

## CHAPTER I

*The sighted Muse*

How can Homer turn his listeners into spectators? His characters and the events he describes belong to a remote past, and he emphasizes that temporal distance by insisting on the gulf between his heroes and “men who are now.”<sup>1</sup> Our analysis of Homeric battle sequences has its basis in Homeric poetics, particularly those aspects that involve vision and emphasize sight as the ultimate source of the poet’s knowledge of the distant events on the plains of Troy. But since the work of Milman Parry, the study of the Homeric poems has focused on verbal repetitions of formulaic expressions on the level of the individual hexameter lines, on type scenes in sequences of verses, and finally on typical motifs and themes that form the larger building blocks of the narrative.<sup>2</sup> Through extensive training, the poet acquires a mastery of all these forms of repetition from the micro level of the formulaic phrase to the macro level of thematic sequence that ultimately allows him to combine and recombine these traditional components to structure his narrative.

Despite its insights, Parry’s work and that of his followers nevertheless did not fundamentally alter the coordinates of the Homeric Question that had dominated discussion since the end of the eighteenth century. The focus remained on the composition and the mechanics of the production, whether oral or written, of the Homeric poems. A new interest in the performance and reception of archaic Greek

poetry has, however, shifted the center of gravity in recent considerations of Homeric epic. Attention has moved away from the creation and evolution of the poems to questions concerning their reception by an audience and the interaction of the poet and his listeners. Regarding the Homeric poems as communicative events invites us to consider Homeric discourse as a special kind of discourse, but one that nevertheless follows the general rules of linguistic communication. Linguistic pragmatics, speech-act theory, and discourse analysis have contributed to defining the character of this special speech, as Bakker has called it.<sup>3</sup> Such studies have, for example, opened new approaches to the Homeric *Kunstsprache*, seen not in its diachronic development as a patchwork of early and late linguistic features, but as a special language whose distance from everyday speech marks it as a gateway to a world distinct from our own, inhabited by gods and heroes, distant but still comprehensible. For English speakers, the King James Bible might offer the closest analogy to the special flavor of the epic *Kunstsprache*. Its sonorities, archaisms, parataxis, rhythmical prose – and even its obscurities – signal to its audience that we are entering a different and sacred realm. As our guide, the epic poet mediates our access to that world through an elaborate enunciative interchange between himself and the Muses that links his audience to the events he narrates. The opening invocation inaugurates that mediation as the poet asks the Muse to sing (ἄειδε, *Iliad* 1.1) or pursue (ἔννεπε, *Odyssey* 1.1) the subject of his song and either instructs her precisely where to begin, as in the *Iliad* (ἔξ οὗ δῆ τὰ πρῶτα, “from the time when first . . .” 1.6) or leaves the choice of starting point to the goddess (*Od.* 1.10: τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, “of those things, from some point, at least . . .”). Thereafter, the speech of the poet purports to be melded into the voice of the Muse who, through her narration, brings the past and the distant of the epic story into the present and the near, as if it were unfolding before our very eyes. The vehicle that makes possible this shift from our everyday present to an imagined epic past is a particular faculty of the Muses,

<sup>1</sup> The expression οἳοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσ’ occurs at 5.304; 12.383, 449; 20.287; cf. 1.272 and *Od.* 8.222.

<sup>2</sup> There is no point in rehearsing the immense bibliography. I mention only a few discussions for the reader’s orientation: for formula, Russo (1976) 31–54; for type-scenes, Arend (1933) and Edwards (1992) 248–330; for themes, see Lord (1960) 68–98. Significantly, Jousse (1925) (Eng. trans. 1990), which had a great influence on both Parry and Lord, consistently played down the visual component in orally transmitted texts.

<sup>3</sup> Bakker (2005) 47–55. This special speech is the equivalent of what Nagy (1990a) 30–42 calls SONG. See also Martin (1989) esp. 147–239, who relates the characteristics of Achilles’ speech to the poet’s own narrative discourse; cf. Foley (1999) and the concept of traditional referentiality. The notion of poetry as a form of special speech goes back at least as far as Roman Jakobson; see especially Jakobson (1981), vol. III.

their vision, as the famous invocation preceding the Catalogue of Ships – from which every discussion of Homeric poetics takes its start – emphasizes (2.484–92):

ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι –  
 ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστέ, πάρεστέ τε, ἴστέ τε πάντα,  
 ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν –  
 οἳ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν·  
 πλῆθ' οὐκ ἄν ἐγὼ μνησσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,  
 οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἴην,  
 φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη,  
 εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι, Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο  
 θυγατέρες, μνησαίεθ' ὅσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον.

Now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus –  
 For you are goddesses, **are present, and have seen all**;  
 But we **hear only hearsay and know nothing** –  
 Go after those who were the leaders and marshals of the Danaans;  
 I could not pronounce or name the multitude,  
 Not if I had ten tongues and ten mouths,  
 And an unbreakable voice and if my heart were of bronze,  
 Unless the Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus  
 Would **bring to mind** how many came under Ilion.

The Muses' knowledge depends on their omnipresence and their ability to be present and eyewitnesses of all events; for the Greeks, to have seen is to know.<sup>4</sup> Such visual knowledge is far superior to the imprecise hearsay that constitutes the normal human access to events distant in both time and space. The transmission of the Muses' vision to the poet is expressed by the verb *mimneskō*, which we usually translate as “to remind” or, in the middle, “to remember.” The “re-” prefix in English suggests the repetition of a previous action that one has performed or the retrieval of information that was stored at some moment in the past. But in our poet's invocation he is not asking the Muses, daughters of Mnemosyne, to repeat something he already knows, but rather to provide him with a special kind of knowledge, visual in its immediacy, not normally accessible to him or to other human beings, but of which the Muses are the

<sup>4</sup> Snell (1924) remains the classic study of the visual character of Greek epistemology.

repository.<sup>5</sup> In possession of that vision, the poet seems to convey his audience to another place and another time.<sup>6</sup> Yet it would not be quite accurate to say that his audience is transported. Rather, through the agency of the Muses and his performance, the poet brings the deeds of the heroes enacted in a distant time and faraway places into the immediate present and imagined proximity of his audience:

Telling the epic story is for the poet very much a matter of seeing it, and of sharing this reality with the audience in the context of the performance. . . . Remembering an event from the past is bringing it to the mind's eye, seeing it, and describing it as if it were happening before one's eyes.<sup>7</sup>

Entry to that world requires knowledge of a markedly visual character that the Muses impart to their disciples and, by implication, the visual nature of their “re-minding” of the poets. The *aidos*, in turn, transmits and makes present to his audience his vision of events by various enunciative strategies.<sup>8</sup> The extraordinarily high percentage of direct speech in Homer – much higher than in other traditional epics – contributes greatly to this vividness, which the ancients called *enargeia*. For the direct speeches of an Achilles or an Agamemnon shift the deictic center from the present moment of the performance in which we are participating to the here and now of the characters: the Greek camp at Troy in the tenth year of the War.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bakker (2005) 141: “Memory in Homer is not a retrieval of stored facts but a dynamic cognitive operation in the present, a matter of consciousness or, more precisely, of the *activation* of consciousness”; “Memory in Homer, then, is very much a matter of the present; it enacts, makes present in the most literal sense” (143); see now also Bakker (2008). Cf. Ford (1992) 53, who renders *mnesomē* as “mindfulness,” i.e. having one's mind full of something. See also Simondon (1982); Vernant (1965) 80–89; and Detienne (1967) 9–20.

