

Framing Achilles:  
Narrative Space in the *Iliad*



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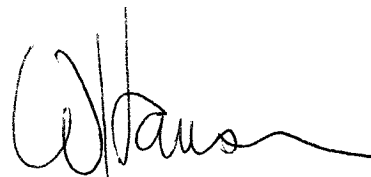
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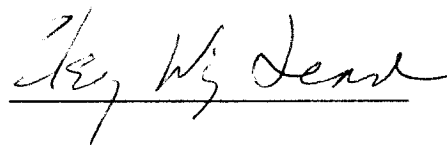
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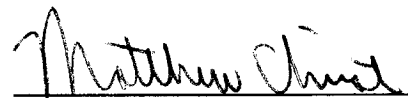


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Dedicated to my mom and dad,  
who have always been there for me,  
through thick and thin.

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Thank you Mom and Dad and the rest of my family. Although you are too numerous to mention here by name, your love and friendship over the years have meant more to me than you’ll ever know. I would like to offer a special prayer, however, for Ma Bea and Poppy, Nana Sue and Grandpa Jack, and Aunt Suzin and Cousin Jackie Sue.

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## Abstract

In his *Poetics*, the cornerstone of modern narratology, Aristotle establishes plot as the most, and spectacle as the least, important of the six elements of tragedy. This initiates a bias for time and against space that continues to shape the narratological agenda to the present day. In the only book-length treatment of narrative space in Homer to date, Brigitte Hellwig reduces the wealth of spatial detail in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to a finite number of places and charts their trajectory throughout each respective epic. As such, she applies to space the structuralist methodology typically devoted to time, extracting from it a hypothetical temporality that subordinates experience to exegesis and disregards all but those spatial phenomena that survive the process of paraphrase. There exists, however, an aesthetic dimension of narrative as well, within which actions are conveyed to the audience in real time before they are abstracted into story-events. In my dissertation I offer a narratological reading of Homer's *Iliad* from the standpoint of space rather than, the usual emphasis, time. I adapt Meyer Schapiro's conception of the picture frame as "a finding and focusing device placed between the observer and the image" to the dynamic medium of epic narrative, and identify the manipulation of frames as the basis for a poetics of narrative engagement. I adopt cinema theory as the most useful heuristic analogue for coming to terms with Homeric space in its own right, emphasizing the cognitive links rather than the historical distance between epic and cinema. I demonstrate how Homer employs four proto-cinematic devices in the *Iliad*—decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette—to achieve montage-like control over his audience's attention and to reveal a semantic component of the epic that manifests itself exclusively within narrative space.

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## Introduction

“What we need is a ‘cinematographer’s guide’ to the classics of literature.” (Eisenstein, 1970b: 83)

In his *Poetics*, the cornerstone of modern narratology,<sup>1</sup> Aristotle establishes plot as the most, and spectacle as the least, important of the six elements of tragedy.<sup>2</sup> This initiates a bias for time and against space that continues to shape the narratological agenda to the present day.<sup>3</sup> Lessing, for example, characterizes painting and poetry as fundamentally spatial and temporal art forms, respectively. He argues that, because only pictures can sufficiently represent objects in space, the poet, if he is to realize the potential of his medium, must limit himself to the representation of events in time.<sup>4</sup> Even Joseph Frank’s theory of Spatial Form—which, according to James A.W. Heffernan, “breaks through the barrier that Lessing so conspicuously erected between the verbal and visual arts”<sup>5</sup> and which, although it is usually associated with the modern novel,<sup>6</sup> Oivind Andersen applies to Homeric epic<sup>7</sup>—is really a way to spatialize time rather than to treat space *per se*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chatman (1981a: 259).

<sup>2</sup> 1989: 58, 60. According to Edmunds (1996: 22), this extreme minimization of the role of spectacle in narrative reflects a contemporary debate about the relative importance of playwright and director to the art of tragedy, inducing Aristotle “to try to rescue the text from performance.” For more on the narratological bias toward plot, cf. Chatman (1981a: 262); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 2); Hawkes (1977: 65, 68); Scholes (1974: 59); Gülich/Quasthoff (1985: 173). On the other hand, for a provocative inquiry into the existence of story and discourse as separate entities, and on the question of why we should even bother making this distinction in the first place, cf. Smith (1981: 224-25 and 220-21, respectively).

<sup>3</sup> For more on this narratological “bias” (as Frazier [1999: 468] calls it) toward time, cf. Scholes (1974: 59); Bal (1985: 93); Balutowa (1976: 433, 1979: 7-8); Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 6); Genette (1980: 215); Wiles (1997: 4); Lowe (2000: 41).

<sup>4</sup> 1984: 76. Among Homerists, Becker (1995: 22) takes issue with Lessing, objecting that “the Shield of Achilles... interrupts the narrative to dwell upon objects in space.”

<sup>5</sup> 1987b: 63. Cf. also 1987a: 100. For more on the concept of Spatial Form and its congeners, cf. Landow (1987: 77-8), who replies directly to Heffernan; Arnheim (1992: 37); Balutowa (1979: 8); Foucault (1970: 113); Zoran (1984: 311).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Poulet, 1977: 106.

<sup>7</sup> 1987: 2.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Fish (1980b: 83), Zoran (1984: 312). According to Heffernan (1987a: 104), art criticism exhibits the opposite tendency: “The literary critic’s tendency to spatialize literature is...mirrored by the art critic’s tendency to temporalize art.”

The only book-length treatment of narrative space in Homer to date is Brigitte Hellwig's study, *Raum und Zeit in Homer*.<sup>9</sup> *Raum* in German, however, is ambiguous: It means both "space" and "place."<sup>10</sup> Hellwig emphasizes the latter sense of the word, reducing the wealth of spatial detail in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to a finite number of places and charting their trajectory throughout each respective epic. In order to generalize about the kinetic behavior of certain groups of characters she concentrates on the places where *events* of the plot transpire rather than on the spaces where *actions* transpire in individual scenes. She observes, for example, that in the *Iliad* divine activity gradually progresses from Ethiopia to the Trojan plain:

In fünf Etappen nähern sich also die Götter dem Geschehen: Äthiopien--Olymp--  
Ida und Samothrake--Grabmal des Herakles und "Kallikolone"--Schlachtfeld.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, Hellwig applies to space the structuralist methodology typically devoted to time, extracting from it a hypothetical temporality that subordinates experience to exegesis and disregards all but those spatial phenomena that survive the process of paraphrase.<sup>12</sup>

There exists, however, an aesthetic dimension of narrative as well, within which actions are conveyed to the audience in real-time through the process of *enargeia*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Also worth mentioning are Horrocks (1980) and Lateiner (1995), which deal with aspects of space outside the purview of the present work.

<sup>10</sup> For more on the distinction between space and place as distinct narrative categories, cf. Bal (1985: 93); Balutowa (1979: 27); Ronen (1990: 32); Klein (1990: 174); Styan (1988: 196); de Certeau (1984: 117); Zoran (1984: 323).

<sup>11</sup> 1964: 28.

<sup>12</sup> The classic statement of the limitations of paraphrase as a heuristic tool is Brooks' (1974: 196) indictment against the "heresy of paraphrase" and his notion of "the resistance which any good poem sets up against all attempts to paraphrase it." Yet Brooks was anticipated by Longinus (1989: 172). Cf. also Rimmon-Kennan (1983: 8); Fish (1980a: 180, 1980b: 89); Shklovsky (1990: 5); Todorov (1981: 4); Cassirer (1946: 37); Greimas (1990: 159).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Leach (1988: 7): "In the verbal realm, the counterpart of verisimilitude is *enargeia*, or the achievement of persuasively lifelike description....*Enargeia* is directed by the speaker to the spectator. Although its artfulness derives from the speaker's verbal facility, its effects fall short of completion without the spectator's response." For more on the link between *enargeia* and audience, cf. Bakker (1993: 18); Bryant-Bertail (2000: 25); Esslin (1976: 53-4); Gillespie (1988: 103); Tomkins (1980: ix); Iser (1980: 50-51); Werth (1995: 191).

before they are abstracted into story-events.<sup>14</sup> Although *enargeia* is all but neglected by narratology,<sup>15</sup> it was considered to be an essential element of Homer's art at least since the scholiasts.<sup>16</sup> Longinus, however, was the first ancient theorist to privilege it as the most potent weapon in the poet's creative arsenal, favoring the ability to "make the speaker *see* what he is saying and bring it *visually* before his audience"<sup>17</sup> over the "ability to order and arrange material."<sup>18</sup> As such, Longinus provides a formidable counterpoise to Aristotelian temporocentrism,<sup>19</sup> giving as much priority to the ecstasy generated by the discourse<sup>20</sup> as Aristotle gives to the catharsis generated by the story.<sup>21</sup> Adopting a Longinian perspective on Homeric epic, Paolo Vivante asserts: "Least of all can the Homeric poems be read with a voracious interest in plot and its denouement," preferring instead "to let a thing become an image the moment it is mentioned" and "[to take]

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<sup>14</sup> Culler (1986: 82); Todorov (1977c: 55); Scholes (1974: 59).

<sup>15</sup> Regarding the insignificance of purely spatial phenomena according to the traditional narratological model, cf. Barthes, 1989: 141; Todorov, 1977b: 77; Genette, 1980: 165; Lévi-Strauss, 1976: 133; Scholes, 1974: 41; Shklovsky, 1990: 5. That is not to say, however, that temporality and an attention to firsthand narrative experience are necessarily mutually exclusive. Despite the priority he gives to narrative time, for example, Ricoeur (1981: 169) resists the structuralist practice of relegating time to the domain of "events," emphasizing instead the experiential aspects of time as a narrative element, differentiating between "the shift in meaning that distinguishes the 'now' belonging to this time of preoccupation from 'now' in the sense of an abstract instant." In that sense, Ricoeur's temporality partakes in the Longinian *ethos* otherwise associated exclusively with space herein.

<sup>16</sup> Bakker, 1993: 18. Gentili (1988: 5), however, traces this heuristic emphasis on *enargeia* to the fifth-fourth century B.C. poet Simonides of Ceos. Even Aristotle (1989: 72) and Lessing (1984: 85) value *enargeia*, despite its incongruity with their positions toward spectacle and the limitations of the verbal representation of space, respectively. Quintilian also reserves a privileged place for *enargeia* in his rhetorical theory (Leach, 1988: 14-15).

<sup>17</sup> 1989: 159.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*: 143.

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Lessing (1984: 154) himself acknowledges Longinus as the most formidable rival to Aristotle. In fact, by privileging the spatial aspects of narrative Longinus effects the same sort of synchronic recalibration of the study of narrative as Lévi-Strauss (1963: 34) does for the study of kinship systems. Among modern artists, Artaud (who [1958: 38] advocates "the substitution, for the poetry of language, of a poetry in space which will be resolved in precisely the domain which does not belong strictly to words") "overturns the Aristotelian ranking of the parts of tragedy, putting the spectacle on top (Edmunds, 1996: 15; Cf. also *Ibid.*: 34-5)." Cf. Bachelard (1964: xviii) and Fish (1980b: 73) for phenomenological and Reader Response perspectives on the priority of space over time, respectively.

<sup>20</sup> 1989: 143.

<sup>21</sup> 1984: 67.

Homer's expression at its face value.”<sup>22</sup> What distinguishes Vivante’s approach to Homer is the emphasis he gives to the *audience’s experience* of narrative.

Scholars have traditionally relied upon Homer’s representation of the activity of singers within his poems to extrapolate information about his audience and how his art most likely affected them.<sup>23</sup> This approach seeks to understand the singer-audience dynamic by observing fictional singers engaging in an activity similar to that of Homer, with the implicit conviction that the data these fictional representations yield correspond more or less precisely to their real-world referent. To encounter Homeric epic directly, however, it is more useful to observe, not merely the singer’s diegetic representation of singers and audiences, but rather his own extradiegetic<sup>24</sup> activity itself and the strategies he employs to integrate his audience into the fabric of the text, as essential collaborators in the production of narrative meaning.<sup>25</sup>

In this study I offer a narratological reading of Homer’s *Iliad* from the standpoint of space rather than, the usual emphasis, time. I establish the frame as the primary link between audience and action and the manipulation of frames as the basis for a dedicated approach to narrative space. I identify cinema theory as the most useful heuristic analogue for coming to terms with the receptive dimension of Homeric space, emphasizing the cognitive links rather than the historical distance between epic and cinema. I demonstrate how Homer employs four proto-cinematic devices in the *Iliad*—decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette—to achieve montage-like

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<sup>22</sup> 1985: 8, 3, 12, respectively. For cinematic parallels, cf. Osadnik (1994: 225); Münsterberg (1970: 57).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Carter, 1995: 286; West, 1981: 113.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Prince (1987): “diegetic. Pertaining to or part of a given diegesis” (20); “diegesis. The fictional world in which the situations and events narrated occur” (20); “extradiegetic. External to (not part of) any diegesis”; cf. Leach (2000: 251).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Gentili (1988: 22); Rehm (1994: 11).

control over his audience's attention and to reveal a semantic dimension to the epic that manifests itself exclusively through spatial artistry. My intention is not to minimize the significance of the temporal approach to narrative or to Homer in particular, but rather to emphasize that by limiting our focus to the events extrapolated from a direct acquaintance with the narrative—the preoccupation of traditional narratology—we succumb to the illusion that what we say about a story is identical to how we experience it.

## Chapter 1: Typology of Homeric Space

“Do we have ‘space’ in Homer?” (Hiller, 1983: 82)

### Frame: Pictorial/Verbal

“Homer had no need for graphics; words were all he needed.” (Antoniades, 1992: 44)

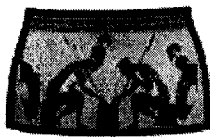
According to Meyer Schapiro, imagery is conveyed from poet to audience through the medium of the frame, which facilitates communication between them:<sup>26</sup>

The frame belongs then to the space of the observer rather than of the illusory, three-dimensional world disclosed within and behind. It is a finding and focusing device placed between the observer and the image.

In his article, “Image and Frame in Greek Art,” Jeffrey Hurwit differentiates between two primary types of artistic frame: closed and open.<sup>27</sup> Hurwit defines the closed frame in the following way:

In closed form the shape given a pictorial field establishes the disposition of elements and axes within the composition, and the border thus guides one's vision toward the dominant internal co-ordinates—the armature—of the image.<sup>28</sup>

As an example of closed composition, Hurwit cites the krater by Exekias that depicts Achilles and Ajax engaged in a game of dice:



He observes how the characters lean over at precisely the point where the vase tapers off on either side, in conformity to the slant of their backs.<sup>29</sup> It is obvious, then, that Exekias tailors the iconography to conform to the vase-shape, resulting in a closed composition that focuses the audience's attention inward, toward the table between the two characters,

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<sup>26</sup> 1969: 227. Cf. Leach (2000: 237).

<sup>27</sup> 1977: *passim*. For others who adopt the same closed/open framic antinomy, cf. Schapiro (1969: 228); Suvin (1987: 313); Bal (1985: 95-6).

<sup>28</sup> 1977: 1.

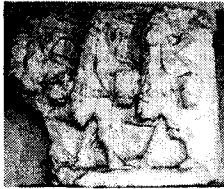
<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*: 1-2.

rather than outward, toward some hypothetical background to the action. It is this centripetal orientation, this gravitation toward the center and subordination of all imagery to this priority, that distinguishes the closed frame from its opposite: the open frame.

Hurwit goes on to define the open frame:

There is, however, another kind of pleasure...obtained...through the perception of limit transcended, of extension rather than closure, of release rather than confinement. When picture content and the picture space defined by the border or frame do not perfectly coincide, when the relationship between them appears more adventitious than ordered, open form results.<sup>30</sup>

As an example of open composition, Hurwit cites the depiction of the theft of the Arcadian cattle by the Dioscuri:



He notes that the adjacent triglyphs in this metope from the Sikyonian treasury would have overlapped both the hindquarters of the cattle and the protruding spear of the figure to the left. Thus, rather than a sense of closure and symmetry, the open frame gives the impression that it encompasses only part of the total action, which the spectator must understand to exist just outside of its borders,<sup>31</sup> lending this type of frame as persistent a sense of centrifugality as the centripetality of its closed counterpart.

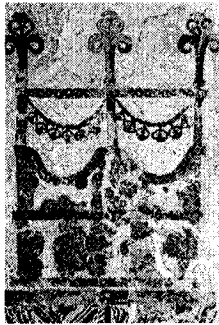
Because Hurwit limits his purview to static art forms, however, his conception of the frame, whether closed or open, is limited to a single frame encompassing whatever imagery lies within it. This basic frame-scheme has its roots at least as far back as the

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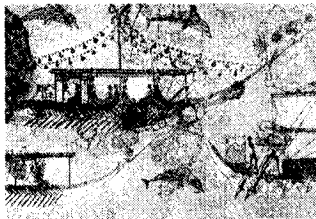
<sup>30</sup> Ibid: 5, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid: 7-8.

Bronze Age.<sup>32</sup> The Ship Fresco on the South wall frieze in Room 5 of the West House at Akrotiri, Thera, for example, depicts a fleet of ships framed by two towns inhabited by characters preoccupied by the nautical spectacle between them.<sup>33</sup> As such, the Ship Fresco, like Exekias' krater, constitutes a closed composition, self-contained in its centripetal orientation. It is also possible, however, to embed frames within other frames. In Room 4 of the West House, for example, the artist presents several panels of the interior of a ship:



whose exterior is depicted in long shot within the panoramic view of the Ship Fresco:<sup>34</sup>



Granted, this sense of progression from close-up to long shot is only implicitly kinetic, relying upon the spectator to walk from Room 4 to Room 5 to achieve its effect:<sup>35</sup>

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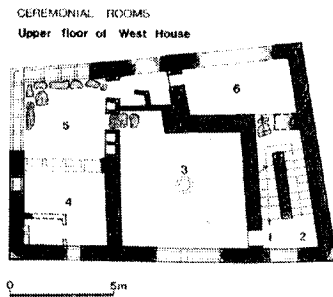
<sup>32</sup> Cf. Schapiro, 1969: 224.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. page 15, below.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Davis, 1991: 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> That is not to say that the pictorial use of the close-up is limited to dynamic art forms—it may be used in, for example, single-canvas paintings as well, although in that case diverse framic distances must be used simultaneously, as with certain twentieth-century painters such as Léger (1988: 372).





Yet the West House frescoes provide evidence of an artist working in a static medium seeking to mobilize its framic structure, to isolate a segment of narrative within the larger, collective frame that encompasses the total action.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, it is the first extant example of the proto-cinematic impulse.

It is worth considering where the West House Painter might have gotten the idea to engage in framic artistry in the first place. Archaeological evidence suggests the existence of a contemporary Late Bronze Age poetic tradition.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Sarah P. Morris argues that the Miniature Fresco exhibits epic-like themes that reveal continuity between this tradition and Homeric epic.<sup>38</sup> The close-up/long shot transition between Rooms 4 and 5 of the West House corroborates Morris' theory, yet on a stylistic rather than thematic basis. Consider, for example, the following scene from the end of Book 2 of the *Odyssey*:

οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντα φέροντες εὐσσέλμῳ ἐνὶ νηὶ  
 κάτθεσαν, ὡς ἐκέλευσεν Ὀδυσσῆος φίλος υἱός.  
 ἂν δ' ἄρα Τηλέμαχος νηὸς βαῖν', ἦρχε δ' Ἀθήνη,

<sup>36</sup> Vase-painters who seek to incorporate more than a single narrative moment into their compositions also compensate for the inherent staticity of their art form by either combining two or more events within a single frame or by depicting two separate events on separate, often opposite, sections of the vase (Stansbury-O'Donnell, 1999: 156), requiring the spectator to twist the vase to reveal the next event, the vase-painting equivalent of the perambulation required between Rooms 4 and 5 of the West House; cf. Brooks (1974: 203) for a direct comparison between poetic and architectural structure.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Bennet (1997: 529); Morris (1989: 511). It is also possible, of course, that the wall-painter provided a model for the epic poet, *pace* Lessing (1984: 62). In either case, the salient fact is that the West House Painter exhibits a proto-cinematic tendency that the epic poet, as we shall see, is able to exploit more fully due to the inherently dynamic nature of his verbal medium.

<sup>38</sup> Morris, 1989: 531.

νῆϊ δ' ἐνὶ πρυμνῇ κατ' ἄρ' ἔζετο: ἄγχι δ' ἄρ' αὐτῆς  
 ἔζετο Τηλέμαχος. τοὶ δὲ πρυμνήσι' ἔλυσαν,  
 ἄν δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ βάντες ἐπὶ κληῖσι καθίζον.  
 τοῖσιν δ' ἵκμενον οὖρον ἴει γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη,  
 ἀκραῖη Ζέφυρον, κελάδοντ' ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον.  
 Τηλέμαχος δ' ἐτάροισιν ἐποτρύνας ἐκέλευσεν  
 ὄπλων ἄπτεσθαι: τοὶ δ' ὀτρύνοντος ἄκουσαν.  
 ἰστὸν δ' εἰλάτινον κοίλης ἔντοσθε μεσόδμης  
 στήσαν ἀείραντες, κατὰ δὲ προτόνοισιν ἔδησαν,  
 ἔλκον δ' ἰστία λευκὰ εὐστρέπτοισι βοεῦσιν.  
 ἔπρησεν δ' ἄνεμος μέσον ἰστίον, ἀμφὶ δὲ κῦμα  
 στεῖρη πορφύρεον μεγάλ' ἴαχε νηὸς ἰούσης:  
 ἦ δ' ἔθειεν κατὰ κῦμα διαπρήσσοσα κέλευθον. (*Od.* 2.414-29)<sup>39</sup>

They all carried the provisions down, and stowed them in the strong-  
 benched vessel,  
 in the way the dear son of Odysseus directed them.  
 Telemachus went aboard the ship, but Athena went first  
 and took her place in the stern of the ship, and close beside her  
 Telemachus took his place. The men cast off the stern cables  
 and themselves also went aboard and sat to the oarlocks.  
 The goddess gray-eyed Athena sent them a favoring stern wind,  
 strong Zephyros, who murmured over the wine-blue water.  
 Telemachus then gave the sign and urged on his companions  
 to lay hold of the tackle, and they listened to his urging  
 and, raising the mast pole made of fir, they set it upright  
 in the hollow hole in the box, and made it fast with forestays,  
 and with halyards strongly twisted of leather pulled up the white sails.  
 The wind blew into the middle of the sail, and at the cutwater  
 a blue wave rose and sang strongly as the ship went onward.  
 She ran swiftly, cutting across the swell her pathway.

The two-fold alternation between the interior (414-15, 423-25) and exterior (420-21, 427-  
 29) of the ship provides the verbal equivalent of the pictorial imagery in Rooms 4 and 5.  
 Homer approaches and retreats from the action in the same way as the West House  
 Painter: by isolating a single perspective on a larger scene and then cutting back from it

<sup>39</sup> All translations of the *Iliad* (Monro, 1902) and *Odyssey* (Goold, 1919) are from Lattimore (1951).

to encompass the scene in its totality. Unlike the West House Painter, however, Homer achieves this effect through words rather than pictures.

According to Rudolf Arnheim, words and pictures exhibit a phenomenological affinity that transcends their superficial differences in media (the foundation of Lessing's negative appraisal of verbal ecphrasis). Arnheim differentiates between two kinds of images: direct and indirect. While direct (or visual) images "come about through the stimulation of the eyes by light generated by or reflected from objects of the physical environment," indirect (or mental) images "are generated by internal stimulation."<sup>40</sup> According to Arnheim, however, even the latter involve a process of mental mediation comparable to that required by words before they can work upon the imagination. He points out that while direct images seem to enjoy a privileged access to immediate experience, they are actually no less subject to mental mediation than so-called indirect images, requiring no less an imaginative effort on our part to perceive them as intelligible contents of whatever artistic continuum they inhere in.<sup>41</sup> From Arnheim's viewpoint, then, verbal imagery is no less suited for the sort of spatial analysis applied to its cinematic counterpart.<sup>42</sup> In fact, it is more so. Because of its fluid nature, the verbal sign

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<sup>40</sup> 1987: 83. Chatman (1978: 101) implies that verbal imagery is handicapped, from a communicative standpoint, by its "indirect" status, as Arnheim would call it. Cf. *Ibid.*: 106.

<sup>41</sup> 1987: 83. Cf. Esrock (1987: 88); Scholes (1982: 25). Even Lessing (1984: 41) acknowledges this fact.

<sup>42</sup> Cf., for example, Arnheim's (1987: 85-6) "cinematographic" analysis of Proverbs 7:1-18 of the Book of Proverbs in the King James Version of the Old Testament. Likewise, Leach (1988) seeks to bridge the gap between spectators of visual and literary texts, convinced that the affinities between these diverse media reveal an underlying phenomenological link that warrants such comparative scrutiny. Leach compares the way Homer, Vergil, and the Esquiline Odyssey Painter describe the Laistrygonian harbor that Odysseus enters in Book 10 of the *Odyssey*, concluding that Homer's paratactic style aims for and indeed achieves less scenographic comprehensiveness than the latter two artists (Andersson [1976] shares a similar conviction that Vergil's robust scenographic technique reflects an increased enthusiasm for "topographical coherence." [Leach, 1988: 38]). More salient from the standpoint of reception, however, are the points of convergence Leach sees between the scenographic styles of Vergil and the Esquiline Odyssey Painter despite their distinctive media, as well as her attempt, inspired by this insight, to "...[understand] the imaginative resources for translating words into pictures which Roman audiences could employ to experience description, and conversely, how they might experience pictures by translating them into

lacks certain limitations to artistic freedom inherent in pictorial media. When, for example, the playwright signifies how far he wishes his audience to imagine themselves to be from a given object on stage, this desideratum usually conflicts with the physical reality of the actual distance between them.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, unlike the wall-painter, vase-painter, playwright, and even filmmaker, Homer has no preformed frame—no wall, vase, stage, or screen—to fill up with dramatic action, but must himself construct this frame, suiting his action to this fundamental choice.<sup>44</sup> In fact, he must construct other frames as well.

By presenting in Room 4 a segment of the all-encompassing action of Room 5, the West House Painter invites us to distinguish between the larger frame and the smaller frame embedded within it, what Seymour Chatman calls story space and discourse space, respectively,<sup>45</sup> corresponding to the central narratological distinction between story (“the content plane of narrative”<sup>46</sup>) and discourse (“the expression plane of narrative”<sup>47</sup>). The notion of a frame-within-a-frame is coopted in various fields such as semiotics,<sup>48</sup> theater,<sup>49</sup> cinema,<sup>50</sup> and literature proper.<sup>51</sup> Yet Arnheim’s formulation, which he applies

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words.” (30) Although Leach’s primary focus is on the description of landscape rather than on the space that is created in conjunction with the flow of action—that is to say, specifically *Homeric* space (32)—her inquiry into the phenomenological convergence between pictorial and verbal art forms and their respective audiences, and the centrality of *enargeia* in this connection (7), has equal relevance to this work.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Edmunds (1996: 32); Lutwack (1984: 13).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Lutwack (1984: 17-18); Langellier (1981: 115); Balutowa (1979: 14); Klein (1990: 176); Davis (1986-87: 89); Nicolaescu (1988: 60); de Jong (1987: 105-06).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Chatman (1978: 96).

<sup>46</sup> Prince, 1987: 91.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: 21.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. de Certeau (1984: 117-19); Shklovsky (1990: 3).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Esslin (1976: 46).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Feldman (1952: 37); Kepley (1995: 98).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Zoran (1984: 321).

to fine art yet is equally salient to verbal narrative, epitomizes the profound interdependence between story space and discourse space.<sup>52</sup>

...there are two ways of analyzing pictorial space, both of which are to be considered in all cases. Starting from a composition as a whole, we see a tissue of interwoven units and intervals, all fitting in one unbroken overall system and held together by intrinsic space. When, however, we start from the units, we see sub-systems meeting, crossing, repelling, or paralleling one another, all this taking place in the arena of an extrinsic space system. The meaning of the work requires the apprehension of both structural versions: the nature of the whole and the behavior of its parts.

While story space (“the whole”) encompasses the total space of a narrative, discourse space (“its parts”) encompasses a particular zone within the story space to which the audience’s attention is to be directed.<sup>53</sup> Just as important, however, Arnheim’s metaphorical characterization of the “meeting, crossing, repelling, or paralleling” of discourse spaces (“sub-systems”) in a painting begs the question of how framing manifests itself in a truly dynamic art form such as epic or cinema. It also suggests that the sort of transition from close-up to long shot depicted in Rooms 4 and 5 only begins to approach the variety of kinetic artistry possible within a narrative art work.

Like the West House Painter, Homer exploits the frame-within-the-frame, yet makes extensive use of it over several “rooms” as only the practitioner of a dynamic art form can do, a prerogative which even Lessing acknowledges:

The principal superiority [of the poetic description over the painting] is that the poet leads us to the scene through a whole gallery of paintings, of which the material picture shows only one.<sup>54</sup>

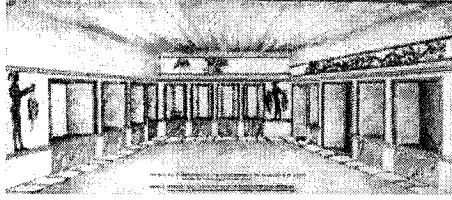
Before we turn to Homer, however, let us enter Room 5 of the West House and see how the artist attempts to compensate for the staticity of his medium through implicit *kinesis*:

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<sup>52</sup> 1966: 67.

<sup>53</sup> To use the example above, Room 4 of the West House presents a discourse-spatial perspective, a close-up view, of the story-spatial totality of the Ship Fresco in Room 5.

<sup>54</sup> 1984: 72.



Once inside, you stand before a fresco on the North wall (obverse in the picture above) depicting a sea battle and a pastoral scene, representing wartime and peacetime activities:



Then, prompted by the implied westward movement of the fisherman in the north-east corner,<sup>55</sup> you walk along the West wall to encounter the South wall frieze, which depicts the aftermath of the sea battle, the homecoming of the warriors:



You recognize the panels of the decorated ship in the middle of this fresco and are thus induced to return imaginatively to where you were in Room 4: inside the ship. You are suddenly the protagonist of an elaborate drama. Yet you are also its primary spectator. As you sail on, you are simultaneously aware of being watched by the occupants of both coasts. Because the fresco cannot be viewed at a single glance, however, you alternate between towns A and B. Finally, you move on: as protagonist, to town B, your diegetic destination; as spectator, to the East wall frieze, your extradiegetic destination:



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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Marinatos (1984: 51).

Suddenly you are in another world, the world of the Elsewhere. Just as the panels of Room 4 induced you to inhabit the ship in Room 5, as well as to see the world through its owner's eyes, now, on the East wall, you are invited to see through his imagination. The world you imagine, however, is not like the world you see with your eyes: it is an exotic world, a land of fantasy, inhabited by mythical creatures occupying an idyllic landscape.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, as the protagonist of the Room 5 narrative you inhabit its universe, and as a spectator you impart movement to otherwise static images. From Room 4 to 5 you switch from the interior to the exterior of a ship. Once inside Room 5 you alternate between towns A and B to witness citizens watching you as you progress to town B. Finally, you travel imaginatively from your immediate surroundings to a distant location. These four types of movement, while distinct in their respective functions for you as both protagonist and spectator, have one thing in common: they require you to actualize them in your own mind, to imagine them as *actually* occurring while in reality they are only implied. This effort on your part is necessary because the pictures on the walls do not really move. The iconography, however, induces you to animate *static* signs *simulating* movement rather than passively to absorb *moving* signs *actualizing* movement, the way Homer, because he employs words rather than pictures, is able to do. We shall now consider how Homer blends story space and discourse space to control his dramatic canvas and, more importantly, the attention of his audience.

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Morris, 1989: 529-30.

## Story Space: Closed/Open

“...an artistic frame indicates an enclosed space, a whole, while a window is only that, a window onto presumably infinite space, a glimpse of just a part.” (Frazier, 1999: 453)

Hurwit’s distinction between the centripetal and centrifugal orientation of the closed and open frame, respectively, serves as a useful basis by which to differentiate between Iliadic and Odyssean story spaces. The story space of the *Iliad* conforms to Hurwit’s closed frame-type. Homer delineates its vertical and horizontal coordinates from the outset, thereby establishing the immutable boundaries within which action will take place for the remainder of the epic,<sup>57</sup> and exhibiting a precise symmetry: Greek camp, Trojan plain, and Troy arranged perpendicularly to Olympus, earth, and Underworld, respectively. Its y (Underworld, Earth, and Olympus)<sup>58</sup> and x (Trojan plain, Greek camp and Troy) axes<sup>59</sup> are introduced metonymically through the imagery of Hades (1.3), dogs and birds (4-5), and Zeus (5), on the one hand, and army (10), ships (12), and Priam (19), on the other. This methodical presentation of Iliadic parameters instills in the audience a permanent sense of groundedness, of conformity to a scenographic master-plan that shapes rather than merely accommodates the dramatic activity.<sup>60</sup>

Iliadic story space is dominated by the Trojan plain, representing the main area upon which the action transpires.<sup>61</sup> The Trojan plain is surrounded on all four sides by equally permanent dramatic regions. To the left is the Greek camp,<sup>62</sup> whose topography is presented at length in the Catalogue of Ships in Book 2. To the right is Troy, separated

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Romm (1992: 10). For cinematic perspectives on this world-building function of the artist, cf. Bazin (1998b: 418); Arnheim (1957: 74-5).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Wright (1995: 93).

