῃσιν, ἑκάστῳ.
> τούτῳ δ᾽ οὐ νέμεσις Δαναῶν κακὸν οἶτον ἀείδειν·
> τὴν γὰρ ἀοιδὴν μᾶλλον ἐπικλείουσ᾽ ἄνθρωποι,
> ἥ τις ἀκουόντεσσι νεωτάτη ἀμφιπέληται.
> σοί δ᾽ ἐπιτολμάτω κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀκούειν·
> οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς οἶος ἀπώλεσε νόστιμον ἦμαρ
> ἐν Τροίῃ, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι φῶτες ὄλοντο.

> "My mother, why do you bear ill-will towards the faithful singer
> who cheers in whatever way his mind takes him? Now,
> singers are not to blame, but I suppose Zeus is to blame, who gives
> to enterprising men just what he wishes, to each.
> And there is no just resentment in this, that he sings the terrible fate
>   of the Danaans;
> for human beings praise the song the more,
> whichever one floats around the listeners most recently.
> And so let your heart and spirit endure and listen;
> for Odysseus alone did not lose his day of return
> in Troy, but many other men perished also. [854]

Unlike Penelope, Telemachus values these public narratives about the recent past, finding that epic poetry fills a narrative gap in his history that rumour and eyewitness accounts have not hitherto addressed.[855] He struggles against the social pressure to avoid mention of Odysseus' loss, which Penelope presents as unspeakable. Instead, Telemachus attempts to normalise the song by linking it to traditional representations of Zeus as the source of

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[854] *Od.* 1.346-55.
[855] Previous readings of this passage have focused on the poetics of epic and the *Odyssey*'s place in the epic tradition. See Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 119-20; Martin, 1993: 234-40; Clark, 2001; Pucci, 1987: 201-8.

suffering, and recontextualises the loss by reminding her that others also died at Troy. He follows his statement on the performance with a declaration of his authority in the household:

> ἀλλ᾽ εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ᾽ αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε,
> ἱστόν τ᾽ ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε
> ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι. μῦθος δ᾽ ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει
> πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ᾽ ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ᾽ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ."

> And so, going back into the house, take care of your own work,
> the loom and the distaff, and order your attendants
> to ply their work. Speech will be a care of the men
> all of them, but especially me; for the power is mine in this house."[856]

With this statement, Telemachus not only asserts male authority over female authority in narrative production,[857] but also asserts his authority over his mother's in the household.[858] He speaks of participating in μῦθος, which Richard Martin describes as 'important speeches that accomplish something or…performative utterances,' as his right as a man (ἀνήρ).[859] He also speaks of his power (κράτος) in the house. Through mention of μῦθος and κράτος, Telemachus asserts his right to participate in narrative building processes within the community and to have his status recognised in Odysseus' absence. In taking over Odysseus' role in the household, Telemachus begins to acknowledge Odysseus' loss as a definite event: he adopts this position overtly in his next speech.[860] In disrupting the *status quo* to establish his authority in the house, Telemachus breaks the silence surrounding past events, making it possible for new narratives to emerge.

Similarly, Telemachus facilitates conversations about suffering in the wider Ithacan community. Members of Odysseus' household continue to silence him, but other Ithacans

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[856] *Od.* 1.356-9.

[857] It is worth noting that the task Telemachus sets Penelope, weaving, is a form of female narrative production; although he stops her from speaking out against the song at the feast, Telemachus does not altogether silence his mother.

[858] However, Martin, 1993: 236-7 notes that the formulaic speech strategy "X will be a care to me: I have the power" is often used by someone who is, in fact, powerless (e.g. Hector at *Il.* 6.490-3; Alcinous at *Od.* 11.352-3). Telemachus' use of the phrase subtly indicates that power over narrative still rests with Penelope. See also Wohl, 1993: 31; 38; 42 for how male power rend female speech relate to each other in the epic.

[859] Martin, 1993: 235. See Martin, 1989: 14-26 for his original argument concerning μῦθοι.

[860] *Od.* 1.396-7. After this moment of self-declared empowerment, Telemachus' position on the likelihood of his father's return reverts to being more ambivalent.

tend to respond positively. Telemachus begins by calling the Ithacan assembly together for the first time since Odysseus' departure, an action that prompts praise from older community members.[861] Aegyptus makes an important generational distinction when considering his audience in his opening speech.[862] He asks:

> νῦν δὲ τίς ὧδ᾽ ἤγειρε; τίνα χρειὼ τόσον ἵκει
> ἠὲ νέων ἀνδρῶν ἢ οἳ προγενέστεροί εἰσιν;
> ἠέ τιν᾽ ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἔκλυεν ἐρχομένοιο,
> ἥν χ᾽ ἡμῖν σάφα εἴποι, ὅτε πρότερός γε πύθοιτο,
> ἦέ τι δήμιον ἄλλο πιφαύσκεται ἠδ᾽ ἀγορεύει;

> And now who has gathered us together thus? On whom comes
>   so great a need
> either one of the young men or one who is earlier in birth?
> Has he heard some news of the army coming home,
> which he might tell us plainly, if indeed he has heard it first,
> or will he disclose some other public matter and speak in assembly?[863]

Aegyptus recognises that both older and younger members of the community attend the assembly. He cannot guess what the reason behind the assembly is, but suggests the most pressing of public matters: news of the army returning from Troy. The ambivalence of this line is particularly interesting. It is likely to refer to the returning Ithacan army but could also perhaps be taken to refer to news of an invasion.[864] It is certainly the type of statement that would hold special significance to those who remembered Agamemnon's visit and the previous Ithacan assembly.[865] This is as near as Aegyptus gets to breaking the silence surrounding the loss of the Ithacan men and airing his preoccupations in the collective space. Telemachus responds by introducing Odysseus' absence as the topic of the assembly, claiming it as a private matter that must be addressed in public. The suitors, who have their own reasons for not wishing to speak about Odysseus, attempt to silence him with threats and insults (e.g. Τηλέμαχ᾽ ὑψαγόρη).[866] This insult concerning his manner of

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[861] *Od.* 2.26-7.
[862] *Od.* 2.17-24. It is worth noting that Aegyptus' biography, discussed in pp. 217-8, reveals a suppressed story of suffering to the audience that is never articulated among the characters.
[863] *Od.* 2.28-32.
[864] For the two interpretations, see Heubeck *et al.* 1988: 131.
[865] For Agamemnon's visit prior to Odysseus' departure, see *Od.* 24.115-7.
[866] *Od.* 2.303. See Chapter 4 for the suitors' motivations in public speech.

speech reminds the audience that the suitors' power to contravene social boundaries comes from the community's reluctance to acknowledge their loss and discuss its implications for Ithacan society. Thus, the opening of the assembly shows Telemachus struggle against social pressure to introduce the topic of Odysseus' absence, which has not previously been addressed in Ithacan public space.

At the same time, Telemachus uses the older generation's taciturnity about their loss to further his own goals. Showing a cunning worthy of his father, Telemachus moves from promoting speech in the community to extracting promises of silence as he leaves.[867] When Telemachus asks Eurycleia to prepare the supplies for his voyage, he tells her 'but make sure you alone know' (αὐτὴ δ᾽ οἴη ἴσθι) and 'swear that you will not speak of this to my dear mother' (ὄμοσον μὴ μητρὶ φίλῃ τάδε μυθήσασθαι).[868] Despite Eurycleia's misgivings about the voyage and her loyalty to her mistress, she is easily persuaded to take the oath.[869] Telemachus presents silence as something that mitigates suffering, asking for the oath so that Penelope 'may not spoil her beautiful skin with weeping' (ὡς ἂν μὴ κλαίουσα κατὰ χρόα καλὸν ἰάπτῃ).[870] This is ironic given the purpose of his journey, but resonates with other portrayals of silence and suffering in Odysseus' household. Telemachus actively manipulates the 'conspiracy of silence' of which he, as a member of the younger generation, is not a committed part, and this allows him to leave Ithaca unchallenged in search of more information about his father.

5.1.2. Constructing narratives about Odysseus

Telemachus leaves Ithaca without an accurate impression of either Odysseus or the significance of his loss as a result of the silence in the Ithacan community. However, Athena works to ensure that Telemachus uncovers the links between himself and his father. From the moment of her arrival on Ithaca, her presence draws out some of the associations

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[867] Athena states that he will need Odyssean cunning and bravery to achieve his aims at *Od.* 2.271-80.
[868] *Od.* 2.356; 2.373.
[869] *Od.* 2.361-70; 2.377.
[870] *Od.* 2.376.

with Odysseus that saturate his household: Athena alights in Odysseus' doorway, where Telemachus sees her as he dreams of his father's return, and Odysseus' spears remain in the stand.[871] Martin claims:

> It is significant that we cannot see Telemachus without instantly hearing of his father. Part of the interest of the rest of the plot will come from seeing how far Telemachus can distinguish himself from his father; the process has not yet started when we first see him.[872]

Martin's argument is not entirely persuasive.[873] In this first meeting, Telemachus' most affective image of his father is the one he gives Athena of 'a man whose white bones doubtless rot in the rain lying on the mainland, or the waves roll them in the sea' (ἀνέρος, οὗ δή που λεύκ᾽ ὀστέα πύθεται ὄμβρῳ //κεῖμεν᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἠπείρου, ἢ εἰν ἁλὶ κῦμα κυλίνδει).[874] This is not an image that encourages either him or the epic's audience to look for similarities between the two characters. Telemachus' journey replaces this image with a more accurate one based on eyewitness evidence from Odysseus' former companions. As he travels around the mainland, they, and the audience, delight in uncovering similarities between father and son. Athena's aim in sending Telemachus on his journey is not to allow him to distinguish himself from his father in the epic tradition. His place in the epic tradition is dependent on his relationship to his father. Rather, his journey allows him and the audience to identify links between the present and the past, and to determine the significance of Odysseus' deeds and suffering for those who come after.

In particular, Athena aims to replace the Ithacan image of Odysseus with one more closely aligned with his portrayal in epic. Telemachus' journey does not facilitate Odysseus' return, nor does it show a development in Telemachus' maturity or abilities, although some scholars have argued this.[875] Instead, his journey prepares for Odysseus' return by re-establishing him as a powerful figure in the Trojan War. Through the stories told by

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[871] *Od.* 1.103; 1.133-7 and 1.127-9 respectively.
[872] Martin, 1993: 234.
[873] Although I agree that Telemachus stands at the end of the epic tradition.
[874] *Od.* 1.161-2.
[875] E.g. Rose, 1967; Schmiel, 1972.

Nestor, Menelaus and Helen, Telemachus' image of Odysseus falls in line with that familiar to the *Odyssey*'s audience from the epic tradition. The image of bones washed up on a faraway shore is replaced with stories that recall the much-wandering, city-sacking man of the *Odyssey* proem.[876] As a result of Athena's intervention, Telemachus creates a new narrative to replace the shattered worldview he has inherited from his mother, which prepares the audience for the action accompanying the warrior's return.

Athena's presence ensures that Telemachus can access the narratives of Odysseus' former companions. The goddess first appears as Mentes, a guest-friend of Odysseus.[877] Like Athena's manifestation before Penelope as Iphthime, the form is chosen to inspire trust and facilitate recovery.[878] As an old man and outsider, Mentes provides experienced but disinterested advice informed by the news he brings from elsewhere.[879] As Odysseus' guest-friend, Mentes can also recall memories of Odysseus that Telemachus has not heard before.[880] Mentor, the disguise which Athena then adopts to interact with Telemachus in matters concerning his journey, has the same qualities, except that he is Ithacan. Abroad, Mentor's Ithacan status ensures trust between the two men, when other ties of guest-friendship might theoretically upset the loyalty between Telemachus and a foreign noble. In neither disguise does Athena feel compelled to the silence that affects the Ithacan community because she is not truly part of that community. Indeed, Athena does not even use her disguises to conceal her divinity; her interventions end with a revelation of her presence that spurs Telemachus to pursue her suggested course of action or increases his prestige among his companions.[881] Athena's presence emboldens Telemachus and, by acting as reassurance that he is his father's son, secures access to the generous hospitality, including the storytelling skills, of his hosts.