There seem, however, to be degrees of making present; the Muses, to be sure, possess this power to a superlative degree, but at *Od.* 4.186–202, Peisistratus “remembers” (μνήσαστο γὰρ κατὰ θυμόν) and weeps for his brother Antilochus who had died at Troy. But Peisistratus admits that he never encountered nor saw (οὐδέ ἴδον) him, but his host Menelaus must have seen him (μέλλεις δὲ σὺ ἴδμεναι); hence in this case Peisistratus' “bringing to mind” of his brother depends on hearsay (φασί). When, however, the Muses make the leaders of the Greek contingents present to the poet's mind, he actually seems to see them arrayed before him. For the semantic relation of the root \**wid* in *oida*, “to have seen” and hence “to know,” and the root \**men* in *mimneskō* “to have present in the mind,” see Bartolotta (2002) who, however, does not sufficiently emphasize the active character of Homeric remembering.

<sup>6</sup> Mackie (1997) 77–95 argues that the dominant model of storytelling in the *Odyssey* differs from that in the *Iliad* insofar as its subject is not the distant past and is in some cases autobiographical. Such a model also presupposes a different poetics and a different relation to the Muses.

<sup>7</sup> Bakker (2005) 63, 146. <sup>8</sup> Many are explored by Bakker (1993) and Bakker (2005).

If what is absent is made present, then what happens to the everyday realities of our lives while we are under the Muses' spell? The pleasure produced by the *aidoi* relieves us from our ordinary concerns, griefs, and worries. In early Greek, the negation of *mimneskō* and *mnemē*, the verb *lanthanō* or the noun *lethē*, "to forget," express such a distraction or diversion that casts our mundane cares into the background.<sup>9</sup> Such pleasurable diversion has something magical about it, an enchanting spell, *thelxis*, which Homer compares to the powerful pleasure of sex or the mind-numbing effects of drugs.<sup>10</sup> Leaving our everyday world behind, we enter one grander than ours through the Muse-implanted *mnemē* of the poet. Apparently, however, these two worlds are somehow mutually exclusive since, when the epic world touches too closely upon personal experience, the result is not pleasure but pain, as happens to Odysseus and Penelope in the *Odyssey*: the former, when he listens to Demodocus' songs of the Trojan War; the latter, when she hears Phemius recount the *nostoi* of the Greeks. Thus not only does the charm of epic distract us from our normal cares, but its power to enchant requires us to maintain a certain distance. The space constituted by epic is thus paradoxically both near and far.

A sign of the complexity of defining Homeric epic in spatial and temporal terms is the notorious absence of the "historical" or, more accurately, the "narrative present," as Fleischman calls it, which is characteristic of many epic traditions and indeed of much of our informal storytelling.<sup>11</sup> (Readers will observe the frequent use of the

<sup>9</sup> The complementary character of *mimneskō* and *lanthanō* is made explicit in the formula that opens several of the Homeric Hymns: μῆσομαι οὐδέ λάθομαι (on which see Bakker [2005] 136–52 and Simondon [1982] 55–59). See also the passage in the proem to Hesiod's *Theogony*, where Mnemosyne gives birth to the Muses as a λησμοσύνην κακῶν, "a forgetfulness of evils" (55); and the description of the man who listens to the songs of the *aidoi*: αἴψ' ὃ γε δυσφροσυνέων ἐπιλήθεται οὐδέ τι κηδέων | μέμνηται, "straightway, he forgets his worries nor does he remember his cares at all" (102–103).

<sup>10</sup> See Clay (1994b).

<sup>11</sup> Fleischman (1990) 285. Even after the historical present had been "discovered," composers of Greek epic such as Apollonius did not use it, presumably because of its absence in Homer. Rossi (2004) 125–49 argues that the use of the "historic present" in Ennius and Virgil derives from its use in the historiographical tradition; she then convincingly distinguishes Virgilian from Homeric epic in that the former uses verbal devices "to bridge the gap between the tale of long ago and the Roman reader's collective experience and forge a continuum between the past retold and the present perceived . . . The effect of 'actualization' achieved through *enargeia* aims at further eliding the distance between these two separate temporal systems,

present tense in my descriptions of scenes of Homeric combat in the next section.) In classical Greek, past tenses such as the imperfect and the aorist have what is called an augment, an extra syllable prefixed to the verbal root, but in the earlier stage of Greek that we find in Homeric epic this augment may or may not be used. It has been argued that this verbal augment originally had a deictic function pointing to the action within the *hic et nunc* of enunciation, that is, the epic performance, which grants access to the heroic world.<sup>12</sup> This observation serves to reinforce the ambiguous status of epic narration: if the secondary tenses (aorist, imperfect) indicate action in the past and therefore "not now," the deictics – and the augment – seem to point to what is present, which again emphasizes the refusal of Homeric epic to fit into the usual categories of space and time. It both maintains its remoteness and is brought into proximity through the magic of performance.

A powerful and startling effect is produced when, in the course of his imaginative re-enactment of the past, the poet addresses one of his characters within the story.<sup>13</sup> In the classical rhetorical tradition, apostrophe meant a turning away from the judge in a court case to address someone or something else as if they were present. In the context of epic performance, we might say that the poet's auditors constitute the judges. Homerists, from the scholia and Eustathius to

past and present . . . for in that way, the past is played out – in the truest meaning of that expression – in the present" (148). Similarly, in the French epic traditions, Fleischman comments: "the dual position of the epic singer – at once outside events looking back on them and inside them recreating the effects of being there – that produces . . . the conspicuous P[ast]-PR[esent] alternation that is likewise characteristic of naturally occurring narration" (265).

<sup>12</sup> See Bakker (2005) 114–35. Basset (1989) argues that the verbal augment distinguishes  *récit* or *histoire* from *discours* but comes close to Bakker's interpretation when describing the augmented forms in the description of the arming of Patroclus (16.130–40): "L'impression est qu'Homère ne se content pas de raconter la scène, mais la *donner à voir*" ("The impression is that Homer is not content to relate the scene, but to *make it visible*," 15, emphasis in original). In the light of these verbal distinctions, it is worth rereading Fleischman's discussion of Romance epic and its use of the French verbal system, which of course differs from the Greek. Her conclusion: "The epic poet sings what he sees, bringing the past to life in dramatic performance, where it becomes imbricated with the present. All other points of view – those of the historian (P[assé] S[imple]), the memorialist (P[assé] C[omposé]), the painter (IMP[erfect]) – are backgrounded so that of the spectator/performer . . . is played out predominantly in the marked PR[esent] tense" (273–74).