<sup>59</sup> The x, y, and z axes of the three-dimensional Cartesian graph correspond to the horizontal, vertical, and depth dimensions of the spatial continuum, respectively; cf. *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (2003).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Kuntz (1993: 10).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Ibid.* (9); Hellwig (1964: 24).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Hainsworth (1993: 189).



from the plain by the great wall that becomes the focus during the Teixoskopia in Book 3. These two regions constitute the horizontal extremities of the dramatic canvas, its terrestrial limits. Beneath the plain is the Underworld, which receives more dramatic attention in the *Odyssey*. Finally, above the plain is Olympus, home of Zeus and the other Olympian divinities, who constantly watch the action below like spectators in a theatrical audience.<sup>63</sup> This region more than any other characterizes the closed story space of the *Iliad* and determines its centripetal orientation. Homer frequently sets his action in Olympus, providing a god's-eye view<sup>64</sup> on the mortal stage<sup>65</sup> otherwise presented to the audience at ground level. Indeed, while on a diegetic level Iliadic story space assumes cosmic proportions, extradiegetically it resembles an architectural plan of sorts, and in particular that of a palace, consistent with the Homeric conception of the universe as a kind of house, an *imago mundi*.<sup>66</sup> Despite the fact that Olympus and the Underworld are diegetically much further apart than the Greek camp and Troy, the palace-like structure of Iliadic story space fosters the illusion that, on a phenomenological level, these four regions are equidistant from the Trojan plain rather than dispersed over an *Odyssey*-like series of *ad hoc* stages.<sup>67</sup>

The story space of the *Odyssey* is more complex than its Iliadic counterpart. It is useful to distinguish between two kinds of Odyssean scenes: those that transpire inside, and those outside, palatial settings. In the latter case Odyssean story space is

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Andersson (1976: 15-16); Griffin (1978: *passim*).

<sup>64</sup> E.g., *Il.* 11.80-83; cf. Richardson (1990: 122-23); Chatman, 1978: 106. Griffin (1978: 1, 5, 11, 14, 15) identifies the Olympians' love of spectatorship as a link between mortal and immortal characters and, by extension, Homer's real-world audience; cf. Leach (1988: 17); Vivante (1985: 5); Richardson (1990: 113).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Austin (1966: 298); Bakker, (1999: 14); Richardson (1990: 58).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Wright (1995: 18). On the concept of the *imago mundi*, cf. Eliade (1959: 42). According to Paul Demont and Anne Lebeau, palaces functioned as sites for theater-like activity as far back as the Late Bronze Age (1996: 10), and John Bennet entertains the possibility that Homeric epic was itself originally performed within a palatial venue (1997: 529).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Bassett (1938: 51-2).

diametrically opposite to that of the *Iliad*, conforming to Hurwit’s conception of the open frame. It serves, therefore, not as a strictly-demarcated container for dramatic action, but rather as an open-ended scenographic field allowing for infinite variety and the freedom to alter along with the action and to contribute to the development of the plot. When Homer shifts the action to Odysseus’ palace in Book 17, however, the story space is suddenly no less monolithic than the Iliadic cosmos. Yet there is one major difference: Odysseus’ *oikos* constitutes, not merely a literal palace, but the domestic counterpart to and mirror-image of the Iliadic palatial cosmos. Whereas in the *Iliad* the diegetically distant coordinates of the cosmos are presented as extradiegetically proximate, the diegetically proximate coordinates of the Odyssean palace are presented as extradiegetically distant. When, for example, Penelope sits outside of her bedroom—the domestic equivalent to Olympus, with a similar vertical orientation and spectatorial function<sup>68</sup>—she is privy to the goings-on within the megaron, the palatial stage:

ἡ δὲ κατ' ἀντηστὶν θεμένη περικαλλέα δίφρον  
 κούρη Ἰκαρίοιο, περίφρων Πηνελόπεια,  
 ἀνδρῶν ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκάστου μῦθον ἄκουε. (*Od.* 20.387-89)

The daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope  
 had taken her beautiful chair and set it just outside the door,  
 and listened to every word the men in the hall were saying.

When, however, she enters her bedroom and closes the door behind her, she is oblivious to the world outside, as far away from the suitors as the Olympian gods are close to the Trojan plain in the *Iliad*. In lines 35-8 in Book 23, for example, she refers to Odysseus’ οἶκος as though it were far away rather than where she is currently located, and asks

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<sup>68</sup> E.g., *Od.* 1.328-29, 4.121, 19.89.

Eurykleia for a report of his whereabouts rather than open her bedroom door and look into the megaron for herself.

εἰ δ' ἄγε δὴ μοι, μαῖα φίλη, νημερτὲς ἐνίσπες,  
εἰ ἐτεδὸν δὴ οἶκον ἰκάνεται, ὡς ἀγορεύεις,  
ὅπως δὴ μνηστῆρσιν ἀναιδέσι χεῖρας ἐφῆκε  
μοῦνος ἐών, οἱ δ' αἰὲν ἀολλέες ἔνδον ἔμιμνον. (*Od.* 23.35-8)<sup>69</sup>

Come, dear nurse, and give me a true account of the matter,  
whether he really has come back to his house, as you tell me,  
to lay his hands on the shameless suitors, though he was only  
one, and they were always lying in wait, in a body!

This vast metaphorical distance between megaron and bedroom is corroborated in Book 23 when Odysseus refers to his bed the way people in the *Iliad* talk about far away places:<sup>70</sup>

οὐδέ τι οἶδα...  
εἴ μοι ἔτ' ἔμπεδόν ἐστι, γύναι, λέχος, ἧέ τις ἦδη  
ἀνδρῶν ἄλλοωσε θῆκε, ταμῶν ὑπο πυθμέν' ἐλαίης. (*Od.* 23.202-04)

I do not know now...  
dear lady, whether my bed is still in place, or if some man  
has cut underneath the stump of the olive, and moved it elsewhere.'

Thus, whereas Homer contracts Iliadic distances to facilitate divine/human interaction, he expands Odyssean distances, and in particular that between Penelope upstairs and Odysseus downstairs,<sup>71</sup> to create the impression of distinct fictional worlds within a single dramatic milieu. Even when characters interact within close proximity of each other, in the Odyssean universe they are still somehow liable to be out of earshot of each

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<sup>69</sup> ἐνέπω is the same verb used by the narrator to ask the Muse to reveal the identity of the best of the Achaeans in the Catalogue of Ships (2.761), and thus, by its impersonal tone, emphasizes the isolation of Penelope's bedroom from the rest of Odysseus' palace.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. the simile in lines 233-40, which portrays their shared intimate knowledge of the bed as a kind of mystery religion, located on an island across distant waters and accessible only to the initiated.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. 20.387-89: the threshold to the bedroom symbolizes this vast gulf between the eavesdroppable here and the otherworldly there.

other, contrasting markedly with the frequent eavesdropping by the gods from Olympus in the *Iliad*:

ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς χειῖρα σπάσασατ' Ἀντινόοιο  
ῥεῖα: μνηστῆρες δὲ δόμον κάτα δαῖτα πένοντο.  
οἱ δ' ἐπελώβευον καὶ ἐκερτόμεον ἐπέεσσιν. (*Od.* 2.321-23)

He spoke, and lightly drew away his hand from Antinoös'  
hand, but the suitors about the house prepared their dinner,  
and in their conversation they insulted him and mocked him,

By distorting narrative space in this intertextual manner,<sup>72</sup> Homer in effect creates a palace out of a universe and a universe out of a palace to attain correspondingly distinctive stylistic and thematic results in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, respectively.<sup>73</sup>

### Discourse Space: Montage/Realism

“As opposed to Griffith and Eisenstein, filmmakers of the cut, Murnau has usually been thought to be a filmmaker of the moving camera.” (Perez, 1998: 132)

In his comparison between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, T.M. Andersson observes:

...the *Iliad* is remarkable among epics because it foregoes the variety afforded by changes of scenery.

He qualifies his statement, however, with the following admission:

Yet the action is not uniform or dull. Homer makes abundant use of movement and tension, which on the whole provide greater narrative energy than the scenic variations of the *Odyssey*.

He goes on to describe what he means by “movement”:

The movement is confined to a limited space, but within that space it is more or less constant. There is a perpetual coming and going, an ebb and flow of action across the plain; if one side is not retreating, it is pursuing. This flux is by no means aimless, but takes place within fixed emotional and spatial parameters

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<sup>72</sup> The spatial intertextuality between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* extends much further than this, but is outside the purview of this work.

<sup>73</sup> This tendency to contrast closed and open story spaces in two interdependent narratives is echoed cinematically, for example, in the two “Godfather” films, whose scenographic differences, and their dramatic ramifications, are characterized by James Berardinelli (1994).

marked at either extremity by the always imminent threat of total rout on one side or the other.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, Andersson defines Iliadic movement from the point of view of the characters. *They* move back and forth on the battlefield. *Their* movement inheres within story space, which “contains existents,”<sup>75</sup> and which Schapiro refers to as “the illusory, three-dimensional world disclosed within and behind [the observer].”<sup>76</sup> Andersson goes on to describe what he means by “tension”:

The alternation of panic and desperate rally keeps the reader on edge not because the movement itself is exciting but because it maintains the emotions of the contending warriors at fever pitch.<sup>77</sup>

As with movement, Andersson attributes Iliadic tension to the audience’s empathy with the characters: we are “on edge” because their “emotions” excite us in a way that the movement itself cannot do. One wonders, however, whether the “movement and tension” Andersson speaks of is really such a worthy substitute for, let alone a greater source of “dramatic energy” than, “the scenic variations of the *Odyssey*,” which, after all, involve Odysseus in a compelling series of adventures in their own right and generate their share of “panic and desperat[ion].” On the contrary, I submit that it is not movement and tension within *story space* that produce the distinctive “dramatic energy” of the *Iliad*, but rather movement and tension within *discourse space*, which Chatman defines as:

...*focus of spatial attention*...the framed area to which the implied audience's attention is directed by the discourse, that portion of the total story-space that is "remarked" or closed in upon, according to the requirements of the medium, through a narrator or through the camera eye—literally, as in film, or figuratively, as in verbal narrative.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> 1976: 27.

<sup>75</sup> Chatman, 1978: 96.

<sup>76</sup> 1969: 227.

<sup>77</sup> 1976: 27.

<sup>78</sup> 1978: 102.

Discourse space serves as the medium by which the poet produces movement and tension, not between characters, but *within the mind of the audience*. To encounter discourse space we require an alternative paradigm to traditional narratology,<sup>79</sup> one that privileges rather than merely accommodates the experience of the audience in the act of watching the spectacle before them.

The first cinema theorists sought to distinguish their art form from those that preceded it, especially theater.<sup>80</sup> This induced them to emphasize certain devices ostensibly unique to cinema, arguing that the camera, editing, and other technological advances provided them with unprecedented freedom to manipulate space and time and thus to exert psychological effects on their audience impossible to achieve through any other medium.<sup>81</sup> According to Eisenstein, however, these supposedly unique cinematographic features actually derive from literature, which commands an equally comprehensive control over the audience's attention as cinema does, only verbally rather than pictorially.<sup>82</sup> Although Eisenstein limits his examples to the modern novel, he mentions the Greeks as a formative influence on the proto-cinematic techniques employed by Dickens, his primary exemplar<sup>83</sup> of the debt cinema owes to verbal narrative.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, in the field of narratology, Chatman adopts a comparative

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<sup>79</sup> An appeal to reception theory (cf. Tomkins, 1980: *passim*) proves relatively fruitless. The mental activity reception theorists are primarily concerned with is concretization, the filling of gaps left by the author, privileging "the fluidity...of the meaning experience" (Fish, 1980: 83) and "the unwritten part [of the text] that gives us the opportunity to picture things" (Iser, 1980: 58). This approach would be more suited to a dedicated study of narrative space in the *Odyssey*, which leaves more room for subjective activity on the audience's part than in the *Iliad*.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Pudovkin (1960: 27); Panofsky (1998: 281); Münsterberg (1970: 16); Bazin (1967: 77); Goffman (1974: 144).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Arnheim (1957: 88); Feldman (1952: 77, 98); Stern (1979: 59, 65); Münsterberg (1970: 45).

<sup>82</sup> 1970b, 1977: *passim*. Cf. Chatman (1978: 105); Pudovkin (1960: 23).

<sup>83</sup> Eisenstein (1970b: 79) also identifies: "several purely cinematic elements in the plastic side of [Emile Zola's] creative work."

<sup>84</sup> 1977: 232. Cf. Zweig (1930: 52).

approach to literature and cinema, treating the two art forms interchangeably to identify the underlying narrative structures shared between them.<sup>85</sup>

Among Homerists, Mark Edwards attributes to Homer the use of cinema-like devices such as the long shot<sup>86</sup> and meta-audience,<sup>87</sup> and Scott Richardson puts a “camera”<sup>88</sup> in his hands and calls what he does “filming.”<sup>89</sup> Despite this avowed affinity between Homer and the filmmaker, however, no one has subjected Homeric epic to a systematic analysis of what one might call its proto-cinematic aspects. The primary reason for this reticence is historical: cinema is a modern art form, invented roughly three thousand years after Homeric epic. This fact has led Caroline Eades and Françoise Létoublon, who attest to the cinema-like “rhetorical, narrative, and stylistic devices and structures” in Homer, to insist that, on the other hand, to attribute to him the use of “cinematic codes” would be anachronistic, as though the former constituted a category separate from, rather than dependent upon, the latter.<sup>90</sup> Yet when we watch a movie sequence that presents a long shot of a scene, then cuts to a medium shot of a character within that scene and finally a close-up or extreme close-up of a certain aspect of that character, the effect on the viewer is similar to when the same relative distances are represented in a text.<sup>91</sup> Thus, if this series of shots warrants serious attention as a distinctive stylistic device in cinema, there is no reason why its verbal counterpart, and other proto-cinematic devices, should not also be so honored.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> 1978, 1981b: *passim*.

<sup>86</sup> 1987: 87.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*: 84.

<sup>88</sup> 1990: 110, 121.

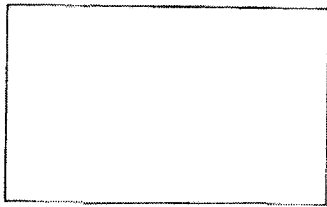
<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*: 119.

<sup>90</sup> 1999: 302. Cf. Martin (1986: 144).

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Edwards (1987: 87).

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Bassi (1998: 5), who bases her characterization of Homer as “pre-theatrical” on a kindred appeal to the phenomenological affinities between epic and theater.

André Bazin differentiates between two primary cinematic styles: montage and realism,<sup>93</sup> corresponding to “those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality,”<sup>94</sup> respectively. Through realism, the filmmaker tends to maintain a consistent distance between audience and action and simply to record the action of the characters, leaving it to the audience, like theatergoers,<sup>95</sup> to direct their attention anywhere within the frame they wish and to give free reign to their powers of selective perception.<sup>96</sup>



In this case “the image is evaluated not according to what it adds to reality but what it reveals of it,”<sup>97</sup> a quality that Roger Ebert attributes to the movie “The Dancer Upstairs”:<sup>98</sup>

“The Dancer Upstairs” is elegantly, even languorously, photographed by Jose Luis Alcaine, who doesn't punch into things but regards them, so that we are invited to think about them.

The realist filmmaker may also pan from place to place, dictating the audience's response to a certain extent, yet preserving the natural flow of time between events and thus maintaining a theater-like sense of lived experience:<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> 1998: *passim*.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*: 43.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Lowe (2000: 163-64). It was this inherent staticity of theater that early filmmakers rejected in favor of the moving camera and editing; cf. Kauffmann (1974: 67-8).

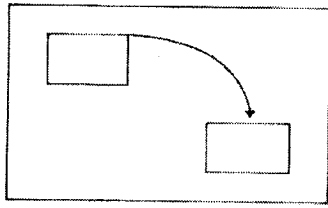
<sup>96</sup> Cf. Esslin (1976: 79). Benjamin (1968: 238) points out the similarity between theater and painting in this regard; cf. Bazin (1998a: 54); Esslin (1976: 81).

<sup>97</sup> Bazin, 1998a: 47. Cf. Arnheim (1957: 76).

<sup>98</sup> 2003a.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Lotman (1976: 82).

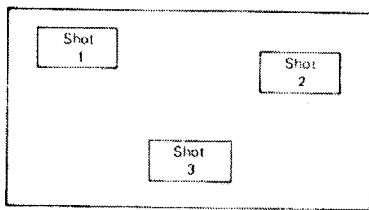




Ebert identifies this tendency in the movie “Elephant”:<sup>100</sup>

The movie is told mostly in long tracking shots; by avoiding cuts between closeups and medium shots, Van Sant also avoids the film grammar that goes along with such cuts, and so his visual strategy doesn't load the dice or try to tell us anything. It simply watches.

Through montage, on the other hand, the filmmaker tends to cut rather than pan between distinct regions of a given location, or even between locations that are far removed in space and time, employing “a whole arsenal of means whereby to impose its interpretation of an event on the spectator”:<sup>101</sup>



This adds a stylistic dimension to a film that is not inherent in the subject matter and that most significantly distinguishes cinema from theater.<sup>102</sup> At its best, montage complements rather than detracts from its subject matter. A.O. Scott praises this aspect of M. Night Shyamalan’s art in his review of the film “Signs”:<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> 2003b. Bazin (1998a) characterizes Murnau (46) and Renoir (55) as practitioners of realist cinema: “[Renoir] forced himself to look back beyond the resources provided by montage and so uncovered the secret of a film form that would permit everything to be said without chopping the world up into little fragments, that would reveal the hidden meanings in people and things without disturbing the unity natural to them.”

<sup>101</sup> Bazin, 1998a: 46.

<sup>102</sup> Regarding the manipulation of focal distances, cf. Pichel (1970: 114); Münsterberg (1970: 15-16); Bobker (1974: 47). Regarding the manipulation of space and time, cf. Stansbury-O'Donnell (1999: 412); Arnheim (1957: 89); Feldman (1952: 60-1); Münsterberg (1970: 74); Pudovkin (1960, 83-90).

<sup>103</sup> 2002.

Mr. Shyamalan is a master of control, with a sure grasp of the classical filmmaking lexicon. His suspense sequences build slowly and elegantly, and he is adept at evoking dread through shifting camera angles and careful manipulation of the frame.

On the other hand, a reviewer at Internet Movie Database expresses disfavor with the way he believes the film “SLC Punk!” abuses the prerogatives of *framic kinesis*.<sup>104</sup>

There were a few times where the filming absolutely drove me insane...The way it was filmed was just awful, there was (*sic*) way too many film cuts that shouldn't have been there. I can't figure out what kind of effect the director was trying to get there, but it just angered me. I don't think it's a good idea if you're paying more attention to the editing than the dialog that's being said.

The Bazin paradigm provides a useful heuristic model by which to differentiate between discourse space in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The *Odyssey* adopts a realistic style, maintaining long shot distance from the action and allowing the interaction between characters to move the story along rather than transporting the audience into the scene through medium or close-up shots. In the following passage, for example, Nestor, his sons, and Telamachus enter the stage one after the other:

Νέστωρ αὐτότ' ἐφῖζε Γερήνιος, οὔρος Ἀχαιῶν,  
σκῆπτρον ἔχων. περὶ δ' υἷες ἀολλέες ἠγερέθοντο  
ἐκ θαλάμων ἐλθόντες, Ἐχέφρων τε Στρατίος τε  
Περσεύς τ' Ἄρητός τε καὶ ἀντίθεος Θρασυμήδης.  
τοῖσι δ' ἔπειθ' ἕκτος Πεισίστρατος ἦλυθεν ἦρως,  
πὰρ δ' ἄρα Τηλέμαχον θεοεΐκελον εἶσαν ἄγοντες.  
τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε Γερήνιος ἱππότης Νέστωρ: (*Od.* 3.411-17)

Gerenian Nestor, the Achaians' watcher,  
sat there holding his staff, and his sons coming out of their chambers  
gathered in a cluster about him, Echephron and Stratios,  
Perseus and Aretos and Thrasymedes the godlike,  
and sixth was the hero Peisistratos who came to join them.  
They brought out godlike Telemachus and seated him next them,  
and Nestor the Gerenian horseman began speaking to them:

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<sup>104</sup> Cortex, 2002. Cf. Kauffmann (1974: 70).

Each character suddenly appears as though he has been waiting in the wings,<sup>105</sup> consistent with the open story space of the *Odyssey*, which rarely seems to contain the action completely but rather, like a window, to frame it arbitrarily, leaving us uncertain as to what will materialize next. As Hurwit puts it:

The image set "within" the border [of an open frame] seems abbreviated, incomplete, severed....The visual effect of such representations...is to create a porthole through which one views only a portion of a long procession of figures seemingly marching on the other side of the tondo's decorative wall....presents a transient, passing show whose extent is not fully captured by the border."<sup>106</sup>

When the camera does move in the *Odyssey*,<sup>107</sup> it tends to pan between contiguous portions of story space rather than to cut between disparate discourse spaces,<sup>108</sup>

κῆρυξ δ' αὐτοῖσιν θάμ' ἐπώχετο οἰνοχοεύων. (*Od.* 1.143)

and a herald, going back and forth, poured the wine for them.

preserving the natural flow of time and leaving open “the points of interval that are the inevitable concomitant of every natural event.”<sup>109</sup>

Homer frequently lets the audience fill in these gaps themselves. In the following passage, for example, προσηύδα in line 507 presupposes that Penelope has not merely called (καλέσασα) Eumaios but that he has also come within earshot of her before she speaks:

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<sup>105</sup> Regarding the conflation of theatrical and cinematic metaphors, cf. Lowe (2000: 163-64).

<sup>106</sup> 1977: 6. Cf. Lowe (2000: 164).

<sup>107</sup> Regarding the theoretical basis for the “anachronistic” use of cinematic terms to describe cinema-like phenomena in verbal narrative, cf. Chatman (1978: 105); Landow (1987: 77-8); Richardson (1990), who refers to Homer’s “camera.”

<sup>108</sup> That is not to say, however, that Homer does not also employ panning in the *Iliad*, even in such a way as to produce a temporary sense of framic openendedness, as when the camera darts temporarily offstage to follow the trajectory of Paris’ helmet thrown by Menelaos (3.377) or Imbrios’ head thrown by Ajax (13.202-05). Likewise, the *Odyssey* is not entirely devoid of *Iliad*-like cutting (e.g. *Od.* 18.394-400). What is at issue, however, is the *preponderance* of realistic and montagistic tendencies in the two epics, respectively.

<sup>109</sup> Pudovkin, 1960: 90. Cf. *Ibid.* (83).

ἡ μὲν ἄρ' ὡς ἀγόρευε μετὰ δμῶησι γυναιξίν,  
ἡμένη ἐν θαλάμῳ: ὁ δ' ἐδείπνει δίος Ὀδυσσεύς:  
ἡ δ' ἐπὶ οἷ καλέσσασα προσηύδα διὸν ὑφορβόν: (*Od.* 17.505-07)

So Penelope, sitting up in her chamber, conversed  
with her serving women, while great Odysseus was eating his dinner.  
But now she summoned the noble swineherd to her, saying:

Sometimes, however, Homer himself occupies the implied interval between the first and last stages of an action with interstitial material. In Book 1, for example, Eurykleia carries a torch for Telemachus to illuminate the path to his bedroom. Homer represents the time it takes for the two characters to reach their goal, between the first and second use of the phrase ἄμ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας φέρε (428-34), with biographical information about Eurykleia:<sup>110</sup>

ἐνθ' ἔβη εἰς εὐνήν πολλὰ φρεσὶ μερμηρίζων.  
τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἄμ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας φέρε κέδν' εἰδυῖα  
Εὐρύκλει', Ὀπος θυγάτηρ Πεισηνορίδαο,  
τὴν ποτε Λαέρτης πρίατο κτεάτεσσιν ἐοῖσι  
πρωθήβην ἔτ' εὐῶσαν, ἑικοσάβοια δ' ἔδωκεν,  
ἴσα δέ μιν κεδνῇ ἀλόχῳ τίεν ἐν μεγάροισιν,  
εὐνή δ' οὐ ποτ' ἔμικτο, χόλον δ' ἀλέεινε γυναικός:  
ἡ οἱ ἄμ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας φέρε, (*Od.* 1.427-34)

There he went to go to bed, his heart full of problems,  
and devoted Eurykleia went with him, and carried the flaring torches.  
She was the daughter of Ops the son of Peisenor,  
and Laertes had bought her long ago with his own possessions  
when she was still in her first youth, and give twenty oxen for her,  
and he favored her in his house as much as his own devoted wife,  
but never slept with her, for fear of his wife's anger.  
She now carried the flaring torches for him,

While the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are both proto-cinematic from the standpoint of the Bazin paradigm, the *Iliad* lends itself more than the *Odyssey* to a dedicated study of

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. also *Od.* 1.428-34, 2.389-407, 3.360-65, 18.77-88, 90-4, and 153-56. Although these passages do not repeat the initial action verbatim as in the present case, they exploit the panning aesthetic in a similar manner.

narrative space, for it is montage rather than realism that achieves “the creation of a sense or meaning not proper to the images themselves but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition,”<sup>111</sup> and only the manipulation of frames can achieve “the needed shifting of attention”<sup>112</sup> that Münsterberg attributes to the cinema, but that applies equally well to the *Iliad*.<sup>113</sup> In his article, “*The Birth of a Nation: The Technique and Its Influence*,” Seymour Stern identifies Griffith as the chief architect of cinematic montage:

By crystallizing the basic principles of film technique, which Griffith himself created or discovered, *The Birth of a Nation* gave birth to the film as an art....The study of usages of movement and movement-forms on the screen could be almost completed from an examination of this one film.”<sup>114</sup>

Long before Griffith, however, there was Homer.

In the remaining chapters we shall consider four spatial devices that Homer employs in the *Iliad* to achieve with words what the West House Painter simulates through *stasis* and the film director actualizes through *kinesis*: “absolute control over the movements in his film.”<sup>115</sup> Each device involves the audience in a different relationship to the action and corresponds to one of the four types of movement adumbrated by the West House Painter. Decomposition (Chapter 2) provides access to the z axis of the spatial continuum through a series of progressively narrowing discourse spaces (long shot, medium shot, close-up), corresponding to the transition from close-up to long shot

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<sup>111</sup> Bazin, 1998a: 44.

<sup>112</sup> 1970: 33.

<sup>113</sup> On this priority in cinema, cf. Münsterberg (1970); Bobker (1974: 46). Although the *Iliad* is more montagistic than realistic, it also exhibits realistic tendencies. When, for example, Chryses walks along the beach in Book 1 and prays to Apollo (*Il.* 1.33-6), we see him do so from a consistently distant vantage-point; the meaning of the scene is generated solely by Chryses’ actions. The camera does not, for example, cut to his face, revealing tears in his eyes and thus heightening the emotional impact of the scene through extradiegetic means (for more on this scene, cf. pp. 129-31, below). Rather than invalidate the characterization of the *Iliad* as montagistic rather than realistic, however, this scene merely illustrates that some degree of stylistic overlap is possible between the two epics. This is true in cinema as well; cf. Youngblood (2001): “Antonioni is known for the detheatralization of cinema--yet he uses certain theater-like techniques.”

<sup>114</sup> 1979: 59, 63.

<sup>115</sup> Feldman, 1959: 124.

of the ship in Rooms 4 and 5, respectively. Intercutting (Chapter 3) keeps the audience at long shot range from the action and cuts between the Greek and Trojan zones of Iliadic story space. This corresponds to the visual alternation between towns A and B required by the spectator of the South wall frieze to acknowledge each group of meta-spectators. Both meta-audience (Chapter 4) and vignette (Chapter 5) transport the audience into the mind of a given character. Whereas the former (corresponding to the meta-spectatorship of both the protagonist *from* the ship and the inhabitants of towns A and B *of* the ship) presents the action through the character's *vision*, the latter (corresponding to the protagonist's visualization of the parallel world depicted on the East wall frieze) presents the action through the character's *imagination*.

One might suspect that the montagistic style of the *Iliad* merely reflects its military subject matter, requiring vivid close-ups of battlefield carnage and the sort of parallel action that Griffith canonized cinematically in "The Birth of a Nation":

...the conjoining of two complementary but opposite movements, seen at a tangent to each other...to create a sense of unleashed activity from all directions in...pursuit...and to step up the tempo of imminent violence."<sup>116</sup>

Military subject matter, however, does not determine the presentational itinerary of a given epic; one can treat it in the montagistic style of the *Iliad* or in the realistic style of the *Odyssey*. This is equally true in cinema, as Ebert's review of "Patton" makes clear:

...'Patton' is one of the most uncluttered of war movies...the battle scenes are seen in long shot, not personalized; they have the sweep of Victorian canvases instead of the hand-to-hand intimacy of "Platoon," "Saving Private Ryan" or "We Were Soldiers."<sup>117</sup>

In fact, Homer's use of decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette is not limited to the military scenes of the *Iliad*. In similes, for instance, the devices may be

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<sup>116</sup> Stern, 1979: 64.

<sup>117</sup> 2002.

utilized in contexts unrelated to battle. In Book 24, for example, Iris obeys Zeus' order to find Thetis in her maritime abode and to convince her to visit Zeus in Olympus. Her journey is compared to the trajectory of an ox-horn fishing-line:

ἦ δὲ μολυβδαίνῃ ἰκέλη ἐς βυσσὸν ὄρουσεν,  
ἦ τε κατ' ἀγραύλοιο βοῶς κέρασ ἐμβεβαυῖα  
ἔρχεται ὠμηστῆσιν ἐπ' ἰχθύσι κῆρα φέρουσα. (*Il.* 24.80-2)

She plummeted to the sea floor like a lead weight which, mounted along the horn of an ox who ranges the fields, goes downward and takes death with it to the raw-ravening fish.

While the simile does not specifically shift from long shot to close-up ranges, it depicts the sort of activity that, when it receives first-order dramatic treatment, lends itself to decomposition. And in the following simile, Homer represents through intercutting the activity of farmers rather than soldiers:

οἱ δ', ὥς τ' ἀμητῆρες ἐναντίοι ἀλλήλοισιν  
ὄγμον ἐλαύνωσιν ἀνδρὸς μάκαρος κατ' ἄρουραν  
πυρῶν ἢ κριθῶν: τὰ δὲ δράγματα ταρφέα πίπτει:  
ὥς Τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες  
δήουν, οὐδ' ἕτεροι μνώοντ' ὀλοοῖο φόβοιο. (*Il.* 11.67-71)

And the men, like two lines of reapers who, facing each other, drive their course all down the field of wheat or of barley for a man blessed in substance, and the cut swathes drop showering, so Trojans and Achaians driving in against one another cut men down, nor did either side think of disastrous panic.

As with the decompositional simile, the actual cutting from side to side is not specified.

The phrase ἐναντίοι ἀλλήλοισιν (67), however, implies that if the scene were to be presented fully it would indeed be done so through intercutting.

Meta-audience and vignette, on the other hand, transport the audience immediately into a given character's skin, and thus preclude the gradual progression from long shot to close-up or from arrow shot to sword stab ranges required for decomposition

and intercutting, respectively. When Agamemnon reviews his troops in Book 4, for example, he encounters the two Aiantes, who are surrounded by a “cloud of foot-soldiers”:

Ἀτρεΐδης δὲ παρώχεται γηθόσυνος κῆρ:  
ἦλθε δ' ἐπ' Αἰάντεσσι κιῶν ἀνὰ οὐλαμὸν ἀνδρῶν:  
τῶ δὲ κορυσσέσθην, ἄμα δὲ νέφος εἶπετο πεζῶν. (*Il.* 4.272-74)

Atreides, cheerful at heart, went onward.  
On his way through the thronging men he came to the Aiantes.  
These were armed, and about them went a cloud of foot-soldiers.

