EMOTIONAL AND THEMATIC MEANINGS IN A REPEATING HOMERIC MOTIF: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: The regularly occurring Homeric motif τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ shares key characteristics with both formulas and type scenes. Like a formula, it is a group of metrically localized words that refers regularly to the same idea. Like a type scene, it describes a series of discrete events that feature 'repeated attempts to do something, often by two different characters'. This motif evokes the same basic theme in the narratives of both Homeric poems: a vigorous hero gains the sympathy of the audience in the course of repeated attempts, usually in vain, to surmount a powerful opposing force. As with many forms of narrative repetition in Homeric epic, most of the instances of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif display regular narrative patterns, and then a few key scenes elaborate on those patterns in order to create moments of outstanding poetic and emotional force. Highly developed examples of this motif make significant contributions to the *aristeia* of Patroclus in *Iliad* 16, the death of Hector in *Iliad* 22 and Telemachus' attempt to string Odysseus' bow in *Odyssey* 21.

Keywords: formula, type scene, Patroclus, Hector, Telemachus

The Homeric correlative τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ is easy to spot, but hard to pin down in a taxonomy of repetitive language. In some ways, it behaves like a formula. Twenty-eight of 44 instances of the word τρίς in Homeric epic appear as half of a τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ correlative expression; three additional examples of τρίς in the *Iliad* evoke this correlative structure without entirely following it (13.20, 22.165 and to a lesser extent 22.251).[1] Moreover, both halves of the expression are metrically localized. τρὶς μέν always appears at the beginning of a verse (*Iliad* × 11, although 13.20 lacks a τρὶς δέ; *Odyssey* × 4), and this is also the most common spot for τρὶς δέ (*Iliad* × 8, including two non-correlative instances of τρὶς δέ in book 24; *Od.* 4.277 (non-correlative), 11.207, 21.126). Where the τρὶς μέν clause is either more or less than one verse in length, τρὶς δέ most often follows the main caesura in the third foot (× 4); twice it makes a syntactic break at less common spots in the verse (*Il.* 16.703, after verse-initial Πάτροκλος; *Od.* 12.105, at the bucolic diaeresis). The 13 instances of solitary τρίς that fall outside these patterns represent 30% of the total, about the same proportion of language in the Homeric poems that various studies have argued is not formulaic; Finkelberg (2012) 76 suggests one third. In all of these respects, the expression τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ looks like a formula; 70% of the instances of τρίς appear within a metrically localized group of words for a specific phenomenon that regularly appears in Homeric poetry.

Even though this 'formulaic' description suits τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ in many key respects, 'three times X happened … three times Y happened' is not a straightforward, discrete *idea* (as Parry (1987) 13 would have it) – such as 'Odysseus' or 'ship' or 'he answered' – so much as a *series of interrelated events*. This is why Bernard Fenik says that τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ 'could be called a small "type

[1] The *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (*LfgrE*) gives the correlative construction as definition 2b for τρίς, which does not adequately take its distribution into account. Latacz (2000), discussing *Iliad* 1.213, characterizes both 'three' and 'thrice' as a 'typical number' for a notable quantity or frequency of something.

scene"', and he sees all the instances of what he calls 'triple attempt' scenes as examples of a traditional type scene.[2] Yet that designation does not fit τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ comfortably either, because even though most τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounters take place on the battlefield in the *Iliad*, the range of dramatic contexts in which characters strive three times to do something is broader than Fenik's focus on battle scenes led him to believe. This is not a small 'battlefield' type comparable to arming or killing an enemy, even though it appears most often on the battlefield. Does trying to do something three times, in itself, add up to a 'type scene'? This seems like a stretch, particularly in relation to two recent definitions of 'type scene', both of which stipulate many different actions that form a 'characteristic sequence' (Reece (2011) 905) or 'repeated set of motifs' (Gainsford (2003) 41 n.3); τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ is, paradoxically, a single expression that refers to multiple actions.

Other scholars have sidestepped the issue by calling τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ something else, such as 'scene' (Allen-Hornblower (2014) 49–50) or 'schéma' (Létoublon (2003) 47) or simply 'repetition' (*Wiederholen*: Bannert (1988)); I will use 'motif', because it is vague enough to carry a minimal amount of terminological baggage in Homeric studies. Indeed, which label we put on this repeated expression matters less than the insights that τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ can give us into the ways in which repetitive language colours the Homeric poems, both the individual scenes in which this expression appears and the telling of an epic tale in a memorable and effective way. As Steve Reece points out, type scenes appear 'somewhere in the middle' of a range of narrative tools of varying scales that entail repetition, starting from formulas at the smaller end through type scenes and 'larger narrative sections or patterns' such as an *aristeia* or 'anger and withdrawal' ((2011) 906). All of these forms of narrative repetition rely on a dynamic tension between common patterns that characterize a particular expression of whatever size and length, on the one hand, and a range of departures from these patterns, on the other. These may include omissions of expected features, added elements, such as similes or speeches, and elaborations that emphasize an instance of a repetitive feature by drawing it out. At every narrative level, such departures draw in the audience by calling attention to a particular passage as a contrast to the common patterns that it does not follow, and by inviting the audience to interpret the aesthetic and poetic effects that result. What characters, actions or themes come to the fore? How does this shape the story being told?

Not only do these repetitive narrative building blocks tell the tales that unfold in the Homeric poems, but, to at least some extent, the story drives which building blocks are used, and how. In particular, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* tell different kinds of stories, and their repertoires of repetitive narrative techniques show both similarities and differences. How we should understand the differences in the narrative 'toolboxes' of repetitive techniques found in the *Iliad* compared to those of the *Odyssey* is one of the most enduring and central questions in Homeric scholarship.[3] Are story differences enough to explain differences in repetitive language and narrative technique, or must we posit more fundamental differences related to some aspect of story *production* (for example, the *Odyssey* consciously alluding to the *Iliad*, as Currie (2016) sees it)? While I believe that firm answers to these questions are unlikely to be forthcoming with the evidence available to us, careful study of τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ can shed some light on them.

The τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif evokes the same basic theme in the narratives of both Homeric poems: a vigorous hero gains the sympathy of the audience in the course of repeated attempts to surmount a powerful hostile force, as a result of which the audience feels greater pity and sorrow for his eventual failure or – less often – greater admiration for his ultimate success. This theme plays a quite different role in the story of the *Iliad* compared to the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad*, nine of the ten instances of τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ appear on the battlefield, mainly at moments of high drama involving central fighters (Diomedes' *aristeia* at 5.432–44, Patroclus' *aristeia* at 16.698–711, 16.779–89, the struggle over Patroclus' corpse at 18.155–60, 18.228–29 and Achilles' *aristeia* at

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[2] Fenik (1968) 46–48, quotation at 46.

[3] Currie (2016) is a recent answer to the question, conspicuous for its thorough and expansive analysis.

20.438–48, 21.173–79, 22.157–213). In these scenes, τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ draws the audience into dramatic moments of conflict at a literal level by lengthening them; the audience spends more time engaged in conflicts of this sort because the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ phrasing dramatizes the repeated unavailing efforts of a pair of antagonists more vividly than would phrasing which presented the end result without the intervening attempts. Furthermore, various Olympian gods play a decisive role in most of these scenes, generally as the antagonist who foils the τρὶς μέν character.[4] Direct participation by the gods raises the stakes for these conflicts and for the doomed mortals who appear in them.

The consequences of failure for a key hero facing a stronger opponent are neither as stark nor as thematically central in the *Odyssey* as they are in the *Iliad*. All of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motifs in the *Odyssey* depict some sort of conflict or failure, but only one of them evokes martial conflict – which is rare in the *Odyssey* – and the non-mortal opponents who figure in such scenes are supernatural forces or monsters rather than Olympian gods. Indeed, the adversary in the 'hero against threatening adversary' motif in the *Odyssey* generally takes the form not of an individual enemy, but of a group of people (the suitors) or lack of knowledge (what has happened to Odysseus?). This means that quite different sorts of striving portray different types of heroic valour in the two Homeric epics, but the striving itself arouses similar feelings for audiences of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Differences in the narrative contexts in which τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ appears in the two Homeric poems stem from the significant differences between the stories in the *Iliad* compared to those in the *Odyssey* rather than from different repertoires of repeated language in the two poems.

The first part of this paper lays out the most common patterns for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif, found primarily on the battlefield in the *Iliad*. Elaborations on these regular patterns shape several dramatic moments immediately before the deaths of Patroclus and Hector, as well as Telemachus' attempt to string the bow of Odysseus in *Odyssey* 21. All instances of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif are presented in tabular form in the appendix. In highly developed scenes, explored in sections II–III, the τρὶς μέν motif provides a narrative framework that unites an assortment of discrete story-telling elements. At the same time, it puts into play a set of conventions and expectations that guide the audience's response to the scene. Most of the τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ motifs, and all of the examples that depart in arresting ways from the most typical patterns, include a theme of 'vigorous sympathetic hero overmatched by stronger opponent'. This emotional force arises from the details of the specific contexts in which the motif appears, as well as the dynamic tension between the most commonly occurring patterns and the variations from those patterns that appear in key scenes. The τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif creates admiration and sympathy for the plight faced by the τρὶς μέν character, due respect for the power of his adversary and an awareness of the likely defeat looming over his attempts, even – or perhaps especially – if he seems to be gaining the upper hand in his struggle.