<sup>13</sup> In the *Iliad*: Patroclus, 16.20, 584, 693, 744, 754, 787, 812, 843; Menelaus, 4.127, 146; 7.104; 13.603; 17.679, 702; 23.600; Melanippus, 15.582; and Apollo, 15.365; 20.152. In the *Odyssey* only Eumaeus is apostrophized.

the present, have, like the ancient rhetoricians, emphasized the emotional character of such direct addresses; in the *Iliad* the poet most frequently apostrophizes sympathetic characters. But other scholars have maintained that largely metrical considerations are involved.<sup>14</sup> Here, however, I want to accentuate the enunciative impact of apostrophe, for, as Culler points out, “apostrophe is different [from other tropes] in that it makes its point not by troping on the meaning of a word but on the circuit or situation of communication itself.”<sup>15</sup> The speaker momentarily turns his back on his audience, as it were, and is absorbed into the story world, directly addressing a Patroclus or a Menelaus as if they were standing here and now in the very space of performance. The real world seems to recede as the past becomes almost palpably present.<sup>16</sup> But in apostrophizing his characters, the poet uses the past tense, which in itself indicates the non-presence of the addressee. Unique among the poet’s direct addresses is the question he poses to Patroclus shortly before his death (16.692–94):

Ἐνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ’ ὕστατον ἐξενάριξας  
 Πατρόκλεις, ὅτε δὴ σε θεοὶ θάνατόνδε κάλεσσαν;  
 Ἄδρηστον μὲν πρῶτα . . .

Then who was the first and who the last whom you slaughtered,  
 Patroclus, when the gods summoned you deathward?  
 Adrastus was the first . . .

The question is addressed to Patroclus in the vocative, but Patroclus is precluded from answering, for his death follows swiftly upon this last series of killings. The heroic past cannot speak to us directly; it requires the mediation of the poet to be brought to life. Moreover, with the help of the Muses, the bard is not only able to list the names of Patroclus’ victims; he also knows what the hero cannot know: his impending doom. This knowledge of his characters’ destinies, which Bakker has termed “storytelling in the future,”<sup>17</sup> again draws us into

<sup>14</sup> Yamagata (1989) reviews the literature and comes down on the side of metrical exigencies rather than emotional involvement.

<sup>15</sup> Culler (1981) 135. Culler’s essay is mainly concerned with Romantic and Modern Lyric.

<sup>16</sup> On apostrophe, see S. Richardson (1990) 170–74, who regards it as a form of metalepsis that creates a sense of intimacy between Homer and his characters. One could say that at the moment of apostrophe, the speaker is imaginatively closer to the actors within his story than to his auditors.

<sup>17</sup> Bakker (2005) 92–113; on this passage 103–104.

the present of performance even as the vocative seemed to admit us into the past. The poet’s question to Patroclus, the latter’s inability to answer, which in turn is followed by the response provided by the Muse-inspired poet, can be seen as paradigmatic for Homeric poetics: the heroic world itself is mute; the Muses can see and hence know it, but only the bard can translate that vision into speech for a human audience.

In addition to making the past present, Homer also exploits other devices that have the opposite effect, momentarily distancing the heroes and their struggles from temporal and spatial proximity and thrusting them back into the mythical past. In the opening of Book 12 the perspective suddenly shifts, and the epic characters are viewed as a vanished race from another age, the *hemitheōn genos andrōn* (the race of demi-gods). The repeated phrase, “as men are now,” likewise draws attention to both the temporal and the qualitative distance between an “us,” embracing both the poet and his audience, and the heroes; the magical nearness created by the Muses’ narrative is momentarily shattered to remind us of our own condition here and now. In addition, certain similes, especially those dealing with homely realities – I think of the honest wool-worker weighing wool for her children (12.433–38), or the two men fighting over a boundary (12.421–26) – have a similar effect by suggesting the gulf between the heroic narrative and the present of the audience’s everyday non-heroic experiences. But all similes, insofar as they shift from the story world and offer an evaluation or interpretation, usually visual, of the action, draw attention to the poet as he pauses and becomes for a moment an observer; audience and bard are briefly united as spectators of the narrative.<sup>18</sup> We will see later how this characteristic of similes can be used to effect transitions. Similarly, after the first invocation of the Muse at the beginning of the poem that brings

<sup>18</sup> Cf. S. Richardson (1990) 66: “Within the simile . . . not only is the narrator’s part in presenting this version of the story accentuated; his presence is more strongly evoked by the reminder of the world in which the discourse takes place.” Cf. Minchin (2001b) 43: “When he uses a simile, Homer is breaking down the illusion that we are direct observers of the action. At these moments he calls his listeners back from the storyworld to the realm of performance and, indirectly, he reminds us of the role he plays as mediator and guide.” Elsewhere (33), she speaks of similes involved in the “cultivation of intimacy” between the poet and his audience. Also Minchin (2001a) 168: Homer’s re-invocations “recall his listeners, temporarily, from the story world to the realm of performance.” For similes as the language of immediacy, see Bakker (2005) 114–35.

us into the heroic realm, subsequent invocations such as the one before the Catalogue of Ships, by enunciating the narrator's need for divine assistance, disrupt the illusion and reinforce our distance from that heroic past.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the speaking voice, even while declaring its human inadequacy, reminds us that it is the poet who grants us entry to this enchanting world and that we are dependent on him to be our guide.<sup>20</sup> When he complains of the difficulty of his task (ἀργαλέον δέ με ταῦτα θεὸν ὡς πάντ' ἀγορεύσαι, "Hard it is for me to tell all these things as if I were a god," 12.176), he paradoxically invites his auditors to admire how well in fact he has managed to fulfill it, how skillfully he has told his story, and how great is his repository of knowledge of those distant events.<sup>21</sup> Its divine origin informs his tale and emerges most prominently in his accounts of the gods; it is, after all, the bard who through his intimacy with the Muses alone has the power to make the gods *enargēs*. Indeed, the interventions and intimate involvement of the gods in the plot of the epic are the hallmark of the difference between "men such as are now" and the heroic world.<sup>22</sup> But again it is the poet who grants us access; without him, we would be like the assembled Achaeans in Book 1, who observe Achilles draw his sword, hesitate momentarily, and return it to its sheath. Athena's intervention would be lost to us, and the poem immeasurably impoverished.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Compare also the "faded" invocations, where the Muse is not named, but the poet asks for information, e.g. "who was the first . . ."

<sup>20</sup> De Jong (1987) 46–53 rightly insists on the self-consciousness of the opening invocation and the one that precedes the Catalogue of Ships. She characterizes the shorter invocations (2.761–62, 11.218–20, 14.508–10, 16.112–13) as having an effect similar to the *πρῶτος/ον* passages involving a zooming in or giving a close-up of the particular action. Accordingly, we could say that the Muse is asked to focus her vision in a particularly discerning or detailed manner.

<sup>21</sup> Bakker (2005) 97–113 also shows how the narrator's use of *mellein* and his judgments of his characters, for example *nepios*, while distancing the audience from the narrative likewise draw attention to his mastery of the epic tradition. Cf. Richardson (1990) 132–39 on the narrator's foreknowledge.

<sup>22</sup> For *enargeia*, see below, pp. 29–30; cf. Clay (1983) 13–25 where I discuss the bard's superior knowledge of the gods both in relation to his characters and to his auditors.

