

## FOLK-TALE VESTIGES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE *ODYSSEY*

When a satisfying story is coming to an end, its teller (and occasionally perhaps its audience also) must wish that a continuation in the company of these agreeable characters were somehow possible, and further adventures too. But how, when, as we have said, the narrative's conclusion is looming? Over the centuries, an ingenious solution was developed by story-tellers, in which a narrative complication allowed just such an extension of the story beyond its apparently destined end, and it is this narrative complication which I shall be examining in the pages that follow. The relevant phenomenon is closely related to the epic device of 'retardation', which we encounter, for instance, in the *Iliad* with the consequences of Achilles' withdrawal from fighting; and in the Epic Cycle with the *Cypria*'s postponement, due to the events at Aulis and before then in Teuthrania, of the Greek arrival at Troy, and the *Little Iliad*'s postponement of the Sack of Troy until Philoctetes and Neoptolemus have been fetched and the Palladium purloined. Very much the same problem faced the author of the *Odyssey* when he had brought its hero back to his island, and very much the same solution was hit upon to ensure almost as much continued time with Odysseus as was spent tracing his homeward sea voyage.

1. That folk-tale has heavily influenced the account of precisely that voyage in our epic we all know. But when it comes to the second half of the poem, it is as if, as soon as the hero sets foot on his native Ithaca, folk-tale flies out of the window. Thus D.L. Page's delightful book *Folk-tales in Homer's Odyssey* has virtually nothing to say about the second half of the epic (except for the vexed issue of the logistics of the archery trial), and the same could be said of several other treatments of the topic<sup>1</sup>. An exception to this rule (and food for thought) is provided by Victor Zhirmunsky's famous article on *The Epic of Alpyamish and the Return of Odysseus*<sup>2</sup>, in which the

<sup>1</sup> Even a work such as Uvo Hölscher's *Die Odyssee: Epos zwischen Märchen und Novelle* (Munich 1988), which sees the general importance of Propp, has little to say of the second half, and my own remarks on *Folk-tale in the Iliad and Odyssey*, "WS" 115, 2002, 5ff. represent no improvement at all in this respect. J. Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice: name and narration in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1990) studies the narrative technique of our poem but does not seem to find Propp's approach useful. He actually claims (p. 35) that "the Homeric and other extant archaic narrative materials offer insufficient empirical data for developing a sequential model as detailed and specific as Propp's", and concludes (p. 41) that "we must look beyond such a model".

<sup>2</sup> "PBA" 52, 1966, 267-86.

Russian scholar established two independent facts: (1) the story of Alpyamish exhibits various similarities with that of the Homeric hero's return; (2) the former story has a two-part construction. In (i) the first part, Alpyamish goes on an heroic quest to the Otherworld accompanied by his companions to win the hand of a princess. This is achieved, but he is then betrayed by the aforesaid companions, who thrust him into a pit or subterranean prison and make off with the princess. In (ii) the second part of the narrative, we find a 'second round of adventures': the hero escapes, in most versions after a seven year interval, and returns in disguise to this world, just in time to rescue the princess from marriage to one of the treacherous companions.

This bipartite narrative construction has wider implications for the *Odyssey* as well as for folk-tale more generally, implications which Zhirumsky failed to follow through. The complication of the story-pattern, so that we are confronted with 'a second round of adventures', has parallels in other examples of heroic quests. For instance, in the folk-tale of Bearson, whose analogies to the story of Odysseus had already been examined in Rhys Carpenter's *Folk-Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics*<sup>3</sup>, Bearson follows his demonic adversary to the Underworld, access to which – I quote the scholar just mentioned – "is usually down a deep well by means of a rope... As Bearson seeks to return from the Underworld, the treachery of his comrades delays and all but prevents his escape... The faithless companions find their way home, bringing the rescued princesses or maidens with them. The variant endings are legion; but a great favourite brings Bearson home in the nick of time to prevent the youngest princess from marrying. He punishes his treacherous comrades and himself marries the princess, with which fortunate triumph the story naturally ends". A similar complication, though without the element of treachery, occurs in the Old Norse *Grettis Saga*, where the hero descends to a monster's underwater lair "by means of a rope, leaving a friend at the surface. He finds not the monster, but a third ogre, and it is the destruction of this third monster which bloodies the water so that his waiting friend thinks the worst and thereupon leaves"<sup>4</sup>. The element of treachery recurs in a circle of stories which relate how three questing brothers come to a crossroad from which three paths branch<sup>5</sup>. The two elder brothers choose the path which an accompanying in-

<sup>3</sup> Berkeley and Los Angeles 1956, pp. 136ff. (p. 150f. is here quoted). For some further bibliography cf. "Prometheus" 28, 2002, p. 3 n. 10.