I. Common patterns for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif

There are 14 instances of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif in Homeric epic, of which ten appear in the *Iliad*. The largest group of such passages (6 × *Iliad*, 2 × *Odyssey*) features one subject who tries repeatedly to do something in the τρὶς μέν clause and a different subject who responds – usually, but not always, in a hostile or confrontational way – in the τρὶς δέ clause. Almost equally commonly, however, the same subject appears in both the τρὶς μέν and the τρὶς δέ clauses (4 × *Iliad*, 2 × *Odyssey*). In some of these passages, the subject fails in the τρὶς δέ clause to accomplish what he set out to do in the τρὶς μέν clause, as Achilles does after he makes three spear casts at Hector, only to miss each time (*Il.* 20.445–46). In others, an ongoing cycle of adversarial actions

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[4] Allan (2006) 25–26 and *passim* argues that the differences in how gods are presented in the two Homeric poems stem not from differences in how the gods are conceived, but from story differences: the *Iliad* features a 'wider narrative (the Trojan War) [which] constitutes an event of cosmic proportions … [but] the *Odyssey* confines itself for the most part to one of many *nostoi* (albeit an eventful one)' (25).

takes place which in some way represents a challenge or defeat for a key character in the scene, even though the action itself has taken place as the subject intended. For example, when Circe uses τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ to describe the repeated daily gush of water thrown up and sucked back down by Charybdis (*Od.* 12.105), the verse-initial, clause-final adverb δεινόν (12.106) portrays this regular feature of Charybdis' behaviour from the point of view of Odysseus and his men as they strive to navigate her treacherous waters.

In the first instance of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif in the *Iliad*, Diomedes repeatedly tries to attack Aeneas before Apollo drives him off, first physically and then with a spoken warning. This concise yet vivid encounter displays the typical patterns for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif in the *Iliad* where the two clauses have different subjects. In various ways, it highlights both the valour of Diomedes and the far superior strength of his divine adversary Apollo (*Il.* 5.432–44):

Αἰνείᾳ δ᾽ ἐπόρουσε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης,
γιγνώσκων ὅ οἱ αὐτὸς ὑπείρεχε χεῖρας Ἀπόλλων·
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἄρ᾽ οὐδὲ θεὸν μέγαν ἅζετο, ἵετο δ᾽ αἰεὶ
Αἰνείαν κτεῖναι καὶ ἀπὸ κλυτὰ τεύχεα δῦσαι.   (435)
<u>τρὶς μὲν</u> ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπόρουσε κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων,
<u>τρὶς δέ</u> οἱ ἐστυφέλιξε φαεινὴν ἀσπίδ᾽ Ἀπόλλων·
ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἶσος,
<u>δεινὰ δ᾽ ὁμοκλήσας</u> προσέφη ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων·
‘φράζεο, Τυδεΐδη, καὶ *χάζεο*, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν   (440)
ἶσ᾽ ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὔ ποτε φῦλον ὁμοῖον
ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ᾽ ἀνθρώπων.’
    ὣς φάτο, Τυδεΐδης δ᾽ ἀνεχάζετο τυτθὸν ὀπίσσω
μῆνιν ἀλευάμενος ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος.[5]

Diomedes, of carrying voice, rushed at Aeneas,
aware that Apollo himself was holding his hands over him.
Yet he did not fear the mighty god at all, but was constantly eager
to kill Aeneas and strip off his renowned armor.   (435)
<u>Three times</u> then he attacked, intent on killing him,
<u>And three times</u> Apollo struck his gleaming shield.
But when indeed for the fourth time equal-to-a-god attacked,
Far-shooter Apollo, <u>shouting dreadfully</u>, addressed him:
‘Take care, son of Tydeus, and *give way*, do not aspire to   (440)
equal the gods, since the race of deathless gods in no way resembles
that of mortals who go about on the ground.’
    Thus he spoke, and the son of Tydeus fell back just a bit,
avoiding the wrath of far-shooter Apollo.

In the τρὶς μέν verse (436), Diomedes rushes three times at Aeneas, intent on killing him even though he knows that Apollo is protecting him (432–35); in the τρὶς δέ clause (437), Apollo pushes Diomedes back with repeated blows to his shield. The full-verse formula at 438 is found in a few 'triple assault' scenes to describe a fourth assault (also at 16.705 and 16.786).[6] Where such a 'fourth try' takes place, it always fails.

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[6] I follow the many mss that omit *Il.* 20.447 τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο; two other failed 'fourth attempts' (*Il.* 21.177, *Od.* 21.128) use somewhat different wording. Metrical

factors determine whether τέτρατον is used rather than τέταρτον: Chantraine (2013) 29–30. The claim in *LfgrE* (τρίς def. 2b) that 'the vb. of [the τέταρτον] cl. is either the same as that of the τ[ρὶς] μὲν cl. alone (2x) or as that of both τ[ρὶς] clauses' is not accurate at a lexical level, although the basic meanings of the verbs in the different

The nominative formula δαίμονι ἶσος ('equal-to-a-god') in 438 refers only to Diomedes (5.438, 459 and 884), Patroclus (16.705 and 16.786) and Achilles (20.493, 21.18 and 21.227) during their respective *aristeia*s.[7] As the character is described in this way, he springs at his enemy, after which he has a direct encounter of some sort with a divinity. Sometimes he falls back immediately afterward, as Diomedes and Patroclus do in the wake of meeting Apollo (5.438–44 and 16.705–11), but at other times the hero succeeds in wounding or otherwise harassing a divine figure, as Diomedes does against Ares (5.841–45) and Achilles against the river Scamander (21.17–21 and 21.223–32). These scenes emphasize that even the few mortals who can claim to be δαίμονι ἶσος because they physically harm a divinity are not, in fact, equal to the gods and should not behave as though they thought they were. Diomedes actually wounds Ares, but only when Athena tells him at some length to go ahead (5.826–34) after he reminds her that he has refrained from attacking Ares because she has forbidden him to fight with gods (5.815–24). This suggests that Diomedes would not have been justified in striking Ares without her approval or, at the very least, that he has good reason to think so.[8] Achilles, on the other hand, is characterized as running amok during his *aristeia* partly because he attacks even rivers with impunity, but here too the upshot of his unnervingly fierce attacks turns out to be θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν ('gods are stronger than men': 21.264). δαίμονι ἶσος simultaneously admires the valour of a hero so described and reminds the audience of the wide gulf between even the most impressive mortal hero and the gods. Most often this gap dovetails with the narrative, in which the brave and god-like hero is bested in a physical encounter with an Olympian.

Immediately after Apollo strikes the rampaging Diomedes, verse 439 introduces his warning speech using δεινὰ δ' ὁμοκλήσας ('shouting dreadfully'),[9] a half-verse formula that only appears in τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scenes (also at *Il.* 16.706 and 20.448). We might almost say that when Apollo admonishes Diomedes not to think that he or any mortal can rival the gods (μηδὲ θεοῖσιν / ἶσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν: 440–41), he spells out the implications of the δαίμονι ἶσος formula that appeared in the previous verse.[10] This warning has the desired effect: Diomedes gives way in order to avoid the divine wrath of Apollo (μῆνιν ἀλευάμενος: 444). In fact, Diomedes goes on to survive not only his *aristeia* here in *Iliad* 5, but the entire Trojan War,[11] suggesting that the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif is not a death sentence or a harbinger of certain and immediate disaster for any hero who might find himself making repeated attempts to attack an opponent who is defended by a god.

When Achilles repeatedly fails to hit Hector with his spear (*Il.* 20.441–49), we find many of the same narrative patterns and expressions, except that Achilles is the subject of both the τρὶς μέν and the τρὶς δέ clauses. This scene, too, brings forward a central character's feelings arising from his failed attempts at something, focusing on the frustration of the τρὶς μέν character about his own shortcomings rather than on his face-to-face clash with a stronger opponent.

> αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
> ἐμμεμαὼς ἐπόρουσε κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων,
> σμερδαλέα ἰάχων· τὸν δ' ἐξήρπαξεν Ἀπόλλων
> ῥεῖα μάλ' ὥς τε θεός, ἐκάλυψε δ' ἄρ' ἠέρι πολλῇ.
> <u>τρὶς μὲν</u> ἔπειτ' ἐπόρουσε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεὺς   (445)

clauses do resemble each other, as they do in this passage (5.436: τρὶς μὲν ἔπειτ' <u>ἐπόρουσε</u>; 5.438: τέταρτον <u>ἐπέσσυτο</u>).

[7] Six verses include the half-verse formula ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἶσος; the other two use 'rush at/spring' verbs with different metrical shapes (θῦνε at 20.493; ἔσθορε at 21.18).

[8] Muellner (1996) 14 argues that 'the diction implies that Diomedes, in his stubborn fourth assault on Aeneas, actually does transcend the limits of human nature and

become the god's equal', but, as his assault is halted by Apollo's warning, I am uncertain why this should be so.

[9] Glossed by Eust. 568.45 as ἀπειλήσας.

[10] This would support the suggestion in Elmer (2015), for example 157–58, that Homeric characters may be aware of and understand epithets as meaningful words.

[11] There are various tales of how Diomedes fared after returning home from Troy; Gantz (1993) 699–700 surveys the attested possibilities.

ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ, <u>τρὶς δ’</u> ἠέρα τύψε βαθεῖαν.[12]
<u>δεινὰ δ’ ὁμοκλήσας</u> ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·   (448)
‘ἐξ αὖ νῦν ἔφυγες θάνατον, κύον … ’

                                    But Achilles
vigorously attacked, intent on killing [Hector],
yelling dauntingly. But Apollo snatched him up
very easily, like a god, and hid him in a great fog.
<u>Three times</u> then swift-footed godlike Achilles attacked   (445)
with his bronze spear, <u>and three times</u> he struck deep fog.
<u>Shouting terribly</u>, he [Achilles] spoke winged words: (448)
‘You’ve escaped death for now, dog … ’

Once again, Apollo appears as the divine opponent who stymies the attack of a Greek fighter, even though no direct antagonist is mentioned in the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ clauses as resisting Achilles. After Achilles tries three times to strike his adversary just as Diomedes had done (20.445, 5.436), he repeatedly hits the fog (ἠέρα ... βαθεῖαν: 446) by means of which Apollo has absconded with Hector (443–44). Here, too, a speech introduced by δεινὰ δ’ ὁμοκλήσας follows the ‘three attempts’,[13] bringing the final effort to a decisive and unsuccessful conclusion. To sum up, we will see the same basic pattern that has emerged from these τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ examples in most of the *Iliad* examples of this motif. Three times, a prominent warrior hastens forward to attack an enemy he meets on the battlefield. Each time, he fails to harm his foe, either directly or indirectly because of the actions of a god. After his last assault fails, someone – either the warrior or his divine adversary – makes a speech.

