

Her Armour: A Representation of Feminine Virtue in Homeric Epic

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis surveys occurrences of the Greek abstract noun *aidōs* and related semantic terms in relation to female characters in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The goal of this endeavour is to create a framework within which to discuss how *aidōs* as a concept is construed for female characters and is distinct from the model for males established by traditional androcentric scholarship. In masculine contexts, the concept of *aidōs* more regularly indicates either an emotional experience of shame or a feeling of respect for one's superiors. For a female character, however, *aidōs* represents a virtue or an attribute signaling her modesty and self-restraint. The label *aidoiē*, the adjectival form of the noun *aidōs*, indicates a woman who is highly valued. Her beauty, her skill at weaving, her efficient management of the household are all qualities for which she is respected and which she must possess in order to be recognized as *aidoiē*. It is her ability to reserve and direct these qualities to the exclusive benefit of her male guardian, however, whether husband or father, which reveals her internalization of *aidōs* as a virtue. Having established the parameters of acceptable behaviour for the *aidoiē gunē*, this study allows for and initiates a more precise discussion of the characterization of female figures who adhere to, and who diverge from, this ideal.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It has long been recognized that *aidōs*, along with a group of related terms, designates a system of honour or shame which reflects the unique moral knowledge of the characters of the Homeric poems. Most of the traditional scholarship on the subject, however, is largely androcentric and presents a code of *aidōs* which is only relevant in masculine contexts of war and politics. The goal of this thesis is to redress this omission by providing a parallel model which recognizes the special significance of a code of *aidōs* for the feminine. The identity of a female character is intimately connected to her place within the home. As a result, her honour and her value are judged predominantly by the loyalty she demonstrates to both her natal household and later to her husband and his household. Her daily completion of household tasks, her beauty and physical, as well as verbal, demonstrations of modesty are all indicators of her worth.

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on identifying the qualities possessed by the *aidoiē gunē*, 'the woman who possesses *aidōs*'. I employ a post-structuralist philological approach in examining numerous occurrences of the adjective *aidoiē* to determine the breadth of its meaning for Homeric females. This analysis yields a spectrum of activities by which one can assess both the degree of a female character's compliance and/or her noncompliance with the

idealized standard of the *aidoiē gunē*. Unlike the heroic male, the female is expected to internalize fully *aidōs* as an immutable aspect of her character. Possessed as an attribute, *aidōs* signals a woman's ability to protect herself from aspersions of shame by physically delimiting herself, particularly from men, and by denying her own subjectivity.

The *aidoiē gunē* is marked in a number of special ways. Because the anxiety about female fidelity represented in the poems places a great deal of meaning on the female body, the fully clothed female form is one of the most potent signifiers of feminine *aidōs*. The covering of the female body is accomplished not only through clothing but also by means of sequestering and by the presence of female attendants when a woman is in the company of men other than her husband. Chapter Two explores the symbolic importance of the idealization of the cloaked female. The poems must also reconcile the periodic necessity of female nudity, represented in scenes of bathing and sex which are crucial to the poems' narratives, with this ideal. This second chapter, therefore, also discusses the parameters within which female nudity can safely be displayed.

The third and final chapter of this thesis confronts the special case of Helen. This character confounds any attempts to argue a simplistic dichotomy between the *aidoiē gunē* and her opposite, the *anaideiē gunē*. Helen is assessed separately by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* according to how each poem construes her responsibility for her departure from Sparta with Paris. The cloaking of the female implies more than a simple concern for modesty. As I mentioned, the

aidoiē gunē cloaks herself both physically and metaphorically. The physical cloaking is accomplished through voluminous clothing, the presence of female attendants and by confinement within domestic space. Metaphorically, the *aidoiē gunē* allows the restriction of her subjectivity; this aspect of compliance with *aidōs* becomes particularly significant in any considerations of the character of Helen.

CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of *Aidōs* and Its Significance for the Homeric Female

Introduction

The intent of this thesis is to come to a clearer understanding of the concept of *aidōs* in the context of the feminine in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Though the concept of *aidōs* has received much attention over the years, its role in helping to define the female characters in these poems has been largely overlooked.¹ In fact, *aidōs* has a special and particular relevance for the women in the poems. Through her possession of *aidōs* as a positive attribute a woman indicates her willingness to be restricted by a code of behaviour dictated by the masculine. This study must therefore rely, in large part, on the examination of occurrences of the adjective *aidoios* rather than on the noun *aidōs* and the verb *aideomai*. A survey of the evidence reveals that a substantial twenty-six of the forty-five uses of the adjective have reference to female characters.² This is surprising not only because of the infrequency with which women appear in the poems but also in comparison to the dearth of references to women in uses of the

¹ The work of Cairns 1993 represents the most recent and most thorough treatment of this subject to date. His discussion of the relevance of *aidōs* for female characters in Homer is limited, however, to a scant six pages (120-5) demonstrating that there was a need for the kind of work I propose here.

² If I include the single use of the comparative '*aidoioteros*' (*Od.* 11.360) and the one adverbial usage '*aidoios*' (*Od.* 19.243) that still gives a total of twenty-six out of forty-seven examples. Of the other nineteen examples which do not refer to women, fourteen refer to beggars, suppliants or guests. The final five occurrences refer to men apparently outside of these types of contexts.

noun and the verb. Only two of the twenty-five occurrences of the noun *aidōs* refer to women and a mere seven of the forty-three uses of the verb *aideomai*.³ These numbers seem to reflect a trend in the poems of avoiding representation of females experiencing the emotion of shame. The poet(s) instead prefers to depict his female characters as the possessors of *aidōs* as a positive *attribute* or virtue. Women are most often represented either as possessing this quality which prompts them to avoid situations or behaviour which would cause them shame, or alternatively, they are depicted as lacking *aidōs*, meaning that they lack both the positive quality of shame and all of the respect and good renown which accompanies the possession of this quality. In fact, even in episodes in which a female character is the subject of the verb *aideomai*, the sense is prospective and indicates an activity from which a woman refrains for fear of incurring shame rather than representing an actual experience of shame.⁴ The only real expression of feminine shame in the poems is found in physical reactions such as hiding or cloaking which demonstrate this experience.⁵

It was not until I encountered a passage in the work of Gloria Ferrari, who was struggling to come to grips with the representation of *aidōs* for the feminine

³ The two occurrences of *aidōs* in feminine contexts appear at *Il.* 24. 111 and *Od.* 8.324 while the seven uses of the verb *aideomai* appear at *Od.* 6.66, *Od.* 6.329, *Od.* 16.75, *Od.* 18.184, *Od.* 19.527, *Il.* 22. 82 and *Il.* 24.90.

⁴ See Cairns 1993: 48 who discusses the inhibitory nature of *aidōs* in certain contexts: “[*aidōs*] prevents the performance of the action expressed in the infinitive. *Aidōs* thus involves a check of some kind; it modifies the conduct of those affected.”

⁵ Ferrari 1990: 190 demonstrates in her study of late archaic and classical vase paintings that “*aidōs*, then is made visible by the downcast glance and the act of covering oneself.” Though this idea will be touched on in this chapter it will be more fully addressed in chapter 2.

that I was finally able to articulate the disparity with its usage in masculine contexts.⁶ The stumbling block for her and for myself is contained in Aristotle's discussion of *aidōs* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

Modesty cannot properly be described as a virtue, for it seems to be a feeling rather than a disposition; at least it is defined as a kind of fear of disrepute, and indeed in its effects it is akin to the fear of danger; for people who are ashamed blush, while those in fear of their lives turn pale; both therefore appear to be in a sense bodily affections, and this indicates a feeling rather than a disposition.

The feeling of modesty is not suitable to every age, but only to the young. We think it proper for the young to be modest, because as they live by feeling they often err, and modesty may keep them in check; and we praise young people when they are modest, though no one would praise an older man for being shamefaced, since we think he ought not to do anything of which he need be ashamed. For indeed the virtuous man does not feel shame, if shame is the feeling caused by base actions; since one ought not to do base actions ...and so one never ought to feel shame. Shame is a mark of a base man, and springs from a character capable of doing a shameful act... Modesty can only be virtuous conditionally—in the sense that a good man would be ashamed *if* he were to do so and so; but the virtues are not conditional. And though shamelessness and not shrinking from shameful actions is base, this does not prove that to be ashamed when one does shameful acts is virtuous....

(Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* IV.ix)⁷

⁶ See Ferrari 1990. The explicit task of this article was not, in fact, to identify *aidōs* for the feminine, but to examine the representation of this idea on late archaic and classical vase paintings. This concept, however, is largely (though not exclusively) communicated through the depiction of the cloaked female. Inevitably, she was forced to confront some of the same concerns about *aidōs* that I address here.

⁷ This translation is taken from Rackham 1934 (Loeb edition).

There are four key points Aristotle makes that will be of importance for our discussion:

1. modesty (*aidōs*) is not a virtue but an emotion.
2. *aidōs* is appropriate only to the young, who deserve praise for their observation of this emotion. Furthermore, *aidōs* helps to keep the young in check.
3. a man who feels shame upon committing a shameful act is not therefore virtuous because he is ashamed of how he acted.
4. *aidōs* is conditionally virtuous, but virtues cannot be conditional, therefore *aidōs* is not a virtue.

This summary represents a view of *aidōs* that is relevant for *men*, in the Homeric poems. Though *aidōs* occasionally indicates a masculine attribute/virtue in the poems, the predominant usage for males appears in descriptions of the occurrence of *aidōs* as an emotion. Aristotle excludes women, for whom the identification of *aidōs* as a virtue would be specifically relevant, from his discussion. Because *aidōs* is not an appropriate virtue for grown men it is not a virtue at all. Despite this assertion, he indicates that *aidōs* is an appropriate emotion for young men which helps to keep them in check. This would seem to indicate that young men were expected to be in a perpetual experience of shame, an experience which prevented them from doing shameful things. It is only by understanding that *aidōs* is indeed also a virtue/attribute that its effectiveness as a deterrent to shameful behaviour can be appreciated.

Among other groups including suppliants and guests whom the Greeks felt needed to be kept 'in check' by *aidōs* are women. That *aidōs* has special relevance for female characters in Homer becomes astoundingly clear once this

discussion is freed from the limitations imposed by the assumption of *aidōs* as an emotion alone. This is not to say that *aidōs* does not function in the context of the feminine as an emotion; it does. As I will show, however, in cases where *aidōs* is indicated for female characters through use of the verb, the emotional experience involves only an awareness that shame could be prompted if they were to proceed with a certain course of action. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to avoid the current discussion on the topic of shame and its relationship to *aidōs* since the experience of shame is often represented for female characters through physical reactions even if it is not overtly expressed through the use of the verb. What follows, therefore, is a short summary of the development of the discussion on shame and guilt in the Homeric texts.

Shame vs. Guilt

The debate concerning the identification of the society presented to us in the Homeric poems as a 'shame-culture' rather than a 'guilt-culture' has been at issue for some time. E.R. Dodds had predecessors who were concerned by what they saw as a lack of conscience or morality in the Homeric characters but he was the first, so far as I know, to label the Homeric construct a 'shame-culture'.⁸ In his work *The Greeks and the Irrational* he argued that the Homeric characters lacked any sense of responsibility, displacing blame from themselves onto the

⁸Dodds 1951.

gods.⁹ Arthur Adkins in his *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*, granted the Homeric hero a sort of basic notion of responsibility but denied that this concept contained a moral component.¹⁰ More recently M. Gagarin in his article entitled "Morality in Homer" has argued for a limited morality, one which can be detected by an apparent lack of self-interest on the part of the actor.¹¹

Since the inception of this discussion when the Homeric hero was denied any concept of moral or even personal responsibility, what some scholars have referred to as conscience, he has gradually been reinvested with this capacity. The final reclamation of his conscience, a recognition that the Homeric hero is willing to accept responsibility for his actions and an awareness that he has acted contrary to a set of internalized values, has been facilitated in large part by the work of Douglas Cairns and Bernard Williams. Cairns has attacked the idea that the Homeric hero lacked a conscience and has demonstrated that the concept of *aidōs* depends upon the presence of both internal and external sanctions. What

⁹Dodds 1951: 13 says that "all departures from normal human behaviour whose causes are not immediately perceived, whether by the subject's own consciousness or by the observation of others, are ascribed to a supernatural agency."

¹⁰Adkins 1960. He acknowledges that the Homeric character accepted responsibility for his actions (14), but he then arrives at the conclusion that "as soon as a crisis forces the essential framework of values into view, the competitive values are so much more powerful than the cooperative that the situation is not treated in terms of quiet values at all; and it is precisely with such crises that the concept of moral responsibility is concerned, it is evident that such terms as *aidōs* and *aeikes*, however useful to society in general, cannot affect the development of moral responsibility, for they are ineffective at the crucial moment" (46). Mary Scott, 1980, follows Adkins' lead in her treatment of *aidōs* and *nemesis*. An article by Richard Gaskin, 1990, represents a development in ideas about the concept of personal responsibility in Homer but does not really address the concept of morality.

¹¹Gagarin 1987: 288. He provides a working definition: "In essence I shall use "morality" to designate that sense of consideration for others not closely tied to rational self-interest, but without the specially privileged status of pure morality. Rather than seeing morality and self-

this means is that the hero does not simply experience *aidōs* upon being caught. His reaction does not have to be dependent on the disapproval of people other than himself. The hero's experience of shame can be provoked by what he perceives to be a deviation from his own internally held set of values.

Previously, it had been held that the distinction between shame and guilt was that shame was based solely on the presence of external sanctions while guilt was a response to internal sanctions. Having disproved the validity of this distinction Cairns proposes that the "criteria for guilt and conscience are satisfied" by *aidōs* and other related words.¹² Because he finds that he can determine little effective difference between the concepts of shame and guilt, he therefore argues that *aidōs* must contain an idea of guilt as well as of shame.¹³ In defiance of those who have reserved the concept of guilt for Western, Christianized cultures, he firmly locates its presence in the Homeric texts.¹⁴ I am more inclined, however, because of the burden of Christian rhetoric concerning this emotion, to accept the argument of Bernard Williams in his *Shame and Necessity*. Williams, upon proving that the experience of shame is, like guilt, dependent upon the presence of a set of internalized values, instead argues that

interest as discrete opposites I shall treat them as the ends of a continuous spectrum, along which we may think of a gradual extension of concern for oneself to concern for others."

¹²Cairns 1993: 42.

¹³Cairns 1993: 25.

¹⁴Cairns 1993: 33. He writes: "Thus the concealed props of the antithesis are laid bare; it still rests on a dichotomy between external and internal sanctions, but supervenient on this criterion is the further thesis that guilt and conscience, and therefore truly internal sanctions, can exist only in societies in which the child is socialized by parents who stress the kind of imperatives, the absolute Good and Evil, which are hypostatized in the figure of a fatherly Deity."

aidōs is representative solely of a concept of shame, without thereby privileging a concept of guilt.¹⁵ In this way we are able to acknowledge the presence of conscience in the Homeric character while avoiding the prospect of invoking Christian sentiment which may muddy our understanding of *aidōs* in its Homeric setting. Shame is not the only meaning conveyed by the word *aidōs*, as I will proceed to demonstrate, but I will continue to deny the usefulness of employing the term guilt in reference to the Homeric texts.

Aidōs

In addition to the concept of shame, *aidōs* can be defined by such descriptors as 'reverence', 'awe'¹⁶ 'respect', and 'regard', along with 'modesty', 'bashfulness' and 'propriety'.¹⁷ This list of terms indicates two distinct types of usage. The first group includes the meanings 'reverence', 'awe', 'respect', 'regard' and the basic meaning of shame. This may, at first, seem an odd combination but "the notions of shame and respect are not totally unrelated; to

¹⁵Williams 1993: 91. *Contra* Cairns: "even though some reactions in those societies were structured in the same way as our reactions of guilt, they were not simply guilt if they were not separately recognized as such; just as shame is not the same when it does not have guilt as a contrast." Also, in order that there be no misunderstanding about issues of primitivism, he adds: "the truth about Greek societies, and in particular the Homeric, is not that they failed to recognize any of the reactions that we associate with guilt, but that they did not make of those reactions the special thing that they become when they are separately recognized as guilt."

¹⁶ For a discussion of *aidōs* meaning 'awe' and, more particularly, 'religious awe', see Hooker 1987. I am, however, inclined to agree with Cairns who, on *aidōs* as 'religious awe', says "not only is this not the original meaning, it is not even a regular meaning (1993: 57, n.44).

¹⁷Cunliffe, R. J. 1963. *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, ad loc. See also Liddell and Scott 1968. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ad loc.

feel inhibitory shame (*aidōs* is always prospective and inhibitory in the earliest authors) is to picture oneself as losing honour, while to show respect is to recognize the honour of another."¹⁸ Furthermore

to be concerned with one's own honour is to envisage oneself as one among others, also bearers of honour; thus to limit one's own claim to honour is to accept one's status *vis-à-vis* others, to inhibit self-assertion is to recognize how such conduct would impinge upon the honour of others, and to experience inhibition before the audience whose disapproval might lead to impairment of one's honour is clearly akin to the inhibitory self-consciousness one might feel in a situation in which one was forced to consider one's own status in relation to that of another person.¹⁹

This first group of terms is indicative of the emotional experience of *aidōs*. As suggested here by Cairns, *aidōs* occurs either in the form of respect, as an acknowledgement of another's status, or, when shame, as a recognition of the debasement of one's status in one's own eyes, or the eyes of another, for having transgressed some commonly held standard of behaviour. To possess *aidōs* as an attribute, therefore, is to be respected for one's recognition of the limitation of one's own status or worth. In addition, to be a possessor of *aidōs* also implies that one's behaviour is restricted.²⁰ This meaning is implicit in the second group of terms which includes 'modesty', 'propriety' and 'bashfulness'. This second set

¹⁸ Cairns 1993: 13.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ See Cairns 1993: 48, quoted on this in n. 4.

of meanings clearly demonstrates why *aidōs* is an attribute which is not desired by males and why Aristotle denies that it is a virtue.

As I will soon show, *aidōs* is an attribute which is possessed by young men but it is expected that they will set it aside when they come of age. I must, therefore, question when Cairns says that “the restraint provided by *aidōs* is an emotional one, and this is borne out by its location in the *thumos*...”²¹ Cairns cites passages that occur at *Iliad* 15.561 and 15.661 to prove the veracity of this statement. The first of these is a common exhortation to the Achaean troops, on this occasion given by Telamonian Ajax.²² He says:

ὦ φίλοι, ἀνέρες ἔστε, καὶ αἰδῶ θέσθ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ,
ἀλλήλους τ' αἰδεῖσθε κατὰ κρατερὰς ὑσμίνας.
αἰδομένων δ' ἀνδρῶν πλέονες σοοὶ ἢ πέφονται·
φευγόντων δ' οὔτ' ἄρ κλέος ὄρνυται οὔτε τις ἀλκή.

O friends, be men, and place *aidōs* in your *thumos*,
feel *aidōs* for others in the fierce battles
for when men feel *aidōs* more men come through safely
and no glory or courage are stirred up by their flight. (*Il.* 15.561-4)²³

The verb used in the first line quoted above is a form of *tithemi*, which means ‘I put’ or ‘I place’. *Aidōs*, therefore, does not reside permanently in a man’s *thumos*, instead it must be set there. In fact, if *aidōs* were imagined to be ever-present in a man’s *thumos*, then we could not describe *aidōs* as an emotion since the

²¹ Cairns 1993: 49.

²² The second passage Cairns mentions is a variation on the same theme. This same construction also occurs at *Il.* 5.529-32 and *Il.* 13.121-22.

²³ Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

experience of an emotion is not normally perpetual but must be provoked by certain stimuli. Where *aidōs* does have a permanent residence is in the female, not as an emotion but as a virtue.

Aidōs is a broad concept. I have no intention, here, of undertaking an exhaustive examination of all the instances in which evidence of this concept appears.²⁴ Instead I will proceed by examining aspects of *aidōs* which illuminate the nature of feminine identity in Homer. The passages I have chosen to consider are intended to point out individual components of this multivalent concept. The aim of this first chapter is to outline some of the characteristic behaviours of the *aidoiē gunē*. Certain ideas about *aidōs* will be important for our understanding of the functioning of this concept in the context of the feminine. Among these is the idea that shame/*aidōs* is connected with being seen, an idea which will become important in the second chapter's consideration of nudity and sexuality. Also important for this study is the connection between *aidōs* and attractiveness. This component of *aidōs* is less overt in positive manifestations of *aidōs* but regularly occurs in negative constructions through the use of adjectives such as *aischros* and *aischos* which mean both 'ugly' and 'shameless'. When *aidōs* is used as an attribute it often implies an idea of attractiveness for its possessor. This latent meaning of *aidōs* is directly tied up with another of its meanings, that of good reputation. Nausikaa has a special concern for *aidōs*, *aidōs* which will prevent her from marring her present good reputation in her time of youthful

²⁴ For a thorough treatment of *aidōs*, especially for its analysis in masculine contexts, see Cairns 1993.

uncertainty and *aidōs* which will remind others also to be wary of doing anything to sully her chances of marriage. For older women, to be labelled *aidoiē* is to be given recognition or respect for having let *aidōs* govern their married careers. Women like Arete and Eurydike, Nestor's wife, are identified as *aidoiē* both for being possessors of *aidōs* and for thereby being deserving of *aidōs* from others. All the traditional meanings of *aidōios*, such as 'respected', 'honoured', 'modest' and 'grave', can still provide useful translations since it becomes clear that this concept is not reducible to a single meaning. One of the goals of this discussion is to attempt to discover for what qualities an *aidoiē gunē* is respected. What kind of portrait should be conjured up in our minds when we confront a female character labelled *aidoiē*?

The experience of shame does not have to depend upon the presence of an actual audience. One can experience shame at a transgression of the internalized, culturally imprinted set of values which have been absorbed and made one's own. It is generally agreed, however, that "the basic experience connected with shame is that of being seen, inappropriately, by the wrong people, in the wrong condition."²⁵ The basic *reaction* upon experiencing shame is, as Williams points out, to cover oneself or to hide.²⁶ This instinctive reaction is displayed by

²⁵Williams 1993: 78. This feature of *aidōs*/shame is also pointed out by Cairns 1993: 14-15 and Taylor 1985: 60ff.

²⁶Williams 1993: 78.

Odysseus in *Odyssey* 8. Upon hearing Demodokos sing of the adventures of the Greeks at Troy, Odysseus is overwhelmed and begins to cry:

Ταυτ' ἄρ' ἄοιδὸς ἀεῖδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
 πορφύρεον μέγα φᾶρος ἔλών χερσὶ στιβαρῆσι
 κάκ κεφαλῆς εἴρυσσε, κάλυψε δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα·
 αἶδετο γὰρ Φαίηκας ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβων.

The renowned bard sang of such things; Odysseus, however,
 lifting his large and brightly coloured mantle in his powerful hands
 drew it over his head and hid his handsome face;
 for he felt shamed before the Phaiakians at the tears pouring down
 beneath his brow. (*Od.* 8.83-6)

It is important to point out about this passage that Odysseus' shame does not stem from the fact of the tears themselves but rather from a concern that his misery might be perceived by his host as dissatisfaction with his hospitality.²⁷ That this is the source of Odysseus' shame is confirmed by Odysseus' statement at *Od.* 19.118-22 where he suggests that someone might feel *nemesis* at him for crying in someone else's house. *Nemesis* is to be understood as the reaction at a breach of *aidōs* and will be used at times in this discussion to indicate where such a breach has occurred and to demonstrate what *aidōs* should have prevented in a given instance. Cairns explains that "*aidōs*, then, foresees and seeks to forestall *nemesis*,"²⁸ and furthermore that "there is always the possibility, then, that *nemesis* may refer to a breach of *aidōs*, even when the latter is not mentioned, and

²⁷Cf. Cairns 1993: 111 on this point.

²⁸ Cairns 1993: 52.

even in cases in which it does not obviously refer to one of the particular contexts in which *aidōs* regularly occurs."²⁹ Williams has observed that:

the reaction in Homer to someone who has done something that shame should have prevented is *nemesis*, a reaction that can be understood, according to the context, as ranging from shock, contempt, and malice to righteous rage and indignation. It should not be thought that *nemesis* and its related words are ambiguous. It is defined as a reaction, and what it psychologically consists of properly depends on what particular violation of *aidōs* it is a reaction to.³⁰

Nemesis is the reaction the goddess Thetis hopes to avoid. In Book 24 of the *Iliad*, Thetis displays the same basic desire to hide that was demonstrated by Odysseus before the Phaiakians. The goddess is in mourning for the imminent death of her son and therefore does not think it fitting to be in the company of others. When Zeus summons her, therefore, she expresses the shame this will bring her. She says:

τίπτε με κείνος άνωγε μέγας θεός; αιδέομαι δέ
μίσησθ' άθανάτοισιν, έχω δ' άχε' άκριτα θυμῶ.

What does that great god desire of me? For I am ashamed
to be in the company of the immortals, for I have an unrelenting
grief in my heart. (*Il.* 24.90-91)

First of all, it should be noted that this apparent experience of shame is still prospective. *Aidōs* would have otherwise prevented her from joining the

²⁹ Cairns 1993: 53.

³⁰ Williams 1993: 80.

company of the gods had Zeus not summoned her. The audience is therefore cognizant of the fact that what she will proceed to do is shameful and that she commits the act unwillingly. Thetis' experience of shame may be prompted by a number of different sources. Her concern may be related to Odysseus' reasons for hiding his grief from his host. In other words, she may consider it shameful to display her grief before others because it might cause them unhappiness. Thetis' shame most likely stems from being seen in her grief.³¹ Zeus, in fact, expresses his regret for making Thetis reveal herself while in mourning but stresses that the urgency of the situation demanded it.³² Grief and the physical marks it left on the mourner were not considered to be aesthetically pleasing.