<sup>4</sup> I quote from M. Swanton, *Beowulf* (Manchester 1978) p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> For an assemblage of the relevant material see Reinhardt Köhler, "Mémoires de l'Acad. Imp. des Sciences de St. Pétersb." 19, 1873, IVff. = *Kleinere Schriften zur Märchenforschung* pp. 537ff.

scription has identified as the easier option, and are punished by being reduced to humiliatingly menial occupations, from which they are rescued by the youngest brother, who chose the hardest and most dangerous path, and is now returning with the object of his quest and a beautiful princess into the bargain. The ungrateful siblings requite the good deed by blinding the hero, casting him into a pit or well, and returning home with the princess. Again a marriage is thwarted at the last moment by the rescued and healed hero's intervention.

2. A general framework for comprehending this type of narrative complication had already been devised by Zhirmunsky's fellow countryman Vladimir Propp, though again the former does not mention it. Propp's *Morphology of the Folk-Tale*<sup>6</sup> allows for the possibility of such complication when the initial heroic quest may seem to be reaching its conclusion: instead of the hero's return home and marriage to the princess as an end to the narrative, "a tale may have another misfortune in store for the hero: a villain may appear once again, may seize whatever Ivan [Propp's name for the archetypal hero of Russian folk-tale] has obtained... In a word, an initial villainy is repeated, sometimes in the same forms as in the beginning and sometimes in other forms which are new for a given tale. With this a new story commences". The specific exemplification which Propp cited fits very closely with the sequence Zhirmunsky supplied from the tale of Alpyamish: "there are specific villains connected with the new misfortune. They are Ivan's elder brothers. Shortly after his arrival home they steal his prize and sometimes kill even [even kill?] him. If they permit him to remain alive then, in order to instigate a new search, it is necessary once more to place a great spatial barrier between the hero and the object being sought. This is accomplished by their throwing him into a chasm (into a pit, a subterranean kingdom, or sometimes into the sea) ... then everything begins anew... again".

In Odyssean terms, it is as if the *hetairoi* of the hero in the first half of the poem were to have abandoned him in the Otherworld or Underworld<sup>7</sup> (he certainly does descend with them to Hades in the *Nekyia*) and returned

<sup>6</sup> For full details of publication, English translation etc., see "CQ" 38, 1988, p. 278 n. 7. Propp covers the relevant issue on pp. 58ff. of this translation.

<sup>7</sup> The closest analogy for this in the *Odyssey*, identified, for instance, by Carpenter (above n. 3) p. 150f., is the episode in which the *hetairoi* undo Aeolus' bag of the winds while their master sleeps, thus preventing his, but also their, return home from the quest. (Carpenter also cites the less obviously analogous episode of the eating of the cattle of the Sun, which ensures the *hetairoi*'s own destruction and the further postponement of Odysseus' return).

home without him but with the princess (it has independently been inferred<sup>8</sup> that Odysseus did originally win the hand of an Otherworld princess: Nausicaa). And further, it is as if he were to have escaped, returned home disguised, and, in the nick of time, prevented one of the *hetairoi* from marrying his princess – an equivalence of sorts between Nausicaa and Penelope has already been deduced<sup>9</sup>. This would certainly be a more economical story, and it does share this at least with our actual *Odyssey*, that both *hetairoi* and suitors, if not identical, represent the same Odyssean type, the sinner whose crimes will be punished in the poem's more morally black and white, un-Iliadic world<sup>10</sup>.