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[876] *Od.* 1.1-2.
[877] *Od.* 1.180-90. See Belmont, 1969 for an interpretation of this first meeting.
[878] See p. 199.
[879] As *Od.* 1.271-300 illustrates.
[880] See *Od.* 1.209-12; 255-64.
[881] Athena's revelations: *Od.* 1.319-23; 3.371-84.

Telemachus' journey to the mainland allows him to hear narratives about Odysseus from his Trojan War companions. These narratives have two parts: they each provide new information about Odysseus' progress and they always present Odysseus as a competent warrior in some fresh anecdote about the war. Whilst the former strand addresses the ostensible purpose of Telemachus' journey, which is to gather news about his father's return, the latter helps Telemachus build a realistic image of his father and of his absence. In Pylos, Nestor emphasises how important Odysseus' presence was to the Achaean army:

> εἰνάετες γάρ σφιν κακὰ ῥάπτομεν ἀμφιέποντες
> παντοίοισι δόλοισι, μόγις δ᾽ ἐτέλεσσε Κρονίων.
> ἔνθ᾽ οὔ τίς ποτε μῆτιν ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην
> ἤθελ᾽, ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὸν ἐνίκα δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς
> παντοίοισι δόλοισι,
>
> For nine years we carefully contrived evils against them
> with every type of stratagem, and the son of Cronos
>   scarcely completed them.
> There no one was ever willing to match his cunning against his,
> since godlike Odysseus far surpassed them
> in all types of stratagem,[882]

Nestor presents the Trojan War as a tactical war and emphasises how apposite Odysseus' talents were for that type of battle.[883] In his other anecdotes, he continues to speak about Odysseus' skill in speech and cunning, naming him with the epithets δαΐφρονα and ποικιλομήτην,[884] and reminiscing about their like-mindedness in the Achaean assemblies.[885] These reminiscences contribute to Telemachus' image of Odysseus by drawing a similarity between his lost father and the man before him. Nestor also establishes links between Telemachus and Odysseus by referring to Odysseus as 'your

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[882] *Od.* 3.118-22.
[883] Note especially the repetition of παντοίοισι δόλοισι at 3.119 and 122; and see Nagy, 1999: 45-7 and Detienne & Vernant, 1978: 18 for a discussion of Odysseus' expertise in this area.
[884] *Od.* 3.163. For δαΐφρων, see *LfgrE*: 205-7. For ποικιλομήτης, see *LfgrE*: 1321; Detienne & Vernant, 1978: 18; 25n.36.
[885] *Od.* 3.126-9.

father' (πατὴρ τεός), and by finding similarities in their speech.[886] These connections build a foundation for Telemachus' new understanding of Odysseus.

In Sparta, Menelaus and Helen contribute further details to Telemachus' narrative. Menelaus explains Odysseus' delay in returning home, saying that Odysseus is trapped on Calypso's island against his will.[887] The two hosts also offer more anecdotes about Odysseus as a warrior in the Trojan War. Before she begins, Helen says:

> πάντα μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ᾽ ὀνομήνω,
> ὅσσοι Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονός εἰσιν ἄεθλοι·
> ἀλλ᾽ οἷον τόδ᾽ ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ
> δήμῳ ἔνι Τρώων, ὅθι πάσχετε πήματ᾽ Ἀχαιοί.

> I could not tell or name every one,
> so many were the struggles of stout-hearted Odysseus;
> but such a thing as this the powerful man did and endured
> in the land of Troy, where you Achaeans suffered miseries.[888]

Contrary to Telemachus' claim on Ithaca, Helen declares that Odysseus earnt a great reputation in the Trojan War, basing her opinion on eyewitness knowledge of Odysseus' deeds. Helen and Menelaus recount exploits in which Odysseus combines great acts of cunning with great feats of endurance.[889] Notably, Helen remembers Odysseus disguising himself as a beggar, infiltrating Troy and gathering intelligence before slaughtering a number of Trojans.[890] Menelaus tells how Odysseus led the ambush that brought about the fall of Troy.[891] He too introduces his anecdote by saying 'such a thing as this the powerful man also did and endured' (οἷον καὶ τόδ᾽ ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ).[892] As the use of κρατερός here suggests, these anecdotes help Telemachus to recover a sense of Odysseus'

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[886] *Od.* 3.122-5. Coming from Nestor, these words carry special significance due to his unique status within the Achaean community. Roisman, 2005 discusses Homer's portrayal of Nestor as a sympathetic counsellor, and considers his role and status in the Trojan War.
[887] *Od.* 4.555-60.
[888] *Od.* 4.240-3.
[889] For Helen and Menelaus' stories as 'subtle acts of self-justification, self-explanation, and mutual recrimination', see Olson, 1989: 387-91; see also Barker & Christensen, 2016: 91-2. For the gender dynamics of Helen and Menelaus' storytelling, see Wohl, 1993: 32-5.
[890] *Od.* 4.244-64.
[891] *Od.* 4.267-89.
[892] *Od.* 4.271.

strength and authority as well as his craftiness and good reputation.[893] These attributes are an important part of Odysseus' legacy, and Telemachus responds to these tales with delight.[894] This epic representation of Odysseus entirely displaces the narrative of Odysseus' disappearance and death that Telemachus put forward on Ithaca.

Alongside information about Odysseus' absence, Menelaus helps Telemachus explore the significance of losing his father. Menelaus presents the loss of Odysseus as a deep source of grief for him personally since returning to Sparta, claiming that food and sleep have become hateful to him.[895] Menelaus claims he grieves Odysseus' loss more than any warrior killed in Troy, because 'not one of the Achaeans suffered so much as Odysseus suffered and endured' (οὔ τις Ἀχαιῶν τόσσ᾽ ἐμόγησεν, //ὅσσ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς ἐμόγησε καὶ ἤρατο).[896] This statement of Odysseus' suffering corresponds to the *Odyssey*'s general representation of Odysseus, but also expresses how much Menelaus valued Odysseus as 'one who for [his] sake endured many trials' (ὃς εἵνεκ᾽ ἐμεῖο πολέας ἐμόγησεν ἀέθλους).[897] Menelaus even mentions his plan to relocate Odysseus and his people to a city in Argos as a reward for his deeds at Troy and how the two warriors would not have been separated until death.[898] In claiming that Odysseus would have received such a great reward, he rewrites the narrative of Odysseus' lost homecoming: Odysseus is no longer the most unfortunate of men, as Telemachus states in *Odyssey* 1, but a man so fortunate that the gods themselves begrudged the remuneration for his success. As a result of hearing these narratives that portray Odysseus as a skilled tactician, an authoritative leader, and a

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[893] For more on κράτος, see Vacca, 1991: 15-17.
[894] *Od.* 4.597-8.
[895] *Od.* 4.104-10. His further statement (*Od.* 4.110-112) that Laertes, Penelope and Telemachus must grieve for Odysseus relates their grief to a warlike image of Odysseus for the first time.
[896] *Od.* 4.106-7.
[897] *Od.* 4.170.
[898] *Od.* 4.171-82. See Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 204-5 for this passage; Andreev, 1979: 365 for the motif of donating cities in Homer.

valued warrior and friend, Telemachus builds an image of him that corresponds to the image presented by the epic poem overall.[899]

Telemachus' encounters with Achaean warriors also ensure that he comprehends the significance of his position as the son of a warrior who fought at Troy. Athena uses stories about Orestes to explore how the Trojan War has begun to shape the identities of the next generation, saying:

> ἦ οὐκ ἀίεις, οἶον κλέος ἔλλαβε δῖος Ὀρέστης
> πάντας ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπους, ἐπεὶ ἔκτανε πατροφονῆα
> Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὅς οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα;
> καὶ σύ, φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ᾽ ὁρόω καλόν τε μέγαν τε,
> ἄλκιμος ἔσσ᾽, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπῃ.
>
> Have you not heard what fame godlike Orestes seized
> among all mankind, when he killed his father's murderer,
> crafty Aegisthus, who had slain his renowned father?
> And you, friend, for I see you are both very noble and great,
> be brave, so that men in later generations speak well of you.[900]

As Athena reminds Telemachus, Orestes' Trojan War legacy required him to kill his father's murderer.[901] She urges Telemachus to show courage as Orestes did when confronting issues passed down from previous generations. Her story presents Orestes as a character who has resolved his legacy of suffering with aggressive action.[902] His response to this legacy shapes his identity in the epic tradition. Initially, Telemachus does not understand the significance of Orestes' example, imagining it to be too different from his own experience for him to follow.[903] However, Nestor, whose position is later supported

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[899] Telemachus' narrative journey thus supports the idea of Odysseus as a central hero of epic and establishes his significance in opposition to the heroes of competing epic poems. See Nagy, 1999: 34-41 for competition between rival Trojan War traditions; Barker & Christensen, 2008 for competition with other epic traditions.

[900] *Od.* 1.298-302.

[901] For role of Orestes in the *Odyssey*, see Goldhill, 1986: 147-54; Olson, 1995: 31; Murrin, 2007: 509.

[902] Consider also Diomedes' *aristeia* in *Iliad* 4-6. Agamemnon's stories about his father initiate his eagerness for battle (*Il.* 4.365-421) and Athena gives him his father's strength (*Il.* 5.124-32). During the fight, she encourages him with comparisons between him and Tydeus (*Il.* 5.800-13). Aggressive action certainly plays a role in living up to his father's legacy. However, Diomedes' relationship with his father is also more complex than that of either Orestes or Telemachus: as Graziosi & Haubold acknowledge, Tydeus is a 'problematic role model' (2010: 140; see also Nagy, 1999: 161-4 for Homeric characters using Tydeus' reputation against Diomedes) whom his son claims to have forgotten (*Il.* 6.222). For Diomedes, coming to terms with his past also involves limiting his father's influence. It is only once he has established a personal relationship with Glaucus (no longer dependent on his father) that his *aristeia* ends.

[903] *Od.* 3.205-09. See also *Od.* 3.226-7.

by Athena, emphasise that Telemachus must deal with the suitors, his problematic legacy from the Trojan War, so that future men to speak well of him.[904] Through the model of Orestes, the epic thus deals with the theme of action in response to legacies of suffering.

Finally, Telemachus learns how members of his own generation find significance in narratives about the Trojan War through Peisistratus' example. Peisistratus and Telemachus have similar relationships to the Trojan War, as their fathers both fought with the Achaeans. Although Nestor returned, Peisistratus lost his brother Antilochus in the war. Like Telemachus, Peisistratus does not remember his lost family member and knows him only through memories passed on by others. In Sparta, Peisistratus models the appropriate behaviour of a young nobleman and facilitates communication between Telemachus and his hosts.[905] In particular, he demonstrates how to respond adaptively to grief and loss. Speaking to Telemachus and Menelaus, he says:

> "Ἀτρείδη, περὶ μέν σε βροτῶν πεπνυμένον εἶναι
> Νέστωρ φάσχ᾽ ὁ γέρων, ὅτ᾽ ἐπιμνησαίμεθα σεῖο
> οἷσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι, καὶ ἀλλήλους ἐρέοιμεν.
> καὶ νῦν, εἴ τί που ἔστι, πίθοιό μοι· οὐ γὰρ ἐγώγε
> τέρπομ᾽ ὀδυρόμενος μεταδόρπιος, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἠὼς
> ἔσσεται ἠριγένεια. νεμεσσῶμαί γε μὲν οὐδὲν
> κλαίειν, ὅς κε θάνῃσι βροτῶν καὶ πότμον ἐπίσπῃ.
> τοῦτό νυ καὶ γέρας οἶον ὀιζυροῖσι βροτοῖσι,
> κείρασθαί τε κόμην βαλέειν τ᾽ ἀπὸ δάκρυ παρειῶν.
> καὶ γὰρ ἐμὸς τέθνηκεν ἀδελφεός, οὔ τι κάκιστος
> Ἀργείων. μέλλεις δὲ σὺ ἴδμεναι· οὐ γὰρ ἐγώγε
> ἤντησ᾽ οὐδὲ ἴδον· περὶ δ᾽ ἄλλων φασὶ γενέσθαι
> Ἀντίλοχον, πέρι μὲν θείειν ταχὺν ἠδὲ μαχητήν."