While this metaphor sufficiently expresses the magnitude of its referent, Homer's emphasis is more on the effect that it has on Agamemnon (and, by extension, on his audience) than on the phenomenon itself. To convey this emotion, however, requires more than what a mere statement of this fact could provide. Agamemnon's response to seeing these troops is an event, and requires a dramatic comparandum to encompass in more than a merely generic way. Homer achieves this through simile. He compares Agamemnon's experience to what a goatherd feels when he ascertains the signs of an impending storm:

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀπὸ σκοπιῆς εἶδεν νέφος αἰπόλος ἀνήρ  
ἐρχόμενον κατὰ πόντον ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς:  
τῶ δέ τ' ἀνευθεν ἐόντι μελάντερον ἤῤτε πίσσα  
φαίνεται' ἰὸν κατὰ πόντον, ἄγει δέ τε λαίλαπα πολλήν,  
ῥίγησέν τε ἰδῶν, ὑπὸ τε σπέος ἤλασε μῆλα:  
τοῖαι ἄμ' Αἰάντεσσι διοτρεφέων αἰζηῶν  
δήϊον ἐς πόλεμον πυκινὰ κίνυντο φάλαγγες  
κυάναει, σάκεσιν τε καὶ ἔγχεσι πεφρικυῖαι.  
καὶ τοὺς μὲν γήθησεν ἰδῶν κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων,  
καὶ σφεας φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα: (*Il.* 4.275-84)

As from his watching place a goatherd watches a cloud move  
on its way over the sea before the drive of the west wind;  
far away though he be he watches it, blacker than pitch is,



moving across the sea and piling the storm before it,  
and as he sees it he shivers and drives his flocks to a cavern;  
so about the two Aiantes moved the battalions,  
close-compacted of strong and god-supported young fighters,  
black, and jagged with spear and shield, to the terror of battle.  
Agamemnon the lord of men was glad when he looked at them,  
and he spoke aloud to them and addressed them in winged words:

Thus, Agamemnon's emotions, like the goatherd's, are complex, and cannot be reduced to the happiness stated (γήθησεν [283]) in the tenor of the simile. In fact, the goatherd is not happy at all to see the storm-cloud but rather struck with fear (ῥίγησέν [279]), the same verb used to describe Ajax when he fears that Hector's success against him in their duel in Book 16 is the result of divine will and reflects the ability of the gods to bring about whatever results they wish:

γνώ δ' Αἴας κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονα ῥίγησέν τε  
ἔργα θεῶν, ὃ ῥα πάγχυ μάχης ἐπὶ μήδεα κείρε  
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, Τρώεσσι δὲ βούλετο νίκην: (*Il.* 16.119-21)

And Ajax knew in his blameless heart, and shivered for knowing it, how this was gods' work, how Zeus high-thundering cut across the intention in all his battle, how he planned that the Trojans should conquer.

Therefore, the salient emotion of the simile in question is anxiety rather than happiness. Yet at the same time it qualifies Agamemnon's happiness, which inspires the simile in the first place. Thus, in this simile Homer employs meta-audience to foreground the spectatorial component of the narrative while avoiding apostrophe or some other equally phatic expedient, which would temporarily shatter the fictional dream. As such, the usefulness of the device is clearly not dependent upon the military subject matter of the *Iliad*.

Vignette, the imaginary equivalent to meta-audience, may also be employed in similes. In Book 4, for example, the color of the wound Menelaos receives from Pandaros' arrow is compared to that of an equestrian object:

ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνή φοίνικι μήνη  
Μηονίς ἢ ἐ Κάρειρα παρήϊον ἔμμεναι ἵππων: (*Il.* 4.141-42)

As when some Maionian woman or Karian with purple  
colours ivory, to make it a cheek piece for horses;

After introducing this παρήϊον, Homer transports us even further into the Elsewhere than the simile itself has already brought us,

κεῖται δ' ἐν θαλάμῳ, πολέες τέ μιν ἠρήσαντο  
ἵππῆες φορέειν: βασιλῆϊ δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,  
ἀμφοτέρων κόσμος θ' ἵππῳ ἐλατήρι τε κῦδος: (*Il.* 4.143-45)

it lies away in an inner room, and many a rider  
longs to have it, but it is laid up to be a king's treasure,  
two things, to be the beauty of the horse, the pride of the horseman:

requiring us to inhabit a realm two steps removed from the first-order reality of the primary narrative, on a meta-narrative level one step removed from the fantasy-realm initially visualized in lines 141-42. Homer's transposition of the four devices to the simile-realm of the *Iliad* underscores their centrality to the extradiegetic component of the narrative despite a diegetic context that accommodates them seamlessly and ostensibly inevitably.

Homer uses decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette to focus the audience's attention wherever on the dramatic canvas he wishes to, a prerogative he shares with the filmmaker and which distinguishes them both from the playwright. To ascertain this aspect of Homeric artistry, we are concerned with the direct experience of the *Iliad* rather than with data that can be deduced from a paraphrase of this experience.

That is, we are concerned with space rather than time. Whereas the execution of each of the devices requires time to unfold, the salient dimension from the standpoint of reception is space, because, as Arnheim puts it:

...it takes things to serve as vehicles for action and...therefore in perception things are prior to what they do. Things, however, dwell in space, whereas time applies to action.<sup>118</sup>

In the *Iliad* we watch characters watch (meta-audience), imagine (vignette), and meet (intercutting) each other, and ourselves, as surrogate characters, penetrate the scene (decomposition), all by means of the “vehicles for action” that are discourse spaces. These four devices serve as the means by which Homer entrenches his audience in the action and engages them in a drama whose impact cannot be epitomized, reduced to facts *about* this experience. According to Samuel Eliot Bassett:

The cinema has at last made possible an epic drama, but must go to Homer before it can fully realize it.<sup>119</sup>

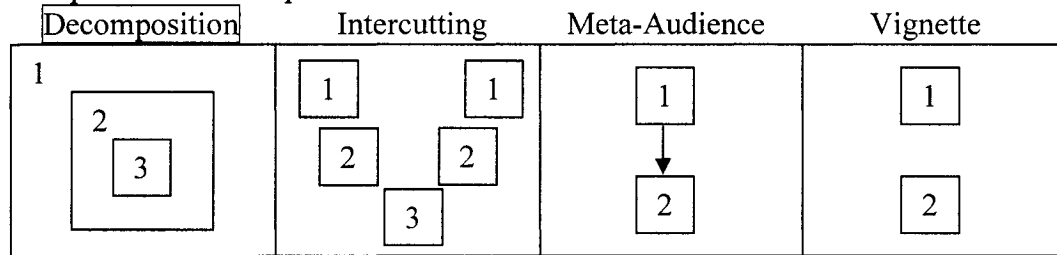
Just as the frame is the primary link between audience and action, so the *kinesis* of frames is the basis for a dedicated approach to narrative space that privileges this fundamental relationship.

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<sup>118</sup> 1986: 78.

<sup>119</sup> 1938: 48.

## Chapter 2: Decomposition



“Homer...disperses the image of his object over a kind of history of it.” (Lessing, 1984: 83)

“Decomposition” is the term used by cinema theorists to describe the gradual progression of frames from a more or less distant to a more or less proximate perspective on a given scene.<sup>120</sup> Early filmmakers considered decomposition, and in particular the use of the close-up, to be the most revolutionary aspect of the cinematic art form,<sup>121</sup> transcending the inherent z-axis staticity of theater.<sup>122</sup> It is used, however, quite frequently by Homer, and especially in the *Iliad*.<sup>123</sup> In the *Iliad* Homer rarely gives the audience the impression that they are watching a scene unfold the way it would appear to them on a theater stage. Rather, he transports them into and back out from the action while at the same time preserving their real-world identity as distant spectators. Nick Browne expresses this paradox in cinematic terms:

The filmic image...implies the ambiguity of a double origin—both from my literal place as spectator and from the place where the camera is within the imaginative space.<sup>124</sup>

Decomposition usually begins with a long shot or extreme long shot and ends with a close-up or extreme close-up, with one or more intermediary shots (such as medium, medium long, or medium close-up) interspersed between them:<sup>125</sup>

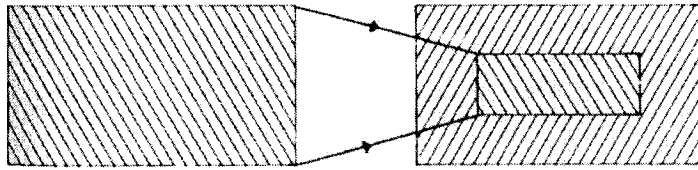
<sup>120</sup> Cf. Feldman (1952: 100).

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Feldman (1952: 98); Arnheim (1957: 76).

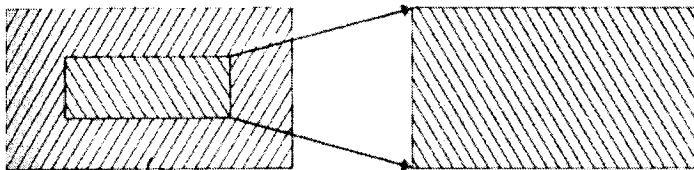
<sup>122</sup> Arnheim (1957: 81, 85). That is not to say that theater completely lacks the decompositional impulse. Lutwack (1984: 59), for example, sees it in Shakespeare.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Edwards (1987: 86); Richardson (1990: 121).

<sup>124</sup> 1999: 161.



The opposite process, the progression from close-up to long shot, is occasionally used to reveal a scene to the audience gradually rather than instantaneously,<sup>126</sup>



as when the camera pulls back at the beginning of the movie “A Clockwork Orange”:

The opening memorable image is an intimate closeup of the blue staring eyes and smirking face of ebullient young punker Alex...As the camera zoom pulls back, the anti-hero character with the malevolent, cold stare is shown sitting amidst his kingly court of teenaged gang of "droogs."<sup>127</sup>

In the scene between Hera and Hephaestus at the end of Book 1 of the *Iliad*, Homer gradually pulls back, like Stanley Kubrick’s camera, from a close-up of a small object (κύπελλον [596]) and reveals a meta-audience (τοῖς ἄλλοισι θεοῖς...πᾶσιν [597]) about whose presence we were previously unaware:<sup>128</sup>

ὥς φάτο, μείδησεν δὲ θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη,  
 μειδήσασα δὲ παιδὸς ἐδέξατο χειρὶ κύπελλον:  
 αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖς ἄλλοισι θεοῖς ἐνδέξια πᾶσιν  
 ὦνοχόει γλυκὸν νέκταρ ἀπὸ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων: (*Il.* 1.595-98)

He spoke, and the goddess of the white arms Hera smiled at him,  
 and smiling she accepted the goblet out of her son's hand.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Feldman (1958: 101). This capacity of the Homeric audience to function simultaneously as static spectator and dynamic participant is encoded in the very language Homer uses, and in particular in the term *δι/φορη*, which means either “chair” or “chariot,” depending upon the context. In their capacity as narrative agents, the audience occupies a *δι/φορη* in the sense of a “chair” or a “chariot” depending upon whether the action is presented to them from long shot or close-up range, respectively.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Arnheim (1957: 79-80).

<sup>127</sup> Dirks, 1996.

<sup>128</sup> Along these lines, Edwards (1987: 87) points out the proto-cinematic nature of “the final receding view of Hector's tomb (24.804).”

Thereafter beginning from the left he poured drinks for the other gods, dipping up from the mixing bowl the sweet nectar.

Although decomposition entertains frame-change in both directions, from distant to close (approach decomposition) and from close to distant (retreat decomposition),<sup>129</sup> the former is more common in the *Iliad* than the latter. In either case, the fundamental units of this device are the close-up and the long shot.<sup>130</sup> The long shot<sup>131</sup> represents the default distance of the audience from the action, to which they are subsequently granted increased intimacy through medium shots and close-ups. It provides the audience with the view they would have if a scene were to be presented to them in a theater.<sup>132</sup> The most common terms Homer uses to establish long shot range fall under three categories: characters,<sup>133</sup> landmarks,<sup>134</sup> and implements.<sup>135</sup> The close-up<sup>136</sup> brings the audience

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<sup>129</sup> Cf. Feldman (1952: 100).

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Arnheim (1957: 79).

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Feldman (1952: 182).

<sup>132</sup> Since we are speaking of the “theater of the mind,” however, the Homeric audience’s perspective on the action encompasses a much greater amount of territory than a physical theater can, accommodating, for example, such spectacles as “...the long shot of the burning pyres that represent the results of Apollo’s plague (1.52)...” (Edwards, 1987: 87); cf. Lowe (2000: 42).

<sup>133</sup> army (στρατός)

*Il.* 4.436 ὡς Τρώων ἀλαλητός ἀνά στρατὸν εὐρὺν ὀρώρει:

*Il.* 4.436 the crying of the Trojans went up through the wide army.

assembly (ἀγορή)

*Il.* 7.345 Τρώων δ’ αὐτ’ ἀγορῆ γένητ’ Ἴλιου ἐν πόλει ἄκρη

*Il.* 7.345 Now there was an assembly of Trojans high on the city of Ilion

people (λαός)

*Il.* 7.306 τῶ δὲ διακρινθέντε ὃ μὲν μετὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν

*Il.* 7.306 So separating, Aias went among the Achaian people,

throng (ὄμιλος)

*Il.* 11.246 δὴ τότε γ’ Ἀτρεΐδης Ἀγαμέμνων ἐξενάριξε,

*Il.* 11.246 Now Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stripped him and went back

*Il.* 11.247 βῆ δὲ φέρων ἀν’ ὄμιλον Ἀχαιῶν τεύχεα καλὰ.

*Il.* 11.247 to the throng of the Achaians bearing the splendid armour.

<sup>134</sup> plain (πεδῖον)

*Il.* 6.2 πολλὰ δ’ ἄρ’ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθ’ ἴθυσε μάχη πεδίοιο

*Il.* 6.2 and the battle veered greatly now one way, now in another,

sky (οὐρανός)

*Il.* 19.257 εὐξάμενος δ’ ἄρα εἶπεν ἰδὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν:

*Il.* 19.257 He spoke before them in prayer gazing into the wide sky:

within touching range of a character or object, providing firsthand access to, rather than merely spectatorial distance from,<sup>137</sup> the action, functioning either to intensify<sup>138</sup> or to generate suspense within<sup>139</sup> a given scene.<sup>140</sup> The most common close-up terms fall under two categories: body-parts<sup>141</sup> and implements.<sup>142</sup>

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sea (πόντος, θάλασσα), shore (θίς):

*Il.* 1.34 βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης:

*Il.* 1.34 and went silently away beside the murmuring sea beach.

river (ποταμός)

*Il.* 21.303 ...οὐδέ μιν ἔσχευ

*Il.* 21.303 ...the river wide running

*Il.* 21.304 εὐρὺ ῥέων ποταμός...

*Il.* 21.304 could not stop him now...

shelter (κλισία)

*Il.* 2.399 κάπνισσάν τε κατὰ κλισίας, καὶ δεῖπνον ἔλοντο.

*Il.* 2.399 they kindled the fires' smoke along the shelters, and took their dinner,

<sup>135</sup> ship (ναῦς)

*Il.* 10.136 βῆ δ' ἰέναι κατὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων.

*Il.* 10.136 and went on his way down the ships of the bronze-armoured Achaians.

horse (ἵππος)

*Il.* 4.365 εὗρε δὲ Τυδέος υἱὸν ὑπέρθυμον Διομήδεα

*Il.* 4.365 He came on the son of Tydeus, high-spirited Diomedes,

*Il.* 4.366 ἑσταότ' ἐν θ' ἵπποισι καὶ ἄρμασι κολλητοῖσι:

*Il.* 4.366 standing among the compacted chariots and by the horses,

fire (πῦρ)

*Il.* 8.553 οἱ δὲ μέγα φρονέοντες ἐπὶ πτολέμοιο γεφύρη

*Il.* 8.553 So with hearts made high these sat night-long by the outworks

*Il.* 8.554 εἶατο παννύχιοι, πυρὰ δὲ σφισι καίετο πολλά.

*Il.* 8.554 of battle, and their watchfires blazed numerous about them.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Feldman (1952: 182).

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Goffman (1974: 144); Arnheim (1957: 85); Münsterberg (1970: 38).

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Pudovkin (1960: 90).

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Chatman (1981b: 124-25).

<sup>140</sup> For Münsterberg (1970: 37) the close-up represents the most unique aspect of cinematic artistry.

<sup>141</sup> eye (ὄσσε)

*Il.* 1.199 θάμβησεν δ' Ἀχιλεὺς, μετὰ δ' ἐτράπετ', αὐτίκα δ' ἔγνω

*Il.* 1.199 Achilles in amazement turned about, and straightway

*Il.* 1.200 Παλλάδ' Ἀθηναίην: δεινὴ δὲ οἱ ὄσσε φάανθεν:

*Il.* 1.200 knew Pallas Athena and the terrible eyes shining.

head (κεφαλή)

*Il.* 24.682 στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς καὶ μιν πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν:

*Il.* 24.682 He stood above his head and spoke a word to him, saying:

hand (χείρ)

*Il.* 14.232 ἔν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζεν:

*Il.* 14.232 She clung fast to his hand and spoke a word and called him by name: 'Sleep,

tear (δάκρυον)

Because the verbal equivalent of a long shot, medium shot, or close-up view of a character or object is achieved through words rather than pictures, there are theoretically as many potential distances between audience and action as there are characters or objects to refer to. Therefore, to avoid spatial ambiguity and to increase the degree of control he exerts over his audience's attention, Homer limits the number of terms he uses with any degree of regularity to represent long shot and close-up distances,<sup>143</sup> thereby compensating for the inherent semantic fluidity of the verbal sign.<sup>144</sup> This endows the privileged terms that survive this process with a pseudo-iconic quality that, according to cinematographer Edward Dmytryk, is exclusive to cinema:

A semantic axiom states that *words* are signs for *things*, but only in a generic sense. To make things more specific words must be modified by *other* words, and it often requires a paragraph of modifiers to pin a word down to a sign of a *particular* thing. *Shots*, on the other hand, are by their nature already signs for particular things—a shot of an airliner, for instance, will identify it specifically as, say, an American Airlines 747 rather than just an "airplane"—and are therefore much more real than words, semantically speaking.<sup>145</sup>

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*Il.* 6.459 καί ποτέ τις εἴπησιν ἰδῶν κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσαν:

*Il.* 6.459 and some day seeing you shedding a tear a man will say of you:

<sup>142</sup> sword (ξίφος)

*Il.* 3.361 Ἀτρείδης δὲ ἐρυσσάμενος ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον

*Il.* 3.361 Drawing his sword with the silver nails, the son of Atreus

spear (δόρυ, ἔγχος)

*Il.* 4.490 Πριαμίδης καθ' ὄμιλον ἀκόντισεν ὀξείῃ δουρί.

*Il.* 4.490 Priam's son, made a cast at him in the crowd with the sharp spear

bow (βιός)

*Il.* 1.49 δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο:

*Il.* 1.49 Terrible was the clash that rose from the bow of silver.

helmet (κόρυς)

*Il.* 3.369 ἧ καὶ ἐπαΐξας κόρυθος λάβεν ἵπποδασείης,

*Il.* 3.369 He spoke, and flashing forward laid hold of the horse-haired helmet

<sup>143</sup> The medium shot ("A medium shot neither magnifies nor reduces the size of what is seen upon the screen...the medium shot...regarded as the norm." [Feldman, 1952: 182]) is more ambiguous than either the long shot or the close-up, occupying the intermediary region between them, spanning the range from medium close-up to medium long shot. As such, the medium shot resists codification and is most often represented simply by naming a character either out of the blue or within a decompositional series.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Culler (1986: 50).

<sup>145</sup> 1988: 87.



By reducing the shot repertoire at his disposal to a small number of items representing long shot and close-up distances, however, Homer constructs a spatial vocabulary whose terms attain the “real” quality Dmytryk attributes to pictures.<sup>146</sup> Each spatial *sema*<sup>147</sup> possesses a kind of iconic quality; by directing our eye to the same specific region of the narrative canvas each time it is mentioned, it attains a power over our perceptive machinery analogous to that of the cinematic image. Like a close-up of a hand that fills the screen, certain Homeric *semata* focus our attention no less unambiguously upon a particular object than a photographic enlargement does. This enables Homer to exert proportionately greater control over his narrative canvas through the immediacy of *enargeia*.

Homer achieves shot variety in several ways, exploiting the scenographic precision that his spatial code makes available to him. Indeed, the use of close-ups and long shots is not limited to decomposition. Therefore, before we turn to decomposition proper we should consider how Homer uses these shots in combinations other than compositionally *per se*.<sup>148</sup> Sometimes he cuts immediately from long shot to close-up, without the use of medium shots to mitigate the transition.<sup>149</sup> At the beginning of Book 1, for example, when Chryses travels to the Greek camp to ransom his daughter Chryseis, the frame shifts between ἐπὶ νῆας (12) and ἐν χερσὶν (14), two of the most frequently used phrases to express long shot and close-up distances, respectively:

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. Eades/Létoublon (1999: 312); Lutwack (1984: 17); Fischer-Lichte (1992: 110); Osadnik (1994: 213); Pudovkin (1960: 23).

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Foley (1999, 13-14).

<sup>148</sup> The alternation between close-ups and long shots to vary the presentation of the action and to avoid monotony is a central preoccupation of cinema (cf. Arnheim [1957: 81]). As Joseph Feldman (1952: 204) points out: “It is as important to create the rhythm of a movement or an action in a film by modulating the cutting beat as it is to represent it visually and pictorially. A photograph of a movement or an action in a film is a dead thing until it has been rendered alive by rhythm. Cf. also Pudovkin (1960: 131).

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Arnheim (1957: 83).

Ἀτρεΐδης: ὁ γὰρ ἦλθε θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν  
λυσόμενός τε θύγατρα φέρων τ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα,  
στέμματ' ἔχων ἐν χερσὶν ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος  
χρυσέω ἀνὰ σκήπτρῳ, καὶ ἐλίσσετο πάντας Ἀχαιοὺς,  
Ἀτρεΐδα δὲ μάλιστα δύο, κοσμήτορε λαῶν: (*Il.* 1.12-16)

when he came beside the fast ships of the Achaians to ransom  
back his daughter, carrying gifts beyond count and holding  
in his hands wound on a staff of gold the ribbons of Apollo  
who strikes from afar, and supplicated all the Achaians,  
but above all Atreus' two sons, the marshals of the people:

Homer may also cut from long shot to medium shot, foregoing close-up range altogether.

This is most effective when the dramatic focus is on extensive dialogue, when the  
conceptual dimension of the narrative is emphasized:

οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ἤγερθεν ὁμηγερέες τ' ἐγένοντο,  
τοῖσι δ' ἀνιστάμενος μετέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς: (*Il.* 1.57-58)

Now when they were all assembled in one place together,  
Achilles of the swift feet stood up among them and spoke forth:

A shot from one range, however, does not always gravitate toward another.

Homer frequently combines long shots or close-ups in clusters, to maintain a consistent  
distance between audience and action. In the following scene we travel to several  
different locations in a series of long shots linked seamlessly rather than interrupted  
abruptly by close-ups or medium shots, fostering a contemplative survey of the distant  
action and, in lines 488-89, putting the otherwise larger-than-life Achilles into proper  
scenographic (and cosmic) perspective:<sup>150</sup>

ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως,  
καὶ τότε ἔπειτ' ἀνάγοντο μετὰ στρατὸν εὐρὺν Ἀχαιῶν: (*Il.* 1.477-78)

ἦ δ' ἔθεεν κατὰ κῦμα διαπρήσσουσα κέλευθον.  
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ' ἴκοντο μετὰ στρατὸν εὐρὺν Ἀχαιῶν,

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<sup>150</sup> Stern (1979:67) attributes this technique to Griffith.

νῆα μὲν οἷ γε μέλαιναν ἐπ' ἠπείροιο ἔρυσσαν  
ύψοῦ ἐπὶ ψαμάθοις, ὑπὸ δ' ἔρματα μακρὰ τάνυσσαν:  
αὐτοὶ δ' ἐσκίδναντο κατὰ κλισίας τε νέας τε.  
αὐτὰρ ὁ μήνιε νηυσὶ παρήμενος ὠκυπόροισι  
διογενῆς Πηλέως υἱὸς πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς: (*Il.* 1.483-89)

But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,  
they put forth to sea toward the wide camp of the Achaians.

She ran swiftly cutting across the swell her pathway.  
But when they had come back to the wide camp of the Achaians  
they hauled the black ship up on the mainland, high up  
on the sand, and underneath her they fixed the long props.  
Afterwards they scattered to their own ships and their shelters.  
But that other still sat in anger beside his swift ships,  
Peleus' son divinely born, Achilles of the swift feet.

This long shot cluster prepares us for Thetis' ascent to Olympus in the following lines and a decompositional series culminating in a close-up of her hand touching Zeus' chin as she supplicates him to grant Achilles' request to punish the Greeks for Agamemnon's affront to his honor. The consistent use of long shots in the previous scene increases the already substantial impact produced by the contrast between long shot and close-up in the decompositional series itself.

Close-ups can also be combined over two or more shots to emphasize the intimacy achieved between the characters in question. When Aphrodite returns to Olympus after being wounded by Diomedes in Book 5, for example, the close-up cluster preceding Dione's words adds pathos to the scene by drawing the audience into the exclusive emotional sphere of mother and daughter:

ἦ δ' ἐν γούνασι πῖπτε Διώνης δῖ' Ἀφροδίτη  
μητρὸς ἐῆς: ἦ δ' ἀγκὰς ἐλάζετο θυγατέρα ἦν,  
χειρὶ τέ μιν κατέρεξεν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἐκ τ' ὀνόμαζε: (*Il.* 5.370-72)

and now bright Aphrodite fell at the knees of her mother,  
Dione, who gathered her daughter into the arms' fold  
and stroked her with her hand and called her by name and spoke to her:

When Achilles prays to his mother in Book 1, the continuity of close-up range between lines 357 and 361 is preserved despite the intermediary transition to Thetis' maritime abode, emphasizing the transcendent bond between the two characters, impervious to mere physical distances:

ὥς φάτο δάκρυ χέων, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε πότνια μήτηρ  
ἡμένη ἐν βένθεσσιν ἀλὸς παρὰ πατρὶ γέροντι:  
καρπαλίμως δ' ἀνέδυστο πολίης ἀλὸς ἡὔτ' ὀμίχλη,  
καὶ ῥα πάροιθ' αὐτοῖο καθέζετο δάκρυ χέοντος,  
χειρὶ τέ μιν κατέρεξε ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε: (*Il.* 1.357-61)

So he spoke in tears and the lady his mother heard him  
as she sat in the depths of the sea at the side of her aged father,  
and lightly she emerged like a mist from the grey water.  
She came and sat beside him as he wept, and stroked him  
with her hand and called him by name and spoke to him:

Although Homer employs an extensive repertoire of long shots and close-ups to vary his presentation, he is nevertheless best able to exploit the full range of z-axis artistry by including intermediary shots between these two extreme distances. It is thus to decomposition proper that we now turn.

Decomposition is more common in the *Iliad* than in the *Odyssey*, corresponding to their montagistic and realistic orientations, respectively. While the *Iliad* promotes z-axis penetration, the *Odyssey* consistently keeps the audience at bay, providing two- rather than three-dimensional access to the action. Therefore, Odyssean close-ups usually play a functional rather than stylistic role, serving more to accentuate the emotional content of a given scene than to transport the audience into the action. Thus, when Homer uses close-ups in the *Odyssey*, he frequently dampens their impact by qualifying them

with abstract adjectives that impart to them a melodramatic quality. When he uses the term “tears,” for example, he often accompanies it with adverbial, adjectival, and verbal emotional cues such as *στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι* (5.83), *ἐλεινὸν* (8.531), and *ὀδύρετο* (16.214), respectively, resulting in a receptive detachment from the image in question that privileges its conceptual rather than its perceptual dimension, a tendency that Peisistratos makes overt in his encomium to tears in Book 4, which induces us to take his use of *δάκρυ* in line 198, following *ὀδυρόμενος* (192) and *κλαίειν* (196), figuratively rather than literally:

καὶ νῦν, εἴ τί που ἔστι, πίθοιό μοι: οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε  
 τέρπομ' ὀδυρόμενος μεταδόρπιος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἤως  
 ἔσσειται ἠριγένεια: νεμεσῶμαί γε μὲν οὐδὲν  
 κλαίειν ὅς κε θάνησι βροτῶν καὶ πότμον ἐπίσπη.  
 τοῦτό νυ καὶ γέρας οἶον οἰζυροῖσι βροτοῖσι,  
 κείρασθαί τε κόμην βαλέειν τ' ἀπὸ δάκρυ παρειῶν. (*Od.* 4.193-98)

So now, if it may be, would you do me a favor? For my part  
 I have no joy in tears after dinnertime. There will always  
 be a new dawn tomorrow. Yet I can have no objection  
 to tears for any mortal who dies and goes to his destiny.  
 And this is the only consolation we wretched mortals  
 can give, to cut our hair and let the tears roll down our faces.

That is not to say, however, that the *Odyssey* does not occasionally exploit z-axis *kinesis* as well, as in the following use of retreat decomposition, which achieves a similar effect as the Hephaestus passage quoted above:

ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' Ἀρήτης βάλε γούνασι χειῖρας Ὀδυσσεύς,  
 καὶ τότε δῆ ῥ' αὐτοῖο πάλιν χύτο θέσφατος ἀήρ.  
 οἱ δ' ἄνεω ἐγένοντο, δόμον κάτα φῶτα ἰδόντες:  
 θαύμαζον δ' ὀρόωντες. ὁ δ' ἐλλιτάνευεν Ὀδυσσεύς: (*Od.* 7.142-45)

Odysseus clasped Arete's knees in his arms, and at that time  
 the magical and surrounding mist was drifted from him,  
 and all fell silent through the house when they saw the man there,

and they wondered looking on him, and Odysseus made his entreaty:

In such cases, however, the transition from one range to another is abrupt, unrelieved by intermediary distances, presenting the scene as economically as possible. When Menelaos encounters Telemachus in Book 4, for example, the process is abbreviated, like a cinematic jump cut:<sup>151</sup>

βῆ δ' ἴμεν ἐκ θαλάμοιο θεῶν ἐναλίγκιος ἄντην,  
Τηλεμάχῳ δὲ παρῖζεν, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε: (*Od.* 4.310-11)

He went on his way from the chamber, like a god in presence,  
and sat down by Telemachus and spoke to him and named him:

While decomposition is a z-axis phenomenon, enabling the audience to penetrate the action, the *Odyssey* compensates for its predominant two-dimensionality by employing a kind of x-axis substitute for its Iliadic counterpart. In this case, however, the audience is invited into the action, not directly as with decomposition proper, but rather indirectly, through a character's own meta-z-axis perspective. This diegetic variety of decomposition corresponds to the *Odyssey*'s horizontal orientation, according to which interiors are constantly penetrated by characters within the story. It reveals itself most conspicuously in the five ecphrases of the *Odyssey*, all of which describe the penetration of an enclosure, whether a cave (Calypso's [5.63-74]), a palace (Antinoos' [7.81-132]), or a harbor (Goat Island [9.116-41], Land of the Laistrygones [10.87-99], Ithaca [13.96-112]). In each case the decompositional process culminates in Odysseus either walking or sailing into a given interior. Thus, Homer adapts this originally montagistic device to a realistic context, linking discrete spaces through panning<sup>152</sup> rather than cutting, thereby distinguishing itself from Iliadic decomposition.

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<sup>151</sup> Cf. Phillips (1999: 572).

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Chatman (1978: 101-02).

The most common decompositional series in the *Iliad* is the transition from long shot to medium shot to close-up, in which a character moves progressively closer to another character and ultimately engages him or her in conversation. Often an immortal descends from Olympus and locates, approaches, and addresses a mortal within medium or close-up range, as in Book 2 when Dream obeys Zeus' request to visit Agamemnon and to persuade him to urge his troops to leave Troy:

ὥς φάτο, βῆ δ' ἄρ' ὄνειρος ἐπεὶ τὸν μῦθον ἄκουσε:  
καρπαλίμως δ' ἵκανε θεὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,  
βῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα: τὸν δ' ἐκίχανεν  
εὕδοντ' ἐν κλισίῃ, περὶ δ' ἀμβρόσιος κέχυθ' ὕπνος.  
στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς Νηληϊῶ υἱ ἑοικώς (*Il.* 2.16-20)

So he spoke, and Dream listened to his word and descended.  
Lightly he came down beside the swift ships of the Achaians  
and came to Agamemnon the son of Atreus. He found him  
sleeping within his shelter in a cloud of immortal slumber.  
Dream stood then beside his head in the likeness of Nestor,

This process can also be reversed, however, as when Ares ascends to Olympus to seek Zeus' support after being wounded by Diomedes on the Trojan plain:<sup>153</sup>

οἷη δ' ἐκ νεφέων ἐρεβεννὴ φαίνεται ἀτῆρ  
καύματος ἐξ ἀνέμοιο δυσσαέος ὄρνυμένοιο,  
τοῖος Τυδεΐδη Διομήδεϊ χάλκεος Ἄρης  
φαίνεθ' ὁμοῦ νεφέεσσιν ἰὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν.  
καρπαλίμως δ' ἵκανε θεῶν ἕδος αἰπὺν Ὀλυμπον,  
πὰρ δὲ Διὶ Κρονίῳνι καθέζετο θυμὸν ἀχεύων,  
δεῖξεν δ' ἀμβροτον αἷμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὠτειλῆς, (*Il.* 5.864-70)

As when out of the thunderhead the air shows darkening  
after a day's heat when the stormy wind uprises,

<sup>153</sup> In lines 5.793-99, Athena locates Diomedes and initiates a decompositional series that likewise concludes with an extreme close-up of a wound. In the present case, however, Athena begins her search, not from Olympus but having already descended to the Trojan plain with Hera in line 769. The significance of the fact that this construction constitutes a reverse-image of the Ares scene in every detail except the provenience of the deity provides an interesting adumbration of Odyssean protocol, when Athena's earth-bound status becomes the rule rather than the exception.

thus to Tydeus' son Diomedes Ares the brazen  
showed as he went up with the clouds into the wide heaven.  
Lightly he came to the gods' citadel, headlong Olympus,  
and sat down beside Kronian Zeus, grieving in his spirit,  
and showed him the immortal blood dripping from the spear cut.

