

Hector, the Marginal Hero: Performance Theory and the Homeric Monologue

(Text = Allen 1932; all translations mine)

1. Scholarship on Homeric monologues: as a dramatic technique for externalizing a character's inner thoughts (cf. Hentze, Leo, Otter, Schadewaldt); as indication of not-yet-integrated person (cf. Snell, Voigt, Dodds, Adkins); as prefiguring later Aristotelian and Stoic theories about human rationality, motivation, and decision-making (cf. Gill, Gaskin, Burnet, Milsford). Good general discussions: Fenik, Scully, Pelliccia.

2. Odysseus' monologue (*Iliad* XI 404-413)

ὄχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὄν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
“ὦ μοι ἐγὼ τί πάθω; μέγα μὲν κακὸν αἶ κε φέβωμαι
πληθὺν ταρβήσας· τὸ δὲ ὀρίγιον αἶ κεν ἄλω
μοῦνον· τοὺς δ' ἄλλους Δαναοὺς ἐφόβησε Κρονίων.
ἀλλὰ τί ἢ μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;
οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι κακοὶ μὲν ἀποίχονται πολέμοιο,
ὅς δέ κ' ἀριστεύησι μάχῃ ἐνὶ τὸν δὲ μάλα χρεῶ
ἐστάμεναι κρατερῶς, ἢ τ' ἔβλητ' ἢ τ' ἔβαλ' ἄλλον.”
εἶος ὁ ταῦθ' ὄρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,
τόφρα δ' ἐπὶ Τρώων στίχες ἤλυθον ἀσπιστάων,
ἔλσαν δ' ἐν μέσσοισι, μετὰ σφίσι πῆμα τιθέντες.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit: “Woe is me, what will I suffer? It will be a great evil if I flee in terror, frightened by their multitude. But it will be more horrible if I am caught all by myself. Cronus' son has put the rest of the Danaäns to flight. **But why indeed does my own spirit debate these things with me?** For I know that cowards withdraw from war, and whoever excels in battle, that man must really stand his ground strongly, whether he is struck or strikes another.” While **he was pondering these things in his wits and in his spirit**, ranks of armed Trojans meanwhile came against him, and hemmed him in their midst, placing, thereby, a source of pain for themselves.

3. Menelaus' monologue (*Iliad* XVII 91-108)

ὄχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὄν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
“ὦ μοι ἐγὼν εἰ μὲν κε λίπω κάτα τεύχεα καλὰ
Πάτροκλόν θ', ὃς κείται ἐμῆς ἔνεκ' ἐνθάδε τιμῆς,
μή τις μοι Δαναῶν νεμεσήσεται ὃς κεν ἴδηται·
εἰ δέ κεν Ἔκτορι μῦνος ἐὼν καὶ Τρωσὶ μάχωμαι
αἰδεσθεῖς, μή πῶς με περιστήσῃ ἓνα πολλοί·
Τρώας δ' ἐνθάδε πάντας ἄγει κορυθαίολος Ἔκτωρ.
ἀλλὰ τί ἢ μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;
ὀππότε' ἀνὴρ ἐθέλη πρὸς δαίμονα φωτὶ μάχεσθαι
ὄν κε θεὸς τιμᾶ, τάχα οἱ μέγα πῆμα κυλίσθη.
τῷ μ' οὐ τις Δαναῶν νεμεσήσεται ὃς κεν ἴδηται
Ἔκτορι χωρήσαντ', ἐπεὶ ἐκ θεοφίην πολεμίζει.
εἰ δέ που Αἴαντός γε βοὴν ἀγαθοῖο πυθοίμην,
ἄμφω κ' αὐτίς ἰόντες ἐπιμησαίμεθα χάρις
καὶ πρὸς δαίμονά περ, εἴ πως ἐρυσσάμεθα νεκρὸν
Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ· κακῶν δέ κε φέροισι εἴη.”
εἶος ὁ ταῦθ' ὄρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν
τόφρα δ' ἐπὶ Τρώων στίχες ἤλυθον· ἦρχε δ' ἄρ' Ἔκτωρ.
αὐτὰρ ὁ γ' ἐξοπίσω ἀνεχάζετο, λείπε δὲ νεκρὸν.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit: “Woe is me, if I should leave behind the beautiful armor and Patroclus, who lies dead here for the sake of my honor, may no one of the Danaäns find fault with me, whoever sees it. But if, on the other hand, I who am alone, fight with Hector and the Trojans because I am ashamed, will they, who are many, not surround me, who is one? Hector of the shining helm leads all the Trojans here. **But why indeed does my own spirit debate these things with me?** Whenever a man comes, in the face of a divinity, to fight with a mortal whom ever the god honors, swiftly a great pain rolls upon him. Therefore no one of the Danaäns will find fault with me, whoever sees me giving way before Hector, since he is fighting with a god's assistance. But I suppose if I could convince Ajax who is good at the war cry, the two of us going could recall our battle fury and even in the face of a divinity, perhaps we could somehow drag away the corpse to Peleus' son Achilles. It would be the best thing among bad options.” While **he was pondering these things in his wits and in his spirit**, ranks of Trojans meanwhile came against him, and Hector was leading them. But he withdrew backwards, and left the corpse.