Any or all of these basic elements can take different shapes in order to highlight various emotions felt both by and for the characters in the story. Some story variations highlight the success or failure of the attempt. For example, gods may help human actors rather than foiling them, or the τρὶς μέν character may succeed, may fail in an unusual way or may make a fourth attempt that follows the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif. Or, an unexpected voice may utter the speech after the attempt fails, thus broadening its direct impact, even at times to include the external audience itself. Sometimes narrative features that are not part of the story draw out τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scenes even further. Counterfactual statements, which provide a glimpse of what did *not* happen in a τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scene, remind the audience of the limitations of human endeavour at moments when an important character seems to reach his greatest heights of bravery and accomplishment. A simile briefly pauses the action to tell the audience a little tale about the events and emotions of a triple attempt, inviting the audience to figure out how the simile and the main story relate to each other. In the most extensive and affecting τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scenes, several of these techniques occur together, united by the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif into a single narrative focused on certain themes rather than simply a collection of appealing or impressive narrative moments. Variations from the most common patterns for τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ occur on a spectrum, from slight elaborations for moderately important encounters (Diomedes and Apollo in *Iliad* 5) to amplifications so elaborate and expressive that the basic motif nearly disappears (Hector and Achilles in *Iliad* 22).

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[12] As commentators on *Il.* 20.447 have noted (for example Leaf (1960); Edwards (1991)), ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἶσος seems unrelated to the action here – at 5.438, 16.698 and 16.786, this formula immediately precedes a decisive move by Apollo – and verse 447 is not found in many mss; Janko (1992) declares it ‘spurious’ (commenting on 16.702). While Kjeld Matthiessen does not include 20.447 among his examples of the ‘when for the fourth time’ formula ((1977) 86–87), he does mention it at 87 n.8 as an example of a ‘formally similar’ expression (*Formal ähnlich*). It seems best to omit it.

[13] The expression σμερδαλέα ἰαχών, which appears at 20.443, depicts non-verbal shouting on the battlefield intended to frighten one’s adversary rather than introducing a speech (7 × *Iliad*; *Odyssey* 22.81).

The *Iliad* most often uses the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif to depict failed attempts and thus to explore human limitations, particularly in relation to the might of divine adversaries whom mortal heroes encounter in battle. When a god intervenes in the *Iliad* in a helpful rather than a harmful way, the τρὶς μέν subject does, in fact, accomplish what he tries to do, either directly or indirectly because a god is helping him. This reinforces the close connection between the actions of the gods in the *Iliad* and the success or failure of mortal endeavours. At 11.461–86, the τρὶς μέν and the τρὶς δέ characters are on the same side, and, accordingly, both achieve their aims when the τρὶς μέν character succeeds in his repeated endeavour. When the wounded Odysseus calls out for help three times (τρὶς μέν ... ἤϋσεν: 462), Menelaus hears him (τρὶς δ᾽ ἄϊεν ἰάχοντος: 463) and calls Ajax to come to Odysseus' aid (465–71). A long simile emphasizes the seriousness of Odysseus' plight and the valour of his comrades by likening the Trojans pressing upon him to beasts of prey who stop chasing a deer after a lion appears (474–81), after which Ajax and Menelaus scatter the Trojans and rescue Odysseus (482–86). Earlier, Athena prevents the spear that wounds Odysseus from killing him (435–40), but she takes no further action to keep him from harm. In book 18, Athena helps Achilles to drive the Trojans away from Patroclus' corpse so that the Greeks can claim it (202–33). Toward the end of this scene, Achilles shouts three times (228), throwing the Trojans into confusion (229). Once again, the help of a god leads to success for the τρὶς μέν character, but this entails the defeat of his enemies in the τρὶς δέ clause.

II. Elaborations on typical patterns: *Iliad*
Patroclus
Elaborations and expansions of these basic patterns underlie two gripping confrontations near the end of Patroclus' *aristeia* in *Iliad* 16. These scenes draw on the common patterns of the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif to contrast the valour that makes Patroclus' most impressive exploits possible with the even mightier power of the Olympian god to whom he will soon fall victim. This contrast is felt only by the audience, whereas Patroclus himself seems unaware of the looming power of Apollo until the very end of his life. In this way, the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif heightens the sense of irony and sympathy that marks these scenes.

The first scene, *Iliad* 16.698–711, resembles Diomedes' meeting with Apollo in several particulars.[14] Patroclus makes a repeated assault on an adversary (τρὶς μέν: 702) that Apollo beats back (τρὶς δ᾽: 703). When Patroclus rushes forward for the fourth time (705), Apollo orders him to retreat (707–09), and he does, fearing Apollo's divine wrath (710–11). Within this framework, however, several features of the narrative highlight the limits that constrain Patroclus, in contrast to the greater strength of his divine adversary. This mismatch suggests that Patroclus may be in trouble, even though the events in the story offer no apparent cause for concern; like Diomedes in book 5, Patroclus comes through this encounter with Apollo unharmed.

> ἔνθά κεν ὑψίπυλον Τροίην ἕλον υἷες Ἀχαιῶν
> Πατρόκλου ὑπὸ χερσί· περιπρὸ γὰρ ἔγχεϊ θῦεν·
> εἰ μὴ Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος ἐϋδμήτου ἐπὶ πύργου   (700)
> ἔστη, τῷ ὀλοὰ φρονέων, Τρώεσσι δ᾽ ἀρήγων.
> τρὶς μὲν ἐπ᾽ ἀγκῶνος βῆ τείχεος ὑψηλοῖο
> Πάτροκλος, τρὶς δ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀπεστυφέλιξεν Ἀπόλλων,

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[14] Many authorities have commented on these similarities and drawn a range of conclusions from them. An A scholion on 16.710 discusses them in the context of reporting a variant reading of Zenodotus (τυτθόν for πολλόν); Fenik (1968) 46–48 sees all of these 'triple attempt' scenes as examples of a traditional type scene; Bannert (1988) 40–44 concludes – rather implausibly in my view – that the similarities create allusions between specific scenes, rather than reflecting common patterns and consistent themes that apply to Diomedes, Patroclus and Achilles, among others. For those inclined to see overly facile connections among these three characters, Lang (1995) 156 points out various differences in how Achilles resembles Diomedes compared to Patroclus.

χείρεσσ' ἀθανάτῃσι φαεινὴν ἀσπίδα νύσσων.
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἶσος,   (705)
δεινὰ δ' ὁμοκλήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
'χάζεο, διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες· οὔ νύ τοι αἶσα
σῷ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθαι Τρώων ἀγερώχων,
οὐδ' ὑπ' Ἀχιλλῆος, ὅς περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.'
ὣς φάτο, Πάτροκλος δ' ἀνεχάζετο πολλὸν ὀπίσσω   (710)
μῆνιν ἀλευάμενος ἑκατηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος.

Then the sons of the Achaeans <u>would have</u> captured high-gated Troy
under the leadership of Patroclus, for he ran well in front with his spear,
<u>unless</u> Phoebus Apollo had stood atop the well-built tower   (700)
devising destruction for him, and helping the Trojans.
<u>Three times</u> he made for the angle of the high wall,
Patroclus, <u>but three times</u> Apollo pushed him away
striking his gleaming shield with immortal hands.
But when for the fourth time equal-to-a-god attacked,   (705)
then he [Apollo], <u>shouting dreadfully</u>, spoke winged words:
'*Give way*, divinely born Patroclus. <u>It is not your destiny</u>
to sack with your spear the city of the noble Trojans,
nor even for Achilles, who is better by far than you.'
Thus he spoke, and Patroclus fell a lot further back   (710)
avoiding the wrath of far-shooter Apollo.

Besides the 'fourth attempt' motif at 705, this passage includes some additional features that occur regularly but not often with τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motifs. First, a counterfactual condition (698–701) provides a glimpse of a non-traditional end to the Troy story in which the Greeks capture Troy under Patroclus' leadership, thus 'increas[ing] the hearers' feeling of potentiality' (Lang (1989) 7) and adding force to Patroclus' assault even though it ultimately fails.[15] Later on, more than two verses for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif itself contain extra physical details about the encounter between Patroclus and Apollo (702–04). The power of Apollo, which arouses both foreboding and sympathy in the audience, has unusual vividness partly because of the contrast between the usual patterns for τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motifs and the construction of this scene.

This particular τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif is distinguished by a detailed and perhaps ominous picture of the immortal body of Apollo as he repels Patroclus' attack on Troy. First, the τρὶς μέν clause in 702 spills over into 703, which happens just three times with the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif, and only here where the subjects of the two clauses are different. At the beginning of verse 703, where we would expect to find τρὶς δέ and where we already know that Patroclus is the subject of verse 702 after hearing his name at 699, we find the nominative Πάτροκλος instead. This causes Patroclus' name to leap out at the audience, just as he springs forward within the story (ἐπέσσυτο, 705).[16] The narrative depicts Apollo, too, with unusual vividness; in fact, insofar as Apollo's actions take the longest to describe, he rather than Patroclus is the star as well as the victor of this τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounter. After the core action of Apollo's counter-attack against Patroclus is narrated in 703, the participial phrase in verse 704 (χείρεσσ' ἀθανάτῃσι φαεινὴν ἀσπίδα νύσσων, 'striking his gleaming shield with immortal hands') draws a more detailed picture, in which words connected

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[15] These conditions also create suspense for the audience about how Troy will, in fact, fall; Scodel (2002) 54 discusses how a traditional narrative of a tale widely known to its audience nonetheless relies on suspense at key points.