Because the decompositional process represents a fundamental relationship between the audience and the action that transcends any particular subject matter it might deal with, the device occasionally manifests itself on the microscopic level as well. In Book 16, for example, Homer underscores Achilles' rare appearance within his shelter by presenting his actions there decompositionally, although involving uncustomary items for this purpose. First the audience penetrates Achilles' shelter,

...αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς  
βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐς κλισίην, χηλοῦ δ' ἀπὸ πῶμ' ἀνέφερε... (Il. 16.220-21)

...But meanwhile Achilleus  
went off into his shelter, and lifted the lid from a lovely chest...

then the chest within his shelter,

ἔνθα δέ οἱ δέπας ἔσκε τετυγμένον... (Il. 16.225)

τό ῥα τότε' ἐκ χηλοῖο λαβῶν... (Il. 16.228)

Inside this lay a wrought goblet...

Taking this now out of the chest...

and finally the goblet within the chest:

...ἀφύσσατο δ' αἶθοπα οἶνον. (Il. 16.230)

...he poured shining wine [into the goblet].

While most decompositional series involve the gradual unfolding of a single action, the momentum from long shot to close-up is so strong that it occasionally violates this principle and extends from a long shot of one subject to a close-up of another subject.



This phenomenon occurs in cinema as well. In the movie “Heaven,” for example, the protagonist Philippa walks briskly down a long corridor, followed by an extremely slow tracking shot. By the time she reaches the end of the corridor and turns left, the camera remains far behind, much closer to where it began than to the end of the corridor. Once she takes the turn, we cut to the interior of a public restroom, facing a door through which she enters immediately. As she approaches us the camera continues creeping along toward her at apparently the same speed as it was moving along the corridor. Thus, although the scene has changed from the corridor to the bathroom, the camera movement remains the same, as though operating autonomously, according to its own transcendent agenda. This variety of decomposition also occurs in the *Iliad*, when a series begins in one milieu but then at some point switches to another without breaking sequence. For example, in the lines leading up to the Aphrodite/Dione encounter mentioned above, the scene shifts from a long shot of Iris ascending to Olympus and feeding her horses, to a medium shot of Aphrodite and Dione, and finally to a close-up of Dione’s hand:

αἶψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἴκοντο θεῶν ἔδος αἰπὺν Ὀλυμπον:  
 ἔνθ' ἵππους ἔστησε ποδὴνεμος ὠκέα Ἴρις  
 λύσασ' ἐξ ὀρέων, παρὰ δ' ἀμβρόσιον βάλεν εἶδαρ:  
 ἦ δ' ἐν γούνασι πίπτε Διώνης δὶ Ἀφροδίτη  
 μητρὸς ἑῆς: ἦ δ' ἀγκὰς ἐλάζετο θυγατέρα ἦν,  
 χειρὶ τέ μιν κατέρεξεν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἐκ τ' ὀνόμαζε: (*Il.* 5.367-72)

Now as they came to sheer Olympus, the place of the immortals,  
 there swift Iris the wind-footed reined in her horses  
 and slipped them from the yoke and threw fodder immortal before them,  
 and now bright Aphrodite fell at the knees of Dione,  
 her mother, who gathered her daughter into the arms' fold  
 and stroked her with her hand and called her by name and spoke to her:

The transition between lines 369 and 370 sustains the decompositional process despite a change in subjects. This also occurs at the end of Book 24, when Priam returns to Troy

with Hector's corpse and Homer cuts from a long shot of the singers and women, to a medium shot of the grieving Andromache, and to a close-up of Hector's head:

ὥς ἔφαθ', οἱ δὲ διέστησαν καὶ εἶξαν ἀπήνη.  
οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ εἰσάγαγον κλυτὰ δώματα, τὸν μὲν ἔπειτα  
τρητοῖς ἐν λεχέεσσι θέσαν, παρὰ δ' εἶσαν ἀοιδούς  
θρήνων ἐξάρχους, οἳ τε στονόεσσαν ἀοιδὴν  
οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἐθρήνεον, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες.  
τῆσιν δ' Ἀνδρομάχη λευκώλενος ἦρχε γόοιο  
Ἐκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο κάρη μετὰ χερσὶν ἔχουσα: (*Il.* 24.718-24)

So he spoke, and they stood apart and made way for the wagon.  
And when they had brought him inside the renowned house, they laid him  
then on a carved bed, and seated beside him the singers  
who were to lead the melody in the dirge,  
and to chant the song of sorrow, and the women were mourning beside them.  
Andromache of the white arms led the lamentation  
of the women, and held in her arms the head of manslaughtering Hector:<sup>154</sup>

A decompositional series is often followed by one character (usually the one who finds the other) addressing another character (usually the one who is found), after which one of four scenarios is possible. In the most typical construction, the addressee heeds the speaker's advice and simply initiates the behavior advocated by his or her words, as when Athena urges Odysseus to prevent the Achaeans from taking to heart Agamemnon's recommendation to abandon the war and return to Greece:

βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων ἀΐξασα:  
καρπαλίμως δ' ἴκανε θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν.  
εὗρεν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆα Διῖ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντον  
ἔσταότ': οὐδ' ὅ γε νηὸς ἐϋσσέλμοιο μελαίνης  
ἄπτειτ', ἐπεὶ μιν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἴκανεν:  
ἀγχοῦ δ' ἴσταμένη προσέφη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη: (*Il.* 2.166-72)

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<sup>154</sup> The impact of this final image is increased by the evocation of Hector's corpse earlier in Book 24 by Priam (406-09, 553-54) and Hermes (411-21) by means of a device called vignette, which is treated in Chapter 6.

ὥς φάθ', ὃ δὲ ξυνέηκε θεᾶς ὄπα φωνησάσης,  
βῆ δὲ θέειν, ἀπὸ δὲ χλαῖναν βάλε: τὴν δ' ἐκόμισσε  
κῆρυξ Εὐρυβάτης Ἴθακήσιος ὅς οἱ ὀπήδει: (Il. 2.182-84)

[Athena] went in speed down the peaks of Olympus,  
and lightly she arrived beside the fast ships of the Achaians.  
There she came on Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in counsel,  
standing still; he had laid no hand upon his black, strong-benched  
vessel, since disappointment touched his heart and his spirit.  
Athena of the grey eyes stood beside him and spoke to him:

So she spoke, and he knew the voice of the goddess speaking  
and went on the run, throwing aside his cloak, which was caught up  
by Eurybates the herald of Ithaka who followed him.

In another construction, the addressee responds, after a single line of preliminary description, to the initial speaker, as when Aeneas urges Pandaros to staunch the momentum of Diomedes' *aristeia* in Book 5, initiating a lengthy exchange between the two warriors, over the course of which they agree to team up against the Greek hero:

τὸν δ' ἶδεν Αἰνεΐας ἀλαπάζοντα στίχας ἀνδρῶν,  
βῆ δ' ἴμεν ἄν τε μάχην καὶ ἀνὰ κλόνον ἐγχειάων  
Πάνδαρον ἀντίθεον διζήμενος εἴ που ἐφεύροι:  
εὔρε Λυκάονος υἱὸν ἀμύμονά τε κρατερόν τε,  
στῆ δὲ πρόσθ' αὐτοῖο ἔπος τέ μιν ἀντίον ἤυδα: (Il. 5.166-70)

τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε Λυκάονος ἀγλαὸς υἱός: (Il. 5.179)

Now as Aineias saw him wrecking the ranks of warriors  
he went on his way through the fighting and the spears' confusion  
looking to see if he could find Pandaros the godlike;  
and he came upon the strong and blameless son of Lykaon.  
He stood before him face to face and spoke a word to him:

Then in answer the shining son of Lykaon spoke to him:

In a third decompositional construction, the initial speech is followed by several lines of intermediary description, eventually resulting in the addressee delivering a speech of his or her own. During these intervening lines, however, the audience is unsure

whether the decompositional series has already run its course, as is usually the case, or will be extended further, resulting in a degree of suspense about the outcome of the scene that manifests itself exclusively through spatial means. When, at the beginning of Book 19, Thetis delivers to Achilles the shield Hephaestus has just made for him, the four-stage progression of the action imparts to the scene an emphatic sense of pseudo-closure:

ἦ δ' ἐς νῆας ἵκανε θεοῦ πάρα δῶρα φέρουσα.  
εὔρε δὲ Πατρόκλῳ περικείμενον ὄν φίλον υἱὸν  
κλαίοντα λιγέως: πολέες δ' ἄμφ' αὐτὸν ἑταῖροι  
μύρονθ': ἦ δ' ἐν τοῖσι παρίστατο δῖα θεάων,  
ἐν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε: (*Il.* 19.3-7)

And Thetis came to the ships and carried with her the gifts of Hephaestus.  
She found her beloved son lying in the arms of Patroclus  
crying shrill, and his companions in their numbers about him  
mourned. She, shining among divinities, stood there beside them.  
She clung to her son's hand and called him by name and spoke to him:

After Thetis speaks, Achilles' reaction to the appearance of his new armor is preceded by four intervening statements, the first two of which distance us from the action via long shot. Because Achilles does not immediately reply to Thetis' words, the construction seems to have exhausted its spatial potential, ripe for transition to a new scene:

ὡς ἄρα φωνήσασα θεὰ κατὰ τεύχε' ἔθηκε  
πρόσθεν Ἀχιλλῆος: τὰ δ' ἀνέβραχε δαίδαλα πάντα.  
Μυρμιδόνας δ' ἄρα πάντας ἔλε τρόμος, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη  
ἄντην εἰσιδέειν, ἀλλ' ἔτρεσαν. αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς (*Il.* 19.12-15)

The goddess spoke so, and set down the armour on the ground  
before Achilles, and all its elaboration clashed loudly.  
Trembling took hold of all the Myrmidons. None had the courage  
to look straight at it. They were afraid of it. But Achilles

In lines 16-17, Homer imputes to Achilles a response to the armor that, encouraged by that of the Myrmidons in line 14, we might have been tempted to extrapolate for ourselves, with different results, to give closure to the scene. The final position αὐτὰρ

Ἀχιλλεὺς in line 15, however, prevents us from taking such liberties. We are rewarded for our patience with a striking close-up of Achilles' eyes in line 17:

ὡς εἶδ', ὡς μιν μᾶλλον ἔδν χόλος, ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε  
δεινὸν ὑπὸ βλεφάρων ὡς εἰ σέλας ἐξεφάανθεν: (*Il.* 19.16-17)

looked, and as he looked the anger came harder upon him  
and his eyes glittered terribly under his lids, like sunflare.

This conveys his anger more forcefully than if we had ourselves interfered, preparing us for the final close-up in line 18 that establishes the intimacy between Achilles and Thetis required for the ensuing dialogue to realize its full dramatic potential:

τέρπετο δ' ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων θεοῦ ἀγλαὰ δῶρα. (*Il.* 19.18)

He was glad, holding in his hands the shining gifts of Hephaestus.

The initial-position *τέρπετο* in line 18 initiates a dramatic shift of emotion from anger to joy, and the close-up of Achilles' hands recalls Thetis' gesture in line 7, tying them together via ring composition and endowing the remaining conversation between mother and son with an even greater sense of communicative isolation than when the Myrmidons competed for our attention in lines 14-15.

In a fourth decompositional construction, suspense is generated by disrupting the decompositional process itself. In the following passage, intervening monologue between decompositional stages leaves it uncertain whether decomposition is even involved in the first place:

ὡς οἱ μὲν μάρναντο δέμας πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο,  
Ἀντίλοχος δ' Ἀχιλῆϊ πόδας ταχὺς ἄγγελος ἦλθε.  
τὸν δ' εὔρε προπάροιθε νεῶν ὀρθοκραιράων  
τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ δὴ τετελεσμένα ἦεν: (*Il.* 18.1-4)

So these fought on in the likeness of blazing fire. Meanwhile, Antilochos came, a swift-footed messenger, to Achilles, and found him sitting in front of the steep-horned ships, thinking over in his heart of things which had now been accomplished.

In lines 5-14, Achilles delivers a soliloquy, followed by a two-stage resolution of the decompositional quandary initiated in line 3:

ἔως ὃ ταῦθ' ὤρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,  
τόφρ' αἰ ἐγγύθεν ἦλθεν ἀγαυοῦ Νέστορος υἱὸς  
δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων, φάτο δ' ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινήν: (*Il.* 18.15-17)

Now as he was pondering this in his heart and his spirit, meanwhile the son of stately Nestor was drawing near him and wept warm tears, and gave Achilles his sorrowful message:

Although the progression from long shot to medium shot to close-up is the most common decompositional pattern in the *Iliad*, other combinations are possible as well. Sometimes these variations occur for strictly practical reasons, as when, for instance, the final stage of a series is intrinsically capacious and requires a long shot to be encompassed, as in Book 2 when Iris initiates the common descent-from-Olympus decompositional pattern:

Τρῶσιν δ' ἄγγελος ἦλθε ποδὴνεμος ὠκέα Ἴρις  
πὰρ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο σὺν ἀγγελίῃ ἀλεγεινῇ: (*Il.* 2.786-87)

Now to the Trojans came as messenger wind-footed Iris, in her speed, with the dark message from Zeus of the aegis.

In the present case, however, our expectation of decompositional progress from long shot to close-up (or at least to medium shot) is thwarted by the inability of the camera to situate itself within customary range, revealing the malleable, and strictly functional, nature of the word ἀγχοῦ in line 790, which is usually reserved for contexts that express

proximity between two individuals encompassed within medium shot range rather than a crowd of people within long shot range:

οἱ δ' ἀγορὰς ἀγόρευον ἐπὶ Πριάμοιο θύρῃσι  
πάντες ὀμηγερέες ἡμὲν νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες:  
ἀγχοῦ δ' ἴσταμένη προσέφη πόδας ὠκέα Ἴρις: (*Il.* 2.788-90)

These were holding assembly in front of the doors of Priam gathered together in one place, the elders and the young men. Standing close at hand swift-running Iris spoke to them:

Decompositional variety is not limited to practical necessity, however: it can also be used for artistic effect. Usually after the dialogue following a decompositional series, as in the four types examined above, the spatial canvas is reset and a new scene begins, unrelated to the previous construction. This sense of closure is especially prevalent when the decompositional series ends (as, for example, in the Chryses scene in lines 1.430-41) with a close-up (ἐν χερσὶ [441]) rather than merely a medium shot (Χρυσῆς [439]), leaving no uncertainty as to its peremptory nature. In lines 446-48, for example, after Odysseus speaks to Chryses, the scene shifts to a completely new stage of action:

ὡς εἰπὼν ἐν χερσὶ τίθει, ὃ δὲ δέξατο χαίρων  
παῖδα φίλην: τοῖ δ' ὦκα θεῶ κλειτὴν ἑκατόμβην  
ἔξειης ἔστησαν ἔϋδητον περὶ βωμόν, (*Il.* 1.446-48)

He spoke, and left her in his arms. And he received gladly his beloved child. And the men arranged the sacred hecatomb for the god in orderly fashion around the strong-founded altar.

In the next passage under consideration, however, Homer expands a decompositional series beyond its usual limits, generating in the audience both surprise, once we realize we are still taking part in a process we thought had already been completed, and suspense, in our curiosity as to how this unexpected spatial gesture will ultimately be resolved.

In the first line of the *Iliad*, Homer establishes the theme of the epic: the wrath of Achilles. The immediate cause of this wrath is Agamemnon's insistence that, if he himself is to comply with the priest Chryses' request to hand over Chryseis to appease Apollo, then Achilles must himself hand over Briseis to Agamemnon. This request leads to a heated confrontation between the two warriors, resulting in Achilles' promise to return home rather than to prolong the war, a war which hardly concerns him personally anyway. Agamemnon accepts Achilles' resignation and Achilles retreats from the Greek camp and returns to his own shelter with his own men. In lines 321-25, Agamemnon orders the heralds Talthybios and Eurybates to retrieve Briseis from Achilles, delivering on his earlier threat to him. What follows is the first decompositional series of the *Iliad*.

In lines 327-29, the heralds move progressively closer to Achilles, in three distinct stages, from an extreme long shot of the beach, a less expansive long shot of the general vicinity of Achilles, and finally a medium shot of Achilles himself who, after a few more preliminary lines, addresses the heralds:

ὦς εἰπὼν προΐει, κρατερόν δ' ἐπὶ μῦθον ἔτελλε:  
τῷ δ' ἀέκοντε βάτην παρὰ θῖν' ἀλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο,  
Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπὶ τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθην,  
τὸν δ' εὖρον παρὰ τε κλισίῃ καὶ νηϊ μελαίνῃ  
ἦμενον: οὐδ' ἄρα τῷ γε ἰδὼν γήθησεν Ἀχιλλεύς. (*Il.* 1.326-330)

He spoke and sent them forth with this strong order upon them.  
They went against their will beside the beach of the barren  
salt sea, and came to the shelters and the ships of the Myrmidons.  
The man himself they found beside his shelter and his black ship  
sitting. And Achilles took no joy at all when he saw them.

As mentioned above, decomposition usually culminates at close-up rather than merely medium shot range, to focus the audience's attention on the ensuing dialogue by bringing them as close to the action as possible. The medium shot in line 329, however, leaves



open the possibility for further decompositional development. Likewise, in the ensuing scene between Achilles and the heralds, Achilles' appeal for the heralds to move closer to him calls into question whether the preceding decompositional series has been completed, generating suspense as to whether the audience will penetrate even further into the action than they already have:

χαίρετε κήρυκες Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν,  
ἄσσον ἴτ'... (*Il.* 1.334-35)

'Welcome, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of mortals.  
Draw near...

In the next ten lines Achilles orders Patroclus to fetch Briseis from his shelter, thereby increasing the suspense. Patroclus obeys Achilles and before we know it the heralds are travelling *παρὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν* (347) to the Greek camp. Thus, despite the centripetal momentum generated by Achilles' invitation for the heralds to approach him, we suddenly revert to long shot range, which is further perpetuated by Achilles' solitary view of the wide expanse of the sea before him as he prays to Thetis. It is then, after Achilles' prayer, that the suspended resolution of the first decompositional series reveals itself as a strategic exploitation of our desire to penetrate the action which, once it occurs, strikes us all the more forceably through an extreme close-up of Achilles' tear:

ὥς φάτο δάκρυ χέων, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε πότνια μήτηρ

So he spoke in tears and the lady his mother heard him (*Il.* 1.357)

Another decompositional series follows, beginning with a long shot of Thetis emerging from the sea, a medium shot of mother and son beside each other on the shore, and a reiteration of Achilles' tears, the peremptory dramatic function of which is corroborated

by a close-up of Thetis' hand, in initial position, wiping them away before she addresses her son within the rarified atmosphere created through decompositional artistry:

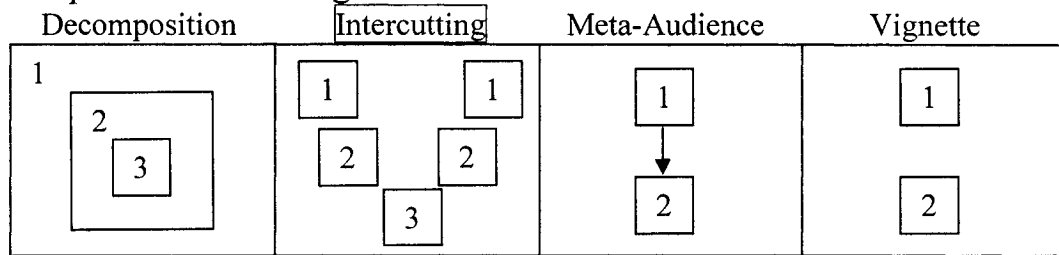
ἡμένη ἐν βένθεσσιν ἄλὸς παρὰ πατρὶ γέροντι:  
καρπαλίμως δ' ἀνέδνυ πολίῃς ἄλὸς ἤϋτ' ὀμίχλη,  
καὶ ῥα πάροιθ' αὐτοῖο καθέζετο δάκρυ χέοντος,  
χειρὶ τέ μιν κατέρεζεν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε:  
τέκνον τί κλαίεις; τί δέ σε φρένας ἴκετο πένθος; (*Il.* 1.358-62)

as she sat in the depths of the sea at the side of her aged father,  
and lightly she emerged like a mist from the grey water.  
She came and sat beside him as he wept, and stroked him  
with her hand and called him by name and spoke to him: 'Why then,  
child, do you lament? What sorrow has come to your heart now?'

Thus, Homer inaugurates the crucial dialogue in lines 364-427 between Thetis and Achilles by prolonging the decompositional series initiated in line 327, generating more suspense, dramatic tension, and pathos than the mere transition to a completely unrelated scenographic construction after the medium shot in line 329 could have achieved.

We now turn to a device which, like decomposition, relies upon a tripartite spatial code to establish a predictable centripetality to the action that can be articulated with or without pause, depending upon whether the poet wishes to generate suspense between two or more stages of it. While the long shot, medium shot, and close-up ranges of decomposition, however, correspond to the distance of the *audience* from a given character or object to which their attention is directed, the tripartite code of the next device corresponds to the distance of *characters* from each other upon the Trojan plain.

### Chapter 3: Intercutting



“Griffith arrived at montage through the method of parallel action, and he was led to the idea of parallel action by—Dickens!” (Eisenstein, 1977: 205)

Intercutting is an editing technique that enables the filmmaker to depict simultaneous action in separate locations by alternating between them.<sup>155</sup> It serves as the horizontal equivalent to decomposition: the x-axis contraction of discourse spaces until they meet at a central point. Whereas decomposition involves a single mobile subject, intercutting involves two subjects located at opposite ends of a common goal. Although Münsterberg considers the device to be unique to cinema,<sup>156</sup> Homer employs it frequently in the *Iliad*, cutting between warriors on the Greek and Trojan lines of battle until they eventually engage in hand-to-hand combat. To control x-axis action with the same precision afforded by the long shot, medium shot, and close-up ranges of decomposition, Homer establishes an equivalent tripartite system to represent the three primary distances between characters when they engage in warfare on the Trojan plain: arrow shot, spear shot, and sword stab.<sup>157</sup>

The furthest range between two characters is represented by bow-fighting. In the following scene, Homer dramatizes, through the tension generated by tactile (123-24),

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Phillips (1999: 565); Feldman (1952: 75-7); Stern (1979: 64); Singor (1995: 191).

<sup>156</sup> 1970: 44-5. Cf. Feldman (1952: 78).

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Hainsworth (1993: 190): “Homer uses no measures of distance such as must have been in vernacular use (e.g. fingers, feet, cubits) except the *πε/λεθρον* ([*Il.*] 21.407, *Od.* 11.577), but makes imprecise and imaginative comparisons...some of which at least appear to be traditional—‘as far as a spear cast’...‘as far as a man shouting can make himself heard.’”

sonic (125), and anthropomorphic (126) imagery, the vast distance that the arrow shot by Pandaros must travel before it finally reaches Menelaos:

ἔλκε δ' ὀμοῦ γλυφίδας τε λαβῶν καὶ νεῦρα βόεια:  
νευρὴν μὲν μαζῶ πέλασεν, τόξω δὲ σίδηρον.  
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ κυκλοτερὲς μέγα τόξον ἔτεινε,  
λίγξε βίος, νευρὴ δὲ μέγ' ἴαχεν, ἄλτο δ' οἴστος  
ὄξυβελῆς καθ' ὄμιλον ἐπιπτέσθαι μενεαίνων. (*Il.* 4.122-26)

[Pandaros] drew, holding at once the grooves and the ox-hide bowstring and brought the string against his nipple, iron to the bowstave. But when he had pulled the great weapon till it made a circle, the bow groaned, and the string sang high, and the arrow, sharp-pointed, leapt away, furious, to fly through the throng before it.

Just as the long shot of a deity descending from Olympus to find a mortal on the Trojan plain prepares the audience to move closer to the object of this search, so when characters stand at arrow shot distance from each other a similar anticipation to get within spear shot is generated, as when Diomedes is within arrow shot of Pandaros in Book 5:

δὴ τότε ἔπειτ' ἠρᾶτο βοῆν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης:  
κλῦθί μοι αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος Ἀτρυτώνη,  
εἴ ποτέ μοι καὶ πατρὶ φίλα φρονέουσα παρέστης  
δηΐω ἐν πολέμῳ, νῦν αὖτ' ἐμὲ φίλαι Ἀθήνη:  
δὸς δέ τέ μ' ἄνδρα ἐλεῖν καὶ ἐς ὄρμην ἔγχεος ἐλθεῖν  
ὅς μ' ἔβαλε φθάμενος καὶ ἐπεύχεται, οὐδέ μ' ἐφησι  
δηρὸν ἔτ' ὄψεσθαι λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο. (*Il.* 5.114-20)

Now Diomedes of the great war cry spoke aloud, praying:  
'Hear me now, Atrytone, daughter of Zeus of the aegis:  
if ever before in kindness you stood by my father  
through the terror of fighting, be my friend now also, Athena;  
grant me that I may kill this man and come within spearcast,  
who shot me before I could see him, and now boasts over me, saying  
I cannot live to look much longer on the shining sunlight.'

And when Pandaros fails to hit Diomedes with his arrow, he too expresses his intention to get within spear shot range of his adversary:

τὸν πρότερος προσέειπε Λυκάονος ἀγλαὸς υἱός:  
καρτερόθυμε δαΐφρον ἀγαυοῦ Τυδέος υἱὲ  
ἦ μάλα σ' οὐ βέλος ὠκὺ δαμάσσατο πικρὸς οἴστος:  
νῦν αὖτ' ἐγχείη πειρήσομαι αἶ κε τύχωμι. (*Il.* 5.276-79)

First to Diomedes called out the shining son of Lykaon:  
'Valiant and strong-spirited, o son of proud Tydeus,  
you were not beaten then by the bitter arrow, my swift shot.  
Now I will try with the throwing-spear to see if I can hit you.'

The next range between two characters on the Trojan plain is represented by spear-fighting. Just as the medium shot serves in an intermediary capacity in decomposition, spanning medium long shot to medium close-up ranges, so the spear shot exhibits a similar versatility. Sometimes, for example, spears and stones (another common *sema* of spear shot distance) are used interchangeably with arrows, when the contrast between arrow shot and spear shot ranges is not emphasized:

πολλὰ δὲ Κεβριόνην ἀμφ' ὄξεα δοῦρα πεπήγει  
ιοί τε πτερόεντες ἀπὸ νευρῆφι θορόντες,  
πολλὰ δὲ χερμάδια μεγάλ' ἀσπίδας ἐστυφέλιξαν (*Il.* 16.772-74)

and many sharp spears were driven home about Kebriones  
and many feathered arrows sprung from the bowstrings, many  
great throwing stones pounded against the shields

When this contrast is central to a scene, however, spear-fighting is clearly differentiated from bow-fighting, representing the kinds of warfare one engages in from far away (έκὰς):

τὸν δ' αὖτ' Ἴδομενεὺς Κρητῶν ἀγὸς ἀντίον ἠῦδα:  
δούρατα δ' αἶ κ' ἐθέλησθα καὶ ἐν καὶ εἴκοσι δῆεις  
ἐσταότ' ἐν κλισίῃ πρὸς ἐνώπια παμφανόωντα  
Τρώϊα, τὰ κταμένων ἀποαίνυμαι: οὐ γὰρ οἴω  
ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων ἐκὰς ἰστάμενος πολεμίζειν.  
τῷ μοι δούρατά τ' ἔστι καὶ ἀσπίδες ὀμφαλόεσσαι  
καὶ κόρυθες καὶ θώρηκες λαμπρὸν γανόωντες. (*Il.* 13.259-65)

Then Idomeneus lord of the Kretans answered him in turn:  
'You will find one spear, and twenty spears, if you want them,  
standing against the shining inward wall in my shelter,  
Trojan spears I win from men that I kill, for my way  
is not to fight my battles standing far away from my enemies.  
Thereby I have spears there, and shields massive in the middle,  
and helms and corselets are there in all the pride of their shining.'

At the other extreme, spears can be used in conjunction with swords at close enough  
range from one victim to get within sword stab range of another without missing a beat:

ἐνθ' ἔλεν Ἀστύνοον καὶ Ὑπείρονα ποιμένα λαῶν,  
τὸν μὲν ὑπὲρ μαζοῖο βαλὼν χαλκῆρεϊ δουρί,  
τὸν δ' ἔτερον ξίφεϊ μεγάλῳ κληῖδα παρ' ὤμον  
πλῆξ', ἀπὸ δ' αὐχένος ὤμον ἐέργαθεν ἠδ' ἀπὸ νώτου. (*Il.* 5.144-47)

Next he killed Astynoös and Hypeiron, shepherd of the people,  
striking one with the bronze-heeled spear above the nipple,  
and cutting the other beside the shoulder through the collar-bone  
with the great sword, so that neck and back were hewn free of the shoulder.

In fact, spears can also be used interchangeably with swords, serving as stabbing rather  
than throwing weapons,

στῆ ῥα μάλ' ἐγχριμφθεῖς: οἱ δ' ἀντίοι υἷες Ἀχαιῶν  
νύσσοντες ξίφεσίν τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν ἀμφιγύοισιν  
ᾠσαν ἀπὸ σφείων: ὁ δὲ χασσάμενος πελεμίχθη. (*Il.* 13.146-48)

he was stopped, hard, beaten in on himself. The sons of the Achaians  
against him stabbing at him with swords and leaf-headed spears  
thrust him away from them so that he gave ground backward, staggering.

or in conjunction with swords, to underscore a warrior's surrealistic ability to range  
simultaneously over two distant stretches of the Trojan plain:

αὐτὰρ ὁ Λαόγονον καὶ Δάρδανον υἷε Βίαντος  
ἄμφω ἐφορμηθεῖς ἐξ ἵππων ᾧσε χαμᾶζε,  
τὸν μὲν δουρὶ βαλὼν, τὸν δὲ σχεδὸν ἄορι τύψας. (*Il.* 20.460-62)

Then Achilles swooping on Dardanos and Laogonos, sons both  
of Bias, dashed them to the ground from behind their horses,  
one with a spearcast, one with a stroke of the sword from close up.

This dual function of spears is corroborated diegetically as well, in Priam's explicit contrast between their two primary uses in Book 22,

αὐτὸν δ' ἂν πύματόν με κύνες πρότησι θύρησιν  
ώμησται ἐρύουσιν, ἐπεὶ κέ τις ὀξείῃ χαλκῶ  
τύψας ἢ ἐβαλὼν ῥεθέων ἐκ θυμὸν ἔληται, (*Il.* 22.66-68)

And myself last of all, my dogs in front of my doorway  
will rip me raw, after some man with stroke of the sharp bronze  
spear, or with spearcast, has torn the life out of my body;

as well as by the fact that the lemma ἐγγύς, meaning “close,” can represent either spear shot or sword stab distance, depending upon the context. In this scene from the chariot games of Patroclus in Book 23, for example, we are not sure what is meant by ἐγγύθεν until the simile in lines 517-23 establishes sword stab distance between Menelaos and Antilochos:

τῶ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' Ἀντίλοχος Νηληϊῶς ἤλασεν ἵππους  
κέρδεσιν, οὐ τι τάχει γε, παραφθάμενος Μενέλαον:  
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς Μενέλαος ἔχ' ἐγγύθεν ὠκέας ἵππους,  
ὅσσον δὲ τροχοῦ ἵππος ἀφίσταται, ὅς ῥα τ' ἀνακτα  
ἔλκησιν πεδίοιο τιταινόμενος σὺν ὄχεσφι:  
τοῦ μὲν τε ψάουσιν ἐπισσώτρου τρίχες ἄκραι  
οὐραῖαι: ὁ δὲ τ' ἄγχι μάλα τρέχει, οὐδέ τι πολλή  
χώρη μεσσηγὺς πολέος πεδίοιο θέοντος:  
τόσσον δὴ Μενέλαος ἀμύμονος Ἀντιλόχοιο λείπετ'. (*Il.* 23.514-23)

After him Neleian Antilochos drove in his horses,  
having passed Menelaos, not by speed but by taking advantage.  
But even so Menelaos held his fast horses close on him.  
As far as from the wheel stands the horse who is straining  
to pull his master with the chariot over the flat land;  
the extreme hairs in the tail of the horse brush against the running  
rim of the wheel, and he courses very close, there is not much  
space between as he runs a great way over the flat land;  
by so much Menelaos by Antilochos the blameless  
was left behind.