<sup>23</sup> The view of the Homeric gods as psychological projections is predicated on the outmoded notion of the primitive mentality of "Homeric man"; see, for instance, Snell (1953) 1–22; and Dodds (1951) 1–27. Dodds himself admits (14): "How much more *vivid* than a mere inward monition is the famous scene in *Iliad* 1 where Athena plucks Achilles by the hair and warns him not to strike Agamemnon!" (italics mine). For the performative character of Homeric psychology, see Russo and Simon (1968).

Finally, some passages serve to bridge the gap between the realm of the story and the world of performance. A powerful device that simultaneously accentuates both the distance and the proximity between the epic narrative and our own lives occurs when one of Homer's characters describes the motivation for and goal of his actions "so that men of the future will hear of them." Thus Helen explains her own and others' sufferings (6.357–58):

οἷσιν ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόνον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω  
ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' ἀοίδιμοι ἔσσομένοισι.

On whom Zeus has laid an evil fate so that even hereafter  
We should be an object of song for men of the future.

Here, in the instance of performance, Helen or Hector or Achilles seems to reach out from the distant past to their present audience, "men who are now"; and we, hearing their exploits, fulfill their heart's desire to be rescued from oblivion and remembered through the *kleos aphthiton*, the imperishable glory that is their reward for their exploits and suffering.<sup>24</sup>

Another potent mechanism exploits the bard's power to transform his auditors into spectators and even participants in the story he tells, by occasionally bringing on (in the potential optative either in the second or third person) a would-be eyewitness to the action.<sup>25</sup> The audience is invited into the narrative as a potential observer (5.85–87):

Τυδεΐδην δ' οὐκ ἄν γνοίης ποτέροισι μετείη,  
ἧ ἔμετ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν ὀμιλέοι ἢ μετ' Ἄχαιοῖσιν.  
θῦνε γὰρ ἄμ πεδίον ποταμῶ πλῆθοντι ἕοικώς . . .

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 22.304–305, where Hector's dying wish is not to die without glory: ἄλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι ("but to have accomplished some great thing for even the men of the future to hear"). Cf. Lynn-George (1988) 272: "In its tale of the past for the future – already belated, after the event, and always ahead of itself, telling what is still to come – the epic compounds a sense of finitude with a sense of the indefinite. The work of immortal glory was already accomplished and is never yet fully completed."

<sup>25</sup> Second person: 4.223–25, 429–31; 5.85–86; 15.697–98; 17.366–67; third person: 4.421, 539–42; 13.343–44; 16.638–40. Cf. de Jong (1987) 53–60; and Richardson (1990) 174–78, who suggests that the narrator is putting his audience into his own shoes: "If you could be the narrator and could see what I am seeing" (176). For the use of this device in Latin, see Kilmartin (1975). For Virgil's sole use of it in the description of Aeneas' shield (*Aeneid* 8.650, 676, cf. 691), see Woodman (1989).

You would not have been able **to discern** on which side the son of Tydeus belonged,  
Or whether he kept company with the Trojans or the Achaeans;  
For he rushed over the plain like a river in spate . . .

On occasion the hypothetical viewer evaluates or reacts to the action as if he were present, as in this passage praised by Pseudo-Longinus where the direct address “makes the hearer seem to find himself in the middle of dangers” (ἐν μέσσοις τοῖς κινδύνοις ποιοῦσα τὸν ἀκροατὴν δοκεῖν στρέφεσθαι [26.1]):

φαίης κ' ἀκμηῆτας καὶ ἀτειρέας ἀλλήλοισιν  
ἀντεσθ' ἐν πολέμῳ, ὡς ἐσσυμένως ἐμάχοντο.

You would say that they were tireless and unwearied  
As they stood opposite each other in battle, so eagerly did they fight.  
(15.697–98)

But most often the spectator's powers of careful observation, especially vision, are emphasized (16.638–40):<sup>26</sup>

οὐδ' ἂν ἔτι φράδμων περ ἀνὴρ Σαρπηδόνα δῖον  
ἔγνω, ἐπεὶ βελέεσσι καὶ αἵματι καὶ κονίησιν  
ἐκ κεφαλῆς εἴλυτο διαμπερές ἐς πόδας ἄκρους.

Nor would even **an observant man** still have **recognized**  
Shining Sarpedon, since with spears and blood and dust  
He was shrouded from his head to the tips of his toes.

Finally, a remarkable passage at the end of Book 4 after battle has been engaged for the first time in the poem (539–44):

ἔνθα κεν οὐκέτι ἔργον ἀνὴρ ὀνόσαιτο μετελθὼν,  
ὅς τις ἔτ' ἄβλητος καὶ ἀνούτατος ὀξεῖ χαλκῶ  
δινεύοι κατὰ μέσσον, ἄγοι δέ ἐ Παλλάς Ἀθήνη  
χειρὸς ἔλοῦσ', αὐτὰρ βελέων ἀπερύκοι ἐρωήν·  
πολλοὶ γὰρ Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν ἦματι κείνῳ  
πρηνέες ἐν κονίησι παρ' ἀλλήλοισι τέταντο.

<sup>26</sup> Note, in addition to the γνοῖς at 5.85 cited above, ἴδοις (4.223) and ἴδων (15.343). 4.421 and 4.429–31, on the other hand, emphasize auditory perception.

Then a man who came upon the battle could no longer have found fault in it,  
One who had not yet been hit or wounded with the sharp bronze,  
Whirling in the midst of it, and Pallas Athena would lead him,  
Taking him by the hand, but keeping off the rush of the missiles;  
For many of the Trojans and Achaeans on that day  
Were stretched out headlong in the dust beside each other.

I paraphrase: if our anonymous observer were present and viewed the scene – and yet was not part of it, in fact, was able to traverse the battlefield unscathed – he would admire the vivid depiction of the intense battle fought long ago (“that day”).<sup>27</sup> Ancient opinion is divided as to whether this θεατής represents the narrator or his audience.<sup>28</sup> Or, one could add, the Muses, for they too are constant θεαταί (πάρεστε). Other passages (13.126–28 and 17.398–99) depict the gods themselves who “would not make light of the battle” (using the same verb ὀνόσαιτο), which is not surprising, since the perspectives of the gods and the poet have much in common; it is in fact this divine perspective that the bard transmits to his audience (cf. also 13.343f.). Indeed, like Athena here, the poet leads his hearers safely by the hand. Thus this passage reveals the intimate link between Muse, poet, and audience. In a discussion of *enargeia* in the Greek historians, Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers a striking parallel (*Antiquitates Romanae* 11.1.3):<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Maronitis (2004) 22–23, who calls the passage an “epilogue” and speaks of “a kind of narrative conspiracy between the rhapsode and the listener, who both surreptitiously participate in the final revelation of the battle.” He also draws attention to lines 452–56, which immediately precede the battle, in which the din of combat is likened to the sound of rivers in spate heard by a shepherd from afar: “at first we, too, hear the battle from a distance; at the end, however, the distance is eliminated and the previous hearing now becomes a viewing” (23).