[16] The cognitive approach to enjambment put forward in Bakker (1990) makes a persuasive case that such post-positioned enjambed proper names that are not necessary for clarity should be seen as 'an elucidation of the clause before, not a part of it' (16), rather than as instances of enjambment.

with the physical body of Apollo literally surround the shield of Patroclus. The common patterns of the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif draws the attention of the audience to the arresting physical presence of both antagonists in this scene, but Apollo is even more frightening and powerful than Patroclus. Patroclus, with access to the story but not the narrative, seems unaware of his own danger.

After Patroclus survives this encounter with Apollo, he kills Hector's charioteer Cebriones (16.732–50), leading to a prolonged struggle to claim the corpse which the Greeks eventually win (16.751–82). Patroclus, meanwhile, makes another 'triple attempt' (16.779–89) that has the common characteristics of this motif along with the same kinds of elaborations that we saw in his earlier 'triple attempt' on the city of Troy. These unusual features include a counterfactual condition which takes a unique form, in addition to its rare presence in a 'triple attempt' scene (780), a unique structure for the τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ verses (784–85), and, finally, an unusual and expressive kind of direct address following τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ (787–88). The framework provided by the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif unites these elaborations into one cogent scene that highlights the poignant mismatch between Patroclus' great courage and the framework of gods and fate against which no human courage can succeed for long.

> ἦμος δ᾿ Ἥλιος μετενίσετο βουλυτόνδε,
> καὶ τότε δή ῥ᾿ <u>ὑπὲρ αἶσαν</u> Ἀχαιοὶ φέρτεροι ἦσαν.   (780)
> ἐκ μὲν Κεβριόνην βελέων ἥρωα ἔρυσσαν
> Τρώων ἐξ ἐνοπῆς, καὶ ἀπ᾿ ὤμων τεύχε᾿ ἕλοντο,
> Πάτροκλος δὲ Τρωσὶ κακὰ φρονέων ἐνόρουσε.
> <u>τρὶς μὲν</u> ἔπειτ᾿ ἐπόρουσε θοῷ ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηϊ,
> σμερδαλέα ἰάχων, <u>τρὶς δ᾿</u> ἐννέα φῶτας ἔπεφνεν.   (785)
> **ἀλλ᾿ ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἶσος,**
> ἔνθ᾿ ἄρα τοι, Πάτροκλε, φάνη βιότοιο τελευτή·
> ἤντετο γάρ τοι Φοῖβος ἐνὶ κρατερῇ ὑσμίνῃ
> δεινός· ὃ μὲν τὸν ἰόντα κατὰ κλόνον οὐκ ἐνόησεν·

> While the Sun advanced towards cow-freeing time,
> for that time also the Greeks were stronger, <u>beyond due measure</u>.   (780)
> They dragged the hero Cebriones out beyond the missiles
> out of battle with the Trojans, and took the armour from his shoulders,
> while Patroclus made for the Trojans, with evil intention.
> <u>Three times</u> then he attacked, comparable to swift Ares,
> yelling dauntingly, <u>and three times</u> he slaughtered nine men.   (785)
> **But when for the fourth time equal-to-a-god attacked,**
> then truly for you, Patroclus, the end of life appeared.
> For Phoebus encountered you in harsh battle
> fearsome. And he [Patroclus] was not aware of him [Apollo]
> coming through the melee.

As in Patroclus' earlier brush with Apollo, a counterfactual deed just before a 'triple attempt' scene (780) includes actions by both the Greeks as a group (the hypothetical sack of Troy at 698; the Greek capture of Cebriones' corpse at 781–82) and Patroclus himself (as the leader of the assault at 699; attacking the Trojans at 783). Although the expression ὑπὲρ αἶσαν ('beyond due measure') appears five times in the *Iliad* (never in the *Odyssey*), it is used only here for something positive that actually happens.[17] As a result, an audience may feel a combination of surprise, admiration and foreboding when the Greeks' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν attempt to seize Cebriones' corpse actually succeeds.

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[17] In the *Odyssey* as well as the *Iliad*, we find the similar expression ὑπὲρ μόρον, with comparable uses and meanings: *Il.* 21.517 (negative purpose clause); *Od.* 5.436 (counterfactual condition). When Zeus twice uses ὑπὲρ μόρον to refer to Aegisthus' actions at *Od.* 1.34–35, it must have a different sense and tone than the other

These counterfactual statements – particularly ὑπὲρ αἶσαν at 16.780, which evokes the overarching divine framework within which human actions take place – suggest that Patroclus may be challenging the limits not simply of his own abilities, but of mortality. The narrative strengthens this idea by means of formulaic epithets, when it describes Patroclus as 'like a god' not once but twice (θοῷ ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηϊ at 16.784; δαίμονι ἶσος at 786) just before a god overpowers him once and for all.[18] These two formulas reinforce each other, sharpening the contrast between the powerful fighter on the verge of encountering Apollo and the dazed warrior who staggers to his death immediately afterward.

The unusual content of the τρὶς δέ clause at 785, too, depicts Patroclus at the peak of his success while implying that some sort of reversal lies in store for him: Eustathius (1086.35–36) hits the nail on the head when he says, ὅτι πολυγνώμων ὁ ποιητὴς ὢν ἤδη πρὸς τῷ θανεῖν γεγονότα τὸν Πάτροκλον σεμνύει ἀριστείᾳ λαμπρᾷ ('the poet is extremely clever to honour Patroclus with a brilliant *aristeia* when he has already reached the moment of death'). Except for this passage, a combatant who appears in both a τρὶς μέν and a τρὶς δέ clause in the *Iliad* fails repeatedly in his attempts.[19] Patroclus, in contrast, kills a total of 27 anonymous Trojans in what Richard Janko calls 'an unparalleled feat'.[20] The patterns of τρὶς δέ as they appear everywhere else in Homeric epic lead us to expect that Patroclus will fall short in his attempted attacks on these Trojans. When he does the complete opposite, we feel surprise and admiration for his deed as well as foreboding about whether it is really as much of a triumph as it might seem to be.

Finally, direct speech of a sort follows this τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounter, but although the addressee is once again a character in the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scene, the speaker is not. Instead, the narrator directly addresses Patroclus in an apostrophe that critics since ancient times have praised for its emotional power (787–88).[21] The direct address in this apostrophe creates a network of emotional bonds among the narrator, Patroclus and the audience. Apostrophe both assumes and conveys the narrator's own concern for Patroclus, which comes across with particular force because no characters – neither mortals nor gods – look on here or come to Patroclus' aid.[22] Indeed, this 'speech' between the narrator and a character is another example of the boundary-crossing that pervades this scene, one which calls attention to the conventional parameters of epic narrative itself.

Except for the second-person pronoun τοι, the clause at 788 in which Apollo encounters Patroclus displays typical form and grammar; it appears to be a γάρ clause that elaborates on φάνη βιότοιο τελευτή ('the end of life appeared') at 787, and its sense boundaries coincide with the verse boundaries. The verse-initial δεινός at 789 evokes the δεινὰ δ' ὁμοκλήσας ('shouting dreadfully') formula that regularly introduces speeches following other τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounters (most recently at 16.706), but here, the clause comes to a sudden halt after this δεινός. While modi-

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'beyond destiny' phrases; only here does such an expression refer to an event that is undesirable or harmful to those most concerned rather than something beneficial.

[18] This effect becomes even more compelling in light of the interpretation of Allen-Hornblower (2014) 51 n.104: that a formula comparing a warrior to Ares 'marks the imminent culmination of heroic martial excellence, which also heralds the heroes' forthcoming doom'. Eustathius makes a similar point when he characterizes the effect of Patroclus' death following these formulas as περιπαθῶς (1086.40).

[19] The other passages that feature the same subject in both clauses are *Il.* 20.445–46 (Achilles), 21.176–77 (Asteropaeus), 23.817 (Ajax and Diomedes); *Od.* 12.105 (Charybdis, who is a hostile force rather than a combatant per se), 21.125–26 (Telemachus).

[20] Janko (1992) 411. Janko goes on to say, 'like the Greeks' success, this is clearly "beyond fate"; Homer reserves such feats for extraordinary moments, thus honouring Patroklos and making his fall into helplessness all the more precipitous and terrifying'. A T scholion on 16.784–85 calls this heap of killings ὑπὲρ μέτρον.

[21] For example, a bT scholion (discussed by Eustathius 1086.50–54) notes that Patroclus is someone who both arouses and feels grief along with other people. It calls him συναχθόμενον and characterizes the effect of the apostrophe as περιπαθές. Among modern commentaries, Parry (1972) 9–15 offers a particularly sensitive reading of the apostrophes for Patroclus and his role in the *Iliad*.

[22] Allen-Hornblower (2016) 45–72 explores many aspects of Patroclus' death scene, especially how unusual it is for a major hero facing death to find himself alone on the battlefield.

fiers of a noun regularly follow their noun in the next verse (Higbie (1990) 33–34), there are very few instances of a modifier of just two syllables followed by strong clause end in the middle of the first foot of the verse. Of the 30% of verses in the *Iliad* that have a single internal clause break, just 3.5% have such a break somewhere in the first foot (Higbie (1990) tables 4.1, 4.10). As Walter Leaf (1960) comments (on 16.789), 'the position of δεινός produces an effect almost unique in the *Iliad*'. Indeed, the abruptness of the enjambment here, following the extended apostrophe at 787–88, plays off the metrical conventions of Homeric poetry to startle the audience, thus suggesting the visceral shock to Patroclus of Apollo's sudden appearance on the battlefield. Indeed, only here does the divine antagonist of the mortal τρὶς μέν attacker not simply repulse the mortal after the 'fourth try' full-verse formula. Instead, Apollo physically attacks Patroclus (16.791–93), which leads directly to his death.[23] The violence of this attack emerges partly through the disrupted conventions of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif.

The framework provided by the common patterns for τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scenes creates a unified narrative at 16.779–89, in which various unusual features work together to arouse strong feelings of sympathy for Patroclus and also a mixture of admiration and foreboding about where his actions might lead. The unusual elements that appear in this scene resemble those found in Patroclus' first encounter with Apollo at 16.698–711 – including a counterfactual condition and a 'but when for the fourth time' formula – but there are more such elements and each one tends to be more elaborate than the analogous motif in the earlier scene. Thus, a comparison between these two passages shows how the aesthetic principle of 'length conveys emphasis'[24] relates to repetitive narrative elements. Both the counterfactual action that actually happens (780–83) and a τρὶς δέ clause in which the subject of the τρὶς μέν clause unexpectedly has a remarkable success in his attempted attacks (784–85) draw a contrast with repeated motif patterns to suggest that, in making these assaults, Patroclus may be crossing boundaries that mortals should not cross. Finally, the narrator's direct address to Patroclus crosses another kind of boundary to create and depict emotional attachments between them, between the audience and Patroclus, and between the audience and the narrator.

Hector

Just as the first τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounter featuring Patroclus can be seen as an 'anticipatory scene' in relation to the second and more elaborate τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scene right before his death, so too Patroclus' death is in some important ways 'anticipatory' to Hector's fatal encounter with Achilles in *Iliad* 22.[25] This meeting follows the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ sequence of 'warrior A tried three times to do X, three times character B foiled him by doing Y and then someone spoke'. The common narrative associations of τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ cast the chase as an ongoing process in which success and failure are equally important, and yet the eventual defeat of one party is all but assured, whatever impressive heights of valour he might temporarily reach in his doomed attempts at victory. As the chase unfolds, the framework provided by the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif gives shape to an episode whose length might otherwise become diffuse or tedious. At a thematic level, the sympathy for Hector that is one of the most affecting features of this episode – and indeed of the *Iliad* as a whole – emerges not simply from the details of this particular scene, but from the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ theme of 'admirable courageous hero gains sympathy in his unsuccessful attempt to defeat an adversary stronger than himself'.

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[23] Although Allan (2005) 8 n.32 cites *Il.* 13.434–44 as a parallel example of a god 'disabling' a mortal who is then killed by another mortal, the absence of a physical component to Poseidon's behaviour toward Alcathous in this passage (ἐδάμασσε / θέλξας: 13.434–35) offers a striking contrast to the punch that Apollo aims at Patroclus.

[24] Russo (1994) offers a particularly clear and effective presentation of this idea.
[25] De Jong (2012) 13–15 takes this view of Hector's death.

At the same time, virtually everything about the chase leading up to the death of Hector, except this essential situation, departs in some way from the most common patterns for τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motifs. In addition to a counterfactual condition and an apostrophe, as at the end of Patroclus' *aristeia*, we find direct speech addressed by one god to another rather than to either of the central participants in the repeated τρίς action. Moreover, the final encounter between Hector and Achilles stands out because of its many similes, some of which are among the most memorable and imitated of all Homeric comparisons. An audience which is aware of the common patterns for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif can appreciate this scene not simply as the poetic tour de force that it undoubtedly is, but as a form of artistry where narrative unity, momentum, suspense and audience involvement spring directly from the basic conventions of repetitive narrative devices.

Elaborations on the most common τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ patterns near the beginning of Hector's flight from Achilles around the walls of Troy (22.157–67) depict Hector (the τρὶς μέν character) not as straightforwardly inferior to his stronger τρὶς δέ opponent, but as simultaneously the equal of Achilles and his doomed victim. For instance, the actions of the two heroes as they run three times around the city are sometimes presented with dual verbs as a single event and sometimes in a more typical μέν ... δέ pairing that distinguishes the actions of Hector from those of Achilles. These co-existing perspectives, which are thrown into relief by the somewhat different norms of the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif, reveal a central theme, not only of this meeting but of the *Iliad* itself: enemies, be they individual fighters or the Greeks and the Trojans, share the same fundamental values even while they try to kill each other.

τῇ ῥα *παραδραμέτην*, φεύγων, ὃ δ' ὄπισθε διώκων·
<u>πρόσθε μὲν ἐσθλὸς ἔφευγε, δίωκε δέ μιν μέγ' ἀμείνων</u>
<u>καρπαλίμως</u>, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ἱερήϊον οὐδὲ βοείην
ἀρνύσθην, ἅ τε ποσσὶν ἀέθλια γίγνεται ἀνδρῶν,   (160)
ἀλλὰ περὶ ψυχῆς θέον Ἕκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο.
<u>**ὡς δ' ὅτ'**</u> ἀεθλοφόροι περὶ τέρματα μώνυχες ἵπποι
ῥίμφα μάλα τρωχῶσι· τὸ δὲ μέγα κεῖται ἄεθλον
ἢ τρίπος ἠὲ γυνή, ἀνδρὸς κατατεθνηῶτος·
<u>**ὡς**</u> τὼ <u>τρὶς</u> Πριάμοιο πόλιν *πέρι δινηθήτην*   (165)
καρπαλίμοισι πόδεσσι· θεοὶ δ' ἐς πάντες ὁρῶντο·
τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε·

There *they both ran around*, [one] fleeing, and the other chasing behind.
<u>In front, a good man was trying to escape, but a much better one was chasing him</u>
<u>swiftly</u>. Not for a sacrificial offering nor for an ox hide
did they strive, which may be prizes for men's footraces,   (160)
but they were running for the soul of horse-taming Hector.
As when prize-bearing single-foot horses run very swiftly
around the turning posts; a great prize lies by,
either a tripod or a woman, after a man has died.
In this way *both went in a circle* around the city of Priam <u>three times</u> (165)
with swift feet, and all the gods were looking on.
The father of both men and gods began a speech to them:

Dual forms (in italics at 157, 160 and 165) make this chase into one deed and Achilles and Hector into a single actor, rather than depicting the pursuit as an onslaught by an individual followed by a separate response or failure. And indeed, the chase will eventually result in the death not only of Hector but also of Achilles, but not yet, and not during the *Iliad*.[26] A chase can also be

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[26] Similarly, De Jong (2012) 99 comments on 22.157: 'it [the dual] stresses the fatal connectedness between the two men locked in a race of life and death'.

seen as the same kind of prolonged attempt met with ongoing resistance or difficulties that the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif most often conveys. At both 157 and 158, the chase presented elsewhere in this passage as a single action is split into two correlative clauses that juxtapose Hector fleeing (φευγειν [μέν: 158]) and Achilles chasing him (διώκειν δέ).[27] These verses do not specify the number of times that this happened, but, otherwise, they depict the same repeated push-pull in a battlefield encounter between enemies that the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif often describes. Indeed, they bring home to the audience the seeming endlessness of the chase; Hector is the subject of not one but two μέν clauses in which he tries vainly to flee, drawing out his attempts to escape Achilles. Moreover, the adjectives at 158 (ἐσθλός ('good') ... μέγ' ἀμείνων ('much better')) point out the mismatch between these two brave soldiers, simultaneously praising Hector and heightening our expectation that he is doomed.

The μέν ... δέ correlative structure at 157–58 and τρίς, which does not appear until 165, create a kind of ring composition around 159–64. This narrative framework casts the two expressive narrative devices that appear in these verses as an elaboration that lengthens the repeated attempt-failure encounter between Achilles and Hector by dramatizing what is at stake. First, the priamel in 159–61 strengthens περὶ ψυχῆς simply by devoting additional space to the basic idea of 'they were running for the soul of Hector' and also by contrasting Hector's ψυχή with less weighty 'prizes' that might await the winner of a more conventional type of footrace.[28] The simile at 162–64 compares the running warriors to horses competing for prizes at the funeral games for a dead man. These horses, unlike the different species of 'predator/prey' animals most commonly found in chase similes in an *aristeia*, are presented as a collective of equally fast runners,[29] and we never find out which one won the race. This bolsters the idea of unity and equality in competition that the dual forms surrounding the simile create. At the same time, the setting of funeral games may be 'an anticipation of Hector's death' (De Jong (2012) 100).

After this elongated version of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif ends at 22.165, the direct speech that often follows a τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounter does not involve either of the two τρίς antagonists. Instead, it takes the form of a conversation among the gods who are watching Hector and Achilles from Olympus (167–87). On one level, this conversation 'fills the time Hector and Achilles need to run around the city three times' (De Jong (2012) 101), but it also creates an inviting opportunity for the audience to join the gods in their sympathy for the plight of Hector.[30] As with so many of the unusual elements in this scene, the conversation among the gods both resembles and differs from common τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ patterns in such a way as to narrate these particular events in a vivid and dramatic manner and also to bring forward key themes of the *Iliad* as a whole.

The two similes at 22.189–93 and 22.199–201 offer a further amplification of the main themes of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif as presented in 22.157–65, both at a literal level by making the chase narrative even longer and also by presenting two additional vignettes featuring a chase in which the pursuer either does not or cannot catch his prey. The comparison at 189–93 casts Hector as prey (νεβρὸν ... ἐλάφοιο: 189) and Achilles as predator (κύων: 189), but the simile lengthens

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[27] Editorial views of 22.157–58 vary. Leaf (1960) cites several editors who cut the line 'as a weak and tautological addition'. On the other hand, Ameis and Hentze (1965) comments approvingly on the effect of the adjectives in 158 and Richardson (1993) calls 158 'an elegant chiasmus' with 157.

[28] See De Jong (2012) 99–100 for more extensive discussions of these ideas.

[29] Krischer (1971) 57–58. He contrasts this comparison with the more usual type of pursuit simile featuring a prey animal and a predator, which also appears in this chase (22.139–43: a hawk and a dove; 189–93: a dog and

a fawn), and in a different way with the simile of a dream of a never-ending fruitless pursuit in 199–201 (which he calls 'das eigenartigste [most peculiar] von allen' of this general type of simile: (1971) 58).