In line 219 of Book 7, on the other hand, Ajax is said to come ἐγγύθεν to Hector:

Αἴας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἡϋτε πύργον (*Il.* 7.219)

Now Aias came near him, carrying like a wall his shield

After a description of Ajax's shield in lines 220-23, Homer reiterates the "closeness" between the two warriors:

στῆ ῥα μάλ' Ἔκτορος ἐγγύς, ἀπειλήσας δὲ προσηύδα: (*Il.* 7.225)

[Ajax] stood near Hector and spoke to him in words of menace:

This use of ἐγγύς, however, brings us no closer to ascertaining whether Ajax and Hector are within spear shot or sword stab range of each other. For the next eighteen lines, they exchange words, until finally, in line 244, Ajax throws a spear at Hector,

ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλῶν προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος, (*Il.* 7.244)

So he spoke, and balanced the spear far-shadowed, and threw it, retrospectively establishing the spear shot rather than sword stab range between the two warriors during their intervening dialogue.

The closest distance between two characters on the Trojan plain is represented by sword-fighting. When characters stand at spear shot range from each other we expect them to proceed to sword stab range.<sup>158</sup> In a common scenario, two characters exchange spear throws without killing each other, inducing them to approach each other further and to engage in hand-to-hand combat at sword stab range. In the duel between Menelaos and Paris in Book 3, for example, Paris throws a spear at Menelaos,

πρόσθε δ' Ἀλέξανδρος προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος, (*Il.* 3.346)

First of the two Alexandros let go his spear far-shadowing  
and hits his shield,

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<sup>158</sup> Lines 707-12 of Book 15 illustrate the teleological nature of x-axis warfare, the natural progression from bow- and spear-fighting to sword-fighting.



καὶ βάλεν Ἀτρεΐδαο κατ' ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' ἔϊσῃν, (*Il.* 3.347)

and struck the shield of Atreus' son on its perfect circle

yet without doing damage:

οὐδ' ἔρρηξεν χαλκόν, ἀνεγνάμφθη δέ οἱ αἰχμῇ  
ἀσπίδι ἐνὶ κρατερῇ... (*Il.* 3.348-49)

nor did the bronze point break its way through, but the spearhead bent back  
in the strong shield...

We now expect Menelaos to reciprocate, and Homer obliges. Menelaos throws a spear at Paris,

ἦ ῥα καὶ ἀμπεπαλῶν προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος,  
καὶ βάλε Πριαμίδαο κατ' ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' ἔϊσῃν: (*Il.* 3.355-56)

So he spoke, and balanced the spear far-shadowed, and threw it  
and struck the shield of Priam's son on its perfect circle.

which, although the graphic details of the spear's trajectory in lines 358-59 produces  
more suspense than the cursory description of Paris' spear in lines 348-49,

διὰ μὲν ἀσπίδος ἦλθε φαεινῆς ὄβριμον ἔγχος,  
καὶ διὰ θώρηκος πολυδαιδάλου ἠρήρειστο:  
ἀντικρὺ δὲ παραὶ λαπάρην διάμησε χιτῶνα (*Il.* 3.357-59)

All the way through the glittering shield went the heavy spearhead  
and smashed its way through the intricately worked corselet;  
straight ahead by the flank the spearhead shore through his tunic,

is no more successful at wounding its target.

ἔγχος: ὃ δ' ἐκλίνθη καὶ ἀλεύατο κῆρα μέλαιναν. (*Il.* 3.360)

yet he bent away to one side and avoided the dark death.

We now expect the characters to progress to sword stab range from each other, as indeed  
they do, until Aphrodite rescues Paris in line 380 and removes him from the fray, in a

variety of the *deus ex machina* device that occurs when key characters reach the end of an intercutting series but are too crucial to the plot to be killed off:<sup>159</sup>

ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ: τὸν δ' ἐξήραξ' Ἀφροδίτη  
ῥεῖα μάλ' ὡς τε θεός, ἐκάλυψε δ' ἄρ' ἠέρι πολλῇ,  
κὰδ δ' εἶσ' ἐν θαλάμῳ εὐώδεϊ κηώντι. (*Il.* 3.380-82)

with the bronze spear. But Aphrodite caught up Paris easily, since she was divine, and wrapped him in a thick mist and set him down again in his own perfumed bedchamber.

In an abbreviated version of this progression from spear shot to sword stab range, Agamemnon throws a spear at one character and then stabs another:

δὴ τότε γ' Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων  
τὸν μὲν ὑπὲρ μαζοῖο κατὰ στήθος βάλε δουρί,  
Ἄντιφον αὖ παρὰ οὖς ἔλασε ξίφει, ἐκ δ' ἔβαλ' ἵππων. (*Il.* 11.107-09)

This time the son of Atreus, wide-powerful Agamemnon, struck Isos with the thrown spear in the chest above the nipple and hit Antiphos by the ear with the sword and hurled him from his horses,

The rapid succession of these actions emphasizes the military prowess of Agamemnon, a tendency that is further exploited when Homer uses the phrase ἔγχεϊ τ' ἄορί τε μεγάλοισι τε χερμαδίοισιν to represent the ubiquitousness of Agamemnon,

αὐτὰρ ὁ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπεπωλεῖτο στίχας ἀνδρῶν  
ἔγχεϊ τ' ἄορί τε μεγάλοισι τε χερμαδίοισιν,  
ὄφρα οἱ αἶμ' ἔτι θερμὸν ἀνήνοθεν ἐξ ὠτειλῆς. (*Il.* 11.264-66)

But Agamemnon ranged the ranks of the other fighters with spear and sword and with huge stones that he flung, for such time as the blood was still running warm from the spear-wound.

and Hector:

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<sup>159</sup> On the other hand, when the victim is a minor character, as in the scene between Achilles and Asteropaios in lines 161-83, for example, he frequently ends up being killed, thus fulfilling the intercutting series, precluding the resort to diversionary tactics, and occasioning a fresh change of scene.

αἴ τ' ἀπ' ἐπισσώτρων. ὁ δὲ ἴετο δῦναι ὄμιλον  
ἀνδρόμεον ῥῆξαι τε μετάλμενος: ἐν δὲ κυδοιμὸν  
ἦκε κακὸν Δαναοῖσι, μίνυνθα δὲ χάζετο δουρός.  
αὐτὰρ ὁ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπεπωλεῖτο στίχας ἀνδρῶν  
ἔγχεῖ τ' ἄορί τε μεγάλοισι τε χερμαδίοισιν,  
Αἴαντος δ' ἄλλείνε μάχην Τελαμωνιάδαο. (*Il.* 11.537-42)

from the running rims of the wheels. So Hector was straining to plunge in  
the turmoil of men, and charge them and break them. He hurled the  
confusion  
of disaster upon the Danaans, and stayed from the spear's stroke  
little, but ranged about among the ranks of the rest of the fighters  
with his spear and his sword and with huge stones flung,  
yet kept clear still of the attack of Telamonian Aias.

The three x-axis distances represent distinct ethical qualities in the *Iliad*; there are  
specific emotions associated with long- and short-range fighting. To begin with, the  
archer is stigmatized as a coward:

τὸν δ' οὐ ταρβήσας προσέφη κρατερὸς Διομήδης:  
τοξότα λωβητῆρ κέρα ἀγλαὰ παρθενοπιπα  
εἰ μὲν δὴ ἀντίβιον σὺν τεύχεσι πειρηθείης,  
οὐκ ἂν τοι χραίσμησι βιὸς καὶ ταρφέες ἰοί:  
νῦν δέ μ' ἐπιγράψας ταρσὸν ποδὸς εὐχεαι αὐτως.  
οὐκ ἀλέγω, ὡς εἶ με γυνὴ βάλοι ἢ πάϊς ἄφρων:  
κωφὸν γὰρ βέλος ἀνδρὸς ἀνάλκιδος οὐτιδανοῖο. (*Il.* 11.384-90)

Then not at all frightened strong Diomedes answered him:  
'You archer, foul fighter, lovely in your locks, eyer of young girls.  
If you were to make trial of me in strong combat with weapons  
your bow would do you no good at all, nor your close-showered arrows.  
Now you have scratched the flat of my foot, and even boast of this.  
I care no more than if a witless child or a woman  
had struck me; this is the blank weapon of a useless man, no fighter.

The close-range fighter, on the other hand, is courageous, daring to look his enemy in the  
eyes:

τοίου γὰρ θεράπων πέφατ' ἀνέρος, ὅς μ' ἄριστος  
Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ καὶ ἀγγέμαχοι θεράποντες.  
ἀλλὰ σύ γ' Αἴαντος μεγαλήτορος οὐκ ἐτάλασσας  
στήμεναι ἄντα κατ' ὅσσε ἰδῶν δηϊῶν ἐν ἀϋτῇ,  
οὐδ' ἰθὺς μαχέσασθαι, ἐπεὶ σέο φέρτερός ἐστι. (Il. 17.164-68)

Such is the man whose henchman is killed. He is far the greatest of the Argives by the ships, and his men fight hard at close quarters. No, but you could not bring yourself to stand up against Aias of the great heart, nor to look at his eyes in the clamour of fighting men, nor attack him directly, since he is far better than you are.'

This is corroborated by the following simile, in which the close-fighter is compared to a lion, whom others fear to engage at sword stab range:

ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τε λέων ὄρεσίτροφος ἀλκὶ πεποιθῶς  
βοσκομένης ἀγέλης βοῦν ἀρπάσῃ ἢ τις ἀρίστη:  
τῆς δ' ἐξ αὐχέν' ἔαξε λαβῶν κρατεροῖσιν ὄδοῦσι  
πρῶτον, ἔπειτα δέ θ' αἶμα καὶ ἔγκατα πάντα λαφύσσει  
δηϊῶν: ἀμφὶ δὲ τόν γε κύνες ἄνδρες τε νομῆες  
πολλὰ μάλ' ἰύζουσιν ἀπόπροθεν οὐδ' ἐθέλουσιν  
ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι: μάλα γὰρ χλωρὸν δέος αἰρεῖ:  
ὡς τῶν οὐ τι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι ἐτόλμα  
ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι Μενελάου κυδαλίμοιο. (Il. 17.61-69)

As when in the confidence of his strength some lion hill-reared snatches the finest cow in a herd as it pastures; first the lion breaks her neck caught fast in the strong teeth, then gulps down the blood and all the guts that are inward savagely, as the dogs and the herdsmen raise a commotion loudly about him, but from a distance, and are not willing to go in and face him, since the hard green fear has hold of them; so no heart in the breast of any Trojan had courage to go in and face glorious Menelaos.

Just as the progression from long shot to close-up in a decompositional series can be delayed to generate suspense, so the intercutting equivalent can occur. This is achieved by shifting the focus of attention temporarily from the centripetal merging of

frames to dialogue, as in the following scene between Tlepolemos and Sarpedon in Book

5. In lines 628-29, an impending duel between the two warriors is established:

Τληπόλεμον δ' Ἡρακλεΐδην ἦϋν τε μέγαν τε  
ὤρσεν ἐπ' ἀντιθέω Σαρπηδόφι μοῖρα κραταιή. (*Il.* 5.628-29)

But Herakles' son Tlepolemos the huge and mighty  
was driven by his strong destiny against godlike Sarpedon.

This leads us to expect them to approach each other, as they in fact do in the next two

lines:

οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες  
υἱὸς θ' υἱωνός τε Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο, (*Il.* 5.630-31)

Now as these in their advance had come close together,  
the son, and the son's son of Zeus cloud-gathering,

Yet rather than immediately consummate this development, the characters suddenly

engage in dialogue:

τὸν καὶ Τληπόλεμος πρότερος πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπε: (*Il.* 5.632)

τὸν δ' αὖ Σαρπηδῶν Λυκίων ἀγὸς ἀντίον ἠϋδα: (*Il.* 5.647)

it was Tlepolemos of the two who spoke the first word:

In turn the lord of the Lykians, Sarpedon, answered him:

It is not until lines 655-59 that the centripetal momentum generated in lines 628-30 is

resumed and resolved:

ὡς φάτο Σαρπηδῶν, ὃ δ' ἀνέσχετο μείλινον ἔγχος  
Τληπόλεμος: καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀμαρτῆ δούρατα μακρὰ  
ἐκ χειρῶν ἦΐξαν: ὃ μὲν βάλεν αὐχένα μέσσον  
Σαρπηδῶν, αἰχμὴ δὲ διαμπερὲς ἦλθ' ἀλεγεινή:  
τὸν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψε. (*Il.* 5.655-59)

So spoke Sarpedon, while the other lifted his ash spear,  
Tlepolemos; and in a single moment the long shafts  
shot from their hands, Sarpedon striking him in the middle

of the throat, and the agonizing spear drove clean through  
and over his eyes was mantled the covering mist of darkness.

An intercutting series, like its decompositional counterpart, can also be aborted rather than merely delayed. As in the first instance of decomposition—when the heralds obey Agamemnon’s order to find Achilles near his shelter in Book 1—the first instance of intercutting in the *Iliad* is prematurely terminated, thwarting the apparently inevitable contraction of Greek and Trojan lines of battle. We first get an establishing shot<sup>160</sup> of both lines of battle:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κόσμηθεν ἅμ' ἡγεμόνεσσιν ἕκαστοι, (*Il.* 3.1)

Now when the men of both sides were set in order by their leaders,  
Then each side is introduced individually, by means of a simile. The Trojans are compared to noisy birds,

Τρῶες μὲν κλαγγῆ τ' ἐνοπῆ τ' ἴσαν ὄρνιθες ὡς (*Il.* 3.2)

the Trojans came on with clamour and shouting, like wildfowl,  
while the Greeks proceed silently:

οἳ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν σιγῆ μένεα πνεύοντες Ἀχαιοὶ  
ἐν θυμῷ μεμαῶτες ἀλεξέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν. (*Il.* 3.8-9)

But the Achaian men went silently, breathing valour,  
stubbornly minded each in his heart to stand by the others.

Then Homer increases the tension of the imminent encounter of the two armies through another simile, emphasizing the commotion of the scene,

εὗτ' ὄρεος κορυφῆσι Νότος κατέχευεν ὀμίχλην  
ποιμέσιν οὐ τι φίλην, κλέπτῃ δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω,  
τόσσόν τις τ' ἐπιλεύσσει ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ λαῶν ἴησιν:

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<sup>160</sup> Cf. Phillips (1999: 567).

ὥς ἄρα τῶν ὑπὸ ποσσὶ κονίσαλος ὄρνυτ' ἀελλῆς  
ἐρχομένων: μάλα δ' ὤκα διέπρησσαν πεδίοιο. (Il. 3.10-14)

As on the peaks of a mountain the south wind scatters the thick mist,  
no friend to the shepherd, but better than night for the robber,  
and a man can see before him only so far as a stone cast,  
so beneath their feet the dust drove up in a stormcloud  
of men marching, who made their way through the plain in great speed.

followed by the formula

οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες, (Il.3.15)

Now as these in their advance had come close together,

As in 5.630 above, this line leads us to expect immediate contact between the two armies.<sup>161</sup> In this case, however, suspense is generated by having one warrior, Paris, advance before the rest of the Trojans and challenge any Greek to a duel:

Τρωσὶν μὲν προμάχιζεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδῆς  
παρδαλέην ὤμοισιν ἔχων καὶ καμπύλα τόξα  
καὶ ξίφος: αὐτὰρ ὁ δοῦρε δύω κεκορυθμένα χαλκῶ  
πάλλων Ἀργείων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρίστους  
ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊότητι. (Il. 3.16-20)

Alexandros the godlike leapt from the ranks of the Trojans,  
as challenger wearing across his shoulders the hide of a leopard,  
curved bow and sword; while in his hands shaking two javelins  
pointed with bronze, he challenged all the best of the Argives  
to fight man to man against him in bitter combat.

This sudden cut to the Trojan side is reciprocated by a cut to Menelaos,

τὸν δ' ὡς οὖν ἐνόησεν ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος (Il. 3.21)

Now as soon as Menelaos the warlike caught sight of him

through whose vision we see Paris, who appears to him as a deer to a lion:

ἐρχόμενον προπάραιθεν ὀμίλου μακρὰ βιβῶντα,  
ὥς τε λέων ἐχάρη μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. Il. 5.14-15.

εὐράων ἢ ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα  
πεινάων: μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει, εἴ περ ἂν αὐτὸν  
σεύωνται ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροί τ' αἰζηοί:  
ὡς ἐχάρη Μενέλαος Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα  
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδών: φάτο γὰρ τίσασθαι ἀλείτην:  
αὐτίκα δ' ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλτο χαμᾶζε. (*Il.* 3.22-29)

making his way with long strides out in front of the army,  
he was glad, like a lion who comes on a mighty carcass,  
in his hunger chancing upon the body of a horned stag  
or wild goat; who eats it eagerly, although against him  
are hastening the hounds in their speed and the stalwart young men:  
thus Menelaos was happy finding godlike Alexandros  
there in front of his eyes, and thinking to punish the robber,  
straightway in all his armour he sprang to the ground from his chariot.

This symmetrical alternation between Greek and Trojan sides is continued with a cut to Paris, through whose eyes we now see Menelaos:

τὸν δ' ὡς οὖν ἐνόησεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδῆς  
ἐν προμάχοισι φανέντα... (*Il.* 3.30-1)

But Alexandros the godlike when he saw Menelaos  
showing among the champions...

Thus, the action has proceeded in six stages up to this point: 1) extreme long shot of Greek and Trojan sides, 2) long shot of Trojan side, 3) long shot of Greek side, 4) long shot of both sides as they approach each other, 5) medium shot of Paris, 6) medium shot of Menelaos looking at Paris, and 7) medium shot of Paris looking at Menelaos. Now we expect the two warriors to engage in spear-fighting or, after drawing closer to each other through intercutting, sword-fighting. What happens instead, however, at first surprises us.

Paris retreats from Menelaos,

...κατεπλήγη φίλον ἦτορ,  
ἄψ δ' ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ' ἀλεείνων. (*Il.* 3.31-2)

...the heart was shaken within [Paris];  
to avoid death he shrank into the host of his own companions.



like one who has been frightened away by a snake:

ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τε δράκοντα ἰδὼν παλίνορσος ἀπέστη  
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσης, ὑπὸ τε τρόμος ἔλλαβε γυῖα,  
ἄψ δ' ἀνεχώρησεν, ὠχρός τέ μιν εἶλε παρειάς,  
ὡς αὐτίς καθ' ὄμιλον ἔδν Τρώων ἀγερώχων  
δείσας Ἀτρέος υἱὸν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής. (*Il.* 3.33-7)

As a man who has come on a snake in the mountain valley  
suddenly steps back, and the shivers come over his body,  
and he draws back and away, cheeks seized with a green pallor;  
so in terror of Atreus' son godlike Alexandros  
lost himself again in the host of the haughty Trojans.

In the previous book, however, we encountered a simile that, in retrospect, makes this development somewhat more predictable, comparing the long-distance fighter to a frightened deer:

Ἀργεῖοι ἰόμωροι ἐλεγχέες οὔ νυ σέβεσθε;  
τίφθ' οὔτως ἔστητε τεθηπότες ἤϋτε νεβροί,  
αἴ τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔκαμον πολέος πεδίοιο θέουσαι  
ἐστᾶσ', οὐδ' ἄρα τίς σφι μετὰ φρεσὶ γίνεται ἀλκή: (*Il.* 4.242-45)

'Argives, you arrow-fighters, have you no shame, you abuses?  
Why are you simply standing there bewildered, like young deer  
who after they are tired from running through a great meadow  
stand there still, and there is no heart of courage within them?

This symbolism is especially appropriate, considering the fact that Paris is known more for his bow-fighting than his sword-fighting.<sup>162</sup> Thus, while through framing we have been led to expect the clash of Menelaos and Paris, this simile lends thematic corroboration to Homer's choice to take his audience in another direction.

The following scene, on the other hand, disrupts intercutting protocol for strictly practical reasons. Although the progression from spear shot to sword stab range is

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<sup>162</sup> Cf. 11.385-88.

aborted here as in the scene above, in this case it involves Homer in an inconsistency. In line 244, Hector throws a spear at Ajax,

ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλῶν προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος, (*Il.* 7.244)

So he spoke, and balanced the spear far-shadowed, and threw it,

and in line 249 Ajax throws a spear at Hector.

Αἴας διογενῆς προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος, (*Il.* 7.249)

Ajax the illustrious in turn cast with his spear far-shadowing,

Then the action progresses to sword stab range when Hector stabs Ajax in line 258,

Πριαμίδης μὲν ἔπειτα μέσον σάκος οὔτασε δουρί, (*Il.* 7.258)

The son of Priam stabbed then with his spear into the shield's center,

and Ajax stabs Hector in line 260:

Αἴας δ' ἀσπίδα νύξεν ἐπάλμενος: (*Il.* 7.260)

Now Aias plunging upon him thrust at the shield,

So far the action has proceeded according to protocol. Now that the two warriors are within sword stab range of each other, we expect either a conclusion to their battle or some turn of events to get them out of harm's way of each other (such as when Athena rescues Paris in lines 379-82 of Book 3). Homer chooses the latter option: he brings the Greek and Trojan heralds onto the scene to shift our attention to them. He cannot do so, however, if Ajax and Hector are fighting hand-to-hand when they arrive, for they would be too embroiled with each other to notice them. Thus, to prepare for the arrival of the heralds, Homer retraces his steps: despite the sword stab distance between Ajax and Hector established in line 249, Homer has Hector throw a stone at Ajax,

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἀπέληγε μάχης κορυθαίολος Ἴκτωρ,  
ἀλλ' ἀναχασσάμενος λίθον εὔλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ  
κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ μέλανα τρηχύν τε μέγαν τε:  
τῷ βάλεν Αἴαντος δεινὸν σάκος ἑπταβόειον  
μέσσον ἐπομφάλιον: περιήχησεν δ' ἄρα χαλκός. (Il. 7.263-67)

Yet even so Hector of the shining helmet did not stop fighting,  
but gave back and in his heavy hand caught up a stone that  
lay in the plain, black and rugged and huge. With this  
he struck the sevenfold-ox-hide terrible shield of Aias  
in the knob of the center so that the bronze clashed loud about it.

and has Ajax throw a stone at Hector:

δεύτερος αὐτ' Αἴας πολὺ μείζονα λᾶαν ἀείρας  
ἦκ' ἐπιδινήσας, ἐπέρεισε δὲ ἴν' ἀπέλεθρον, (Il. 7.268-69)

After him Aias in turn lifting a stone far greater  
whirled it and threw, leaning into the cast his strength beyond measure,

Homer emphasizes this new distance between Ajax and Hector by using the clause:

καὶ νῦ κε δὴ ξιφέεσσ' αὐτοσχεδὸν οὐτάζοντο, (Il. 7.273)

And now they would have been stabbing with their swords at close quarters,

to clear the way for the heralds to enter the stage

εἰ μὴ κήρυκες Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν  
ἦλθον, ὃ μὲν Τρώων, ὃ δ' Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων,  
Ταλθύβιος τε καὶ Ἴδαϊος πεπνυμένω ἄμφω: (Il. 7.274-76)

had not the heralds, messengers of Zeus and of mortals,  
come up, one for the bronze-armoured Achaians, one for the Trojans,  
Idaios and Talthybios, both men of good counsel.

and to urge the two warriors to strike a temporary truce:

μέσσω δ' ἀμφοτέρων σκῆπτρα σχέθον, εἰπέ τε μῦθον  
κῆρυξ Ἴδαϊος πεπνυμένα μήδεα εἰδώς:  
μηκέτι παῖδε φίλω πολεμίζετε μηδὲ μάχεσθον:  
ἀμφοτέρω γὰρ σφῶϊ φιλεῖ νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς,  
ἄμφω δ' αἰχμητά: τό γε δὴ καὶ ἴδμεν ἅπαντες.  
νῦξ δ' ἦδη τελέθει: ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιθέσθαι. (Il. 7.277-82)

They held their staves between the two men, and the herald Idaios  
out of his knowledge of prudent advices spoke a word to them:  
'Stop the fight, dear children, nor go on with this battle.  
To Zeus who gathers the clouds both of you are beloved,  
and both of you are fighters; this thing all of us know surely.  
Night darkens now. It is a good thing to give way to the night-time.'

The phrase καί νύ κε δὴ ξιφέεσσ' αὐτοσχεδὸν οὐτάζοντο (273) is used only here in the *Iliad*, although a similar line is used in Book 17 to describe a battle between Hector and Automedon:

καί νύ κε δὴ ξιφέεσσ' αὐτοσχεδὸν ὠρμηθήτην (*Il.* 17.530)

And now they would have gone for each other with swords at close quarters,

In this case, however, the progression from spear shot range,

Ἴκτωρ δ' Αὐτομέδοντος ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῷ:  
ἀλλ' ὃ μὲν ἄντα ἰδὼν ἠλεύατο χάλκεον ἔγχος; (*Il.* 17.525-26)

Then Hector made a cast with the shining spear at Automedon,  
but he, keeping his eyes straight on him, avoided the bronze spear.

to a contrafactual expression of sword stab range,

καί νύ κε δὴ ξιφέεσσ' αὐτοσχεδὸν ὠρμηθήτην  
εἰ μή σφω' Αἴαντε διέκριναν μεμαῶτε, (*Il.* 17.530-31)

And now they would have gone for each other with swords at close quarters,  
had not the two Aiantes driven strongly between them,

occurs logically and without the need for *ad hoc* correction, as though Homer learned his lesson in Book 7. Thus, in lines 264-73, Homer takes advantage of the flexibility of his verbal medium by reversing a previous spatial configuration to serve a present dramatic purpose.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. Andersen (1990: *passim*), Jones (1992), and Braswell (1971: *passim*) for a similar *ad hoc* manipulation of time in the *Iliad*, time in the *Odyssey*, and mythological paradigms in the *Iliad*, respectively.

Mortals are not, however, the only characters whose actions are represented through intercutting. Two times in the *Iliad* the Olympian gods alternate between Greek and Trojan lines of battle to mirror a similar development occurring between the human characters. In Book 17 the Greeks and Trojans fight over Patroclus' corpse. Up to this point, the action has constantly shifted from side to side.<sup>164</sup> In line 543, an establishing shot imposes a temporary pause in the action:

ἄψ δ' ἐπὶ Πατρόκλῳ τέτατο κρατερὴ ὕσμίνῃ  
ἀργαλέῃ πολύδακρυς, ἔγειρε δὲ νεῖκος Ἀθήνη (*Il.* 17.543-44)

Once again over Patroklos was close drawn a strong battle  
weary and sorrowful, and Athena from the sky descending

Then, rather than return immediately to one side or the other, Homer intercuts between Athena and Apollo as they occupy the Greek and Trojan lines, respectively. First he has Athena disguise herself as Phoinix, descend from Olympus to the Greek line of battle, and encourage Menelaos to persuade the Greeks to continue to protect Patroclus' corpse (544-59). Menelaos assures Athena that all he needs in order to carry out her wishes is divine strength. She provides it to him and he displays his new-found strength by killing a Trojan warrior (560-81). Then Apollo disguises himself as Phainops, encounters Hector on the Trojan line of battle, and fuels his desire to attack Menelaos (17.582-90). It is in lines 593-96, however, that the parallel nature of mortal and immortal intercutting becomes most conspicuous, when Zeus flashes his thunderbolt,

καὶ τότε ἄρα Κρονίδης ἔλετ' αἰγίδα θυσσανόεσσαν  
μαρμαρέην, Ἴδην δὲ κατὰ νεφέεσσι κάλυπεν,  
ἀστράψας δὲ μάλα μεγάλ' ἔκτυπε, τὴν δ' ἐτίναξε,  
νίκην δὲ Τρώεσσι δίδου, ἐφόβησε δ' Ἀχαιοῦς. (*Il.* 17.593-96)

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<sup>164</sup> E.g., 17.394.

And now the son of Kronos caught up the betasselled  
glaring aegis, and shrouded Ida in mists. He let go  
a lightning flash and a loud thunderstroke, shaking the mountain,  
gave victory to the Trojans, and terrified the Achaians.

reminiscent of the clash between mortals on the battlefield that often concludes an  
intercutting series.

In a more elaborate version of the previous scene, the divine allies of each army  
gather on the Greek and Trojan lines of battle:

βὰν δ' ἴμεναι πόλεμόνδε θεοὶ δίχα θυμὸν ἔχοντες:  
Ἥρη μὲν μετ' ἀγῶνα νεῶν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη  
ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων γαίηοχος ἠδ' ἐριούνης  
Ἑρμείας, ὃς ἐπὶ φρεσὶ πευκαλίμησι κέκασται:  
Ἥφαιστος δ' ἅμα τοῖσι κίε σθένει βλεμεαίνων  
χωλεύων, ὑπὸ δὲ κνήμαι ῥώοντο ἀραιαί.  
ἔς δὲ Τρῶας Ἄρης κορυθαίολος, αὐτὰρ ἅμ' αὐτῶ  
Φοῖβος ἀκερσεκόμης ἠδ' Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα  
Λητώ τε Ξάνθος τε φιλομμειδῆς τ' Ἀφροδίτη. (Il. 20.32-40)

and the gods went down to enter the fighting, with purposes opposed.  
Hera went to the assembled ships with Pallas Athena  
and with Poseidon who embraces the earth, and with generous  
Hermes, who within the heart is armed with astute thoughts.  
Hephaestus went the way of these in the pride of his great strength  
limping, and yet his shrunken legs moved lightly beneath him.  
But Ares of the shining helm went over to the Trojans,  
and with him Phoibos of the unshorn hair, and the lady of arrows  
Artemis, and smiling Aphrodite, Leto, and Xanthos.

Both Athena and Ares deliver a war cry in their respective terrestrial locations:

...αὐε δ' Ἀθήνη  
στᾶσ' ὅτε μὲν παρὰ τάφρον ὀρυκτὴν τείχεος ἐκτός,  
ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἀκτάων ἐριδούπων μακρὸν ἀὔτει.  
αὐε δ' Ἄρης ἐτέρωθεν ἐρεμνῆ λαίλαπι ἴσος  
ὄξυ κατ' ἀκροτάτης πόλιος Τρώεσσι κελεύων, (Il. 20.48-52)

...and Athena bellowed  
standing now beside the ditch dug at the wall's outside  
and now again at the thundering sea's edge gave out her great cry,

while on the other side Ares in the likeness of a dark stormcloud  
bellowed, now from the peak of the citadel urging the Trojans

Then Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades reciprocate, symbolizing the comprehensive scope of  
the impending battle in all four corners of the universe:

δεινὸν δ' ἐβρόντησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε  
ὑψόθεν: αὐτὰρ ἔνερθε Ποσειδάων ἐτίναξε  
γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην ὀρέων τ' αἰπεινὰ κάρηνα.  
πάντες δ' ἐσσεύοντο πόδες πολυπίδακος Ἴδης  
καὶ κορυφαί, Τρώων τε πόλις καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.  
ἔδδεισεν δ' ὑπένερθεν ἄναξ ἐνέρων Αἰδωνεύς,  
δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἄλτο καὶ ἴαχε, (Il. 20.56-62)

From high above the father of gods and men made thunder  
terribly, while Poseidon from deep under them shuddered  
all the illimitable earth, the sheer heads of the mountains.  
And all the feet of Ida with her many waters were shaken  
and all her crests, and the city of Troy, the ships of the Achaians.  
Aïdoneus, lord of the dead below, was in terror  
and sprang from his throne and screamed aloud,

Then in lines 66-74 we realize that the gods are not merely intervening in human affairs,  
as Zeus' *laissez-faire* attitude in lines 24-5 encourages,<sup>165</sup> but actually engaging in  
warfare against *each other*:

τόσσος ἄρα κτύπος ὤρτο θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνιόντων.  
ἦτοι μὲν γὰρ ἔναντα Ποσειδάωνος ἄνακτος  
ἴστατ' Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος ἔχων ἰὰ πτερόεντα,  
ἄντα δ' Ἐνυαλίῳ θεᾷ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη:  
Ἴηρη δ' ἀντέστη χρυσηλάκατος κελαδεινῇ  
Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα κασιγνήτη ἐκάτοιο:  
Λητοῖ δ' ἀντέστη σῶκος ἐριούνιος Ἑρμῆς,  
ἄντα δ' ἄρ' Ἴφαιστοῖο μέγας ποταμὸς βαθυδίνης,  
ὄν Ξάνθον καλέουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ Σκάμανδρον. (Il. 20.66-74)

such was the crash that sounded as the gods came driving together  
in wrath. For now over against the lord Poseidon  
Phoibos Apollo took his stand with his feathered arrows,

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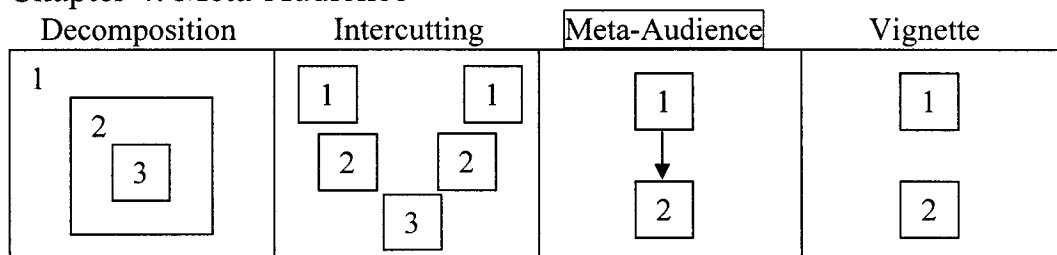
<sup>165</sup> Cf. Il. 20.24-5.

and against Enyalios the goddess grey-eyed Athena.  
Against Hera stood the lady of clamour, of the golden distaff,  
of the showering arrows, Artemis, sister of the far striker.  
Opposite Leto stood the strong one, generous Hermes,  
and against Hephaestus stood the great deep-eddying river  
who is called Xanthos by the gods, but by mortals Skamandros.