4. Agenor's monologue (*Iliad* XXI 550-572)

αὐτὰρ ὁ γ' ὡς ἐνόησεν Ἀχιλλῆα πολίπορθον
ἔστη, πολλὰ δὲ οἱ κραδίη πόρφυρε μένοντι·
ὄχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὄν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
“ὦ μοι ἐγὼν· εἰ μὲν κεν ὑπὸ κρατεροῦ Ἀχιλλῆος
φεύγω, τῆ περ οἱ ἄλλοι ἀτυζόμενοι κλονέονται,
αἰρήσει με καὶ ὡς, καὶ ἀνάγκη δειροτομήσει.
εἰ δ' ἂν ἐγὼ τούτους μὲν ὑποκλονέεσθαι ἔασω
Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ, ποσὶν δ' ἀπὸ τείχεος ἄλλη
φεύγω πρὸς πεδίον Ἰλίου, ὄφρ' ἂν ἴκωμαι

But when he noticed Achilles, sacker of cities, he stood, but his heart as he remained there surged greatly. **Troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit:** “Woe is me, if I run away from the influence of strong Achilles, in the way that others in distraught are driven in confusion by him, he will catch me even so and will slash my throat like that of a weakling. But if I allow these men to be driven in confusion by Peleus' son Achilles, and flee by foot away from the city walls in another direction to the plane of Ilion, until I should reach the foothills of Ida and slip down into

Ἴδης τε κνημοὺς κατὰ τε ῥωπήϊα δῦω·
ἐσπέριος δ' ἂν ἔπειτα λοεσσάμενος ποταμοῖο
ἰδρῶ ἀποψυχθεὶς προτὶ Ἴλιον ἀπονεοίμην·
ἀλλὰ τί ἢ μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;
μή μ' ἀπαιερόμενον πόλιος πεδίον δὲ νοήσῃ
καὶ με μεταίξας μάρψῃ ταχέεσσι πόδεσιν.
οὐκέτ' ἔπειτ' ἔσται θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξαι·
λίην γὰρ κρατερός περὶ πάντων ἔστ' ἀνθρώπων.
εἰ δέ κέ οἱ προπάροιθε πόλεος κατεναντίον ἔλθω·
καὶ γὰρ θῆν τούτῳ τρωτὸς χρῶς ὀξεί χαλκῶ·
ἐν δὲ ἴα ψυχῇ, θνητὸν δὲ ἔφασ' ἀνθρώποι
ἔμμεναι· αὐτὰρ οἱ Κρονίδης Ζεὺς κῦδος ὀπάξει.”
Ἦς εἰπὼν Ἀχιλῆα ἀλεῖς μένεν, ἐν δὲ οἱ ἦτορ
ἄλκιμον ὀρμάτο ππολεμίζειν ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι.