<sup>28</sup> See de Jong (1987) 59, who cites the bT Scholia at 4.541; and Eustathius 506.6–8, who argues for the poet's audience: τοιοῦτος δ' ἂν εἴη θεατὴς ὁ τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἀκροατὴς, ὅς οὐ τῶν τοῦ πολέμου κακῶν μετέχει, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τῶν πολεμικῶν διηγήσεων κατὰ νοῦν ἀπολαύει καλοῦ θεάματος, ἀκίνδυνος τὴν μάχην περιῶν (“The man who listens to the poet would be the kind of spectator who does not share in the evils of war but enjoys the fine spectacle of the war narrative in his mind while taking part in the battle without danger”).

<sup>29</sup> Cited in Walker (1993) 364. Cf. Aelius Aristides, *Smyrnaeus politicus* 17.8 (Behr): περιηγείσθαι καθάπερ εἰς τῆς χειρὸς ἔχοντα, μάρτυρα τὸν θεατὴν τῶν λόγων ποιοῦμενον (“[shouldn't] one lead the spectator around, as if holding him by the hand, and render him a witness of one's words?”). Cf. Jordan (1905) 79: “Wir wissen schon, dass die Dichter [*sic*]

ἦδεται γὰρ ἡ διάνοια παντὸς ἀνθρώπου χειραγωγούμενη διὰ τῶν λόγων ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκούουσα τῶν λεγομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ πραττόμενα ὁρῶσα.

For the understanding of every human being takes pleasure in being **led by the hand** through words to deeds and not only hearing what is said, but also seeing what is done.

In the *Iliad* it is the Homeric bard who takes us by the hand and through his imaginative guidance conducts us safely through the fiery heart of battle, allowing his listeners to share in the re-presentation of the heroic world the Muses have entrusted to him.

To claim that the Homeric poet makes the past present to his audience or that he transports them from the present into the past – although he manages to do both – does not quite do justice to the kaleidoscopic and shifting character of the *aioidos'* relation to the heroic world of which he sings. I would prefer to describe that relation less in terms of past and present than in spatial terms. The world of the heroes is not only past but elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> The Muses can convey it to us not only because they were there when the Greek and Trojans fought but because they *are* present (πάρεστε) on the battlefield before Troy and are able to transmit what they witness into our field of vision.

The preceding discussion has placed special emphasis on the visual and spatial features of the interaction that unites the Muse, the poet, and the recipients of his performance. Cognitive studies have demonstrated the importance of visual imagery in remembering and, more particularly for what concerns us here, the role of visual memory in storytelling in oral traditions.<sup>31</sup> Traditional storytellers frequently speak of seeing the story unfold before their eyes “like a silent movie, a set of slides, or even a dramatic play . . . This kind of mental ‘seeing’

der Ilias es lieben, die Personen, mit denen sie ausziehen, an der Hand zu behalten, bis sie die, mit denen sie agieren sollen, treffen” (“We already know that the poets of the *Iliad* like to keep in hand the characters with whom they sally forth until they encounter those with whom they are to interact”). More on *enargeia* below.

<sup>30</sup> Vernant (1965) 87 speaks of “the decipherment of the invisible” and “the geography of the supernatural”: “The past appears as a dimension of the *au-delà*.”

<sup>31</sup> Much of this paragraph is based on the discussion of imagery in Rubin (1995), which I have summarized and simplified. Esrock (1994) offers another useful summary of research in visual imagery.

was sometimes described to be so vivid as to approach eidetism.”<sup>32</sup> An 86-year-old traditional Gaelic storyteller, who claimed to tell the old stories “just the way I heard it,” described how he “saw” the story:

[O]nce you get started on it, and it's there in your mind, you can see the whole thing before you there. All you have to do is follow it . . . I don't think, unless a person could visualize it in that way, that he could remember the whole of it so well at all.<sup>33</sup>

In so far as a story can be visualized as an itinerary, it can be mapped, and that cartographical representation offers a spatial version of the verbal plot. The mapping of one such traditional tale produced a remarkable symmetrical loop.<sup>34</sup> But lest it be thought that such “plotting” and visualizing is only a feature of oral or illiterate societies, I refer the reader to Nabokov's wonderful *Lectures on Literature* and his various maps and plans of Gregor Samsa's apartment and Dr. Hyde's house, of the trajectories of Bloom and Daedalus in *Ulysses* as they wind their way through Dublin, or the choreography of an outing to an English country estate in *Mansfield Park*: “We must see things and hear things, we must visualize the rooms, the clothes, the manners of an author's people. The color of Fanny Price's eyes in *Mansfield Park* and the furnishing of her cold little room are important.”<sup>35</sup>

Research has shown that imagery, that is, a mental visual representation (“seeing in the mind's eye”) is a system analogous to perception and “uses the same parts of the brain as visual perception.”<sup>36</sup> In addition, there appears to be a neural distinction between object perception that describes and identifies objects and spatial perception

<sup>32</sup> Labrie (1981) 91. Cf. Labrie (1983) 230, quoting another storyteller: “As you go along telling the story, well there is something like a road that opens up before you, the same road of the imagination that you took the first time.”

<sup>33</sup> Macdonald (1978) presents a translation of the whole interview, where the storyteller, Donald Alasdair Johnson, also mentions the need to tell the story from the beginning, as he visualizes it, and the danger of distractions during performance. In another interview, MacDonald (1981) elicits similar formulations from another informant: “if I couldn't see a picture . . . I couldn't remember it”; but when performing a short poem with which the story ends, he says “you don't make a picture of that at all” (121), which confirms the distinctness of verbal and visual memory (the ancient *memoria rerum* as opposed to the *memoria verborum*). Alasdair Johnson also claimed to see a picture when listening to a story. See also Bruford and Todd (1996).

<sup>34</sup> Labrie (1983). See also my analysis of *Iliad* 17 below.

<sup>35</sup> Nabokov (1980); quotation on p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Rubin (1995) 57. For a recent survey of the field, see Shah and Miyake (2005).

that situates objects in space. This distinction also finds a counterpart in object imagery and imagery involving spatial orientation.<sup>37</sup> While verbal recall and visual memory involve different systems and are centered in different parts of the brain, visual imagery, especially the spatial variety, can be a powerful aid to memory. Thus, if I am given the task of memorizing a list of twenty household items, my performance will be substantially better if I imagine them in a specific location, say, in my apartment. I will return later to those mnemonic techniques, both ancient and modern, that have exploited this correlation.

Until recently, Homeric studies have emphasized verbal repetitions, and metrical shape as mnemonic devices. But a great deal of traditional storytelling is composed in prose:

Although the insights of Parry and Lord into the use of formulae and themes have opened our eyes to several aspects of how epic narratives are produced, they are of little help in explaining the *mnemonic processes* which come into play when the singer is singing his tale . . . Moreover, if an oral narrative does not depend on the use of meter but is recounted in a free prose style, then the findings of the Parry–Lord school do not provide the scholar with the appropriate tools . . . But how do the memories of storytellers who do not have recourse to meter function?<sup>38</sup>

No one can deny the critical importance of Parry's discoveries for an understanding of Homeric composition, but these studies of non-metrical prose storytellers have demonstrated the crucial role of visual imagery and memory; as Rubin concludes, "oral traditions appear to be remarkably spatial."<sup>39</sup> We are beginning to see the application of cognitive studies to Homer and a growing recognition of the importance of visual and spatial imagery in epic composition.<sup>40</sup> Rubin elaborates on its functioning:

<sup>37</sup> See Courtney *et al.* (1996) 39–49. As Small (1997) 108 notes: "The history of art teaches us, then, that the visual representation of things develops separately from the representation of the location of these same things in space." The mastery of vanishing-point perspective in art is a Renaissance phenomenon.