If we now proceed to analyse in detail Propp's account of the narrative complications in the "new story" as he terms it, we are instantly impressed by just how closely the pattern corresponds to the details in the second half of the *Odyssey*. Thus, preserving Propp's numeration of what he calls his "functions", we find the following:

XII *bis* "The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc. which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper". This is a reprise of the hero's encounter, at an early stage of his quest, with a helper figure (often ambivalent) who provides crucial aid. The helper figure here is obviously Athena, who is disguised as a young mortal man, just like Hermes<sup>11</sup> in the equivalent episode in the first half of the adventure (and of the epic) at *Od.* 10.281ff. Also equivalent is the potentially contemptuous tone of her opening vocative to the hero<sup>12</sup> at 13.237 νήπιός εἰς, ᾧ ξεῖν' (= 4.371 addressed to Menelaus by Eidothea), similar to 10.281 addressed by Hermes to Odysseus; as is the way in which she sends him on to a further helper figure, the old goatherd Eumaeus, just as Hermes had sent on Odysseus to Circe, or Eidothea sent Menelaus on to her father the Old Man of the Sea, in a pattern recalling the folk-tale sequence of 'Old. Older, Oldest'<sup>13</sup>.

XIII *bis* "The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor". A large range of phenomena is covered by this Proppian generalisation. What counts most in the present instance is that such encounters between hero and helper can take the form of a 'testing' or 'tempting' of the former by the latter<sup>14</sup>, from

<sup>8</sup> R. Lattimore, *Nausicaa and the Suitors*, 'Perry Festschrift' (1966) pp. 88ff.

<sup>9</sup> See Lattimore as cited in previous note.

<sup>10</sup> On which see R. Hankey in *Owls to Athens* ('Dover Festschrift', 1990) pp. 87ff.

<sup>11</sup> See my article *Hermes the Helper Figure*, "Prometheus" 34, 2008, 27ff.

<sup>12</sup> See the article cited in the previous note.

<sup>13</sup> See "Prometheus" 29, 2003, p. 58 n. 11 on the folk-tale sequence 'Old, older, oldest'.

<sup>14</sup> On 'testing' and 'tempting' of the folk-tale hero by the helper figure see my remarks in "CQ" 54, 2004, 606ff.

which the latter emerges victorious<sup>15</sup>. So the disguised Athena tries her protégée's characteristic cunning, which is not found wanting, as Odysseus resorts to yet another lying tale. By pretending to be someone he is not, Odysseus shows he has the qualities needed to succeed in the quest ahead – which process of showing is the idiomatic function of the folk-tale hero's encounter with his helper. Pretending to be someone he is not is precisely the knack which will stand Odysseus in good stead in the following narrative.

XIV *bis* "The hero acquires the use of a magical agent". This was the original significance<sup>16</sup> of the moly plant which Hermes hands to Odysseus with so little obvious benefit in *Od.* 10. This quintessentially folk-tale feature is similarly obscured in *Od.* 13, but the magical disguising of the hero as an old man is surely the equivalent<sup>17</sup>.

XV *bis* "The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search". In this case, the object of search is Odysseus' own palace, symbolising the kingdom and power (and wife) he must recover, and he is led there by Eumaeus, the second helper figure.

"From this point onward", says Propp, "the development of the narrative proceeds differently, and the tale gives new functions". But as far as the second half of the *Odyssey* is concerned, the coincidence with the first scheme outlined by Propp continues, and the closeness of the fit is little short of uncanny.

XXIII "The hero, unrecognised, arrives home or in another country". In Odysseus' case, of course, it is the former alternative, though Athena had earlier disguised Ithaca to look like another country, so that the two options might be said to be combined.

XXIV "A false hero presents unfounded claims". Propp proceeds to specify thus: "if the hero arrives home, the claims are presented by his brothers [who] ... pose as capturers of the prize". [Cf. the example cited above p. 3]. In view of what was said above, the role of false hero in the *Odyssey* is occupied by the suitors, especially Antinous, with their claim to the hand of Penelope.

XXV "A difficult task is proposed to the hero". We would naturally identify this with the stringing and drawing of Odysseus' bow, even if Propp did not proceed to exemplify with the instance "test of strength, adroitness, fortitude".

XXVI "The task is resolved". Odysseus succeeds in stringing his bow.

<sup>15</sup> For the processes of testing and tempting as showing that the hero "possesses the right qualities" etc. see my remarks in the article cited in n. 11.

<sup>16</sup> See the article cited in n. 11, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> 'Unpromising heroes' in folk-tale are often thus disguised and for Odysseus as such a hero see my forthcoming article *Unpromising heroes and heroes as helpers*.