This type of aesthetic concern also motivates Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, to tell Penelope that she should stop crying:

ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος,
μηκέτι νῦν χροῖα καλὸν ἐναίρεο μηδέ τι θυμὸν
τῆκε πόσιν γοῶσα· νεμεσσῶμαί γε μὲν οὐδέν·

O *aidoiē* wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes,
no longer mar your beautiful skin now nor pine away your heart
for your husband, yet I feel no indignation towards you. (*Od.* 19.262-4)

Odysseus goes on to explain that even women whose husbands are less favoured by the gods mourn for them when they are lost. Nonetheless, there is an

³¹ I disagree with the suggestion made by Collins 1988: 33 that "her grief, although certainly appropriate to the death of Patroclus and the imminent mortality of her son, seems specifically in this passage to be connected with her ambiguous status in the divine community, whose *νέμεσις* at her appearance she anticipates, and which causes her grief."

³² Cf. *Il.* 24. 104-6.

acknowledgement here that blame could be assigned to Penelope. The primary reason that Penelope might deserve *nemesis* must be that she would discomfit her guest by her behaviour. The disguised Odysseus, however, does point out that she is making herself unattractive through her continued grieving. This constitutes a reason for *aidōs* but not in a straightforward way. Homer does not precisely construct ugliness as shameful but specifically in the context of the feminine a woman suffers a loss of *aidōs* as an attribute when her beauty is marred. By spoiling her looks a woman devalues herself, and *aidōs* can, in some ways, be seen as a measure of that worth.

An even more pronounced demonstration of the unsightliness of grief can be found in scenes of ritualized mourning. Part of the ritual behaviour of the mourner involved a form of physical defilement which included throwing dirt on oneself, scratching the skin and tearing at the hair. Achilles displays many of these symptoms when he mourns over the body of Patroklos:

τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα·
 ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἔλῶν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
 χεῦατο κακ κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ' ἤσχυνε πρόσωπον·
 νεκταρέῳ δὲ χιτῶνι μέλαιν' ἀμφίζανε τέφρη.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίησι μέγας μεγαλωστί τανυσθεὶς
 κείτο, φίλησι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἤσχυνε δαΐζων.

and a black cloud of grief hid him;
 and taking up the ash-dust in both his hands
 he poured it over his head and befouled his lovely face;
 he scattered black ashes over his heavenly tunic;
 and stretching himself out, awesome in his greatness, he
 lay down in the dirt, and tearing his hair with his dear hands he

disfigured himself. (*Il.* 18.22-27)³³

The verb I have translated as 'befouled' at line 24 and 'disfigured' at line 27 is *aischuno*. *Aischuno* and the adjectives *aischos* and *aischros* are often considered to be cognates of *aidōs* and frequently convey ideas of shame.³⁴ Thus, for Achilles to disfigure himself is, on some level, for him to shame himself. That is to say, under normal circumstances for Achilles to be seen in such a condition would be considered shameful.³⁵ In the context of mourning, however, Achilles' shame seems to be shrouded by the black cloud of grief which provides a figurative barrier from prying eyes.

³³This type of disfigurement seems almost to mimic the disfigurement which might have been incurred by the dead person. A great deal of concern was shown over the defilement of corpses which was seen to bring additional shame upon the dead person and his family, which is, in part, why Achilles' attempts to defile the corpse of Hector are such a great insult. At *Il.* 24. 418 Hermes, in disguise, reassures Priam that despite Achilles' efforts, the corpse of Hector has not been mutilated. See also the words of Iris to Achilles when she warns him that he will be shamed if he lets Patroklos' body be sport for the dogs: *Il.* 18.175-180. Priam at *Il.* 22.75-6 says that it is most pitiful for an old man to be mutilated by dogs in his genitals after death. Douglas 1966: 177 gives the example of the Nyakusa tribe who also cover themselves in filth upon the death of a loved one. She suggests that "a voluntary embrace of the symbols of death is a kind of prophylactic against the effects of death; the ritual enactment of death is a protection, not against death but against madness." Clader 1976: 17-18 points out that "for an epic hero, the thought of being prey to dogs before receiving a proper funeral seems to be a major threat; his heroic ethos may in fact require that he die in order to attain a place in epic, but it would be non-heroic to be eaten rather than honored with an appropriate funeral pyre. In other words, dogs often seem to represent an obstacle in the traditional hero's path to an honorable death."

³⁴ The etymological connection between *aidōs* and *aischuno*, *aischos* and *aischros* is not firmly established but it is nonetheless proposed by Cairns 1993: 4. The connection is also suggested by Chantraine 1990, *s.v.* *aischos*, though the link is not elaborated. It is, however, clear that these groups share the same semantic range. As to definitions, Cunliffe 1963, gives for *aischuno*, in addition to the meanings 'defile', 'mar', 'mutilate', 'disfigure' and 'despoil', meanings such as 'to bring shame upon', 'to put to shame' and, in the passive voice, 'to feel shame', and 'to feel shame at the prospect of'. For *aischos* meanings include: 'shame', 'disgrace', 'an occasion for shame or disgrace' and, in the neuter plural form, 'shameful deeds'. *Aischros* shares a similar range of meanings.

³⁵See Redfield 1975: 161 for a discussion of the aesthetic significance of dirt for ritual purification. See also Douglas 1966: 35 on dirt as 'matter out of place' and on ideas about pollution.

The notorious figure of Thersites, who attempts to reproach Agamemnon before the entire Greek army, provides a much discussed example of the connection between ugliness and shame.³⁶ He is described as the ugliest/most shameful (*aischistos*) man who came to Troy (*Il.* 2. 216). This identification is preceded by statements about his propensity for disorderly speech and his inappropriate conduct in arguing with kings, which includes saying anything to get a laugh out of the troops (*Il.* 2. 212-16). Directly *following* the statement about Thersites' status as *aischistos* is a description of his physical appearance. He is bandy-legged, lame in one foot, hunch-backed and has a pointy head (*Il.* 2. 217-19). The adjective *aischistos* should be understood as a comment on both his inappropriate/shameful behaviour and his ugly/shameful appearance. As Thalmann has noted "[Thersites'] grotesque ugliness...seems to play on the Greek tendency to regard physical appearance as a correlate of moral worth, and to relate both to social class (aristocrats, of course, being both good and handsome)."³⁷ Odysseus proceeds to punctuate his disgrace by threatening to beat him and strip the clothing off those parts which one would prefer were not "seen, inappropriately, by the wrong people, in the wrong condition," parts more

³⁶In his commentary on purification in Homer, Redfield 1975: 161 says about Thersites that "those who are dishonorable deserve ugliness and dirt as well; Thersites, who speaks without measure or order (*Il.*212-14), is appropriately ugly, lame and deformed (*Il.*216-19)." Thalmann 1988, however, argues that Thersites' role is more complicated than this. He understands Thersites as a scapegoat who mediates the social/class tension that has been generated by Agamemnon's testing of the troops. For further discussion of the character of Thersites see: Koulanakis 1999; and Vodoklys 1992: 38-48.

³⁷ Thalmann 1988: 15. See also, Austin 1994: 35 who asserts that "in the shame or, more correctly, the honor culture of archaic Greece, the beautiful was good, and ugliness a disgrace."

familiarly known as the genitals.³⁸ Odysseus delivers the beating but does not seem to denude him. The laughter prompted at this abuse is apparently sufficient measure of his current shaming and sufficient to reinforce his continuing status as shameless.

There is one further manifestation of the concept of *aidōs* which I will discuss before I proceed with a more systematic examination of the adjective *aidoios* and its relevance for the feminine. The concept of *aidōs* has a special relevance for young people in the poems. Telemachos, in particular, is characterized by his struggle to come to grips with the new expectations placed on him as he comes of age.³⁹ This struggle is largely characterized in terms of his changing relationship with *aidōs*. As a boy he had been expected to show *aidōs* to anyone older than himself.⁴⁰ In his travels to find news of his father, Telemachos is advised by Athena, in her guise as Mentor, that it is time to set *aidōs* aside (*Od.* 3. 14-16). As he becomes a man he must cease to feel shame at addressing his elders, especially at such critical times. His relationship to *aidōs* as a young child had been relatively unambiguous; *aidōs* ought to prevent him, wherever possible, from doing shameful things, one of which was speaking to his elders since he did not yet know how to speak appropriately.⁴¹ The confusion arises when he

³⁸*Il.* 2.260-4. The term for genitals used here is a form of the noun *aidōs*, the significance of which will be discussed in the second chapter of this thesis.

³⁹ Cf. Cairns 1993: 104.

⁴⁰ See *Od.* 3.22-24.

⁴¹ Odysseus, while in Phaiakia, is confronted by Euryalos who casts aspersions on Odysseus' athletic abilities. Odysseus responds to this rude remark by saying that Euryalos does not speak well (*ou kalon eeipeis*, *Od.* 8.166) and that some men are blessed with the ability to speak in public

begins to come of age as a man and is suddenly expected to assume a role of greater authority. As a result of his liminal position between man and boy, he has a heightened sensitivity to *aidōs*.⁴²

It is this heightened sensitivity to shame, to *aidōs*, that is one of the keys to understanding the role of *aidōs* in the context of the feminine in Homer. There is no point at which a female in the poems is expected to set aside *aidōs*. Her relationship to *aidōs*, however, like that of a male character, is not a static one but changes depending on her age. The same sensitivity to *aidōs* that was characterized by Telemachos can be seen to inform the behaviour of Nausikaa. She too is shown to be in a liminal state between *parthenos* (maiden) and *gunē* (wife/woman). Nausikaa's awareness of her eligibility for marriage, the prospect of her imminent transfer from the house of her father to that of her new husband, perhaps a growing awareness of the sexual implications inherent in this transference, all cause her to be particularly conscious of *aidōs*, especially in her dealings with men.

In *Odyssey* 6 Nausikaa is visited in a dream by the goddess Athena who tells her that she is being negligent in her duties, that she should take the washing to the beach so as to please her mother and father (*Od.* 6. 20-40). Athena

'without hesitation and with pleasing tact (*aidoi*)' (*Od.* 8.171-2), while others are pretty but have no sense. This is also one of the charges laid against Thersites, see above. On the significance of *sophrosyne* in restraining the actions of young men and on the relationship of this concept to *aidōs* and *nemesis* see North 1966: 5-6.

⁴² On the idea of liminality as negotiated through ritual Douglas 1966: 96 proposes that "danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state or the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others. The danger is controlled by ritual which precisely separates him from his old status, segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry to his new status."

tells her that this is the way to gain a good reputation. The goddess also explicitly connects this outing with the possibility of a wedding for Nausikaa. The next morning, however, Nausikaa proceeds to ask her father's permission to go on this outing but she does not make mention of her true motivation because:

αἶδετο γὰρ θαλερὸν γάμον ἐξονομῆναι
πατρὶ φίλω· ὁ δὲ πάντα νόει καὶ ἀμείβετο μύθῳ·

she was ashamed to speak of her impending marriage to her dear father; but he understood everything and replied.... (*Od.* 6. 66-67)⁴³

The fact that her father, Alkinoos, is said to understand everything despite the fact Nausikaa has neglected to mention that marriage is on her mind should alert us to the fact that other parties were also aware of her heightened sensitivity to *aidōs* and were perhaps themselves more acutely sensitized to her sensitivity during this liminal period. This is to say that other characters, her mother and father for instance, but also eligible bachelors, are conscious of the fact that Nausikaa's heightened vigilance in adhering to the code of behaviour dictated by *aidōs* should be answered by special attention to *aidōs* in their dealings with her.⁴⁴

⁴³ It should be noted that as in the case of Thetis, earlier in this chapter, Nausikaa's *aidōs* is prospective and not immediate. She feels *aidōs* to do something which is expressed in the infinitive. *Aidōs* therefore prevents her from doing the thing that would cause her shame. Even though expressed verbally, *aidōs* is actually working as an attribute, the possession of which prevents negative behaviour.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ferrari 1990: 192, who points out that "the appropriate display of *aidōs* imposes on those toward whom it is directed some form of restraint, resulting in immunity from insult, violence, or revenge for their subjects."

The *aidoiē gunē*

In order to gain a better appreciation of the ways in which *aidōs* functions in the context of the feminine in the Homeric poems, we must look at some examples. As I have already suggested, one use of a derivative of *aidōs* seems to have special weight in reference to the female characters, that of the adjective *aidoios*. A systematic examination of the use of *aidoios* is necessary in order to come to an understanding of the full range of what this adjective designates. Many of the occurrences of this adjective can be described as formulaic. Nevertheless, as David Claus points out:

First, the supposition that Homeric formulae are ordinarily perceived as fixed and unambiguous in meaning is at odds with the simple fact that they are used in the poems as a means of communication between individuals. From the point of view of function, therefore, formulae must be perceived by their speakers as capable of differing in meaning according to context, since intelligible speech cannot occur unless meaning is something only potential in words until used.⁴⁵

As I will demonstrate, *aidōs* and its derivatives provide a fertile example of the ambiguity of meaning to which Claus refers.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Claus, David 1975. "Aidōs in the Language of Achilles," *TAPA* 105: 15.

⁴⁶See Cairns 1993. This despite his dismissal of the importance of the adjective in reference to women about which all he has to say is: "In the feminine, however, the adjective is used formulaically of any respectable woman (87)." Though he does use a few examples which include women, they are used only to support his general conclusions about the 'I respect' meaning of *aidoios*.

The most common translations of the word *aidoios*, when referring to the feminine, are 'modest', 'honoured' and 'respected' and 'grave'.⁴⁷ An example of a purportedly formulaic use of this adjective occurs at *Iliad* 6, where the home of Priam is described. First the fifty rooms of Priam's sons are mentioned, where their wedded wives lie down to sleep beside them.⁴⁸ Opposite these rooms are twelve more

ένθα δὲ γαμβροὶ
κοιμῶντο Πριάμοιο παρ' αἰδοίης ἀλόχοισιν.

where the sons-in-law
of Priam lie down to sleep beside their *aidoieis* wives. (*Il.* 6.249-50)

In this instance the word 'modest' might seem to provide the closest rendering of the Greek since these wives are described as sleeping beside their husbands, an activity in which a chaste woman would be engaged. While this possibility may seem tempting we must avoid restricting our understanding of feminine *aidōs* to the sphere of chastity. To begin with, although this is an obvious point, we must remember that the adjective describes the women and not their activity, and we can therefore make no firm assumptions that they are being defined by where they make their beds. Also, as will become evident, women labelled *aidoiē* are described in quite different contexts within the poems.

⁴⁷See, e.g., Lattimore's translations.

⁴⁸ *Il.* 6. 246 reads *mnestes alochoisi*. See app. crit. for alternative *aidoiēis alochoisi*. Kirk 1991, makes an argument for this alternative reading.

The second of the three examples of this formula occurs at *Od.* 10.11 and parallels the usage in the latter passage. In this second example it is the wives of the sons of Aiolos who are described as *aidoiai* as they sleep beside their husbands. Once again, while we must admit the possibility that *aidoios* may contain the idea of modesty, in the sense of chastity or sexual fidelity to one's spouse, we must also remember that each of the other translations, 'respected' or 'honoured', are equally valid in this context.

Finally, the phrase *aidoiēis alochoisi* occurs at *Iliad* 21.460 where Poseidon accosts Apollo, reminding him of the hatred they bear against Laomedon and berates him for not punishing his descendants, the Trojans and their families. Poseidon charges Apollo:

οὐδὲ μεθ' ἡμέων
πειρᾶ ὡς κε Τρῶες ὑπερφίαλοι ἀπόλωνται
πρόχνη κακῶς, σὺν παισὶ καὶ αἰδοίῃς ἀλόχοισι.

and you do not, along with us,
try to see to it that the reckless Trojans are destroyed
in utter evil, along with their children and *aidoiēis* wives. (*Il.* 21.458-460)

With this example we can begin to see how translations such as 'honoured' or 'respected' become more appealing.⁴⁹ The women are not engaged in any action but rather are the innocent and passive recipients of a fate thrust upon them by the actions of their 'reckless' husbands. The adjective *hyperphialoi* seems to be set up in explicit contrast to *aidoiēis* and along with the adverbial phrase *prochnu*

⁴⁹Lattimore uses the word 'honored'.

kakōs, 'in utter evil' seems to emphasize the innocence of the women as well as their dependency on the actions of their husbands. I should reiterate at this time that *aidoios* is, on some level, connected with the idea of a woman's good reputation. The point may seem obvious, but its importance becomes clear when we consider the fact that despite the fact that these women have earned a positive reputation independently of the actions of their husbands, they are nevertheless condemned by their husbands' errors.

This brings up another important point about the use of the translations 'modest' and 'honoured/respected'. The term 'modest' implies that an individual possesses an attribute which, while it may elicit approval from others, is yet not dependent upon their acknowledgement for its reality. The terms 'respected' and 'honoured', however, while they may indicate that the individual described possesses respect or honour him/herself, they need not do so. Instead these adjectives specifically indicate approval, are indeed dependent upon approval from others, for their significance. They indicate a response to some kind of 'good' behaviour but they do not themselves signify a quality possessed by an individual. This distinction is important not because it indicates any difficulty in employing either of these translations but rather to draw attention to the fact that *aidoios* must reflect both a quality that is possessed in some absolute sense, like 'modest', and *also* indicates an acknowledgement and approval from others for an individual's possession of this quality.

The *aidoiē tamiē* is a figure who appears throughout the *Odyssey*.⁵⁰ Lattimore identifies her as the 'grave housekeeper'. She is a stock character, one who remains usually nameless, but her presence in a scene seems to indicate that appropriate hospitality is being delivered to a guest. The emblematic incarnation of this character-type is, of course, the cherished Eurykleia.⁵¹ In the *Odyssey*, Eurykleia fulfills both the role of nurse and housekeeper or steward. The tasks of the housekeeper involved the supervision of other servants, the maintenance of an accurate inventory of the household's contents and the regulation of the distribution of those contents. This latter aspect of her role is emphasized in the formulaic treatment of her appearance.⁵² When a guest is welcomed into a home, a maidservant brings water for both guest and host to wash their hands. This activity then prompts the appearance of the housekeeper:

σίτον δ' αἰδοίῃ ταμίῃ παρέθηκε φέρουσα,
εἶδατα πόλλ' ἐπιθείσα, χαριζομένη παρεόντων·

And the *aidoiē* housekeeper, bringing food, placed it before them
setting out many different kinds of foods, generous with her provisions.
(*Od.* 1.139-40)⁵³

Karydas rightly points out that the role of the housekeeper was a formidable one. She is a woman who is granted considerable responsibility and a great deal of

⁵⁰Cf. *Od.* 1.139, 4.55, 7.175, 10.371, 15.138, 17.94, and 17.259.

⁵¹See discussion by Karydas 1998, esp. chapter one.

⁵² Cf. Reece 1993: 23.

⁵³I have borrowed the phrase 'generous with her provisions' from Lattimore, which seems to capture the phrase precisely.

control over the management of the household. For this reason, the housekeeper was expected to be a woman of great ability. Ideally she ought to have a degree of intelligence,⁵⁴ an authoritative presence,⁵⁵ unswerving loyalty, and be of impeccable moral stature.⁵⁶ It was often assumed, in antiquity, that these qualities were, in part, acquired with age.⁵⁷ This would help to explain the inclination to translate *aidoiē* as 'grave' in this context. *Aidoiē* does reflect, in some cases, a kind of dignity acquired through age but it also equally reflects all of the other qualities deemed valuable in a *tamiē*.

Another formulaic use of the adjective is essentially a variation on the phrase *aidoiēs alochoisi*, a shift from plural to singular. The first of the three uses of the phrase '*aidoiē parakoitis*' describes the wife of Nestor at *Od.* 3.381:

ἀλλὰ, ἄνασσ', ἴληθι, δίδωθι δέ μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν,
αὐτῷ καὶ παίδεσσι καὶ αἰδοίῃ παρακοίτι·

So receive my prayer, mistress, and grant me good repute
for myself, for my children and for my *aidoiē* wife. (*Od.* 3.380-381)

Here and at *Od.* 3.451 Lattimore translates *aidoiē* as 'grave', once again perhaps because of an implied idea about Eurydike's age or perhaps because 'modest' does not seem ideal and 'respected' or 'honoured' would make the request seem

⁵⁴See discussion of Eurykleia's intelligence by Karydas 1998: 14-15.

⁵⁵In her introduction Karydas 1998: 3, describes the authority of Eurykleia as Nurse. Some of this same type of authority would also be necessary for her role as *tamiē*.

⁵⁶See discussion of the unfaithful maidservants, below.

⁵⁷Cf. Karydas 1998: 2-3.

redundant. The poet(s) of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* did not, however, have the same concerns as we do for redundancy. It would not be out of place for the Homeric poet to have a character ask for good reputation for his respected wife, especially since what Nestor must be seeking is the continuation of this present condition.

The second mention of Eurydike occurs in the context of sacrifice at *Od.* 3.451. She, her daughters and her daughters-in-law are said to raise the ritual cry. This is another context in which it would be unwise to assume that *aidoios* in any way comments upon the activity in which she is engaged. It may be true, however, that *aidoios* does embody a sense of religious scruple, an appropriate attitude toward the gods or conscientiousness in the performance of religious ritual. *Aidoios* regularly designates individuals who have a special claim to the protection of the gods, specifically suppliants, beggars and guests.⁵⁸ While this does not prove that any of the individuals who claimed special status possessed a unique degree of piety (indeed, many a suppliant was seeking protection as a result of some form of transgression on their part) nevertheless a certain standard of behaviour was expected from them.⁵⁹ The relationship between guest/suppliant and host was a mutual one in which both parties had recourse

⁵⁸See, e.g., *Od.* 9.266-71, where Odysseus attempts to explain to Polyphemus that guests and suppliants have the protection of Zeus, a relationship which, he claims, earns them the right to a guest gift and a sanction against violence on the part of the host. Also, see M. Gagarin for a discussion of the rights due these protected groups. For other examples of the use of *aidoios* with reference to guests or suppliants see: *Od.* 5.447, 7.165, 7.181, 8.544, 19.181 and *Il.* 21.75.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Yamagata 1994: 153, who discusses the misdeeds of the suitors as an offence against *xenia*.

to divine aid.⁶⁰ Throughout the *Odyssey* the suitors are described as *anaideis*, lacking *aidōs*.⁶¹ Because this is a relationship which has divine sanction, a transgression of *aidōs* must entail both a lack of respect for the gods as well as for mortals. The point of this apparent digression is to demonstrate that a person who is *aidios* should, ideally, be both a possessor of *aidōs* and expect *aidōs* to inform the actions of others towards herself/himself.⁶²

A third and final example of the use of the phrase *aidoiē parakoitis* occurs at *Iliad* 21, describing the goddess Hera:

ἀλλὰ χολωσαμένη Διὸς αἰδοίη παράκοιτις
 வீκεσεν ἰοχέαιραν ὄνειδείοις ἐπέεσσι·

But enraged the *aidoiē* wife of Zeus
 reproached her, looser of arrows, with contemptful words. (*Il.* 21.479-80)

Artemis, the object of Hera's attack, has just finished berating her brother for not standing up to their uncle, Poseidon. Hera responds by calling her a presumptuous bitch (*kuōn adees*) and condemns her for attempting to match strength with the queen of the gods. She then proceeds to abuse Artemis physically, before the goddess runs away crying (*Il.* 21. 481-95). It would be

⁶⁰See, e.g., *Od.* 2.138-45, in which Telemachus tells the suitors that if they continue to destroy his household he will call down the wrath of Zeus upon them.

⁶¹See, e.g., *Od.* 1.254, 13.376, 20.29, 20.39, 20.386 and 23.37.

⁶²*Contra Cairns* 1993: 87: "Frequently in the poems we find people described as *aidios*. Those who deserve this designation, people before whom one feels *aidōs* (the 'I respect' usage, *aidōs* for the direct recipient of one's actions) fall into three broad categories: those before whom one feels inferior, who fill one with a sense of awe; those with whom one has a tie of *philotēs*; and those who are helpless or who throw themselves on one's mercy."

something of an understatement to say that this example does not seem to conform to the image we have come to expect of an *aidoiē gunē*. Hera is not, however, a typical Homeric female. She is deceptive, opinionated, spiteful, jealous and insubordinate, to name just a few of her less desirable character traits. These are attributes for which Zeus regularly scolds her. At one point Zeus says that he is more angry with his daughter, Athena, than he is with his wife because Hera *always* disobeys him.⁶³ I do not think that the apparent discrepancy with the portrait I have thus far painted should prompt us to attribute Hera's identification as *aidoiē* solely to her divinity.⁶⁴ Though surely we must admit that standards of behaviour for the gods differed from those expected of humans this seems insufficient explanation for this anomaly.⁶⁵

We must look to Hera's statement about Artemis trying to match strength with her in order to begin to see the way in which *aidoiē* is an appropriate epithet. Hera's claim to this title derives from her position as queen of the gods. As we shall see, *aidoios* also involves a concept of personal worth or value. This aspect of *aidoios* is more clearly recognizable in a few passages which concern Odysseus. In *Odyssey* 11 Odysseus tells Alkinous that even should the king bid him remain for a year, before sending him home laden with gifts, that this course of action would be better because he would return home more *aidoios* and more *philos* to

⁶³See e. g., *Il.* 8.407, 8.421.

⁶⁴It is presumably this type of example which prompts some scholars to label 'formulaic' all uses of *aidoiē* in a feminine context. See above n. 42.

⁶⁵Cf. Beye 1974: 91: "There is no point arguing it seems to me that she is a deity and thus different. The gods especially in the *Iliad* are emphatically anthropomorphized."

his countrymen (*Od.* 11. 358-61). On an earlier occasion Athena had poured grace over his head and shoulders in order to make him *philos*, *deinos* and *aidoios* to the Phaiakians (*Od.* 8. 18-23). Commenting on this passage Cairns suggests:

Being stouter and taller, Odysseus could obviously expect to appear *deinos*, and the other two epithets take their force from this fact; looking like a man of wealth and power, Odysseus will be more likely to find people who will entertain him, since, *philotēs* being the reciprocal relationship that it is, one who looks as if he can repay one's hospitality is a better prospect than one who does not.⁶⁶

This concept of personal worth should be familiar to any reader of the *Iliad* where *geras* (booty) is distributed to heroes according to their status. Odysseus, who had been counting on returning home with a full hand demonstrating the value placed on him by the army, is instead shipwrecked and seeks some other way to fill his purse so that he should not return home empty-handed.

Aidoios in some ways can be said to indicate an individual's high market value, to put it crudely. This is further supported by Hephaistos' reception of the goddess Thetis in *Iliad* 18.⁶⁷ Charis, the wife of Hephaistos, first addresses her with a formulaic greeting⁶⁸, calling her *aidoios* and *philos*; the response Odysseus

⁶⁶Cairns 1993: 89-90.

⁶⁷Despite the fact that Cairns basically dismisses the use of *aidoios* in the context of the feminine, see above n.42, he does use the example of Thetis to point out the idea that "both *deinos* and *philos* may describe one who has special status in another's eyes, and it is this special status that makes one *aidoios* (90)."

⁶⁸Compare Kalypso's greeting of Hermes: *Od.* 5.87-8.

hoped to elicit from the Phaiakians and the Ithakans.⁶⁹ Hephaistos then greets her himself, addressing her as *deinos* (awesome) and *aidoios*, and proceeds to explain his indebtedness to her:

ἦ ῥά νύ μοι δεινή τε καὶ αἰδοίη θεὸς ἔνδον,
 ἦ μ' ἐσάωσ', ὅτε μ' ἄλγος ἀφίκετο τῆλε πεσόντα
 μητρὸς ἐμῆς ἰότητι κυνώπιδος, ἦ μ' ἐθέλησε
 κρύψαι χωλὸν ἔόντα·

There is indeed an awesome and *aidoiē* goddess in our home
 she who saved me, when pain came to me after my long fall
 by the will of my dog-eyed mother, who wanted to hide me
 because I am lame;.... (*Il.* 18.394-7)⁷⁰

Hephaistos goes on to say that he will do whatever he can to help Thetis because she saved his life (*Il.* 18. 406-8). It is true that Hephaistos might have greeted Thetis as *aidoiē* and *philē* even if he had not felt this sense of obligation. When Kalypso welcomes Hermes in *Odyssey* 5 there is no indication of any outstanding debt or favor owing. Kalypso does, however, indicate that she is eager to aid him in whatever he requests. Also, in both instances there is an automatic reaction, on the part of the host, to provide refreshment and entertainment. Indeed, this type of reception is, to some extent, inherent in the relationship of *xeinia*. As Odysseus made clear, however, it was better to be *aidoios* and *philos* because one's reception would be more favourable and more profitable. In this instance, Thetis is able to capitalize on the special esteem, her exceptional worth

⁶⁹*Il.* 18.385-6 and 18. 425.

⁷⁰ On the connection between dog-insults and shamelessness, see Graver 1995.

in the eyes of Hephaistos, to acquire a gift beyond the normal expectations of a *xeinos*, namely, a custom-made, divinely wrought set of armour for Achilles.⁷¹

What a woman might attain then, in the context of the poems, is the perpetuation or enhancement of the condition of being *aidoiē*. As we saw with the case of Hera, there is a certain prestige, a certain value placed on being the wife of a powerful man, or, in this case, a god. An obvious example of this type of accreditation can be seen in Penelope's title, '*aidoiē* wife of Odysseus, son of Laertes'.⁷² Clearly, in this instance, the adjective derives some of its weight from Penelope's relationship to Odysseus, a powerful man and son of another powerful man. Some of Penelope's value as a woman in the Homeric context derives from the quality of husband she is able to attract.⁷³ Penelope is, however, also described as an '*aidoiē basileia* (queen/mistress)⁷⁴, a usage which would seem to focus on her skill in managing the household. Arete, Queen of the Phaiakians, is described as the '*aidoiē* mother' of the children of 'formidable

⁷¹In another example at *Il.*14. 210, Hera tells Aphrodite that she will be called *aidoiē* and *philē* if she is able to repair the marriage of Ocean and Tethys, an indication that there was some special relevance to this designation and that it was not simply the privilege of any *xeinos* or *philos*. She will acquire greater worth, an enhancement to her reputation, through her beneficent action. It is important to understand this as an enhancement since, as we have already seen, Hera is already possessed of the title by virtue of her rank.

⁷²Cf. *Od.* 17.152, 19.165, 262, 336, 583.

⁷³ For an interesting discussion of Penelope's worth as demonstrated through her skill at weaving, see Thomas 1988.

⁷⁴Cf. *Od.* 18. 314. In this passage Penelope is not only being acclaimed as an *aidoiē basileia*, her role is also explicitly contrasted with the negative behaviour of the maidservants. They are told to go into the house and spin and card wool with their mistress rather than stay in the hall and provide light for the suitors. This latter task would allow them the opportunity to engage in inappropriate activities with the suitors.

Alkinoos'.⁷⁵ Here it is Arete's role as a mother that is singled out. This will bring us back to a point about which I cautioned earlier. I advised against attempting to ascertain the meaning of *aidoios* from the activity in which the woman described was engaged. I will expand on this. One should not attempt to ascertain the meaning of *aidoios* from its use in a *singular* context. What I hope has begun to become clear from this discussion is the range of activity and the range of roles for which a woman could be designated *aidoiē*.

My initial warning has special relevance for a passage found in the Catalogue of Ships, describing the lineage of Askalaphos and Ialmenos:

οὐς τέκεν Ἄστυόχη δόμῳ Ἄκτορος Ἄζειδαο,
παρθένος αἰδοίη, ὑπερώϊον εἰσαναβασα,
Ἄρηϊ κρατερῷ· ὁ δέ οἱ παραλέξατο λάθρη·

whom Astuoche bore in the home of Aktor, son of Azeus,
an *aidoiē* maiden, having ascended to an upper chamber,
with mighty Ares; and he lay down with her in secret. (*Il.* 2.513-15)

This might, at first, seem a somewhat surprising exception to the general pattern of the virtuous female and it certainly seems to contradict any notions of

⁷⁵Cf. *Od.* 8. 419-20. The juxtaposition of these two epithets describing husband and wife seems significant. Anne Parry has made a strong argument for understanding the adjective *amumōn* to mean something like "possessing the kind of beauty which is the result of bodily strength, coordination, and health (56)." Unfortunately, as she herself points out, there is no adjective in English which means "possessing the strong, handsome body of a warrior (60)," I have thus resorted to the somewhat weak translation 'formidable'. She also points out that *amumōn* may have overtones of meanings such as 'brave', 'spirited' and 'steadfast in battle' (60), though she hastens to argue that these meanings are only secondary to the predominant concern with physical appearance. My interest in this adjective stems from what seems to be a common theme with *aidoios* in designating spheres of excellence for their respective sex. Also, as I argued above there is a further connotation of *aidōs*, and therefore of *aidoios*, which is concerned with physical attractiveness.

modesty, since there is no suggestion here of rape or excessive coercion on Ares' part.⁷⁶ Any expression of the maiden's complicity here, however, would be meaningless to the male, Greek audience. Every Greek male knew that young women were notoriously susceptible and impressionable and thus could not be held responsible for their actions. The label *aidoiē*, in this instance, indicates the special degree of consideration for *aidōs* that males, in particular, ought to have in their dealings with young, unmarried women. Under normal circumstances, when a female was taken advantage of by a male outside of the household, some kind of vengeance was exacted or repayment demanded.⁷⁷ When the seducer happened to be a god, however, there were few foolhardy enough to make complaint. Thus, without wanting to incriminate himself, our poet makes subtle comment on the transgression of the god, an act *aidōs* should have prevented.⁷⁸ *Aidoiē*, here, highlights not Astuoche's lack of morals but her vulnerability, her sanctity (rape of a virgin was a religious offence), and her worth to the family as a potential bride.⁷⁹

⁷⁶The use of the aorist participle *eisanabasa*, in the feminine, implies Astuoche's free agency and therefore a degree of complicity.

⁷⁷Yamagata 1994: 28-29.

⁷⁸Kirk 1990, points out that *parthenos aidoiē* looks as though it ought to be formulaic but the combination does not occur anywhere else in the poems. The adjective *aidoiē* seems more regularly to be applied to matrons which may reflect the fact that it indicates a status acquired over time. Every girl must have been considered *aidoiē* in the sense that individuals must be more conscious of *aidōs* in interacting with them. *Aidoiē* in more regular usage, however, seems to convey a quality informed by experience and reflected in the ongoing career of a more mature, or at least a married, woman. This explanation of the scarcity of the combination *parthenos aidoiē* would seem to support further the claim that its use here is exceptional and pointed though still subtle enough to avoid divine wrath.

⁷⁹It should be noted that a maiden's worth was largely based on her function as a product of exchange. Where Odysseus wanted to appear more *aidoios* in order to procure gifts, this was to

Against this we must set the example of the indiscretions of Odysseus' maidservants. In the case of Astuoche, the poet seemed, covertly, to be ascribing blame to Ares, by applying the adjective *aidoiē* to a young girl, an adjective, to some degree, reserved for more mature women who have earned the right to that title. By employing the adjective in this context the poet seems to be emphasizing the implicit, although perhaps less frequently overt, meaning of *aidoios*, that one should behave with an awareness for the heightened potential of incurring shame when encountering a person who falls under this category. This category includes all women, although young unmarried women, in particular, suppliants, guests; and young men not yet of age. All of these groups, with the exception of the first, are characterized by their liminality, by the delicate nature of the individual's status, a thing easily compromised. For this reason there is an expectation that people who are *aidoios*, in this sense, will be treated in a way that is consistent with the dictates of *aidōs* but also that they will be possessors of *aidōs*. The maidservants of Odysseus and Penelope are not possessors of *aidōs*. They do not let shame prevent them from doing what they ought not to do.

It is Eurykleia, the model female maidservant, who points out to Odysseus which of the girls have abandoned *aidōs*:

πεντήκοντά τοί εισιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γυναῖκες
 δμῳαί, τὰς μὲν ἔργα διδάξαμεν ἐργάζεσθαι,
 εἰριά τε ξαίνειν καὶ δουλοσύνην ἀνέχεσθαι.

indicate the potential worth of the gifts he could donate were the positions of guest and host reversed. This has nothing to do with marketing his own worth as a commodity as would be the case of Astuoche, or even Penelope.

τάων δώδεκα πᾶσαι ἀναιδείης ἐπέβησαν,
 οὐτ' ἐμὲ τίουσαι οὐτ' αὐτὴν Πηνελόπειαν.
 Τηλέμαχος δὲ νέον μὲν ἀέξετο, οὐδέ ἐ μήτηρ
 σημαίνειν εἴασκεν ἐπὶ δμῶησι γυναιξίν.⁸⁰

You have fifty female servants in the palace,
 whom we have taught to perform their tasks,
 to card wool and to endure servitude;
 of these, twelve, in total, have given themselves over to shamelessness;
 they show no respect for me or for Penelope herself.
 Telemachos had only recently begun to come of age and his mother
 did not allow him to give orders to the maidservants. (*Od.* 22. 421-7)

To begin with we should note that the maidservants are identified as *gunaikes*, a term which usually indicates that they were at least of marriageable age, if not older. They were no longer *parthenoi*, young unmarried girls, and so were of an age where they were expected to begin to take responsibility for their own actions. These women, as servants, could not necessarily expect marriage, and if they did marry, it would only be with the approval of their master and would probably not be considered a binding contract. Odysseus had complete sexual control over the *dmōai*.⁸¹ For the maidservants to sleep with the suitors was to give the suitors some measure of control within the household, the negative

⁸⁰ Russo *et al.* *ad loc.* have accepted the proposition put forward by Beringer that *doulosunēn anechesthai* cannot mean 'to endure servitude' but rather must mean 'to abstain from bed-slavery'. While I am in favour of the idea that this phrase implies an idea of the women's status as sexual property I am disinclined to believe that it suggests that the women were taught to abstain from bed-slavery with men outside the household. It seems more likely that this phrase implies that the women were taught to endure the fact that their sexuality was in the control of their master. The distinction may be a small one but it points out more clearly that this was specifically an offense against Odysseus and his authority.

⁸¹ Yamagata 1994: 28-29 suggests "as is clear from many examples in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the master of the household – and he only – has the right to have intercourse with his slave-women, because they are potential mothers of his heir or even potential wives."

impact of which can be seen in the maidservants' betrayal of Penelope's trick of nightly unravelling her day's weaving to the suitors.⁸² The loyalty of these women is seen to be intimately tied to their sexuality. Their sexual infidelity leads directly to their insubordination and their disavowal of any of the traits which would have made them *aidoiai*.

The distinction conveyed by the title *aidoiē* is an important one for the women of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It communicates the basic idea that the woman so identified deserves respect, as Cairns suggested. It also conveys a sense of those qualities for which women were respected. The scope of activities which represent the career of the *aidoiē gunē* is broad but not surprising. For a mature female character the epithet *aidoiē* seems to indicate an established status based on a spotless career which may have included managing a household, mothering, nursing, keeping inventory, the performance of any number of domestic tasks, and maintenance of sexual fidelity to her husband.

⁸²Cf. *Od.* 19.149-156. On the control usurped by the suitors see Yamagata 1994: 29 who notes that "the suitors' affairs with the slave-women of Odysseus are an intrusion into his patriarchal right and a threat to his lineage." See also Thalmann 1998b: 72-3: "from the point of view of the patriarchal *oikos* sexual betrayal by the slave-women is treachery at its most threatening. This explains the emphasis on the disloyalty of the female slaves, or at least shows why it is effective in the representational economy of the poem. It uncovers the area where the slaveholder is most vulnerable and stirs some of his deepest fears."

CHAPTER TWO

Physical Manifestations of Feminine *Aidōs*: Negotiating Nakedness in an Ideal of Concealment

Introduction

ἄμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ γυνή.

along with the stripping of her garment, a woman is also stripped of *aidōs*. (Herodot. *Hist.* 1.8)

This gnomic-sounding statement is expressed by Gyges, the bodyservant of King Candaules in Herodotus' *Histories*. The uxorious Candaules proposes that Gyges secretly spy on his wife as she gets into bed, in order that he might bear witness to her extraordinary beauty. Gyges is suitably shocked at the suggestion. Nonetheless, to please his master, he consents. Unbeknownst to the male parties, Candaules' wife takes notice of Gyges

μαθοῦσα δὲ τὸ ποιηθὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός οὔτε ἀνέβασε αἰσχυνθεῖσα οὔτε ἔδοξε μαθεῖν, ἐν νόῳ ἔχουσα τείσασθαι τὸν Κανδαύλεα· παρὰ γὰρ τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖσι ἄλλοισι βαρβάροισι, καὶ ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνὸν ἐς αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει.

but although she perceives the deed of her husband she does not cry out despite having been shamed, nor does she let on about her discovery, for she intends to punish Candaules. For among the Lydians, as among nearly all other foreign peoples, it is considered

a great shame even for a man to be seen naked. (Herodot. *Hist.* 1.10)¹

There are two things, in particular, that interest me about this story. First, the overt equation of clothing with a woman's *aidōs*. A woman's clothing is represented here as though it were a form of body armour which, as it accompanies *aidōs*, provides a woman with her first line of defense. When Candaules' wife removes her clothing/armour she is vulnerable to the experience of shame, shame which will be provoked by being seen, or further, by what people might say. There is no inappropriateness in her revealing her nakedness to her husband but as she does so she entrusts him with her *aidōs* (her propriety, her good reputation, her worth).² Candaules' first betrayal begins with his *speaking* of his wife's naked beauty, an act which provides partial penetration of his wife's armour of *aidōs*. The ultimate betrayal, of course, accompanies the most basic experience of shame, that of being seen.

The second point to make about this passage concerns Herodotus' statement about male nudity. In typical Herodotean fashion, he focuses on the otherness of the Lydians in suggesting that among barbarians it was shameful even for men to be seen naked. The very way that Herodotus suggests that this is a quirk of barbarian behaviour implies that this was not typical Greek behaviour, and indeed male nudity is often heavily idealized in Greek culture.³

¹ The verb translated here as 'shamed' is a participle formed from *aischuno*; the same verb used to describe Achilles' behaviour in defiling himself in mourning (see Chapter One pp. 19-20, esp. n. 34). The noun in the last line of this passage translated as 'shame' is the noun *aischune*.

²See Ferrari 1990: 198.

³See Stewart 1997: 26. See also Salomon 1997.

The attitudes expressed in this story are, however, those of a Greek (male). My intention here is not to suggest that we should assume a continuity of meaning from Homer to Herodotus nor that we can make any conclusions about *aidōs* in the Homeric texts based on its representation in Herodotus. I have, however, already begun to demonstrate in the Homeric poems the reaction of the individual upon experiencing shame, which is to cover him/herself or to hide. This story in Herodotus conveniently encapsulates an idea about feminine *aidōs* which is evident in the Homeric texts.

This chapter will focus on the role of *aidōs* in determining the significance of the cloaked and uncloaked body. The experience of nudity, not surprisingly, is constructed differently for female characters than for their male counterparts. Indeed, female nudity is only once explicitly mentioned in the texts.⁴ On other occasions, where a modern audience might expect some mention of nakedness, no overt reference is made by the poet; one must postulate nudity for the female in contexts of sex and bathing.⁵ The poet offers little opportunity for voyeurism with the singular exception of the encounter between Aphrodite and Ares. The poet's unwillingness to make mention of female nudity seems to fit a pattern

⁴The singular explicit reference to female nudity, and it is only partial nudity, in the poems is at *Il.* 22. 79-83 when Hecuba bares her breast to her son Hector.

⁵Stewart 1997: 27 points out that bathing and athletics were the two activities where public nudity was sanctioned in classical Athens; nudity in athletics, of course, being restricted to males. He remarks that the public bathing was segregated and therefore relatively unproblematic.

which involves cloaking the female, mediating her apparently perpetually latent eroticism, and the danger lurking therein, by concealing her body.⁶

The appropriate occasions for a female character to be naked are limited in the poems to private and intimate settings with her husband/captor and bathing in the company of other women.⁷ Unfortunately, much of the material we have is not characterized negatively by explaining circumstances in which female characters have enacted a breach of *aidōs*. It is at times, therefore, difficult to construe a positively functioning model which can be shown to be informed by *aidōs*. At times it will be necessary to discuss passages in which no overt mention of an *aidōs*-word is made. In these instances my discussion will be focused on behaviour or situations which are consistent with shame-related experiences. These scenes often involve the covering or hiding of one or more individuals, either as a reaction to some negatively assessed behaviour, or as a preventative measure, to avoid an experience of shame. As Ferrari has suggested "*aidos*, then, is made visible by the downcast glance and by the act of covering oneself."⁸

⁶ A useful parallel to this literary trend can be found in Salomon's discussion of "the asymmetrical treatment of the nude male and clothed female in Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture (1997: 201)."

⁷Odysseus' sexual encounters with Kalypso and Kirke must be considered to be somewhat deviant from what Homer constructs to be the norm for female behaviour. These women are separate and other because as Wohl puts it, they are "without men to direct their fertility into socially productive channels" (Wohl 1997: 24). They serve in the *Odyssey* to demonstrate that "when men are sexually subordinated to women, the result is the crumbling of the world order, a loss of the distinctions between men, beasts, and gods—semiotically, the felling of the cosmic pole" (Wohl 1997: 24).

⁸ Ferrari 1990: 190.

Nudity and Sex

In *Iliad* 14, Hera contrives her successful seduction of Zeus. Having acquired the enchanted girdle of Aphrodite as well as a guarantee from the god Sleep to anesthetize Zeus after their love-making, Hera makes her move (*Il.* 14. 231-7). Zeus, not immune to the affects of Aphrodite's love girdle, promptly proposes that they make love on the spot. And Hera replies:

αἰνότατε Κρονίδη, ποῖον τὸν μῦθον ἔειπες.
 εἰ νῦν ἐν φιλότῃ λιλαίεαι εὐνηθῆναι
 Ἰδῆς ἐν κορυφῇσι, τὰ δὲ προπέφανται ἅπαντα·
 πῶς κ' ἔοι, εἴ τις νῶϊ θεῶν αἰειγενετῶν
 εὐδοντ' ἀθρήσειε, θεοῖσι δὲ πᾶσι μετελθὼν
 πεφράδοι; οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε τεὸν πρὸς δῶμα νεοίμην
 ἐξ εὐνῆς ἀνστᾶσα, νεμεσσητὸν δέ κεν εἶη.
 ἄλλ' εἰ δὴ ῥ' ἐθέλεις καὶ τοι φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ,
 ἔστιν τοι θάλαμος, τόν τοι φίλος υἱὸς ἔτευξεν·
 Ἥφαιστος, πυκινὰς δὲ θύρας σταθμοῖσιν ἐπῆρσεν·
 ἔνθ' ἴομεν κείοντες, ἐπεὶ νύ τοι εὐαδεν εὐνή.

Most dread son of Kronos, what a thing to say!
 If you now desire to take to bed in lovemaking
 on the peaks of Ida, everything is open to view.
 How would it be, if one of the immortal gods
 should see us abed, and went and told this to all
 the gods; I would not get up out of bed and go back
 to your house, for this would be shameful.
 But if this is what you wish and desire fills your heart,
 then there is your bedchamber, which my dear son, Hephaistos,
 built for you, he fitted the doors close-set with the posts.
 Let us go within and lie down, since going to bed pleases you.
 (*Il.* 14. 330-40)

This passage clearly shows that Hera's concern for propriety is prompted by the context.⁹ She does not consider it appropriate to make love in front of a potential audience, nor in a place that could leave her exposed to one. Zeus' response to her complaint is to shield them both inside a golden cloud so dense that even the eyes of Helios cannot penetrate its cover (*Il.* 14. 342-5). The cloud does not cover up something which is shameful. On the contrary, the cloud behaves in much the same way as the garment of Candaules' wife. If I were to reformulate Gyges' *sententia* to read 'together with the stripping away of the cloud the scene is stripped of *aidōs*' it becomes clearer that what is contained behind the barrier is not shame-less but that it loses the protection of *aidōs* when this barrier is removed.

I have already flagrantly exploited the formulation proposed by Williams that "the basic experience connected with shame is that of being seen, inappropriately, by the wrong people, in the wrong condition," an idea which is clearly demonstrated in the above-quoted passage.¹⁰ Williams has further insights to contribute; he follows this statement by noting that this experience "is straightforwardly connected with nakedness, particularly in sexual connections."¹¹ That the potential experience of shame described by Hera is motivated by the prospect of revealed nudity and not by some deep-rooted

⁹See Cairns 1993: 123 who says "inappropriateness of place is Hera's (feigned) reason for refusing sex with Zeus..."

¹⁰Williams 1993: 78.

¹¹*ibid.*

connection between shame and the sexual act itself can be shown from a passage which describes Hera's procurement of the girdle from Aphrodite.¹² Hera claims that she needs the girdle in order to help resolve the conflict between Okeanos and Tethys:

τοὺς εἶμ' ὄψομένη, καὶ σφ' ἄκριτα νείκεα λύσω·
 ἦδη γὰρ δηρὸν χρόνον ἀλλήλων ἀπέχονται
 εὐνήσ καὶ φιλότητος, ἐπεὶ χόλος ἔμπεσε θυμῶ.
 εἰ κείνω γ' ἐπέεσσι παραιπεπιθοῦσα φίλον κῆρ
 εἰς εὐνήν ἀνέσαιμι ὁμωθῆναι φιλότητι,
 αἰεὶ κέ σφι φίλη τε καὶ αἰδοίη καλεοίμην.

I will go and see them, and I will free them from their unresolved
 contention;
 already now for a long time they have stayed away from each other,
 from the bed and from love-making, since anger resides in their hearts.
 If, having persuaded the dear heart in them with words,
 I should set them in bed to be united in love,
 then will I always be called *philē* and *aidoiē* by them. (*Il.* 14. 205-10)

Sex is identified here as a unifying and healing experience.¹³ Hera feels no shame in discussing the sex-lives of others and instead believes that she will earn great respect from the couple for re-engaging them in sexual activity.¹⁴ This

¹³ Calame 1992: 40 suggests: "the Homeric text refers explicitly to the pleasure derived from the interplay of love that takes place on a bed. When manifested in a relationship of *philotēs*, the pleasure of love is generally enjoyed by both partners, as suggested by the dual or plural forms that epic poetry employs in such cases."

¹⁴ *Contra* Cairns 1993: 123. In general, Cairns describes the *aidōs* of women in sexual contexts as a 'coyness about sex' and a 'shyness towards men'. In discussing the episode with Zeus and Hera he begins with the introduction: "on two occasions we find married women expressing reluctance with regard to sex even with their husbands, and doing so on the grounds that others will

representation of love-making should be viewed alongside numerous others which portray sex as a pleasurable and beneficial experience for both parties.¹⁵ Neither the fact of being naked nor the sexual act itself are worthy of shame themselves. What provokes an experience of shame is being seen in the midst of both at once. Nudity, on its own, is not a condition which should provoke shame unless the character is naked in the wrong company or in the wrong context. Sex, likewise, is not a shameful activity but it necessitates a dense barrier of *aidōs*; it must be covered to maintain its appropriateness. Both of these experiences have carefully delineated rules of etiquette, as in our own society, and they are occasions on which the individual or individuals involved must take special precautions to observe the boundaries of *aidōs*.

Some discussion should be made about the controversial scene involving Aphrodite's coercion of Helen into Paris' bed. In *Iliad* 3 Aphrodite appears to bring Helen to the bedroom of her defeated husband who has just been whisked to safety by his champion, Aphrodite. Helen reproaches her for her meddling:

ἦ πῆ με προτέρω πολίων εὖ ναιομενάων
 ἄξεις, ἦ Φρυγίης ἦ Μηονίης ἐρατεινῆς,
 εἴ τίς τοι καὶ κείθι φίλος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων·

disapprove." Though he recognizes that when Hera expressed concern about sex with Zeus, her disapproval stemmed from their location, he seems to persist in the idea that women are represented in the poems as being 'coy' about sex and even reluctant to engage in sexual activity. Needless to say, he ignores Hera's claim that she will be *aidoiē* and *philē* for getting Okeanos and Tethys back into bed together and he makes no mention of scenes where a coyness about sex is not demonstrated by female characters. Examples of this type of scene include particularly the reunion between Odysseus and Penelope (*Od.* 23.295-6 and 300-01). See also *Od.* 5.226-7 where Odysseus and Kalypso enjoy themselves in their love-making.

οὔνεκα δὴ νῦν διὸν Ἀλέξανδρον Μενέλαος
 νικήσας ἐθέλει στυγερὴν ἐμὲ οἴκαδ' ἄγεσθαι,
 τοὔνεκα δὴ νῦν δεῦρο δολοφρονέουσα παρέστης;
 ἦσο παρ' αὐτὸν ἰοῦσα, θεῶν δ' ἀπόεικε κελεύθου,
 μηδ' ἔτι σοῖσι πόδεσσιν ὑποστρέψειας Ὀλυμπον,
 ἀλλ' αἰεὶ περὶ κείνον ὀΐζυε καὶ ἐφύλασσε,
 εἰς ὃ κέ σ' ἢ ἄλοχον ποιήσεται, ἢ ὃ γε δούλην.
 κείσε δ' ἐγὼν οὐκ εἶμι—νεμεσσητὸν δέ κεν εἶη—
 κείνου πορσανέουσα λέχος· Τρωαὶ δέ μ' ὀπίσσω
 πᾶσαι μωμήσονται· ἔχω δ' ἄχε' ἄκριτα θυμῷ.

Will you carry me off somewhere to well-established cities,
 either to Phrygia or to lovely Maionia,
 is there some man there who is dear to you
 or is it because Menelaos, having defeated glorious
 Alexandros, wants to lead my hateful self to his home
 is it for this that you are here now plotting trouble?
 Come and sit beside him yourself, withdraw from the abodes of the gods
 never again to turn your feet back to Olympos,
 but instead suffer for that man always and protect him,
 so that he will make you his wife, or his concubine
 I will not go there — for it would be shameful —
 sharing the bed of that man; all the Trojan women
 would blame me hereafter; and I hold endless grief in my heart. (*Il.* 3.400-
 12)

Helen characterizes the prospect of having sex with her husband as deserving of *nemesis* or indignation which indicates that it contradicts her own internalized set of values. Helen also regards compliance with Aphrodite's command as conflicting with the code of *aidōs* upheld by the community of Trojan women.¹⁶ I

¹⁶Kirk 1985, *Il.* 3.411, suggests that the Trojan women would feel *nemesis* at the 'indecent haste' of the encounter "rather than [Helen's] accepting her (second) husband again at some point after the apparent defeat in the duel; but in her mind and theirs there must be the thought already outlined in 404, that legally she may belong now to Menelaos instead."

have already demonstrated that the sexual act is not constructed as shameful within the context of the poems. Sex with Paris, however, is construed as shameful on this occasion first because the timing is highly inappropriate and secondly, because Helen now regards her husband as being worthy of *nemesis*. Mary Ebbott suggests that "Helen expresses not only that it would be blameworthy of her to go to Paris' bed after his loss to Menelaos, but she also portrays her marriage to Paris as itself blameworthy and worthy of reproach by all the Trojan women."¹⁷

Paris is largely responsible for the onset of the Trojan war and yet he regularly absents himself from the battle. And now when Aphrodite has just rescued him from death at the hands of Menelaos, his first thought is to make love to his wife though he has just demonstrated that he is incapable of supporting his claim to her. Helen, as the most beautiful prize, is supposed to mark the superlative male. Paris, however, comes close to being the antithesis of Achilles, the 'best of the Achaeans', and is, in fact, heavily feminized by his association with Aphrodite and his valuation of *erōs* over the art of war.¹⁸

Unable to oppose Aphrodite Helen turns her attack on Paris, with biting sarcasm.¹⁹ She reviles Paris (*enipapē*) and tells him that she wished he had died. She tells him that he should rejoin the battle but then scathingly points out that

¹⁷ Ebbott 1999: 3.

¹⁸ See Nagy's, *The Best of the Achaeans*, for a discussion of the significance of this qualification. For an account of the nature and occasions of Paris' feminization see Clader 1988: 37.

¹⁹ II. 3. 428-36. See Kirk 1985 *ad loc.* for the argument that Helen's reversal should not be taken literally and should instead be understood as sarcastic derision or contempt.

he might get killed if he were to fight Menelaos again and so instead encourages him to remain at home. Helen's disgust with Paris can be seen more clearly when she speaks of him to his brother, Hector, in Book 6:

ἀνδρὸς ἔπειτ' ὄφελλον ἀμείνωνος εἶναι ἄκοιτις,
ὃς ἦδη νέμεσίν τε καὶ αἴσχεα πόλλ' ἀνθρώπων.

Then I would have wished to be the wife of a better man,
one who knew about *nemesis* and the many kinds of shame among
humans. (*Il.* 6. 350-1)

As will be shown in the final chapter of this thesis, Helen dissociates herself from Paris' shamelessness in order to demonstrate her compliance with the code of *aidōs*. Though Helen presents herself as one who has committed a breach of *aidōs* she also indicates through her behaviour and her speech that she has learned from her mistake and that she has cloaked herself once again in the dominant value system of her community. Helen's complaint about Paris is that he does not do the same. Unlike herself, Paris has not reformed and he continues to behave as a man ignorant of *aidōs*, as is displayed by his eagerness to make love in the middle of *his* war. More broadly then, Helen's *nemesis* arises not from a coyness about sex but from the inappropriateness of the occasion and from her husband's inability to recognize it as such.

In Book 8 of the *Odyssey*, the goddess of love herself is caught in bed at an inappropriate time and, more importantly, with an inappropriate person. Hephaistos suspects Aphrodite's infidelity and contrives a net impossibly strong

and fine in which he catches the two adulterers. He calls the male gods to witness but

θηλύτεροι δὲ θεαὶ μένον αἰδοῖ οἴκοι ἑκάστη.

the female gods remain each in their home because of *aidōs*. (*Od.* 8.324)

Most immediately one might postulate that the goddesses were staying home out of embarrassment or propriety. Embarrassment does not capture the right sense, however, because the goddesses have done nothing to be embarrassed about. In addition, *aidōs* does not express a sense of being embarrassed on someone else's behalf. Translating *aidōs* as propriety here would be more appropriate since in this context *aidōs* is prohibitory; it manifests itself as an attribute which prevents the goddesses from embarking on an activity which could bring *aidōs* upon them.

What is this potential experience which would make them feel shame? In addition to the combination of factors which was present for the scene of Hera's potential shame, we have also the factor of adultery.²⁰ Though adultery is clearly the motivation for Hephaistos' rage, it is less certain that the fact of infidelity would be the most immediate source of an experience of shame for the

²⁰Yamagata 1994: 20 suggests that "'Thou shalt not commit adultery' does not seem to be a god-given moral code in Homer. We all know that Zeus himself is a regular adulterer." I would point out, first of all, that Zeus is a male god against whom any existing sanctions would prove weak. Also, Hera's anger and jealousy, her frequent punishment of the women and offspring involved in Zeus' philandering, and her persistent nagging of her husband can hardly be indicative of approval for this type of behaviour. For the father of the gods to be represented as limited by the same kinds of moral sanctions appropriate for humans would be to limit his omnipotence. Furthermore, as can be seen from the passage quoted above, Ares is forced to pay the adulterer's damage for his offence, the gods are present to provoke shame in the offenders, the goddesses are absent to indicate their disapproval and Hermes speaks of being willing to incur greater shame through engaging in the same offence. All of this seems sufficient evidence to prove that the gods are represented as having a moral concern over adultery.

goddesses were they present. It seems more likely that their shame would be prompted by seeing the adulterers naked and *in flagrante delicto*. Hera's reaction to the possibility of being seen in a compromised position is straightforward. It is natural and familiar for a person to feel shame at being seen while being both naked and engaged in sexual activity. It does not necessarily follow that it should bring shame upon the onlookers. Indeed, the male gods are impeded by no such concern; they flock eagerly to the scene of Ares' and Aphrodite's shame and take delight in the irony of the crippled Hephaistos besting the athletic young war god, Ares.

The comments of Hermes, shortly after this episode, help to emphasize the disparity of roles between the male and female gods. Apollo asks him if he would be willing to be bound up in this manner if he had the chance to sleep with Aphrodite.²¹ Hermes replies:

αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο γένοιτο, ἄναξ ἑκατηβόλ' Ἄπολλον.
 δεσμοὶ μὲν τρὶς τόσσοι ἀπείρονες ἀμφὶς ἔχουεν,
 ὑμεῖς δ' εἰσορόωτε θεοὶ πᾶσαί τε θέαιναι,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν εὐδοίμι παρὰ χρυσέῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ.

If only this could be, o Lord Apollo, the far-shooter.
 Were there three times the number of inextricable bonds encircling
 and were you gods watching, along with all the goddesses

²¹ Slatkin 1991: 68 makes the important point about binding that it "is the ultimate penalty in the divine realm, where by definition there is no death. It serves not to deprive an opponent of existence, but to render him impotent. Once bound, a god cannot escape his bondage by himself, no matter how great his strength." This idea is particularly significant for our present subject because it indicates that the male is essentially emasculated by being bound. This should be no great surprise since to be bound is the characteristic condition of the female, as represented in the poems.

nonetheless I would lie down beside golden Aphrodite. (*Od.* 8. 339-42)

The male gods are present to bear witness, to provide the gaze which produces shame in its object. This is not the role of the goddesses who express their disapproval by their absence since to bear witness, to be the possessor of the gaze, in this instance, would be to bring shame upon themselves. When Hermes stresses that he would endure the scrutiny of the goddesses as well as the gods he proposes a whole new level of shame. If the goddesses were in fact present, as Hermes proposes, this would cause them to feel shame. The shame of the perpetrators should therefore be escalated by their knowledge of the shame they brought to the witnesses of their misdeeds. It would appear that it is not appropriate for female characters to possess the gaze.²² For the goddesses to view a sexual act, and more specifically, an act of infidelity, might give them a degree of awareness of their own sexual subjectivity. To some extent, for the female to assume possession of the gaze would be to assume a masculine, subjective, stance. It is this transgression of gender boundaries which provokes shame in the goddesses.

²²As Mulvey 1988: 62, has suggested "the determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly." The female is the object of the gaze, rather than a subjective possessor of its power.

Women Bathing

This occasion of Aphrodite's shame leads us directly to an opportunity to discuss the only appropriate setting for female nudity outside the bedroom. Though the text makes no use of an *aidōs*-term in reference to Aphrodite in this scene, the *aidōs* which prevented the presence of the goddesses and prompted Hermes' comments about being willing to endure further humiliation suggest that we can infer that the figures of both Aphrodite and Ares should be experiencing shame. Both of these characters do in fact display behaviour that is consistent with the experience of shame. Poseidon convinces Hephaistos that he will pay Aphrodite's bride-price if Ares shirks the debt and so Hephaistos agrees to release them:

αὐτίκ' ἀναΐξαντε ὁ μὲν Θρήκηνδε βεβήκει,
 ἢ δ' ἄρα Κύπρον ἴκανε φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη,
 ἐς Πάφον, ἔνθα τέ οἱ τέμενος βωμός τε θυήεις.
 ἔνθα δέ μιν Χάριτες λούσαν καὶ χρίσαν ἐλαίῳ
 ἀμβρότῳ, οἷα θεοὺς ἐπενήνοθεν αἰὲν ἐόντας,
 ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἔσσαν ἐπήρατα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

and straightaway they lept up, he went to Thrace,
 and ever-smiling Aphrodite went to Paphos on Cyprus
 the location of her sanctuary and her altar fragrant with sacrificial smoke
 where the Graces bathed her and anointed her with oil
 befitting a god, which covers the gods who live eternally,
 and they put delightful clothing around her, a wonder to behold. (*Od.* 8.
 361-66)

This desire to be hidden from those who would witness their shame is a typical reaction. Aphrodite sequesters herself in her *temenos* (her sacred space or sanctuary), an act which conceals her from prying eyes. The psychological implications of her need to clean herself may also be significant in representing Aphrodite's feelings of shame but lie beyond the scope of this work. More to the point, however, Aphrodite apparently remains nude from the time she is in bed with Ares to after her bath when she is clothed by the Graces, a fact which should help to prove that women are represented in the poems as bathing nude. The poet therefore provides an opportunity for Aphrodite to be doubly cloaked, first by the physical shelter of the sanctuary and then by the clothing provided by her attendants.

Furthermore, by returning to the company of the Graces, Aphrodite is reinstating herself into an environment of safety with regard to *aidōs*. The Graces, though goddesses themselves, are of a lower rank in the divine hierarchy than Aphrodite.²³ Their inferior social status is reflected in the fact that they behave as attendants for another goddess. This characterization of the Graces is significant because it signals their status as a retinue for Aphrodite, the presence of which is the mark of an *aidoiē gunē*. The fact that they are represented as being of a lower class means that they do not pose a threat to Aphrodite as further witnesses to her shame. Instead, because they are identified as attendants they serve as guarantors against a further breach of *aidōs*, at least for as long as

²³I disagree with Yamagata 1994, 152 who proposes that "in the divine world, each member seems to have an equal right...there is only one 'class' in divine society..." The assumption of a hierarchical divine order is an essential premise of Slatkin's work. See e.g., Slatkin 1991: 79.

Aphrodite remains in their company. Aphrodite's decision to return to them indicates, along with the physical behaviour of cloaking, a consciousness of *aidōs* demonstrated by her need for their protection.

Since the Graces clothe Aphrodite, we can assume that they are witness to her nakedness and, since she is unclothed as she steps from the bath, we can assume that the poet was accustomed to a tradition of women bathing in the nude. I will proceed on the assumption that the poet implies nudity for his female characters during bathing. The text also seems to suggest that it is fitting for women to bathe in the company of other women. This practice affords them added protection against unwanted attention and affronts to their modesty.

In Book 14 of the *Iliad*, however, in order to preserve the secrecy of her activities, Hera washes herself without the presence of female attendants before she leaves to seduce Zeus. In order to compensate for this absence, Hera takes special precautions to ensure her privacy:

βῆ δ' ἴμεν ἐς θάλαμον, τόν οἱ φίλος υἱὸς ἔτευξεν
 Ἥφαιστος, πυκινὰς δὲ θύρας σταθμοῖσιν ἐπῆρσε
 κληῖδι κρυπτῇ, τὴν δ' οὐ θεὸς ἄλλος ἀνῶγεν·
 ἔνθ' ἢ γ' εἰσελθοῦσα θύρας ἐπέθηκε φαεινάς.

She went into the chamber which her dear son, Hephaistos, constructed, and she fitted the close-set doors in their posts with a secret bolt, which none of the gods could open; and when she was within she closed the shining inner doors. (*Il.* 14.166-69)

Hera then proceeds to wash herself and ready herself for her encounter with Zeus (*Il.* 14. 170-86). The secrecy she employs is strongly emphasized. One

commentator has made the plausible suggestion that this secrecy arises from Hera's intended deception of Zeus.²⁴ This same commentator also draws attention to the fact that Hera is not bathed by attendants, as are Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.362-6) and even Penelope (*Od.* 18.192-7).²⁵ Hera's concern for privacy is certainly predicated by her desire to keep her deception secret, but it is also prompted by this fact. Under normal conditions, concerns of modesty are mediated by the protective presence of attendants or fellow-bathers. In this case, because she is alone, Hera must take special precautions to ensure that she is not seen while naked.²⁶ The double set of doors and the unbreakable lock substitute for the lack of attendants. Once again the presence of *aidōs* can be seen in the symbol that provides concealment.

The *Odyssey's* scene of the bathing of Nausikaa and her companions brings us back to the model of bathing in company. This activity takes place after they have finished washing the clothes:

αἱ δὲ λοεσσάμεναι καὶ χρισάμεναι λίπ' ἐλαίῳ
 δείπνον ἔπειθ' εἶλοντο παρ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο.

And having washed and anointed themselves richly with olive oil
 they then took their dinner on the banks of the river. (*Od.* 6.96-7)

²⁴Janko 1992, *ad loc.*

²⁵Janko 1992, *Il.* 14. 166-86.

²⁶Janko 1992 *Il.* 14. 170-1, points out that "Homer coyly avoids saying that Here is naked," a point which has been noted here and which is consistent with other scenes in which nudity must be assumed but is never overtly mentioned by the poet.

The girls are therefore naked and in the open as they bathe (one must assume that in this abbreviated description Homer feels it unnecessary to describe the girls redonning their clothing). Though the audience is aware that this must be a relatively secluded spot, or at least that the girls think so, the audience also knows that Odysseus is sleeping nearby. The poet, therefore, carefully locates this activity prior to the awakening of Odysseus. There is a very prudent reason for this group of girls to be bathing together, playing together and working together. Stories of the dangers for a young girl who strays from the pack picking wildflowers or the like are far too familiar in Greek mythology for the tension here to go unnoticed.²⁷ For a maiden to be caught alone, even fully clothed, could in the Greek imagination lead to her rape and abduction, as in the story of Persephone. The danger would only be multiplied by her being caught alone while naked. The poet establishes a setting whose dangers will be apparent to the audience but he also provides all the information necessary to indicate that the parties have negotiated the danger successfully.

That Nausikaa is surrounded by companions, that she does not stray from the pack is consistent with and helps to create the overall representation of her as a model *parthenos*.²⁸ Together with her display of *aidōs* before her father which was discussed in the first chapter, there are a number of other small details which signal once again the special sensitivity, the extra precautions that are taken by, and on behalf of, young unmarried women. The poet tells us that

²⁷See Murnaghan 1987: 93-94; see also Van Nortwick 1979: 271.

²⁸See Van Nortwick 1979: 270.

when Athena comes to visit Nausikaa in her dream, the young maiden is not even sleeping unattended:

παρ δὲ δὺ' ἀμφίπολοι, Χαρίτων ἄπο κάλλος ἔχουσαι,
σταθμοῖν ἐκάτερθε· θύραι δ' ἐπέκειντο φαειναί.

and two attendants, possessed of beauty from the Graces
were nearby on either side of the door-posts; and the shining doors
were closed. (*Od.* 6.18-19)

Nausikaa would seem to have guards posted by her bedchamber, as further protection of her chastity. These watchers are female, not for the physical protection they can provide, but because male guards might themselves represent a threat to the girl's virginity, or at least to her good name. The female attendants are seemingly present to provoke *aidōs* in any man who might make an attempt at the princess. They represent an audience, an audience which, as we saw from the absence of the goddesses from the bed of Ares and Aphrodite, should provoke an exceptionally keen sense of shame in the prospective perpetrator. Were a man to attempt to rape a young virgin, one of high worth and on the brink of marriage, this would be exceedingly shameful of its own accord.²⁹ To do so in front of other young women, also presumably virgins, heightens the shame factor drastically. The mention of Nausikaa's sleep-guards

²⁹It should be noted that these special precautions are taken on behalf of the princess only. Though, as we saw in the first chapter, concern is expressed over the sexual fidelity of all the women in the household, it is clear that a great deal more effort went into preserving the chastity of its 'more important' members, those of higher status. For a valuable discussion of the implications of class on the sexual mores of female characters in the *Odyssey* see Thalmann 1998a.

serves to emphasize the liminality of her present state, her own heightened sense of *aidōs* and that of her parents and those around her.

Aidōs can be seen, more explicitly, to be informing Nausikaa's behaviour in her encounter with Odysseus. Apart from the issue of his nudity, a topic I will address shortly, Nausikaa ponders the question of how she will get Odysseus back to the city, now that he has been made presentable. She conjectures that as they pass through the city some of the coarser sailors might suggest that she had gone out searching for a husband on her own and that she has passed over the local suitors who have so ardently courted her. She is conjuring up the *nemesis* which others would feel toward what she would perceive to be a breach of *aidōs*. She explains:

ὡς ἐρέουσιν, ἐμοὶ δέ κ' ὀνειδέα ταῦτα γένοιτο.
καὶ δ' ἄλλη νεμεσῶ, ἢ τις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι,
ἢ τ' ἀέκητι φίλων πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς ἐόντων
ἀνδράσι μίσγηται πρὶν γ' ἀμφάδιον γάμον ἔλθειν.

This is what they will say, and this would be a disgrace for me.
And I myself would feel *nemesis* at another, who would do such things,
who, without the good will of her dear father and mother
mingles with a man before she enters upon a public marriage. (*Od.* 6.285-8)

Nausikaa fears what others might say of her, how others might misconstrue her behaviour, despite the fact that she herself has done nothing wrong.³⁰ In fact,

³⁰*Pace Cairns* 1993: 122. *Contra Wohl* 1993: 28 who suggests about Nausikaa that "at the end of this passage, she moves from the plane of pure imagination to one of potential reality; she goes from imagining gossip about a deed to guilt about the deed itself..." This conclusion arises largely from her translation of the last three lines of this passage. She ignores the object of *nemesis*, *allē* 'another (girl)', in line 286 and mistranslates the verb *nemesis* to mean 'I am ashamed'

Nausikaa's super-sensitivity to *aidōs* prompts her to misread the situation, at least according to her father. Odysseus praises Nausikaa's thoughtfulness and composure in helping him at the river (*Od.* 7. 292-6) but Alkinoos suggests that she should have brought Odysseus to the palace herself (*Od.* 7. 299-301). Odysseus then comes to Nausikaa's defence and lies on her behalf:

ἦρωσ, μή μοι τοῦνεκ' ἀμύμονα νείκεε κούρην·
 ἡ μὲν γάρ μ' ἐκέλευε σὺν ἀμφιπόλοισιν ἔπεσθαι·
 ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔθελον δείσας αἰσχυρόμενός τε,
 μή πως καὶ σοὶ θυμὸς ἐπισκύσσαιτο ἰδόντι·
 δύσζηλοι γάρ τ' εἰμὲν ἐπὶ χθονὶ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων.

Hero, do not blame this excellent maiden on account of me,
 for she bid me to follow along with her attendants,
 but I was unwilling being both fearful and conscious of shame
 lest in some way your heart should be offended seeing us
 for we among the tribes on earth are a suspicious lot. (*Od.* 7. 303-07)

Odysseus confirms, in this way, that concern for *aidōs* was necessary, and that he is sensitive to Nausikaa's present condition. It is probable that Nausikaa over-reacts because of her own current anxiety over protecting her good reputation but this is in part because her own thoughts toward the stranger changed suddenly from duty to a suppliant to interest in a prospective husband.

rather than 'I feel indignation at' or 'I disapprove of' which are closer to the actual meaning of the verb. As we have seen, *nemesis* is the reaction of an individual to someone who has committed a breach of *aidōs*, it does not itself indicate an experience of shame. It is for this reason that Wohl construes the final lines as referring to Nausikaa herself, as though she were speaking in the first person. It is this translation that is used to give some weight to her argument about Nausikaa's heightened awareness of her sexuality.

Because the audience is aware of Nausikaa's change of attitude, doubt lingers for some as to the purity of her intentions. Wohl is right to express surprise about Nausikaa's use of the word *'misgētai'*, in the passage, quoted above, where she worries over what people might say about her new-found companion.³¹ The verb frequently means 'to have intercourse' and Wohl points out that "this is the fourth time she has used the explicitly sexual verb in under 100 lines." The verb *'misgētai'*, however, can also be construed more innocently to mean something like 'be in the company of' or 'mingle' as I have translated it here. Though we should not ignore the sexual meaning of the verb, and indeed there is little doubt that Homer intended that meaning to be implicit, it is unlikely that he wanted Nausikaa's character explicitly to mention sex.³² Because Wohl suggests that Nausikaa is actually fantasizing about being herself engaged in this illicit activity she aligns Nausikaa with a pattern she has outlined for Kalypso and Kirke when she describes her as one "who bears a distinct resemblance to the "dread goddesses" [Odysseus] has just left behind, both in the help she may offer him and in her remarkable awareness of her own sexuality: she is quick to respond to Athena's dream-promptings, and there is a suggestion in the book that she will have at least some say in the circumstances of her own

³¹Wohl 1993: 29 translates this as 'having sex with'.

³² Pace Cairns 1990: 264: "I do not wish to suggest, however, that there is any *specifically* sexual sense in Nausicaa's use of *μισγηται* in 288 – it would be superfluous for a well-brought-up young woman like Nausicaa to express her disapproval of a girl who has sex with men (pl.) before marriage; but I do wish to show that an entirely neutral sense of the verb could lead to a significant misunderstanding."

marriage."³³ Though Wohl does point out that "Nausicaa does not, in fact, actualize her fantasies and, moreover, there is no suggestion that she does or will wield any power outside the *oikos*,³⁴" she does seem to be suggesting that Nausikaa's sexuality is represented as though it is scarcely under control.

The manner in which Wohl speaks of an awareness or consciousness of sexuality implies that Nausikaa recognizes the power of her own sexuality as a tool and refrains from using it by choice, or at least through will. I would suggest that what Nausikaa has is an awareness of the imminence of her sexual initiation. It is no surprise that she seems to be somewhat fixated on the approaching moment which will mark her emergence into womanhood.³⁵ It is also no surprise that these musings have strong sexual overtones. To suggest, however, that Homer would want to represent a young, inexperienced virgin as a sexual threat to Odysseus seems to me untenable. Surely she represents a threat to his homecoming in terms of the prospect of marriage but Nausikaa's latent sexuality should not be understood as the weapon it is shown to be in the hands of a Kirke or a Kalypso.³⁶

³³Wohl 1993: 27-8.

³⁴Wohl 1993: 29.

³⁵Cairns 1993: 122 also recognizes that her behaviour is informed by thoughts of her approaching marriage, and realizes that she has not transgressed the bounds of *aidōs*.

³⁶See Wohl 1993: 23-7.

Some scholars have questioned the modesty of Nausikaa's choice to remove her headress for a game of ball-throwing with her companions.³⁷ The concern arises from the fact that Nausikaa will proceed to confront Odysseus with her head uncovered. One commentator has this to say: "note the erotic overtone (the κρήδεμνον is a symbol of virtue and modesty). Such excursions as the present were a notorious hazard for young females...but by throwing off their veils in the presence (as the audience know) of a man, the girls are almost courting the fate that at 138 they clearly thought had overtaken them."³⁸ Wohl, attempting to characterize Nausikaa as a young woman strongly aware of her own sexuality, points out that "she meets him - a strange, naked man in a lonely place - without the usual chastity emblems: accompaniment and veil."³⁹ The *krēdemnon*, the veil or rather the head covering, is indeed a symbol of virtue and, more specifically, of *aidōs*.⁴⁰ As we shall see, however, for Nausikaa to have

³⁷Il. 6. 100. On the notion that Nausikaa compromises her modesty by this gesture see, e.g., Van Nortwick 1979: 270, who suggests that "by manipulating a few potent symbolic devices—the throwing off of a veil, a simile, a dream sent by Athena—the poet suggests the confusion attendant upon adolescent sexuality between innocent modesty and a certain forwardness which is only dimly recognized, if at all, by Nausicaa herself."

³⁸Heubeck *et al.* *Od.* 6. 100.

³⁹Wohl 1993: 28. Carson 1990: 156, outlines more of these chastity emblems: "since woman does not bound herself, she must be bounded. This is achieved by organization of her space, prescription of her gestures, ordering of her rituals, imposition of headgear, attendants and other trappings."

⁴⁰See Janko 1992 *Il.* 14. 184 who, in discussing the *krēdemnon* in the context of Hera's seduction of Zeus, rightly points out that this article of clothing is not in fact a veil but a head covering, in that it does not cover the face. Ferrari 1990 discusses the representation on archaic and early-classical Greek vase-paintings of the cloaked figure often identified by the caption '*aidōs*'. The individual wearing the garment communicates a visual symbol indicating that he or she is a possessor of *aidōs*. That the *krēdemnon* is associated with *aidōs* can also be seen by its synonym *kaluptre*, a noun which derives from the verb *kalupto*, meaning 'I hide'. The *kaluptre* is then a garment which hides the wearer. Once again, it hides from view not something which is shameful but something

thrown off her head covering does not constitute a breach of *aidōs* but instead leaves her vulnerable to one.

It is difficult to determine whether or not Nausikaa and her companions exhibit any signs of shame at being caught with their head-coverings off. All of them, including Nausikaa, do *attempt* to flee which, as we saw with Aphrodite, is consistent with the behaviour of a shamed individual. Whether they flee in shame, or whether they flee in fear, however, is less clear. If they do flee in shame, is it as a result of their lack of head-coverings or is it due to Odysseus' nudity and generally dissheveled appearance? A partial answer can be found in Athena's treatment of Nausikaa. When Athena stops her she puts boldness (*tharsos*) in her heart and removes the fear (*deos*) from her limbs (*Od.* 6. 139-140). Nausikaa's reaction, therefore, is not based on an experience of shame nor does her demeanor in the remainder of her encounter with Odysseus indicate that she feels shame over, or even an acknowledgement of, her lack of head-covering.

The poet of the *Odyssey* has explicitly drawn the audience's attention to the strewn *krēdemnoi* presumably to emphasize further the vulnerability of the girls, their defenselessness with regard to *aidōs*. That this is the case seems relatively indisputable considering the strength of the *krēdemnon* as a symbol of the *aidoiē gunē*. How then should Nausikaa's lack of response to what has been construed as a lapse of modesty be understood? In order to appreciate properly the significance of Nausikaa's behaviour, it will be necessary first to understand

which is vulnerable to shame if revealed. Nagler 1974: 64-85, also has discussion of the *krēdemnon* motif.

the importance of the *krēdemnon* as a symbol for the *aidoiē gunē*, the mature matron.

In Hera's adornment scene, discussed above, one of the articles of clothing she dons is the *krēdemnon* (*Il.* 14. 184). This might seem somewhat discordant with the other accoutrements she employs for her seduction but as a married woman the *krēdemnon* is a symbol of her fidelity to her husband, her loyalty to his bed and her unwillingness to put her beauty on display to men other than her husband.⁴¹ This last idea comes out most strongly in Homer's representation of Penelope. In *Odyssey* 18 Athena inspires Penelope

μνηστήρεσσι φανῆναι, ὅπως πετάσειε μάλιστα
θυμὸν μνηστήρων ἰδὲ τιμήεσσα γένοιτο
μᾶλλον πρὸς πόσιός τε καὶ υἱέος ἢ πάρος ἦεν.

to show herself to the suitors, in order greatly to set aflutter
the heart of the suitors and that she might be honoured
more by her husband and her son than she had been before. (*Od.* 18.160-2)

She then tells her servant, Eurynome, that she will go amongst the suitors though they are still hateful to her (*Od.* 18. 165). Commentators have long puzzled over this apparent change in Penelope's attitude toward the prospect of a new marriage.⁴² Penelope finds herself in a very difficult position. While she herself longs to persist in her loyalty to her husband she recognizes that this position

⁴¹ Zeitlin 1995: 125 describes the characteristic expression of loyalty to the husband's bed: "in traditional diction, terms for adultery and fidelity focus on the state of the marital bed, defined between the two poles of "shaming" (*aischunein*, 8. 269) or "respecting" (*aidomene*) its sacrosanct qualities."

⁴²See Van Nortwick 1979: 269 n. 1, for bibliography concerning Penelope's apparent change of heart.

proves ever more detrimental to her son. As Murnaghan characterizes her position:

the poem takes great pains to present that allegiance as her intrinsic and intensely admirable characteristic, an essential fact of her character, rather than as simply a product of the circumstance of being Odysseus' wife when he is there to be her husband. Thus the *Odyssey*, in depicting the unsettled conditions that generate its plot, inevitably draws our attention to a conflict between the virtue that it demands of its heroine as an inalienable aspect of her character and the social world in which it situates her and in which her character must be negotiated. In a world where a marriageable woman has to be defined as the wife of somebody, the faithful wife of someone who no longer exists, who is widely believed to be dead is an impossibility. Yet that is the figure Penelope is called upon to be.⁴³

When she comes, therefore, to the necessary decision to stage the contest of the bow, a decision that sets in motion the potentiality for a new marriage, she nonetheless continues to display her basic unwillingness to be remarried. It is therefore important to recognize that it is Athena's intention and desire to present Penelope to the suitors rather than any motivation of her own.⁴⁴ Athena wishes to display Penelope before the suitors in order to prompt the contest of the bow and while this happens to coincide with Penelope's decision to

⁴³ Murnaghan 1994: 90.

⁴⁴ Russo *et al.*, *ad loc.*

announce her renewed availability for remarriage, she indicates, through her behaviour, that she does so only out of necessity.

When Penelope has announced her intention to Eurynome, the servant immediately suggests that Penelope wash herself and make herself presentable before she goes to address the suitors (*Od.* 18. 170-4). Penelope, however, refuses to be bathed:

Εὐρυνόμη, μὴ ταῦτα παραύδα, κηδομένη περ,
 χρωτ' ἀπονίπτεσθαι καὶ ἐπιχρίεσθαι ἄλοιφῇ·
 ἀγλαίην γὰρ ἐμοί γε θεοί, τοὶ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
 ὤλεσαν, ἐξ οὗ κείνος ἔβη κοίλης ἐνὶ νηυσίν.
 ἀλλὰ μοι Αὐτονόην τε καὶ Ἴπποδάμειαν ἄνωχθι
 ἐλθέμεν, ὄφρα κέ μοι παρστήετον ἐν μεγάροισιν·
 οἷη δ' οὐκ εἴσειμι μετ' ἀνέρας· αἰδέομαι γάρ.

Eurynome, though it is through your concern for me, do not urge
 such things as washing my skin and being anointed with oil.
 For the gods who hold Olympos destroyed my beauty
 from the time that man went away in the hollow ships.
 But bid Autonoe and Hippodameia to come
 in order to stand with me in the great hall.
 For I will not go alone among men. For I would feel *aidōs* to do so. (*Od.*
 18.178-84)

Effectively, Penelope is saying that her beauty exists for her husband alone, thereby reaffirming her loyalty to him.⁴⁵ Her disheveled appearance, her face

⁴⁵A fascinating parallel to this struggle between revelation and concealment can be seen in Laura Mulvey's 1988: 63-64, discussion of the representation of the heroine in two films. She says "thus both in *Only Angels Have Wings* and in *To Have and Have Not*, the film opens with the woman as object of the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonists in the film. She is isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualized. But as the narrative progresses she falls in love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamorous characteristics, her generalized sexuality, her show-girl connotations; her eroticism is subjected to the male star

ravaged by grief, which as we saw in the first chapter could provoke shame, serve to indicate here that she is unwilling to employ her beauty in attracting a new husband. While she submits to the necessity of her remarriage she also demonstrates her unhappiness with this necessity by refusing to participate fully in her role as bride. Penelope's intent to demonstrate her continuing loyalty to her husband is only finally and partially thwarted by Athena who must take the further step of putting Penelope to sleep in order to beautify her.

Despite Athena's desire to control the manner and the message of Penelope's revelation to the suitors, Penelope still does everything she can to identify herself as an *aidoiē gunē*. When she finally makes her entrance

οὐκ οἴη, ἅμα τῇ γε καὶ ἀμφίπολοι δὺ' ἔποντο.
 ἢ δ' ὅτε δὴ μνηστῆρας ἀφίκετο διὰ γυναικῶν,
 στῆ ῥα παρὰ σταθμὸν τέγεος πύκα ποιητοῖο
 ἄντα παρειάων σχομένη λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα·
 ἀμφίπολος δ' ἄρα οἱ κεδνὴ ἐκάτερθε παρέστη.

she is not alone, for two attendants follow along with her
 and when she, a gem among women, arrived before the suitors
 she stood by the pillar closely fitted to the well-built roof
 holding her shining headdress before her cheeks
 and a devoted attendant stood to either side of her. (*Od.* 18.207-11)

Penelope surrounds herself with emblems of chastity. She is accompanied by attendants, she goes to stand by the *stathmos*, a symbol, as Wohl points out,

alone." When Penelope descends before the suitors, through the engineering of Athena, she is isolated and eroticized by their gaze. Penelope's desire, however, corresponds to that of the love-stricken film-star, a desire to signal her possession by another. The loss of the film star's outward manifestations of beauty correspond to Penelope's active attempts to suppress and hide her beauty and to reserve it as a treasure for the eyes of her possessor alone.

which allies her to her husband and to the *oikos*,⁴⁶ and she wears a headdress which she modestly holds over her face, a gesture so emblematic of Penelope's character.⁴⁷ This final gesture, in particular, demonstrates her desire to conceal her beauty and to maintain the *aidōs* appropriate to a matron. Athena achieves her desired end since the suitors become weak in the knees at the sight of Penelope (*Od.* 18. 212-13), but Penelope still clings, in some small measure, to control over the message of her presentation through her attitude of *aidōs*. Rather than representing a subversive attempt, on the part of Penelope, at pursuing her own narrative desires, it instead represents her inability to deviate from the only narrative plot she knows: that of being the wife of Odysseus. Furthermore, her display of *aidōs* before the suitors, whether she knows or intends it, actually furthers her husband's achievement of his *nostos* since the combined effect of Athena's enhancement of Penelope's beauty and her own insistence upon concealing it reveal the qualities of the perfect wife. This aids the purpose of both Athena and Odysseus by inciting the suitors to bestow generous gifts, which will help to replenish the wealth they have diminished, and to take up the contest of the bow.

This portrayal of Penelope's intractable *aidōs*, the importance to her of concealing her beauty, in part, through her use of the *krēdemnon*, is crucial for our

⁴⁶Wohl 1993: 23 says: "The image of the *axis mundi* recurs throughout the poem, represented variously as a loom, a roofpillar, and a bedpost, always with the woman next to it. In this picture of the woman next to the ithyphallic cosmic pillar is represented the entire world order: any movement on the woman's part represents the collapse of the cosmos on some level. The message of this *sēma* could not be clearer: the woman must revolve around the man; while he supports the universe, her cooperation is essential."

⁴⁷ Cf. *Od.* 1. 334, 16. 416, and 21. 65.

understanding of Nausikaa's apparent unconcern over her lack of headdress when she appears before the naked Odysseus. Part of the inherent danger associated with the state of being a *parthenos* is contained in the idea that the young woman must make herself somewhat vulnerable to *aidōs* because she must display herself, display her beauty, in order to attract a husband. This is the nature of Nausikaa's liminality. As a *parthenos* she is especially vulnerable to breaches of *aidōs* due to her ripeness for marriage. At the same time, however, she must relax her vigilance with regard to the trappings of *aidōs* in order to gain recognition for her beauty which will increase her good reputation which will, in turn, give her a greater worth which will be employed in attracting the right sort of husband for her.

As I have already suggested, the removal of Nausikaa's head-covering does not constitute a breach of *aidōs* but only a vulnerability to this emotion, an experience which would be provoked by being seen by the wrong person while in this condition. This is to suggest that it is apparently not inappropriate for Odysseus to see Nausikaa with her *krēdemnon* removed. This brings my discussion to an altogether different point about the potential for an experience of shame in this context. The prospect that Odysseus, a naked, dirty stranger, should not represent a threat to Nausikaa or to her *aidōs* seems, at first, somewhat startling. This is, however, the conclusion that must be reached and it can be explained by two factors. First of all, Odysseus' appearance when he is washed up on the beach does not indicate his actual status: his indeterminate status places Nausikaa in a superior position. Secondly, Odysseus negotiates his

exchange with Nausikaa beautifully by acknowledging her *aidōs* and thereby putting her at ease. These two ideas are in fact related, but it is helpful to distinguish them here because it makes Odysseus' approach to Nausikaa become clearer.

When I examined above the reaction of Aphrodite to being caught with her lover Ares in bed I pointed out that the Graces, who bathed her, did not apparently provoke any sense of shame in her by their presence. In that case it seemed that Aphrodite did not feel shame before them because of their lower status. The same is true of Nausikaa's lack of shame before Odysseus. She feels no shame before him because, even before he speaks, his condition, his physical appearance, indicate that he is in need, and that he must therefore approach as a suppliant. One who is "permanently or temporarily at disadvantage" must display *aidōs* before those of greater status, those who could help or harm him or her.⁴⁸ Knowing how highly charged his present situation is, Odysseus immediately indicates to Nausikaa that he approaches as a suppliant, thereby acknowledging her superior position and precluding any shame or any threat she might have perceived. Odysseus' status as a suppliant here is dictated largely by his overwhelming lack of anything that could otherwise identify him as a *xeinos*. He lacks companions, who could attest to his status. He lacks clothing, which is also an indicator of status, but its absence places him in a

⁴⁸ Ferrari 1990: 192, notes that "respect [*aidōs*] is due to men in authority by persons who are permanently or temporarily at disadvantage." Though she points out that *aidōs* is due only to *men* from persons who are placed at a disadvantage, I would suggest that it was equally due to female benefactors.

situation where he is being seen inappropriately, by the wrong person. He also lacks a noble appearance, the absence of which compromises his status as *aidoios*. The lack of any markers identifying his status in fact helps him, at least initially, because it is his lack of status that allows Nausikaa to be at ease and to avoid an experience of shame. By the same token, the beautification he receives from Athena and the clothes he acquires from Nausikaa help to re-establish him as a man worthy of *aidōs*, one who looks as though he can repay the gift of hospitality. Though his high status may have represented itself as a hindrance in reassuring Nausikaa initially, it is essential that it is subsequently recognized in order that he achieve his *nostos*.⁴⁹

Interestingly, after their initial shock, neither Nausikaa nor her companions demonstrate any concern over Odysseus' nudity. This can be explained, in part, by the commonplace activity of women, of varying status, bathing men in various episodes in the poems.⁵⁰ Elsewhere, however, the men in question are *xeinoi* who have been properly welcomed by the male head of household, and whose status has at least been surmised. The maidens do not express concern over Odysseus' nudity, but Odysseus does. After Nausikaa and he have exchanged speeches, she tells her attendants to aid him in his bath, an offer which he protests:

⁴⁹See Murnaghan 1987: 91-102, on the importance for Odysseus of reclaiming his status in order to achieve his *nostos*.

⁵⁰ While the task of bathing male visitors is customarily given to servants, when Telemachus visits Nestor in Pylos he is bathed by Nestor's own daughter Polykaste (3. 464-5). In addition, Helen (4. 252), Kalypso (5. 264) and Kirke (10. 449) all take their turn bathing Odysseus. For a summary of the typical bathing scene within the context of Homeric hospitality see Reece 1993: 33-4.

Ἄμφίπολοι, στῆθ' οὕτω ἀπόπροθεν, ὄφρ' ἐγὼ αὐτὸς
 ἄλμην ὤμοιῖν ἀπολούσομαι, ἀμφὶ δ' ἐλαίῳ
 χρίσομαι· ἦ γὰρ δηρὸν ἀπὸ χροός ἐστιν ἀλοιφή.
 ἄντην δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ γε λοέσσομαι· αἰδέομαι γὰρ
 γυμνοῦσθαι κούρησιν ἐϋπλοκάμοισι μετελθών.

Attendants, stand thus at a distance, since I myself will
 wash the salt from my shoulders and will anoint them
 with olive oil; for it is long since my skin has known oil.
 And so I will not bathe before you; for I am ashamed to be
 naked in company with lovely-haired maidens. (*Od.* 6. 218-22)

If, as I have said, it is a commonplace activity for females to bathe naked males, what explanation can be offered for Odysseus' feelings of shame?⁵¹ It has been suggested that Odysseus' shame is provoked by his unsightly appearance. This is certainly part of the equation. I have shown that ugliness is construed as shameful in the poems. Also, as I pointed out above, his good looks and some attractive clothing would have given Nausikaa an indication of his status. Odysseus is acutely aware of the fact that his current physical appearance does not communicate his actual status and he is ashamed at having to appear in what, for him, constitutes a severely depreciated state.

The fact that Odysseus does not look his status implies a loss of power, an impairment of subjectivity because he is forced to be dependent on others. When Odysseus adopts the disguise of a beggar upon his arrival in Ithaca, he is still in control of his physical representation; he manipulates the sign of 'beggar' in

⁵¹Heubeck *et al.* *Od.* 6. 217-222.

order to achieve his own ends. In Scheria, however, he must rely on Nausikaa and on the help of Athena in order to construct the identity he wishes to present in this context.⁵² Before he is able to become clean and to clothe himself Nausikaa had readily projected onto his inappropriately naked and, therefore, vulnerable body the status of harmless suppliant. While this degradation in status had been helpful in gaining Nausikaa's confidence and putting her at ease, it is crucial to Odysseus that he regain control of his self-presentation.

The vulnerability, the passivity inherent for a male in appearing naked in the wrong context is amplified in his death. The anxiety surrounding the condition and treatment of the warrior's body after death can be understood more clearly when the total incapacity, the ultimate vulnerability of the dead male body is recognized for what it is. Hector most clearly encapsulates this concern in *Iliad* 22 where he conjectures about Achilles' treatment of him:

μή μιν ἐγὼ μὲν ἴκωμαι ἰών, ὁ δέ μ' οὐκ ἐλεήσει
οὔδέ τί μ' αἰδέσεται, κτενέει δέ με γυμνὸν ἔόντα
αὐτως ὡς τε γυναῖκα, ἐπεὶ κ' ἀπὸ τεύχεα δύω.

he will not take pity on me
and he will show no *aidōs* for me, but he will kill me

⁵²See Bassi 1995: 18, who says that "Odysseus' adornment also obviously signals his utter dependence on a woman for the realization of his homecoming." Odysseus must, of course, always rely on a woman in some capacity or other but in the case of Kirke and Kalypso he is able to exploit his physical attractiveness and his reputation to his advantage and he does not need to prove his identity. Neither must he prove himself to Athena, who knows Odysseus no matter what his disguise and who respects him for his wits. Only with Nausikaa and Penelope, the two mortal women on whom his success so greatly depends, is Odysseus unable to rely on the strength of his looks and his fame. With these two women, who do not have the benefit of divine insight, must he go to greater lengths to prove his worth. It rests upon their recognition of his worth to guarantee him a successful *nostos*.

just as though I were naked like a woman, when I strip off my armour.
(Il. 22.123-5)

Hector does not mean that he would be killed in the manner one kills a naked woman, a practice which, as far as I know, was not common. There is special import to the nudity of the female in this simile. One might have thought it a sufficient analogy for Hector to have compared himself to a woman, clothed or not, due to the defenselessness considered to be characteristic of the female. Just as with Candaules' wife, when a woman strips off her clothing she is vulnerable to an experience of *aidōs*/shame. She is also vulnerable to a breach of *aidōs* perpetrated by another. In the same way, the dead male body is vulnerable to *aidōs*. This is particularly true when, as Hector points out, the warrior's body is stripped of its armour.⁵³ The dead warrior's body, stripped of its armour, is vulnerable, like the naked woman's body, to *penetration*. This is, of course, the special way in which a woman's naked body is vulnerable, because it might invite penetration from a male other than her husband. The naked warrior's body is also vulnerable to penetration from its enemy, a reality which would effect the emasculation of the warrior. It is not specifically shameful for the warrior to be dead; it is the fact that penetration can take place beyond the man's control (largely in the form of scavenging by birds and dogs).

⁵³Bassi 1995: 5, points out that "in the epic, it is clearly a sign of his weakness for a warrior to be stripped bare of his armor (i.e., to be γύμνος); it even makes him like a woman... But what is stressed here is the act of stripping the armor, that is, the *transition* from armed to unarmed. Male nudity of itself, free from the stigma of having lost one's armor, is not necessarily a sign of compromised masculinity."

CHAPTER THREE

To Be *Aidoiē* or Not to Be: That is the Question

Introduction

The nature of Helen's relationship to *aidōs* is more complex than the portrait I have outlined thus far for the typical *aidoiē gunē*. Helen is not straightforwardly condemned by either of the poems as 'the woman with no shame' nor is she entirely free of *nemesis* whether it comes from herself or from others.¹ This study has revealed a code of *aidōs* for the feminine by which a female character can be seen either to conform socio-culturally, for which she is granted the title of *aidoiē*, or to rebel, in which case she is called *anaideiē*, and is rendered valueless. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* both demonstrate a tendency to minimize representation of the feminine experience of shame. The majority of the behaviours displayed by female characters which might otherwise be indicative of a person undergoing an experience of shame for the feminine tend to reveal instead *proscriptive behaviour* which acts to *prevent* an experience of shame. This trend of cloaking the female conveys not only a message of feminine modesty but also complicit passivity and objectivity. Female characters are rarely shown to undergo an emotional experience of *aidōs* because this would imply that they had asserted their own agency outside the parameters of the

¹Austin 1994: 26 labels her 'the woman with no shame'.

model of the *aidoiē gunē*. To commit a breach of *aidōs*, therefore, can also be understood as an attempt, by the female, to control her own narrative, to assert her subjectivity and perhaps to generate an identity unique and independent from the approved standard.²

Helen, therefore, as a woman who has committed a breach of *aidōs*, is problematic. Her error cannot be underestimated; she broke the cardinal rule of the code of the *aidoiē gunē*: to remain loyal and faithful to husband and *oikos*.³ The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* employ different methods for negotiating the undisputed fact that Helen left Sparta with Paris and sailed to Troy. The *Iliad* approaches this problem from two distinct angles. First of all, characters in the poem other than Helen herself present the scenario as rape; they deny that she *acted* at all. By denying that Helen made a deliberate choice to leave they also deny that she committed a breach of *aidōs*, thereby exonerating her from blame and, simultaneously, excising her subjectivity. Helen, for her part, repeatedly attempts to assert that she arrived in Troy through her own agency. She claims

² See Holmberg 1995 for a discussion of the construction of subjectivity. Though her article takes the figure of Penelope in the *Odyssey* as its specific subject, her discussion of recent feminist theory is much more broadly applicable. When, therefore, she states that “the *Odyssey* thus consistently asserts an ideology that denies the female a position as a positive, active participant in the creation of her narrative plot, or, in other words, denies female subjectivity (104),” one can immediately see the relevance of this formulation for any number of texts, both ancient and modern.

³ Murnaghan 1994: 84 highlights the centrality of this issue for the feminine in her discussion of Penelope: “for the female characters in the poem, indeterminacy arises in connection, not with identity, but with sexual fidelity. The question that is raised about them is not whether they are really who they are reputed to be, but whether they are faithful to their husbands. While the duplicity embodied in the figure of Odysseus raises the question of whether or not he is really Odysseus, the duplicity embodied in the figure of Penelope raises the question of whether or not her sexual desires are directed exclusively towards her husband.” See also Zeitlin 1995, esp. 125 on the issue of female fidelity as expressed by maintaining *aidōs* for a husband’s bed.

this not in an attempt to gain control over her own narrative, but in order to reinscribe herself into the code of *aidōs* which she feels that she has transgressed. Helen claims responsibility and by condemning what she construes to be her own action, she broadcasts her understanding and acceptance of *aidōs*. The poet demonstrates her awareness of *aidōs* both through her self-censure and through her behaviour in the *Iliad* which is shown to be consistent with that of an *aidoiē gunē*.

The *Odyssey* employs the reverse strategy. In this poem, characters other than Helen condemn her because they construct her as an agent who acted of her own accord when she left with Paris. Characters of the *Odyssey* do not exculpate her by asserting her victimization; instead they assume that she was pursuing her own desire and in doing so, committed a breach of *aidōs*. Helen, on the other hand, tends to assume less responsibility for her involvement with Paris than she had in the *Iliad*. Though her behaviour remains, for the most part, consistent with that of an *aidoiē gunē*, this serves only to indicate that she possesses some of the attributes and attitudes of this caliber of woman but not that she is strongly aware, on an emotional level, of the implications of her breach of *aidōs*.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* present these divergent characterizations of Helen because the emphasis on her value has shifted. In the *Iliad* Helen represents both the goal of the war and the foremost prize for its victor. For the *Iliad* to characterize her as a woman without shame would be to devalue the prize for which the men strive and for which so many of them have already

died.⁴ Helen becomes the vehicle for expressing the *nemesis* which might otherwise be directed at her were she not a prize which needs to retain its value.⁵ Leslie Collins has noted that "only Helen can blame Helen without exposing the paradox that the poem wishes to remain hidden: that the very act which necessitates a war over her also condemns her from the poem's point of view, and renders her an unworthy object of struggle."⁶ The poet obscures this paradox by invalidating Helen's conviction of her own agency through the testimony of her fellow-characters who deny her subjectivity.

The *Odyssey*, however, has a new goal and a new prize, both of which are to be found in the figure of Penelope. In this poem Helen's reputation does not need to be protected since there is no longer any danger that the significance of the war will be undermined by exposing the ambiguous value of its prize. The problem of Helen in the *Odyssey* is characterized by an uncertainty about her loyalty, a theme which is exploited by its poet in order to raise questions about its heroine, Penelope. The *Odyssey* acknowledges that Helen continues to behave like an *aidoiē gunē* but it persistently erodes this portrayal by questioning whether or not Helen can restrain her impulses to take command of her own narrative.

⁴Collins 1988: 42 argues that "warriors are impelled to fight this war out of their regard for such values as νέμεσις, yet this war, implicitly a praise of Helen, might arouse νέμεσις, for her adultery with Paris and ethical affinity with Aphrodite opposes her to these values (44)."

⁵Collins 1988: 45 suggests that "not only can the poem repudiate the contradiction of fighting over and thus praising a woman who represents an affront both to heroic values and the warrior's self-esteem; but, by having her denigrate herself and her past actions, the *Iliad* can reinforce its own values."

⁶Collins 1988: 57.

Helen in the *Iliad*

Helen's experience of shame is more complete, more enduring and more indicative of a concept of moral and personal responsibility than is demonstrated by any other character, male or female, in either of the poems. I make this comment in response to a tradition that began as a result of Dodds' discussion of "Agamemnon's Apology", the first chapter of his book entitled *The Greeks and the Irrational*, in which he uses the example of Agamemnon's apology to Achilles to explain that in the context of Homer's 'shame-culture', "unsystematised, nonrational impulses, and the acts resulting from them, tend to be excluded from the self and ascribed to an alien origin."⁷ As a result of his choice of example, subsequent scholarship, which has done much to remedy Dodds' misconception, has tended to focus on the figure of Agamemnon to prove the presence of a concept of moral responsibility within the Homeric texts. Surprisingly little attention has been paid to Helen, a character who more straightforwardly exhibits both personal and moral responsibility and who, despite her ascription of blame to Aphrodite, also readily blames herself. In contrast to the assertion that Helen's responsibility is "a question that remains unanswered in the *Iliad*," I would argue that responsibility is clearly claimed by Helen despite her exoneration by many other characters in the poem.⁸ The fact that she does not

⁷ Dodds 1956: 17.

⁸ Suzuki 1989: 56.

accept exclusive responsibility for events leading up to the Trojan War should not lead the reader to believe that her feelings of regret are somehow lessened because the blame is shared. As Williams has pointed out:

Regret must be governed, in good part, by results that go beyond intention. Sometimes regret can focus simply on the outside circumstances that made the action go wrong, and the thought is: I acted and deliberated as well as I could, and it is sad that it turned out that way. But regret cannot always be held at that distance, and then it moves back to the moments of deliberation and action, and you regret acting as you did. This need not imply that you deliberated carelessly; you may have deliberated as well as you could, but you still deeply regret that that was how the deliberation went, and that this is what you did. This is not just a regret about what happened, such as a spectator might have. It is an agent's regret, and it is the nature of action that such regrets cannot be eliminated, that one's life could not be partitioned into some things that one does intentionally and other things that merely happen to one.⁹

In the *Iliad*, Helen's regret is an agent's regret. She recognizes now that her deliberations could have gone better, especially if her wits had not been impaired by the influence of Aphrodite, but she still accepts that it was as a result of her action that the war took place. It is the other characters in the *Iliad* that characterize Helen's role passively and place it under the heading of 'things that merely happen to one'. This issue of responsibility is crucial because it is through her expression of regret and her self-blame that Helen signals her awareness of *aidōs* and therefore demonstrates her worthiness as a prize.

⁹Williams 1993: 69-70.

The vast majority of the references to Helen in the *Iliad* centre on her function as the object and prize over which the war is fought. Some of these occurrences focus on the status of her ownership, i.e. that she is currently the wife of Paris.¹⁰ Others focus on her worth as a prize, suggesting the effort and sacrifice that has gone into retrieving/retaining her.¹¹ These references often take the form of the *heineka Helenēs* construction.¹² This construction, which indicates that the war ensues 'for the sake of Helen', does not imply that the speaker considers Helen to be responsible for the war as a result of her actions. Instead, this construction signals Helen's status as a possession and a trophy to be fought over. The poet of the *Iliad* goes to great lengths to ensure that this incomparable prize should, in the end, prove worthy of the suffering she cost.

Despite the numerous references to her as the cause of the war, the *Iliad* demonstrates a tendency towards withholding blame from Helen. Some of the best and strongest evidence for this trend comes from the mouth of her father-in-law, Priam, as he sits on the wall watching the activities below:

δεῦρο πάροιθ' ἔλθοῦσα, φίλον τέκος, ἴζευ ἐμέϊο,
 ὄφρα ἴδη πρότερόν τε πόσιν πηούς τε φίλους τε—
 οὐ τί μοι αἰτία ἐσσί, θεοί νύ μοι αἴτιοί εἰσιν,
 οἳ μοι ἐφώρμησαν πόλεμον πολύδακρυν Ἀχαιῶν—

Come to me here, dear child, and sit by me,

¹⁰See e.g., *Il.* 8. 82, 11. 369, 505.

¹¹See e.g., *Il.* 4. 19, 6. 292, 7. 350, 355, 401.

¹²See e.g., *Il.* 2. 161, 177, 356, 590, 4. 174, 9. 339, 19. 325.

so that you may see your former husband, your kinsmen, and those
 dear to you —
 for I hold that it is not you who are to blame, but the gods
 who embroiled me in this mournful war against the Achaians. (*Il.* 3. 162-5)

Helen's father-in-law, a man whose kingdom and family are at risk because of her, nonetheless absolves her of responsibility for the war. He suggests, instead, that the gods are to blame, relegating Helen's role to that of a pawn or victim. Priam's view might not be considered to be representative of the general opinion held of Helen at Troy; after all, she tells us that he and Hector were her only supporters at Troy (*Il.* 24. 767-72). She claims that others in the city speak ill of her but the poet does not provide us with any negative testimony other than her own.¹³ The important point here, however, is that Priam does not blame Helen despite her claims of responsibility.¹⁴

The words of the cicadas, the old men who accompany Priam as he sits on the wall, help to clarify the dominant characterization of Helen's role in her departure from Sparta by characters other than Helen herself. As Helen enters their company the old men comment:

οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἑὺκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
 τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν·
 αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῆς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν·
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς τοίη περ ἑοὔσ' ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω,
 μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσσι τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο.

¹³ Both Collins 1988: 45 and Ebbott 1999: 4 point out that Helen is the sole source of blame for herself.

¹⁴*Il.* 3.173-5. This passage will shortly be discussed in greater detail.

The Trojans and well-greaved Achaians do not deserve *nemesis*
 for long enduring suffering for such a woman;
 terribly does she resemble the immortal goddesses when you look
 at her face.

But though she is such a one, let her go and depart with the ships
 Lest she remain behind as a grief to us and our children. (*Il.* 3. 156-60)

This treatment of Helen places her in the 'woman as prize' category, mentioned above.¹⁵ The warriors too are exempted from responsibility for the war because they do not enact a breach of *aidōs* in fighting for a prize that will earn the victor such *kleos*. Blame is, however, subtly assigned to Helen's beauty, the most readily discernible indicator of her worth.¹⁶ Her beauty is described as *ainōs*, 'terrible' in the way she resembles the goddesses. It is, therefore, not Helen as an agent who is characterized as dangerous or evil, but her beauty which causes men to do terrible things and which the old men wish she would take away.¹⁷ Suzuki has suggested that Helen's "undecidability makes her a perfectly ambiguous sign; the warriors read her as an emblem with antithetical

¹⁵ For parallels of this kind of treatment of the female one need only look as far as the girls Chryseis and Briseis. At *Il.* 1.182-4 Briseis is described as a prize (*geras*) being offered in exchange for Agamemnon's loss of Chryseis. Briseis is described as *geras* again at *Il.* 9. 111 and Chryseis is also identified by this term at *Il.* 1. 118 and 120. At *Il.* 19. 246 Briseis is listed as one item amongst a catalogue of goods being given to Achilles in reparation for Agamemnon's ill-treatment of the hero. Achilles recalls to Agamemnon the distribution of booty after the sack of Eëtion whose portion had been Chryseis (*Il.* 1. 369ff.).

¹⁶Collins 1988: 44, points out that the cicadas "reject the possibility that the rationale for this war is inadequate by evoking Helen's unique excellence in respect to beauty; but in their words is implicit discomfort with this costly war for a mere woman."

¹⁷Clader 1976: 12 suggests that "the simile employed by the elders is thus an expression more of Helen's effect on them than of any objective quality in her."

meanings—beautiful as an immortal goddess but a baneful bringer of death.”¹⁸ This formulation would seem to suggest that these two qualities are independent of one another when, in fact, it is Helen’s beauty that is a baneful bringer of death. Neither the old men nor any of the other characters (except Helen herself) construct her as *doing* anything which might provoke such destruction other than being beautiful. Helen is rendered a passive participant in the havoc her beauty wreaks.

Apart from isolating her beauty as responsible for the tragedy of the war, the old men also call Helen a *pēma* (a grief), the word used by Hesiod to describe Pandora (*Theo.* 592). Although Helen is not demonized in quite the way that Pandora is, there is still a powerful connection between the two women in their bringing disaster as a result of their beauty. Though Pandora is described as having evil intentions, a trait which gets her into trouble later on, it is her beauty which excites Epimetheus into forgetting Prometheus’ orders and accepting the treacherous gift from the gods:

θαῦμα δ’ ἔχ’ ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητούς τ’ ἀνθρώπους,
ὡς εἶδον δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν.

wonder took hold of the immortal gods and mortal men
as they looked on the utter deception, irresistible to men. (*Theo.*, 588-9)

Pandora is bedecked by the gods and fashioned in the likeness of an *aidoieē parthenos* (*Theo.*, 571-2; *W & D*, 71). The goddess Athena places a *kaluptērē* on her

¹⁸Suzuki 1989: 19.

head (*Theo.*, 574). Here then is further reinforcement that the woman who is *aidoiē* can be identified visually. Pandora's beauty and her resemblance to an *aidoiē parthenos* are described as being potent weapons. The danger, in Helen's case, is not that she intends to employ her beauty as a weapon, but that she cannot control its effects.

In order to determine properly the validity of the tradition which identifies Helen as shameless, it will be necessary to examine not only what Helen says about herself and what other characters say of her but also the degree to which the poet constructs her behaviour as conforming to or deviating from the model of the *aidoiē gunē*. When Helen is summoned to the wall by Iris, the messenger goddess, Iris places in her a desire to see her former husband:

αὐτίκα δ' ἀργεννήσι καλυψαμένη ὀθόνησιν
 ὀρμᾶτ' ἐκ θαλάμοιο τέρεν κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα,
 οὐκ οἴη, ἅμα τῇ γε καὶ ἀμφίπολοι δὺ' ἔποντο,
 Αἴθρη, Πιτθῆος θυγάτηρ, Κλυμένη τε βοῶπις·

And straightaway she covered herself with white robes
 and rushed from the bedchamber pouring forth a delicate tear,
 she was not alone, the attendants followed along with her,
 Aithre, daughter of Pitheus, and ox-eyed Klymene. (*Il.* 3. 141-4)

This is the same formulation that is used of Penelope when she goes before the suitors in Book 18 of the *Odyssey*. As I showed in the last chapter, this type of behaviour is indicative of a woman who possesses *aidōs*. While we are not explicitly told that Helen wears the *krēdemnon*, the verb used to describe her

activity is *kaluptō* whose basic meaning is to 'hide' or 'conceal'. I also noted in the previous chapter that this verb provides us with a synonym for *krēdemnon* in the *kaluptrē*, whose function is to hide or cover the individual who wears it. Along with this 'chastity emblem', she also makes certain not to join the company of men without her attendant women. This is a point which is mentioned again at 3.383-4 when Aphrodite goes to summon Helen to Paris' bedchamber where the poet tells us that she is "encircled by a throng of Trojan women."

On the one occasion where Helen is compelled to do something which constitutes a breach of *aidōs*, she reacts as someone experiencing shame would do. When Aphrodite comes to lead Helen back to Paris' bedchamber, Helen claims that she will incur *nemesis* if she complies (*Il.* 3. 410-11).¹⁹ Normally, as with Nausikaa, the acknowledgement that to proceed with a course of action will provoke *nemesis* would cause a woman (or man) to desist in this activity. As I have shown in the case of Thetis, however, sometimes the code of *aidōs* is superseded by the demands of someone with higher authority.²⁰ Though Thetis was ashamed to go before the gods in her disheveled condition, Zeus requires that she set aside *aidōs* in the face of his need. In the same way Helen, though she is conscious of the demands of *aidōs*, is forced to subsume her own propriety to the will of Aphrodite.²¹

¹⁹ See Chapter Two 48ff. for discussion of this passage.

²⁰ Cf. *Il.* 24. 90. See Chapter One, 16-17 for a discussion of this passage.

²¹ Clader 1976: 15 too, views Helen as a victim in the face of Aphrodite's power. See Collins 1988: 54.

This forced breach of *aidōs* provokes a unique occurrence within the poems: a sustained portrayal of a woman experiencing shame as an emotion. Thetis' experience of shame is not emphasized, but rather it is minimized by Zeus' sympathetic treatment of her. Helen, on the other hand, is forced to recreate the moment of her shame which forever damaged her status as *aidoizē*.²² Helen's recognition of the shameful nature of what she is compelled to do signals not that she is a shameful woman, but that "Helen in the *Iliad* is intensely aware of shame, nemesis and the blame produced by her past actions."²³

After voicing her unwillingness to continue playing the trophy and being Aphrodite's pawn, Helen is finally frightened into compliance:

βῆ δὲ κατασχομένη ἐανῶ ἀργῆτι φαεινῶ
σιγῆ, πάσας δὲ Τρωας λάθεν· ἦρχε δὲ δαίμων.

she went shrouding herself with her shining white robe
silently, and she was hidden from all the Trojan women, and the
goddess was leading her. (*Il.* 3. 419-20)

This behaviour is not analogous to the scenes of women shrouding themselves which I have discussed in previous chapters, but it is reminiscent of Odysseus' weeping before the Phaiakians. Helen does not cloak herself here as an indication of her modesty, but instead displays an emotional experience of shame and a consciousness of the *nemesis* her behaviour will provoke from others. It should be pointed out that, once again, the verb *aideomai* is not used to

²²Collins 1988: 52.

²³Ebbott 1999: 4.

describe her emotional state. Both Helen and Thetis express concern for the *nemesis* which they will incur. This expression is proscriptive and, under normal circumstances, would prevent them from continuing along the proposed course of action. Helen and Thetis, however, are not granted this privilege, but in both cases their subsequent experience of shame is not expressed verbally. This trend of avoiding explicit articulation of the feminine experience of shame takes on special significance in the case of Helen. Apart from Helen's own avowal of responsibility and her extremely negative self-characterization, the poet seems to avoid passing judgment on her.

Homer does not have characters other than Helen condemn her because they are invested in maintaining the value of Helen as a symbol of the war. At the same time, the poet shows that Helen recognizes the lack of *aidōs* that she demonstrated both in her departure from Sparta and in her return to Paris' bedchamber after his duel. Helen is shown to possess *aidōs* but she is never characterized as *aidoiē*. The poet tries to show that Helen's behaviour is consistent with that of an *aidoiē gunē* or, at least, that she, unlike her husband, knows *aidōs*, without granting her the title of *aidoiē* which she can no longer legitimately own. In part, the poet does not divest Helen completely of this quality because, as I have shown in the preceding chapters, the term *aidoiē* indicates much more than a woman's knowledge of shame. *Aidoiē* is a title which communicates a woman's worth and all of the qualities by which her worth might be calculated. Thus, to characterize Helen's behaviour as totally deviant

from that expected of an *aidoiē gunē* would be to strip her of any value thereby rendering the deaths and sacrifice undertaken on her behalf pointless and inane.

Helen is presented not as a woman who lacks *aidōs* but as a woman who has enacted a breach of *aidōs*. If Helen's character were to ignore her transgression then she could more truly be described as a woman without *aidōs*. Helen most decidedly does not ignore her misdeeds. She regularly expresses her own very negative self-assessment, she claims responsibility for her role in instigating the Trojan War and she expresses her feelings of shame over her involvement. I have shown elsewhere in this thesis that the feminine experience of shame is rarely communicated through the use of the verb *aideomai*; instead it is more regularly demonstrated through descriptions of physical reactions such as covering or hiding. This will hold true for Helen as well. Rather than express her experience verbally, she instead characterizes her state by explaining the *nemesis* others must feel towards her. Alternatively, her shame is communicated through a physical demonstration of this emotion or by her frequently voiced wishes to be hidden, or, as an extension of this idea, *to die*. When she greets Priam on the wall she says:

αἰδοῖός τέ μοι ἔσσι, φίλε ἔκυρέ, δεινός τε·
 ὡς ὄφελεν θάνατός μοι ἀδεῖν κακὸς ὀππότε δεῦρο
 υἱεῖ σῶ ἐπόμην, θάλαμον γνωτούς τε λιποῦσα
 παῖδά τε τηλυγέτην καὶ ὀμηλικίην ἐρατεινήν.
 ἀλλὰ τά γ' οὐκ ἐγένοντο· τὸ καὶ κλαίουσα τέτηκα.

Dear father-in-law, you are to me both awesome and deserving
 of respect

how I wish that hateful death had been pleasing to me at that time when
 I followed your son here, leaving behind my bedchamber and my
 kinsmen
 my daughter come-of-age and my lovely age-mate.
 But these things did not happen; and I have wasted away in weeping.
 (Il. 3.172-6)

Helen does not simply wish that she had not accompanied Paris, nor does she wish that she had had the power to resist his charms. Her words make it seem as though any form of resistance, other than death, would have been futile. Her inability to resist Aphrodite's whim at the end of Book 3 suggests that she may be justified in this belief. Death would have amounted to the ultimate display of *aidōs* for her husband. When a character expresses a wish to die it is normally a response to some current breach of *aidōs*. In Helen's case, her wish is not that she had died as a result of shame but as an indication of her *aidōs*. *Aidōs* should have prevented her from leaving with Paris even if prevention entailed her own death. Where Helen only recognizes belatedly that death might have been preferable to a life of shame with Paris, Penelope longs for this outcome when she is confronted with the prospect of having to betray *aidōs* for a new husband (*Od.* 20.61-83).²⁴ This passage at once communicates Helen's desire to have died in the past as an expression of *aidōs* and, since this wish has gone unrealized, her own present experience of shame.

²⁴Collins 1988: 47 also notes the parallel attitudes of Helen and Penelope and remarks that this desire for death "is an eminently decorous posture."

In Book 6 when Helen speaks to Hector she projects her desired death even further into the past. Hector had been visiting Paris in order to shame him into returning to the war. Helen stops him as he leaves:

δᾶερ ἔμεϊο κυνὸς κακομηχάνου ὀκρυοέσσης,
ὥς μ' ὄφελ' ἤματι τῷ ὅτε με πρῶτον τέκε μήτηρ
οἴχεσθαι προφέρουσα κακῇ ἀνέμοιο θύελλα
εἰς ὄρος ἢ εἰς κύμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,
ἔνθα με κῦμ' ἀπόερσε πάρος τάδε ἔργα γενέσθαι.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάδε γ' ὦδε θεοὶ κακὰ τεκμήραντο,
ἀνδρὸς ἔπειτ' ὄφελλον ἀμείνονος εἶναι ἄκοιτις,
ὃς ἤδη νέμεσιν τε καὶ αἴσχεα πόλλ' ἀνθρώπων.
τούτῳ δ' οὔτ' ἄρ νῦν φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω
ἔσονται· τῷ καί μιν ἐπαυρήσεσθαι οἴω.
ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν εἴσελθε καὶ ἔζο τῷδ' ἐπὶ δίφρῳ,
δᾶερ, ἐπεὶ σε μάλιστα πόνος φρένας ἀμφιβέβηκεν
εἶνεκ' ἔμεϊο κυνὸς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔνεκ' ἄτης,
οἷσιν ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόρον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω
ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' αἰοίδιμοι ἐσσομένοισι.

Brother-in-law to me, a bitch to be shuddered at, evil-contriving
how I wish that on that day when first my mother bore me
an evil blast of wind, picking me up, would have taken me away
to the mountain or to the waves of the roaring sea,
where the waves would have swept me away before these events
had taken place.

However, since the gods decreed these evil things,
then I wish that I was the wife of a better man
one who acknowledged *nemesis* and the many insults of men.
But there is nothing stable in this man's head now, nor will there
be in future; and I think he will suffer for it.
But come now, come and sit yourself in this chair,
brother-in-law, for this burden has weighed especially on your

thoughts
 for my sake, bitch that I am, and for the blindness of Alexander,
 we on whom Zeus laid an evil destiny, so that hereafter
 we will become a subject of song for future generations. (*Il.* 6. 344-58)

Helen now wishes that she had been swept away, removed from sight, on the day she was born. This statement seems to reflect Helen's awareness of the danger of making herself visible. Clearly she is not suggesting that there was something shameful about her as a baby. Instead, she wishes that some accident of fortune (or perhaps not an accident but exposure by her mother) had removed her from the world so that she had never been seen. It was, after all, being seen that got her into trouble in the first place. The epic tradition tells us that it was Helen's beauty that caused her suitors to swear an oath to protect her future husband's claim to her. It was the sight of her beauty that caused Paris to abandon *aidōs* in his seizure of her. A reader is prompted to wonder if Helen was as scrupulous as she might have been in reserving her beauty for her husband. The poet gives no detail about the actual meeting of Helen and Paris but only gives hints of the roles each played in the affair.²⁵ Despite the poet's reluctance to divulge this information, he does show us that Penelope's modest attempts to conceal her beauty from her own suitors proved fruitless in the face of Athena's machinations. Also, Helen does seem to indicate from her first speech that it would have taken death to have maintained her *aidōs* upon confronting Paris with all the power of Aphrodite behind him.

²⁵Suzuki 1989: 36 points out that "the poet only portrays the present Helen and leaves her past self a mystery. He represents Helen as an almost disembodied consciousness passively living out the effects of her fatal act."

Helen has more to say. At lines 350-51 she proposes an alternative wish to that of her own death saying that she would have settled for a husband who knew *nemesis*. This wish seems to be based on the assumption that the war and the events leading up to it, i.e. her union with a man other than her husband, were destined to happen. This is a curious wish since, presumably, any man who stole the wife of a *xeinos* would be unimpeded by *nemesis*. Since her wish is based on the assumption of the abduction/elopement as a given, her insult seems to be directed at Paris' current behaviour. What she wants is a husband who, despite his initial breach of *aidōs*, would proceed in his future activities as a man who knows *nemesis*. In short, Helen is making a subtle comparison with her own behaviour since she has arrived in Troy.²⁶ Despite her breach of *aidōs* in running away with Paris in the first place, she has, henceforth, behaved as one would expect of an *aidoiē gunē*, at least, in so far as she has been allowed by Aphrodite.

Wishing that Paris were a better man is, however, secondary to her wish that she had died before the events of the war had unfolded. Her own self-condemnation through which she communicates her shame is particularly significant in this speech. It is important to notice about this speech the diction Helen uses to denigrate herself. Helen's experience of shame is indicated primarily through her wish for death but it is also suggested by the insults with

²⁶Collins 1988: 47 suggests about Helen that "she means, obviously, to set herself apart from Paris: for although she unquestionably had a part in the same evils as Paris, still Helen, in contrast to him, now sees them the way Hector or any φίλος would."

which she characterizes herself. In Book 3 she told Priam that she was *kunōpidos* (bitch-eyed; *Il.* 3.180). In the passage quoted above she calls herself *emeio kunos kakomēchanou okruoessēs* (a bitch to be shuddered at, evil contriving; *Il.* 6. 344) and again, *emeio kunos* (me, a bitch; *Il.* 6. 356). Margaret Graver argues that "metaphors drawn from the *κύνων* group are a rather harsh form of abuse, one which labels its objects as greedy and potentially cannibalistic in the domain of goods, or of fighting, sexuality, or speech."²⁷ She makes this argument in opposition to the traditional assumption which sees dog-insults as being almost synonymous with the term *anaidēis*.²⁸ While I agree that "when applied to the Helen of epic, such abuse strikes the ear as unduly powerful, inappropriate to her character and actions," I do not concur that Helen is characterizing herself as greedy-for-men and that her self-slander must represent the voice of an alternative tradition which condemned Helen through this type of abuse.²⁹ It seems to me unhelpful to understand the dog-insult as indicating greed or some kind of metaphorical cannibalism in its target. Greed may be one manifestation of an individual's noncompliance with the code of behaviour dictated by *aidōs* but it is a lack of *aidōs*, generally, that is implied by this insult. Nowhere does Helen articulate that her specific misdeed is a greediness for men, which, incidentally, would indicate that she had a permanent character-flaw rather than

²⁷Graver 1995: 53. Alternatively, see Clader 1976: 18-23 who argues that the insults ascribed to Helen including those belonging to the *kuōn* group indicate Helen's status as a symbol of danger and death.

²⁸Graver 1995: 44-5.

²⁹Graver 1995: 53. For her discussion of the idea that Helen's self-denigration represents the condemnation of an alternative tradition see 54 ff.

that she had transgressed a certain code of behaviour in an isolated instance. Instead Helen communicates her shame through her wishes to die and through her *nemesis* at the prospect of reliving the moment of her transgression by returning to Paris's bed. Helen is aware that *aidōs* should have prevented this transgression but did not and therefore she accuses herself of shamelessness, which is expressed through the dog-insult.

In fact, nowhere in either poem does anyone label Helen *anaideiē*. This might seem somewhat surprising considering the dog-insults with which Helen so frequently condemns herself, and the *nemesis* she expresses towards her own actions. The term *anaidēis* is not applied to Helen because although it would convey her shamelessness, it would also imply that she lacked all of the other, positive traits that are indicated by the adjective *aidoiē*. To be without *aidōs* is, for a female character, not simply to lack shame. As I argued in the first chapter of this thesis, the *aidoiē gunē* is a woman who possesses not only the capacity to avoid deviant behaviour, but is one who has earned respect for qualities such as her beauty, her efficiency at carrying out household tasks, her wisdom and her overall worth and value as a wife, among other things. The dog-insults, while certainly a harsh type of abuse, do not indicate the complete devaluation of their target that is suggested by the term *anaideiē*. The latter implies not only a lack of shame but also a lack of all the other qualities and attributes which make Helen a valuable prize.

The maidservants of Odysseus, however, are labeled *anaideiē* not only for the initial lack of *aidōs* which they demonstrated in sleeping with the suitors, but

for the fact that this indiscretion lead them to abandon all of the other characteristics and behaviours that indicate an *aidoiē gunē*. They no longer perform their household tasks, they are rude to guests, they no longer listen to their superiors, in short, they have lost all value. Most mistakes or lapses of *aidōs* can be forgiven but complete abandonment of what this code implies for the female can only lead to her complete devaluation. It is for this reason that Odysseus kills the maidservants.

One might have expected a characterization of Helen which revealed a woman corrupted by the infiltration of a seducer, a woman who had abandoned *aidōs* altogether much like her sister Klytaimnestra, or like the maidservants of Odysseus. This did not, however, suit the poet's purposes. Homer's heroine, the object of this great war, needed to look and act like an *aidoiē gunē* even if he could not openly name her so. Tradition left Helen open to the suspicion that she did not properly respect *aidōs*, and the poet acknowledges this doubt through Helen's own voice. He simultaneously gives expression to the doubt surrounding Helen's knowledge of *aidōs* and reinforces his own claim that Helen is very conscious of shame and possesses the qualities of an *aidoiē gunē* by having Helen express *nemesis* towards herself. The poet cannot call Helen *aidoiē* without drawing attention to the reality of her past, a question he leaves to one side. Likewise, he cannot label Helen *anaideiē* because this would be to strip Helen of any worth and therefore to question the legitimacy of the war and to undermine the value system which the warriors supposedly fight to uphold.

Helen in the *Odyssey*

Helen's knowledge of *aidōs* becomes more indeterminate in the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad* she represents the common goal and prize of the whole army, but the *Odyssey* is a story of one man's struggle for an entirely different prize. *Aidoiē* Penelope is the object of Odysseus' quest and Helen becomes a foil against whom the behaviour of Penelope can be judged. The *Odyssey* has little investment in maintaining Helen's status as a worthy prize, and instead it reveals that even Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, may not have been worth the suffering she cost. As in the *Iliad*, her behaviour shows that Helen is attempting to comply with the feminine code of *aidōs*. The *Iliad* represents Helen as acknowledging that she would become the subject of song, a song which would never allow her to recover her good reputation; the *Odyssey* represents Helen as actively attempting to re-write that narrative.³⁰ There is, however, less conviction in her speech that she is to blame for the war. Alongside Helen's apparent attempts to downplay her responsibility, other characters in the poem explicitly blame Helen. The combined effect of the testimony of Helen and

³⁰Helen remarks that she will be a subject of song for future generations at *Il.* 6. 358. Some authors seem to characterize this song positively, as an expression of *kleos*. Collins 1988: 42 argues that "Helen will suggest to Hector that the suffering she has caused, the *πόνος* with which Hector is burdened, might issue in some good; Zeus bestowed these sufferings so that they might be preserved in song for future generations... At the very moment Helen condemns herself as the cause of suffering, she links it to the idea of fame through song and thus not only expiates herself but praises herself. She implies that the interests of the *φίλοι* will in the long run be well-served by this war." Helen, in this passage, however, is clearly not suggesting that it is a positive thing to be immortalized in song as an emblem of shame. Characters do not win *kleos* for their infamy. The type of song she fears is the sort assigned to her sister Klytaimnestra by the ghost of her husband (*Od.* 24. 199-202). For commentary on Klytaimnestra's song see Nagy 1979: 36-7, §13n1, §13n3, §13n5 and 255, §5n1. See Chs. 11-14 for a broader discussion of blame poetry.

others is to undermine any aspirations she might have for restoring her reputation through her good behaviour. Helen is unable to escape the implications of her departure from Sparta, the one action which represented an attempt to govern her own narrative. As a result of this attempt to claim subjectivity, she is forever denied the ability to regain the status she once rejected.

Helen's behaviour in the *Odyssey* is not characterized by a great deal of flourish. Her feelings of shame are not emphasized, nor are other indications of her *aidōs*, but they are nonetheless present. When Helen makes her first appearance in the poem she is said to look like the goddess Artemis (*Od.* 4.121-2). This is strange considering the intensity of her connection with Aphrodite in the *Iliad*. This comparison seems to signal a shift in associations, especially since it appears that Aphrodite's attention has shifted to Helen's daughter Hermione who is said to possess the beauty of that goddess (*Od.* 4.14). It is tempting to read a great deal into this association since, for example, Nausikaa, an unwedded virgin, is also, more understandably, compared to the virgin huntress (*Od.* 6. 150-2). Rather than imagining that the poet is implying anything about Helen's marital or virginal status, the comparison should be seen to indicate, most importantly, a departure from her ties to Aphrodite. For Helen, a woman several times married, the significance of the association with Artemis may lie in the implications of purity and sexual restraint within the context of marriage.³¹ It is

³¹Clader 1976: 29 notes that "Helen is likened to the goddess, then, through simile and through the general brilliance which surrounds her, but also represents the perfectly loyal wife with her homely attributes of spinning."

unlikely that the poet intended the audience to assume any lasting connection between Helen and Artemis, but the fact that it signals a separation from the powers of Aphrodite would seem to indicate a new stability and decreased volatility in Helen's character. Free from the impassioned clutches of Aphrodite, Helen can now behave in a manner more appropriate to that of an *aidoiē gunē*.³²

While this new association with Artemis indicates a change in behaviour more in keeping with the code of *aidōs*, it is perhaps less securely connected with the profile of an *aidoiē gunē* than some of the patterns I have pointed out thus far. One more recognizable way in which Helen demonstrates that she is a possessor of *aidōs* is that she brings attendants with her. When Helen makes her entrance into the company of Menelaus and his guests, she is accompanied by three female servants:

τῆ δ' ἄρ' ἄμ' Ἀδρήστη κλισίην εὐτυκτον ἔθηκεν,
 Ἀλκίππη δὲ τάπητα φέρεν μαλακοῦ ἐρίοιο,
 Φυλὸν δ' ἀργύρεον τάλαρον φέρε, τὸν οἱ ἔδωκεν

Adreste went with her and set down a well-built chair
 Alkippe carried a blanket of soft wool,
 and Phylo bore the silver basket. (Od. 4. 123-5)

Unlike Penelope's appearances in which it is emphatically announced that she enters the presence of men 'not alone' (*ouk oiē*), and she speaks of the shame she would feel if she did, Helen's accompaniment is not stressed. Greater emphasis

³²As Suzuki 1989: 64, has suggested "this shift in association from Aphrodite to Artemis seems to signal Helen's transformation from a woman of passion to a chaste wife."

is placed on the role of the attendants as porters than on the fact that by their presence they help to preserve Helen's reputation.

Another indication of Helen's compliance with this feminine code of *aidōs* can be found at *Od.* 4. 305. Helen is described here as sleeping beside her husband, Menelaus. Several times in the poems women are described in this way and they are always identified as *aidoiē*.³³ The importance of this parallel is that the activity of sleeping *beside* one's husband is characterized as non-sexual. This image is intended to evoke associations of fidelity and stability, *aidōs* for the marriage bed, rather than the pleasures of lovemaking. This is a significant way in which the poet signals to the audience that Helen adheres to the model of the *aidoiē gunē* while, at the same time, by omitting this adjective, tells the audience that she has not earned this classification.

Helen's character is enhanced by her performance of everyday activities. As I have pointed out, Helen has attendants, and she dutifully sleeps beside her husband. Helen also delegates household tasks (*Od.* 4.296), she is courteous to her guests and provides them with gifts (*Od.* 15.100-26). The poet gives us several clues by which we can gauge her behaviour against the standard of the *aidoiē gunē* and she is shown to pass the test.

Just as in the *Iliad*, therefore, Helen is shown, through these small tokens, to be in compliance with the established code of behaviour for the feminine. Not surprisingly, Helen also continues to slander herself through the dog-insult:

³³See e.g., *Il.* 6.249-50. For further discussion of this theme see Chapter One.

ἐμείο κυνώπιδος εἶνεκ' Ἀχαιοὶ
ἦλθεθ' ὑπὸ Τροίην, πόλεμον θρασὺν ὀρμαίνοντες.

for the sake of *shameless* me the Achaians
came beneath Troy, consumed with thoughts of strenuous war.
(*Od.* 4.145-6)

The self-denigration she displays here does not, however, strictly conform to the model found in the *Iliad*. Though she does call herself bitch-eyed, i.e. shameless, the insult does not carry the vehemence or conviction that it did in the *Iliad*.³⁴ This is, in part, due to the fact that whereas in the *Iliad* Helen had emphasized her own personal responsibility, here her statement follows the common pattern *heinek' emeio* or *heinek' Helenēs* which, as I pointed out earlier, does not imply that the war came about by any action on the part of Helen but only for the sake of Helen as a prize that needed to be recovered. It would therefore seem that Helen is accepting less responsibility for her role in the war than she had in the *Iliad*. The posture of self-blame which Helen maintains in the *Iliad* serves to indicate that she is conscious of shame. The departure from this posture in the *Odyssey* seems to indicate a greater ambiguity in Helen's understanding of *aidōs* on an emotional level.

In the *Iliad* the poet desired to have a Helen who could, through her behaviour and attitude, prove a worthy prize. While Helen proclaimed her responsibility for the affair, an attitude which highlighted her awareness of *aidōs*, the other characters tried to convince Helen (and perhaps themselves) that she

³⁴Suzuki 1989: 69 notices the same lack of conviction and force in Helen's self-directed insult.

was a victim of fate and of the gods. In the *Odyssey* characters have had time to analyze their losses, to meditate on the price they paid for the war. Achilles memorably tells us that he would rather be the lowest, most penniless peon alive on earth than be king over all the shades of the dead (*Od.* 11. 488-491). Menelaus' own brother, Agamemnon, was killed by Helen's sister upon his return home from the war. If Agamemnon had not gone to Troy he would not have had to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigeneia, and alienate his wife. In order to recover Helen, Menelaus has had to sacrifice his family and his dearest friends and not only in life but in death as well. As a special privilege for being Zeus' son-in-law, Menelaus will spend eternity in the Elysian fields, forever separated from those he loves (*Od.* 4.561-71).³⁵

In the *Odyssey*, therefore, Helen has become something of a shadow of her Iliadic self. The recovery and possession of Helen proves less rewarding than might be expected from such a costly prize. To begin with, Helen has apparently been stripped of the gifts of Aphrodite. She now seems to be associated with Artemis and sexual self-restraint, a characterization which is reinforced by the fact that she lies *beside* her husband, Menelaus.³⁶ Passion and eroticism, two of the fringe benefits one might expect to gain from possessing the most beautiful woman in the world and a favourite of Aphrodite, are lacking in the marriage of

³⁵Suzuki 1989: 63, points out that "Odysseus' preference for mortality, together with the poet's portrayal of Menelaus' melancholy life with Helen, qualify the attractiveness of Menelaus' promised immortality; the eternal continuation of his present existence would be less than unequivocally blissful."

³⁶Austin 1994: 72, notes: "Helen is no longer wild; her status has been resolved. She is not wife and mistress, but simply a wife; not Greek and Trojan, but simply Greek. Eros has been caged, and Helen's vagrancy is over once and for all."

Helen and Menelaus. In addition to this, we are told that Helen is now, quite literally, barren (*Od.* 4. 12). Helen has given Menelaus only one child, a female child, one who can bring no glory to her father through martial exploits. Menelaus' only male child was born to him by a slave woman (*Od.* 4. 12).³⁷ Helen is unable to escape the repercussions of her one significant action. She is forever determined by the single act of her departure from Sparta with Paris, whether she left voluntarily or otherwise. Just as she can generate no new children, so too can she generate no new identity. She can perform no action, she can say no word which will redeem her or reclaim her status as an *aidoiē gunē*.

Helen vainly attempts two different strategies for generating an identity beyond her status as a symbol of the war. First, she tries to make her guests forget. The whole group, Menelaus, Telemachus, Peisistratos and Helen, have all already come to tears at the thought of lost companions. In an attempt to lighten their spirits, Helen mixes a heart-easing medicine into the wine:

αὐτίκ' ἄρ' ἐς οἶνον βάλει φάρμακον, ἔνθεν ἔπινον,
νηπενθές τ' ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἀπάντων.
ὄς τὸ καταβρόξειεν, ἐπεὶ κρητῆρι μιγείη,
οὐ κεν ἐφημέριός γε βάλει κατὰ δάκρυ παρειῶν
οὐδ' εἴ οἱ κατατεθναίη μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε,
οὐδ' εἴ οἱ προπάρειθεν ἀδελφεὸν ἢ φίλον υἷον
χαλκῷ δηϊόφεν, ὃ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώτο.
τοῖα Διὸς θυγάτηρ ἔχε φάρμακα μητιόεντα,

³⁷See Collins 1976:30-2 for an interesting discussion about the significance of the name of Menelaus' son, Megapenthes, for characterizing his father as being plagued by a great grief, a grief, which is, in part, caused by Helen.

ἔσθλά, τά οἱ Πολύδαμνα πόρεν, Θῶνος παράκοιτις,
 Αἴγυπτίη, τῇ πλεῖστα φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα
 φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἔσθλα μεμιγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρά·

straightaway she cast a drug into the wine which they were drinking,
 a drug which banished grief and allayed wrath, causing one to
 forget all evils.

the one who drank it, once it was stirred into the mixing bowl,
 for that day would not shed a tear down his cheeks,
 not if both his mother and his father were to die,
 not even if, right in front of him, men killed his brother or
 beloved son with bronze, and he witnessed it with his own eyes.
 The daughter of Zeus had such helpful drugs in her possession,
 good drugs, which Polydamna gave her, wife of Thon,
 from Egypt, where the grain-giving earth produces so many
 medicinals, many good mixtures and many baneful. (*Od.* 4. 220-30)

Helen's role as pharmacologist in this scene has often been understood to have sinister implications. Suzuki suggests that "Helen's *pharmakon* is both "good and malignant": salutary, in that it ensures rest from constant awareness... baneful, in that it dulls consciousness—even of the loss of parents or the butchery of one's brother or child before one's very eyes."³⁸ Helen's use of narcotics also inevitably recalls the enchantment of Odysseus' men by the drugs of the goddess, Kirke (*Od.* 10. 213). Helen, however, can only emerge favourably from such a comparison. Helen's drugs are good drugs (*esthla*, 4. 228) and cause one to 'forget all evils' (4. 221) while Kirke's drugs are wretched (*lugra*, 10. 236), evil (*kaka*, 10.213), and are described as causing one to forget one's homeland (*lathoiato patridos aiēs*, 10. 236). Kirke is described as 'thinking evil things in her

³⁸Suzuki 1989: 66.

heart' (*kaka phroneous' eni thumōi*, 10. 317) while no such maleficent intentions are ascribed to Helen who only wishes to entertain (4. 239).

Rather than highlighting Helen's sinister nature, the episode with the drug rather serves to emphasize her ineffectuality.³⁹ Helen administered the drug in an attempt to set the minds of her companions at ease, to help them forget their sorrows and, therefore, her role as their emblem. The story she subsequently tells about an adventure of Odysseus at Troy is an attempt to superimpose or replace the negative reputation she has acquired with a positive account of her continued loyalty to the Greeks (*Od.* 4. 235-64). Her tale has been labeled "self-congratulatory" and this is not far wrong.⁴⁰ Helen's goal, however, is not praise for its own sake. Rather, Helen aims to reinvent herself, to rewrite her story.⁴¹

³⁹Suzuki 1989: 67 suggests that "through these stories, the poet revises the portrait of the Iliadic Helen in order to blame and hence to scapegoat her as the evil wife. To that end, he represents Helen in Troy as sinister, destructive, and culpable and robs Helen in Sparta of any power to act with consequence, thereby relegating her to the margins of his narrative. The poet associates Helen with the *Iliad* through these Iliadic stories told by and about her; by representing Helen as at once evil and inconsequential, he thereby subverts the authority of the *Iliad*." First of all, the poet of the *Iliad* does not allow Helen the 'power to act with consequence'. Though she is portrayed more favourably, largely through the poet's emphasis on denying her responsibility for the war, she is characterized, perhaps even more explicitly, by her passivity. It is only in these 'Iliadic' episodes, related in the *Odyssey* but never in the *Iliad*, that Helen might be shown to have some power to act with consequence. If these two stories are examined more closely, however, it becomes clear that they are characterized, in the first case, by inactivity and, in the second story, by ineffectuality. Her tale about her encounter with Odysseus shows us that her significant action was not to speak. She did nothing and the effect was that it was a non-deed that went unrecognized in the *Iliad* and which is devalued in the *Odyssey* by Menelaus' tale. In the second story, her attempts to act with consequence similarly fail since Odysseus defeats her ploy. The poet of the *Odyssey* does not subvert the authority of the *Iliad* because both poems represent Helen as being incapable of any action which might restore her reputation.

⁴⁰Suzuki 1989: 68.

⁴¹Doherty 1995: 86 points out that "Helen, while ostensibly telling a story in praise of Odysseus, also seeks to revise her own story, to promulgate a new *kleos* for herself." See also Bergren 1981: 208: "her aim, it appears is not only the *kleos* of Odysseus, but also her own "fame" among the assembled men."

She tells of a time when she met the disguised Odysseus who had secreted his way into Troy and how she alone recognized him underneath the filthy rags of a beggar (*Od.* 4.245-50). Helen bathed him, questioned him and swore a great oath not to denounce him to the Trojans (*Od.* 4. 251-4).⁴² And when Odysseus proceeds to slaughter a large number of Trojans on his way out of the city (*Od.* 4. 257-8), Helen tells us that:

ἐνθ' ἄλλαι Τρωαὶ λίγ' ἐκώκουν· αὐτὰρ ἐμὸν κῆρ
χαῖρ', ἐπεὶ ἤδη μοι κραδίη τέτραπτο νέεσθαι
ἄψ οἰκόνδ', ἄτην δὲ μετέστενον, ἦν Ἀφροδίτη
δῶχ', ὅτε μ' ἤγαγε κείσε φίλης ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἴης,
παῖδά τ' ἐμὴν νοσφισσαμένην θάλαμόν τε πόσιν τε
οὐ τευ δευόμενον, οὔτ' ἄρ φρένας οὔτε τι εἶδος.

then the other Trojan women cried out in a loud voice; but my heart rejoiced, since by now my heart had turned toward going home, and I grieved for the blindness, with which Aphrodite had afflicted me, when she led me there away from my beloved homeland,
having left behind my child, my bedchamber and my husband a man who lacked neither for brains nor for good looks. (*Od.* 4. 259-64)

Helen aligns herself with the Iliadic theme of limiting her responsibility by assigning blame to another party. In the *Iliad*, however, though she does blame the manipulation of Aphrodite, she also claims explicit responsibility in saying

⁴²Helen's bathing of Odysseus should not be understood to carry any sexual implications. Women in the poems, as we saw in the last chapter, regularly bathe men under the pretext of hospitality. Austin 1994: 79-80 suggests that Helen and Odysseus may have had a sexual encounter during their meeting at Troy.

that she *followed* rather than that she was *led*.⁴³ It was the task of those around her to absolve her from blame while she condemned herself, an approach which highlighted her awareness of *aidōs*. Here, however, she downplays her own responsibility and stresses her loyalty to the Greeks. The combined effect of this statement does not fulfill Helen's purpose of presenting a positive reevaluation of herself. Instead the displacement of blame from herself indicates a compromised understanding of *aidōs*. In addition, this profession of love for the Greeks is out of place. The mark of a woman's *aidōs* is, after all, demonstrated through loyalty to her husband and *oikos*, and at the time of Helen's story, her husband is Paris and her extended *oikos* comprises the very Trojan women whose grief she does not share. Helen is attempting to show, with this story, a continuity in her loyalty to Menelaus and the Greeks which would be in line with the rape scenario offered in the *Iliad*, but she herself admits that her loyalties had, at some point during her time at Troy, lain with the Trojans (260). Helen, therefore, demonstrates that she not only committed a breach of *aidōs* in abandoning her loyalty to Menelaus, but that she also abandoned her loyalty to her second husband while she remained in his *oikos*. In attempting to display that her commitment to Menelaus and to *aidōs* was only interrupted by the *atē* sent by Aphrodite, she instead reveals the ephemeral nature of her fidelity.

This presentation of Helen raises a great many questions. For example:

How did this mendicant Odysseus come to be received in the royal house and bathed by none other than Helen herself? Earlier it was

⁴³Helen tells us that she followed Paris at *Il.* 3. 174. She blames Aphrodite at *Il.* 3. 399ff.

servant women who bathed Telemachus and Peisistratus. What was Helen doing bathing a naked beggar? Why did Odysseus permit himself to be bathed, anointed and clothed by a woman whose earlier recognition and questioning he had to elude? Why is it necessary to omit the answers to these questions, if Helen's "good drug" can cure any negative side-effects of the story? And, indeed, what in Helen's story would be *lugros* without the "good drug" and for whom? Would Odysseus' victory by violation of *xenia* be shameful to Telemachos?⁴⁴

These are some of the questions Ann Bergren asks of this passage and she follows them with another sequence which focuses on the supposedly sexual implications of the bath.⁴⁵ First of all, as I have shown elsewhere in this thesis, the fact that Helen bathes Odysseus should not be surprising. On numerous occasions guests are bathed by female members of the household and though Bergren points out that it is the servants who bathed Telemachos in Menelaos' home, it is Nestor's own daughter, Polykaste, who bathes him when he visits that man in Pylos (*Od.* 3. 464-8). Also, though it is more frequently the case that servants attend to this task, Helen, recognizing Odysseus and feeling partisan to the Greeks, wants to question him alone, so it is natural that she would be the one to bathe him. Furthermore, Helen does not administer the drug in order that she might tell them a grievous story, she does so in order to relieve the grief already present. By removing their pain she hopes to put in its place a happy

⁴⁴ Bergren 1981: 208.

⁴⁵ Bergren 1981: 209.

story which will earn both herself and Odysseus *kleos*. Answers could be provided for all of these questions demonstrating that Helen's *behaviour* is actually in compliance with the feminine code of *aidōs*. The danger with Helen is that she appears to be an *aidoiē gunē* both for her physical beauty and for dutiful attention to her domestic tasks. Her noncompliance with this code or, at least, doubt about her noncompliance, is only revealed in what people say about Helen and, in the *Odyssey*, this includes what Helen says about herself.

To further compound the doubt about Helen's allegiances Menelaus follows her tale with one of his own (*Od.* 4. 266-89). He recalls how, in an event which took place after the time of Helen's story, Helen attempted to make the Achaians betray themselves from their hiding-place inside the wooden horse:

ἦλθεσ' ἔπειτα σὺ κείσε· κελευσέμεναι δέ σ' ἔμελλε
 δαίμων, ὃς Τρώεσσιν ἐβούλετο κῦδος ὀρέξαι·
 καί τοι Δηϊφობος θεοείκελος ἔσπετ' ἰούση.
 τρὶς δὲ περίστειξας κοῖλον λόχον ἀμφαφόωσα,
 ἐκ δ' ὄνονακλήδην Δαναῶν ὀνόμαζες ἀρίστους,
 πάντων Ἀργείων φωνὴν ἴσκουσ' ἀλόχοισιν.

And then you came there; a god must have compelled you
 who wanted to confer glory on the Trojans
 and godlike Deiphobos accompanied you when you came.
 Three times you walked around the hollow hiding-place,
 touching it with your hands,
 you called on the best of the Danaans by name
 imitating with your voice the wives of all the Argives. (*Od.* 4. 274-9)

Menelaus' story seems openly to contradict Helen's assertion of restored loyalty to the Greeks. He does, however, suggest that her agency may have been limited by the intervention of a god. The phrase '*keleusemenai de s' emelle*' conveys the idea 'it is *likely* that you were compelled'. Menelaus does not express a great deal of conviction about the probability of divine intervention, but Helen is his wife and it would not be appropriate for him to suggest too openly that he doubts her claims of loyalty to the Greeks. He does, however, mention another source of motivation for Helen's renewed support of the Trojans. The epic tradition informs us that Deiphobos became Helen's husband after the death of Paris. The return of Helen's loyalties to the cause of the Trojans may stem from the fact that by this time she has a new husband, one who, unlike the unsatisfactory Paris, perhaps is a man conscious of *aidōs* and *nemesis*. The purpose of Menelaus' tale is, in the minds of many, to catch Helen in a lie. Menelaus tells Helen, however, that:

ναὶ δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα, γύναι, κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες.

in all of these things, wife, you speak appropriately. (*Od.* 4. 266)

Menelaus' words reveal not that Helen was lying but the more disturbing truth that Helen's loyalties are ever mobile, never fixed or secure.

In the *Iliad*, though Helen communicates her dissatisfaction with Paris and even her wish that she could have married a better husband, there is never any suggestion that she would betray her loyalties to her present *oikos*. In fact, when Helen suggests that she would prefer to be married to a man who knew *nemesis*, one is forced to remember that this is the type of man she left behind. Menelaus

is not named because this would suggest that Helen's loyalties were not with the Trojans, which would undermine her relationship to *aidōs*. The great affection she expresses for Hector and for her father-in-law, Priam, signals her connection to the Trojans where her marriage with Paris cannot.⁴⁶ While there is some subtle hint, in the *Iliad*, that she might wish to return to her former husband, there is no suggestion that she would betray the Trojans. In the *Odyssey*, despite her outward display of *aidōs*, her worth is undermined by the fact that her *aidōs* has been shown, time and again, not to withstand the ultimate test of loyalty to her husband and his *oikos*, whether he be Trojan or Greek.

In contrast to Helen's diminished sense of moral responsibility, other characters seem to blame Helen more explicitly.⁴⁷ Odysseus, when he visits the entrance to the underworld to speak with the shades of the dead, speaks with the ghost of his friend Agamemnon. After hearing of the treachery his friend met with at the hands of his wife, Odysseus sympathizes:

ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ γόνον Ἀτρείος εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
 ἐκπάγλως ἔχθαιρε γυναικείας διὰ βουλάς
 ἐξ ἀρχῆς· Ἑλένης μὲν ἀπωλόμεθ' εἵνεκα πολλοί.
 σοὶ δὲ Κλυταίμνηστρη δόλον ἦρτυε τηλόθ' ἐόντι.

How misfortunate, that far-seeing Zeus has been specially hostile

⁴⁶The scene between Hector and Helen in Book 6 (343-68) demonstrates, in a small way, the affection Helen feels for Hector. Her feelings are suggested more strongly in her funeral lament for him at *Il.* 24. 761ff. Helen and Priam demonstrate their reciprocal affection at *Il.* 3. 162ff. Helen also mentions her fondness and gratitude towards her father-in-law in her lament for Hector (*Il.* 24. 770-1).

⁴⁷Suzuki 1989: 68 argues that the *Odyssey's* poet "diverges from the *Iliadic* poet who declined from scapegoating Helen and reinscribes the scapegoating of Helen by the *Iliadic* warriors."

to the offspring of Atreus through the plans of women
 from the beginning; many perished for the sake of Helen,
 and while you were far away Klytaimnestra plotted treachery
 against you. (*Od.* 11.436-9)

Odysseus, too, uses the *heineka Helenēs* construction which, as I have said, does not imply blame. This is not, however, all that Odysseus has to say. He suggests that Zeus has punished the house of Atreus through the plans of women. Zeus should not be considered to have made any direct intervention. Even where blame is attributed directly to the gods it does not preclude the responsibility of mortals. Odysseus is, therefore, placing blame squarely on Helen's shoulders. In fact, he not only suggests that Helen is responsible for a momentary lapse of *aidōs* or reason, but also that her involvement was premeditated. She is compared to her sister Klytaimnestra who planned the murder of her husband. Odysseus' comment is the most pointed assertion of Helen's culpability to be found in the poems other than Helen's own statements. This cannot be an unexpected response since Odysseus is still suffering the consequences of what he construes to be Helen's action. While Helen, now restored to her place in Sparta, attempts to recover her good reputation through her behaviour and her attempts to downplay her responsibility, Odysseus undercuts her efforts by dictating the terms of her song. The weight given to any pronouncement made by Odysseus himself, since the *Odyssey* is, after all, his song, cancels out Helen's attempts to regain the status of an *aidoiē gunē*.⁴⁸ Odysseus determines the song to be sung

⁴⁸ Holmberg 1995: 104 argues that "Penelope's, and female, narrative desires are consistently overcome or appropriated by the narrative desires of the males, particularly Odysseus..."

about Helen to future generations: Helen, alongside her sister Klytaimnestra, will serve only as foils for Penelope. Odysseus has particular reason, at this moment in the narrative, to condemn these sisters since Helen represents the reason Odysseus had to leave and has not yet arrived home while Klytaimnestra represents a potential conclusion to his own imminent homecoming.

In contrast to the conviction of Odysseus' blame of Helen provoked by the frustrated delay of his homecoming, Penelope's comments about Helen arise in the happiness brought about by the fulfillment of Odysseus' objective. As a result, her words seem to pass a milder sentence on Helen.⁴⁹ When Penelope and Odysseus have finally acknowledged their recognition of one another, Penelope feels the need to explain her caution in trusting her long-lost husband:

αὐτὰρ μὴ νῦν μοι τόδε χῶεο μηδὲ νεμέσσα,
οὐνεκά σ' οὐ τὸ πρῶτον, ἐπεὶ ἴδον, ᾧδ' ἀγάπησα.
αἰεὶ γὰρ μοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν
ἐρρίγει μὴ τίς με βροτῶν ἀπάφοιτο ἔπεσιν
ἐλθῶν· πολλοὶ γὰρ κακὰ κέρδεα βουλεύουσιν.
οὐδέ κεν Ἀργεῖη Ἑλένη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα,
ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἄλλοδαπῷ ἐμίγη φιλότητι καὶ εὐνή,
εἰ ἤδη ὃ μιν αὐτίς ἀρήϊοι υἴες Ἀχαιῶν
ἀξέμεναι οἰκόνδε φίλην ἐς πατρίδ' ἔμελλον.
τὴν δ' ἦ τοι βέξαι θεὸς ὥρορεν ἔργον ἀεικές·
τὴν δ' ἄτην οὐ πρόσθεν ἐῷ ἐγκάτθετο θυμῷ
λυγρὴν, ἐξ ἧς πρῶτα καὶ ἡμέας ἵκετο πένθος.

⁴⁹Schein 1995: 25 suggests that "this is the most sympathetic thing anyone in the *Odyssey* says about Helen." Felson-Rubin 1994: 39 characterizes Penelope's response as 'uncommon empathy toward the adultress'.

Therefore do not now feel anger or *nemesis* towards me
because I did not greet you, when I first saw you, as I do now.
for always the spirit in my devoted heart
was fearful that some man would come and beguile me
with words; for many people contrive evil plans.
For Argive Helen, daughter of Zeus would not have
made love to a foreign man in a sensuous bed
if she had known that the warlike sons of the Achaians
were fated to fetch her back again to her dear home and fatherland.
A god prompted her to do this disgraceful thing;
and never before had such a grievous madness entered
her heart, out of which sorrow first came upon us. (*Od.* 23.213-24)

Penelope's speech is quite complex in structure. It delivers a tripartite assessment of blame targeting an unknown seducer, Helen, and a god. She cites three separate causes for Helen's departure from Sparta, each one totally independent of the last: that is, none provides sufficient explanation for the others.⁵⁰ Her initial words explain her fear of being seduced by 'some man'. Penelope seems to be alluding to Paris as the type of man who seduces married women.⁵¹ She does not mention Paris specifically because a) Paris is now dead

⁵⁰ See Katz 1991: 182-4 for a succinct discussion on the problematic nature of this passage. Since antiquity scholars have argued that this is an interpolation and have suggested numerous emendations.

⁵¹ Marquardt 1985: 42-3, 46-7 argues that this reference to 'some man' does indeed recall Paris and compares him to the suitors. Roisman 1987: 60-1 disagrees with this conclusion saying that Penelope did not fear seduction by a suitor but by an imposter who might claim to be Odysseus rather than pursuing his courtship under his own identity. "Nor does the phrase *κακά κέρδεα βουλεύουσιν* connect Paris with the suitors, for nothing in the text indicates that Paris used hypocrisy, simulation or guile to seduce Helen, or that she was unwilling (61)." Katz 1991: 184 accepts Roisman's argument. Roisman is correct in pointing out that the text does not suggest that Helen was unwilling but Penelope does indicate that Helen was not acting entirely under her own capacity (222-4). As for Paris, there is nothing in the text to indicate that he did *not* use 'hypocrisy, simulation or guile'. This is the crux of the matter; Homer does not describe for us the scene of Helen and Paris' first meeting. He does not overtly delineate who was the instigator in their departure nor whether all parties went willingly. It is left to the audience to interpret

and b) she was not afraid that Paris *himself* would appear as her seducer. Nonetheless, one can hardly overlook the allusion specifically when it is then strengthened by Penelope's mention of Helen.

The mention of Helen directly after Penelope expresses her fears about seduction in an apparent reference to Paris leads the audience to expect that Helen is to be exonerated by being portrayed as a victim.⁵² Penelope, however, does not fulfill our expectations. She does not proceed to suggest that Helen would not have gone to Troy if she had not been seduced, but instead she proposes that Helen would not have gone if she had known she would be caught.⁵³ The previous discussion of seduction is not, therefore, offered as an explanation for Helen's behaviour and blame is not removed from her. If this seeming allusion to seduction by Paris does not offer an excuse for Helen, then one might expect from the phrasing of Penelope's story and from her proposed aim (removing suspicion from herself) that she would provide some other excuse

which scenario individual characters believe to have taken place. Paris' evil intentions, therefore, to which the phrase *kaka kerdea bouleuousin* could easily refer, in addition to the placement of the description of this seducer, as an introduction to the error of Helen, should be sufficient reason to believe that Penelope is, at least, hinting at Paris and is comparing him to the behaviour of her present suitors or some other, hypothetical, suitor.

⁵² Felson-Rubin 1994: 40 suggests that "Penelope exonerates Helen to exonerate herself." Katz 1991: 185 also argues that Penelope exonerates Helen.

⁵³ Williams 1993: 81-2 notes that "if everything depended on the fear of discovery, the motivations of shame would not be internalised at all. No one would have a character, in effect, and, moreover, the very idea of there being a *shame* culture, a coherent system for the regulation of conduct, would be unintelligible." Penelope's phrasing, then, could serve to suggest that Helen does not possess an internalized set of values but only determines whether something is right or wrong through the reactions of others. This would place Helen's morality on somewhat ambiguous grounds.

for Helen. Instead, Penelope seems to stress Helen's agency and her limited understanding of *aidōs*.

First of all, Penelope expresses the seemingly odd notion that Helen was ignorant of the consequences of her actions.⁵⁴ Though the poet of the *Odyssey* does not mention the pact that was made by Helen's suitors (to support her husband-to-be against potential abductors such as Paris), it is hard to believe that the poet would suggest that Helen was unaware that the Achaians would follow her. What Penelope seems to be suggesting, therefore, is that Helen did not expect the Achaians to pursue a woman who had submitted willingly to sex with a man other than her husband. Penelope assumes Helen's consent, her active participation in the flight from Sparta. Based on that assumption, she suggests that Helen too was conscious of her own agency, and believed that the fact of her complicity would devalue her to such an extent that she would not be worth retrieving. She is suggesting that Helen did not expect them to try to retrieve a woman who had demonstrated such an egregious offense against *aidōs*. This is, of course, why the *Iliad* needed to insist on Helen's lack of agency.

Furthermore, Penelope's subsequent assignation of blame to a god does not remove responsibility from Helen. Though a god prompted Helen to act (*rhēxai*), act she did. The fact that blame is attributed to a god only after Helen has been shown to be culpable, in her own right, weakens this assertion and

⁵⁴ Felson-Rubin 1994: 39-40 suggests that Penelope insists upon Helen's ignorance of the consequences of her actions because of her own guilt over her 'near betrayal' of Odysseus. She asserts that: "Penelope reinterprets Helen's betrayal of Menelaos in order to argue that any woman might unwittingly betray her husband. To accentuate the similarity between their two situations, she veils a conspicuous distinction: Helen abandoned Menelaos out of sheer desire, but if she, Penelope, had betrayed Odysseus, it would have been unintentional."

renders it insufficient to negate the blame already placed on Helen. The result of this seemingly fractured assessment of Helen's predicament is not to remove or lessen the blame of any one party but rather to assert independent culpability for each. One expects Penelope to exonerate Helen in order to communicate to Odysseus the degree of her vulnerability while he was away. Penelope chooses instead to highlight the degree of her own stability and the strength of her *aidōs*.⁵⁵ The allusion to Paris, therefore, is not intended to point out that Helen was helpless in the face of a single seducer but to remind the audience that Penelope has successfully resisted the temptation of fifty.⁵⁶ Penelope's explanation of Helen's motivations suggests her belief that Helen was not a woman who was ignorant of the consequences of her actions but is one who displays a moral ambiguity, an uncertainty about her awareness of *aidōs* that magnifies and places in high relief the moral integrity of *aidoiē* Penelope.⁵⁷ Penelope's request to Odysseus that he feel no *nemesis* towards her is not

⁵⁵ Roisman 1987: 64 rightly suggests: "Moreover, by mentioning her cautious welcome of her husband, Penelope indicates how careful she was in greeting other strangers whose identity was in doubt, and she vividly shows the care she took to maintain her chastity. The motif of chastity culminates in her reference to Helen, who was accepted back despite her infidelity..."

⁵⁶ *Contra* Felson-Rubin 1994: 40 who suggests that these lines reflect Penelope's own mental state, her guilt about "where her flirtation with remarriage might have led, and how she barely escaped marrying a suitor, with her husband so near at hand."

⁵⁷ Schein 1995: 25 argues that "in light of Penelope's comment, it might be more accurate to say that in the end the poem leaves the question of Helen's moral responsibility and even the moral status of adultery open and in doubt, however it may tempt a listener or reader to share in the majority judgement against her and her behavior." I would suggest, however, that Penelope is very clear about the moral status of adultery and that she does not, in fact, excuse Helen's behaviour. What does remain ambiguous is Helen's moral status since although the characters of the *Odyssey* do not exonerate her, neither do they devalue her completely in part, perhaps, for the sake of her awesome beauty, in part, because she is the wife of Menelaus.

intended to indicate that she has done anything wrong. Instead it acts as a device through which she can introduce an encomium to herself. Penelope compares herself to Helen in order to display not her similarity to her cousin but to show how greatly she surpasses her in her knowledge of *aidōs*.

The presentation of Helen in the *Odyssey* is far less coherent than the character revealed in the *Iliad*. In the *Iliad* we are offered two different perspectives on Helen: her own and that of everyone else. These two perspectives, however, together help to establish a unified portrait of a woman who is conscious of *aidōs*. In the *Odyssey* Helen's relationship to *aidōs* is persistently questioned. Though Helen puts on a display of *aidōs* through her behaviour and through the weak echoing of her Iliadic insistence upon her culpability, nonetheless, her limited understanding of the feminine code of *aidōs* becomes ever more apparent to those around her.

Helen looks as though she is chastely restored to her appointed place at Menelaus' side but Helen also seemed to be an *aidoiē gunē* before she left Sparta, a fact to which Penelope attests (*Od.* 23. 223-4). The pair of tales told by the couple underline the fact that Helen's loyalties continued to shift even while she was at Troy. Odysseus' subsequent condemnation of her through comparison to her sister communicates the authoritative position on Helen's involvement in the exodus from Sparta, characterizing her as a subversive element attempting to act out her own narrative desires. Finally, Penelope's subtle denunciation of Helen (which amounts to praise of herself) demonstrates that Helen cannot recapture her status as *aidoiē* in a poem in which Penelope is the prize.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has revealed that current scholarship on the subject of *aidōs* proves insufficient to the task of defining an appropriate model for its use in the context of the feminine. To date, studies of this abstract noun and its network of related terms have focused on its significance in delineating the parameters of a 'shame' or 'honour culture' which is largely based on a masculine, warrior ethic. For female characters, however, *aidōs* indicates a standard of behaviour against which feminine worth can be assessed. Unlike their heroic male counterparts, female characters in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are expected to internalize *aidōs* fully as an intrinsic part of the self. The adjective *aidoiē* indicates a woman who is shown to possess *aidōs*. A female character who possesses *aidōs* does not possess shame. On the contrary, she has a deep and intrinsic awareness of her vulnerability to 'the shameful' and she establishes barriers to insulate herself from the possibility of committing a breach of *aidōs*. Among the things included in the category of 'the shameful' are, most importantly, sexual infidelity, an unwillingness to perform domestic duties and also, physical unattractiveness. The term *aidoiē* is a form of praise indicating that a woman is valuable, as a wife, as a potential wife or as a trusted servant.

The antithesis of this model is the woman who lacks *aidōs*, the *anaideiē gunē*. This woman is not sexually faithful to her husband or master, she balks at

her tasks and disobeys orders; if she has beauty she does not preserve it for the appropriate male but exploits it to pursue her own sexual desires. In order not to validate the desires of these deviant females nor to allow their misplaced usurpation of subjectivity to disrupt the plots of the male characters, the Homeric poet gives them little representation. He also largely refrains from depicting female characters undergoing an experience of shame. Even where a woman is described as feeling ashamed, she has usually committed a breach of *aidōs* against her wishes, indicating her knowledge of *aidōs* and her desire to conform to the standards of its code.

A more common presentation of the female can be found in the frequent physical demonstrations of a woman's *aidōs*. Typical behaviour for a person experiencing shame is actual physical concealment through covering or hiding. When, however, a female character in the poems covers or sequesters herself, she is most often erecting barriers. She bounds and delimits herself, signalling a recognition of her vulnerability to breaches of *aidōs* committed both by herself and by others. On those occasions, therefore, where nudity is to be expected, either in scenes of bathing or sex, the *aidoiē gunē* must take special precautions to ensure that only the appropriate parties witness her unclothed body. Strict privacy must be insisted upon in sexual scenarios and in the context of bathing; danger of revelation is negotiated by the presence of female attendants and preferably by a remote or enclosed location.

The third chapter of this thesis confronted the ambiguity represented in the figure of Helen. Helen fits neatly into the category of neither the *aidoiē gunē*

nor the *anaideiē gunē*. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, therefore, find distinct ways to negotiate her preeminence among women despite uncertainty about her compliance with the code of *aidōs*. The strategies of both poems centre on the question of Helen's agency, on whether Helen left Sparta with Paris willingly or otherwise. Neither the *Iliad* nor the *Odyssey* gives an account of the meeting of Helen and Paris. The texts allow, therefore, ample opportunity for interpretation regarding Helen's responsibility. In the *Iliad*, male voices (the only voices to speak on the issue of Helen's culpability other than Helen herself) exonerate her from blame. By stressing that Helen was unwilling to leave, in other words, that she was raped, these male voices reinforce Helen's value as a prize since, in this construction, she did not attempt to exercise her subjectivity and she did not commit a breach of *aidōs*. To complement this attitude, Helen repeatedly asserts her responsibility for the war, a posture which demonstrates that she is conscious of *aidōs*, that she has correctly identified 'the shameful' and that in future she will erect the appropriate barriers in order to prevent further transgression. Helen's behaviour in the poem reinforces the impression that she is attempting to conform to the model of the *aidoiē gunē* through cloaking herself and surrounding herself with other emblems of her chastity.

The *Odyssey* is not so sympathetic to Helen. This poem venerates Penelope, the ultimate incarnation of the *aidoiē gunē*. Helen can only suffer by comparison to such a model, and she does. The poet of the *Odyssey* does not go so far as to label Helen *anaideiē*, perhaps from a reluctance to characterize the prize of the *Iliad* as completely valueless, particularly since she is now restored in

her position as wife to a Greek hero. The irrepressible question arises, however, about whether Helen can comfortably or meaningfully be reinstalled in her former life when the markers, the gestures of *aidōs* by which she was previously identified and known, have all been rendered ineffective by her earlier betrayal of that same identity. Characters of the *Odyssey*, other than Helen herself, do understand Helen's behaviour as betrayal, unlike their Iliadic counterparts. She is constructed as an agent, subjectively creating and pursuing her own narrative desires. Helen's own attempts to regenerate an identity as an *aidoiē gunē* prove futile. The danger of Helen's beauty, both to herself and others, is contained in the *Odyssey* by her measured devaluation. Helen is placed in limbo without any useful labels which could allow her to recede into an acknowledged category. Instead, she is unmarked, which means that the characters around her are ever on the alert to signs of noncompliance.

The vigilance that Helen elicits is really only a heightened form of the vigilance directed at all female characters at all times within the poems. The constant concern that an attitude of *aidōs* be displayed not only by Helen but by every Homeric female is clearly yet another manifestation of the Greeks' general ideological perspective towards women, i. e. that they are vulnerable to or actively prone towards types of behaviour which must be prevented, in the case of the construction of *aidōs*, through the implementation of this moral imperative.

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APPENDIX

The following is a list of terms that have been relevant to this study. I cite here all of the occasions in which the terms appear in a specifically feminine context.

aidōs

- Il.* 24. 111 - Thetis
Od. 8. 324 - goddesses - (Ch. 2: 53)

aideomai (aideo)

- Il.* 22. 82 - Hecuba - (Ch. 2: 44)
Il. 24. 90 - Thetis - (Ch. 1: 17)
Od. 6. 66 - Nausikaa
Od. 6. 329 - Athena
Od. 16. 75 - Penelope
Od. 18. 184 - Penelope - (Ch. 2: 70)
Od. 19. 527 - Penelope

aidoiē

- Il.* 2. 514 - Astuoche - (Ch. 1: 37)
Il. 6. 250 - wife - (Ch. 1: 25)
Il. 14. 210 - Hera - (Ch. 2: 48)
Il. 18. 386 - Thetis
Il. 18. 394 - Thetis - (Ch. 1: 34)
Il. 18. 425 - Thetis
Il. 21. 460 - wives - (Ch. 1: 26-7)

- Il.* 21. 479 - Hera - (Ch. 1: 32)
Il. 22. 451 - Hecuba
Od. 1. 139 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28, 29)
Od. 3. 381 - Eurydike - (Ch. 1: 30)
Od. 3. 451 - Eurydike - (Ch. 1: 30)
Od. 4. 55 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28)
Od. 7. 175 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28)
Od. 8. 420 - Arete - (Ch. 1: 36)
Od. 10. 11 - wife - (Ch. 1: 26)
Od. 10. 371 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28)
Od. 15. 138 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28)
Od. 17. 94 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28)
Od. 17. 152 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 36)
Od. 17. 259 - *tamiē* - (Ch. 1: 28)
Od. 18. 314 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 36)
Od. 19. 165 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 36)
Od. 19. 262 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 18, 36)
Od. 19. 336 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 36)
Od. 19. 583 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 36)

anaideiē

- Od.* 22. 424 - maidservants - (Ch. 1: 39-40)

nemesis

- Il.* 3. 156 - Helen - (Ch. 3: 86-7)
Od. 2. 136 - Penelope
Od. 20. 330 - Penelope

nemesaō & nemesizomai

- Il.* 8. 198 - Hera
Il. 8. 407 - Hera & Athena
Il. 8. 421 - Hera & Athena
Il. 15. 103 - Hera

Od. 2. 101 - Penelope
Od. 2. 138 - Penelope
Od. 6. 286 - Nausikaa - (Ch. 2: 62)
Od. 18. 227 - Penelope
Od. 19. 146 - Penelope
Od. 19. 264 - Penelope - (Ch. 1: 18)
Od. 23. 213 - Penelope - (Ch. 3: 117-8)
Od. 24. 136 - Penelope

nemesētos

Il. 3. 410 - Helen (Ch. 2: 50; Ch. 3: 90)
Il. 14. 336 - Hera (Ch. 2: 46)

kaluptrē

Il. 22. 406 - Hecuba
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Il. 14. 184 - Hera - (Ch. 2: 67)
Il. 22. 470 - Andromache
Od. 1. 344 - Penelope
Od. 5. 346 - magical - given by Leukothea to Odysseus
Od. 5. 351 - magical - given by Leukothea to Odysseus
Od. 5. 373 - magical - given by Leukothea to Odysseus
Od. 5. 459 - magical - given by Leukothea to Odysseus
Od. 6. 100 - Nausikaa & her companions - (Ch. 2: 65-6)
Od. 16. 416 - Penelope
Od. 18. 210 - Penelope - (Ch. 2: 71)
Od. 21. 65 - Penelope

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Il. 2. 161 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Il. 2. 177 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Il. 2. 356 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Il. 2. 590 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Il. 4. 174 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Il. 9. 339 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Il. 19. 325 - (Ch. 3: 85)

Od. 4. 145 - *heinek' emeio* - (Ch. 3: 105)

Od. 11. 438

Od. 17. 118

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