<sup>38</sup> Bruford and Todd (1996) 8. <sup>39</sup> Rubin (1995) 59.

<sup>40</sup> While greatly advancing the application of cognitive studies to the Homeric poems, Minchin's book rather underestimates the importance of visual, especially spatial imagery, particularly in the *Iliad*. She dwells more on objects and similes involving descriptive memory (Minchin [2001a] 100–58), which, as we have seen, operates differently from spatial visualization, whose critical role in the *Iliad* I will demonstrate. She does, however, speak of spatial memory in relation to the *Odyssey* (117–19) as well as the Catalogue of Ships (84–87), on which see p. 117 below. Interestingly, R. Rabel, in his review of Minchin (*BMCR* [http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2001/2001-12-09.html]) believes that Minchin overestimates the role

[I]magery has many strengths as a way of increasing the memorability of an oral tradition. Imagery is one of our most powerful mnemonic aids. It is especially useful where the rapid retrieval of information is important, as it is in singing to a fixed rhythm, and where spatial layout and interacting components of a scene offer additional forms of organization. Imagery, by its very nature, also seems well suited for the rapid transformations and actions . . . that most oral traditions require . . . In an oral tradition, imagery involves the transformation of a sequential verbal input into a spatial image and back to a sequential verbal output.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the poet who works in an oral tradition takes the verbal component of his story and actually sees it playing like a movie in his mind's eye and then is able to translate this vision into words that allow his audience to share in his vision. This phenomenon is encapsulated in the old term *enargeia*, that characteristic vividness so much admired by the ancient critics of the Homeric epics, as the image seen by the poet and conveyed through his words so as to make them visible and present to his listeners so that his auditors are transformed into spectators.<sup>42</sup>

The interchangeability of the visual and the verbal constitutes an implicit cornerstone of Homeric poetics and the *enargeia* to which it aspires. The equivalence of the "sister arts" became the explicit foundation of Renaissance aesthetics until it was challenged by Lessing, who at the beginning of his *Laokoon* cites the Simonidean dictum, *ut pictura poesis*, calling it "the brilliant antithesis of the Greek Voltaire."<sup>43</sup> Emphasizing the incompatibility of the visual arts and poetry and drawing his examples primarily from the *Iliad*, Lessing argued that painting must depict things in spatial proximity to each other (*nebeneinander*) whereas poetry, since it belongs to the sphere of

of visual imagery in Homer. Since then, Minchin has in fact turned her attention to spatial memory in "Spatial Memory and the Composition of the *Iliad*" (2008), which pursues an argument similar to the one espoused here.

<sup>41</sup> Rubin (1995) 62.

<sup>42</sup> On *enargeia*, see Webb (1997); Manieri (1998); Ford (1992) 49–56; Walker (1993); Zanker (1981); Meijering (1987); Calame (1991), who takes issue with Zanker's somewhat static view: *enargeia* refers not so much to descriptions of things (= *ekphrasis*), but to the narration of events. Dubel (1997), however, argues that *ekphrasis* as a λόγος περιηγηματικός "est un discours géographique . . . Elle est récit de voyage, représentation d'un itinéraire fictif du narrateur, elle cherche à faire voir ce qu'elle décrit" ("a geographic discourse . . . It is a narration of a voyage, a representation of a fictional itinerary of the narrator, it attempts to make visible what it describes," 257). In Homer, the adjective *enargēs* is used to describe gods who are recognizably present to the mortal actors (*Il.* 20.131; *Od.* 3.420, 7.201, 16.161); in *Od.* 4.841 it is used of Penelope's dream sent by Athena.

<sup>43</sup> Lessing, "Vorrede," *Laokoon* (ed. Stenzel, 582).



actions in progress (*fortschreitende Handlungen*), is the art of temporal sequence (*nacheinander*).<sup>44</sup> The *Laokoon's* countless insights and brilliant interpretations of Homer do not, in my opinion, depend on Lessing's central thesis. His insistence on the static character of the visual arts that cannot compete with poetry's movement and temporality could obviously not take into account the art we call the "movies" that embraces both. To be sure, the Homeric poet also could not go to the movies, but his divine Muse can zoom out for a sweeping view of two armies charging, focus in on blood spattered chariot wheels or the perfect breasts of Aphrodite, fade into an informative little flashback, or fast forward to anticipate a warrior's death, or cut between the Trojan and Greek camps.<sup>45</sup>

However that may be, Lessing has had a crucial if indirect influence on Homeric studies through the work of the Polish scholar Thaddaeus Zielinski.<sup>46</sup> On the basis of Lessing's aesthetic, Zielinski claimed that you cannot visually focus simultaneously on two or more actions. Moreover, not only is it impossible to visualize two concurrent events, but you also cannot describe them simultaneously in words.<sup>47</sup> I must leave the truth of the first proposition, actually the only one Zielinski called a "law," to cognitive psychologists. Common sense would seem to affirm the second: verbal communication, whether oral or written, is sequential. In fact, you cannot tell two stories at the exact same time, no matter what their temporal sequence. But various verbal cues are available, either on the part of the narrator or one of his characters, to indicate whether an event occurred prior to or after another action. And as we have seen, in the context of epic performance, references to the future in relation to the story time may point to the *hic et nunc* of performance. Thus Helen can refer to her future incorporation into the song we are hearing. The verbal medium treats simultaneous action similarly; it uses verbal markers (for example "meanwhile") to indicate their simultaneity.

<sup>44</sup> Lessing, ch. 16 (ed. Stenzel, 620–21).

<sup>45</sup> See de Jong and Nünlist (2004). <sup>46</sup> Zielinski (1899–1901)

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Scholium T at 12.199 when we leave Asios for Hector: ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντα λέγειν ἀδύνατον ("But to tell everything at once is impossible"). As Seck (1998) 132 notes: we have only one brain and one mouth. Seck 134 invents the nice concept of "philological time," which he defines as the attempt by philologists to reckon the length of time of, say, Telemachus' stay in Sparta.