XXVII “The hero is recognised”. Among the modes of recognition listed by Propp is that “the hero is... recognised by his accomplishment of a difficult task (this is almost always preceded by an unrecognised arrival)”. As soon as he has strung and bent the bow and shot through the axes, Odysseus reveals his identity by stripping off his rags and shooting Antinous. It is, however, striking that Propp begins his list of modes of recognition by saying “he is recognised by a mark... a wound”, which starkly reminds us of Odysseus’ encounter with Eurycleia at an earlier stage of the narrative (“XXIV a”, as it were).

XXVIII “The false hero or villain is exposed”. Propp at once observes that “this function is, in most cases, connected with the one proceeding”, and explains that “sometimes it is the result of an uncompleted task”, which he exemplifies with the eventuality that “the false hero cannot lift the dragon’s heads” which he claims to have won rather than the real hero. The Odyssean equivalent is, of course, the suitors’ inability to string the bow, though this has been slightly displaced in the new narrative sequence.

XXIX “The hero is given a new appearance”. In the *Odyssey*, this function is fulfilled by Propp’s subsection 3 “the hero puts on new garments”. I shall be saying more about this below (in section 3).

XXX “The villain is punished”. Here too a certain degree of displacement is to be allowed for, but Propp’s initial exemplification, “the villain is shot”, reminds us just how closely Homer’s epic adheres to the scheme.

XXXI “The hero is married and ascends the throne”, taken in connection with Propp’s subcategory 5 “[if] a married hero loses his wife, the marriage is resumed as the result of a quest”.

The closeness of the fit is quite remarkable. And yet, as if to remind us that we are dealing with a carefully crafted construct, not an original folk-tale (whatever that is), functions XII *bis* to XIII *bis*, which in Propp’s scheme are repeated in the second half of the story from the first, actually have no direct counterpart in the first half of the *Odyssey*, which also lacks any equivalent of I–XIII from the first part of the folk-tale. How are we to explain this?

My answer would resort to the well-known paradox<sup>18</sup>, symbolised by the moly plant in *Odyssey* 10, that the poet marginalises the folk-tale and the fantastic even (or, indeed, especially) in his hero’s wanderings through a locale which clearly derives from the Otherworld and its fairy mistresses. He will concede to the values and ethos of the folk-tale no more than that bare minimum. By beginning his epic with the Telemachy and then having Odysseus narrate his own adventures as story within story, Homer has frac-

<sup>18</sup> See the article cited in n. 11, p. 29 n. 11.

tured and refashioned the original folk-tale sequences, so that the hero's encounter with a helper figure (Hermes) in Book Ten occurs at an apparently late stage, so late that its original function is very well disguised and has already been anticipated by Menelaus' account of his meeting with the Old Man of the Sea (another story within a story) in *Odyssey* 4.<sup>19</sup> But when Odysseus is safely back in the real world, then the poet can, with equivalent safety, allow his narrative to be determined by the folk-tale pattern of the retardation, because the folk-tale does not otherwise loom large in this portion of his epic.

3. As we have just seen, disguise features significantly in Propp's schema ("The hero returns home unrecognised... is recognised, ... is given a new appearance"). It is a common idea in folk-tale that the hero absents himself for some time and then returns disguised in order to test a variety of human feelings: for instance, the genuineness of a girl's love, a friend's generosity, the fidelity of those near and dear to him, be it his servants, relatives or, especially, his wife<sup>20</sup>. Such a motive is not directly used in the second half of the *Odyssey*, where the hero's disguise is primarily a means whereby he can infiltrate his own palace without detection and thus a matter of life and death meant to preserve him from the suitors. But the folk-tale motif does appear sporadically: at *Od.* 16.306ff., for instance, which pictures Odysseus planning to test the fidelity of his slaves; or at 17.360ff., where Athena urges him to gather gifts of bread from the suitors and thereby discover who among them are righteous and who the reverse. Most problematically of all, at 24.244ff. Odysseus tests his father. And at 23.174ff., Penelope tests Odysseus himself ("the tester put to the test"). One of the earliest extant instances of the pattern of the tested wife is the story of Cephalus and his wife Procris, attributed to Pherecydes *FGrHist* 3 F34 and already interpreted as some type of source for the *Odyssey* by Rhys Carpenter<sup>21</sup>. In this narrative the hero, having absented himself for the folk-tale figure of seven years<sup>22</sup>, then returns in disguise to seduce his wife with offers of finery. The version of this story offered by Ovid *Met.* 7.690ff., with Cephalus' former mistress

<sup>19</sup> For the similarities between the two episodes see, for instance, the article cited in n. 1, p. 23 n. 72.