Thus, the intercutting in this scene does not merely reflect human intercutting, as in the battle over Patroclus' corpse, but constitutes a first-order implementation of the device in its own right, linking mortal and immortal *movement* within Iliadic story space. In the next two chapters we encounter yet another way in which Homer links mortal and immortal characters: through their shared *perception*, of both visible and imaginary spaces.



## Chapter 4: Meta-Audience



“Experienced as it is by the human characters...and, at the same time, looked upon by the gods, the action of the [Homeric] poems is scrutinized in its depths. Light is projected upon it from many angles.” (Vivante, 1970: 32)

Meta-audience consists of characters watching other characters.<sup>166</sup> Homer establishes four main locations within it—two aerial, two terrestrial—as permanent spectatorial venues. The aerial meta-theaters consist of Olympus, abode of the gods, and Mount Ida, to which the gods frequently descend for an intimate view of the mortal action. The Olympian gods peruse the Trojan plain so often, in fact, that Michael Silk considers their reactions to human events to be their sole narrative function.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, in one scene the narrator emphasizes the absence of all except one minor deity to witness the battle between Greeks and Trojans from Olympus, as though to imply that they are otherwise always present:

οἷ γάρ ῥα θεῶν παρετύγγανε μαρναμένοισιν,  
οἱ δ' ἄλλοι οὐ σφιν πάρεσαν θεοί, ἀλλὰ ἔκηλοι  
σφοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι καθεῖατο, ἦχι ἑκάστω  
δῶματα καλὰ τέτυκτο κατὰ πτόχας Οὐλύμπιοι. (*Il.* 11.74-77)

[Hate] alone of all the immortals attended this action  
but the other immortals were not there, but sat quietly  
remote and apart in their palaces, where for each one of them  
a house had been built in splendour along the folds of Olympus.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Edwards (1987: 84); Edmunds (1996: 3).

<sup>167</sup> 1987: 80.

Despite their frequent focus on mortal activity, however, the attention of the gods is by no means monopolized by it. Occasionally they even watch *each other*, as when Hera directs her gaze at Poseidon and Zeus on two separate stages:

Ἥρη δ' εἰσεΐδε χρυσόθρονος ὀφθαλμοῖσι  
στᾶσ' ἐξ Οὐλύμπιοιο ἀπὸ ῥίου: αὐτίκα δ' ἔγνω  
τὸν μὲν ποιπνύοντα μάχην ἀνὰ κυδιάνειραν  
αὐτοκασίγνητον καὶ δαέρα, χαῖρε δὲ θυμῶ:  
Ζῆνα δ' ἐπ' ἀκροτάτης κορυφῆς πολυπίδακος Ἰδης  
ἦμενον εἰσεΐδε, στυγερός δέ οἱ ἔπλετο θυμῶ. (*Il.* 14.153-58)

Now Hera, she of the golden throne, standing on Olympus' horn, looked out with her eyes, and saw at once how Poseidon, who was her very brother and her lord's brother, was bustling about the battle where men win glory, and her heart was happy. Then she saw Zeus, sitting along the loftiest summit on Ida of the springs, and in her eyes he was hateful.

The gods also play a crucial dramatic role in their own right.<sup>168</sup> Frequently they act on their own volition, even take part in the fighting themselves, as when Zeus watches a battle between several Olympians in Book 21:

ἐν δ' ἄλλοισι θεοῖσιν ἔρις πέσε βεβριθυῖα  
ἀργαλέη, δίχα δέ σφιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἄητο:  
σὺν δ' ἔπεσον μέγῳ πατάγῳ, βράχε δ' εὐρεῖα χθῶν,  
ἀμφὶ δὲ σάλπιγξεν μέγας οὐρανός. ἄϊε δὲ Ζεὺς  
ἦμενος Οὐλύμπῳ: ἐγέλασσε δέ οἱ φίλον ἦτορ  
γηθοσύνη, ὅθ' ὄρᾳτο θεοὺς ἔριδι ξυνιόντας. (*Il.* 21.385-90)

But upon the other gods descended the wearisome burden of hatred, and the wind of their fury blew from division, and they collided with a grand crash, the broad earth echoing and the huge sky sounded as with trumpets. Zeus heard it from where he sat on Olympus, and was amused in his deep heart for pleasure, as he watched the gods' collision in conflict.

The most common activity of the gods, however, is to watch the mortal drama and to descend either to Ida or the Trojan plain or to ascend to Olympus from the Trojan

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<sup>168</sup> Cf. Redfield (1975: 229).

plain. Excursions to and from Olympus are frequent and often elaborately described.<sup>169</sup>

On the other hand, sometimes the action shifts there without prior notice and takes the audience by surprise, as in the following scenario described by Richardson:

When Achilles is chasing Hector around the citadel before the inevitable duel, we are joined as spectators not only by the Greek army and the Trojan populace, but also by the gods...(*Il.* 22.165-70)... We suddenly find ourselves on Olympus, though after a fashion we have been viewing the chase from there as long as the gods have.<sup>170</sup>

This technique is especially effective when the transition occurs in mid-verse rather than in initial or final position, accentuating its unexpected quality, as in the sudden cut from the Trojan plain to Olympus in line 4 of Book 15:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ διὰ τε σκόλοπας καὶ τάφρον ἔβησαν  
φεύγοντες, πολλοὶ δὲ δάμεν Δαναῶν ὑπὸ χερσίν,  
οἱ μὲν δὴ παρ' ὄχεσφιν ἐρητύοντο μένοντες  
χλωροὶ ὑπαὶ δείους πεφοβημένοι: ἔγρετο δὲ Ζεὺς  
Ἴδης ἐν κορυφῇσι παρὰ χρυσοθρόνου Ἥρης,  
στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἀναΐξας, ἴδε δὲ Τρῶας καὶ Ἀχαιοὺς  
τοὺς μὲν ὀρινομένους, τοὺς δὲ κλονέοντας ὀπισθεν  
Ἀργείους, μετὰ δὲ σφί Ποσειδάωνα ἄνακτα: (*Il.* 15.1-8)

But after they had crossed back over the ditch and the sharp stakes in flight, and many had gone down under the hands of the Danaans, they checked about once more and stood their ground by the chariots, green for fear and terrified. But now Zeus wakened by Hera of the gold throne on the high places of Ida, and stood suddenly upright, and saw the Achaians and Trojans, these driven to flight, the others harrying them in confusion, these last Argives, and saw among them the lord Poseidon.

Sudden shifts to a given meta-theater often bring us back quickly to the point of origin, as when Zeus considers a course of revenge for the death of Sarpedon:

ὣς ἄρα τοὶ περὶ νεκρὸν ὀμίλειον, οὐδέ ποτε Ζεὺς  
τρέψεν ἀπὸ κρατερῆς ὑσμίνης ὅσσε φαεινῶ,

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<sup>169</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, above.

<sup>170</sup> 1990: 112.

ἀλλὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς αἰὲν ὄρα καὶ φράζετο θυμῷ,  
πολλὰ μάλ' ἀμφὶ φόνῳ Πατρόκλου μερμηρίζων, (*Il.* 16.644-47)

So they swarmed over the dead man, nor did Zeus ever  
turn the glaring of his eyes from the strong encounter,  
but kept gazing forever upon them, in spirit reflective,  
and pondered hard over many ways for the death of Patroclus;

After this brief meditation in Olympus the action returns to the Trojan plain, where Zeus' plan to avenge his son begins to materialize. Sometimes, however, the action lingers in the new location and initiates a scene between two or more Olympians, as when Zeus addresses Athena following what seems to be a routine jaunt to Olympus:

ὣς ἔφατο κλαίων, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γέροντες,  
μνησάμενοι τὰ ἕκαστος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔλειπε:  
μυρομένους δ' ἄρα τούς γε ἰδὼν ἐλέησε Κρονίων,  
αἶψα δ' Ἀθηναίην ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα: (*Il.* 19.338-41)

So he spoke, mourning, and the elders lamented around him  
remembering each those he had left behind in his own halls.  
The son of Kronos took pity on them as he watched them mourning  
and immediately spoke in winged words to Athena:

In either case, these frequent excursions to Olympus accentuate its offstage status, inducing the impression that at any moment we might be transported there, its divine inhabitants waiting in the wings, akin to what cinematographer Bill Butler achieves in the movie "Jaws":<sup>171</sup>

We kept the camera at water-level whenever we could. And it isn't something that you will see immediately, but after awhile you begin to feel that that shark was maybe just under that water. And by keeping the camera down close to that water, we built into the picture a kind of atmosphere or feeling that we wouldn't have gotten any other way.

This technique applies as well to *Ida*, as when Zeus wakes up after Hera seduces him in 15.1-8, as well as between *Ida* and Olympus, as when Zeus catches Hera and Athena

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<sup>171</sup> 2000.

preparing to descend to the Trojan plain to help the Greeks in 8.397. Olympus and Ida, however, are not the only permanent meta-theaters in the *Iliad* (not the only sharks in the sea, so to speak), and the action does not shift to these locations frequently enough to generate such anticipatory anxiety automatically. Therefore, as a subtle reminder of their imminent presence, characters frequently refer to the gods in their capacity as meta-spectators:

νῦν δ' ἐμέθεν ξύνες ὤκα: Διὸς δέ τοι ἄγγελός εἰμι,  
ὄς σεῦ ἄνευθεν ἐὼν μέγα κήδεται ἢ δ' ἐλεαίρει. (*Il.* 2.26-27)

Listen quickly to what I say, since I am a messenger  
of Zeus, who far away cares much for you and is pitiful.

or the narrator reports that a character's prayer is acknowledged

ὥς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων, (*Il.* 1.43)

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoibos Apollo heard him,

or disregarded

ὥς ἔφατ', οὐδ' ἄρα πῶ οἱ ἐπεκράϊαινε Κρονίων, (*Il.* 2.419)

He spoke, but none of this would the son of Kronos accomplish,

by a given deity, thereby evoking Olympus without a full-scale change of scene.

Although not alone in the role of meta-spectator, Zeus determines the meta-theatrical agenda of the *Iliad* more than any other deity.<sup>172</sup> In the following analysis of Books 8 and 9—where his influence, and that of Olympus, is both most and least felt, respectively—we see how his absence or presence can influence the nature and course of the mortal action. We begin in Olympus, at the beginning of Book 8. Zeus convokes a

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. Silk (1987: 80).

meeting with the other deities (8.1-4). He instructs them to stay out of the war, and travels to Ida to assume his usual function as meta-spectator:

Ἴδην δ' ἵκανεν πολυπίδακα μητέρα θηρῶν  
Γάργαρον, ἔνθά δέ οἱ τέμενος βωμός τε θυήεις.  
ἔνθ' ἵππους ἔστησε πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε  
λύσας ἐξ ὀχέων, κατὰ δ' ἠέρα πουλὺν ἔχευεν.  
αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κορυφῇσι καθέζετο κύδει γαίω  
εἰσορόων Τρώων τε πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν. (Il. 8.47-52)

He came to Ida with all her springs, the mother of wild beasts,  
to Gargaron, where was his holy ground and his smoking altar.  
There the father of gods and of mortals halted his horses,  
and slipped them from their harness, and drifted close mist about them,  
and himself rejoicing in the pride of his strength sat down on the mountain  
looking out over the city of Troy and the ships of the Achaians.

The *dramatis personae* enter the Trojan plain, beginning with the Greeks at stage-left

οἱ δ' ἄρα δεῖπνον ἔλοντο κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ  
ῥίμφα κατὰ κλισίας, ἀπὸ δ' αὐτοῦ θωρήσοντο. (Il. 8.53-54)

Now the flowing-haired Achaians had taken their dinner  
lightly among their shelters, and they put on their armour thereafter;

and the Trojans at stage right:

Τρῶες δ' αὐθ' ἐτέρωθεν ἀνὰ πτόλιν ὠπλίζοντο  
παυρότεροι: μέμασαν δὲ καὶ ὥς ὑσμῖνι μάχεσθαι  
χραιοῖ ἀναγκαίη, πρό τε παίδων καὶ πρό γυναικῶν.  
πᾶσαι δ' ὠϊγγυντο πύλαι, ἐκ δ' ἔσσυτο λαός,  
πεζοὶ θ' ἱππῆές τε: πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει. (Il. 8.55-59)

and on the other side, in the city, the Trojans took up  
their armour, fewer men, yet minded to stand the encounter  
even so, caught in necessity, for their wives and their children.  
And all the gates were made open, and the fighting men swept through them,  
the foot ranks and the horsemen, and the sound grew huge of their onset.

Finally, both Greeks and Trojans converge onto center stage:

οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἐς χῶρον ἓνα ξυνιόντες ἴκοντο  
σὺν ῥ' ἔβαλον ῥινούς, σὺν δ' ἔγχεα καὶ μένε' ἀνδρῶν

χαλκεοθωρήκων: ἀτὰρ ἀσπίδες ὀμφαλόεσσαι  
ἔπληντ' ἀλλήλησι, πολὺς δ' ὀρυμαγδὸς ὀρώρει.  
ἔνθα δ' ἄμ' οἰμωγή τε καὶ εὐχολὴ πέλεν ἀνδρῶν (*Il.* 8.60-5)

Now as these advancing came to one place and encountered,  
they dashed their shields together and their spears, and the strength of  
armoured men in bronze, and the shields massive in the middle  
clashed against each other, and the sound grew huge of the fighting.  
There the screaming and the shouts of triumph rose up together  
of men killing and men killed, and the ground ran blood.

Rather than delve into the meta-performance proper, however, the scene shifts immediately back to Ida, where Zeus, upon determining that the Trojans will get the better of the Greeks, flashes his thunderbolt above the mortal stage, providing a first-order spectacle for the Greeks and a third-order spectacle for the audience through the eyes of the Greeks as seen through the eyes of Zeus:

αὐτὸς δ' ἐξ Ἴδης μεγάλ' ἔκτυπε, δαιόμενον δὲ  
ἦκε σέλας μετὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν: οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες  
θάμβησαν, καὶ πάντας ὑπὸ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν. (*Il.* 8.75-77)

and he himself crashed a great stroke from Ida, and a kindling  
flash shot over the people of the Achaians; seeing it  
they were stunned, and pale terror took hold of all of them.

Thus, both the Greeks, on the one hand, and Zeus, on the other, become meta-spectacle and meta-spectator simultaneously.<sup>173</sup> Then the mortal spectacle resumes, until the Greeks threaten to bypass Zeus' pro-Trojan agenda, resulting in another shift to Ida, where Zeus looks down onto the battlefield and again flashes his thunderbolt. This time his appearance is more explicitly acknowledged by the Greeks, in Nestor's address to Diomedes:

Τυδεΐδη ἄγε δ' αὐτε φόβονδ' ἔχε μώνυχας ἵππους.  
ἦ οὐ γινώσκεις ὅ τοι ἐκ Διὸς οὐχ ἔπετ' ἀλκή; (*Il.* 8.139-40)

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<sup>173</sup> Cf. Wood (1987: 28, 38).

'Son of Tydeus, steer now to flight your single-foot horses.  
Can you not see that the power of Zeus no longer is with you?

Yet the scene shifts again to the Trojan plain, where Hector acknowledges Zeus' favoritism and encourages the Trojans to take advantage of it. We expect a return to Ida, in conformity to the pattern that seems to be emerging in Book 8. Yet after Hector's boastful speech in lines 173-83, the action shifts, not to Zeus on Ida, but rather to Hera on Olympus:

ὥς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, νεμέσησε δὲ πότνια Ἥρη,  
σεῖσατο δ' εἰνὶ θρόνῳ, ἐλέλιξε δὲ μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον, (Il. 8.198-99)

So he spoke, boasting, and the lady Hera was angry,  
and started upon her throne, and tall Olympus was shaken,

Thus, three concurrent meta-theaters are established: Olympus and Ida with their view of the Trojan plain, and the Trojan plain with its view of Zeus' pyrotechnics, *sema* of divine intervention.<sup>174</sup> What begins as a simple meta-theater in line 52 expands into a three-tier dramatic complex, facilitating immortal spectatorship from and travel between Olympus and Ida, while the mortal action transpires upon the Trojan plain along the horizontal continuum between the Greek camp and Troy. Such spatial polyphony displays a resourcefulness denied even to cinema, whose horizontal viewing area precludes symmetrical correspondence between its x and y axes. That is not to say, however, that this handicap is inherent to the cinematic medium. On the contrary, Eisenstein insists that if the horizontal movie-screen were to be replaced by a square one, cinema could conceivably do justice to the complementary forces of horizontal and vertical action:<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> While acknowledging that "such omnipresence" is denied to theater, Münsterberg (1970: 44) considers it to be an exclusively cinematic technique.

<sup>175</sup> 1970a: 49. Cf. Stansbury-O'Donnell (1999: 156).



...for thirty years we have been content to see excluded 50 per cent of composition possibilities, in consequence of the *horizontal shape* of the frame. By the word “excluded” I refer to all the possibilities of *vertical, upright composition*...that loathsome upper part of the frame...has bent and bound us to a passive horizontalism...

This is, in fact, precisely the balance achieved by Homer. Rather than focus primarily upon horizontal action, as in the *Odyssey*, the constant presence of Zeus as meta-spectator and of Olympus and Ida as meta-theaters enriches the spatial dimension of the *Iliad* and prevents receptive complacency. At any given point the action might shift left, right, above, or below, each location within eyeshot of the others, susceptible to abrupt or gradual transitions between them. In line 350 of Book 8, for example, after 138 lines of battle that result in a Greek rout, Hera and Athena decide to descend to the Trojan plain and to help the Greeks, despite Zeus’ prohibition against divine intervention at the beginning of the book. This initiates a meta-narrative between Zeus, Hera, and Athena that transpires on the vertical dimension of story space in counterpoint to the main action on the Trojan plain. As the goddesses descend from Olympus the scene shifts to Ida through the meta-spectatorship of Zeus,

τῆ ῥα δι' αὐτάων κεντρηνεκέας ἔχον ἵππους.  
Ζεὺς δὲ πατήρ Ἰδηθεν ἐπεὶ ἶδε χώσατ' ἄρ' αἰνῶς, (*Il.* 8.396-97)

Through the way between they held the speed of their goaded horses.  
But Zeus father, watching from Ida, was angered terribly

who sends Iris to Olympus to prevent them from continuing their journey:

ὥς ἔφατ', ὦρτο δὲ Ἴρις ἀελλόπος ἀγγελέουσα,  
βῆ δὲ κατ' Ἰδαίων ὀρέων ἐς μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον.  
πρώτησιν δὲ πύλῃσι πολυπτύχου Οὐλύμποιο  
ἀντομένη κατέρυκε, Διὸς δὲ σφ' ἔννεπε μῦθον: (*Il.* 8.409-12)

He spoke, and Iris, storm-footed, rose with his message  
and took her way from the peaks of Ida to tall Olympus,  
and at the utmost gates of many-folded Olympus  
met and stayed them, and spoke the word that Zeus had given her:

Hera and Athena obey Zeus' orders and he returns to Olympus, where he threatens them and warns them to honor his authority. Hera feebly objects, resulting in an even greater expression of Zeus' absolute power. The scene ends with Hera's pregnant silence and the conclusion of this divine meta-narrative through ring composition: a curtain-call of Greek and Trojan *dramatis personae* arranged symmetrically upon the Trojan stage:

ὡς φάτο, τὸν δ' οὐ τι προσέφη λευκώλενος Ἥρη.  
ἐν δ' ἔπεσ' Ὠκεανῶ λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο  
ἔλκον νύκτα μέλαιναν ἐπὶ ζεΐδωρον ἄρουραν.  
Τρωσὶν μὲν ῥ' ἀέκουσιν ἔδν φάος, αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοῖς  
ἀσπασίη τρίλλιστος ἐπήλυθε νύξ ἐρεβεννή. (Il. 8.484-88)

So he spoke, and Hera of the white arms gave him no answer.  
And now the shining light of the sun was dipped in the Ocean  
trailing black night across the grain-giving land. For the Trojans  
the daylight sank against their will, but for the Achaians  
sweet and thrice-supplanted was the coming on of the dark night.

Thus, Homer uses meta-audience to frame lines 1-488 of Book 8, encompassing the action within two Olympian episodes. Once, however, the Trojans assemble near the Greek ships and Hector delivers a speech urging them to cease fighting until the next day and to pay tribute to the gods, the atmosphere grows ominous, lacking the sense of divine presence permeating the previous scenes, as though the Olympians have left the stage:

ἔρδον δ' ἀθανάτοισι τεληέσσας ἑκατόμβας  
κνίσην δ' ἐκ πεδίου ἄνεμοι φέρον οὐρανὸν εἴσω.  
ἠδεῖαν: τῆς δ' οὐ τι θεοὶ μάκαρες δατέοντο,  
οὐδ' ἔθελον: μάλα γάρ σφιν ἀπήχθετο Ἴλιος ἱρή  
καὶ Πριάμος καὶ λαὸς ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο (Il. 8.548-52)

They accomplished likewise full sacrifices before the immortals,  
and the winds wafted the savour aloft from the plain to the heavens

in its fragrance; and yet the blessed gods took no part of it.  
They would not; so hateful to them was sacred Ilion,  
and Priam, and the city of Priam of the strong ash spear.

In his speech to the Greeks at the beginning of Book 9, Agamemnon chastizes Zeus as though he is no longer within earshot:

ὦ φίλοι Ἀργείων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες  
Ζεὺς με μέγα Κρονίδης ἄτη ἐνέδησε βαρείη  
σχέτλιος, ὃς πρὶν μὲν μοι ὑπέσχετο καὶ κατένευσεν  
Ἴλιον ἐκπέρσαντ' εὐτείχεον ἀπονέεσθαι,  
νῦν δὲ κακὴν ἀπάτην βουλευσατο, καί με κελεύει  
δυσκλέα Ἄργος ἰκέσθαι, ἐπεὶ πολὺν ὤλεσα λαόν. (*Il.* 9.17-22)

'Friends, who are leaders of the Argives and keep their counsel:  
Zeus son of Kronos has caught me badly in bitter futility.  
He is hard: who before this time promised me and consented  
that I might sack strong-walled Ilion and sail homeward.  
Now he has devised a vile deception and bids me go back  
to Argos in dishonour having lost many of my people.

Diomedes and Nestor urge the Greeks to stay the course rather than to desert the war as Agamemnon advises, and Nestor urges Agamemnon to petition Achilles to reenter the fray, evoking Zeus in a reverential light:

Ἀτρεΐδη κύδιστε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγάμεμνον  
ἐν σοὶ μὲν λήξω, σέο δ' ἄρξομαι, οὐνεκα πολλῶν  
λαῶν ἐσσι ἄναξ καὶ τοι Ζεὺς ἐγγυάλιξε  
σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφισι βουλευῆσθα. (*Il.* 9.96-99)

'Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon,  
with you I will end, with you I will make my beginning, since you  
are lord over many people, and Zeus has given into your hand  
the sceptre and rights of judgment, to be king over the people.

Agamemnon reiterates Nestor's sentiment, evoking Zeus with a similar degree of subtlety:

ἀασάμην, οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἀναίνομαι. ἀντί νυ πολλῶν  
λαῶν ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ὃν τε Ζεὺς κῆρι φιλήσῃ,  
ὥς νῦν τοῦτον ἔτισε, δάμασσε δὲ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν. (*Il.* 9.116-18)

I was mad, I myself will not deny it. Worth many  
fighters is that man whom Zeus in his heart loves, as now  
he has honoured this man and beaten down the Achaian people.

This sets the stage for a reappearance of Zeus, to sanction the present turn of events and to reaffirm his essential function as dramatic chaperon. To initiate this reaffirmation of divine guidance, Nestor concludes his elaborate plans for an embassy to Achilles with the intention to win Zeus' support:

φέρτε δὲ χερσὶν ὕδωρ, εὐφημῆσαί τε κέλεσθε,  
ᾧφρα Διὶ Κρονίδῃ ἀρησόμεθ', αἴ κ' ἐλεήσῃ. (*Il.* 9.171-72)

Bring also water for their hands, and bid them keep words of good omen,  
so we may pray to Zeus, son of Kronos, if he will have pity.'

In lines 174-76, the Greeks pour a libation to Zeus, leading us to expect either a favorable or unfavorable response from him. He completely ignores it, however. In lines 182-84, the Greeks pray to Poseidon for help in their mission as they travel along the shore to Achilles' shelter. He ignores their plea as well. Thus, despite the wealth of supplicatory activity from the beginning of Book 9, the Olympians remain offstage and the terrestrial action transpires within the same dramatic vacuum initiated at the end of Book 8. Indeed, when the Greeks finally encounter Achilles, his subsequent refusal of their offer merely confirms their spiritual alienation, contrasting markedly with the numinosity of the previous book.

In addition to the gods, mortals also frequently serve as meta-spectators in the *Iliad*. They focalize, for instance, emotions such as amazement,<sup>176</sup> joy,<sup>177</sup> courage,<sup>178</sup> and

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. 3.342.

fear.<sup>179</sup> Sometimes, on the other hand, two characters or groups of characters react differently to a given meta-spectacle. For example, Greeks and Trojans register joy and fear, respectively, when Ajax appears on the battlefield:

τὸν δὲ καὶ Ἀργεῖοι μέγ' ἐγήθεον εἰσορόωντες,  
Τρῶας δὲ τρόμος αἰνὸς ὑπήλυθε γυῖα ἕκαστον, (*Il.* 7.214-15)

And the Argives looking upon him were made glad, while the Trojans were taken every man in the knees with trembling and terror,

Agamemnon and Menelaos both panic when they witness Menelaos' wound in Book 4, yet Menelaos revises his response to it once he discovers its relatively benign status:

ῥίγησεν δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων  
ὡς εἶδεν μέλαν αἶμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὤτειλῆς;  
ῥίγησεν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος.  
ὡς δὲ ἶδεν νεῦρόν τε καὶ ὄγκους ἐκτὸς ἐόντας  
ἄψορρόν οἱ θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἀγέρθη. (*Il.* 4.148-52)

Agamemnon the lord of men was taken with shuddering fear as he saw how from the cut the dark blood trickled downward, and Menelaos the warlike himself shuddered in terror; but when he saw the binding strings and the hooked barbs outside the wound, his spirit was gathered again back into him.

Iliadic mortals also form meta-audiences to witness significant events such as the funeral games of Patroclus in Book 23 and Achilles' pursuit of Hector in Book 22, which Homer compares explicitly to an athletic contest, only, as Jasper Griffin puts it, "...the gods were among the audience, and the stake was the life of Hector."<sup>180</sup> The meta-theatrical element is essential to this scene, as the following passage makes clear,

οἱ δὲ παρὰ σκοπιὴν καὶ ἐρινεὸν ἠνεμόεντα  
τείχεος αἰὲν ὑπέκ κατ' ἀμαξιτὸν ἐσσεύοντο, (*Il.* 22.145-46)

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<sup>177</sup> Cf. 7.307.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. 14.441.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. 15.280.

<sup>180</sup> 1978: 14.

They raced along by the watching point and the windy fig tree  
always away from under the wall and along the wagon-way

emphasizing the presence of meta-spectators and a sufficient distance between meta-spectacle and wall (ὑπέκ) to accommodate meta-theatrical activity. The first meta-audience mentioned is the gods—all of them:

ὥς τῶ τρις Πριάμοιο πόλιν πέρι δινηθήτην  
καρπαλίμοισι πόδεσσι: θεοὶ δ' ἐς πάντες ὀρώντο: (*Il.* 22.165-66)

so these two swept whirling about the city of Priam  
in the speed of their feet, while all the gods were looking upon them.

The scene remains in Olympus, where Zeus, in a rare display of *aporia*, canvasses the other gods about what course of action to take and allows Athena to descend to the Trojan plain to assist Achilles against Hector. Before she arrives, the mortal meta-audience is introduced indirectly,<sup>181</sup> consistent with Homer's general tendency to present spatial information in the course of the action rather than in descriptive blocks that staunch the narrative flow:<sup>182</sup>

λαοῖσιν δ' ἀνένευε καρῆατι δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,  
οὐδ' ἔα ἰέμεναι ἐπὶ Ἑκτορι πικρὰ βέλεμνα,  
μή τις κῦδος ἄροίτο βαλῶν, ὃ δὲ δεύτερος ἔλθοι. (*Il.* 22.205-07)

But brilliant Achilles kept shaking his head at his own people  
and would not let them throw their bitter projectiles at Hector  
for fear the thrower might win the glory, and himself come second.

This subtle detail suffices to give us the sense of watching the proceedings as meta-audience rather than primary audience, thus imbuing the scene with a correspondingly greater degree of emotional involvement. No sudden close-ups of specific meta-spectators is necessary to sustain this illusion, which has been achieved in a manner

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<sup>181</sup> They are not explicitly said to watch until line 370, after Hector has been killed.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Leach (1988: 32).

impossible to duplicate cinematically.<sup>183</sup> Ebert addresses this issue in his review of the movie “Troy”:

As for the Greek cities themselves, a cliché from the old Hollywood epics has remained intact. This is the convention that whenever a battle of great drama takes place, all the important characters have box seats for it. When Achilles battles Hector before the walls of Troy, for example, Priam and his family have a sort of viewing stand right at the front of the palace, and we get the usual crowd reaction shots, some of them awkward closeups of actresses told to look grieved.<sup>184</sup>

In contrast with its prominent meta-theatrical function in the *Iliad*, Olympus is more often referred to than travelled to in the *Odyssey*. This reflects the terrestrial orientation of Odyssean action, focused more on Odysseus’ linear trajectory toward Ithaca and his relationship with Athena than on the contrast between human and divine forces or the establishment of Olympus as a parallel dramatic theater. Homer stresses the open-endedness of Odyssean story space and its corresponding lack of *Iliad*-like constriction through frequent reference to the expansiveness of the sea<sup>185</sup> and its imperviousness to nautical swiftness;<sup>186</sup> of the land,<sup>187</sup> its manifold regions,<sup>188</sup> and the vast distances between them;<sup>189</sup> of κλεῖος, with its awesome horizontal<sup>190</sup> and vertical<sup>191</sup> scope, and yet to the transcension of scenographic anarchy through courage,<sup>192</sup> friendship,<sup>193</sup> culture,<sup>194</sup> patriotism,<sup>195</sup> the gods’ will,<sup>196</sup> and the power of supplication,<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> If, for example, voice-over narration were provided to convey to the audience Achilles’ motive for shaking his head, the audience would no longer be watching the scene through the eyes of the meta-spectators but rather of the primary narrator, whose perspective this observation would represent.

<sup>184</sup> 2004.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. *Od.* 3.321-22.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. *Od.* 4.708-09.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. *Od.* 4.602-03.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. *Od.* 14.120.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. *Od.* 4.757.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. *Od.* 4.726.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. *Od.* 9.20.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. *Od.* 7.51-2.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. *Od.* 9.16-18.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. *Od.* 9.273-74.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. *Od.* 9.34-6.

affirming the inherent formidability of Odyssean distances through the necessity to contain them within manageable limits. The exotic status of divine society in the *Odyssey* is underscored by the following description of Olympus, which lacks the familiar ring of comparable scenes in the *Iliad*, despite the extensive action situated there at the beginning of the previous book:

ἢ μὲν ἄρ' ὧς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη  
Οὐλυμπόνδ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ  
ἔμμεναι. οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρω  
δεύεται οὔτε χιῶν ἐπιπύλνεται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη  
πέπταται ἀννέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη: (*Od.* 6.41-45)

So the gray-eyed Athena spoke and went away from her  
to Olympus, where the abode of the gods stands firm and unmoving  
forever, they say, and is not shaken with winds nor spattered with rains,  
nor does snow pile ever there, but the shining bright air  
stretches cloudless away, and the white light glances upon it.