Zielinski examined Homer's strategies for depicting concurrent actions; he never, as a popular misconception has it, claimed that Homer was incapable of depicting events that occur at the same time; rather, he claimed that Homer never recounted one action and then went backward in time to pick up the second narrative strand<sup>48</sup> nor made use of his characters' speeches or his own voice to fill in his audience on events taking place at the same time. While these claims are not, strictly speaking, true and clearly admit of exceptions,<sup>49</sup> Zielinski went on to insist that Homer used only one technique that involved jumping from one field of action to another and back again to give the illusion of simultaneity. The poet would choose the moment of transition from one scene to another when the first had come either to a moment of rest or to a point of continued but undifferentiated motion. When, however, an action involved just such continuous movement, for example the heralds' journey to Troy and the Greek camp respectively before the duel of Paris and Menelaus in *Iliad* 3 (116; cf. 3.245), Homer would fill that temporal interval with an episode because of what Zielinski labeled an aesthetic *horror vacui*. The result was an episodic structure typical of Homeric epic such as, for instance, the insertion of the *Teichoskopia* (the view from the Trojan wall) during the heralds' mission to fetch Priam from Troy (3.121–244). Many of us would be surprised to consider the *Teichoskopia* a "filler" used to occupy the time required by the heralds' displacement. That time, however, is not "required." Homer can extend or compress a journey at will. Indeed, Priam's journey from Troy to the site of the proposed duel takes only seven lines (3.259–66) and his return only four (3.310–13). But Zielinski's interpretation is interesting because it suggests that Homer actually created or sought out opportunities for the insertion of simultaneous action, rather than considering it a problem to be avoided. Zielinski here also slips in an

<sup>48</sup> For a refutation, see Nünlist (1998).

<sup>49</sup> Rengakos (1995) offers the most detailed account and refutation of Zielinski's interpretations of specific Homeric passages. For the *Odyssey*, see also Olson (1995) 90–119, who takes issue with the work of Delebeque (1958) and (1970), whose theories were inspired by Zielinski. It is worth noting that Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459b24–27, distinguishes tragedy from epic precisely because the former is unable to ἅμα πραττόμενα πολλά μέρη μιμῆσθαι . . . ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ διὰ τὸ διήγησιν εἶναι ἔστι πολλά μέρη ἅμα ποιεῖν περαινόμενα (tragedy cannot "imitate many parts of actions occurring simultaneously . . . but in epic because it is narrated, it is possible to describe many different parts simultaneously"). Depiction of multiple simultaneous actions, then, appears to be a characteristic feature of epic.

evaluation of what constitutes the *Haupthandlung* (“main action”) as opposed to the *Nebenhandlung* (“secondary action”), which can on occasion be suppressed or simply assumed.<sup>50</sup> In the case of the *Teichoskopia*, Homer’s framing of the preparations for the duel over Helen’s fate and the subsequent duel itself has far less to do with filling the required time. The inserted scene allows us to see both the cause of the battle and its prize: the enigmatic Helen herself.

In exceptional cases, according to Zielinski, when the strategy of “jumping” from one scene to another did not present itself, or both concurrent events had equal weight and hence needed to be narrated in full, the poet would make it appear that they took place one after another whereas in reality they were simultaneous. In other words, here the illusion of simultaneity is suppressed even though the actions are indeed simultaneous. This rather odd and counterintuitive assertion is predicated on the notion that Homer does not regress temporally, that his action is always forward moving.

I am not interested in disproving this claim, as others have, by citing counter-examples from the Homeric poems.<sup>51</sup> Nor am I interested in dealing with Fränkel’s arguments that build on those of Zielinski concerning Homer’s supposed lack of a notion of time.<sup>52</sup> What concerns me here and is relevant to our overall discussion is that Zielinski bases his whole argument on the fact that Homer is a *schauender Dichter*. Throughout my own discussion, I too have insisted on the visual character of the *Iliad*’s narrative, and yet Zielinski’s model strikes me as fundamentally flawed. He represents Homer as an eyewitness to an action that always moves forward. In watching an action unfolding before us, we cannot, it is true, stop to turn the clock back and demand a replay – at least not before the days of televised basketball replays; and even in the era of multi-tasking we also cannot give our full attention to two actions occurring at once. So, in order to include both strands, we can either go back and forth between them according to Zielinski’s “analysierend-desultorische Methode,” or first

follow one story and then another. But in fact, a pure spectator, recounting only what he sees in front of him, cannot do this because he cannot go back in time. Zielinski then claims that Homer solved the problem by making it appear that the two strands are sequential (*scheinbare Handlung*) whereas in reality (*wirkliche Handlung*) they are concurrent. This could be a narrative device (although not one used by Homer, and more suited to flipping pages in a book rather than listening to a story), but in any case it is not a spectator’s device.<sup>53</sup> While an eyewitness is obliged to observe an action unfolding sequentially, a narrator is under no such compulsion. Language allows him to situate himself in temporal proximity to the action he describes by using, for example, the present tense. But as soon as he dissociates himself from the action by, for instance, employing a past tense, he declares that the action is not here and now but elsewhere. As soon as an action is not the immediate account of what is going on before one’s eyes, that is, I/now/here deixis, there is no compulsion to tell a story in the sequence in which a putative onlooker would have perceived it, that is, in strictly chronological order. As for the audience, its vision of the events recounted by the poet is purely imaginary; however vivid these figments of their imagination may be, they are bound neither in space nor in time.

I make all this fuss because the visual aspect of Homeric narrative that I have emphasized throughout this study, its *enargeia*, is independent of its sequential arrangement. *Enargeia* resides in the manner of recounting individual episodes rather than narrating them in strict chronological sequence. An obvious example is the well-known scene involving Odysseus’ scar (*Od.* 19.386–470) where the old nurse Eurycleia touches the scar while washing the beggar’s feet, and recognizes her master. Although one may dispute Auerbach’s overall interpretation of the passage that posits our forgetting of the framework of the digression as we learn the origins of the scar, one can nevertheless agree with his judgment of the vividness of the “digression” that fills the interval between Eurycleia’s recognition of the scar, and her surprised reaction.<sup>54</sup> The vividness of this digression does not

<sup>50</sup> This would be a version of Zielinski’s “reproducierend combinatorische Methode.”

<sup>51</sup> Again, see Rengakos (1995) and Nünlist (1998) and now for a balanced presentation of the debate, Scodel (2008) 107–25, who rightly suggests that “the debates about Homeric time have emphasized too much what “really” happens in the story, and not enough how the hearer actually experiences the flow of the narrative information” (p. 109).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Fränkel (1968).

<sup>53</sup> For later epic, see Mehmel (1940). There is, to be sure, a vast literature on space and time in the modern novel that revisits these issues; see, for instance, Sappok (1970).

<sup>54</sup> Auerbach (1953). De Jong (1985) argues that the digression is focalized through Eurycleia’s eyes, which does not invalidate my argument. See also Bakker (2005) 56–70.

arise from the unfolding of an action in its temporal sequence; on the contrary, the time frame shifts backward from the present scene in the palace of Odysseus, and then to the incident of the boar's hunt when the young Odysseus first acquired the scar, and back beyond that, to the birth and naming of the hero – and then back again to the narrative's present. Yet despite its disruption of the temporal framework, each scene possesses the vividness or *enargeia* Auerbach so much admired. The retrospective sequence that opens the *Iliad*, which reaches back from the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon (where the Muse has been instructed to begin) to Apollo's wrath and Chryses' supplication then forward to the plague, loses none of its vividness – neither the callousness of Agamemnon's refusal nor the awe-inspiring descent of the plague god – because the temporal order is violated.<sup>55</sup> To take another example, on the shield of Achilles each of the elaborate scenes possesses vividness and movement, but their ordering is not chronological. Although there is an overall sequence in Hephaestus' making of each image, the individual scenes themselves do not present a temporal sequence. Rather, the relation between them is contrastive, creating a play of meaningful juxtapositions.<sup>56</sup>