[30] '[The gods] are shown to us at times suffering as they look on; their presence and attention also serves as a device to heighten for us the emotional significance of terrible events': Griffin (1980) 196. The gods both feel and express sorrow as they look on at the misfortunes of Hector in particular, most notably his death here and Achilles' maltreatment of his corpse (24.23–92).

the chase rather than anticipating its end insofar as the hound in the simile does not, in fact, catch the fawn. The simile freezes the two animals in an ongoing, endless pursuit. A brief view of the chase itself uses iterative verb forms to link together Hector's attempts to flee (ὁσσάκι δ᾽ ὁρμήσειε: 194) and Achilles' pursuit (τοσσάκι … ἀποστρέψασκε: 197).

A second simile at 199–201 depicts the two in terms very similar to the φεύγειν (μέν)… διώκειν δέ clauses at 157–58, returning to a picture of the two combatants as evenly matched rather than as predator and prey:

> ὡς δ᾽ ἐν ὀνείρῳ οὐ δύναται φεύγοντα διώκειν·
> οὔτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὁ τὸν δύναται ὑποφεύγειν οὔθ᾽ ὁ διώκειν·
> ὣς ὁ τὸν οὐ δύνατο μάρψαι ποσίν, οὐδ᾽ ὃς ἀλύξαι.

> As in a dream, [he] is not able to catch the one fleeing.
> Neither indeed can he escape him, nor [can] he capture [him].
> In this way he could not catch him on foot, nor [could] he escape.[31]

In 199, the dreamer is the person doing the chasing, but the extremely concise clause structure brings the pursuer and the chaser together both literally and metaphorically by putting the two verbs one after the other in a single syntactical unit that lacks a nominative form that would allow us to identify the subject quickly. Verse 200 separates them into two clauses – and, by extension, two separate actors – but chase and flight remain equal and opposite processes with no beginning and no decisive end in sight, both for the simile dreamers in 200 and for the characters in 201.[32] Even while these similes – and the unusually lengthy narrative – continually postpone or call into question the end of the chase, the associations of the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif prevent the audience from having any real doubts about the eventual result.

As in Patroclus' *aristeia*, a condition and a form of direct address to the audience now precede a 'but for the fourth time' element, but here, these techniques become even more engaging because they are combined into a rhetorical question. Verses 22.199–204 have been questioned since antiquity on the grounds that it is implausible that 'swift-footed' Achilles was unable to catch Hector (the view of a T scholion on 22.199), but recent critics generally admire the passage.[33]

> <u>πῶς δέ κεν</u> Ἕκτωρ κῆρας ὑπεξέφυγεν θανάτοιο,
> <u>εἰ μή</u> οἱ πύματόν τε καὶ ὕστατον ἤντετ᾽ Ἀπόλλων
> ἐγγύθεν, ὅς οἱ ἐπῶρσε μένος λαιψηρά τε γοῦνα;
> λαοῖσιν δ᾽ ἀνένευε καρήατι δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,   (205)
> οὐδ᾽ ἔα ἱέμεναι ἐπὶ Ἕκτορι πικρὰ βέλεμνα,
> μή τις κῦδος ἄροιτο βαλών, ὃ δὲ δεύτερος ἔλθοι.
> **ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον** *ἐπὶ κρουνοὺς ἀφίκοντο,*
> καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατὴρ ἐτίταινε τάλαντα,
> ἐν δ᾽ ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο …   (210)

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[31] In order to capture the vividly compressed parallelism in this simile, I have intentionally rendered it in a meticulously literal and thus rather confusing and ungraceful way.

[32] As Allen-Hornblower (2016) 38 has it, 'the heroes are at a draw'. Eustathius makes the same point when he describes Hector and Achilles in these two similes as τῶν δύο ἀριστέων (1266.1).

[33] De Jong (2012) 109–10 offers a sensitive reading of 202–04 that takes into account both plot-driven and emotional aspects of the story at this point in the *Iliad*. When Nicholas Richardson contextualizes the objections to these verses raised by earlier critics (for example by Ameis and Hentze (1965), where they are called a later addition to the text), his parenthetical remark that the question 'do[es] not add much to the story at this point' seems to me insufficiently attuned to the emotional dimensions of 'story': Richardson (1993) 128.

<u>How could</u> Hector have escaped the agents of death,
<u>unless</u> Apollo had encountered him for the last and final time
nearby, who roused his strength and swift knees?
Godlike Achilles shook his head at his people,   (205)
and he did not allow them to aim piercing weapons at Hector,
lest some shooter should gain the glory and he come second.
But when for the fourth time *they reached the springs*,
then indeed father [Zeus] was arranging his golden balance,
and he was placing in it two allotments of woeful death …   (210)
one for Achilles, and one for horse-taming Hector …

Unlike the apostrophe that the narrator addresses directly to Patroclus at 16.787–88, the rhetorical question in 22.202–04 makes the narrator a 'speaker' who addresses the external audience. This invites the audience directly into the poem in a manner almost unparalleled in Homeric epic.[34] In a different way, a counterfactual condition again opens up for the audience a window through which a different scenario, a different ending, can be seen, a more expeditious one in which the plainly outmatched Hector falls victim to Achilles sooner than he does. Indeed, the narrator's explicit presence in the rhetorical question underlines that a particular creative force is arranging the events of the story in a specific way here. This reminds the audience that the difference between our glimpses in counterfactual conditions of things that *cannot* happen (Patroclus succeeds in his attack on Troy, *cf.* 16.698–701) and outcomes that *do not* happen (Achilles dispatches Hector quickly and easily, 22.202–04) is not necessarily a hard and fast one. Moreover, insofar as counterfactual conditions 'make an editorial comment on a particular character' (Louden (1993) 184), this reminder that a different outcome lies simultaneously close at hand and impossibly out of reach arouses both admiration and sympathy for Hector.

Now at last the 'but when for the fourth time ...' element occurs (22.208–11), but it does not immediately precede the failure of the 'triple attempt' (over 40 verses earlier), as the other examples of this motif would lead the audience to expect.[35] Nor is this the only unusual feature of the 'fourth time' motif that plays against common patterns for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif to highlight the close kinship between Hector and Achilles.

Only here does the half-verse ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον introduce a collective action by both participants in a τρίς scene (ἐπὶ κρουνοὺς ἀφίκοντο: 208), rather than a final assault by the τρὶς μέν character before a god intervenes to prevent his success once and for all. Hector, who is the μέν actor in all the instances where a μέν ... δέ structure appears (22.157, 158), is in fact about to fail in the most grim and final manner possible, but ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον, a formula which normally would signal that this failure is nearly upon him, in fact says something else. Here the two adversaries arrive *together* at the spring in their fourth circuit around the city of Troy. Who is the μέν character whose attempts are so soon to fail? Who is the δέ character about to foil him? Verse 208 does not say. Although Hector will be the loser in the short term, neither character will survive the siege of Troy. Even as Achilles' fatal attack against Hector approaches, the narrative draws on repeating narrative elements in such a way as to create unity rather than conflict between them. At the same time, this way of telling the story creates suspense about the manner and moment of Hector's death by failing to meet narrative expectations that such repeating patterns have established.

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[34] Rhetorical questions are extremely rare in narrator text. In the *Iliad*, De Jong (2012) 109 counts this passage and 17.260–61 as rhetorical questions (1.8 is elsewhere noted as a possible rhetorical question: De Jong (2004) 91); for the *Odyssey*, Minchin (2007) 76–77 cites only 22.12–14.

[35] As De Jong (2012) points out in comments on 165–66, the τέταρτον element normally comes directly after the τρίς attempts. West (2011) 387 disagrees with several editors who athetize some or all of the verses between 165 and 207, characterizing this scene as an amplified version of the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ … τέταρτον motif.

Broadly speaking, the narrative of the chase immediately before Hector's death follows a recognizable sequence in relation to the most common patterns for τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motifs, and, by the same token, its unusual features have the force that they do partly in contrast to these patterns. After the 'but for the fourth time' element, not one but two gods act (Zeus weighs the fates of the two warriors at 209–12; Athena encourages Achilles and tricks Hector into stopping his flight at 213–47) and the τρὶς μέν character – Hector – fails to accomplish what he tried to do. As with so many aspects of this scene, however, Hector fails in a remarkable way that achieves some of its emotional power because it both resembles and differs from the common patterns for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ ... τέταρτον sequence. That is, Hector follows the usual conventions for this motif in that he fails to outrun Achilles, and he dies after the combined assault of Athena's trickery (highlighted by the narrator as κερδοσύνη at 247) and Achilles' physical attacks. But Hector, unlike any other τρὶς μέν character in the *Iliad*, voluntarily stops what he was trying to do. Like other figures in such scenes, he is overcome by superior force – here, both a divine assault and a more powerful human antagonist – but the narrative shows us the process that Hector goes through as he decides to stop, face Achilles and, ultimately, acknowledge his own imminent death (22.224–311). This gives a level of poignancy and heroism to his failure that other such defeats do not reach.

The narrative of Achilles chasing Hector around and around the city of Troy before killing him might come across as repetitive, or even as pointless delay. Instead, the various elaborations that extend this τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scene depict the two most important fighters in the *Iliad* as fundamentally the same, and the fates of both – but especially Hector – as a matter of the warmest interest to the gods both individually and collectively. The 'length confers emphasis' aesthetics of Homeric epic are particularly effective for depicting a pivotal event that the characters themselves experience as taking a long time. Moreover, the individual expansions that appear in this scene foster the audience's emotional engagement with the characters and the story. These include: several similes, which depict Achilles and Hector both as predator and prey and also as essentially identical competitors (162–65, 189–93, 199–201); a conversation between the gods watching from Olympus, where we would expect a single speech by one of the τρίς characters (168–85);[36] a counterfactual condition within a rhetorical question, which brings the audience vividly into the poem in a manner nearly unparalleled in Homeric epic (202–04); and, finally, the τέταρτον turn of events (208–13), which features a character who, about to fail in his τρὶς μέν attempt, chooses to renounce his endeavour rather than simply be overpowered by a hostile god. These techniques work together even – or especially – as Hector's death approaches to depict him as a brave and admirable warrior fully deserving of sympathy from both the internal audience of gods and the external audience of the *Iliad*.