5. Hector's monologue (*Iliad* XXII 98-130)

ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
ὦ μοι ἐγὼν, εἰ μὲν κε πύλας καὶ τείχεα δῦω,
Πουλυδάμας μοι πρῶτος ἐλεγχείην ἀναθήσει,
ὅς μ' ἐκέλευε Τρωσὶ ποτὶ πόλιν ἠγήσασθαι
νύχθ' ὕπο τήνδ' ὀλοήν ὅτε τ' ὄρετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην· ἦ τ' ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν.
νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ὤλεσα λαὸν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ἐμήσιν,
αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάδας ἐλκεσιπέπλους,
μή ποτέ τις εἴπησι κακώτερος ἄλλος ἐμείο·
“Ἐκτῶρ ἦφι βίηφι πιθήσας ὤλεσε λαόν.”
ὥς ἐρέουσιν· ἐμοὶ δὲ τότε ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον εἶη
ἄντην ἢ Ἀχιλῆα κατακτείναντα νέεσθαι,
ἠὲ κεν αὐτῷ ὀλέσθαι ἐνυκλειῶς πρὸ πόλης.
εἰ δέ κεν ἀσπίδα μὲν καταθειομαι ὀμφαλόεσσαν
καὶ κόρυθα βριαρῆν, δόρυ δὲ πρὸς τεῖχος ἐρείσας
αὐτὸς ἰὼν Ἀχιλῆος ἀμύμονος ἀντίος ἔλθω
καὶ οἱ ὑπόσχωμαι Ἑλένην καὶ κτήμαθ' ἅμ' αὐτῇ,
πάντα μάλ' ὅσα τ' Ἀλέξανδρος κοίλῃσιν ἐνὶ νηυσὶν
ἠγάγετο Τροίηνδ', ἦ τ' ἔπλετο νεῖκος ἀρχή,
δωσέμεν Ἀτρεΐδῃσιν ἄγειν, ἅμα δ' ἀμφὶς Ἀχαιοῖς
ἄλλ' ἀποδάσσεσθαι ὅσα τε πόλις ἦδε κέκευθε·
Τρωσὶν δ' αὖ μετόπισθε γερούσιον ὄρκον ἔλωμαι
μή τι κατακρύψειν, ἀλλ' ἀνδιχα πάντα δάσασθαι
κτῆσιν ὅσῃν πολίεθρον ἐπήρατον ἐντὸς ἔεργει·
ἀλλὰ τί ἢ μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;
μή μιν ἐγὼ μὲν ἴκωμαι ἰών, ὃ δὲ μ' οὐκ ἐλεήσει
οὐδέ τί μ' αἰδέσεται, κτενέει δὲ με γυμνὸν ἐόντα
αὐτῶς ὡς τε γυναῖκα, ἐπεὶ κ' ἀπὸ τεύχεα δῦω.
οὐ μὲν πως νῦν ἔστιν ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης
τῷ ὀαριζέμεναι, ἃ τε παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε
παρθένος ἠΐθεός τ' ὀαρίζετον ἀλλήλουιν.
βέλτερον αὐτ' ἔριδι ξυνελαυνόμενον ὅτι τάχιστα·
εἶδομεν ὀπποτέρῳ κεν Ὀλύμπιος εὐχος ὀρέξῃ.

6. *oaristus*: intimate conversation on Aphrodite's magical brassiere (*Iliad* XIV 214-217)

Ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στήθεσφιν ἐλύσατο κεστὸν ἱμάντα
ποικίλον, ἐνθα δὲ οἱ θελκτήρια πάντα τέτυκτο·
ἐνθ' ἐνὶ μὲν φιλότις, ἐν δ' ἴμερος, ἐν δ' **ὀαριστὺς**
πάρφασις, ἦ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων.

the undergrowth; then in the evening after having bathed in the river and dried off my sweat, I could return back to Iliion. **But why indeed does my own spirit debate these things with me?** May he not notice me making my way from the city toward the plain and rushing after me catch up with me with the speed of his feet! Then it will no longer be possible to escape death and the death spirits. For he is too strong, beyond all other men. But if I go and meet him in front of the city, truly even his flesh is vulnerable to this sharp bronze; he has but one life, and men say that he is mortal. It is only that Cronus' son Zeus grants him glory. **So speaking** he gathered himself to wait for Achilles, and the bold heart within him was urgent to make war and to fight