> "Son of Atreus, the old man Nestor said that you were wise
> beyond mortals, when mention was made of you in our
> halls, and we questioned each other.
> And now, if it is perhaps possible, listen to me; for I indeed take no
> delight in weeping during supper, but also early born dawn
> will soon be here. Indeed I feel no resentment
> about weeping for any one of the mortal men who has died and reached the
> fated end of his life.

> Now this alone is the gift for miserable mortals,
> that we cut our hair and let fall tears down our cheeks.
> For my brother also died, a man not the worst of the
> Argives. And you must have known him; for I indeed neither
> met nor saw him; but they say that he stood out among others,
> Antilochus, surpassing in quick running and in battle."[906]

Peisistratus describes a constructive narrative transmission process in which father and son speak openly about the losses in their family. Unlike on Ithaca, there is no sense that either too little information has been shared or that shared information has not been properly contextualised. Indeed, Nestor has been so thorough that Peisistratus knows Menelaus' role in the Trojan War and his relationship with Antilochus before his death. Peisistratus is also aware of the distance between himself and Antilochus, making it clear that he has no personal knowledge of his brother whereas Menelaus has fought alongside him. Finally, Peisistratus describes mourning rituals as the γέρας for mortals, echoing a sentiment repeatedly expressed in Homeric epic.[907] Alfred Heubeck *et al.* comment here that 'his observations on the tribute due to the dead, though fitting in themselves, seem a little out of place on the lips of the one who, of all the company, has least real cause for grief,'[908] but this demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of grief in Homeric epic: it is not that Peisistratus has 'least real cause for grief,' but that, of those present, he manages his grief best. His declaration that he feels no shame in weeping shows that he recognises the importance of mourning and giving the dead their due, but he balances this claim with the equally important claims of the living, found in food and the social rituals surrounding mealtimes. Peisistratus thus teaches Telemachus what he has set out to learn, namely that communication between generations can resolve suffering and restore relationships after loss events in a community.

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[906] *Od.* 4.190-202.
[907] The sentiment is also expressed at *Il.* 16.457; 16.675; 23.9; *Od.* 24.190; 24.296.
[908] Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 205.

5.1.3. Facilitating communication on Ithaca

Telemachus returns to Ithaca with a better understanding of Odysseus' character and the significance of his loss for both Odysseus' companions and for himself. Scholars have often concluded that Telemachus' journey is 'inadequately motivated' and 'not justified by its results,' since the information he collects gives no indication of when Odysseus will return.[909] Sheila Murnaghan offers a different perspective, claiming that the *Telemachy* decreases Odysseus' κλέος by showing the audience a glimpse into a world where some heroes have returned and, although they may have lost companions, society continues on.[910] Whilst I disagree with Murnaghan's claim that Nestor and Menelaus work 'against Odysseus' interests' or that their presence 'compromises Odysseus' glory,' I believe this interpretation of the *Telemachy* contains an important kernel of truth: the *Telemachy* shows that individual losses can be overcome and need not indicate the end of communities. Whilst Ithacan society does not function well without Odysseus and fails to address the Trojan War as a source of suffering, other Achaean communities function well and discuss their losses in the war. Through a series of encounters, Telemachus' journey serves to explore the effects of Odysseus' absence on Telemachus, Ithaca and the other Achaean warriors in anticipation of the hero's traditional return.

Telemachus' return challenges existing Ithacan narratives about Odysseus' loss and turns him into an active agent in narrative building. The suitors, who hold most narrative power on Ithaca,[911] feel threatened by Telemachus' new authority. They claim that he has completed a 'great deed' (μέγα ἔργον) by completing his journey, and recognise that Telemachus has begun to take control of his father's legacy by describing him as 'skilled in counsel and wisdom' (ἐπιστήμων βουλῇ τε νόῳ τε),[912] attributes that are commonly

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[909] Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 53. Conversely, Olson, 1995: 87-9 argues that Telemachus achieves everything he sets out to do, and Rose, 1967 claims that he is successful because he shows psychological development as a result of his journey.
[910] Murnaghan, 2011: 119-20.
[911] See Chapter 4.
[912] *Od.* 16.374-6.

associated with Odysseus. Antinous worries that Telemachus will use his new skills to call another assembly and create a narrative of the suitors' 'evil deeds' (κακὰ ἔργα), including their attempt to murder him.[913] He fears that Telemachus has the power to rewrite the collective narratives about Odysseus, Penelope and the suitors on Ithaca.[914] Such fears show that Telemachus is now seen as an active agent within the community. He is well-positioned to break the silence on Ithaca on matters concerning Odysseus' absence and the Trojan War.

Telemachus' relationship with Penelope also changes as a result of his new knowledge and position. Penelope no longer influences Telemachus' perception of Odysseus and Telemachus no longer supports Penelope's interpretation of events. Even Telemachus' return disrupts Penelope's interpretation of his journey as a repetition of his father's loss. When he left, she said:

> ἢ πρὶν μὲν πόσιν ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσα θυμολέοντα,
> παντοίης ἀρετῇσι κεκασμένον ἐν Δαναοῖσιν,
> ἐσθλόν, τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ᾽ Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος.
> νῦν αὖ παῖδ᾽ ἀγαπητὸν ἀνηρείψαντο θύελλαι
> ἀκλέα ἐκ μεγάρων,

> Formerly, I lost my noble, lion-hearted husband,
> surpassing the Danaans in all manner of excellence,
> a noble man, whose fame is wide through Greece and middle Argos.
> Now the storm has snatched away my dear child
> from the halls without fame,[915]

Penelope initially interprets Telemachus' departure as a repetition of Odysseus' and finds it overwhelming because she assumes that Telemachus will likewise not return.[916] His successful homecoming means that Penelope's viewpoint is no longer tenable either to him or to her. Whilst Telemachus can agree with Penelope's characterisation of Odysseus as a noble, brave and famous warrior, he challenges Penelope's narrative that Odysseus has

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[913] *Od.* 16.374-80.
[914] Telemachus also demonstrates this skill when he challenges violence from the suitors (*Od.* 20.304-19; 344-53) and when he chooses to lose the challenge with the bow (*Od.* 21.125-35).
[915] *Od.* 4.724-28.
[916] Eumaeus, another of Telemachus' caregivers, expresses a similar view in *Od.* 16.23-4.

been 'lost' (ἀπώλεσα). He resolves the fragmentary anecdotes about Odysseus during the period after his 'loss' into one complete narrative that he relates to her.[917] He also brings Theoclymenus to the house, who provides omens suggesting Odysseus' imminent return.[918] Telemachus' narrative does not resolve Penelope's suffering; after hearing the news, she soon returns to being grief-stricken and angry, wishes for death,[919] and finds fault with his new sense of identity.[920] However, it permanently separates Telemachus' perspective on Odysseus' absence from Penelope's sense of loss.

Once he has constructed this narrative, Telemachus turns towards the future, facilitating narrative between other characters. We can compare this to the typical role taken up by members of a younger generation suffering intergenerational trauma, whose main work of recovery is in breaking the 'conspiracy of silence' practices of older generations.[921] After Odysseus reveals his identity to Telemachus, Telemachus facilitates his father's plans, encouraging dialogue between Odysseus and his Ithacan supporters in order to reintegrate Odysseus into the community. When Odysseus outlines his plan to kill the suitors, Telemachus urges him to discover the attitudes of his female servants immediately.[922] During the battle, Telemachus also saves Phemius and Medon from Odysseus' revenge with a subtle reminder of events on Ithaca in Odysseus' absence.[923] Telemachus' intervention provides the opportunity for narrative creation, and narrative competition, to begin between Odysseus and the Ithacan community;[924] Odysseus emphasises the opportunity for dialogue in the order 'say to others that well-doing is much better than ill-doing' (ἀτὰρ εἴπησθα καὶ ἄλλῳ //ὡς κακοεργίης εὐεργεσίη μέγ᾽ ἀμείνων).[925] Finally, Telemachus facilitates the reunion between Odysseus and Penelope. Initially, Penelope is

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[917] At *Od.* 17.108-49.
[918] *Od.* 17.152-61.
[919] *Od.* 18.201-5.
[920] *Od.* 18.215-225.
[921] E.g. Kidron, 2003; Bar-On, 1995: 19-20.
[922] *Od.* 16.316-7.
[923] *Od.* 22.357-8.
[924] For further discussion, see pp. 222-70.
[925] *Od.* 22.373-4.

wary of the news that her husband has returned. When they meet, Odysseus is hesitant about his reception and Penelope is unable to speak.[926] Eventually, Telemachus breaks the silence:

> "μῆτερ ἐμή, δύσμητερ, ἀπηνέα θυμὸν ἔχουσα,
> τίφθ᾽ οὕτω πατρὸς νοσφίζεαι, οὐδὲ παρ᾽ αὐτὸν
> ἑζομένη μύθοισιν ἀνείρεαι οὐδὲ μεταλλᾷς;
> οὐ μέν κ᾽ ἄλλη γ᾽ ὧδε γυνὴ τετληότι θυμῷ
> ἀνδρὸς ἀφεσταίη, ὅς οἱ κακὰ πολλὰ μογήσας
> ἔλθοι ἐεικοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν·

> "My mother, yet no mother, having an ungentle spirit,
> why do you turn away from my father in this way, and not, sitting
> beside him, question him and ask after him with words?
> No other woman with such an enduring heart
> would stand apart from her husband, who, having suffered many evils,
> returned in the twentieth year to his fatherland;[927]

In this passage, Telemachus chides Penelope for her hesitance. Shay emphasises the complications of reconnecting with family members after traumatic experiences.[928] He describes Odysseus' relationship with Penelope as 'rich and humanizing,' arguing that the difficulties the poet portrays in this meeting contribute to his depiction of Odysseus as a realistic man.[929] Telemachus' words remind the audience of the numerous trials each of his parents have each overcome to reach this moment, but they also act as catalysts for dialogue and reconciliation. They reassure Odysseus of Penelope's loyalty during his absence. Then, once Telemachus has spoken, Penelope instantly rejects his concerns, claiming that they know 'other and better signs' (ἀλλήλων καὶ λώιον…σήμαθ᾽) by which they can recognise each other.[930] Her sharp response creates a connection with Odysseus and begins to restore their relationship; Odysseus smiles (μείδησεν) and dismisses Telemachus to talk privately with his wife.[931] Although he does not see events from their perspectives or share their suffering, Telemachus thus expedites the rebuilding of

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[926] *Od.* 23.91-3.
[927] *Od.* 23.97-102.
[928] See Shay, 2002: 152-6.
[929] *Ibid.*: 120.
[930] *Od.* 23.109-10.
[931] *Od.* 23.111-22.

Odysseus' and Penelope's relationship, allowing each character to narrate their experiences of suffering to the other before Odysseus must leave on the journey dictated by Tiresias' prophecy.

Conclusion

The concept of intergenerational trauma thus sheds light on some of the most revealing elements of Telemachus' relationship with Penelope, with Athena and with the Achaeans whom he meets on his journey. The 'conspiracy of silence' concept allows us to consider the Ithacan community from the perspective of the young men represented in the *Odyssey*. As a result of the few opportunities that the community has taken over the past nineteen years to engage in collective discussion about the Trojan War, these men do not subscribe to one interpretation of these events. Telemachus in particular relies on Penelope to understand how to relate to his absent father. Athena's visit expands his sources of knowledge about Odysseus and sets him on a path to new interpretations.