III. Typical patterns and the *Odyssey*

The τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif has basically the same thematic and contextual meaning in the *Odyssey* as it has in the *Iliad* – hero gains sympathy during repeated attempts to overcome a stronger adversary, who generally but not always emerges victorious over the hero – but, in the very different story of the *Odyssey*, these meanings take different yet recognizable shapes. In two of the four occurrences of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif in the *Odyssey* (9.361, 12.105), Odysseus uses it to present ongoing or repeated events that unfold in situations hostile to himself. In both of these passages, the τρὶς μέν character succeeds in the action presented in the τρὶς μέν clause, and a single verse presents both the τρὶς μέν and the τρὶς δέ actions. Verses 9.360–61 describe Odysseus repeatedly giving wine to the Cyclops (αἴθοπα οἶνον / τρὶς μὲν ἔδωκα φέρων), who foolishly gulps

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[36] Allen-Hornblower (2016) 37 notes that the attention of the gods here brings out 'the momentousness of the confrontation to come'.

it down (τρὶς δ' ἔπκιεν ἀφραδίῃσιν). While Odysseus succeeds in his immediate goal – getting the Cyclops drunk – this repetitive action occurs in an episode in which Odysseus suffers great losses at the hands of the Cyclops. When Circe tells Odysseus about the daily cycle of Charybdis at 12.105–06 (τρὶς μὲν γάρ τ' ἀνίησιν ἐπ' ἤματι, τρὶς δ' ἀναροιβδεῖ / δεινόν; for three times per day she throws up [water], and three times she gulps it down / fearsomely) and cautions him to avoid her if he can, once again Odysseus tells the Phaeacians about a supernatural menace that threatens him and his men. In both scenes, Odysseus himself emerges unscathed, but the hostile force who is the subject of the τρὶς μέν clause kills many of his men. This, indeed, is a central theme both of Odysseus' narrative and of the prologue of the poem (1.5–9): Odysseus makes many admirably clever plans which often succeed, and yet, neither his clever plans nor anything else he does enables his men to reach home safely.

The other two τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motifs in the *Odyssey* present repeated attempts at greater length, and, accordingly, the ultimate failure of such efforts carries greater emotional weight for the audience. The specific situations in which these failures occur do not closely resemble anything that we find in the *Iliad*, but the basic parameters – a central hero becomes sympathetic to the audience as he strives in vain to surmount something stronger than himself – are just the same. The emotions that arise from such a disappointment come across with particular vividness when Odysseus himself narrates his unavailing attempts to embrace the shade of his mother Anticleia, and his sorrowful speech to her after he fails (11.204–10):

> αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γ' ἔθελον φρεσὶ μερμηρίξας
> μητρὸς ἐμῆς ψυχὴν ἑλέειν κατατεθνηυίης.   (205)
> <u>τρὶς μὲν</u> ἐφωρμήθην, ἑλέειν τέ με θυμὸς ἀνώγει,
> <u>τρὶς δέ</u> μοι ἐκ χειρῶν σκιῇ εἴκελον ἢ καὶ ὀνείρῳ
> ἔπτατ'· ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος ὀξὺ γενέσκετο κηρόθι μᾶλλον,
> καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων·
> 'μῆτερ ἐμή ... '

> But having pondered, I was eager in my heart
> to catch hold of the soul of my dead mother.   (205)
> <u>Three times</u> I exerted myself, my heart urged me to grasp it,
> <u>but three times</u> like a shadow or a dream, it flew
> out of my hands. Piercing grief arose in my heart even more,
> and speaking winged words, I addressed her:
> 'My mother … '

Just as we have seen repeatedly on the battlefield in the *Iliad*, a central character makes three attempts at a result that ultimately eludes him. After his last try fails, one of the participants in the scene makes a speech. Here, uniquely and poignantly, the character-narrator explicitly attributes to himself the sorrow that such unavailing efforts regularly arouse in the audience, thus highlighting the feelings underlying the sympathetic attachment that the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif can create between the audience and a striving character.

This passage throws into relief questions about the relationship between repeated language in the *Iliad* compared to the *Odyssey*. On the one hand, the patterns and effects that accompany τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ here can be understood as one example of a general pattern that centres on the emotional significance of repeated attempts for both the characters and the external audience, rather than on any specific place or context where those attempts take place. This interpretation does not assume, nor does it suggest, any particular relationship to specific details of τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scenes in the *Iliad*. However, several critics have understood this scene as an adaptation of the battlefield version of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif (see, for example, Heubeck and Hoekstra (1990) 89, paraphrasing the eloquent presentation of Reinhardt (1960) 106). This analysis conflates

'most common' with 'normative', when, in fact, we simply do not have the tools to determine whether the most common narrative context for the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif – battlefield encounters in the *Iliad* – should also be seen as the norm.

The only τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif in the *Odyssey* found in narrative rather than in Odysseus' tale in books 9–12 is also the one that most closely resembles the narrative patterns found in the *Iliad*.[37] When Telemachus tries three times to string Odysseus' bow (21.124–31), he would have succeeded on his fourth attempt had Odysseus not restrained him:

> στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' οὐδὸν ἰὼν καὶ τόξου πειρήτιζε.
> <u>τρὶς μέν</u> μιν πελέμιξεν ἐρύσσασθαι μενεαίνων,   (125)
> <u>τρὶς δὲ</u> μεθῆκε βίης, ἐπιελπόμενος τό γε θυμῷ
> νευρὴν ἐντανύειν διοϊστεύσειν τε σιδήρου.
> <u>καί νύ κε</u> δή ῥ' ἐτάνυσσε βίη τὸ **τέταρτον** ἀνέλκων,
> ἀλλ' Ὀδυσεὺς ἀνένευε καὶ ἔσχεθεν ἱέμενόν περ.
> τοῖς δ' αὖτις μετέειφ' ἱερὴ ἲς Τηλεμάχοιο·   (130)
>   'ὢ πόποι …'

> Reaching the threshold, he stood there and kept trying the bow.
> <u>Three times</u> he grappled with it, eager to draw it,   (125)
> <u>But three times</u> he slackened his strength, although he hoped in his heart
> to draw the string and shoot an arrow through the iron [axe heads].
> <u>And now he would have</u> strung the bow with strength, drawing for the **fourth time**,
> but Odysseus was shaking his head and restrained him, although he was eager.
> Thereupon the holy strength of Telemachus addressed them: (130)
>   'Oh, dear …'

Telemachus repeatedly tries and fails to accomplish a feat involving a weapon of war (125–27). 'The fourth time' expression introduces the τρὶς μέν character's final doomed attempt (128) before a different character finally puts an end to his efforts (129), and a counterfactual condition extends Telemachus' valour past the boundaries of what actually happens into the realm of unrealized possibility.[38] In war, this formulaic sequence depicts 'major hero engaged in unsuccessful assault that decisively fails on the fourth try [where there is one] and arouses audience sympathy for him [with a counterfactual condition, among other possibilities] as he encounters a superior force'. In the comparative safety of Odysseus' palace, under the watchful eye of Odysseus himself, it has much the same effect, but the consequences of failure for Telemachus are much less grave than they are for the warriors of the *Iliad*. Moreover, the fate of Telemachus' attempt ultimately turns not on physical valour, but on the deception that underlies so many heroic exploits by both Odysseus and members of his family.

In this scene, repetitive language that often depicts conflict instead presents a deceptive collaboration between two loving allies in order to defeat a mutual enemy. The τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ motif at 125–26 strongly suggests that Telemachus will not succeed in this attempt to string the bow, given that characters who repeatedly struggle to do something as the subject of both the τρὶς μέν and τρὶς δέ clauses uniformly fail.[39] Indeed, the combination in 128 of a contrary-to-fact condition and a τέταρτον attempt raises the liveliest apprehensions about Telemachus: elsewhere, 'but for

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[37] As often noted, the closest analogue to this scene is *Iliad* 21.174–79, in which Asteropaeus repeatedly fails to free a spear stuck in the ground and is killed by Achilles before he can make a fourth attempt.

[38] The papyrus reading of 126 defended in Matthiessen (1977) would not affect either the τέταρτον

or the counterfactual condition. This article contains many sound observations about the specific wording in τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ motifs.

[39] See above on the apparent exception of the doomed Patroclus at 16.784–85.

the fourth time' leads to certain if not deadly failure and contrary-to-fact conditions are used along-side τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ motifs for doomed characters of valour – Patroclus and Hector – who become sympathetic partly because they are overmastered by stronger opponents. Given the disquieting signals that the implications of this language have sent, it comes as a positive relief when the resistance that Telemachus does not surmount here comes not from a god, nor even from an enemy, but from his own father. Using the language of failure and conflict to present a collaborative deception by father and son underlines the trust they share and contrasts it with the various kinds of hostility and competition that motivate their behaviour throughout their battle with the suitors in *Odyssey* 21–22.