In conformity with the terrestrial emphasis of the *Odyssey*, Athena tends to appear at ground level rather than in Olympus, functioning, not as a detached spectator, but as the main benefactor of Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope. When Telemachus prays to Athena in the following scene, for example, she is characteristically ready at hand to offer him help:

ὧς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, σχεδόθεν δέ οἱ ἦλθεν Ἀθήνη,  
Μέντορι εἰδομένη ἡμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ αὐδὴν, (*Od.* 2.267-68)

So he spoke in prayer, and from nearby Athena came to him  
likening herself to Mentor in voice and appearance.

This synergy between Athena and her mortal beneficiaries is symbolized by the display of mortal/immortal synchronicity in the following passage:

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<sup>196</sup> Cf. *Od.* 3.231.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. *Od.* 6.310-12.



ὡς ἄρα φωνήσασ' ἠγήσατο δῖα θεάων  
καρπαλίμως: ὁ δ' ἔπειτα μετ' ἰχνα βαῖνε θεοῖο.  
Ἴξον δὲ σπεῖος γλαφυρὸν θεὸς ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνήρ,  
καὶ ῥ' ὁ μὲν ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἐπὶ θρόνου ἔνθεν ἀνέστη  
Ἑρμείας, νύμφη δ' ἐτίθει πάρα πᾶσαν ἐδωδὴν,  
ἔσθειν καὶ πίνειν, οἷα βροτοὶ ἄνδρες ἔδουσιν: (*Od.* 5.192-97)

So she spoke, a shining goddess, and led the way swiftly,  
and the man followed behind her walking in the god's footsteps.  
They made their way, the man and the god, to the hollow cavern,  
and he seated himself upon the chair from which Hermes lately  
had risen, while the nymph set all manner of food before him  
to eat and drink, such things as mortal people feed upon.

The two primary terrestrial meta-theaters of the *Iliad* are the Greek camp and the Trojan wall. In the following scene the Greek camp serves as an outpost for Agamemnon to survey the current situation before he encounters Nestor to plan an ambush of the Trojan camp. His view of Trojan territory, however, is not as comprehensive as that enjoyed by the gods in Olympus or Ida. He can only deduce the activity of the Trojans themselves through visual (12) and auditory (13) cues, while his access to the Greeks (14) and Olympus (16) is unrestricted:

ἦτοι ὄτ' ἐς πεδῖον τὸ Τρωϊκὸν ἀθήσειε,  
θαύμαζεν πυρὰ πολλὰ τὰ καίετο Ἴλιόθι πρὸ  
αὐλῶν συρίγγων τ' ἐνοπήν ὄμαδόν τ' ἀνθρώπων.  
αὐτὰρ ὄτ' ἐς νῆάς τε ἴδοι καὶ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν,  
πολλὰς ἐκ κεφαλῆς προθελύμνους ἔλκετο χαίτας  
ὑψόθ' ἐόντι Διῖ, μέγα δ' ἔστενε κυδάλιμον κῆρ. (*Il.* 10.11-16)

Now he would gaze across the plain to the Trojan camp, wondering  
at the number of their fires that were burning in front of Ilion,  
toward the high calls of their flutes and pipes, the murmur of people.  
Now as he would look again to the ships and the Achaian  
people, he would drag the hair by its roots from his head, looking  
toward Zeus on high, and his proud heart was stricken with lamentation.

Once Achilles returns to his camp after his near-fatal argument with Agamemnon in Book 1, it becomes a meta-theater in its own right, providing an alternate view of the action from Achilles' ship,<sup>198</sup>

τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ἐνόησε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς:  
εἰστήκει γὰρ ἐπὶ πρυμνῇ μεγακίτεϊ νηϊ  
εἰσορώων πόνον αἰπὺν ἰῶκά τε δακρυόεσσαν. (*Il.* 11.599-601)

Now swift-footed brilliant Achilles saw [Nestor] and watched him,  
for [Achilles] was standing on the stern of his huge-hollowed vessel  
looking out over the sheer war work and the sorrowful onrush.

or from his shelter,

ἦτοι ὁ μὲν σπείσας τε καὶ εὐξάμενος Διῖ πατρὶ  
ἄψ κλισίην εἰσῆλθε, δέπας δ' ἀπέθηκ' ἐνὶ χηλῶ,  
στῆ δὲ πάροιθ' ἐλθὼν κλισίης, ἔτι δ' ἤθελε θυμῶ  
εἰσιδέειν Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν φύλοπιν αἰνίην. (*Il.* 16.253-56)

When Achilles had poured the wine and prayed to Zeus father  
he went back into the shelter, stowed the cup in the chest, and came out  
to stand in front of the door, with the desire in his heart still  
to watch the grim encounter of Achaians and Trojans.

complementing the Greek camp proper the way Ida complements Olympus, providing an alternative perspective on the military action. Likewise, the Trojan wall constitutes the Trojan equivalent to Achilles' shelter in its spatial relationship to Troy proper. On the other hand, Troy, unlike the Greek camp (its scenographic antipode) does not itself offer a view of the battlefield, and thus the Trojans are limited to the single perspective provided by the Trojan wall. This meta-theatrical contrast between Greek and Trojan armies emphasizes the vulnerability of the Greek ships and the relative security of the city. It also provides the opportunity to dramatize the act of meta-spectatorship itself. For example, Andromache's distance from the main action is most clear in Book 22, when

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<sup>198</sup> Cf. Kuntz (1993: 9).

she eventually learns of Hector's death. Hecuba mourns outside but Andromache does not yet hear her:

ὡς ἔφατο κλαίουσ', ἄλοχος δ' οὐ πῶ τι πέπυστο  
Ἴκτορος: οὐ γάρ οἱ τις ἐπήτυμος ἄγγελος ἐλθὼν  
ἤγγειλ' ὅτι ῥά οἱ πόσις ἔκτοθι μίμνε πυλάων, (Il. 22.437-39)

So she spoke in tears but the wife of Hector had not yet heard: for no sure messenger had come to her and told her how her husband had held his ground there outside the gates;

Her isolation is dramatized by the contrast between the emotional devastation outside and her own calm demeanor inside:

ἀλλ' ἦ γ' ἴστων ὕφαινε μυχῶ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο  
δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ' ἔπασσε.  
κέκλετο δ' ἀμιπόλοισιν ἐϋπλοκάμοις κατὰ δῶμα  
ἀμφὶ πυρὶ στῆσαι τρίποδα μέγαν, ὄφρα πέλοιτο  
Ἴκτορι θερμὰ λωετρὰ μάχης ἐκ νοστήσαντι  
νηπίη, οὐδ' ἐνόησεν ὅ μιν μάλα τῆλε λωετρῶν  
χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος δάμασε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη. (Il. 22.440-46)

but she was weaving a web in the inner room of the high house, a red folding robe, and inworking elaborate figures. She called out through the house to her lovely-haired handmaidens to set a great cauldron over the fire, so that there would be hot water for Hector's bath as he came back out of the fighting; poor innocent, nor knew how, far from waters for bathing, Pallas Athena had cut him down at the hands of Achilles.

Yet she suspects that something is not quite right once she hears the crying:

κωκυτοῦ δ' ἤκουσε καὶ οἰμωγῆς ἀπὸ πύργου: (Il. 22.447)

She heard from the great bastion the noise of mourning and sorrow.

We cut suddenly to an object that falls from her hand to the ground,

τῆς δ' ἐλελίχθη γυῖα, χαμαὶ δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε κερκίς: (Il. 22.448)

Her limbs spun, and the shuttle dropped from her hand to the ground.

a powerful visual technique<sup>199</sup> reminiscent of the opening scene from “Citizen Kane”:

DISSOLVE:

INT. KANE'S BEDROOM - FAINT DAWN - 1940

A snow scene. An incredible one. Big, impossible flakes of snow, a too picturesque farmhouse and a snow man. The jingling of sleigh bells in the musical score now makes an ironic reference to Indian Temple bells - the music freezes -

KANE'S OLD OLD VOICE

Rosebud...

The camera pulls back, showing the whole scene to be contained in one of those glass balls which are sold in novelty stores all over the world. A hand - Kane's hand, which has been holding the ball, relaxes. The ball falls out of his hand and bounds down two carpeted steps leading to the bed, the camera following. The ball falls off the last step onto the marble floor where it breaks, the fragments glittering in the first rays of the morning sun.

The suspense builds when Andromache calls her handmaidens and orders them to accompany her to the Trojan wall to determine whether the noise, as she suspects, is a sign of Hector's slaying at the hands of Achilles. The intensity is increased by her urgency as she bursts out of her house and approaches the wall:

ὥς φαμένη μεγάροιο διέσσυτο μαινάδι ἴση  
παλλομένη κραδίην: ἅμα δ' ἀμφίπολοι κίον αὐτῇ (Il. 22.460-61)

So she spoke, and ran out of the house like a raving woman  
with pulsing heart, and her two handmaidens went along with her.

Even when she arrives at the wall, however, her ignorance is dispelled only gradually, as she searches (παπτήνας') for Hector,

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πύργον τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἴξεν ὄμιλον  
ἔστη παπτήνας' ἐπὶ τείχεϊ... (Il. 22.462-63)

But when she came to the bastion and where the men were gathered  
she stopped, staring, on the wall...

until finally, at the end of line 463, she perceives him:

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<sup>199</sup> Cf. Münsterberg (1970: 48).

...τὸν δ' ἐνόησεν (*Il.* 22.463)

...and she saw him

It is at this moment, after twenty-five lines in which Andromache gradually emerges from the labyrinthine interiors of Troy, that she becomes a meta-spectator in her own right, equipped with visual access to the action below, which constitutes both meta-spectacle to her and second-order meta-spectacle to us, as we watch the sort of scene to which we are normally granted direct access, but which gains dramatic force as we see it through Andromache's eyes:

ἐλκόμενον πρόσθεν πόλιος: ταχέες δέ μιν ἵπποι  
ἔλκον ἀκηδέστως κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν. (*Il.* 22.464-65)

being dragged in front of the city, and the running horses  
dragged him at random toward the hollow ships of the Achaians.

The narrator then shifts our attention from meta-spectacle to meta-spectator through an extreme close-up of Andromache's eyes themselves,

τὴν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψεν, (*Il.* 22.466)

The darkness of night misted over the eyes of Andromache.

achieving a pathetic effect similar to when the Greeks witnessed their ships being overrun by Trojans in Book 13:

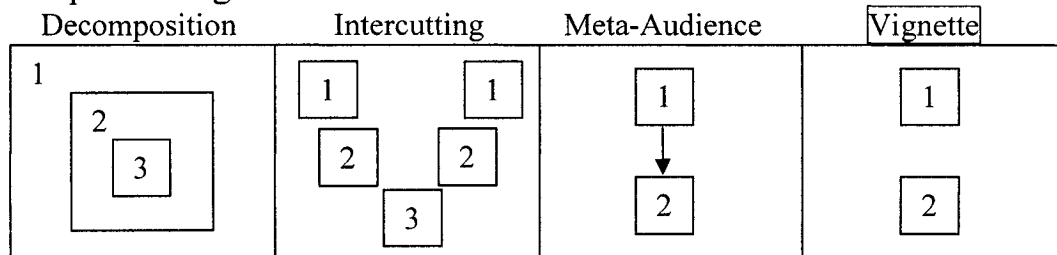
καί σφιν ἄχος κατὰ θυμὸν ἐγένετο δερκομένοισι  
Τρῶας, τοὶ μέγα τεῖχος ὑπερκατέβησαν ὀμίλῳ.  
τοὺς οἷ γ' εἰσορόωντες ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβον: (*Il.* 13.86-88)

discouragement of the heart came over them, as they watched  
the Trojans, and how in a mass they had overswarmed the great wall.  
As they saw them the tears dripped from their eyes.

While decomposition transports the audience into the action along the z axis of the spatial continuum, and intercutting keeps them at bay as they watch the characters on

the Trojan plain merge toward a common center, meta-audience transports them instantaneously within the mind of a character and shows them the world through his or her eyes. Thus, unlike the previous two devices, meta-audience dictates, not merely active or passive reception on the part of the audience but rather an actual transformation, however temporary, of their very identity. This complicates their relationship with both the story and the discourse, indeed threatens to obliterate the boundaries between them, as the transition between lines 87 and 88 of Book 13 makes especially clear, during which the audience is suddenly thrust back into their role as real-world spectators following three lines in which they look subjectively through the very eyes they now perceive objectively at close-up range. In the final chapter we consider a device that, like meta-audience, requires us to assume the vision of a given character, only in this case we see, not through his or her *eyes*, but through his or her *imagination*.

## Chapter 5: Vignette



“Throughout [the *Iliad*] flashlike perspectives open up beyond the action.” (Vivante, 1995: 74)

The cinematic device vignette occurs when the action suddenly shifts to an area that was previously offscreen.<sup>200</sup> Seymour Stern attributes vignette to D.W. Griffith,<sup>201</sup> yet Griffith himself acknowledges its literary provenience.<sup>202</sup> Its theatrical counterpart, the offstage excursion, functions somewhat similarly, providing information, actual or hypothetical, in the present, past, or future, about a location distant from the central scene at hand.<sup>203</sup>

The difference in media between cinema and theater, however, dictates the correspondingly distinctive manner in which each art form executes offscreen and offstage action, respectively. Excursions to the offstage in theater are left solely to the imagination of the audience to visualize, relying upon language to refer to an invisible scene parallel to the scene portrayed physically before them.<sup>204</sup> Excursions to the offscreen in cinema, on the other hand, differ from their theatrical counterpart in the immediacy they share with the main spectacle, presenting the offscreen action before the eyes of the viewer rather than hypothetically through words. In epic, because words are used as its exclusive medium rather than, as in theater, in competition with scenography, excursions to distant regions are no less capable of *enargeia* than the main action they

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Aumont et al. (1992: 12); Lessing (1984: 66).

<sup>201</sup> 1979: 65-6.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Griffith (1925: 66); Münsterberg (1970: 45).

<sup>203</sup> Scolnicov (1987: 13-14).

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Lieblein (1986: 120); Scolnicov (1987: 13); Longman (1987: 151).

temporarily diverge from. Thus they function more like the offscreen of cinema than like the offstage of theater, despite the identical verbal medium used in epic and theater.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, the Elsewhere,<sup>206</sup> the verbal equivalent to the offscreen region, constitutes, not merely an invisible realm possessing exclusively referential existence, but rather a dramatic arena in its own right, no less potentially vivid and contextualized than the main action itself.

To get a clearer sense of what constitutes vignette, we should first consider certain constructions which, while similar to it in one way or another, do not strictly speaking qualify as legitimate excursions to the Elsewhere. A transition between two locations, for example, can achieve an effect similar to vignette, as in Book 3 when the scene shifts from Paris and Helen in the rarified atmosphere of Paris' bedroom to the Trojan plain:

τῶ μὲν ἄρ' ἐν τρητοῖσι κατεύνασθεν λεχέεσσιν,  
Ἀτρεΐδης δ' ἀν' ὄμιλον ἐφοίτα θηρὶ ἐοικῶς  
εἷ που ἐσαθήσειεν Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα. (*Il.* 3.448-50)

So these two were laid in the carven bed. But Atreides  
ranged like a wild beast up and down the host, to discover  
whether he could find anywhere godlike Alexandros.

Because we do not return back to the original location, however, this transition does not constitute an instance of vignette proper. In order to qualify as vignette, the scenographic element must be concrete, situating the characters in a perceptual rather than merely conceptual framework. Thus, when Diomedes kills Xanthos and Thoön in Book 5, the description of their father's future bereavement is less pathetic than if the scene were set in a particular location to increase its dramatic verisimilitude:

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<sup>205</sup> Balutowa (1979: 114-15); Frazier (1999: 453).

<sup>206</sup> Lyons (1991: 72).



ἐνθ' ὃ γε τοὺς ἐνάριζε, φίλον δ' ἐξαίνυτο θυμὸν  
ἀμφοτέρω, πατέρι δὲ γόον καὶ κήδεα λυγρὰ  
λεῖπ', ἐπεὶ οὐ ζῶοντε μάχης ἐκνοστήσαντε  
δέξατο: χηρωσταὶ δὲ διὰ κτῆσιν δατέοντο. (*Il.* 5.155-58)

There he killed these two and took away the dear life from them both, leaving to their father lamentation and sorrowful affliction, since he was not to welcome them home from the fighting alive still; and remoter kinsmen shared his possessions.

Furthermore, the mere fact that something is lying somewhere else does not convey the same experience as the actual image of that object lying there, since it lacks the element of *enargeia* indispensable to vignette.<sup>207</sup> For example, in Book 23 Achilles refers to a corselet that he has Automedon retrieve from his shelter.

Ἀντίλοχ', εἰ μὲν δὴ με κελεύεις οἴκοθεν ἄλλο  
Εὐμήλω ἐπιδοῦναι, ἐγὼ δέ κε καὶ τὸ τελέσσω.  
δώσω οἱ θώρηκα, τὸν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων  
χάλκεον, ᾧ πέρι χεῦμα φαεινοῦ κασσιτέροιο  
ἀμφιδεδίγηται: πολέος δέ οἱ ἄξιος ἔσται. (*Il.* 23.558-62)

'Antilochos, if you would have me bring some other thing out of my dwelling as special gift for Eumelos, then for your sake I will do it. I will give him that corselet I stripped from Asteropaios; it is bronze, but there is an overlay circled about it in shining tin. It will be a gift that will mean much to him.'

It is not, however, until the corselet itself appears in line 565, when Automedon puts it in Achilles' hands, that we perceive it *in situ*:

ἦ ῥα, καὶ Ἀὐτομέδοντι φίλῳ ἐκέλευσεν ἑταίρῳ  
οἰσέμεναι κλισίηθεν: ὃ δ' ᾗχετο καὶ οἱ ἔνεικεν,  
Εὐμήλω δ' ἐν χερσὶ τίθει: ὃ δὲ δέξατο χαίρων. (*Il.* 23.563-65)

He spoke, and told Automedon, his beloved companion, to bring it out of the shelter, and he went away, and brought it back, and put it in Eumelos' hands. And he accepted it joyfully

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<sup>207</sup> Cf. Suvin (1987: 313).

Although οἴκοθεν is mentioned in line 558, the fact that the corselet is located in Achilles' shelter is not the same as *seeing* it located there, regardless of how thoroughly detailed its description. For the focus of vignette is not merely on the object in question, nor on its location, but rather on the symbiosis between the two. Thus, because we do not perceive the corselet in a parallel location but rather in the same location as Achilles himself, the passage does not constitute vignette but rather a close-up view of the object in question which, until line 565, possesses a strictly conceptual provenience.

Vignette provides the audience with a temporary simile-like escape<sup>208</sup> from the closed story space of the *Iliad*, varying the presentation of the narrative in much the way that the diversification of focal distances achieves,<sup>209</sup> only rather than alternating between long shots and close-ups we alternate between the here-and-now, on the one hand, and the there-and-now or the there-and-then, on the other. Homer shares with the playwright the tendency to transcend the constrictive confines of closed story space. According to Colin Duckworth, for example, the plays of Beckett exploit “the austerity of the stage space,” drawing upon “the rich evocation of worlds elsewhere.”<sup>210</sup> And Michael Issacharoff observes that the more constrictive the story space is, the more significant the offstage region becomes, while a relatively open story space tends to marginalize the offstage region or at best to relegate it to “a single described area.”<sup>211</sup> Indeed, Homeric space corroborates Issacharoff's theory: whereas the closed story space of the *Iliad* inspires a great variety of Elsewhere activity,<sup>212</sup> the open story space of the *Odyssey* limits itself primarily to a single region of the Elsewhere (Ithaka) toward which the action

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<sup>208</sup> Cf. Bowra (1972: 60).

<sup>209</sup> Münsterberg (1970: 41).

<sup>210</sup> 1990: 131.

<sup>211</sup> 1981: 222.

<sup>212</sup> This tendency is shared by tragedy, cf. Scolnikov (1987: 16-17).

constantly gravitates. It is worth considering how Homer employs vignette in the *Odyssey* in this overtly linear, plot-centered manner before turning to its Iliadic counterpart, according to which each individual instance of the device exhibits a dramatic self-sufficiency whose thematic coherence becomes clear only through synchronic analysis.

Near the beginning of the *Odyssey*, the whereabouts of Odysseus are established in a conversation between Zeus and Athena, in which Athena expresses her concern for, and reveals the location of, the Greek hero:

ἀλλά μοι ἄμφ' Ὀδυσῆι δαΐφρονι δαίεται ἦτορ,  
δυσμόρω, ὅς δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πῆματα πάσχει  
νήσω ἐν ἀμφιρῦτι, ὅθι τ' ὀμφαλός ἐστι θαλάσσης.  
νήσος δενδρήεσσα, θεὰ δ' ἐν δώματα ναίει, (*Od.* 1.48-51)

But the heart in me is torn for the sake of wise Odysseus,  
unhappy man, who still, far from his friends, is suffering  
griefs, on the sea-washed island, the navel of all the waters,  
a wooded island, and there a goddess has made her dwelling place

When Athena visits Telemachus to inform him about Odysseus, Telemachus expresses, not merely uncertainty about his father's whereabouts, but his belief that he is dead:

ξεῖνε φίλ', εἰ καὶ μοι νεμεσήσῃς ὅττι κεν εἶπω;  
τούτοισιν μὲν ταῦτα μέλει, κίθαρις καὶ ἀοιδή,  
ῥεῖ', ἐπεὶ ἀλλότριον βίοτον νήποινον ἔδουσιν,  
ἀνέρος, οὗ δὴ που λεύκ' ὀστέα πύθεται ὄμβρω  
κείμεν' ἐπ' ἠπείρου, ἢ εἰν ἀλὶ κῦμα κυλίνδει. (*Od.* 1.158-62)

Dear stranger, would you be scandalized at what I say to you?  
This is all they think of, the lyre and the singing. Easy  
for them, since without penalty they eat up the substance  
of a man whose white bones lie out in the rain and fester  
somewhere on the mainland, or roll in the wash of the breakers.

At this point Telemachus establishes Ithaca as the central hub of the Odyssean

Elsewhere, despite the hypothetical state of his present knowledge:

εἰ κεῖνόν γ' Ἰθάκηνδε ἰδοῖατο νοστήσαντα,  
πάντες κ' ἀρησαΐατ' ἐλαφρότεροι πόδας εἶναι  
ἢ ἀφνειότεροι χρυσοῖό τε ἐσθῆτός τε. (*Od.* 1.163-65)

If they were ever to see him coming back to Ithaka  
all the prayer of them all would be to be lighter on their feet  
instead of to be richer men for gold and clothing.

Then Athena, disguised as Mentès, informs Telemachus of the fact that his father is still  
alive, already known to the audience through her conversation with Zeus:

οὐ γάρ πω τέθνηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,  
ἀλλ' ἔτι που ζωὸς κατερύκεται εὐρέι πόντῳ  
νήσω ἐν ἀμφιρῦτῃ, χαλεποὶ δέ μιν ἄνδρες ἔχουσιν  
ἄγριοι, οἳ που κεῖνον ἐρυκανώσ' ἀέκοντα. (*Od.* 1.196-99)

For no death on the land has befallen the great Odysseus,  
But somewhere, alive on the wide sea, he is held captive,  
on a sea-washed island, and savage men have him in their keeping,  
rough men, who somehow keep him back, though he is unwilling.

Thus, Odysseus' existence becomes factual rather than hypothetical to Telemachus,  
whose uncertainty now hinges exclusively upon his father's location, the knowledge  
about which Athena encourages him to ascertain, thereby establishing the central *telos* of  
the *Odyssey*: the expulsion of the suitors from, and the subsequent resacralization of,  
Odysseus' palace:

ὦ πόποι, ἦ δὴ πολλὸν ἀποιχομένου Ὀδυσῆος  
δεύη, ὃ κεν μνηστῆρσιν ἀναιδέσι χεῖρας ἐφείη.  
εἰ γὰρ νῦν ἐλθὼν δόμου ἐν πρώτῃσι θύρῃσι  
σταίη, ἔχων πῆληκα καὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ δύο δοῦρε,  
τοῖος ἐὼν οἷόν μιν ἐγὼ τὰ πρῶτ' ἐνόησα  
οἴκῳ ἐν ἡμετέρῳ πίνοντά τε τερπόμενόν τε, (*Od.* 1.253-58)

Oh, for shame. How great your need is now of the absent  
Odysseus, who would lay his hands on these shameless suitors.  
I wish he could come now to stand in the outer doorway  
of his house, wearing a helmet and carrying shield and two spears,  
the way he was the first time that ever I saw him

in our own house, drinking his wine and taking his pleasure,

The fact that Telemachus is now aware of Odysseus' existence, however, does not mean that this knowledge automatically extends to the other characters as well. In fact, once Telemachus partakes in privileged knowledge about Odysseus, the other mortals continue to harbor the same illusions about Odysseus' fate as Telemachus previously did. Penelope, for example, remains ignorant of Odysseus' existence until the dramatic recognition scene in Book 23:

κλῦτε, φίλοι: πέρι γάρ μοι Ὀλύμπιος ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν  
ἐκ πασέων, ὅσσαι μοι ὁμοῦ τράφεν ἠδ' ἐγένοντο:  
ἦ πρὶν μὲν πόσιν ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσα θυμολέοντα,  
παντοίης ἀρετῆσι κεκασμένον ἐν Δαναοῖσιν,  
ἐσθλόν, τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ' Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος. (*Od.* 4.722-26)

Hear me, dear friends. The Olympian has given me sorrows  
beyond all others who were born and brought up together  
with me, for first I lost a husband with the heart of a lion  
and who among the Danaans surpassed in all virtues,  
and great, whose fame goes wide through Hellas and midmost Argos

This results in two parallel versions of the Elsewhere according to which Odysseus is either dead or alive, depending upon the knowledge of the speaker at a given dramatic juncture. The latter is expressed in two ways: by characters, beginning with Telemachus and followed by those who subsequently recognize Odysseus, evoking Ithaka as the future site of dramatic conflict and resolution, and by Odysseus himself, as in Book 5, when he informs Calypso that despite her beauty he nevertheless longs for Penelope and his Ithakan palace:

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἤματα πάντα  
οἴκαδ' εἴ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἡμᾶρ ἰδέσθαι.  
εἰ δ' αὖ τις ῥαίησι θεῶν ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ,  
τλήσομαι ἐν στήθεσσιν ἔχων ταλαπενθέα θυμόν:  
ἦδη γὰρ μάλα πόλλ' ἔπαθον καὶ πόλλ' ἐμόγησα

κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ: μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω. (*Od.* 5.219-24)

But even so, what I want and all my days I pine for  
is to go back to my house and see my day of homecoming.  
And if some god batters me far out on the wine-blue water,  
I will endure it, keeping a stubborn spirit inside me,  
for already I have suffered much and done much hard work  
on the waves and in the fighting. So let this adventure follow.

In either case, the Ithakan Elsewhere remains the primary focus of the *Odyssey* until the action switches to Odysseus' palace. As we shall now see, this plot-centered approach to vignette in the *Odyssey* contrasts significantly from its Iliadic counterpart.

Each instance of vignette in the *Iliad* comprises a kind of mini-narrative, replete with meta-narrator, meta-narratee, and meta-protagonist. Although the Elsewhere is usually evoked by a character, the meta-narrator is sometimes identical with the primary narrator, transporting the audience to various sites of the Elsewhere in his own voice. He may, for instance, portray a fallen warrior's wife, contrasting the intimacy of the emotional bond between the two characters with the vast geographical distance between them:

ὡς δὲ μὲν αὔθι πεσῶν κοιμήσατο χάλκεον ὕπνον  
οἰκτρὸς ἀπὸ μνηστῆς ἀλόχου, ἀστοῖσιν ἀρήγων,  
κουριδίης, ἧς οὐ τι χάριν ἶδε, πολλὰ δ' ἔδωκε: (*Il.* 11.241-43)

So Iphidamas fell there and went into the brazen slumber,  
unhappy, who came to help his own people, and left his young wife  
a bride, and had known no delight from her yet, and given much for her.

The narrator by no means limits himself to the past, however, when he employs vignette for pathetic effect. He may also exploit the present, as when Andromache is depicted in her room, still impervious to the death of Hector in lines 437-42 of Book 22, or even the future, as when Zeus weeps about, not what has happened or what is happening, but rather about what is going to happen to his son Sarpedon:

αίματοέσσας δὲ ψιάδας κατέχευεν ἔραζε  
παῖδα φίλον τιμῶν, τόν οἱ Πάτροκλος ἔμελλε  
φθίσειν ἐν Τροίῃ ἐριβόλακι τηλόθι πάτρης. (*Il.* 16.459-61)

He wept tears of blood that fell to the ground, for the sake  
of his beloved son, whom now Patroclus was presently  
to kill, by generous Troy and far from the land of his fathers.

This pathetic function of vignette is deployed extensively in Book 2 in the Catalogue of Ships. Besides the evocation of Protesilaos' wife in Phylake (699-702) and of the unfortunate Philoktetes in Lemnos (721-25), two vignettes focus on Achilles and the Myrmidons. The first occurs when Achilles' ship is mentioned along with the others. It is relatively abstract, emphasizing the reasons for Achilles' current inactivity more than the visualization of the scene itself:

κεῖτο γὰρ ἐν νήεσσι ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεὺς  
κούρης χωόμενος Βρισηΐδος ἠΰκόμοιο,  
τὴν ἐκ Λυρνησοῦ ἐξείλετο πολλὰ μογήσας  
Λυρνησσὸν διαπορθήσας καὶ τείχεα Θήβης,  
καὶ δὲ Μύνητ' ἔβαλεν καὶ Ἐπίστροφον ἐγχεσιμῶρους,  
υἱέας Εὐηνοῖο Σεληπιάδαο ἄνακτος:  
τῆς ὅ γε κεῖτ' ἀχέων, τάχα δ' ἀνστήσεσθαι ἔμελλεν. (*Il.* 2.688-94)

since he, swift-footed brilliant Achilles, lay where the ships were,  
angered over the girl of the lovely hair, Briseis,  
whom after much hard work he had taken away from Lyrnessos  
after he had sacked Lyrnessos and the walls of Thebe  
and struck down Epistrophos and Mynes the furious spearmen,  
children of Euenos, king, and son of Selepios.  
For her sake he lay grieving now, but was soon to rise up.

In lines 721-25, however, when Achilles is mentioned again, in connection with Ajax as the second greatest Greek warrior after himself, the narrator paints a more vivid picture of the scene at Achilles' camp, thereby dramatizing rather than merely describing its almost idyllic isolation:

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν νήεσσι κορωνίσι ποντοπόροισι  
κεῖτ' ἀπομνήσας Ἀγαμέμνονι ποιμένι λαῶν  
Ἄτρεΐδῃ: λαοὶ δὲ παρὰ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης  
δίσκοισιν τέρποντο καὶ αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες  
τόξοισίν θ': ἵπποι δὲ παρ' ἄρμασιν οἷσιν ἕκαστος  
λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι ἐλεόθρεπτόν τε σέλινον  
ἔστασαν: ἄρματα δ' εὖ πεπυκασμένα κεῖτο ἀνάκτων  
ἐν κλισίῃς: οἱ δ' ἄρχὸν ἀρηΐφιλον ποθέοντες  
φοίτων ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα κατὰ στρατὸν οὐδ' ἐμάχοντο. (*Il.* 2.771-79)

But Achilles lay apart among his curved sea-wandering  
vessels, raging at Agamemnon, the shepherd of the people,  
Atreus' son; and his men beside the break of the sea-beach  
amused themselves with discs and with light spears for throwing  
and bows; and the horses, standing each beside his chariot,  
champed their clover and the parsley that grows in wet places,  
resting, while the chariots of their lords stood covered  
in the shelters, and the men forlorn of their warlike leader  
wandered here and there in the camp, and did no fighting.

The freedom of characters to transport the audience to the offstage region of the *Iliad* supplies them with a kind of meta-narrative power, reciprocating the audience's pseudo-diegetic function as meta-audience with their own pseudo-extradiegetic function as meta-narrators. As such they possess the ability, alongside the narrator, to exert control over the audience's attention. This establishes them as formidable narrative agents in their own right (no less conspicuously so than Odysseus in the *Odyssey*) and the Elsewhere as a kind of spatial underground to which the audience is granted access through the will, not of the narrator (as with excursions to Olympus), but rather of the characters themselves. In their capacity as meta-narrators the characters who engage in vignette reveal a semantic dimension of the *Iliad* otherwise inaccessible to the audience, a sphere of meaning both complementary to yet independent from the main action.

Some excursions to the Elsewhere provide imaginary access to nostalgic venues. In Book 1, for example, Agamemnon evokes his home in Argos to illustrate, with great



rhetorical persuasiveness, the future that awaits Briseis after the war as a result of Achilles' insistence that he relinquish Chryseis:

τὴν δ' ἐγὼ οὐ λύσω: πρὶν μιν καὶ γῆρας ἔπεισιν  
ἡμετέρῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ἐν Ἄργεϊ τηλόθι πάτρης  
ἰστὸν ἐποιομένην καὶ ἐμὸν λέχος ἀντιόωσαν: (*Il.* 1.29-31)

The girl I will not give back; sooner will old age come upon her  
in my own house, in Argos, far from her own land, going  
up and down by the loom and being in my bed as my companion.