In an influential article Joseph Frank cites the famous scene in *Madame Bovary* that cinematographically cuts back and forth between the country fair, with its bloviating officials and sundry barnyard noises emanating from the various animals, and Emma Bovary's tryst with the sleazy Rodolphe as a model for spatial form in the modern novel. Temporal progression halts, but meaning inheres in the juxtaposition and interplay of simultaneous events.<sup>57</sup> Like so much else that seems innovative, this contrapuntal technique is already to

be found in Homer. His juxtaposition of scenes is frequently far more important than their temporal progression. Two immediate examples: in the encounters of Hector with Hecuba, Helen, and Andromache in *Iliad* 6, the temporal sequence is secondary to the “rising scale of affection,” and to the juxtaposition of the dysfunctional relationship of Paris and Helen with the loving marriage of Hector and Andromache. Similarly, the quarrel on Olympus that easily dissolves into waves of laughter at the end of Book 1 does not so much follow the baneful terrestrial strife of Agamemnon and Achilles as stand in contrast to it.

Whether supporting or criticizing Zielinski's views, discussions of Homer's narrative temporalities tend to have a very narrow and technical focus.<sup>58</sup> Caught up amid the trees, they rarely glance up at the grand forest of Homer's temporal strategies. The sophistication of the *Iliad*'s manipulation of time, its violation of temporal verisimilitude, emerges as it retrogresses to the War's beginning and points forward to its ending so that the whole Trojan War is encapsulated into a few days.<sup>59</sup> To give only the most obvious examples: the replay of Paris' seduction of Helen and the duel between her two husbands in Book 3, not to speak of the notoriously misplaced Catalogue of Ships

<sup>58</sup> It is perhaps worth pointing out that Zielinski himself suggested that his study was largely a means to a further end. At the end of his essay (449) he announces his intention to look at later epic where “dieses Gesetz durchbrochen worden ist” (“where this law is violated”) and “die Bedeutung unseres Gesetzes für die homerische Frage zu erörtern” (“to explain the meaning of our law for the Homeric Question”). Cf. his earlier (419) enigmatic pronouncement: “Ausserdem schwebten dem Verfasser noch andere Ziele vor, die besser erreicht werden, wenn man von ihnen nicht redet” (“Moreover, the author had other aims in mind, which are better accomplished if one does not speak of them”). One can guess that Zielinski intended to use his study to make an argument for the unity of Homer, or at least the *Iliad*; but there is no way of knowing why he gave up the project. Much work on other epic traditions has been inspired by Zielinski although his arguments on the treatment of synchronous events have been rejected; of special interest is Steinhoff (1964) 25–43, who analyzes the temporal and spatial structures of the elaborate second battle in Wolfram's *Willehalm*, where *Masenschlacht* is followed by *Einzelkämpfe*.

<sup>59</sup> See Sternberg (1978) on Homeric exposition and its relation to the doctrine of *in medias res*: 35–40 on the *Iliad* and 56–128 on the *Odyssey*. Again, Sternberg's focus is on the modern novel, but, like Genette and other theoreticians, he finds much in common with Homer's narrative techniques. As Nünlist (1998) 2 points out: “Die Forschungsergebnisse der letzten Jahre . . . lassen dagegen die Erkenntnis wachsen dass das Homerische Epos sich nicht kategoriiell von anderer Erzählliteratur unterscheidet” (“The results of recent research have increased the recognition that Homeric epic does not differ categorically from other narrative literature”). This judgment, while basically correct, undervalues the importance of oral performance.

<sup>55</sup> Ironically, these opening lines of the *Iliad* offer Genette's ([1980] 36–37) first and paradigmatic example of narrative anachrony, that is, the violation of strict temporal progression, while the incident of Odysseus' scar serves as Genette's model for external analepsis (pp. 48–49).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Schadewaldt (1965a) 329: “Polar sieht er [Homer] die Welt, polar führt er – im Kleinen wie Grossen – das Geschehen” (“Homer sees the world in terms of polarities, and he structures his narrative – both in large and in small – through polarities”); and “Die ganze epische Handlung steht unter dem Gesetz der Polarität, die hier im Bereich der künstlerischen Wirkung auftritt als Kontrast und Kontrapost” (“The entire epic action obeys the law of polarity, which manifests itself here in the realm of aesthetic effect as contrast and contraposition,” p. 369). See also Schadewaldt (1966) 133–34.

<sup>57</sup> Frank (1963) 14–17 (first published in 1945). As might be expected, Frank begins his discussion with Lessing.

and the temporal absurdity of the *Teichoskopia* – all betray a sovereign mastery over the coordinates of time rather than an enslavement to its regulations. The meaning of these brilliant episodes that encompass most of Books 2 to 7 has nothing to do with their chronological sequence.

I may have made heavy going of my critique of Zielinski, but the underlying issue has been the importance of dissociating *enargeia* from certain widely held views of the structure of Homer's narrative. Imaginative visualization and its verbal representation in narrative do not require chronological sequence; as we will see, Homer can manipulate simultaneous or sequential action with equal vividness.

Many scholars have called attention to the cinematic character of Homer's narrative. Most recently, Martin Winkler has offered an illuminating discussion of the *Iliad's* cinematic devices including the filmic characteristics of Homeric similes and the scenes on Achilles' shield, both as they might be produced by a director and as they would be received by an audience.<sup>60</sup> Van Wees, on the other hand, focuses on descriptions of combat:

Homer constructs his battle scenes much as a film director might do. He opens with a panoramic image of the forces drawing up and advancing, then zooms in on the action, and thereafter cuts back and forth between close-ups of the heroes of the tale and wide-angle views of the armies at large. During close-ups, the general action recedes into the background or falls outside the frame . . . The background, however, is never forgotten.<sup>61</sup>

While highlighting the visual character of Homeric combat narrative, this description emphasizes the narrator's perspective as he surveys the battlefield, focusing his attention now on one duel, now on another. But it neglects a second element, distinct, but coordinate with the first.<sup>62</sup> Just as Homer may shift his gaze, his characters may likewise move from one sector of the battlefield to another, and their arrivals and departures have narrative consequences. To pursue the

theatrical metaphor, the analysis that follows will largely ignore the speeches of the actors and instead focus on their entrances and exits and their movements within the space of the battlefield – in other words, the explicit or implied stage directions. It will likewise bring to the fore the narrator's verbal indications of locations and transitions that permit us to follow his staging of the Trojan battlefield.

<sup>60</sup> Winkler (2007) 46–63.

<sup>61</sup> Van Wees (1997) 673–74; Latacz (1977) 78 also uses the metaphor of the zoom lens. De Jong and Nünlist (2004) 67, n. 6, point out that, strictly speaking, one cannot speak of zooming in.

<sup>62</sup> The distinction here resembles narratologists' story and discourse or *fabula* and *sjuzhet*, but my interest is primarily on their visual and spatial dimensions.

# HOMER'S TROJAN THEATER

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JENNY STRAUSS CLAY



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*In memory of Roger Breed Stein*

One had to be versed in country things  
Not to believe the phoebes wept.

Robert Frost

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