These patterns emphasize that, although Telemachus does not complete what he set out to do, he is nonetheless a full-fledged partner in deceiving the suitors during the bow contest.[40] Like Hector, Telemachus does not *fall short* in his effort to string Odysseus' bow. He *consents to not* do so at Odysseus' behest, in order to create a false impression of his own strength for the suitors. The counterfactual condition at 128–29 tells us that Odysseus' nod, not a failure of βίη (126, 128), is what stops Telemachus. Although this counterfactual statement attracts our sympathy for Telemachus and draws our attention to powerful forces that constrain his behaviour, he chooses his course of action. Accordingly, the sympathy for him arising from his failed efforts differs from the sadness or pity that other such failures evoke. In other τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ scenes, counterfactual conditions depict alternative scenarios whose stark contrast with reality arouses the audience's sorrow for powerful heroes who will soon fall victim to death, fate and the gods. Telemachus, unlike either Hector or Patroclus, not only has the ability to string the bow at the moment when the counterfactual condition depicts him opting not to do so, but, in the future, we can imagine him moving beyond the circumstances that govern his choice here. Even at a moment when Telemachus has less power than Odysseus does to determine their course of action, he has much more power than either Hector or Patroclus when they appear in scenes with both a τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif and a contrary-to-fact condition. This contrast strongly emphasizes the voluntary nature of Telemachus' act and gives his deception a central role in the scene as a whole.

Interpreting Telemachus' endeavours in the bow contest against the backdrop of the general patterns for the τρὶς μέν… τρὶς δέ motif brings a new level of clarity to larger questions about the relationship between Telemachus and his father, and the evolving power structures on Ithaca in the wake of Odysseus' return. Critics have offered different opinions of this scene, and more broadly on the issue of how Odysseus' quest to restore his authority on Ithaca affects Telemachus. Some view their relationship as harmonious, and Telemachus' experiences with his father as guiding him in a straightforward manner toward maturity;[41] others see a zero-sum game in which Telemachus cannot achieve fully adult status with Odysseus present.[42] The most common patterns for the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif help to depict Telemachus as a full and even Odyssean partner in the various acts of deception that enable Odysseus and his supporters to defeat the suitors. Telemachus voluntarily presents himself here as less powerful than he really is in order to restore the legitimate household power structures, just like his wily father does many times in the course of his νόστος.

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[40] Scheid-Tissinier (1993) 13 asserts that it is the 'complicité' of *both* Telemachus and Odysseus that permits the restoration of the οἶκος.

[41] Norman Austin offers a well-developed argument for this position. He calls the bow contest 'the culmination … of his education in the [Odyssean] art of disguise': Austin (1969) 60. Gottesman (2014), which is interested in Telemachus primarily in relation to the power struggle between Odysseus and the suitors, provides an extensive up-to-date bibliography.

[42] Thalmann (1998) 206–23, which explores the tensions in the father-son rivalry with great sensitivity. Thalmann's view, richly contextualized in relation to the opinions of other critics, is that 'the father's rights are asserted at the expense of the son's': (1998) (207). This is consistent with his broader focus on the aristocratic ideology of the *Odyssey*.

Indeed, Telemachus adds to his own disguise as a weak and ineffectual contestant by means of his speech immediately after receiving Odysseus' signal to desist (21.131–35):

ὢ πόποι, ἦ καὶ ἔπειτα κακός τ' ἔσομαι καὶ ἄκικυς,
ἠὲ νεώτερός εἰμι καὶ οὔ πω χερσὶ πέποιθα
ἄνδρ' ἀπαμύνασθαι, ὅτε τις πρότερος χαλεπήνῃ.
ἀλλ' ἄγεθ', οἵ περ ἐμεῖο βίῃ προφερέστεροί ἐστε,
τόξου πειρήσασθε, καὶ ἐκτελέωμεν ἄεθλον.   (135)

Oh dear, indeed I will be base and feeble even yet,
or I am a young man and cannot yet trust my hands
to ward off a man, when someone takes the initiative in wrangling.
But come, you who are mightier than I am in strength,
make trial of the bow, and let us bring the contest to an end.   (135)

In the *Iliad*, the speaker after someone has failed in his fourth attempt is most often some sort of authority figure (Apollo: 5.440–42, 16.707–709; the main narrator: 16.787–89; the Olympians: 22.168–85) rather than the person whose last attempt has just been beaten back. Telemachus magnifies his supposed failure by dwelling on his own youth in very uncomplimentary terms.[43] By means of the dismay conveyed by ὢ πόποι (131) and repeated references to his own youth (νεώτερος: 132), incapacity (κακός τ' … ἄκικυς: 131) or both (οὔ πω χερσὶ πέποιθα: 132), Telemachus creates a misleading picture that gives the suitors the impression that they can easily surpass him (οἵ περ ἐμεῖο βίῃ προφερέστεροί ἐστε: 134). While the narrator has just described Telemachus' βίη as sufficient to string Odysseus' bow (128), Telemachus successfully redirects the suitors' attention to their own supposedly superior βίη. Both the backdrop of common patterns for the τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motif and Telemachus' speech at 131–35 present his behaviour in this scene as a choice, when the language that narrates it would normally imply an involuntary and sometimes disastrous defeat. Thus, this scene depicts the young man as having an Odyssean level of control over his own deceptive actions and self-presentation. Within the world of the *Odyssey*, this makes him a fully adult hero.

IV. Conclusions

τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ is a motif regularly found in Homeric narrative that shares key characteristics with both formulas and type scenes. It forms a group of metrically localized words that refers regularly to the same 'idea'; this idea is 'repeated attempts to do something, often by two different characters'. This evokes the series of actions associated with type scenes, rather than the kind of single idea that a formula is generally thought to convey. Like other forms of narrative repetition in Homeric epic, most of the instances of the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif display regular narrative patterns. Meanwhile, a few key scenes elaborate on those patterns in order to create moments of outstanding poetic and emotional force whose effects are created in part by the associations of the commonly occurring patterns.

Wherever the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif appears, it presents actions either done by or affecting central heroes in the story, extending the narrative by dwelling on repeated attempts to do something instead of presenting only the end result. This immerses the audience in the experience of a hero trying unsuccessfully to accomplish a desired end, arousing their sympathy on his behalf

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[43] ἄκικυς appears in Homeric epic only here and in the Cyclops' disgusted surprise that he was blinded not by a mighty warrior (μέγαν καὶ καλὸν: *Od.* 9.513) but by someone unimpressive, ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καὶ ἄκικυς ('small and of no account and feeble': 9.515).

when he fails or (occasionally) admiration when he succeeds, whether he be Diomedes encountering Apollo and emerging unscathed in *Iliad* 5, Patroclus achieving a short-lived triumph before his death at the hands of Apollo in *Iliad* 16 or Telemachus faking failure in *Odyssey* 21 in order ultimately to defeat the suitors. At the same time, the basis of the hero's valour, and the nature of the forces that may prevent him from succeeding nonetheless, differ in the *Iliad* compared to the *Odyssey* because the two poems are telling quite different stories about two different heroic adventures. The heroes in the *Iliad* are generally engaged in hand-to-hand combat with other characters in τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounters, and whether or not they succeed often depends in part on the actions of the gods. Both the glory and the limits of mortal martial valour are, in turn, key themes of heroism as the *Iliad* depicts it and of this particular story about the end of the city of Troy.

The τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ scenes in the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, never feature the kinds of fighting that underlie most of the *Iliad* τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ encounters; the only *Odyssey* τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ attempt that appears to depend on physical valour, in book 21, in fact turns on a co-operative deception practised by two members of Odysseus' family. This emphasizes that heroism in the *Odyssey* is as much mental as physical, and as much collaborative as combative. In other words, a sense of the various ways that the τρὶς μέν ... τρὶς δέ motif functions in Homeric epic suggests that we can understand the *Odyssey*'s view of heroism as an organic feature of the poem on its own terms, and not necessarily as a reaction to the *Iliad* in particular. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* use the same narrative toolbox, and the same aesthetics arising from an absorbing and powerful tension between common and less common patterns of use, to tell different stories about different kinds of heroes and different kinds of heroism.

Appendix: τρὶς μέν … τρὶς δέ motifs in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*
The formatting applied here to column headers is used in individual passages in the body of the paper to identify specific features.

Citation	τρὶς μέν actor	τρὶς δέ actor	Fourth try	Speech	Counterfactual	**Simile**	Other/miscellaneous
Iliad 5.436–43	436, Diomedes	437, Apollo	438	440–42, Apollo to Diomedes			δεινὰ δ᾽ ὁμοκλήσας, 439
8.169–71	169, Diomedes	170–71, Zeus					
11.462–86	462, Odysseus	463, Menelaus		465–71, Menelaus to Ajax		474–81	
16.698–709	702–03, Patroclus	703–04, Apollo	705	707–09, Apollo to Patroclus	698–701		δεινὰ δ᾽ ὁμοκλήσας, 706
16.779–89	784–85, Patroclus	785, *Patroclus*	786	787–89, apostrophe to Patroclus	780		δεινός, 789
18.155–80	155–56, Hector	157–58, Ajax		170–80, Iris to Achilles	165–68	161–64	struggle over Patroclus' corpse
18.228–29	228, Achilles	229, Trojans					
20.445–54	445–46, Achilles	446, *Achilles*	[447]	449–54, Achilles to Hector			δεινὰ δ᾽ ὁμοκλήσας, 448
21.176–99	176, Asteropaeus	177, *Asteropaeus*	177–78	184–99, Achilles to Asteropaeus			
23.817 (athletic competition)	Ajax/Diomedes	Ajax/Diomedes					
Odyssey 9.361	Odysseus	Cyclops					Odysseus narrator
11.206–214	206, Odysseus	207–08, Anticleia's soul		210–14, Odysseus to Anticleia			Odysseus narrator
12.105–06	105, Charybdis	105–06, *Charybdis*					Odysseus narrator δεινόν, 106
21.125–35	125, Telemachus	126–27, *Telemachus*	128	131–35, Telemachus to suitors	128–29		
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13.2	Poseidon	N/A	13.2				
22.157–223	157–58, 165, Hector	157–58, 165, Achilles	208	1. 168–85, Olympian gods in conversation; 2. 216–23, Athena to Achilles	202–04, rhetorical question	162–64, 189–93, 199–201	

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