<sup>20</sup> See Joseph Russo's commentary on *Od.* 17.306ff., and W.W.-Krapp's article s.v. 'Die treue Frau' in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (5.203ff.).

<sup>21</sup> As above (n. 3) p. 129f. n.

<sup>22</sup> Literally ἐπὶ ἑτὶ ὀκτώ, i.e. "for seven years and in the eighth", for which folk-tale figure see "CQ" 54, 2004, p. 608 n. 17, adding to the references M. C. Lyons, *The Arabian Epic: Heroic and oral story-telling*, ii. (Cambridge 1995) p. 464, and K. Pöge-Alder in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* s.v. 'Sieben' (12.646ff.).

Aurora instilling jealousy in his heart and disguising him in order to facilitate the test of marital fidelity, was ingeniously recognised as the central source of Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto for Mozart's *Così fan tutte* by Ernst Gombrich<sup>23</sup>: "the same fervour of rejection, the same insistence just to the point when fidelity gives way". That opera's plot has surprisingly been compared<sup>24</sup> with that of another opera, Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*, in a way that can perhaps illuminate the *Odyssey*. For what all three works have in common is the notion of a surprise return home – with the intention of testing – undertaken by men absent, or supposedly absent, at war. In the case of Lucretia, no disguise is involved, and all the wives tested are found fallible save one. In that of *Così fan tutte*, where disguise does feature, the fiancées are initially faithful but are soon found wanting. If one then turns to the *Odyssey* one encounters a hero returning from war in disguise and finding his wife faithful. But within the poem itself that tale of mortal fidelity is contrasted on the divine level with Demodocus' inset tale of Ares and Aphrodite, where the wife is found faithless by the returning husband – who has only pretended to be away – in bed with Ares, god of war. The juxtaposition of these two stories supplies the required contrast, between some husbands returning to find their wives faithful and others finding them faithless, which is encountered in the story of Lucretia. The *Odyssey* further provides a third story of a husband returning home – this time again from war – to find his wife unfaithful. This is the story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, which recurs throughout the poem – a contrast here with the song of Demodocus – as a foil to the story of Odysseus' family<sup>25</sup>. So both the mortal and the divine levels of the epic show us contrasts in men returning to find their wives faithful or not.

Shakespeare's treatment of the *Rape of Lucrece* records the crucial role of Brutus at the story's climax. As his name suggests, this figure is one of folk-tale's 'unpromising heroes'<sup>26</sup>, who pretends to be stupid, a relevant consideration, since such unpromising heroes often resort to disguise, like

<sup>23</sup> In "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" 17, 1954, 372.

<sup>24</sup> By Anthony Holden, not, as one might expect, in his book on Da Ponte, *The Man who wrote Mozart* (London 2006), but in the course of a television programme on the same librettist first aired during Mozart's centenary year (2007).

<sup>25</sup> For the function as 'foil' of these references to Agamemnon and his family within the epic see, e.g., Hölscher (above, n. 1), pp. 297ff.

<sup>26</sup> On the unpromising hero see n. 17 above. Relevant examples include the prince who "is deliberately masquerading as a bald man or scald head" and the hero who "will disguise his horse with the skin of some peasant's beast [and] will himself exchange clothes with the peasant and pull a sheep's bladder over his locks" (D. A. Miller, *The Epic Hero*, Baltimore 2000, p. 247).



Odysseus. The pregnant language used by Shakespeare in this context is significant (*Lucrece* 1814-5): “But now he throws that shallow habit by, / Wherein deep policy did him disguise”. The ambivalence of the English word “habit” will draw us into the next stage of the argument. For folk-tale experts<sup>27</sup> have long been interested in the truth conveyed by such proverbial expressions as “clothes make the man”<sup>28</sup>, and in the relationship between an individual’s outer garments and inner personality, the extent to which the former can symbolise the latter, and the degree to which a change in clothing can reflect or even induce a change of character. Disguise and clothing are closely related themes in the *Odyssey*, and tie in with the further theme of appearance and reality.

So regularly is the theme of “identity concealed” associated with Odysseus in the poem that I am inclined to connect it with the magic powers of metamorphosis with which his grandfather Autolycus was credited. Just as Odysseus’ transformation after bathing at *Od.* 6.224ff. may represent a toned-down version of the motif of literal rejuvenation, so disguise may count as a rationalisation of the power of shape-changing attributed to Autolycus, and, indeed, in a few late authors, to Odysseus himself<sup>29</sup>. However that may be, clothes are certainly an important and recurrent theme in the *Odyssey*: perhaps a more complex and problematic theme than is generally realised. The clothing which Calypso provides for the hero on his departure from her island are carefully introduced as a theme and prepared for (5.167, 364), but when the crisis (and the storm) comes, they prove more bane than boon, and have to be discarded (*ib.* 322, 343). Odysseus thus turns up naked on Scheria, in a scene which consequently has implications of renewal and

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, K. Horn’s article s.v. ‘Kleidung’ in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (7. 1432ff.), esp. the opening perception that “Kleidung kann den Menschen sowohl körperlich und seelisch verändern als auch – in ihrer Eigenschaft als ‘zweite Haut’ – der wahren Persönlichkeit entsprechen”, or the observation (1433) that “ ‘Kleidung ist das Symbol des Menschen, der sie trägt’ steht gegen die Meinung dass der Mensch durch seine Qualitäten und nicht nach seine Kleidung bewertet werden soll”. Also 1436: “Da das Volksmärchen gerne Inneres in Äusseres übersetzt, spielt die Kleidung in ihm eine überaus wichtige Rolle... Sie wird als Ausdruck der Persönlichkeit betrachtet und dient so weitgehend zur Identitätsbestimmung des Helden und der Heldin”.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. H.- J. Uther’s article s. v. ‘Kleider machen Leute’ in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (7.1425ff.). An instance that recurred to me in the course of writing this article: the demoted hotel doorman (played by Emil Jannings) in F.W. Murnau’s famous silent film of 1924 *Der Letzte Mann* seems to fear that if he loses possession of the gold-braded and -buttoned coat which symbolises his former employment, he will sacrifice not only his job but his very identity.

<sup>29</sup> For Autolycus and Odysseus as shape changers see P.M.C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford 1990) p. 222.

even rebirth. Nausicaa supplies him with a fresh set of clothes, but these too lead to complications, provoking an awkward question from Queen Arete and being thematically linked to a marriage (with Nausicaa) that never materialises. The clothing may seem to restore the hero to himself, being analogous in this respect to the function of clothes at the end of Demodocus' song (*Od.* 8.360ff.) where Aphrodite's assumption of garments on her island of Paphos that make her a wonder to behold symbolises the end of her humiliation. But Odysseus still conceals his true identity for a while. He finally leaves the Phaeacians and their island once more freshly kitted out, but on arrival at Ithaca finds, yet again, that he must abandon his garments, this time for a beggar's rags. Finally, having stripped off these rags to slay the suitors, Odysseus moves into the climactic encounter with, and recognition by, his wife, without the benefit of the bath and the change of clothing for which the narrative has been carefully preparing us, with scenes such as the reception of Telemachus and Pisistratus in Pylos at 3.48ff.

Given the ambiguities and complexities that attach themselves to the theme of clothing in the Odyssean narrative, perhaps this absence of the expected climax is just as well. As we have seen, the motif of clothing is bound up with another of the poem's themes, the issue of identity and its concealment<sup>30</sup>, and a final picture of the wife clothing her newly recognised husband may consequently have seemed inappropriate and simplistic. Something more unusual and less predictable may have been preferred, the characteristically cunning and ingenious device of the bed, the question and answer session concerning which is so informative about both Odysseus and Penelope – no better proof of their well-matched qualities could be devised. And so the themes of clothing and disguise finally peter out and fade away, yielding place to this more significant concern<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> For the issues of appearance and reality ("Schein und Sein") in folk-tale see the article by H. Gerndt, *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* s.v. (11.1309ff.).

<sup>31</sup> Perhaps it is significant that the climactic symbol of Odysseus' ingenuity in the poem should be the Wooden Horse (cf. my remarks in "SO" 75, 2000, 59ff.), which is the epitome of disguise in the sense of hidden identity, involving a being which seems one thing on the outside and another on the inside.