In response to Agamemnon, Achilles paints an even more vivid picture of his own homeland to justify his imminent desertion of the war:

οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ Τρώων ἔνεκ' ἤλυθον αἰχμητῶν  
δεῦρο μαχησόμενος, ἐπεὶ οὐ τί μοι αἰτιοί εἰσιν:  
οὐ γὰρ πῶ ποτ' ἐμὰς βοῦς ἤλασαν οὐδὲ μὲν ἵππους,  
οὐδέ ποτ' ἐν Φθίῃ ἐριβώλακι βωτιανείρῃ  
καρπὸν ἐδηλήσαντ', ἐπεὶ ἦ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξὺ  
οὔρεά τε σκιάοντα θάλασσά τε ἠχῆεσσα:  
ἀλλὰ σοὶ ὦ μέγ' ἀναιδὲς ἄμ' ἐσπόμεθ' ὄφρα σὺ χαίρης, (*Il.* 1.152-58)

I for my part did not come here for the sake of the Trojan  
spearmen to fight against them, since to me they have done nothing.  
Never yet have they driven away my cattle or my horses,  
never in Phthia where the soil is rich and men grow great did they  
spoil my harvest, since indeed there is much that lies between us,  
the shadowy mountains and the echoing sea; but for your sake,  
o great shamelessness, we followed, to do you favor,

This initiates a battle of wits between Achilles and Agamemnon that, as we shall see below, plays itself out in the arena of the Elsewhere.

Excursions to the Elsewhere provide an opportunity for characters who are otherwise denied access to certain locations to travel to them imaginatively, thereby creating dramatic situations based upon hypothetical rather than actual reality. This denial of access can be due to the character being on the opposite side of the war, as when Priam evokes Greece (4.90-2) or Agamemnon evokes Troy:

ἀλλά μοι αἰνὸν ἄχος σέθεν ἔσσεται ὦ Μενέλαε  
αἶ κε θάνης καὶ μοῖραν ἀναπλήσης βιότιο.  
καὶ κεν ἐλέγχιστος πολυδίψιον Ἄργος ἰκοίμην:  
αὐτίκα γὰρ μνήσονται Ἀχαιοὶ πατρίδος αἴης:  
κὰδ δέ κεν εὐχολὴν Πριάμῳ καὶ Τρωσὶ λίπομεν  
Ἀργεῖν Ἑλένην: σέο δ' ὅστεα πύσει ἄρουρα  
κειμένου ἐν Τροίῃ ἀτελευτήτῳ ἐπὶ ἔργῳ. (*Il.* 4.169-75)

But I shall suffer a terrible grief for you, Menelaos,  
if you die and fill out the destiny of your lifetime.  
And I must return a thing of reproach to Argos the thirsty,  
for now at once the Achaians will remember the land of their fathers;  
and thus we would leave to Priam and to the Trojans Helen  
of Argos, to glory over, while the bones of you rot in the ploughland  
as you lie dead in Troy, on a venture that went unaccomplished.

It can also consist of a hero evoking a location on the same side of battle, but which would nevertheless constitute an invasion of privacy if visited directly. When Thersites chastizes Agamemnon for not sticking to his initial plan to desert the war, for example, he violates his personal space by presuming to describe the scene within his inner sanctum:

Ἀτρέϊδῃ τέο δ' αὖτ' ἐπιμέμφεαι ἠδὲ χατίζεις;  
πλεῖαί τοι χαλκοῦ κλισίαι, πολλαὶ δὲ γυναῖκες  
εἰσὶν ἐνὶ κλισίῃς ἐξαίρετοι, ἅς τοι Ἀχαιοὶ (*Il.* 2.225-27)

'Son of Atreus, what thing further do you want, or find fault with now? Your shelters are filled with bronze, there are plenty of the choicest women for you within your shelter, whom we Achaians

Just as vignette can transport characters themselves to locations otherwise inaccessible to them, so it enables them to envision other characters in imaginary situations made possible exclusively through their meta-narrative function. A character may, for example, involve his interlocutor in a hypothetical scenario, as when Zeus taunts Hera about her unquenchable loyalty to the Greeks:

εἰ δὲ σύ γ' εἰσελθοῦσα πύλας καὶ τείχεα μακρὰ  
ὤμων βεβρώθοις Πριάμον Πριάμοιό τε παῖδας  
ἄλλους τε Τρῶας, τότε κεν χόλον ἔξακέσαιο. (*Il.* 4.34-36)

If you could walk through the gates and through the towering ramparts  
and eat Priam and the children of Priam raw, and the other  
Trojans, then, then only might you glut at last your anger.

More often, however, a speaker refers to a character who is absent but whose fate concerns him in one way or another. For instance, in Book 15 Hera evokes Zeus indirectly, although no less persuasively, to the other gods rather than directly to his face:

νήπιοι οἱ Ζηνὶ μενεαίνομεν ἀφρονέοντες:  
ἦ ἔτι μιν μέμαμεν καταπαυσέμεν ἄσσον ἰόντες  
ἦ ἔπει ἠὲ βίη: ὃ δ' ἀφήμενος οὐκ ἀλεγίζει  
οὐδ' ὄθεται: φησὶν γὰρ ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι  
κάρτεϊ τε σθένεϊ τε διακριδὸν εἶναι ἄριστος. (*Il.* 15.104-108)

'Fools, we who try to work against Zeus, thoughtlessly.  
Still we are thinking in our anger to go near, and stop him  
by argument or force. He sits apart and cares nothing  
nor thinks of us, and says that among the other immortals  
he is pre-eminently the greatest in power and strength.

And in Book 16 Patroclus portrays for Achilles the plight of the Greeks:

οἱ μὲν γὰρ δὴ πάντες, ὅσοι πάρος ἦσαν ἄριστοι,  
ἐν νηυσὶν κέεται βεβλημένοι οὐτάμενοί τε. (*Il.* 16.23-24)

For all those who were before the bravest in battle  
are lying up among the ships with arrow or spear wounds.

Sometimes a character becomes the spokesman for his own people, as when Hector convinces Paris of the desperate situation of the Trojans by dramatizing it in vivid scenographic detail:

τὸν δ' Ἔκτωρ νεΐκεσσαν ἰδὼν αἰσχροῖς ἐπέεσσι:  
δαιμόνι' οὐ μὲν καλὰ χόλον τόνδ' ἔνθεο θυμῶ,  
λαοὶ μὲν φθινύθουσι περὶ πτόλιν αἰπύ τε τείχος

μαρνάμενοι: σέο δ' εἶνεκ' αὐτή τε πτόλεμός τε  
ἄστυ τόδ' ἀμφιδέδηε ... (*Il.* 6.325-329)

But Hector saw him, and in words of shame he rebuked him:  
'Strange man! It is not fair to keep in your heart this coldness.  
The people are dying around the city and around the steep wall  
as they fight hard; and it is for you that this war with its clamour  
has flared up about our city.

The meaning of such passages is determined not only by the identity of meta-narrator and meta-protagonist, however, but of meta-narratee as well. In the following scene, for example, Dolon is coerced by Odysseus to describe the Trojan camp, information which eventually dooms his own people:

ὄσσαι μὲν Τρώων πυρὸς ἐσχάραι, οἷσιν ἀνάγκη  
οἱ δ' ἐγρηγόρθασι φυλασσέμεναί τε κέλονται  
ἀλλήλοισι: ἀτὰρ αὐτε πολύκλητοι ἐπίκουροι  
εὔδουσι: Τρωσὶν γὰρ ἐπιτραπέουσι φυλάσσειν:  
οὐ γάρ σφιν παῖδες σχεδὸν εἶσται οὐδὲ γυναῖκες. (*Il.* 10.418-22)

As for the watchfire hearths of the Trojans, those who must do it  
keep awake by the fires and pass on the picket duty  
to each other, but their far-assembled companions in battle  
are sleeping, and pass on to the Trojans the duty of watching,  
since their own children do not lie nearby, nor their women.'

Vignette may also bridge the gap between mortal and immortal, as when Zeus evokes  
Troy (4.34-6) or Apollo Achilles' shelter:

ὄρνυσθ' ἰππόδαμοι Τρώες μηδ' εἴκετε χάρμης  
Ἀργείοις, ἐπεὶ οὐ σφι λίθος χρῶς οὐδὲ σίδηρος  
χαλκὸν ἀνασχέσθαι ταμείχροα βαλλομένοισιν:  
οὐ μὰν οὐδ' Ἀχιλεὺς Θέτιδος πάϊς ἠὔκομοιο  
μάρναται, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ νηυσὶ χόλον θυμαλγέα πέσσει. (*Il.* 4.509-13)

'Rise up, Trojans, breakers of horses, bend not from battle  
with these Argives. Surely their skin is not stone, not iron  
to stand up under the tearing edge of the bronze as it strikes them.  
No, nor is Achilles the child of lovely-haired Thetis  
fighting, but beside the ship mulls his heartsore anger.'

The most exotic destination for a character's excursion to the Elsewhere, however, is when Achilles evokes, not a specific location, but rather a simile-like forest:

ναὶ μὰ τόδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὐ ποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους  
φύσει, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα τομῆν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν,  
οὐδ' ἀναθηλήσει: περὶ γάρ ῥά ἐ χαλκὸς ἔλεψε  
φύλλά τε καὶ φλοιόν: νῦν αὐτέ μιν υἱεὶς Ἀχαιῶν  
ἐν παλάμαις φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἳ τε θέμιστας  
πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται: ὁ δέ τοι μέγας ἔσσεται ὄρκος: (*Il.* 1.234-39)

in the name of this sceptre, which never again will bear leaf nor branch, now that it has left behind the cut stump in the mountains, nor shall it ever blossom again, since the bronze blade stripped bark and leafage, and now at last the sons of the Achaians carry it in their hands in state when they administer the justice of Zeus. And this shall be a great oath before you:

By doing so, Achilles emulates the omniscient tone of the narrator that is evident, for example, in certain similes, such as this evocation of an isolated olive tree:

δούπησεν δὲ πεσῶν, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε' ἐπ' αὐτῷ.  
αἵματί οἱ δεύοντο κόμαι Χαρίτεσσιν ὁμοῖαι  
πλοχμοὶ θ', οἳ χρυσῷ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἐσφήκωντο.  
οἶον δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνήρ ἐριθηλὲς ἐλαίης  
χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, ὅθ' ἄλις ἀναβέβρυχεν ὕδωρ,  
καλὸν τηλεθάον: τὸ δέ τε πνοιαί δονέουσι  
παντοίων ἀνέμων, καὶ τε βρῦει ἀνθεὶ λευκῷ: (*Il.* 17.50-56)

He fell, thunderously, and his armour clattered upon him, and his hair, lovely as the Graces, was splattered with blood, those braided locks caught waspwise in gold and silver. As some slip of an olive tree strong-growing that a man raises in a lonely place, and drenched it with generous water, so that it blossoms into beauty, and the blasts of winds from all quarters tremble it, and it bursts into pale blossoming.

By employing vignette within similes, the narrator transports the audience to intimate areas of the dramatic landscape, thereby heightening their receptive immediacy and increasing the verisimilitude of the scene. In the following simile, for example, the phrase

κεῖται δ' ἐν θαλάμῳ in line 143 vivifies an otherwise routine figurative excursion, achieving what Roland Barthes calls a “reality effect”:<sup>213</sup>

ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνή φοίνικι μήνη  
Μηονίς ἢ Κάειρα παρήϊον ἔμμεναι ἵππων:  
κεῖται δ' ἐν θαλάμῳ, πολέες τέ μιν ἠρήσαντο  
ἵππῆες φορέειν: βασιλῆϊ δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,  
ἀμφοτέρων κόσμος θ' ἵππῳ ἐλατῆρί τε κῦδος:  
τοιοῖ τοι Μενέλαε μίανθην αἶματι μηροῖ  
εὐφυέες κνήμαί τε ἰδὲ σφυρὰ κάλ' ὑπένερθε. (*Il.* 4.141-47)

As when some Maionian woman or Karian with purple  
colours ivory, to make it a cheek piece for horses;  
it lies away in an inner room, and many a rider  
longs to have it, but it is laid up to be a king's treasure,  
two things, to be the beauty of the horse, the pride of the horseman:  
so, Menelaos, your shapely thighs were stained with the colour  
of blood, and your legs also and the ankles beneath them.

Likewise, the phrase ἦ μὲν τ' ἀζομένη κεῖται ποταμοῖο παρ' ὄχθας in the following evocation of a tree-stump makes a similar appeal to lived experience, without which the simile would merely serve the practical function of establishing the provenience of the chariot-wheel:

ἦλθεν: ὁ δ' ἐν κονίησι χαμαὶ πέσεν αἰγείρος ὡς  
ἢ ῥά τ' ἐν εἰάμενῃ ἔλεος μέγαλοιο πεφύκει  
λείη, ἀτάρ τέ οἱ ὄζοι ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῃ πεφύασι:  
τὴν μὲν θ' ἀρματοπηγὸς ἀνήρ αἰθῶνι σιδήρῳ  
ἐξέταμ', ὄφρα ἵτυν κάμψῃ περικαλλεῖ δίφρῳ:  
ἦ μὲν τ' ἀζομένη κεῖται ποταμοῖο παρ' ὄχθας.  
τοῖον ἄρ' Ἀνθεμίδην Σιμοείσιον ἐξενάριξεν  
Αἴας διογενῆς... (*Il.* 4.482-89)

He dropped then to the ground in the dust, like some black poplar,  
which in the land low-lying about a great marsh grows  
smooth trimmed yet with branches growing at the uttermost tree-top:  
one whom a man, a maker of chariots, fells with the shining

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<sup>213</sup> 1989: *passim*.

iron, to bend it into a wheel for a fine-wrought chariot,  
and the tree lies hardening by the banks of a river.  
Such was Anthemion's son Simoeisios, whom killed  
illustrious Aias...

This prerogative assumed by Achilles transcends the use that other characters make of vignette and corroborates Griffin's notion of Achilles as the most Elsewhere-preoccupied character in the *Iliad*.<sup>214</sup>

Perhaps the most poignant use of vignette is when a character, whether Greek or Trojan, evokes his own father, as Adrestos and Diomedes do in 6.47-50 and 14.112-14, respectively, or as Achilles brings us once again to Phthia, where he imagines his father suffering vicarious pain for his loss of Patroclus:

σῆ ποθῆ: οὐ μὲν γάρ τι κακώτερον ἄλλο πάθοιμι,  
οὐδ' εἴ κεν τοῦ πατρὸς ἀποφθιμένοιο πυθοίμην,  
ὅς που νῦν Φθίῃφι τέρεν κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβει  
χρήτει τοιοῦδ' υἱός: ὃ δ' ἄλλοδαπῶ ἐνὶ δῆμῳ  
εἵνεκα Ῥιγεδανῆς Ἑλένης Τρωσὶν πολεμίζω: (*Il.* 19.321-25)

of longing for you. There is nothing worse than this I could suffer,  
not even if I were to hear of the death of my father  
who now, I think, in Phthia somewhere lets fall a soft tear  
for bereavement of such a son, for me, who now in a strange land  
make war upon the Trojans for the sake of accursed Helen;

This image of Peleus reflecting upon his son is so powerful that Homer reprises it in Book 24. Only now it is not Achilles himself who imagines his father in Phthia, but rather Priam, who exploits vignette as though aware of its rhetorical potential. Here he appeals to Achilles' pity by giving him hope that he, unlike his own son, might one day return home to his father:

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<sup>214</sup> 1980: 75, 157; 1986: 53.

ἀλλ' ἤτοι κεῖνός γε σέθεν ζώντος ἀκούων  
χαίρει τ' ἐν θυμῷ, ἐπί τ' ἔλπεται ἥματα πάντα  
ὄψεσθαι φίλον υἷὸν ἀπὸ Τροίηθεν ἰόντα: (*Il.* 24.490-92)

Yet surely he, when he hears of you and that you are still living,  
is gladdened within his heart and all his days he is hopeful  
that he will see his beloved son come home from the Troad.

Thus Homer exploits vignette thematically through the recurrence of Achilles and Peleus within a Phthian context. The most extensive thematic use he makes of the device, however, pertains not to Greek heroes, nor even to Olympian gods, but to a group of characters who otherwise play a relatively minor role in the *Iliad* yet who are nevertheless the most significant protagonists of the Elsewhere: Greek and Trojan women.

The first woman depicted in the *Iliad*, and thus in extant western literature, appears not within the main action but rather in the Elsewhere, through the eyes of Agamemnon, who envisions her in a particularly unflattering light (1.29-31). This overt disrespect towards Briseis, reiterated in lines 112-13, initiates a rhetorical conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles that parallels their more conspicuous disharmony on the level of the story and is not fully resolved until Book 9, after a series of excursions to the Elsewhere charting the progress of this crucial sub-plot. The next vignette featuring female protagonists, and the second stage in the meta-narrative, occurs in Book 2. The meta-narrator is still Agamemnon, who continues to make rhetorical use of the device, only now his intention is not to threaten or to frighten but rather to persuade in a more rational manner, trying to convince the Greeks to desert the war and to return home to their wives and children.

ἐννέα δὴ βεβάασι Διὸς μεγάλου ἐνιαυτοί,  
καὶ δὴ δοῦρα σέσηπε νεῶν καὶ σπάρτα λέλονται:



αἱ δὲ πού ἡμέτεραί τ' ἄλοχοι καὶ νήπια τέκνα  
εἶατ' ἐνὶ μεγάροις ποτιδέγμεναι: ἄμμι δὲ ἔργον  
αὐτῶς ἀκράαντον οὐ εἵνεκα δεῦρ' ἰκόμεσθα. (*Il.* 2.134-138)

And now nine years of mighty Zeus have gone by, and the timbers  
of our ships have rotted away and the cables are broken  
and far away our own wives and our young children  
are sitting within our halls and wait for us, while still our work here  
stays forever unfinished as it is, for whose sake we came hither.

Despite his generic appeal to ἄλοχοι καὶ νήπια τέκνα rather than to any particular female protagonist, Agamemnon employs the concrete phrase ἐνὶ μεγάροις<sup>215</sup> to situate the scene as vividly, and thus as persuasively, as possible. The next stage in the meta-narrative concerns Agamemnon once again, yet this time not as meta-narrator but rather as meta-narratee. In lines 225-27 of Book 2, Thersites criticizes Agamemnon for taking Odysseus' advice to stay in Troy after the near desertion caused by Zeus' deceptive dream. To drive his point home he argues that Agamemnon is hardly in need of more spoils, given the abundance of bronze and women in his shelter. By doing so, Thersites establishes women as possessions in the utilitarian manner reminiscent of Agamemnon himself.

At this point a clear distinction is established between two diametrically opposite positions adopted towards women within the meta-narrative. The first tendency, illustrated by Agamemnon and Thersites above, contrasts sharply with the favorable depiction of women as symbols of nostalgic yearning, as introduced in the following two

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<sup>215</sup> This construction will be used later in line 435 of Book 18 by Thetis when she appeals to Hephaestus to fashion new armor for Achilles. It is noteworthy that the subject of this excursion to the Elsewhere is Peleus, who plays such a central role in the thematic complex mentioned above.

scenes. In the first the primary narrator provides the back-story for the absence of Protesilaos from the Trojan war:<sup>216</sup>

οἱ δ' εἶχον Φυλάκην καὶ Πύρασον ἀνθεμόεντα  
τῶν αὖ Πρωτεσίλαος ἀρήϊος ἡγεμόνευε  
ζωὸς ἐών: τότε δ' ἤδη ἔχεν κάτα γαῖα μέλαινα.  
τοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀμφιδρυφῆς ἄλοχος Φυλάκη ἐλέλειπτο  
καὶ δόμος ἡμιτελής: τὸν δ' ἔκτανε Δάρδανος ἀνὴρ  
νῆος ἀποθρώσκοντα πολὺ πρῶτιστον Ἀχαιῶν. (*Il.* 2.695-702)

They who held Phylake and Pyrasos of the flowers,  
of these in turn fighting Protesilaos was leader  
while he lived; but now the black earth had closed him under,  
whose wife, cheeks torn for grief, was left behind in Phylake  
and a marriage half completed; a Dardanian man had killed him  
as he leapt from his ship, far the first of all the Achaians.

In the second scene the Trojan version of this sentiment is expressed directly by the hero Lykaon himself, whose nostalgia for home is rendered even more palpable by the strategic architectural detail in line 213:

εἰ δέ κε νοστήσω καὶ ἐσόψομαι ὀφθαλμοῖσι  
πατρίδ' ἐμὴν ἄλοχόν τε καὶ ὑπερεφῆς μέγα δῶμα,  
αὐτίκ' ἔπειτ' ἀπ' ἐμεῖο κάρη τάμοι ἀλλότριος φῶς  
εἰ μὴ ἐγὼ τάδε τόξα φαεινῶ ἐν πυρὶ θείην  
χερσὶ διακλάσσας: ἀνεμῶλια γάρ μοι ὀπηδεῖ. (*Il.* 5.212-216)

Now if ever I win home again and lay eyes once more  
on my country, and my wife, and the great house with the high roof,  
let some stranger straightway cut my head from my shoulders  
if I do not break this bow in my hands and throw it in the shining  
fire, since as a wind and nothing I have taken it with me.'

The scene in Book 6 in which Hector visits his wife Andromache for the last time is frequently noted for the poignancy of its main action. It also features, however, an

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<sup>216</sup> This passage also represents a special construction in which two distinct regions of the Elsewhere are evoked within a single instance of the device, thereby extending its scenographic scope. In the present case the contrast between the two locations is especially poignant, similar, in fact, to the thematic complex involving Achilles and Peleus mentioned above. For other examples of this variation, see 2.134-38, 6.45-50, 8.22-35, 11.74-83, 13.758-64, 21.114-25, and 22.508-11.

instance of vignette that is no less crucial to its emotional impact. At this point in the narrative, when Hector approaches his own house in order to locate Andromache, the anticipatory tension is compounded by the adverb αἶψα in line 370 so that, when οὐδ' εὔρ' Ἀνδρομάχην λευκώλενον ἐν μεγάροισιν occurs, we are caught off-guard, left to wonder where in fact Andromache can be. Thus, while excursions to the Elsewhere usually divert the audience's attention from the main action in a purely autonomous capacity, in this case the vignette in lines 372-73 answers a question inspired by the preceding action, generating the dramatic tension that culminates in the tearful reunion between husband and wife in lines 394-406:

οὐδ' εὔρ' Ἀνδρομάχην λευκώλενον ἐν μεγάροισιν,  
 ἀλλ' ἦ γε ξὺν παιδί καὶ ἀμφιπόλῳ ἐϋπέπλω  
 πύργῳ ἐφειστήκει γοόωσά τε μυρομένη τε. (*Il.* 6.371-373)

but failed to find in the house Andromache of the white arms;  
 for she, with the child, and followed by one fair-robed attendant,  
 had taken her place on the tower in lamentation, and tearful.

In stark contrast with the previous three uses of vignette to portray women as anchors in the emotional life of Protesilaos, Lykaon, and Hector, Book 9 brings us to the final stage of Agamemnon's gradual discomfiture, and the denouement of the meta-narrative. If his previous vision of Briseis slaving away in Argos seemed callous and unsentimental, Agamemnon now attempts to win Achilles back to the Greek cause by sacrificing his own daughters on the altar of political expediency:<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Agamemnon uses the verb ἀγέσθω in the same emphatic metrical position as Paris and Hector use it in 3.72 and 3.93 in the phrase κτήμαθ' ἔλων εὖ πάντα γυναϊκά τε οἴκαδ' ἀγέσθω to refer to Helen and the possessions that will accompany the self-proclaimed κύων either to Greece or Troy, depending upon whether Paris or Menelaos wins their impending duel.

τρεις δέ μοί εἰσι θυγάτρεις ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ εὐπήκτῳ  
Χρυσόθεμις καὶ Λαοδίκη καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα,  
τάων ἦν κ' ἐθέλησι φίλην ἀνάεδνον ἀγέσθω  
πρὸς οἶκον Πηλεΐδος: ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ μείλια δώσω  
πολλὰ μάλ', ὅσσ' οὐ πῶ τις ἐῖ ἐπέδωκε θυγατρὶ: (*Il.* 9.144-148)

Since, as I have three daughters there in my strong-built castle,  
Chrysothemis and Laodike and Iphianassa,  
let him lead away the one of these that he likes, with no bride-price,  
to the house of Peleus, and with the girl I will grant him as dowry  
many gifts, such as no man ever gave with his daughter.

Achilles refuses Agamemnon's offer, however, in the most peremptory manner possible:  
by deflecting his words back at him, evoking the women of Greece as Agamemnon has  
consistently done up to this point yet to Agamemnon's disadvantage, thereby coopting  
the Elsewhere as his own rather than Agamemnon's rightful dominion:

πολλαὶ Ἀχαιῖδες εἰσὶν ἀν' Ἑλλάδα τε Φθίην τε  
κοῦραι ἀριστήων, οἳ τε πτολίεθρα ρύονται,  
τάων ἦν κ' ἐθέλομι φίλην ποιήσομ' ἄκοιτιν.  
ἔνθα δέ μοι μάλα πολλὸν ἐπέσσυτο θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ  
γήμεντα μνηστὴν ἄλοχον εἴκυϊαν ἄκοιτιν  
κτῆμασι τέρπεσθαι τὰ γέρων ἐκτίσατο Πηλεΐδης: (*Il.* 9.395-400)

There are many Achaian girls in the land of Hellas and Phthia,  
daughters of great men who hold strong places in guard. And of these  
any one that I please I might make my beloved lady.  
And the great desire in my heart drives me rather in that place  
to take a wedded wife in marriage, the bride of my fancy,  
to enjoy with her the possessions won by aged Peleus.

When Achilles reenters the fray in Book 18, his overt power-struggle with Agamemnon  
in the Greek camp at the beginning of the *Iliad* seems to be resolved exclusively by his  
thirst to avenge the death of Patroclus, and thus to depend primarily upon circumstances  
beyond his control. As we have seen, however, a more subtle, internecine battle has been  
waged concurrently within the parallel universe of the Elsewhere, throughout the course

of a meta-narrative suggesting that, at least in Achilles' mind, the dispute between the two heroes has been fought and won on the battlefield of rhetoric.

## Conclusion

“Forces are manifested in poems that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge.” (Bachelard, 1964: xxi)

Homer employs decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette in the *Iliad* to promote an interactivity between audience and action whose significance resists structuralist scrutiny. By establishing a tripartite spatial code to represent distances along both the z (decomposition) and x (intercutting) axes of the narrative continuum, Homer creates a sense of inevitability to the way actions are framed from one moment to the next that he may either conform to or diverge from, depending upon the requirements of each individual scene.<sup>218</sup> He may generate suspense, for example, as to whether the audience will progress from a long shot view of the battlefield to a close-up view of a character upon it or, on the other hand, whether they will maintain throughout the scene a theater-like distance from the action. Likewise, two characters within arrow shot range of each other may or may not proceed to within spear shot or sword stab range of each other, and, if so, with or without tension-building delay-tactics. These are factors that concern the audience, not because of any intrinsic preoccupation with spatiality within the story, but rather because of the systematic way in which Homer frames his audience and characters—and the relationship between them—within narrative space.

Meta-audience and vignette present the *Iliad* through the eyes or the imagination of a given character. By assuming his or her vision the audience in effect becomes a character in their own right, exposed to a visual, and at times emotional, proximity to the action that captivates them in a way otherwise denied to them in their capacity as

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<sup>218</sup> Cf. Pichel, 1970: 113; Landow (1987: 77-8) identifies z- and x-axis motion as the two most characteristic proto-cinematic processes; Feldman (1952: 95) differentiates between decomposition and intercutting based upon conceptual rather than perceptual criteria.

detached spectators. When they join Andromache in her chamber as the other Trojan women wail outside, her deafness is their deafness, just as her gradual discovery of the truth is also their own. The proximity between regions within Iliadic story space enables Homer to generate suspense about where the audience's attention will be focused next and why. Furthermore, through the constant sense of divine presence in Olympus and on Mount Ida, the gods influence the action even when they do not participate in it directly. When, on the other hand, the action shifts to a region outside of Iliadic story space, it affords temporary refreshment from scenographic monotony. Yet it also reveals a parallel universe where hypothetical scenarios play themselves out in the minds of characters whose actions on the Trojan plain tell only part of the story.

While decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette enrich the audience's experience of Homeric epic, however, they generate data that have no bearing, or at most tangential bearing, upon the event-structure of the story. This distinction between events that matter to a narrative and those that do not is a central narratological datum, according to which only bound motifs<sup>219</sup> are significant, precisely because they are essential to the plot, whose constituent events can be isolated and compared with other events both within the story in question and with events from other stories. The result is a methodology that disregards extraneous details, the free motifs generated within narrative space in real time before they are paraphrased into events for subsequent analysis.

In Book 1 of the *Iliad*, for example, the priest Chryses beseeches Apollo to avenge the dishonor he has suffered at the hands of Agamemnon. That is at least the gist of the scene, its event-status from the standpoint of the plot (if, in fact, it can be said to

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<sup>219</sup> For the distinction between "bound" and "free" motifs, cf. Prince (1987: 10-11, 36).

contribute to the plot in the first place<sup>220</sup>). The actual scene, however, is more vital to the audience's experience of the narrative than what an epitome can convey:<sup>221</sup>

βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης:  
πολλὰ δ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε κιῶν ἠρᾶθ' ὁ γεραιὸς  
Ἀπόλλωνι ἄνακτι, τὸν ἠΰκομος τέκε Λητώ: (*Il.* 1.34-36)

[Chryses] went silently away beside the murmuring sea beach.  
Over and over the old man prayed as he walked in solitude  
to King Apollo, whom Leto of the lovely hair bore:

The image παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης (34) presents a pathetic long shot, distancing Chryses from the audience and thereby representing him as a miniscule speck in a vast cosmos, seeking from Apollo a redressing of his grievances toward Agamemnon. When Apollo subsequently plunges vertically from Olympus (44), his actions accentuated by a close-up of the arrows clashing on his shoulders (46), the dramatic effect is heightened by this long shot/close-up perspectival contrast, thereby increasing the tension of the scene.

Because these concerns pertain exclusively to narrative space, however, they are neglected by traditional narratology. Hence Gerard Genette's structuralist interpretation of this passage:

This *shore of the loud-sounding sea* [is] a detail functionally useless in the story...The loud-sounding shore serves no purpose other than to let us understand that the narrative mentions it only because *it is there*, and because the narrator, abdicating his function of choosing and directing the narrative, allows himself to be governed by "reality," by the presence of what is there and what demands to be "shown."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> In his epitome of the *Iliad* in *A History of Greek Literature* (1996: 24), Lesky omits this scene altogether, as well as the details of Apollo's intervention, presumably because they do not further the story: "[Agamemnon] has incurred Apollo's wrath by failing to restore the captive Chryseis to her father, and the arrows of the god are smiting the host."

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Owen (1989), who follows his description of "Chryses praying to Apollo beside the sea," (4) with an admission that "The most interesting feature here...is the immediate introduction of the dramatic method in narrative. We are not so much hearing the story told as seeing it happen," (4-5).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Kirk (1985: 56).



Leonard Lutwack argues, on the other hand, that a poet is not constrained by the sort of “reality” that Genette speaks of, for the verbal medium transcends the scenographic determinism inherent to theater:

There is nothing in the art of narrative that makes place the troublesome problem it is in drama because, being verbalized only, place in narrative cannot have as insistent a presence as it has in stage settings.<sup>223</sup>

Indeed, Homer exercises the freedom to tailor Iliadic space to suit the interactivity between audience and action that he seeks to establish within it. To this end, he constructs a uniform story space and, through the manipulation of discourse spaces via decomposition, intercutting, meta-audience, and vignette, maximizes his control over his audience’s attention. Narrative space in the *Iliad* is more than merely a vehicle to provide scenic backdrops for the action or to increase dramatic verisimilitude: it is the matrix for action itself. To come to terms with it, however—to lay the groundwork for a spatial narratology—requires a heuristic approach that privileges the audience’s experience of the discourse over the critic’s extrapolation of the story *from* the discourse.

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<sup>223</sup> 1984: 17.

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Mythology (C205)  
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Mythology (Classics 40)  
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2004: Classical Studies Lecture Series, Indiana University (Bloomington, IN): "Framing Achilles: Narrative Space in the *Iliad*"

1998: CAMWS Annual Meeting (Charlottesville, VA): "*Oulomenen* in the *Iliad*"

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1997: Novus Antiquus Seminar, Ball State University (Muncie, IN): "Animal Symbolism in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*"

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## SERVICE

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