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit: “**Woe is me!** If I go inside the gates and walls Poulydamas will be the first to place reproach upon me, he who bid me to lead the Trojans back to the city that destructive night when brilliant Achilles roused himself. But I didn't obey him, though in truth, it would have been far more profitable. But now since I destroyed the fighting men by my recklessness I feel shame before the Trojans and Trojan women with their trailing robes, lest ever some other person who is less of a man than me should say, “Hector trusted in his strength and destroyed the fighting men.” That's what they will say. As for me, it would be far more profitable then to go back after having killed Achilles in hand-to-hand combat, or else to be killed by him gloriously in front of the city. But if I lay down my shield, massive in the middle, and my strong helmet, and lean my spear against the city wall and go as I am to meet blameless Achilles face-to-face and promise him Helen and her possessions along with her, all those many things, as many as in the hollow ships of Alexander were brought to Troy, which things were the beginning of the conflict; to give these to Atreus's sons to take away, and at the same time for the Achaeans to divide up other things, as much as this city has laid away, and afterward to take an oath among the elders for the Trojans not to conceal anything, but to divide everything in two, as much property as lay enclosed within the lovely city ... **But why indeed does my own spirit debate these things with me?** Even if I approached him, he might not pity me and would not respect my position at all, and would kill me, naked though I am, just as if I were a woman, since I took off my armor. No, there is no way now from tree or from rock to **converse intimately with him, the things ever a maid to a youth, a maid and a youth converse intimately with one another.** Better to come together with him in contention as quickly as possible. We will see to whichever one of us the Olympian will grant glory.”

She spoke and unfastened the embroidered brassiere from her chest, intricately decorated, and here all enchantments are figured upon it; and here love is on it, and desire, and ***oaristus***, alluring persuasion, which steals away the thick-set mind even of

thoughtful men.

7. *oaristus*: intimate meeting in battle (*Iliad* XIII 288-291)

εἴ περ γάρ κε βλεῖο πονεύμενος ἢε τυπείης
οὐκ ἂν ἐν αὐχέν' ὀπισθε πέσοι βέλος οὐδ' ἐνὶ νώτῳ,
ἀλλὰ κεν ἢ στέρνων ἢ νηδύος ἀντιάσειε
πρόσσω ἰεμένοιο μετὰ προμάχων ὄαριστῶν.

Even if you were struck by missile as you toiled or were hit by
weapon, the missile would not fall upon your neck from behind
nor strike you in the back, but would be driven straight against
your chest or belly in the front as you make your way through the
oaristus of front-fighters.

8. *oaristus*: intimate meeting in battle (*Iliad* XVII 227-228)

τῷ τις νῦν ἰθὺς τετραμμένος ἢ ἀπολέσθω
ἢε σωθήτω· ἢ γὰρ πολέμου ὄαριστῶς.

Accordingly let a man now be turned straight ahead and either
perish or be saved. For this is the *oaristus* of battle.

9. *oarizein*: intimate conversation between Hector and Andromache (*Iliad* VI 514-516)

αἶψα δ' ἔπειτα
Ἔκτορα δῖον ἔτετμεν ἀδελφεὸν εὐτ' ἄρ' ἔμελλε
στρέψασθ' ἐκ χώρης ὅθι ἢ ὄαριζε γυναικί.

And then suddenly he [= Paris] caught up with brilliant Hector
his brother, just as he was about to turn away from the place
where he was **conversing intimately** with his wife.

10. Influence of Near-Eastern traditions of lament or pastoral poetry on the *Iliad*: Griffin, Hunter.

11. Markos Vamvakaris "Ακουσε με" (1960)

τα ματόκλαδά σου λάμπουνε σαν τα λούλουδα του
κάμπου,
σαν τα λούλουδα του κάμπου νε τα ματόκλαδά σου
λάμπουνε.

Your eyelashes shine like the flowers of the field, like the flowers
of the field—yes—your eyelashes shine.