On his journey, Telemachus engages with multiple views of Odysseus as a warrior in the Trojan War. He also comes to understand how Odysseus' disappearance has affected other Achaeans and how Telemachus' life may have been different had he returned. Like Peisistratus, Telemachus finds a place in the wider Achaean community as the son of a prominent Achaean warrior. He learns how to adapt to losses resulting from the Trojan War and how to establish his own identity in relation to that significant event. In doing so, he overcomes the constraints placed on him within the Ithacan community and creates a narrative to challenge the silence surrounding the loss of his father. He returns to Ithaca able to articulate these findings and, no longer preoccupied by Odysseus' absence, becomes an active agent facilitating narrative building on Ithaca.

5.2. Navigating others' suffering: Nausicaa and the Phaeacians

Introduction

In the previous section, I looked at the way in which Telemachus, a character from the generation after the Trojan War, related to his father's absence as a result of his participation in that war. The Trojan War, I argued, came to define the identity of the Achaeans that participated in it and those that came after. In this section, I now turn to another depiction of suffering told through spoken narratives in the *Odyssey*; the Phaeacians' history of their migration to Scheria. Confusion and misunderstanding often arise between Odysseus and the Phaeacians when they interact. I believe that the concept of intergenerational trauma can provide insight into the causes of these misunderstandings. In particular, I suggest that the main barrier to communication between the Phaeacians and Odysseus is that their cultures are defined by different overwhelming events. Among the Phaeacians, Odysseus attempts to narrate his experiences of suffering in the aftermath of the Trojan War, which is the defining Achaean cultural trauma within the epic, for the first time. In turn, they relate his experiences of suffering to their own cultural trauma, the persecution of their ancestors by the Cyclopes and their subsequent migration to Scheria. The different cultural points of reference for suffering mark the Phaeacians as a separate community from the Achaeans, and explain in part why Odysseus cannot stay among them.[932] However, by listening to Odysseus' narrative, the Phaeacians discover enough similarities with their legacy of suffering to feel empathy for Odysseus and to decide to assist him with his return.[933]

By reading this episode in relation to the concept of intergenerational trauma, I aim to reconcile the modern readings that see Odysseus' sojourn on Scheria as a therapeutic

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[932] The Phaeacians are also barely mortal and remaining among them would not constitute a full *nostos* for Odysseus. Clarke, 1967: 54 emphasises the lack of potential for heroic exploits there. Segal, 1962: 26-31 discusses their closeness to the gods as a reason that Odysseus cannot remain among them, although he takes their initial 'removal from the full measure of suffering which Odysseus knows' for granted (26).

[933] Narrative exchange between Odysseus and Eumaeus works on similar principles and many of the points I make in this section are pertinent to their conversation. However, they do not speak across a cultural divide and it is clear, in light of the narrative Odysseus tells here, how he adapts his story to encourage Eumaeus' empathy.

journey and those that detect a more sinister undertone to Phaeacian hospitality.[934] In this section, I first explore how Nausicaa and Alcinous construct Phaeacian identity. These characters' Phaeacian identity is closely linked to their family identity and reflects their connections to the gods. I explore how their perception of their community affects the hospitality they offer to Odysseus when he approaches them as a suppliant. I then turn to the relationship between Odysseus and the Phaeacians. I look at how Odysseus introduces the Trojan War as a measure of suffering into the Phaeacian community and consider how it alters the Phaeacians' perception of their culture. The Phaeacians' history of suffering, I argue, sometimes causes misunderstandings, but ultimately helps them to empathise with Odysseus, making them an eager audience for his account of his suffering. In turn, the Phaeacians become invested in the Trojan War, which brings them closer to the human world, but also ends their way of life.

5.2.1. The construction of Phaeacian identity

In *Odysseus in America*, Shay constructs a picture of the Phaeacians as 'tourists in the landscape of suffering.'[935] Focused as he is on the ways that Odysseus' experiences reflect modern experiences of individual trauma, he does not recognise that the Phaeacian community has its own history of suffering. Unlike the other communities of mortal men depicted in the *Odyssey*, the Phaeacians are not Achaeans. The epic constructs Phaeacian collective identity around several markers. When the Phaeacians are first introduced into the narrative, the narrator provides this information about the community's origin:

> αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη
> βῆ ῥ᾽ ἐς Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν δῆμόν τε πόλιν τε.
> οἳ πρὶν μέν ποτ᾽ ἔναιον ἐν εὐρυχόρῳ Ὑπερείῃ,
> ἀγχοῦ Κυκλώπων ἀνδρῶν ὑπερηνορεόντων,

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[934] Segal, 1962 sees the Phaeacians as 'an essential stepping stone…a symbolic reengagement' (22), which was the prevailing reading of his time: for similar views, see Finley, 1954: 101; Whitman, 1958: 121; Kirk, 1962: 363 and Austin, 1975: 153-62. These recognise, but do not tend to address, the details of Athena's warning about the Phaeacians. Writing against this reading, Rose, 1969 discussed Homeric construction of Phaeacian 'hostility' (392). This has become a highly influential reading; its influence can be seen, for example, in the interpretations offered by Murnaghan, 2011: 102; Reece, 1993: 104-21; and Dougherty, 2001: 122-7. However, Race, 2014: 47-8 provides a good overview of the limitations of such a reading.
[935] Shay, 2002: 16.

οἵ σφεας σινέσκοντο, βίηφι δὲ φέρτεροι ἦσαν.
ἔνθεν ἀναστήσας ἄγε Ναυσίθοος θεοειδής,
εἷσεν δὲ Σχερίῃ, ἑκὰς ἀνδρῶν ἀλφηστάων,
ἀμφὶ δὲ τεῖχος ἔλασσε πόλει καὶ ἐδείματο οἴκους
καὶ νηοὺς ποίησε θεῶν καὶ ἐδάσσατ᾽ ἀρούρας.
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἤδη κηρὶ δαμεὶς Ἄιδόσδε βεβήκει,
Ἀλκίνοος δὲ τότ᾽ ἦρχε, θεῶν ἄπο μήδεα εἰδώς.

                              And Athena
went to the land and city of the Phaeacian men.
They before at one time dwelled in spacious Hyperia,
near the Cyclopes, overbearing men,
who had kept plundering them and were greater in strength.
From there, making them rise, godlike Nausithous led a migration,
and settled them in Scheria, far away from enterprising men,
and he drove a wall around the city and built houses
and made temples for the gods and divided the ploughlands.
But presently he, having been overpowered by fate, went to Hades,
and then Alcinous ruled, being versed in counsel from the gods.[936]

Athena's entry into Scheria resonates with her entry into Ithaca after the first divine

council, which there allows for an overview of the situation in Odysseus' household during

his absence.[937] By repeating this motif, the epic invites comparison between the two places.

In *Odyssey* 6, line 4, the narrator turns to the Phaeacians' history and character. Unlike

Achaean identity, which is rooted in the Trojan War, the Phaeacians construct their identity

around a chain of events in the previous generation, the Cyclopes' attacks on their

community and their subsequent migration to Scheria from Hyperia. The narrator uses

these events to explain the community's location, their mode of living and their choice of

leader. With this portrayal, the incursions and migration take on a status akin to a founding

trauma in the Phaeacian community.[938] Conversely, the Trojan War is not a significant

event for them because their community did not participate in it or suffer as a result of it.

The epic thus uses this introduction both to emphasise that the Phaeacians are not part of

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[936] *Od.* 6.2-12.
[937] Athena's entry: *Od.* 1.102-3.
[938] See p. 234 for 'founding traumas'. Founding traumas become problematic when they become unquestionable as the basis of an identity. The Phaeacians do not question or reinterpret the narrative passed down to them until Odysseus arrives on Scheria.

the post-Trojan War world, and to suggest that they too have traumatic group memories that shape their identity as the Trojan War shapes the Achaeans'.

The epic supplements this perspective on the Phaeacians with a view of Phaeacian collective identity expressed by Nausicaa, the daughter of the Phaeacian king. Like Telemachus, Nausicaa is a young character who grew up in the aftermath of a significant event.[939] She is more removed from the event than he is, having not been born when the migration took place and being part of the second generation to mature after the event. The views that she expresses on events in Phaeacian history are therefore the product of learning rather than experience. When Nausicaa encounters Odysseus, she reprimands her companions for their fear. She says:

> οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ οὗτος ἀνὴρ διερὸς βροτὸς, οὐδὲ γένηται,
> ὅς κεν Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἵκηται
> δηιοτῆτα φέρων· μάλα γὰρ φίλοι ἀθανάτοισιν.
> οἰκέομεν δ᾽ ἀπάνευθε πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ,
> ἔσχατοι, οὐδέ τις ἄμμι βροτῶν ἐπιμίσγεται ἄλλος.

> There is not such a mortal man alive nor could there be one,
> who could come to the land of the Phaeacian men
> bearing hostility; for we are very dear to the immortals.
> And we dwell far away in the much-dashing sea,
> the farthest apart, and no other mortals mix with us.[940]

Nausicaa views the Phaeacians as a blessed people whose safety is assured by their close relationship with the gods and by their remoteness from other mortal societies. The way she describes this is revealing. First, she emphasises the Phaeacians' close relationship with the gods. This is something that the epic also stresses throughout the Phaeacian episode. The narrator describes Alcinous' house in terms similar to those used for the gods' houses, and notes that its gardens and the bronze dogs at its doors are gifts from the

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[939] Readers have always seen connections between Nausicaa and Telemachus due to their similarities in age and social status. In antiquity, this resulted in narrative traditions in which the two characters married; see Belmont, 1967; Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 291. Modern scholars have variously interpreted the two characters as a universal type of the 'aristocratic youth ripening into maturity' (Belmont, 1967: 2) or Nausicaa as a 'stand-in for Telemachos, in the Scherian paradigm of the ideal family' (Austin, 1975: 201). However, scholars have not addressed their similarities in relation to legacies of suffering.
[940] *Od.* 6.201-205.

gods.[941] Alcinous himself remarks that divinities do not normally disguise themselves when they visit Scheria.[942] However, Nausicaa appears to feel that their relationship with the gods does not by itself secure their safety. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that, whilst Alcinous' family are descended from Poseidon, Poseidon has not ensured their safety in the past and threatens their safety in the future.[943] Ultimately, Nausicaa trusts that the Phaeacians' distance from other communities ensures their safety, and this distance results from Nausithous' migration. Thus, Nausicaa's statement outlining her perspective on Phaeacian identity shows how that identity is constructed around fears about invasion inherited from an earlier period in Phaeacian history.

The Phaeacians also construct their identity in opposition to the collective identity of the Cyclopes, who raided them. Phaeacian identity is thus an identity informed by a sense of victimhood, which Sami Adwan and Dan Bar-On define as a 'state of mind that is developed in violent and long conflicts, in which at least one party…reconstructs its identity around its victimization.'[944] As the audience will learn from Odysseus' description of the Cyclopes, their characterising trait is complete disregard for the gods,[945] and particularly for Zeus as protector of suppliants. Indeed, Polyphemus specifies that 'the Cyclopes do not heed aegis-bearing Zeus or any of the blessed gods, since we are better than them by far' (οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν //οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν).[946] Polyphemus' statement here is the only one in which a Cyclops defines an aspect of its collective identity: it thus determines the manner in which the audience interprets the actions of the Cyclopes throughout the episode. In contrast, when Nausicaa receives Odysseus, she states:

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[941] *Od.* 7.47-132. Segal, 1962: 29-33; A. Edwards, 1993: 47-8; and Dougherty, 2001: 87-8 discuss the orchard. M. Edwards, 1987; Beck, 1991; and Reece, 1993: 14-5 discuss the bronze dogs.
[942] *Od.* 7.199-205.
[943] Poseidon did not prevent the attacks from the Cyclopes, who are themselves close to him (*Od.* 7.206), and a prophecy claims he will destroy them (*Od.* 8.564-71). The Phaeacians' descent from Poseidon (*Od.* 7. 56-67) rather than Zeus is another factor that marks them out as different from the Achaeans.
[944] Adwan & Bar-On, 2001: vii. Chaitin, 2008: 38-46 applies this concept to modern case studies.
[945] Although he readily calls upon Poseidon (*Od.* 9.529) as his father.
[946] *Od.* 9.275-6.

ἀλλ᾽ ὅδε τις δύστηνος ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ᾽ ἱκάνει,
τὸν νῦν χρὴ κομέειν· πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες
ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε,

But this is some wretched wanderer come here,
of whom it is now necessary to take care; for all strangers and beggars
are from Zeus,[947]

Although the Phaeacians believe that they have a close relationship with the gods and claim descent from Poseidon, they worship Zeus.[948] Nausicaa also demonstrates respect for the rules of hospitality, a point where religious duty intersects with the treatment of strangers entering a community uninvited. Prominent members of the Phaeacian and the Cyclopean communities thus demonstrate antithetical perspectives on the place of hospitality and the divine in their respective cultures.

However, whilst the Phaeacians welcome strangers, they also show wariness towards them. This wariness is the source of the conflicting interpretations of the Phaeacians in modern literature.[949] In addition to the flight of Nausicaa's attendants upon Odysseus' arrival, the epic makes several further references to the Phaeacians' wary reception of strangers. Athena, for example, covers Odysseus in a 'heavy cloud' (πολλὴν ἠέρα) and 'divine mist' (ἀχλὺν //θεσπεσίην), and warns him not to speak.[950] She says:

ἀλλ᾽ ἴθι σιγῇ τοῖον, ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὁδὸν ἡγεμονεύσω,
μηδέ τιν᾽ ἀνθρώπων προτιόσσεο μηδ᾽ ἐρέεινε.
οὐ γὰρ ξείνους οἵ γε μάλ᾽ ἀνθρώπους ἀνέχονται
οὐδ᾽ ἀγαπαζόμενοι φιλέουσ᾽, ὅς κ᾽ ἄλλοθεν ἔλθῃ.
νηυσὶ θοῇσιν τοί γε πεποιθότες ὠκείῃσι
λαῖτμα μέγ᾽ ἐκπερόωσιν, ἐπεί σφισι δῶκ᾽ ἐνοσίχθων·"

But come so in silence, and I will lead the way,
and do not look at any of the men, nor ask them anything.
For they do not much suffer foreign men,
and they do not love welcoming those who come from another place.
They, trusting in the speed of their swift ships,

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[947] *Od.* 6.206-8.
[948] For the different ways in which the Cyclopes and Phaeacians are close to the gods, see Segal, 1992: 495-7.
[949] Compare Rose's interpretation (1969) of their unfriendly nature or Aronen's (2002: 103) description of them as 'superhuman and overcivilised' with Race's interpretation (2014) of the warm welcome they give Odysseus. For the contradictory nature of Phaeacian character, see also Dougherty, 2001: 103; 122-7.
[950] *Od.* 7.15-7; 39-42.

go out over the great depths, since the Earthshaker granted this to them;[951]

Athena emphasises the Phaeacians' distrust of strangers, reinforcing an earlier impression created by Nausicaa's hesitation over being seen in public with Odysseus and the rebukes she imagines from other Phaeacians based on his unfamiliar appearance.[952] Both speeches present the tension between the Phaeacians' view of themselves as excellent hosts, who can provide convoy to any visitor, and their reluctance to host strangers within their community. The Phaeacian attitude seems targeted at preventing visitors from intruding into the community: it may be that we can read this wariness of strangers as a trait inherited from a time and place where unwanted incursions into the Phaeacian community were more common and their seafaring skill was able to remove them from the threat.[953]

Indeed, the cultural memory of the Phaeacians' encounters with the Cyclopes and their subsequent migration, I argue, lies behind their characteristic wariness. Throughout the Phaeacian episode, the epic emphasises that the point at which strangers enter a community is a dangerous one for that community; and strangers, whether hostile or friendly, have always threatened to bring destruction on the Phaeacians, either through violence or through the demands of hospitality that draw attention from the gods. Phaeacians subscribe to a prophecy that sees the end of their culture and community as a result of Poseidon's wrath:

> ἀλλὰ τόδ᾽ ὥς ποτε πατρὸς ἐγὼν εἰπόντος ἄκουσα
> Ναυσιθόου, ὃς ἔφασκε Ποσειδάων᾽ ἀγάσασθαι
> ἡμῖν, οὕνεκα πομποὶ ἀπήμονές εἰμεν ἁπάντων·
> φῆ ποτὲ Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν ἐυεργέα νῆα
> ἐκ πομπῆς ἀνιοῦσαν ἐν ἠεροειδέι πόντῳ
> ῥαισέμεναι, μέγα δ᾽ ἧμιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψειν.

> Yet this I heard said once upon a time by my father
> Nausithous, who said how Poseidon would yet be angry
> with us, because we are convoy without hurt to all;
> he said that one day, as a well-made ship of Phaeacian men
> comes back from a convoy on the misty face of the water,

[951] *Od.* 7.30-5.
[952] *Od.* 6.258-84.
[953] The Cyclopes notably do not have seafaring skills (*Od.* 9.125-30).

<center>he would wreck it, and pile a great mountain around our city. [954]</center>

Here, Alcinous remembers a prophecy that he received from his father Nausithous, the leader of the migration and the founder of the city on Scheria. In previous chapters, I have shown that Homeric epic uses prophecy as a form of public narrative exploring how past events will have a significant impact on the future.[955] This prophecy picks up many of the themes associated with the Phaeacians' history of suffering. Nausithous, the guide who led them out of Hypereia becomes their guide to the future.[956] Poseidon, strongly connected to the Cyclopes in the *Odyssey* as Polyphemus' protector, becomes the architect of the Phaeacians' future misfortune. The Phaeacians' respect for hospitality becomes the instrument of their final destruction, which seems to have been merely delayed by their migration away from the Cyclopes. The Phaeacians have thus inherited a narrative about future suffering from previous generations who experienced suffering as a result of the incursions of strangers who did not respect the gods or hospitality. As part of the public discourse on Scheria, it sits uneasily with other aspects of Phaeacian identity and creates wariness when the Phaeacians greet strangers for the first time.

The *Odyssey* depicts the tension between Phaeacian piety and hospitality on the one hand and their wariness of strangers on the other when Odysseus appears in Alcinous' halls. Athena's mist allows Odysseus to reach Arete without being challenged, but, when Odysseus' presence is revealed, the company is stunned into a silence that lasts over ten lines of the epic.[957] The Phaeacians' failure to respond to Odysseus' speech and presence demonstrates their surprise at his sudden appearance. The only other welcome that involves a comparable degree of hesitation is at Sparta, where Paris, the last guest known

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[954] *Od.* 8.564-69.

[955] See pp. 220; 228-9.

[956] For an alternative interpretation of Phaeacian 'complacency' in response to the prophecy, see Segal, 1992: 500.

[957] *Od.* 7.144-54. Person, 1995 discusses the meaning of this and other silences in Homeric epic. Arete's position of influence may also be a product of the Phaeacians' insular attitude after the migration (*Od.* 7.56-67). However, the Phaeacians should not be entirely surprised at the presence of a stranger. Some among them remember conveying Rhadamanthys to Euboea (*Od.* 7.321-6), although he is now in the Elysian plain (*Od.* 4.563-4), and either trade or raiding has occurred during Alcinous' lifetime to bring Eurymedusa to Scheria from Apeire (*Od.* 7.8-9).

by the epic tradition to have visited the city, violated the laws of hospitality and abducted Helen.[958] The scene exhibits the tension caused by the decision to accept a stranger as a suppliant when accepting confirms the Phaeacians' view of themselves as a hospitable and pious people, but exposes them to the prophecy's threat of destruction. Ultimately, the Phaeacians act in a way that confirms their sense of collective identity. Echeneus reminds Alcinous of his duties towards a suppliant in Zeus' name and the king becomes an exemplary host.[959] Both the Phaeacians' extreme hospitality and their wariness of strangers can thus be read as a product of a multigenerational legacy of suffering that shapes Phaeacian identity and remains a source of tension within the community.

5.2.2. Odysseus and the Phaeacians: relating to others' suffering

I have argued that the Phaeacians' collective identity, which I have shown to be informed by a sense of victimhood, affects the Phaeacians' attitude towards guests. I now consider how it shapes their response to Odysseus and his suffering. Odysseus suffers many trials on his return from the Trojan War, one of which, according to Shay, is the Phaeacians.[960] In contrast, Race describes Scheria as an 'idealised halfway house' and argues that *Odyssey* 5-12 present Odysseus' rehabilitation, because the Phaeacians provide 'basic physical necessities, socialization, and physical and psychological therapy' for him.[961] He argues that Alcinous and Odysseus 'conduct themselves much like therapist and patient' during this period.[962] Whilst I agree with Race that we can draw on modern insights into trauma and recovery to interpret this episode, I believe that his representation of Alcinous and Scheria is as misleadingly positive as Shay's is negative. The Phaeacians' legacy of suffering, I argue, influences how they relate to Odysseus' presence and his account of his suffering. Narrating for the Phaeacians has therapeutic benefits for Odysseus, as Race argues. Their relationship, however, is better characterised as one between members of two

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[958] *Od.* 4.20-36.
[959] *Od.* 7.159-71.
[960] Shay, 2002: 11-8.
[961] Race, 2014: 47.
[962] *Ibid.*: 48.

suffering groups than one between veteran and civilian, or therapist and patient. The Phaeacians find common ground between their cultural narrative of suffering and Odysseus' story, become invested in the deeds and suffering Odysseus experienced in the Trojan War, and are drawn into the post-Trojan War world.

This process, however, is gradual and in many ways fraught. The first misunderstanding between the two sides arises from their interpretations of Nausicaa's behaviour after Odysseus' supplication. When Arete recognises Odysseus' clothing, Odysseus reveals that he originally supplicated Nausicaa. He compliments Nausicaa's treatment of him, telling her parents:

> τὴν ἱκέτευσ'· ἡ δ᾽ οὔ τι νοήματος ἤμβροτεν ἐσθλοῦ,
> ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἔλποιο νεώτερον ἀντιάσαντα
> ἐρξέμεν· αἰεὶ γάρ τε νεώτεροι ἀφραδέουσιν.

> Her I supplicated; and she did not err in good thought,
> as you would not have cause to hope that a young person,
>   whom one encounters,
> would act, for always the younger people are thoughtless.[963]

Odysseus interprets Nausicaa's hesitation as good judgement and declares that she is not 'thoughtless' (ἀφραδέουσιν) in her reception of strangers. This praise makes the Phaeacian's welcome stand in stark contrast to the other, less well-judged welcomes Odysseus has experienced on his journey when he then describes them over the course of his stay. Odysseus praises a quality of Nausicaa's that he is certain Alcinous will value; most men in Homeric societies value prudence in their daughters and Athena has warned Odysseus that the Phaeacians are particularly wary of strangers.[964] Yet Alcinous finds fault with the degree of hospitality she offered Odysseus, as she did not bring Odysseus to the house herself.[965] As a Phaeacian, Alcinous wants to show a greater degree of hospitality than is practical, given that his unmarried daughter's reputation is at stake. Sensing Alcinous' disapproval, Odysseus resolves the situation. He lies to protect Nausicaa and

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[963] *Od.* 7.292-4.
[964] See Shapiro, 1995 for social norms for unmarried girls in the *Odyssey*.
[965] *Od.* 7.299-301.

adopts responsibility for the precautions taken that suggested any wariness of strangers,[966] leaving Alcinous able to believe that the Phaeacians provided excellent hospitality from the moment Odysseus entered their community.[967] Odysseus thus manages this early moment of miscommunication by assuming responsibility for any behaviour that does not align with Phaeacian cultural values.

Misunderstandings then arise in relation to the Trojan War narratives told on Scheria. The Phaeacians treat the Trojan War as a form of entertainment. They take an outsider's perspective on these songs, which sit readily alongside stories of the gods.[968] Demodocus' first song, requested by Alcinous, describes a time when 'the beginning of evil rolled on, descending on Trojans and on Danaans, through the designs of great Zeus' (τότε γάρ ῥα κυλίνδετο πήματος ἀρχὴ //Τρωσί τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς).[969] Identity markers are prominent in the narrator's summary of this song, but the Phaeacians are notably absent. The phrase 'the best of the Achaeans' (ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν), a term with martial connotations, also finds a place in Demodocus' songs,[970] whilst only the narrator uses the phrase 'the best of the Phaeacians' (Φαιήκων οἱ ἄριστοι).[971] This perhaps plays with the characteristic Phaeacian love of entertainment, since it is used when Phaeacians ask the bard to continue each time he pauses. Their reaction contrasts sharply with Odysseus', who covers his face, weeps and pours libations to the gods as he listens to the events in which he participated.[972] The conflicting values indicated by the phrases 'best of the Achaeans' and 'best of the Phaeacians' point to fundamental differences between the cultures and their perspectives on the Trojan War.

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[966] *Od.* 7.303-7.
[967] As *Od.* 7.310 illustrates.
[968] Many readers have commented that the bardic performances in Homer model how audiences should respond to performances of Homeric epic; see, for example, Ford, 1992: 51-6; Segal, 1994: 114-41; Doherty, 1995b: 89-92. I would argue that the ideal audience to the *Odyssey* is one that views the Trojan War as a significant event in their own history and empathises with the Achaean community. The audience may come to adopt this position over the course of the performance, as the Phaeacians do. Segal, 1962: 27-31 goes some way to making this case, but does not consider why Odysseus' story affects the Phaeacians so greatly.
[969] *Od.* 8.81-2.
[970] *Od.* 8.78. Nagy, 1999 discusses the term 'best of the Achaeans' (32-9) and Demodocus' first song (15-26).
[971] *Od.* 8.91.
[972] *Od.* 8.83-90.

When Alcinous notices Odysseus' reaction, and so realises that miscommunication is occurring, he stops the bard and organises an exhibition of Phaeacian prowess so that Odysseus may better understand their culture. The exhibition, however, brings Phaeacian and Achaean identity into open conflict. Euryalus and Laodamas provoke Odysseus into competing by suggesting that Odysseus is a merchant.[973] Odysseus' physical condition results from the Trojan War and his return, and thus marks him as an Achaean, as he reveals when he wins.[974] Race argues that the 'physical exertion, occasioned by this two-stage provocation, has in fact brought Odysseus out of his despondency (κήδεα) and restored his self-confidence in the public arena.'[975] I agree that the challenge benefits Odysseus, but believe that we should also consider its effect on the Phaeacians. The Phaeacians conduct the games to exhibit their most impressive abilities to Odysseus in order that he may speak about their skills abroad.[976] On his turn, Odysseus throws the discus so far that Athena, who now goes among the Phaeacians in disguise, declares that 'no one of the Phaeacians will come up to this, nor send it farther' (οὔ τις Φαιήκων τόν γ᾿ ἵξεται οὐδ᾿ ὑπερήσει).[977] Instead of competing with the Phaeacians, Odysseus then compares himself with other participants in the Trojan War: he ranks himself highly among the Achaean bowmen and claims to be sure of his success against the Phaeacians in contests other than the footrace.[978] The Phaeacians are again shocked into silence as they are forced to re-evaluate their worldview. Alcinous adjusts his description of Phaeacian prowess from activities including athletic skill (boxing, wrestling, leaping and fast running) to ones where, with the exception of racing, artistic expertise dominates (seamanship, feasting, lyre-playing, dancing).[979] With Odysseus' visit, the Trojan War begins to take on significance for the Phaeacian community. Through this contest, Trojan

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[973] *Od.* 8.160-4.
[974] *Od.* 8.214-33.
[975] Race, 2014: 53.
[976] *Od.* 8.100-104.
[977] *Od.* 8.198. That Athena adopts a disguise among the Phaeacians after Odysseus enters their community is significant. It suggests that they are moving away from the gods and becoming closer to mortal communities.
[978] *Od.* 8.214-33.
[979] *Od.* 8.246-54.

War hierarchies become the standard measure of skill in any activity and the Phaeacian community are forced to modify their perception of their strengths as a result.

As Odysseus and the Phaeacians return to feasting, there is a significant shift in attitudes towards narratives about the Trojan War. Odysseus takes charge, requesting a third song from Demodocus and specifying the subject matter.[980] He also changes the way in which these narratives are received, saying to Demodocus:

> ἢ σέ γε Μοῦσ᾽ ἐδίδαξε, Διὸς πάϊς, ἢ σέ γ᾽ Ἀπόλλων.
> λίην γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἶτον ἀείδεις,
> ὅσσ᾽ ἔρξαν τ᾽ ἔπαθόν τε καὶ ὅσσ᾽ ἐμόγησαν Ἀχαιοί,
> ὥς τέ που ἢ αὐτὸς παρεὼν ἢ ἄλλου ἀκούσας.

> Surely either the Muse taught you, daughter of Zeus, or even Apollo.
> For you sing in very good order the fate of the Achaeans,
> whatever the Achaeans did and suffered, and whatever they endured,
> as though you had been there yourself or heard it from another who was.[981]

Odysseus claims to admire the bard for his ability to imitate an eyewitness account; he prizes first-hand knowledge and understanding of suffering as well as narratives about great deeds. He also emphasises the bard's ability to convey an Achaean perspective on events. By highlighting these qualities, Odysseus repositions the audience from disinterested spectator to empathetic witness. Through the bard's 'inspired song' (θέσπιν ἀοιδήν),[982] the Phaeacians transcend their own cultural perspective and begin to demonstrate an empathetic understanding of Achaean suffering in the Trojan War.

This third song provokes compassionate communication between Odysseus and the Phaeacians. Alcinous combines enquiries about Odysseus' history with further information about the Phaeacians' suffering.[983] Their equal exchange seems more like group therapy work than conversation between patient and therapist.[984] In telling Odysseus about Nausithous' prophecy, Alcinous explains some of the Phaeacians' strange attitude towards

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[980] *Od.* 8.474-495.
[981] *Od.* 8.488-91.
[982] *Od.* 8.498.
[983] *Od.* 8.555-70.
[984] *Contra* Race, 2014: 47. Sipprelle, 1992: 24-7 examines the differences between these approaches.

visitors and demonstrates his genuine commitment to assisting Odysseus despite the danger it holds. Alcinous also demonstrates his respect for hospitality bonds by claiming that a sensible man treats a suppliant like a brother.[985] Alcinous employs these strategies in an attempt to empathise with Odysseus' suffering, although he does not fully understand it, as this passage suggests:

> εἰπὲ δ᾽ ὅ τι κλαίεις καὶ ὀδύρεαι ἔνδοθι θυμῷ
> Ἀργείων Δαναῶν ἠδ᾽ Ἰλίου οἶτον ἀκούων.
> τὸν δὲ θεοὶ μὲν τεῦξαν, ἐπεκλώσαντο δ᾽ ὄλεθρον
> ἀνθρώποις, ἵνα ᾖσι καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν ἀοιδή.
> ἦ τίς τοι καὶ πηὸς ἀπέφθιτο Ἰλιόθι πρὸ,
> ἐσθλὸς ἐών, γαμβρὸς ἢ πενθερός; οἵ τε μάλιστα
> κήδιστοι τελέθουσι μεθ᾽ αἷμά τε καὶ γένος αὐτῶν,
> ἦ τίς που καὶ ἑταῖρος ἀνὴρ κεχαρισμένα εἰδώς,
> ἐσθλός; ἐπεὶ οὐ μέν τι κασιγνήτοιο χερείων
> γίνεται, ὅς κεν ἑταῖρος ἐὼν πεπνυμένα εἰδῇ."

> And say why you cry and mourn within your heart
> hearing the fate of the Argive Danaans and of Ilios.
> The gods caused it, and spun destruction for
> men, so that it would be a song for those to come.
> Did perhaps some of your kinsman perish before Troy,
> being a good man, a wife's father or brother? They are quite nearest
> after you own blood and kin,
> or perhaps even some companion, a man knowing your favour,
> a good man? Since not at all inferior to a brother
> is a companion who knows wise things.[986]

In lines 579-80, Alcinous acknowledges that the Trojan War will be a significant event for mortals in the future, an interpretation which Helen introduces in the *Iliad*.[987] However, Alcinous also recognises that the Trojan War holds personal significance for Odysseus, which goes beyond familiarity with rumour or song. He invites Odysseus to speak about his personal experiences with his observation that Odysseus' grief is reminiscent of a person's pain when a male relative dies. In turn, Alcinous' phrasing reminds the audience of the passage on Phaeacian history, which shows that all of Alcinous' male relatives, save his sons, are dead. This speech should therefore not be interpreted as showing Alcinous'

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[985] *Od.* 8.546-7.
[986] *Od.* 8.577-86. See Clader, 1976: 16; Graziosi & Haubold, 2010: 180 for Helen's remark.
[987] *Il.* 6.357-8.

lack of empathy.[988] Instead, it demonstrates his awareness that Odysseus is more involved in the Trojan War than his hosts, who have previously approached the topic as outsiders, can fully understand and shows that Alcinous makes a genuine attempt to approach the topic with sympathy by applying his own perspective on suffering to Odysseus' case.

As a result of the Phaeacians' interest in his story, Odysseus reveals his identity and gives an account of his suffering during his return. The Phaeacians now respond empathetically to his pain. When Odysseus pauses his story they once more respond with silence, but this time the silence takes on a notably different quality:

> ὣς ἔφαθ᾽· οἱ δ᾽ ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ·
> κηληθμῷ δ᾽ ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα.

> Thus he spoke, and they all were stricken into silence,
> spell-bound throughout the shadowy halls.[989]

Odysseus' narrative enchants his Phaeacian audience and silence becomes a mark of successful communication between the two parties. Although they only hear about the Trojan War second-hand, the Phaeacians recognise the truth in Odysseus' presentation of his suffering; Alcinous emphasises the difference in quality between Odysseus' account and stories from 'men devising lies from which no one may see anything' (ἀνθρώπους, //ψεύδεά τ᾽ ἀρτύνοντας, ὅθεν κέ τις οὐδὲ ἴδοιτο).[990] The Phaeacians show their investment in Odysseus' account by asking about the fates of the other Trojan War heroes,[991] and by providing Odysseus with rich gifts and safe passage home in reward for his storytelling.[992] In this way, Odysseus uses the narrative of his suffering to turn the Phaeacians from spectators into active participants in his return.

The Phaeacians' investment in the Trojan War story has painful consequences for them. Poseidon claims that the Phaeacians dishonour him by facilitating Odysseus' homecoming

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[988] As, for example, Pucci, 1987: 221 interprets it.
[989] *Od.* 11.333-4; *Od.* 13.1-2 has the same wording, although van Thiel punctuates differently there.
[990] *Od.* 11.365-6.
[991] *Od.* 11.371-6.
[992] *Od.* 11.350-3; 13.4-15.

and he determines to punish them in line with Nausithous' prophecy.[993] Heubeck *et al.* suggest that the 'point' of this prophecy may have been 'to explain why Scheria was unknown,' by explaining that Poseidon had cut it off from the sea.[994] However, the prophecy's fulfilment also has another function. It resolves the conflict between the two overwhelming events that shape Achaean and Phaeacian identities. By participating in Odysseus' return from Troy, the Phaeacians accept the significance of an event outside their cultural boundaries. As a result, Phaeacian identity changes in a way that brings them nearer to the mortal world. The Phaeacians' relationship with the gods becomes more distant and they determine to stop providing hospitality to strangers in an attempt to stave off complete destruction. As the epic resumes the thread of Odysseus' return, the Phaeacians are left praying around Poseidon's altar. Unlike Odysseus, they are never afforded the opportunity to narrate their suffering and are instead left frozen in the midst of another overwhelming moment.[995] The Phaeacians' acceptance of the Trojan War as a significant event disrupts their multigenerational legacy of suffering, bringing the fulfilment of the prophecy passed down from their forbearers. Whether or not Poseidon completes all aspects of Nausithous' prophecy, Phaeacian culture as Odysseus found it does not survive the transition into a post-Trojan War world.

Conclusion

As with the portrayal of Telemachus on Ithaca, the epic's representation of Phaeacian society shows that painful events in the past continue to hold significance for future generations and shape how they think about their identity. The Phaeacians have a narrative of collective trauma, in which they are the victims of Cyclopean attacks. This collective narrative is complicated by the Phaeacians' family connection to their attackers through Poseidon, whom they cannot rely on for protection. From this narrative come the Homeric

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[993] *Od.* 13.128-38. Friedrich, 1989: 398 and Segal, 1992: 517 offer interpretations of how the prophecy is fulfilled.
[994] Heubeck *et al.*, 1988: 384.
[995] *Od.* 13.159-87.

characteristics of Phaeacian identity, which is most notably marked by a tension between their excessive wariness of strangers and their need to present themselves as good hosts. In addition, there is conflict between their view of themselves as having a close relationship with the gods and the prophecy that warns of destruction from Poseidon. Odysseus' presence among the Phaeacians exposes the conflicts between different elements of Phaeacian collective identity and precipitates change.

As the Phaeacians have their own history of suffering, the relationship between Odysseus and Alcinous on Scheria is more equal than previous scholarship has suggested. Their interactions suggest that, if we must look for a direct modern parallel, we would do better to look towards group therapy sessions rather than the relationship between therapist and patient in order to model the dynamics of these episodes. It is more productive, however, to keep our focus on the histories of suffering and the interactions between characters with which the text presents us. Misunderstandings arise between Odysseus and the Phaeacians because they have different personal and cultural expectations of what suffering is, stemming from their different reference points for overwhelming events. However, Odysseus' Phaeacian hosts slowly align their views more closely with those of Odysseus and of the epic. During time spent engaging in feasts, contests and storytelling with Odysseus, the Phaeacians recognise the significance of the Trojan War and come to empathise with Odysseus' suffering. In turn, Odysseus hears about Phaeacian experiences of suffering and narrates his own story, a process which, as I have discussed in Chapter 3, helps him to rebuild his worldview. Odysseus' presence draws the Phaeacians into the post-Trojan War world. Since Phaeacian identity is built on an earlier cultural experience of suffering, this proves problematic for the Phaeacian community. The conflict between old and new plays out in the story of Poseidon's wrath: the fulfilment of Nausithous' prophecy marks the end of an era in Phaeacian culture.

Conclusion: Findings and Directions for Future Research

i. Findings

In my thesis, I set out to consider what twenty-first century trauma studies can contribute to the interpretation of early Greek hexameter poetry. To answer this question required me to break down the modern concept of trauma into two component elements: trauma as the relationship between an overwhelming event and an emotional response; and trauma as the effect of an overwhelming event on an individual's sense of identity. I therefore organised my thesis into two parts, each of which addressed one of these elements of trauma. Part I asked whether the language of Greek epic provided evidence of a relationship between overwhelming events and emotional responses. In particular, it addressed the following questions: Does Greek epic have a concept of an overwhelming event? What emotional responses do overwhelming events provoke? Under what circumstances and for what purposes do characters talk about overwhelming events? And what response to overwhelming events does epic advocate? Part II of my thesis took one text, the *Odyssey*, as a case study and asked whether it portrayed characters' identities as being significantly affected by their experiences of overwhelming events. I viewed identity in the *Odyssey* as consisting of individual, collective and intergenerational aspects and allocated a chapter to the consideration of each. Each of these chapters addressed the following questions: What types of overwhelming event do Odyssean characters experience? How do these overwhelming events impact a character's sense of identity in the *Odyssey*? And how do characters recover from overwhelming events and adapt to changes in their worldview? Throughout my thesis, I argued that the Homeric epics show a strong tendency to identify overwhelming events in their portrayal of suffering, and that characters that experience overwhelming events in the *Odyssey* often reshape their identity in response to them.

The introduction to my thesis positioned my research in relation to both trauma studies in general and more specifically to current debates about trauma in classics, two areas which

are not currently aligned as closely as they might be. I laid out how the field of trauma studies has developed since early medical concepts of trauma were first defined in the late nineteenth century. I highlighted Young's work on the development of the concept of trauma to support my position that responses to overwhelming events need to be seen in their historical and cultural context, a position that is shared by the majority of scholars working in trauma studies. By bringing this evidence from trauma studies to bear on current debates about the universality of trauma in classics, I established that PTSD is not a universal phenomenon and that the PTSD diagnosis cannot be applied to individuals in the ancient world in any meaningful way. By providing an overview of how twenty and twenty-first century media and scholarship have responded to the same concepts of trauma, I also addressed the question of why strategies developed to read modern trauma literature cannot be applied directly to ancient texts. Instead, I recommended that classical scholars work with a broad definition of trauma that views it as an extreme response to an overwhelming event; and that they consider whether elements of this concept can be found in ancient texts. This position, I have argued, prevents us from assuming that ancient experiences of, or attitudes towards, events, emotions, memory or identity mirror twenty-first century experiences or attitudes while preserving what can be usefully transferred from modern trauma studies to other domains of research.

Part I began with an analysis of key concepts associated with suffering in the language of epic hexameter poetry. This analysis proves that Homeric poetry possesses the conceptual apparatus, as well as displaying the narrative focus, to justify meaningful research into trauma in the Homeric world. Chapter 1 (on ἄλγος and πῆμα) found evidence that epic distinguishes events that cause extreme suffering from ordinary events, while Chapter 2 found evidence that epic has a language to describe the emotional responses to these events (ἄχος and πένθος). Moreover, the prevalence of relevant concepts in character speech confirms that events that cause suffering, and characters' responses to these events, are

topics of interest to the composers of epic hexameter poetry. What is particularly striking about the language of epic poetry, however, is that it has multiple words to differentiate between different types of overwhelming event, reflecting the different ways in which characters come to perceive their experiences and their aftermath. I also found that overwhelming events in epic poetry give rise to a range of emotional responses. The emotional response that an event is said to inspire (either by the narrator or by a character in the text) tends to depend on whether the person affected had the opportunity to take action in their defence at the time of the event, and (especially in the case of character speech) on the context and purpose of any claims about suffering. My analysis thus showed that epic poetry uses a complex network of language to describe the relationship between events and emotional responses. This language is specifically adapted to meet the needs of poets describing responses to overwhelming events on and away from the battlefield and may thus be studied in light of twenty-first century concepts of trauma – despite the fact that it does not easily map onto those concepts.

Chapter 2 concluded with an analysis of the verbs τλάω and τολμάω, both meaning 'I endure.' I found that characters direct others to endure when they experience overwhelming events or speak about their suffering. Characters also tell themselves to endure, engaging in conversation with their θυμός in order to bolster their resolve. Through these usages, the Homeric epics promote an attitude of endurance in response to overwhelming events and present endurance as a laudable personal characteristic. This attitude, I noted, is notably different from a display of resilience, which is the comparable response to trauma in the twenty-first century. Although resilience is essentially defined as the ability to withstand stress, it is often imagined as an inherent property or a particular worldview that cannot be shattered by traumatic experiences. Endurance in epic poetry, on the other hand, is a challenging characteristic to exhibit, as evidenced by the inner debates it provokes. It can require characters to experience a great deal of pain whilst the

overwhelming event takes place and it does not preclude a painful emotional response after the event. The prominence of endurance as a noble quality, particularly in the *Odyssey*, was an important part of my analysis, as it showed that, in Homeric society, extreme suffering generally contributes to a character's good reputation and so may not always provoke a negative emotional reaction in the text.

Several additional themes emerged from my analysis in Part I, the most important of which was the ways in which suffering impacted on identity. Medical approaches to trauma aim to trace traumatisation back to a single traumatic event, often seeing it as a single moment in which traumatisation occurred. This narrative plays a significant role in securing a diagnosis and in enabling recovery. Whilst characters in Homeric epic interpret their suffering in a context where a medical diagnosis is neither sought nor offered, spoken narrative still plays an important role in processing experiences of acute suffering in Homeric epic. Characters sometimes identify multiple events as the cause of their suffering, and can see their emotions as a cumulative response to the events they have experienced. The most important question for Homeric characters when they determine the significance of their suffering is whether their experiences fall within the regular range of suffering or whether they have an exceptional quality. As my analysis in Part I showed, characters make claims about their exceptional suffering or exceptional endurance in Homeric epic partly because recognition of these qualities by others increases their renown. Making claims about events or emotional responses may also help characters to process the meaning or significance of an event by, for example, seeing divine motivation behind an event or identifying another common cause behind their experiences. Spoken claims about suffering therefore, I argued, help characters to restructure their memories of suffering in a more orderly way and, in allowing them to reflect on the significance of their suffering, enable their experiences of suffering to change their sense of identity without causing major disruption or breakdown.

Part II took up the theme of how suffering alters identity in epic poetry. Limiting discussion to the *Odyssey*, it explored the various aspects of identity with which the Homeric poet engages. I departed from previous scholarship by suggesting that, as the PTSD diagnosis aims to identify symptoms of trauma, it is not the most relevant concept to employ when considering epic poetry. Instead, I focused on the role that spoken narratives about overwhelming events play in shaping identity in the *Odyssey*. I started by identifying overwhelming events from the perspective of the characters involved: if a character claims that an event is overwhelming, using the language that I analysed in the previous part of my thesis, I treated it as an overwhelming event. I then looked for emotional responses associated with the event, analysed practices that promoted recovery, and considered the ways in which experiences of suffering shaped characters' identities in its aftermath. This included paying careful attention to culturally and historically specific aspects of Homeric society: I looked at the differences between male and female roles in society (Chapter 3); the ways in which Homeric communities act in public (Chapter 4); and the important roles that story-telling plays in Homeric societies (Chapter 5). Throughout the three chapters that make up Part II, I argued that suffering shapes all aspects of identity in the *Odyssey*; and that it does so through the narratives that characters produce after the event to determine their meaning and significance.

Chapter 3 established the ways in which suffering affects individual identity in the *Odyssey*. My discussion of individual suffering engaged with Janoff-Bulman's model of trauma as a shattering of assumptions. Homeric characters, I argued, experience suffering as the shattering of a worldview that requires reconstruction. In approaching this topic, I took into consideration feminist approaches to trauma studies, which show that men and women often experience different types of traumatic event. The first section of Chapter 3 considered a specifically male perspective on overwhelming events and took Odysseus as its focus. The *Odyssey* depicts Odysseus experiencing several overwhelming events and

also sees him revisit his actions in the Trojan War. I argued that elements of the Trojan War and Odysseus' lengthy return journey both shatter Odysseus' previously held assumptions about war and the possibility of return. I noted that Odysseus suffers over a long period of time in the *Odyssey*. His experience of prolonged suffering is unlike anything in the *Iliad*, where individuals typically respond to overwhelming events with direct action and do not, albeit with some notable exceptions, tend to show prolonged suffering. I considered how Odysseus attempts to use narrative to rebuild his worldview and re-establish his identity and noted that his delayed return prevented him from finding an empathetic audience. I also explored how he mapped his experiences of suffering onto a sense of closeness or separation from Athena. My approach in this section offered an alternative to Shay's interpretation of Odysseus' behaviour in the *Odyssey*: it allowed me to explore the culturally and historically specific elements of Odysseus' emotional responses to overwhelming events, and did not rely on his experiences being treated as analogy for twenty-first century experiences.

In the second section of Chapter 3, I explored specifically female responses to overwhelming events in the *Odyssey*, a topic which has received little attention outside its immediate relation to combat. Over the last few decades, trauma literature has recognised that female experiences of trauma do not necessarily follow the sort of combat model that PTSD was originally designed to diagnose, because women's experiences of trauma often occur in different environments and receive less recognition from their communities. I looked at how male and female experiences in the Homeric world reflected this divide, focusing on Penelope, whom the epic portrays in many ways as Odysseus' female counterpart. My analysis showed that female characters in epic have the same range of emotional responses to overwhelming events as male characters. However, as I argued in this chapter, their opportunities to respond to overwhelming events with either direct action or spoken narratives are limited, because they are generally confined to domestic settings.

This means also that women cannot travel from the site of their overwhelming experience and have constraints on their responses imposed by the expectations of other community members that do not share their experiences. These constraints force women to turn to other means of expressing their responses to suffering and of signalling how it affects their identity. My research in this area drew on, and further developed, work that other scholars have done on the ways in which female voices are represented in epic poetry. By recognising that female characters experience overwhelming events that are not always directly related to (or a reflection of) combat, I suggested new ways in which the *Odyssey* explores the theme of suffering.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I considered the collective and generational aspects of an individual's identity that psychotherapeutic approaches can only address in individuals, but that the Homeric epics often describe in terms of wider communities. In Chapter 4, I began by acknowledging the many similarities between the Homeric portrayal of collective identity and the ways in which collective identity works within Alexander's concept of cultural trauma. In both, characters attribute meaning and significance to events by creating narratives in communities. These narratives describe the ways in which an overwhelming event has altered a group's sense of collective identity. Collective narrative creation allows multiple voices to contribute. Because there are multiple perspectives on the event and multiple understandings of the collective identity at play in these situations, communities undergo a more complex process of negotiation than do individual characters to determine that an event is overwhelming and to decide upon its meaning and significance to the group. In this section, I focused on the case of the Ithacan assembly. The first assembly, I argued, depicts Telemachus' unsuccessful attempt to establish his personal suffering as a cultural trauma. The second assembly, in contrast, depicts Eupeithes' successful attempt to argue that the suitors' massacre holds significance for the entire Ithacan community. This discussion showed that the theme of suffering takes on new forms as the *Odyssey*

progresses. In doing so, it offered a specific example of how emerging ideas from the field of trauma studies can aid interpretation of ancient epic.

Building on this work on both individual and collective responses to overwhelming events, Chapter 5 finally considered the ways in which overwhelming events shape generational aspects of identity in the Homeric world. The *Odyssey*, I argued, depicts both individuals and communities as forming their own relationships with suffering undergone by members of a previous generation. These characters see events that happened to other people as shaping their own identity in significant ways. In my consideration of multigenerational legacies of suffering, I found LaCapra's distinction between a 'loss' and an 'absence' and Danieli's work on intergenerational trauma useful for determining how different generations respond to the same event. The first section of Chapter 5 dealt with Telemachus' response to Odysseus' absence. Building on my work on collective trauma in Chapter 4, I noted that Ithacan society does not engage in public discussion about the lost members of their community for the majority of the epic. The *Odyssey*, I argued, expands its exploration of the ways in which suffering can affect identity by showing Telemachus resist the public silence on Ithaca, travel to find news of his father and return to facilitate narrative on Ithaca with his personal interpretation of the meaning and significance of Odysseus' absence. My interpretation of the *Telemachy* thus offered an alternative to standard readings of it as a coming-of-age narrative. The second section in Chapter 5 considered Phaeacian culture as informed by the Cyclopes' raids and Nausithous' migration in the previous generation, which I argued were cast as a cultural trauma in Phaeacian narratives about the past. These narratives, I contended, accounted for some of the contradictions that the epic portrayed in Phaeacian society, notably between hostility to strangers and a strong commitment to proper ξενίη. The different cultural traumas in Achaean and Phaeacian society also, I suggested, explain the miscommunications that occur between Odysseus and the Phaeacians before the Phaeacians have come to accept the

Trojan War as a significant cultural reference point for themselves. My discussions of Telemachus and of the Phaeacians provide a more substantial foundation than currently exists for claims that ancient texts were interested in portraying the effects of suffering on multiple generations. In addition, they broaden our understanding of how the aftermath of suffering is represented in the *Odyssey* and shows how the theme of suffering in the epic extends beyond the individual characters that experience overwhelming events. Taken together, the approaches I have adopted in Part II show that it is important to consider all aspects of suffering in order to develop a fuller understanding of its impact as described in the text.

ii. Directions for future research

This thesis has explored the relationships between overwhelming event and emotional response, and between suffering and identity in the Homeric epics. In doing so, it has criticised recent attempts to read trauma into ancient texts. It has looked at some of the concepts and structures within the texts that make such readings appear plausible to twenty-first century readers and contextualised these with reference to the history of trauma studies, the rise of the trauma novel, and the turn of the twenty-first century as a time that defines itself with reference to traumatic experience. However, I have also considered the multiple pitfalls associated with mapping these concepts taken from other fields directly onto ancient texts. As I conclude, I consider the implications of my argument for future research.

The approach I have taken recognises the value of using the concept of trauma in the act of reception. On one level, we have no choice but to read ancient epic as twenty-first century readers, readers who have become familiar with trauma as a way to interpret and respond to devastating events. Being able to interpret narratives about the Trojan War within a similar framework ensures the texts remain accessible to a wide audience. Yet when we choose to interpret the texts as classicists, we must remain aware of the distinction between

what we as readers bring to texts in the twenty-first century and how earlier audiences would have felt it appropriate to interpret the same narratives. This consideration brings me to the limitations of the arguments I have proposed.

First and foremost, it is important to note that the work that I have begun here is specific to the language of early Greek hexameter poetry. I would not assume that the concepts I have analysed remained the same in any other historical period or culture. Thus, any conceptual apparatus that might be identified in Latin or Akkadian literature, for example, will have its own dynamic and cannot be assumed to reflect the same relationship between overwhelming event and emotional response. Similarly, my analysis cannot be used to argue that the relationship between overwhelming event and emotional response is represented in the same way in other texts and genres of ancient *Greek* literature. I emphasise these points because classicists and psychologists have shown a tendency to decontextualize primary sources in existing work on trauma in order to emphasise similarities with the modern PTSD diagnosis. Any work on representations of trauma and suffering in written evidence needs to take into account the role that these representations play within their context. In order to improve our understanding of how overwhelming events are portrayed in texts throughout the ancient world, detailed work such as I have begun here would need to be completed on a range of other texts from different periods and genres. In particular, Roman and Near Eastern texts would initially need to be considered separately, because of the differences in language and culture. Since trauma is never understood and identified as a named concept in the ancient world, close textual study must be at the root of all further investigation.

From such study, it should be possible to identify texts or periods with a particular interest in the relationship between overwhelming events and emotional responses. That would allow us to create a history of responses to overwhelming events in the ancient world and consider whether certain periods or contexts prompted influential formulations of, or

revisions to, the problem of overwhelming event and emotional response, just as the modern concept of trauma has found itself under constant revision in recent decades. In particular, I believe it would be worthwhile to examine whether exceptional suffering retains its close links with religious belief throughout the ancient world, and consider competing models in which the gods are absent, if such models exist. Modern literature on trauma suggests that strong religious faith reduces the impact of overwhelming events, if faith remains intact, but exacerbates the effects if events shatter this worldview. It would be interesting to see whether this is true in the ancient world; texts such as *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and *The Babylonian Theodicy* might prove fruitful avenues for further study.[996] In the same vein, research informed by the concept of resilience might produce some interesting results. I have had little space to explore the relationship between Homeric endurance and twenty-first century resilience in this thesis, but future research could consider other ancient and modern texts that portray endurance as a positive response to suffering and investigate whether perspectives on endurance change as contexts of suffering change. This sort of research would provide the contextualising material that work on trauma in the ancient world is currently lacking.

When further progress has been made in contextualising the perceived relationships between overwhelming events and emotional responses in the ancient world, it should eventually be possible to consider the behavioural symptoms associated with responses to overwhelming events. Proper contextualisation should guard against automatically interpreting phenomena as evidence of trauma simply because they are considered possible symptoms of trauma in the twenty-first century. If such study were to prove successful, it would be interesting to consider the range of behavioural responses as well as emotional responses to overwhelming events in different periods and look at their consistency over

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[996] For example, personal gods play a significant role in suffering and punishment in Mesopotamian literature (see Jacobsen, 1976: 19-64; van der Toorn, 1985: 97), and it would likely be profitable to explore how this affects the presentation of extreme responses to overwhelming events in these texts. Oshima, 2014 provides a critical edition and commentary on *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and *The Babylonian Theodicy*; and his introduction includes a useful overview of attitudes to suffering and divine punishment in these poems (73-7).

time and across cultures. It might also be worth considering whether literary depictions of suffering characters influence historical behaviour of suffering people (in as much as this can be reconstructed) and *vice versa*. Any further debate on whether trauma has any universal applicability could then be supported by evidence from the ancient world: such evidence may be useful to the psychiatric community, as it could nuance the observation of modern symptoms that are being associated with traumatisation, and might suggest new forms of treatment.

An alternative line of enquiry arises from my specific focus on a text concerned with the aftermath of the Trojan War. In the *Odyssey*, overwhelming events occur mostly in connection with the Trojan War, although combat itself is rarely represented as an overwhelming event. Study of the *Iliad*, which does represent a range of battlefield experiences, would therefore be a natural next stage for research into the impact that suffering has on the identities of Homeric characters. Such research might contribute to the ongoing debate to what extent ancient experiences of battle differ from experiences of battle since the beginning of the twentieth century, and whether battlefield traumatisation can take very different forms, or, in the case of ancient warfare, may not occur at all. From the conceptual work I have done in this thesis, it seems that it is a character's perception of loss events rather than battlefield conditions that prompts extended suffering in the *Iliad*. As a result, I believe there is much scope for productive work on individual, collective and even multigenerational responses to overwhelming events in the *Iliad*.

In the wake of the Homeric epics, the Trojan War becomes an important marker of both Greek and Roman identity. Later literature often presents the Trojans as the victims rather than the perpetrators of the Trojan War; Euripides' *Trojan Women*, for example, encourages empathy for the female survivors of Troy, whilst Virgil's *Aeneid* presents the siege as a significant event prefiguring the foundation of the Roman Empire. I believe research from a diachronic perspective into the ways in which representations of suffering

associated with the Trojan War shift and develop would be fruitful: as well as passing through different genres of literature, each representation has a different historical and cultural context to shape the representations of overwhelming events and emotional responses. This approach would be particularly valuable, considering that some of these works have already been the subject of readings informed by the PTSD diagnosis. Research in this area could also build on the case I have proposed here for the Trojan War as a founding trauma. At the same time, the theme of the Trojan War is ideally suited to establish a coherent and continuous diachronic narrative on trauma and suffering in the ancient world, bringing together insights from many of the existing studies into trauma and the ancient world.

Finally, the Trojan War continues to act as a source of inspiration for new texts and performances. It is clear that some psychologists still look to classics, and Greek myth in particular, when they trace the history of psychological states and behavioural patterns. As an offshoot of this relationship, organisations are making claims about the value of ancient texts as vehicles for therapy or healing. With the rise in public awareness of trauma, some retellings of Trojan War stories have set out to find therapeutic benefits in ancient narratives. In this thesis, I have not been able to consider in detail the implications of such approaches either for participants or for our understandings of the ancient texts. My analysis has shown that there is some basis for such interpretations in some texts: the *Odyssey,* for example, explores different ways of responding to suffering after overwhelming events. What my research highlights, however, is that modern therapeutic interpretations rely strongly on the distance between the ancient world and the twenty-first century for their efficacy, and often draw on the prestige associated with such texts to give audiences both reason and license to come together and discuss issues that are otherwise rarely spoken about in public. Given this new trend in the interpretation of ancient literature, it may be interesting to consider how the reception and interpretations of Greek

myth has changed as psychological approaches have developed over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Trauma, I have argued, provides a theoretically rich and hermeneutically valuable framework for analysing ancient texts in the twenty-first century. At a basic level, the historical development of trauma theory has shaped how twenty-first century readers interpret responses to suffering – which means it is more necessary than ever before to understand how concepts need to be reshaped before they can be applied to ancient texts. At the same time, I have shown that the *Odyssey* responds well to a reading informed by ideas associated with trauma studies. We cannot argue that the concept of trauma is universal or retrospectively diagnose trauma in ancient texts or characters, but discussion of specific responses to overwhelming events as represented in the ancient texts benefit from being contextualised within modern research into trauma. When viewed in this light, trauma studies still has much to offer to the study of the ancient world.

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