Τα ματάκια σου αδερφούλα μου ραγίζουν την καρδούλα
μου ραγίζουν την καρδούλα τα ματάκια σου αδερφούλα

Your eyes, sister, shatter my little heart,
they shatter my little heart, your eyes do, sister.

Τα ματάκια σου να βγούνε σαν και μένα δε θα βρουνε
σαν και μένα δε θα βρουνε τα ματάκια σου να βγούνε

Search till you're blind, you won't find another like me; you
won't find another like me, even if you search till you're blind.

12. Homeric epic as containing reflections of other poetic performance genres: Scott, Martin (1997), Hunter, Richardson.

Select Bibliography

- Adkins, A. W. H. 1970. *From the Many to the One: A Study of Personality and Views of Human Nature in the Context of Ancient Greek Society, Values, and Beliefs*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Burnet, A. P. 1991. "Signals from the Unconscious in Early Greek Poetry." *CP* 86: 275-300.
- de Jong, I. F. 2012. *Homer: Iliad Book XXII*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dodds, E. R. 1951. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fenik, B. 1978. "Stylization and Variety: Four Monologues in the *Iliad*." In B. Fenik, ed., *Homer: Tradition and Invention*. Leiden: Brill. 68-90.
- Fowler, R. L. 1987. "The Rhetoric of Desperation." *HSCP* 91: 5-38.
- Gaskin, R. 1990. "Do Homeric Heroes Make Real Decisions?" *CQ* 40: 1-15.
- Gill, C. 1996. *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hentze, C. 1904. "Die Monologe in homerischen Epen." *Philologus* 63: 12-30.
- Hunter, R. 2005. "'Sweet Talk': *Song of Songs* and the Traditions of Greek Poetry." In Hagedorn, A. C. ed. *Perspectives on the Song of Songs*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 228-44.
- Leo, F. 1908. *Der Monolog im Drama. Ein Beitrag zur griechisch-römischen Poetik*. Berlin: Weidmann.
- Levaniouk, O. 2011. *Eve of the Festival: Making Myth in Odyssey 19*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Lohmann, D. 1970. *Die Komposition der Reden in der Ilias*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Martin, R. 1989. *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the Iliad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Martin, R. 1997. "Similes and Performance." In Bakker, E. and Kahane, A. eds. *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Tradition, Performance, and the Epic Text*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 138-66.
- Milsfurd, M. L. 1998. "On the Idea of Reflexive Rhetoric in Homer." *Ph&Rh* 31: 41-54.
- Otter, H. 1914. *De soliloquiis quae in litteris graecorum et romanorum occurrunt observationes*. Marburg: Typis C. Schaaf.
- Pelliccia, H. 1995. *Mind, Body, and Speech in Homer and Pindar*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Petersmann, G. 1974. "Die Entscheidungsmonologe in den homerischen Epen." *GB* 2: 147-69.
- Ready, J. L. 2011. *Character, Narrator, and Simile in the Iliad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richardson, N. J. 2011. "Reflections of Choral Song in Early Hexameter Poetry." In Athanassaki, L. and Bowie, E. L. eds. *Archaic and Choral Song: Performance Politics, and Dissemination*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 15-31.
- Schadewaldt, W. 1926. *Monolog und Selbstgespräch, Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der griechischen Tragödie*. Berlin: Weidmann.
- Schadewaldt, W. 1966. *Iliasstudien*. 3rd ed. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Scott, W. C. 1974. *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*. Leiden: Brill.
- Scully, S. 1984. "The Language of Achilles: The OXΘHΣAΣ Formulas." *TAPA* 114: 11-27.
- Smitherman, V. H. 2013. "Epanalepsis." In G. Giannakis, ed., *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, Vol. I, s.v. epanalepsis. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Snell, B. 1930. "Das Bewusstsein von eigenen Entscheidungen im frühen Griechentum." *Philologus* 85: 141-158.
- . 1953. *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, tr. T. G. Rosenmeyer. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Voigt, C. 1934 (rpt. 1972). *Überlegung und Entscheidung, Studien zur Selbstauffassung des Menschen bei Homer*. Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain.