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Enter Hektor

This chapter looks at how the *Iliad*'s serial narrative establishes the primary storylines and its main characters within the first several 'episodes' of its performance. The *Iliad*'s first six books would take nearly five hours of performance time, and would consist of several episodes. As Hektor hardly appears in the first two hours of the epic, I will focus first on how the narrative create anticipations for his character as it builds its storyworld, with a special interest in how the structure and order of its beats and episodes works building recognition, alliance and eventually allegiance with Hektor.

In media res

What is it like to enter a new world? We do it all the time when we watch television serials, where the narrative works to very quickly establish multiple storylines, characters, locations, and sometimes, temporalities, with preliminary work towards the relationships between these different narrative aspects. *Game of Thrones* opens with three men on horses behind an opening gate in a wintry landscape; we follow them through a tunnel, which opens up on one side of a huge, snowy wall – we enter the woods with them. One man finds body parts in the snow, a young girl pinned to a tree, a sword through her torso. They have a conversation about these 'wildlings' that have been killed; they talk of their orders and their desire to get back to the Wall. One man tells another that if he runs south they will catch him as a deserter and behead him. The three go back to where the first man found the bodies. The body parts are missing. Soon, the three are attacked, seemingly by zombies, including the young girl whom we saw pinned to the tree. The one man who was told he would be beheaded watches a shadowy figure behead one of his companions, toss the head towards him. The scene ends and cuts to the title sequence.

No names are given in this sequence, and, in fact, none of these characters are 'important' – the next scene shows that the one man does escape, only to be

beheaded by Ned Stark outside of Winterfell. The show has literally thrown its audience into a strange land full of strangers. The costumes, the size of the snowy wall, the zombies, all indicate to the show's contemporary media audience that they are not in a realistic world: these play on tropes of fantasy and of horror. The *Game of Thrones* pilot asks its audience, regardless of whether they have read the source novels, to situate themselves in a new world that has at least four physical locations (the Wall, plus the title-cued locations of Winterfell, King's Landing, and Pentos) and around twenty-five speaking characters, of whom over twenty are named. Part of the excitement of watching a new show is the ludic aspect,¹ the puzzle-solving challenge as we start to piece together the show's world and where its characters fit into it.

The *Iliad* expertly builds in details over its first episodes to introduce its characters, their relationships, and where *this* story fits into a tradition of stories about Troy.² The first episode follows the actions of multiple characters: Chryses, Achilles, Agamemnon, Thetis, and, to a lesser extent, Zeus and Odysseus. While the first episode mentions Hektor, its primary focus is on the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, a long beat sequence that sets the events of the *Iliad* into motion. Most serials, even those with many characters, can only balance three or four (often intersecting) storylines within a given episode. *Game of Thrones* may have nearly thirty main characters, but most episodes are split between three or four locations and follow just a few of the major characters. Some weeks we do not see certain characters at all – most prominently, the show's fifth season excluded the story arc of Bran Stark, one of the main characters since the show's pilot, completely.

The first beats of the *Iliad* likewise introduce many characters, but constrain themselves to three storylines. The first storyline introduces the priest Chryses, who wants his daughter, the captive Chryseis, returned by Agamemnon (Apollo also plays a role in this storyline). The second sees Achilles challenge Agamemnon about returning Chryseis, and Agamemnon take Achilles' Briseis instead, spurring Achilles to withdraw from battle and to ask his mother, the goddess Thetis, for help. The third storyline follows Thetis to Zeus, and sees Zeus promise Thetis to help Achilles by punishing the rest of the Achaians. Of these storylines, the first is resolved within the first episode, as Agamemnon does return Chryseis to her father, bringing audience satisfaction to one problem to be overcome. But the remaining two storylines – Achilles' withdrawal from the war and Zeus's aid against the Achaians – will continue for many episodes before reaching resolution, determining most of the events still to come in the epic.

Diegetic introduction: 1.233–350

And where, in all this, is Hektor? Just as Mittell describes recaps within character conversation as ‘diegetic retelling’,³ we might think of character introduction in conversations as ‘diegetic introduction’. In the beats of serial narrative, other characters will often speak about a character before he or she finally shows up in the narrative, building audience anticipation for that character’s eventual entrance. Television serial narratives frequently use this strategy, particularly when drawing on traditional material: we might think of the delayed introduction of *Game of Thrones*’ Tywin Lannister, who, though mentioned as early as the first episode, does not appear until the seventh in the show’s first season.⁴ In *Game of Thrones*’ pilot, siblings Cersei and Jaime Lannister talk, and Jaime admits how scared he was of their father as a child. This reference to their father is the serial narrative’s first oblique introduction of Tywin Lannister. Over the first six hour-long episodes of the television series, several other characters make mention of him, building an expectation of a man who seems universally formidable to both his enemies and members of his family. Charles Dance’s Tywin finally appears on screen in the seventh episode: stony-faced, sharp-tongued, aggressively cleaning a dead deer as he speaks to his son Jaime, barely looking up at him, tearing him down with every word. Tywin Lannister fulfils expectations, and even though the audience knows how Jaime feels about his father, it is still a startling scene to see the normally confident Jaime shrivel in his presence. Perhaps one of the most anticipated entrances in contemporary serial television has been that of the character Negan, an antagonist to the group that Rick Grimes leads, in the zombie drama *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 2010–), based on a comic series of the same name. The character’s casting was announced in November 2015, not quite halfway through the show’s sixth season. This built audience anticipation for Negan to be a major character in the second half of the show’s season, and throughout the second half of the season, characters have made reference to him, or even claimed to *be* him. But only in the season’s finale does Negan finally appear, to seemingly kill off one of the main characters.⁵ In a similar way, the *Iliad* begins to introduce Hektor as a major character through the dialogue of other characters before the narrator makes any direct comment on Hektor or before Hektor himself becomes an actor in the plot.⁶ The *Iliad* delays its introduction of Hektor and does not reveal him until the end of Book 2, at least two hours into a performance of the whole epic.

Achilles first introduces Hektor in the fiery conclusion to his long argument-exchange with Agamemnon. Ending their argument over the captive women,

Achilles swears an oath-threat to Agamemnon that he will regret driving Achilles out of the fighting through this conflict (1.233–44). In his oath, Achilles angrily throws Agamemnon's sceptre to the ground, threatening him: 'In the future, no matter how much you grieve, you won't be able to do anything when many fall and die at the hands of man-slaughtering Hektor' (τότε δ' οὐ τι δυνήσεται ἀχνύμενός περ/χραιομεῖν, εὖτ' ἄν πολλοὶ ὑφ' Ἑκτορος ἀνδροφόνιοι/θνήσκοντες πίπτωσι, 1.241–3). This sworn introduction of Hektor creates a point of divergence. From here on in Achilles and Agamemnon's storylines will go their separate ways, while Achilles hints at Hektor's storyline on the horizon. Here, Achilles constructs Hektor as the epic's *real* antagonist, beyond this quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. Achilles' threat presumes a pre-existing fear of Hektor on the part of the Achaians, and this implied fear instils an emotional curiosity for the audience: now we *want* to see this Hektor, who kills, who terrifies.⁷

The narrative physically demarcates the divergence of these character arcs as Achilles and Agamemnon go their separate ways within the Achaian camp (1.304–11): Achilles' point of withdrawal will be a physical space wherein his story arc will unfold for the next many, many hours.⁸ Their divergence also immediately results in two different 'missions' that create audience anticipation for future events and set the agenda for the next several beats.⁹ For Agamemnon, the mission becomes to send Chryseis on her way, and to take Briseis from Achilles, which he accomplishes in the next beat sequence (1.311–50).

Thetis: 1.351–611

Once Briseis has left, Achilles laments and calls to his mother, the sea-nymph Thetis, and, despite accusing her of already knowing the story (οἶσθα, 1.365), gives a long recap of everything from the sack of Thebe to Agamemnon's seizing of Briseis (1.365–92). This is the epic's first major recap, and Achilles' speech seems to wink at the audience, who also already knows what has happened, and why Achilles is upset. Achilles' recap brings the audience up to speed (including late-comers to the performance), reiterating the important plot point of his quarrel with Agamemnon.¹⁰ That Achilles' speech so thoroughly recaps the events of the previous beats might suggest that the performer can take a break before this beat: even without Achilles' being named at 1.351, his name comes back in within less than two minutes of performance time (1.364). Whether or not the performer chooses to take a break, Achilles' recap also creates backstory

in giving more details about the sack of Thebe that led to Agamemnon's taking Chryseis and setting the whole quarrel in motion (1.366–9), giving further depth to his character through creating the illusion of his character past. At the same time, Achilles' speech gives the audience access to his character through his motivations and goals.¹¹ Achilles follows up on the threat he made to Agamemnon in the earlier scene and he asks his mother to get Zeus to side with the Trojans against the Achaians, at least until Agamemnon realizes what a mistake he has made in his dishonouring Achilles (1.393–412; cf. 1.239–44).

Serial television sometimes also uses this kind of immediate repetition to reiterate that event's importance to the story, to add character perspective on a recent event, and to add information that builds anticipation for future events. In the first episode of *The Path* (Hulu, 2016–), we see Sarah follow her husband, Eddie, to a motel; she assumes that he is having an affair. Several beats later, we see the exact same shots, but this time the narrative also allows us to see *whom* Eddie meets in the hotel: a woman who has escaped the cult-like religion that Sarah and Eddie practice. This repetition increases the significance of the event, while its elaboration adds to our understanding of Eddie and builds anticipation for how this encounter will affect Eddie and his relationship with Sarah in future episodes.

Similarly in the *Iliad*, Achilles' conversation with Thetis recaps his decisive quarrel with Agamemnon while it gives us insight into Achilles and builds anticipation for Thetis's mission to Zeus. That anticipation pays off several beats later,¹² when Thetis approaches Zeus and he agrees to the 'mission' (1.493–527), which gives the audience a clue that the coming epic might unfold as Achilles has threatened it will. In these scenes the *Iliad* uses both analepses (here, Achilles' recap) and prolepses (here, Zeus's promise that events will unfold as Achilles hope they will) to place the audience within the frame of the story as a whole, and to build suspense going forward. This suspense emerges around the absent-but-implied Hektor, who was the agent in Achilles' initial threat. If Zeus has agreed to Achilles' mission, now we want to see how Hektor will enter into that plan.

In the next beat after Zeus's meeting with Thetis, the narrative attaches the audience to Zeus returning to Olympos, where the conflict with Hera that he predicted in the last scene happens because of his helping Thetis (1.536–69, fulfilling 1.518–27). But with Hephaistos's encouragement, Hera's anger subsides, and Zeus and Hera go to bed together (1.531–611). That resolves one potential problem that has arisen, which could give the performer another chance for a break, particularly as the next beat recaps the tension between the gods and its resolution.

Achaians assemble: 2.1–394

To fulfil his mission, Zeus sends a Dream to Agamemnon that sets the agenda for the beats to come in his orders for Agamemnon to arm the Achaians (2.1–15). The narrative attaches to the Dream as it goes down to Agamemnon, and the next several scenes deepen Agamemnon's character and reveal his goals and motivations, while fleshing out an array of secondary characters through their relationships to Agamemnon, all of whom have their own story arcs. Nestor, Odysseus, Menelaos and Diomedes all work as points of tension with Agamemnon, and form constellation points in the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure. In this 'episode', the debate between Agamemnon and these characters as to whether or not to remain at Troy replaces the first 'episode's' fight between Agamemnon and Achilles as the central conflict. These characters' speeches not only give us insight into who they are, where they are from, and what their character motivations are, but also fill in gaps in the narrative information that the audience has. For example, Nestor mentions that the Achaians outnumber the Trojans (2.125–33), and that the Achaians have been in Troy for nine years (2.134). Thersites complains about Agamemnon's treatment of Achilles (2.239f.), which recaps the first episode's quarrel, while it ramps up the tensions between the other Achaians in this storyline. Odysseus's speech takes us all the way back to Aulis (2.303), and the launching of the Achaian fleet for Troy; his recount of Kalchas's prophecy there (2.308–30) suggests that Troy will fall in its tenth year. Putting these pieces together increases our anticipation – not so much over the question as to whether Troy will fall, with us in the expedition's tenth year – but rather, will Troy fall in *this* story? Finally Achaians turn, once more, to fight against the Trojans (2.394). This resolution plays on Achilles' threat (1.239–44), hinting at an upcoming encounter with Hektor's Trojans.

Hektor on the horizon: 2.394–473

Agamemnon explicitly invokes Hektor in his prayer to Zeus before the Achaians prepare to head into battle (2.412–8). Nearly an hour of performance time has passed since Achilles threatened Agamemnon with of man-slaughtering Hektor cutting down his men (1.241–3). Now Agamemnon inverts this image as he prays to Zeus, as he imagines cleaving through Hektor's tunic with his bronze (Εκτόρεον δὲ χιτῶνα περὶ στήθεσσι δαΐξαι/ χαλκῷ ῥωγαλέον, 2.416f.) with his

companions around him dying in the dust (2.412–8) in front of Priam's burning palace.¹³ Rather than giving in to Achilles' threat of Hektor killing his men, Agamemnon prays to kill Hektor.

In doing so, Agamemnon re-shapes the image of Hektor, not as the focus of a fragmented Achaians' fear, but instead, of a newly unified (with the exception of Achilles) Achaian aggression. When Agamemnon finishes his prayer, the narrative comments that Zeus will not bring the prayer to pass (οὐδ' ἄρα πῶ οἱ ἐπεκράϊαινε Κρονίων, 2.419), but it leaves *exactly* what will not come to pass ambiguously open; another half-clue for the audience to follow. Will Hektor live? Or will Agamemnon simply not be the one to kill him? Either way, the seed has been sown: in the eyes of the Achaians, Hektor is both future menace and future victim. And, much like Achilles' threat of Hektor, Agamemnon's prayer here suggests a past. Hektor must be well-established as an enemy in the minds of the Achaians for Agamemnon to make this prayer.

This puts the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, and the smaller tensions between the rest of the Achaians, temporarily on hold. The resolution of the Achaians to stay and fight together (with the exception of Achilles) suggests another possible break for the performer, who can stop between the extended similes that describe the Achaian army. The first simile describes the gleaming bronze of the marching troops as a forest fire on the mountain (2.455–9); the second the gathering troops along the plains of Skamandros as flocks of swans in their thousands like leaves and flowers (2.459–68); finally, the third names the Achaians as swarms of insects at 2.469–73, now advancing against Troy. A break between these last two similes would come after about thirty-five minutes of performance time, and the option would leave the audience with a wonderfully vivid image of the Achaians, for the first time, on the attack.

Catalogue: 2.474–785

With the Achaians and Troy named in the third simile, it stands as a perfect opportunity for a performer to bring an audience back into the action, after a possible short break. Before we get to actually meet Hektor, and after painting the vivid image of the Achaians on the move, the narrator calls on the Muses to help him recite the catalogue of ships. The catalogue serves as an extended introduction and re-introduction of many of the *Iliad's* main characters.¹⁴ This performance would last around a half hour: plenty of time to build up anticipation for an audience's first experience of the Trojans and Achaians in battle.¹⁵ But a long

time, too, in which we might lose track of Hektor altogether. In fact, the catalogue only mentions one Achaian to even fall at the hands of a Trojan: Protesilaos, 2.699–703, and gives us no name for the Dardanian who cut him down.¹⁶

But the catalogue *does* remember Achilles when the narrative lists Nireus as the second most beautiful man at Troy, after Achilles (2.671f.). The catalogue also includes Achilles himself and recaps that he sits apart because he grieves for Briseis. Here the narrator deepens his character with further backstory, filling in that Achilles took Briseis at Lyrnessos; at the same time, the narrator prepares the audience for his eventual return to battle (2.688–94). The narrator ends the catalogue by bringing in Achilles yet again when he asks the Muses for help to remember the horses who fought at Troy:¹⁷ here the narrator reminds us that Achilles' horses, like Achilles himself, are sitting this one out (2.769–73). The catalogue ends with another vivid simile, as the remaining Achaians march across the plain like thunder (2.780–5).

Here, too, we might imagine the performer taking a break, if he wanted to end on the strong cliffhanger of the charging Achaians: 'So the earth groaned beneath their feet as they charged, as they sped fast across the plain.' (ὥς ἄρα τῶν ὑπὸ ποσσὶ μέγα στεναχίζετο γαῖα/ ἐρχομένων· μάλα δ' ὤκα διέπρησσαν πεδίοιο. 2.784f.) But it would be hard to sit through the catalogue without some pay-off. The audience wants to finally see the Trojans, and Hektor: everything in the last hour of performance time has them ready for a fight.¹⁸

Reveal: 2.786–810

The beat switches as the narrator changes audience alignment from the Achaian charge to Iris, Zeus's messenger, making her way to the Trojans. This transition matters, as the narrative did not show the audience the message from Zeus, or Zeus's instructions to Iris, before Iris's appearance, as they might expect with a message (cf. Zeus and the Dream, 2.5–34) – this omission means that the audience is not sure whom her message is for or what it will contain. Still, the two beats work perfectly together, as Iris brings the 'message' of the last beat's actions (the Achaians are on the move) to the Trojans in front of Troy.

In this beat, the narrative finally *shows* Hektor, when his name has only twice been said in over a hundred minutes of performance time, not including breaks. Iris approaches the Trojans before the gates of Priam's palace (2.788), disguised as Priam's son Polites (2.791). When Iris speaks, she aims her address at Priam (ὦ γέρον at 2.796), warning him that the vast army of the Achaians are on the

move (2.797–801 recaps 2.780–5): this recap would allow a break after the catalogue at 2.785. Then ‘Polites’ addresses Hektor directly (Ἑκτορ, 2.802). No narrative or character introduction has told the audience that Hektor is part of the Trojan assembly, nor where he is, nor how he looks, nor even that ‘Polites’ addresses him. So the vocative might shock an audience: man-slaughtering Hektor (1.242), whose tunic Agamemnon wants to cleave through with his bronze (2.416–8), is right beside them in the audience, when the performer as Iris as Polites calls him out by name.¹⁹

‘Polites’ orders Hektor that he ‘most of all’ command the leaders of the Trojans and their various allies to get into order (Ἑκτορ σοὶ δὲ μάλιστα ἐπιτέλλομαι, 2.802). So ‘Polites’ re-enforces Hektor’s role as field commander of the Trojans. Hektor does not respond, but ‘recognizes the goddess’s command and immediately dissolves the assembly’ (Ἑκτωρ δ’ οὐ τι θεᾶς ἔπος ἡγνοίησεν,/ αἶψα δ’ ἔλυσ’ ἀγορὴν, 2.807f.).

Trojan catalogue: 2.811–3.14

Once the Trojans get into their ranks, the narrative voice catalogues them and their allies. The narrator starts with Hektor, and repeats Hektor’s name and role, adding for the first time new character attributes, and the fact that he is Priam’s son:

Τρωσὶ μὲν ἡγεμόνευε μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ
 Πριαμίδης· ἅμα τῷ γε πολὺ πλείστοι καὶ ἄριστοι
 λαοὶ θωρήσσοντο μεμαότες ἐγχέϊσι.

Great, shining-helmed Hektor ruled the Trojans,
 the son of Priam, and with him the most and the best men by far,
 eager to fight with the spear.

2.816–8

Can you see Hektor? For the first time, the narrator gives physical clues to his appearance, using neutral to positive adjectives/epithets to describe Hektor, focusing on his great size and his shiny helmet.²⁰ Hektor cuts an imposing figure, and in this anticipation of battle, he is neither the aggressor nor the victim that Achilles and Agamemnon, respectively, painted him as.

But *where* this introduction appears in the order of this beat sequence increases audience anxiety around Hektor. First, there is the prayer/threat of Agamemnon against Hektor (2.412–8), followed by a *very* long list of Achaian

warriors (2.494–759), only one of whom has died at the hands of the Trojans (2.699–703); and within this catalogue, several references to Achilles, who will soon return (2.671f., 2.688–94, 2.769–73). Similes that describe the vastness of the Achaian force trigger the catalogue and bring it to a close, creating and reiterating an impression of its size as it approaches (2.780–5).²¹ Iris's warning to Priam about just how many the Achaians are only aggravates our concern (again described with a simile, 2.800f.). Then Iris introduces Hektor. The 'Trojan catalogue' that follows does not mention Hektor again, but contributes to a growing sense of dread. The list is notably shorter than that of the Achaians (the Achaian catalogue is around twenty minutes long, 2.494–759; the Trojan catalogue is only about seven minutes long, 2.786–877), almost proving in the time it has taken to *hear* the lists that the Trojans are vastly outnumbered. More, the narrator includes information about who will die in the Trojan catalogue,²² providing 'red-shirts' alongside the main characters before battle even begins.²³ After Hektor, the catalogue names Aineias, and then on to Adrestos and Amphios, who went to war despite their father's prophetic protests (2.832f.), since the 'dark spirits of death led them'. Then after several other Trojan allies, the narrator comes to Chromis and Ennomos the bird-seer (2.858), who will be killed by Achilles in the river (2.860f. looks forward to Achilles' slaughtering Trojans and Trojan allies in Book 21), and Nastes will suffer a similar fate (2.872–5).²⁴ The catalogue ends on Sarpedon and Glaukos, the leaders of Lykia (2.876f.).²⁵ So the narrative directly foreshadows the deaths of several minor characters in a catalogue that also contains Hektor and Sarpedon, two major characters that the audience might know from tradition will also die. All of these ordered details construct a sense of the danger that Hektor faces in the epic to come.

Enter Paris: 3.15–37

Just as with the end of the Achaian catalogue, the end of the Trojan catalogue leaves the coming battle dangling. More, the narrative omits Paris from the Trojan catalogue, so those in the audience familiar with tradition will still be waiting for his appearance. Paris is, after all, *supposed* to be the antagonist in the Trojan War.²⁶ I do not think that a performer would stop between these two scenes, as the narrator zooms out from Sarpedon to show both armies coming against one another, before quickly zooming back in on Paris. Much like the reveal of Hektor, Paris's sudden appearance – godlike, wearing a leopard hide, carrying a bow, a sword and two javelins (3.16–20) – provides the pay-off for the

audience's anticipation for him, and for combat. The audience has now been waiting around a half hour for battle, since the Achaians resolved to again march against Troy (2.432); much longer than that for mention of Paris, as he has yet to appear at all in the *Iliad*. But Paris's introduction also subverts expectations that the narrative has built around Hektor. The narrative has taken the time to construct Hektor as someone to fear and fear for in his role as the leader of the Trojans. Paris appears from nowhere, and, later, disappears almost as fast in his Aphrodite-drawn mist (3.380–2).

Hektor and Paris: 3.38–75

The confrontation between Paris and Menelaos finally provides Hektor with a speaking role, and his interactions in Book 3 begin to bring his character into sharper focus. In this episode, the Achaians and the Trojans interact for the first time, the narrative heads to Troy for the first time, and, most importantly for our discussion, the characters of several of the Trojan characters deepen significantly.

Nearly as soon as Paris has jumped out of the frontlines to challenge the Achaians, he jumps back into the group of his companions, terrified of Menelaos (3.30–7). Hektor *sees* Paris' retreat (ἰδὼν, 3.38), and the narrative follows his gaze in order to switch alignments to Hektor, who now speaks for the first time. Hektor's rebuke for his brother re-introduces Paris, while recapping what has just happened in Paris's failed confrontation with Menelaos. At the same time, Hektor's exchange with Paris serves as a 'character moment' that gives us insight into Hektor beyond his role as leader of the Trojans,²⁷ furthering audience recognition and alignment. The exchange provides crucial backstory to any audience members who might not know what is going on or who these characters are, while reinforcing information for those who do. Hektor starts by characterizing his brother: since the narrative has just introduced Paris in the prior beat, Hektor's characterization leaves a strong mark. Hektor addresses his brother as Δύσπαρι ('Bad-Paris!', 3.39): of course this paints Paris in a bad light, but it also suggests a closeness between the brothers, as Hektor not only calls him by a different name (his 'Trojan' name) than the narrator (cf. 3.16, 3.27, 3.30, 3.37), but he calls him a nickname that no one else in the epic will ever call him.²⁸ The narrative called Paris 'godlike', but Hektor counters this with 'pretty boy' (εἶδος ἄριστε, lit. 'best-looking', 3.39);²⁹ before also calling him 'girl-crazy' (γυναιμανὲς, 3.39); and 'cheater' (ἡπεροπεντὰ).³⁰ So Hektor challenges the

narrative's introduction of Paris (θεοειδής, 3.16) as a kind of iceberg characterization that sees only the surface but does not understand what lies beneath. This is certainly his concern about what the Achaians might think of his brother, as they might assume that his good looks correlate to Paris's being a brave warrior (3.43–5). Hektor's insults give the audience access to his own values, which he opposes to Paris's values: through this access, the narrative starts to build audience allegiance around both characters. Hektor's contempt for Paris goes so far that he wishes that his brother had died long ago, before he got married (αἴθ' ὄφελος ἄγονός τ' ἔμηναι ἄγαμός τ' ἀπολῆσθαι, 3.40), before he ever met Helen and brought her across the sea. Here Hektor refers to the backstory of Paris's bringing Helen to Troy (so far only recapped during the catalogue, at 2.588–90). Hektor gives this backstory a further nod by bringing up Menelaos as Helen's husband at 3.52f. Hektor then continues adding character attributes to his brother: Paris plays the lyre, he has the gifts of Aphrodite, he has pretty hair, he's beautiful (3.54f.). With each of these character traits, Hektor gives us further access to his judgements about his brother. Finally, Hektor claims that the Trojans should have stoned him for what he did (3.56f.), calling the Trojans 'cowards': so he places himself at odds with the rest of the community. Hektor fills in quite a lot of character information in this short rebuke for his brother. With these reproaches, the narrative allows access to Hektor that an audience can use to build allegiance with his character, deciding whether or not they agree with him and what he has to say.

Paris's response does much of the same, giving us his view on Hektor while fleshing out their relationship dynamic and providing Paris's views on his own character attributes. He starts out, 'Hektor, you've told me off right – not more than what's right' (Ἑκτορ ἐπεῖ με κατ' αἴσαν ἐνείκεσας οὐδ' ὑπὲρ αἴσαν, 3.59). Paris builds the illusion of their shared backstory with this phrase, as he suggests that he has gotten used to Hektor's criticisms and now he knows how to handle them. Then Paris quickly pivots to compliment his brother in a slightly cheeky way to allay the tension between them, reinforcing the image that the Achaians have painted of Hektor as the chief military presence on the Trojan side (cf. 1.242, 2.416f.).³¹ First he claims that Hektor's 'heart is always tireless, like an axe' (αἰεὶ τοι κραδίη πέλεκυς ὥς ἐστιν ἀτειρής, 3.60). Paris follows this extended simile by describing Hektor's 'mind' (νόος, 3.63) as 'fearless' (ἀτάρβητος, 3.63), and this might also be a sarcastic rebuttal to Hektor's rebuke, where Hektor claimed of Paris as having neither force nor courage in his thoughts (εἶδος ἔπ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι βίη φρεσὶν οὐδέ τις ἀλκή, 3.45). Paris finally commands Hektor not to dismiss the gods' gifts, but to go and sit the armies down, with a casual 'but

now, if you want me to fight ...' (νῦν αὖτ' εἴ μ' ἐθέλεις πολέμιζεν, 3.67) that shows Paris's lackadaisical attitude as he suggests that Hektor set up a single combat between himself and Menelaos (3.67–75). Paris sets the rules of the fight as 'winner-take-all', so that Menelaos's win would mean a victory for the Achaians, and Paris's win would mean the Trojans could live on in peace. Even if we do not know how Troy falls, the story structure has set up Achilles' conflict with Agamemnon as the primary conflict, and already hinted at Achilles' return to battle: these earlier episodes would make any audience expect that peace now is a false possibility, but it peaks interest to see *how* it will show itself to be false.³² Paris's evaluations of Hektor also create a new layer of character information for the audience to process, against which they can now judge his subsequent actions.

The narrative gives access to Hektor as Paris's plan makes him happy (3.76): this, too, contributes to audience allegiance to his character. At the same time, Paris's plan for a single combat sets the agenda for the next several beats, laying out how it will come about and building anticipation for what will happen when Paris and Menelaos finally face off against one another.

Setting terms: 3.76–120

The narrative switches beats by remaining attached to Hektor as he goes between the armies to set up the single combat between Paris and Menelaos. As Hektor walks out, the Achaians try to hit him with their weapons (3.79–81), reminding us of his inverse role as 'Achaian enemy'; but as Agamemnon stops them, naming Hektor with the more neutral epithet, 'shiny-helmed' (κορυθαίολος Ἔκτωρ, 3.83; cf. 2.861),³³ that role subsides slightly.

Hektor calls out to both armies and repeats Paris's terms for single combat (3.88–91 recaps 3.68–70), which allows the audience to compare Hektor's own response to the proposal to that of the Achaians. The Greeks stay silent (3.95), but Menelaos responds (3.97–110). He acknowledges that he has played a role in everyone's suffering, pointing to the backstory he shares with the Greeks, and then he hopes for a peace that can last between the sides once one of them has died (3.98–102). Finally, Menelaos agrees to the truce on the condition that Priam should be the one to take the oath, since his sons are 'arrogant' and 'untrustworthy' (ἐπεὶ οἱ παῖδες ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄπιστοι, 3.106). So as Hektor and Paris characterized each other in the last beat, in very different ways, now Menelaos adds attributes to them both, creating ambiguity in their characterizations. Are the

brothers really more alike than they seem? Is this just an outsider's tendency to lump his enemies together? These questions call audience allegiances into question. In response to Menelaos's speech, the narrator tells us that the men on both sides are happy (3.111): this access to Menelaos's internal audience further shapes our anticipation, because whether we find our allegiance more with Paris or with Menelaos, their audience makes us more invested in a truce that we know cannot last. The beat ends on Hektor and Agamemnon sending to Troy and their camp, respectively, for the things needed for the oath (3.116–20), again looking forward to the beats to come as these 'missions' come to fruition.

Troy-time: 3.121–260

Summoning Priam gives the narrative a chance to change scenes, but it contravenes a conventional scene switch. Rather than following the heralds sent into Troy to fetch him, the narrative switches audience alignment to Iris, the gods' messenger (and now, for the second time, a scene-changing device) and follows her, disguised as Helen's sister-in-law Laodike, to Helen's bedroom (3.121–4). This is a startling juxtaposition of space, jumping quite literally from the battlefield to the bedroom.³⁴ This switch to Helen also allows for two important recaps. First, the robe Helen weaves sums up the whole of the Trojan conflict (3.125–8), and so introduces her character explicitly through her role in that conflict, which adds her shared backstory to those of Paris and Menelaos that previous beats pointed to (cf. 3.46–53, 3.99f., etc.). Then Iris's speech recaps the last beat, and the agreement reached between Menelaos and Hektor (3.130–7 recaps 3.86–110): this allows for Helen's response to Paris's proposal in addition to those we have seen of Hektor, Menelaos, and the Trojan and Achaian people. Helen longs for her former husband (3.139f.) and this access to her emotion creates character alignment with her, just as the narrative keeps the audience attached to her as she goes to the walls of Troy.

On the wall, the narrative switches the audience's alignment again, to the Trojan elders, whom the narrative introduces (3.146–9). These men see Helen approaching, and they, too, repeat her role in starting the war (3.146–9). Helen herself re-introduces the main Achaian characters, reiterating their names and roles in her exchange with Priam (Agamemnon, Odysseus, Aias, Idomeneus, 3.167–242). This short scene in Troy can bring any audience member up to speed, and can reinforce again (twenty minutes after the catalogues in terms of performance) the epic's main characters and their roles and relationships as the narrative moves forward.

This beat also elaborates on the exchange between Hektor and Paris, shedding new light on what we have just seen of Hektor's character through other character perspectives. The Trojan elders at the gate echo Hektor's frustration with the Trojans for not making Paris's death happen (3.56f.), as they say 'there can be no anger at the Trojans and the well-greaved Achaians for suffering long pain for the sake of this woman' (οὐ νέμεσις Τρῳᾶς καὶ ἔϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς/ τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν, 3.156f.). That the Trojans mention their 'anger' means that they have it, even if Helen's appearance assuages it. This confirms both Hektor's frustration with Paris *and* his frustration with the Trojans for not having punished Paris, but adds a new, complicating, dimension that Hektor had not focused on: Helen. The Trojan elders' view of Helen excuses their frustrations with the war. Helen herself also 'answers' Hektor's rebuke for Paris when she echoes Hektor's wish that Paris had died before marrying Helen, wishing that she had wanted to die when she left her first husband, and her people to come to Troy with Paris (3.173–6; cf. 3.40–2). So the viewpoints of the Trojan elders and Helen herself better situate Hektor's rebuke for Paris, confirming his frustrations while also showing us that the situation is slightly more emotionally complicated than Hektor had suggested.

At the same time, Priam's backstory of the embassy of Menelaos and Odysseus to his home creates a shared history between these characters, giving them each individually more depth, particularly in Priam's extensive descriptions of both men (3.205–24). The scene ends when Helen sees all of the Achaians she once knew except for her two brothers, whom she imagines might not have come to Troy, or might not have come to the battlefield, too ashamed to fight because of her (3.234–42). The narrator then comments that her brothers are dead, opening a gap between her knowledge and the audience's that creates a sense of *pathos* for Helen moving forward, and anticipation for when she might find out.³⁵ This exemplifies the use of 'melodramatic' tension between narrator and character knowledge to generate *pathos*. More, it adds the real threat of death to the following scenes, where we rejoin the Trojans and Achaians on the battlefield, with Paris and Menelaos preparing to do battle.

Now the beat switches to find the heralds again, moving through Troy and gathering things for the oath, which creates the illusion of continuity from their being dispatched (3.245–8; cf. 3.116f.). Before the heralds' encounter with Priam, the narrative has made time for the audience to build allegiance with the old man, and with Helen. The heralds recap the agreement between Hektor and Menelaos once again (3.256–8 recaps 3.73–5), giving us yet character response to the event, exploiting the narrative's melodramatic alignment structure. Priam shudders as they describe the truce (ρίγησεν, 3.259),³⁶ and with this access to his

response, the emotional stakes of the single combat increase, even if the audience ‘knows’ that neither Menelaos nor Paris can die yet, not in this story.

Trusted oaths (untrustworthy sons): 3.261–302

The narrative keeps the audience attached to the heralds when they bring Priam to the battlefield (3.261–6), as Menelaos had asked (3.105–10). Agamemnon himself lays out the oath, which repeats the terms of the single combat that Paris and Hektor had suggested (3.276–87 recaps 3.69–75 and 3.88–94). Agamemnon then builds further anticipation for the duel’s outcome, pushing past the simple ‘winner takes all’ scenario suggested in the earlier beats’ ‘terms’, and imagining instead a scenario where ‘Priam and the children of Priam’ refuse to give Helen back even if Menelaos does win (Πρίαμος Πριάμοιό τε παῖδες, 3.288, cf. 3.106): if this happens, Agamemnon swears, he will stay and fight until the bitter end (3.288–91). So Agamemnon opens up a new possible series of outcomes for the single combat, one that will in fact happen: Paris will lose, the Trojans will not return Helen, Agamemnon will sack Troy. And in linking Priam with both his sons, Agamemnon obliquely implicates Hektor in that outcome.

As the narrator switches alignment away from Agamemnon, that outcome comes into sharper focus in ‘any man’s’ prayer to Zeus on the oath:³⁷ ‘whoever violates these oaths first, let their brains pour to the ground like this wine, theirs and their children’s, and let their wives be raped by others’ (ὁπότεροι πρότεροι ὑπὲρ ὅρκια πημήνεια/ ὧδέ σφ’ ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέει ὡς ὅδε οἶνος/ αὐτῶν καὶ τεκέων, ἄλοχοι δ’ ἄλλοισι δαμείεν. 3.299–301). This creates consequences for actions that have not yet happened, but that will happen. A traditional audience who knows how the story ends will see this as an explanation for all that comes after, but then the narrative confuses expectations slightly. When the oath concludes, the narrator simply says, ‘they spoke, and the son of Kronos would not make these things happen for them’ (ὡς ἔφαν, οὐδ’ ἄρα πῶ σφιν ἐπεκράαινε Κρονίων, 3.302).

Duel: 3.303–448

Once the oath is sworn, the narrative switches alignment to Priam. Just as he shuddered when he first heard of the combat (3.259), now he leaves the battlefield because he ‘cannot bear to see with his eyes his dear son fighting against war-loving Menelaos’ (ἐπεὶ οὐ πῶ τλήσοιμ’ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρᾶσθαι/ μαρνάμενον

φίλον υἱὸν ἀρηϊφίλῳ Μενελάῳ, 3.306f.). That Priam cannot watch the fight builds anticipation for it all the more, and creates concern for Paris in the fight that might not exist otherwise for the audience, based on what they have seen and heard of him so far.

Hektor and Odysseus measure out the combat area and draw lots to determine who has the first spear-cast (3.314–25). The narrative explicitly says that Hektor shakes out Paris's lot, 'looking backwards' (ἄψ ὀρόων, 3.325), seemingly painting Hektor as trustworthy, despite the concerns of Agamemnon and Menelaos. The arming sequences follow and spend eight lines detailing Paris's armour (3.330–8), but only a single line saying that Menelaos 'also armed' (3.339).³⁸ This greater narrative investment in Paris just before the battle corresponds to the greater number of beats associated with Paris that have occurred so far in this episode: the conversation between Hektor and Paris, the time spent in Troy, and Priam's emotional responses to the duel. Throughout, the narrative has kept the audience more aligned with the Trojan side. But Menelaos prays before his spear-cast, his prayer to Zeus a reminder that Paris has done him wrong and broken the conventions of guest-friendship (3.351–4). With this build-up, the narrative masterfully creates a scenario where an audience member can invest allegiance in either side: with Paris, because the audience 'knows' him better, or with Menelaos, because he is in the right.

Paris fights badly; Aphrodite rescues him, commands Helen to sleep with him, and leaves Paris and Helen together to have sex (3.346–447). As Helen comes into their bedroom, she tells Paris that he should challenge Menelaos again (3.432f.); Paris's response cavalierly admits defeat at Menelaos's hands with Athena's help (νῦν μὲν γὰρ Μενέλαος ἐνίκησεν σὺν Ἀθῆνῃ, 3.439), but he makes no mention of returning Helen because he has lost (3.438–46). Melodrama comes into play again, as Paris wilfully ignores the significance of this single combat with Menelaos, claiming that he might win against him another time (κεῖνον δ' αὖτις ἐγώ, 3.440). He forgets the oath. He forgets that, if he has lost, and he does not return Helen, he will be an oath-breaker. Audience allegiance to him here depends on audience attention and commitment to the world: do they remember the consequences of the oath? Do they judge Paris according to that oath? Does this beat confirm Hektor's earlier assertions about Paris (3.39–57)? Or Menelaos's (3.106)?

Missing in action: 3.448–61

The scene suddenly changes from Paris's bedroom (literally his *bed*) to Menelaos searching for Paris on the battlefield on the same line (3.448; cf. 3.121), creating

a sharp juxtaposition between the two men and the two spaces that they simultaneously occupy.³⁹ Then the narrative switches audience alignment to the Trojans, who could not give Paris up, explaining that they would not have hidden him out of friendship, because they hated him like black death (οὐ μὲν γὰρ φιλότητί γ' ἐκεύθανον εἴ τις ἴδοιτο/ ἴσον γάρ σφιν πᾶσιν ἀπήχθετο κηρὶ μελαίνῃ, 3.453f.). This calls back to Hektor's rebuke at the beginning of the episode that suggested the Trojans should have long ago stoned Paris for his crimes (3.56f.). The episode ends with Agamemnon declaring victory for Menelaos, demanding the return of Helen (3.457–60), which recaps again the terms of the oath the previous scenes established (3.276–91). This resolves the 'problem' of this possible episode as it provides an outcome in the confrontation between Paris and Menelaos. But it also looks forwards, building the expectation that the oath's terms will be respected: even if any audience member will guess that peace will not happen (based on tradition or the fact that the story has only been going for about two and half hours), the ambiguity of what will happen next demands further audience engagement.

This 'episode', then, stretching, as it might, from Iris's first trip to the Trojan assembly as 'Polites', all the way through to leaving these Trojans searching for Paris on the battlefield, builds allegiance with the Trojans (2.786–3.461). But, at the same time, a complex series of interactions challenges those allegiances. Does an audience support Hektor, because he is right, compared to Paris? Or do they support the Achaians against them both?

Gods: 4.1–72

Just as Agamemnon's declaring victory for Menelaos resolved the last 'episode', the beginning of Book 4 provides enough diegetic retelling of the major events in the last 'episode' to make the division between Books 3 and 4 a plausible performance break.⁴⁰ Book 4 starts with an abrupt scene switch from the Trojan battlefield to the gods on Olympus. Here the narrative aligns the audience with Zeus, giving us access to his motivations, as he wants to goad Hera. His taunting speech to her recaps significant events of the last 'episode', including Aphrodite's saving Paris (4.10–12 recaps 3.380–2), and Menelaos's victory (4.13; recaps 3.457). Zeus then asks the other gods whether or not they should start the war up again or allow the return of Helen and the salvation of Troy (4.14–9); this sets up two possibilities for how the narrative will play out, and even a traditional audience's knowing that the truce must break would raise curiosity as to *how*.

The exchange that follows lets Zeus elaborate on Hera's and his own histories with and subsequent feelings for the Trojans (4.31–49). These backstories create a sense of depth in the characters: Zeus's feelings are based on the fact that he has a past where the Trojans always honoured him (4.48f.). Zeus vividly describes Hera's hate (4.30–6), but does not explain it: a traditional audience would know that her hatred remains from the Judgement of Paris,⁴¹ but others would be left to wonder about her motives, and that ambiguity would create further engagement. Despite his own feelings towards the Trojans, Zeus gives in to Hera, who directs him to send Athena to the army to ensure that the Trojans break their oaths first (4.64–7); Zeus repeats these orders to Athena just a moment later (4.25–72). This phrasing recalls the terms for 'the first to break the oaths' at 3.298–301, pointing towards the long-term consequences that might be in store for the Trojans, while Athena's 'mission' itself sets the agenda for the following beat.

Broken oaths: 4.73–220

The audience stays attached to Athena as she moves from the gods' council to Pandaros, whom she, disguised as Laodokos, convinces to let loose an arrow against Menelaos. She implies that Paris would be happy to see Menelaos's corpse (4.93–103), and this is convincing because of the shared history of the two men that the narrative has now shown some glimpses of (cf. 3.67–75). The narrative stretches out Pandaros's taking up the bow and finally making his shot, taking almost two full minutes to describe the process, building suspense by seeming to slow down time (4.105–26).⁴² As the arrow is in the air, the narrative switches alignment to Menelaos through its apostrophe:⁴³ the narrator tells *Menelaos* what happens to the arrow as Athena brushes it aside (4.127–9).⁴⁴ Just as with Pandaros's shooting the arrow, Menelaos's wound attracts several lines of narrative investment. First, the narrator describes the arrow strike itself (4.134–40), before moving onto the wound through an extended simile and another apostrophe to Menelaos (4.141–7).

Then the narrative switches the audience's alignment suddenly to Agamemnon, who shudders when he sees Menelaos's wound (ρίγησεν, 4.149f.; cf. Priam's 'shudder' at 3.259). Agamemnon's response to Menelaos's wound allows for another recap of the previous 'episode's' events, through from quite a different perspective than that of the gods, and in obviously different circumstances. Agamemnon mentions the oaths sworn (4.157 recaps 3.264–301); the single

combat (4.156 recaps 4.340–80); the details of the oath (4.158f recaps 4.268–96); and finally the penalty for breaking the oath. When the oath was sworn, they prayed: ‘Let their brains pour out on the ground like this wine, and that of their sons, and let their wives be raped by others.’ (ὥδέ σφ’ ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ρέοι ὡς ὅδε οἶνος/ αὐτῶν καὶ τεκέων, ἄλοχοι δ’ ἄλλοισι δαμεῖεν. 3.300f.)⁴⁵ Now, with the truce broken, Agamemnon says: ‘The Olympian . . . will make it happen, and they’ll pay a great price, with their own heads, and with their women, and with their children.’ (ἔκ τε καὶ ὃψὲ τελεῖ, σύν τε μεγάλῳ ἀπέτισαν/ σύν σφῆσιν κεφαλῇσι γυναιξὶ τε καὶ τεκέεσσιν, 4.161f.) So it follows that Agamemnon then predicts the fall of Troy (4.164–8), even if he goes on to fret that he might fail in this Trojan expedition, should Menelaos die (4.169–82). This whole beat seemingly has nothing to do with Hektor: he has been absent from the narrative for over twenty minutes of performance time (since 3.325), and he is nowhere to be seen now. However, Agamemnon’s speech raises the ante for the Trojan side as a whole, because the Trojan women and children (including Hektor’s wife and child) will be destroyed as a matter of divine justice. Menelaos is quick to assure Agamemnon that the wound is not fatal, and soon Machaon the healer makes his way onto the battlefield to help Menelaos (4.183–219).

Ready to rumble: 4.220–421

While Menelaos is being tended to, the narrator switches our alignment to the advancing Trojans (4.220–2): we have not seen anything of the Trojans as a whole since they were all searching for Paris on the battlefield around twenty minutes earlier, not counting any break in the performance (3.451–4). This Trojan attack coming so close after Agamemnon’s damning them as oath-breakers gives no clue to *their* reaction to Pandaros’s shooting Menelaos. So the narrator keeps its audience aligned with the Achaians as they continue to recap and reinforce the Trojans’ position as oath-breakers and they prepare for battle.

The Achaians arm and Agamemnon jumps into action (4.222–5). To the men he finds eager, Agamemnon recaps again the Trojans’ broken oaths and their consequences:

‘Father Zeus will be no help to liars: these men were the first to break the oaths and the vultures will feast on their delicate skin and we’ll lead their dear wives and innocent children away in our ships when we’ve sacked the city.’ (οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ ψευδέσσι πατήρ Ζεὺς ἔσσετ’ ἀρωγός,/ ἀλλ’ οἱ περ πρότεροι ὑπὲρ ὅρκια

δηλήσαντο/ τῶν ἦτοι αὐτῶν τέρενα χροῖα γῦπες ἔδονται,/ ἡμεῖς αὐτ' ἀλόχους τε
φίλας καὶ νήπια τέκνα/ ἄξομεν ἐν νήεσσιν, ἐπὶν πτολίεθρον ἔλωμεν. 4.235–9).

To the men who are hanging back, Agamemnon asks if they are waiting for the Trojans to come close to their ships, and so suggests the first possibility that the Trojans might reach the Achaian ships (4.247–9). Agamemnon then goes from commander to commander, so that the narrative introduces the primary Achaians once again: Idomeneus (4.257–64), the Aiantes (4.273–91), Nestor (with Pelagon, Alastor, Chromios, and Haimon, 4.293–325), Menestheus (4.327f.), Odysseus (4.329–63), and finally, Diomedes and Sthenelos (4.365–422). Their introduction being last points towards Diomedes' central role in the battle to come.

This exchange between Agamemnon and Idomeneus recaps that the Trojans have broken their oaths (4.269f.), and that they will have death and sorrow for being the first to break the oaths (4.270f.; 4.271 = 4.236 = 4.72 = 4.67). Each of the exchanges between Agamemnon and the other leaders also works to establish or reinforce the world's values with which the audience can judge the epic's characters in the battle context: they give us a framework for our allegiance moving forward. At the same time, we can assume that these Achaian leaders will be playing key roles in the battle to come, creating anticipation for each of their fates before the battle begins. Agamemnon's exchanges also work to build backstories and to deepen these characters and their relationships. So looking backwards through the past few 'episodes', those that Books 1 and most of 2 encompass focused on the Achaians, while those in the end of Book 2 and most of Book 3 focused on the Trojans; now the Achaians are re-introduced here. These necessary episodes have built up audience allegiances with a range of Trojan and Achaian characters, so that the audience is emotionally invested in the battle when it finally comes. This is why the *Iliad* starts *in medium res*, rather than in the middle of battle.

Now the audience knows many of the main warriors involved, and many of their values, as they watch the battle unfold. Audience members will have found allegiance with heroes on both sides, and the battle itself provides a context that continues to add narrative layers to these characters that will affect those allegiances. This kind of diverse character investment is common to serial narratives. In *Game of Thrones*' 'Battle of the Blackwater' (Season 2, Episode 9), the whole episode focuses on Stannis Baratheon's attack on King's Landing. Because of the multiplicity of characters and perspectives that the show has built up to this point, an audience can have a variety of conflicted allegiances during the battle. The audience might hate Joffrey Lannister, but root for his uncle, Tyrion; might have ambivalence towards Cersei Lannister, but worry for the

women in the citadel and what will happen should the city fall; might not *like* Stannis Baratheon, but might think he has a legitimate claim on the crown; might root for Stannis's honest and low-born 'Onion Knight', Davos Seaworth, regardless of how they think of Stannis himself. These multiple investments keep the audience engaged in every beat, in the interconnected fates of the many characters as the battle progresses.

Battle: 4.422–543

The scene changes as the narrative gives us a description of the two armies coming against one another: the Achaians like silent, beating waves (4.422–32), the Trojans like sheep waiting to be milked, bleating for their lambs (4.433–6). This parenting simile for the Trojans raises an ominous feeling, after the sequential warnings about the consequences of their oath-breaking for their children.⁴⁶ Then the narrative zooms out and shows Ares driving on the Trojans, Athena driving on the Achaians (4.439), and Terror and Fear and Hate driving on them all (4.440–5).

From the general description of the fray, the narrative zooms back in on individual combat encounters. Now, many of the Achaians whom the narrative has already introduced get their first kills, while others appear for the first time. The narrator brings in Antilochos in his first appearance,⁴⁷ as he kills Echepolos (4.457–62). The Trojan Agenor kills Elephenor (4.463–70) and both the Trojans and the Achaians fight over the body; Telamonian Aias kills Simoeisios (4.473–89); Priam's son Antiphos tries to get Aias with his spear, but hits Odysseus's companion Leukos instead (4.489–93); Odysseus responds with anger to Leukos's death, and kills Priam's bastard son Demokoön (4.494–504).⁴⁸ With this last kill, the advantage shifts towards the Achaians. Now the audience gets a fleeting glimpse of Hektor for the first time in nearly forty-five minutes of performance time: 'then the vanguard retreated, and shining Hektor' (χώρησαν δ' ὑπὸ τε πρόμαχοι καὶ φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ, 4.505). The narrative names Hektor and reinforces his role as the Trojan battlefield leader, but now, he is leading his men in the wrong direction.

The narrative switches the audience's alignment to Apollo, who exhorts the fleeing Trojans (4.507–13). Apollo announces to them that Achilles is missing from the battlefield (4.512f.), recalling Achilles' withdrawal after his quarrel with Agamemnon from the epic's first episode. Then Athena stirs up the Achaians (4.514–6). When battle starts again, the narrative continues to switch audience

alignment back and forth between the Achaians and the Trojans: Diores dies at the hands of Thoas (4.517–26), who in turn dies at the hands of Peiros (4.527–35), and finally, ‘on that day, many of the Trojans and the Achaians lay stretched out in the dust beside one another’ (πολλοὶ γὰρ Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν ἥματι κείνῳ/ πρηνέες ἐν κονίῃσι παρ’ ἀλλήλοισι τέταντο. 4.543f.). This line consciously acknowledges the audience’s diverse allegiances: whoever’s side you are on, your side has lost someone, is losing someone. While a performer certainly might end his ‘episode’ here, on this image, there is no resolution, no real break in the battle.

Overhaul: 5.1–453

The narrative hones in on Diomedes in the battle at the beginning of Book 5, as Athena spurs him into battle.⁴⁹ Diomedes’ exchange with Sthenelos and Agamemnon lasted around four minutes (4.365–418), and would have taken place less than ten minutes ago if the action of Books 4 and 5 is continuous. This was the first time that the audience saw Diomedes speak, and yet here, under Athena’s influence, he undergoes what Mittell calls a ‘character overhaul’.⁵⁰ Diomedes’ overhaul in his *aristeia*, or time of battlefield excellence, will affect both audience and other characters’ recognition of the hero in the scenes to come. This significantly expands audience understanding for the possibilities of character in this storyworld (Hektor himself will undergo a similar transformation). At the same time, it creates a new dynamism between character and context, between the warrior and battle, as we see how battle can change our heroes.

After Diomedes’ *aristeia* begins, he is not the first to get a kill on the battlefield. Instead, a series of Achaians have successful kills first: Agamemnon kills Odios (5.38–42); Idomeneus kills Phaistos (5.53–7); Menelaos kills Skamandrios (5.49–58); Meriones kills Phereklos, the builder of Paris’s ships (5.59–68); Meges kills Pedaïos (5.69–75); Eurypylos kills Hypsenor (5.76–83). This string of ‘recognizable’ heroes sets up a clear contrast with Diomedes, about whom the narrator tells the audience: ‘But you wouldn’t have even known *who* Tydeus’s son was fighting for – the Trojans or the Achaians’ (Τυδεΐδην δ’ οὐκ ἂν γνοίης ποτέροισι μετείη/ ἢ ἐ μετὰ Τρώεσσιν ὁμιλέοι ἢ μετ’ Ἀχαιοῖς, 5.85f.). The narrator challenges the audience to re-recognise Diomedes under Athena’s divine influence.

The next beat follows Pandaros’s gaze,⁵¹ as he watches Diomedes, aims his arrow, hits him and boasts (5.95–105). But Sthenelos pulls the arrow out and Athena heals Diomedes (5.106–22) before sending him back into battle with the

ability to recognise gods and three times more rage than he had before (5.123–43). So the narrative reinforces Diomedes' character overhaul, giving him even more supernatural powers. With his new rage, Diomedes kills eight men in quick succession (5.144–65), and the beat switches again, this time following Aineias's gaze, who watches Diomedes from across the battlefield.

This beat switch could indicate a break in performance, as Aineias's failure to recognise Diomedes presents ample opportunity for the narrative and other characters to recap his name and role. The fact that Aineias approaches Pandaros further suggests that a performer might take a break here, as the re-introduction of Pandaros will also allow for continuity from the previous 'episode', and for Pandaros's diegetic retelling of his shooting Menelaos.

Aineias approaches Pandaros to ask where his arrows and his fame have gone, repeating Pandaros's name and role (5.171–3), before asking if the archer can take a shot at 'whoever this is, ruling it and doing lots of bad things to the Trojans' (ὅς τις ὅδε κρατέει καὶ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργε/ Τρῶας, 5.175). So after Diomedes' character overhaul, Aineias also has trouble recognizing him. Aineias's exchange with Pandaros then allows Pandaros to re-identify Diomedes, give a recap of recent events, give his own backstory, and look forward to what will happen next. Pandaros identifies the 'unknown' warrior as Diomedes based on his physical characteristics (5.180–3) and he recaps his shooting Diomedes just a few minutes earlier (5.184–91 recaps 5.96–106): Pandaros then goes further back, recapping his shot at Menelaos (5.206–8 recaps 4.105–40), some forty-five minutes earlier in performance time. Finally Pandaros talks about his departure from home, his desire to win glory for Hektor (5.211), and his self-curse that someone should kill him should he not break his bow if he wins home and sees his wife again (5.212–7). This reinforces Pandaros's role in the battle, reiterates Hektor as the Trojan leader (worth winning glory for), and finally, causes the audience to wonder as to whether or not Pandaros will make it home to his wife.⁵² The audience's knowledge of the consequences for breaking the oath that Pandaros has broken places him on a precarious edge (3.298–301; cf. 4.157–68; 4.266–71).

Diomedes brutally kills Pandaros just a few moments after his homecoming fantasy, at 5.290. The narrative has built to this over several episodes, starting with the catalogues; first we meet the Achaians, then the Trojans, with the embedded violent threat to the Trojan wives and children in the oath sworn for single combat; then the Trojans breaking the oath, and the first battle deaths. Now the narrative shows a recognizable Trojan, Pandaros, who broke the oath, suffer a death that could be the result of his oath-breaking, and we know that his death will have a knock-on effect with his wife at home (cf. 5.212–7).

Aineias jumps into action to protect the fallen Pandaros, but Diomedes throws a rock at him, shatters his hip, and he has to be rescued by Aphrodite (5.312–8); Diomedes stabs Aphrodite herself (5.334–51), and then tries again for Aineias just a short time later, and finally confronts Apollo himself before stopping (5.433–43), while Aineias lands in Pergamum, replaced on the battlefield with a phantom (5.444–53). This prompts Apollo to ask Ares for help in fighting Diomedes (5.454–9), which in turn prompts Ares to disguise himself as Akamas to exhort the Trojans (5.461–70).

Returns: 5.454–532

This sequence of events brings Hektor back into the narrative. First Ares/Akamas urges the Trojans to fight because ‘a man is down whom we honoured the same as brilliant Hektor – Aineias, son of big-hearted Anchises’ (κεῖται ἀνὴρ ὃν ἴσον ἐτίομεν Ἑκτορι δίῳ/ Αἰνείας υἱὸς μεγαλήτορος Ἀγχίσιου, 5.467f.), recapping and reframing Aineias’s injury (5.305–10). This rhetoric works to stir up the men (5.470), while it reinforces Hektor’s role again at the top of the Trojan hierarchy despite his absence from battle. Sarpedon responds by ‘really insulting brilliant Hektor’ (μᾶλα νείκεσεν Ἑκτορα δῖον, 5.471): this line conjures Hektor for the audience before Sarpedon addresses him in the next line.

Sarpedon’s insult uses backstory to give us new information about Hektor, Sarpedon, and their relationship. But first, he asks where Hektor’s erstwhile *menos* (battle-fury) has gone (“Ἑκτορ πῇ δὴ τοι μένος οἴχεται ὃ πρὶν ἔχες; 5.472), and his brothers and brothers-in-law that he had boasted he could defend the city with, alone – Sarpedon cannot see them (5.473–6). Sarpedon implies his own past experience with Hektor, saying that Hektor always used to have *menos*. But the narrative goes beyond just giving more character information through a subjectively framed backstory. In the *X-Files* (FOX, 1993–2002), David Duchovny, who played one of the two leads, Fox Mulder, left the show for most of its eighth and ninth seasons. In the series finale, Mulder re-appears, and Scully, his partner, simply asks him, ‘God, where have you been? Where have you been hiding?’ While the *Iliad*’s poet did not have to worry about an embodied actor wanting to leave the show, he uses a similar narrative ‘wink’ at the audience to re-introduce a major character that has been missing from the narrative. Hektor’s *menos* – Hektor himself, has been missing from the battlefield for over forty-five minutes. And Sarpedon’s reference to Hektor’s missing ‘brothers and brothers-in-law’ draws attention to Paris’s persistent absence since 3.380–2, well over an hour ago. The rest of Sarpedon’s speech gives us

more character information, as he draws a contrast between his own responsibilities on the battlefield, as an ally from far-off Lykia, and those of Hektor, reiterating their respective roles. Just as Pandaros did (5.212f.), Sarpedon invites further audience allegiance as he elaborates his role to Hektor as a father and husband, saying that 'he has left behind his beloved wife and young son there' (ἐνθ' ἄλοχόν τε φίλην ἔλιπον καὶ νήπιον υἱόν, 5.480). Sarpedon then draws attention to Hektor's failure in his role, while Hektor is defending his own home, 'he doesn't even order the other men to stay and defend their wives' (ἀτὰρ οὐδ' ἄλλοισι κελεύεις/ λαοῖσιν μενέμεν καὶ ἀμυνέμεναι ὥρεσσι, 5.485f.). The concern for women and children has come onto the battlefield in dribs and drabs over the last few beats;⁵³ now Sarpedon projects a motivation onto Hektor that he should have, indirectly accusing him of failing *his* wife and child, behind the walls of Troy. Sarpedon ends with a warning about the fall of Troy, admonishing the Trojans not to fall prey to their enemies and let their city be sacked (5.491f.). This scene, coming close on the heels of Pandaros's death, and Aineias's near-death, focuses the threat of death of 'major' characters closer to Hektor, and with it the consequences of such death: the vulnerability of women and children, the fall of Troy. The insult 'bites' into Hektor's heart (δάκε δὲ φρένας Ἑκτορι μῦθος, 5.493), but he does not respond, except for jumping into battle to stir up his troops (5.494–6). And then, once again, he disappears.

Aineias conveniently returns after a very short zoom-out that takes in both armies (5.497–505), Apollo returning him from Pergamum. Aineias's friends rejoice, but do not have time to ask him where he has been (5.512–6): this is another narrative wink, because the audience knows where he has been (5.445f.). In the *X-Files* scene above, Scully finally asks Mulder what he was doing and where he was. He says 'I can't tell you, Scully.' She, frustrated, responds, 'Mulder, that doesn't make any sense.' Mulder reassures her, 'You've got to trust me, Scully. I know things. It's better you don't.' The whole scene makes fun of the plot device of Mulder's disappearance and reappearance, much as the *Iliad's* narrative self-consciously draws attention to its own plot device of bringing Aineias back here. At the same time, Aineias's return reinforces the previous beat's discussion of consequences of battlefield absence by showing its obverse: the joy felt when a leader comes back to battle, unharmed. Aineias's return also comes nearly as soon as Hektor has entered battle: this confuses audience expectations as to who the narrative will align the audience with more in the battle scenes to come. This confusion, in turn, builds anticipation to see what will happen next.

As Hektor once again steps aside, it is worth thinking about how the narrator works to compare his times of battlefield absence against those of the other heroes. The narrative switches our alignment back to the Achaian side, and now

re-introduces the Aiantes and Odysseus alongside Diomedes (5.519), seemingly balancing out the trio of primary Trojans and allies (Aineias, Sarpedon and Hektor) that the previous beats established as heading into battle. Agamemnon is here, too, stirring up the troops with an exhortation that focuses on cooperation as a means of survival (5.529–32). The narrator purposefully brings these characters back in after long absences to expand the battle away from its previous central focus of Diomedes (and, to a lesser extent, Aineias): this contextualizes Hektor's own absence from the battlefield while Aineias was the primary Trojan fighter, as the Aiantes, Odysseus, and Menelaos were all absent during Diomedes' *aristeia*. But the narrative only asks us to consider Hektor's absence as part of our allegiance to a character, and he is the only one of these characters to receive a rebuke upon his return.

Battle: 5.533–89

Now battle begins again, as the narrator rapidly switches alignment between the two sides. After Agamemnon's exhortation, he throws his spear and kills Deïkoön, a companion of Aineias (5.533–6). Aineias does not respond to this death, but the narrative does switch the audience's alignment to Aineias in the next beat, and this juxtaposition makes it seem as though Aineias's kills of Orsilochos and Krethon (5.541–9) respond to Deïkoön's death.⁵⁴ Their deaths give the narrator a chance to repeat the important past information that these two men sailed to Ilion to win honour for Agamemnon and Menelaos (5.550–3), referencing the beginning of the war and its cause.

The next beat then appropriately switches audience alignment to Menelaos, who pities the two fallen sons of Diokles (5.561–5).⁵⁵ Ares drives him into battle, thinking that Aineias might beat him down (5.562–4). Then the narrator aligns the audience with Antilochos, who sees what Menelaos is doing and runs to Menelaos's aid against Aineias (5.565–70), just as Menelaos and Aineias square off to face one another (5.568f.).⁵⁶ Aineias takes off upon seeing their double team, while Menelaos and Antilochos rescue the dead bodies (presumably of the sons of Diokles), and then kill Pylaimenes and Mydon, respectively (5.573–89).

Overhaul: 5.590–627

Now, as he sees Menelaos and Antilochos from across the battlefield, Hektor finally returns, almost ten minutes after Sarpedon's rebuke (5.472–92), and just

after Aineias has failed against them. Ares and Enyo accompany Hektor as he ranges through his ranks (5.590–5): this approximates Diomedes' own character overhaul from earlier in the episode, and it cause similar problems of recognition, for both the audience and for the other characters. We have not yet seen Hektor fight, so we could not see a change in Hektor's fighting if we tried. But Diomedes can. And, we might remember, the overhauled Diomedes can recognize the gods (5.127f.). So when Diomedes sees Hektor, he yells out to his men: 'Friends, we used to wonder at the kind of spearman Hektor was – a brave warrior – but now one of the gods defends him from ruin – Ares is with him, looking like a mortal.' (ὦ φίλοι οἶον δὴ θαυμάζομεν Ἑκτορα δῖον/ αἰχμητὴν τ' ἔμεναι καὶ θαρσαλέον πολεμιστήν/ τῷ δ' αἰεὶ πάρα εἷς γε θεῶν, ὃς λοιγὸν ἀμύνει/ καὶ νῦν οἱ πάρα κείνος Ἄρης βροτῷ ἀνδρὶ ἑοικώς, 5.601–5). Diomedes draws on his own past experience of Hektor as a great warrior to insist that Hektor is even better now. This confirms the implied-past Hektor that we have heard about before but never experienced for ourselves: the man-slaughterer (1.242), the one with great battle-fury (*menos*, cf. 5.472). Now, on top of this, Ares helps Hektor, and for the first time, Hektor kills – Anchialos and Menesthes (5.608–10). But the narrative quickly swerves away from Hektor again, following a gaze from the fallen Anchialos and Menesthes back to its subject, Aias, who kills Amphios out of pity for the two fallen men but is soon driven backwards again (5.610–26).

Sarpedon: 5.628–78

With Hektor once again pushed aside, the narrative jumps to Tlepolemos, Herakles' son, as he faces off against Sarpedon (5.628f.). Tlepolemos taunts Sarpedon, questioning their shared Zeus ancestry, before telling the story of Herakles, 'who sacked the city of Troy and widowed its streets' (Ἰλίου ἐξαλάπαξε πόλιν, χήρωσε δ' ἀγυιάς, 5.642). This reference to a past sack of Troy suggests the possibility of the future sack – particularly in its use of the verb 'widowed' playing on Sarpedon's accusing Hektor of failing to defend the Trojan wives (5.486). Tlepolemos then seemingly refers to Aias's kills in the previous beat, when he tells Sarpedon that he is a coward, and people are dying (σοὶ δὲ κακὸς μὲν θυμός, ἀποφθινύθουσι δὲ λαοί, 5.643). Tlepolemos and Sarpedon finally throw their spears; Sarpedon kills Tlepolemos; Tlepolemos strikes Sarpedon through the thigh with his spear (5.655–62). Both men are dragged out of the fighting by their men, Sarpedon still with the spear through his thigh (5.663–9). Sarpedon falling means that another one of the Trojan-allied leaders will have to

come back into the foreground, building anticipation for Hektor to once again emerge.

But the narrative aligns the audience with the Achaians first. Like Aias, the narrator named Odysseus among the Achaians at 5.519, and now, seeing Tlepolemos fall, Odysseus considers whether or not he should go after Sarpedon. But Athena pushes him against the other Lykians, and he kills seven in quick succession: Koiranos, Chromios, Alastor, Halios, Alkandros, Prytanis and Noemon (5.677–9). This is the first time in the epic that someone kills people in a list:⁵⁷ it serves as a condensed burst of battlefield excellence (Diomedes' eight kills took from 5.144–65). And Odysseus would have killed even more, the narrator tells us, if it were not for Hektor.⁵⁸

Hektor: 5.679–710

The contrafactual that re-introduces Hektor gives the audience a greater allegiance with Hektor, knowing that Odysseus would have killed more if not for his intervention. As Hektor sees Odysseus, the narrator focuses on his appearance, as he 'strides out', mentioning his shining helmet twice in two lines:⁵⁹ he is first 'great, shiny-helmed Hektor' (μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἔκτωρ, 5.680), then 'he goes out through the frontlines, in his shining bronze helmet' (βῆ δὲ διὰ προμάχων κεκορυθμένος αἴθοπι χαλκῷ, 5.681). Then in one line, the narrative shows us the emotional responses to Hektor from both sides: 'He bore terror to the Danaans, but Sarpedon, the son of Zeus, rejoiced at him advancing' (δεῖμα φέρων Δαναοῖσι· χάρη δ' ἄρα οἱ προσιόντι/ Σαρπηδὼν Διὸς υἱός, 5.682f.). These successive views give the audience a three-dimensional look at Hektor, where he becomes the focal point for the *Iliad's* imagination. The diversity of these views allows different possibilities for audience allegiance: Hektor as a shining hero, a terrifying enemy, a saviour, or all three at once.

Sarpedon's delighted gaze segues into his imploring Hektor to stop and help him, as he still cannot stand (5.5.684–8), creating continuity from Sarpedon's last appearance the beat before last (5.663–7). Sarpedon's speech again mentions his wife and child, whom he will not be able to delight through a safe homecoming should he die at Troy (εὐφρανέειν ἄλοχόν τε φίλην καὶ νήπιον υἱόν, 5.688): once again, the mention of home invites the audience to wonder whether or not Sarpedon will make it back there, building anticipation for his death that the traditional audience might already know will happen. In this, the narrative also gives us access to Sarpedon's motivations, relaying his desire to make it home,

because of his roles as father and husband (cf. 5.480), not insignificantly roles that Hektor also occupies.⁶⁰ And the narrative gives us some access to Hektor's motivations too, describing him, as he just rushes past Sarpedon, 'striving to push back and kill the Argives' (5.689f.).

This proves a complicated answer to Sarpedon's earlier rebuke to Hektor. Now Hektor fights hard, but so hard that he leaves a man down on the battlefield, the same thing that Ares/Akamas rebuked the Trojans for when Aineias was fallen on the field (5.464–9). But then Sarpedon's companions immediately drag him out of the *mêlée* (5.692–8), releasing Hektor from having to save him. This creates ambiguities in how we judge Hektor in this scene: does Sarpedon's safety excuse Hektor's neglect of him on the field? Does Hektor's offensive action against the Achaians outweigh his present defensive obligation to his ally Sarpedon? Hektor's silence does not help the audience in constructing their allegiance. He has not spoken in nearly two hours of performance time, without considering breaks (3.94). We see Hektor, we hear what others think of him and ask of him, but we do not hear him.

The beat changes audience alignment from Sarpedon's recovery to the Argives, who still do not retreat, though they move slowly backwards because of Ares and Hektor (5.699–702). A performer might take a break here before the narrator asks who Hektor kills, as he implicitly recaps the previous beat with the repetition of Hektor's and Ares' names (and Hektor's being the son of Priam, 5.704) and their onslaught against the Achaians. That the narrator has to ask for the number of Hektor's and Ares' seven kills (5.677–9) makes their kills here *seem* greater than Odysseus' seven kills less than two minutes earlier (5.6747–9). This might be a conscious moment of juxtaposition, bigging up Hektor (backed, as he is, by Ares) to contrast with Odysseus. But this difference would matter less after a break, where an extended narrative introduction to Hektor's rampage would help resituate the audience.

Silent type: 5.711–909

Whether or not there is a break before Hektor's and Ares' kill list, the narrative switches away from Hektor again almost immediately as it shifts scenes to the gods (5.711). Hera and Athena see Ares helping Hektor and decide to intervene (5.711–8); but this decision only mentions *Ares* and not Hektor (5.717). The rest of the book starts a new beat sequence that follows the gods' story arcs, straight into the middle of the clashing story arcs of the Trojan and Achaian heroes. In

this sequence, Hera and Athena arm (5.719–52), ask Zeus for permission to enter the fray (5.753–67), and a disguised Hera exhorts the Achaians (5.784–93, which recaps Achilles' absence at 5.788), while Athena helps Diomedes wound Ares, before all the gods return to Mt. Olympos. Athena's direct help of Diomedes echoes the beginning of the Book, which may or may not have been performed as a continuous action (5.793–867 calls back to 5.1–8; 5.121–32).⁶¹ So Book 5 ends and the narrative re-joins the battle without the gods in the first line of Book 6. As we have received Book 5, it stands as the longest book in the *Iliad*, at over nine hundred lines, or almost seventy minutes in performance length. There are few indications within its battle sequence of a preferred break in its action. If we view the book as a performance episode,⁶² the episode's central problem simply moves the plot sideways, as Athena, with Hera's support, supports Diomedes in pushing all the gods who are allied with the Trojans – Aphrodite, Apollo, and Ares – off the battlefield. These events matter in terms of elaborating character relationships, backstories, and shared experiences, but they do little to advance the epic's plot.

Throughout the battle, the narrative foregrounds Diomedes and several other main Achaians, including Agamemnon, the Aiantes, Menelaos, Antilochos, and Odysseus, while it also pushes Aineias and Sarpedon, and Hektor to a lesser extent, forward from the Trojan side. These investments in supporting characters allow for diverse audience allegiances, while they delay and continue to build anticipation for the inevitable confrontation between Achilles and Hektor that the first book establishes.

Hektor has appeared in about a minute of the last seventy-five minutes of action and has not spoken in over two hours of performance time, eschewing the early books' expectation that suggested Hektor would be *the* main Trojan on the battlefield. In terms of characterization, Hektor remains elusive. He exists silently, like a black hole at the intersection of several gazes. In this battle sequence, Sarpedon has said that Hektor has not backed up his boasts, and does not defend his people (5.471–92); Diomedes has, in the past, with the other Achaians, been amazed by Hektor as a warrior, but only fears him now because Ares backs him (5.596–606); the narrator sees him so bright and shiny in his helmet (5.680f.); the Danaans are terrified of him (5.682); Sarpedon is glad to see him but is ignored (5.682–91); the narrator must to ask how many Hektor killed (5.702–10); finally Hektor disappears when Diomedes and Athena drive Ares out of the battle (5.850ff.).

In Hektor's absences, the narrator has developed, through his other characters, a theme that will be very significant to Hektor moving forward: the connection

between warriors under threat on the battlefield and the consequences for their families and friends.⁶³ This is the case of Pandaros, who obliquely wonders if he will see his wife and home again (5.211–6), but then is brutally killed (5.290–6); Sarpedon who has left his wife and child behind to fight for Hektor (5.480); Aineias, whose return delights his friends (5.514–6); Sarpedon, who worries his death at Troy will not let him delight his wife and child (5.684–8). All of these moments form important internal narrative schemata that look past the warrior himself on the battlefield, into the social network that he is embedded in, with all the emotional consequences that that network implies.⁶⁴

Achaians kill: 6.1–36

The narrator cuts from Zeus and Ares at the end of Book 5 to the battlefield at the beginning of Book 6 with an explicit reference to the Trojans and the Achaians now being left alone to their fighting (οἰώθη, 6.1). This detail signals a shift away from the battle sequence of the gods fighting at the end of Book 5, which centred on divine intervention on the battlefield. While the sequences in Book 5 pushed Hektor to the sidelines for most of its action, Book 6 will foreground Hektor in over a half hour of performance time, over sixty per cent of its lines if it does constitute an episode. But, as in the first scenes of Book 5, the first scenes of Book 6 check in with many of the main Achaian characters.

First the narrator re-establishes the scenic space, shifting away from Mt. Olympus from the end of Book 5: now, as before, the Achaians and the Trojans are fighting in the space between the Xanthos and Simoeis (6.4; cf. 5.774).⁶⁵ Then we get a quick burst of battle that perfectly exploits the *Iliad*'s melodramatic alignment structure, in a beat sequence that catches up with many of the primary Achaian warriors for the first time since before the gods entered the fight, over twenty minutes ago, but that also throws some new faces into the mix. The work of the previous episodes have built up audience allegiance with some of these characters, and those characters become anchors on the Achaian side as we meet new characters, some of whom will become major players, some of whom will not. *Game of Thrones* uses a similar strategy to introduce new characters: think of the many characters thrown into the Battle of Hardhome. Many of these characters will never be seen again, but consider the giant, who appears throughout the battle with previously established characters like Jon Snow or Eddison Tollett, and then becomes a recurring character on the Wall.⁶⁶ We might similarly think of Alicia Florrick's chaotic first day in bond court on

The Good Wife, which introduces her to a slew of new characters, but only Lucca Quinn goes on to become a major character.⁶⁷ In this battle, first Telamonian Aias kills Akamas (6.5–11; cf. 5.617); Diomedes kills Axylos and Kalesios (6.12–9); Euryalos appears for the first time since the catalogue and kills Opheltios, Dresos, Aisepos, and Pedasos (6.20–8; cf. 2.565); Polypoites, too, pops up for his first time since the catalogue and kills Astyalos (6.29; cf. 2.740); Odysseus kills Pidytes (6.30; cf. 5.679); Teukros shows up for the first time and kills Aretaon (6.31); Antilochos kills Ableros (6.32f.; cf. 5.589); Agamemnon kills Elatos (6.33; cf. 5.537); Leïtos appears for the first time since the catalogue and kills Phylakos (6.35; cf. 2.494); Eurypylos kills Melanthios (6.36; cf. 5.79). Whether the narrator is introducing or re-introducing a key Achaian player here, the quick montage of kills clearly establishes that the Achaians are dominating on the battlefield: ten Achaians kill fourteen Trojans in less than three minutes.

Even the unborn: 6.37–72

But Menelaos interrupts their killing spree when he makes to capture Adrestos alive (6.37–51), only to be chided by Agamemnon, who tells him to remember the Trojans' crimes (6.55–60). As far as the Trojans go, Agamemnon says that 'not one of them will escape sudden destruction and our hands, not even the young boy that the mother still carries in her stomach, not even he will escape, but all of them together of Troy will be wiped out, uncared for, extinguished' (τῶν μὴ τις ὑπεκφύγοι αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον/ χεῖράς θ' ἡμετέρας, μηδ' ὄν τινα γαστέρι μήτηρ/ κοῦρον ἔοντα φέροι, μηδ' ὅς φύγοι, ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες/ Ἰλίου ἐξαπολοῖατ' ἀκήδεστοι καὶ ἄφαντοι, 6.57–60). With these terrible words, Agamemnon elicits layers of audience memory: traditional memory for Paris's abduction of Helen; the prayers over the oath that the oath-breaker's brains and sons' brains will pour out like wine, their women to be raped by others (3.300f.); Pandaros breaking the oath and shooting Menelaos (4.124–40); Agamemnon's own previous declaration that Troy will fall (4.163–8). At the same time, it reminds us of the vulnerability of the Trojan women and children that Sarpedon pointed to in his rebuke for Hektor (5.485f.). So this short scene between Agamemnon, Menelaos, and Adrestos reinforces information from several earlier scenes, as does its brutal end, where Menelaos pushes the suppliant Adrestos away from him, Agamemnon stabs him with his spear (6.61–4), and, in a genius moment of ambiguity, 'Atreides' pulls it out once again (6.64): this 'son of Atreus' might well refer to either Agamemnon or Menelaos.

Nestor follows with an exhortation that clearly pushes forward this agenda of total war (6.67–71), as he urges his men not to bother with the spoils, saying instead, ‘let’s kill men’ (ἄνδρας κτείνωμεν, 6.70).

Mission: 6.73–118

The beat switches through a contrafactual to the terrified Trojans who would have retreated into Troy, had not Helenos approached Aineias and Hektor (6.73–6). The narrator introduces Helenos here for the first time in the epic, using his patronymic as Priam’s son to relate him to Hektor, by now so familiar to the audience as Priam’s son (Πριαμίδης, cf. 5.684). This scene’s position places it as a clear response to the Achaian violence of the previous beats, including the threat of violence to the Trojan women and children.⁶⁸ Helenos’s speech also functions in several ways in terms of the beat structure of serial narrative.

First, Helenos’s speech re-introduces Aineias and Hektor, reasserting their roles and names (6.77–9). Aineias was last seen at 5.572 (a half hour ago, without break time) and Hektor at 5.710 (twenty minutes ago, without break time). Helenos’s grouping them together now also recalls that these two were central characters in the previous ‘episode’: so it makes sense that Helenos addresses Aineias first, because he has been absent longer, but also because he served a more central role in the battle sequences leading up to the present scene.

After re-establishing Aineias and Hektor, Helenos then gives them each ‘missions’, which creates audience anticipation for the next several beats. First, he warns the leaders to put their men in order, to prevent them from running home and falling into the arms of their women (6.80–2). This might call back to Paris, who escaped to the arms of his woman all the way back at 3.382, around two hours ago.⁶⁹ Then, Helenos says that while they hold the line, Hektor will go back to Troy and ask the Trojan women to pray to Athena to have pity on the city and protect its women and children (6.86–95). Here Helenos links the actions on the battlefield and the direct consequences for those off of it to the current state of battle, playing on the trope that has developed in previous scenes. In his address to Hektor, Helenos also refers to their shared mother (6.87), so further embedding himself as a new character into the existing character network and emphasizing the proximity of his relationship to Hektor as full brothers.

Helenos’s mission for Hektor also plays on the narrative’s melodramatic alignment structure, playing on the gaps in knowledge that exist between the audience and certain characters. The audience will know that Athena has been

very actively helping the Trojans through the whole last battle sequence. This irony only grows as Helenos suggests that Athena's pity, 'on the city, and the Trojan women, and their young children' (αἶ κ' ἐλεήσῃ/ ἄστυ τε καὶ Τρώων ἀλόχους καὶ νήπια τέκνα, 6.94), might motivate her to check Diomedes (ὥς κεν Τυδέος υἱὸν ἀπόσχῃ Ἰλίου ἱρῆς, 6.95). Of course, the audience knows that it was Athena who drove Diomedes through most of the last episode. So this recaps Diomedes' dominance in the previous episode, while creating considerable irony as Helenos's speech lays out the actions for the next few beats in Hektor's 'mission'.

Helenos also says that the Trojans now fear Diomedes even more than they 'feared Achilles . . . whom they say was born from a goddess' (οὐδ' Ἀχιλῆα ποθ' ὥδε γ' ἐδείδιμεν ὄρχαμον ἀνδρῶν,/ ὅν περ φασι θεᾶς ἐξέμμεναι, 6.99f.). This mention of Achilles builds backstory (the Trojans have encountered Achilles in the past, and thought him the strongest warrior), speaks to Achilles' current absence (obliquely recapping Achilles' withdrawal from Book 1), and implicitly anticipates Achilles' eventual return. This last element becomes all the more important in that Helenos mentions Achilles *to* Hektor, again subtly building further anticipation for an eventual confrontation between the two men (cf. 1.240–4).

Helenos ends by saying that Diomedes has gone too mad, and that no one can match his battle-fury (ἀλλ' ὅδε λίην/ μαίνεται, οὐδέ τις οἱ δύναται μένος ἰσοφαρίζειν, 6.100f.). Diomedes was present in this episode's opening scenes and killed two men, but Helenos's assessment of him here recalls Diomedes' *aristeia* in the previous episode. Ending on such an emphatic danger in Diomedes gives Hektor's 'mission' to Troy more emotional urgency, and aids in audience alignment and allegiance with him for that mission.

The narrator keeps the audience attached to Hektor as he does what Helenos has asked, getting the troops in order, so that he 'wakes the dreadful battle din' in the Trojans (ἐγειρε δὲ φύλοπιν αἰνήν, 6.105). In response, the Achaians run away, stopping from their slaughter, 'thinking some immortal had come down from the starry heaven and defended the Trojans, they had twisted round so' (φὰν δέ τιν' ἀθανάτων ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος/ Τρωσὶν ἀλεξήσοντα κατελθέμεν, ὥς ἐλέλιχθεν, 6.108f.). For a moment, the narrative elevates Hektor to a god, at least in the eyes of the Achaians. Here, the narrator plays on the established trope, where disguised gods rallied the Trojans (Iris as Polites at 2.790–806 and Ares as Akamas at 5.464–9); but also, again, implicitly links Hektor's battle success with the gods, as it was in his last battlefield appearance (5.703–20).

Then Hektor exhorts his men before running back to Troy, shaking two spears as he ranges their ranks (6.101–5). For the most part, Hektor repeats the

instructions that Helenos gave him (6.113–5; cf. 6.86–95). But he changes one key thing: rather than say that he will tell his mother to assemble the old women (6.87) to make the prayer to Athena, Hektor tells his men that he ‘will tell the elders and our wives’ to make the prayer (εἶπω βουλευτῆσι καὶ ἡμετέρης ἀλόχοισι, 6.114). This speech allows the audience a moment of access to Hektor. Perhaps Hektor’s thoughts turn to his own wife here, aware of the consequences for her that the previous scenes and episodes have laid out should he die on the battlefield; this certainly places his wife in the narrative frame for the audience.

This beat ends with Hektor running back to Troy, while the narrator uses his epithet κορυθαίολος (‘shiny-helmed’), he focuses most on his shield, which hits Hektor’s ankles and his neck as he runs back to Troy (6.117–9); these external markers reinforcing his role as Troy’s defender.

Face-off: 6.119–236

The beat that follows cuts away from Hektor and brings Diomedes back into action (fulfilling the audience expectation that Helenos established with his focus on Diomedes at 6.96–101), coming up against Glaukos.⁷⁰ This beat extends the audience’s break from battle, and even affords them a glimpse at peace, as Diomedes and Glaukos discover that they are ancestral guest-friends. On the other hand, the scene ends with Diomedes declaring that there are plenty of Trojans for him to kill, creating anticipation for further carnage for the Trojans, while Glaukos may only kill ‘if he is able’ (ὅν κε δύνῃαι, 6.229). Just as their armour exchange is near-comically uneven,⁷¹ the encounter between Glaukos and Diomedes suggests peace, but reinforces an inequality between the sides that does not bode well for the Trojans and their allies. This beat sequence gives the narrative a chance to stretch, engaging with traditional material in a way that might appeal to certain audience members. At the same time, it adds further depth to Diomedes’ character and establishes Glaukos as a recurring character, while its length builds greater anticipation for Hektor’s time in Troy.⁷²

Troy-time: 6.237–85

The beat switches away from the battlefield to Hektor’s arrival at Troy, on his ‘mission’ to get the Trojan women to pray to Athena. This marks the beginning of one of the epic’s longest ‘character-centric’ beat sequences. Apart from two

short beats, when the narrative is in Troy, it keeps the audience attached to Hektor.⁷³ This attachment – this time spent with him – provides ample opportunity for the audience to hone their allegiance to him, as his spoken exchanges with many other characters finally allow audience a broader access to his feelings and motivations that they can evaluate. In short, the amount and type of time spent with him compels us to feel something about his character, and maybe even feel something *for* his character.

Hektor's first encounter in Troy is with the Trojan women, who ask after their men (6.239f.); this follows ominously close on Diomedes' claim that there are plenty of Trojans to kill (6.227f.), while also looking forward to Hektor's encounter with his own wife.⁷⁴ Hektor tells the women to pray to the gods 'in turn' (ἐξείης, 6.241). This small word implies time taken with each woman, a carefulness and attentiveness on the part of Hektor. But the comment that there would be sorrow for many (πολλῇσι δὲ κήδε' ἐφῆπτο, 6.421), slightly ambiguous as to whether it comes from Hektor or the narrator, also speaks to the futility of the women's prayers, and gives further confirmation that this mission to the gods might be for naught.

Mission continued (Hekabe): 6.242–85

The narrative keeps the audience attached to Hektor as it follows him through Priam's palace,⁷⁵ past the bedrooms of Priam's sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, embedding him in a social domestic space that further defines his character through these relationships. Here, the narrative introduces Hektor's mother (6.251) and his sister Laodike (6.251). Hekabe, still unnamed, speaks to Hektor: her speech reasserts his relation as her child τέκνον, 6.254). She asks him why he has left the battlefield, thinking that the Achaians might have worn him out (6.255f.; τείρουσι at 6.255) and suggesting that he has returned to Troy to give prayers to Zeus (6.256–60); finally, she offers him wine to restore his battle-fury (6.258–62; μένος at 6.251).⁷⁶ Hektor corrects her on nearly all these points, but she is not far off: the Trojans *have* been tired out; Helenos said that the Trojans were 'tired out' (τεϊρόμενοί, 6.85) when he gave his orders to Hektor on the battlefield. Hekabe's assumption that Hektor has come back to pray is also close to the truth; Hektor has come back to ask the women to pray. Hekabe's assumptions come into tension with what we know of Hektor's mission. They also create a realistic sense of relationship between the two, as Hekabe projects motivations on Hektor based on her past experiences of her

son, giving the audience a sense of a shared backstory between them. She *knows* that he can be worn out, but she also knows that he has the good sense to pray to Zeus when he has been worn out, and that he has great *menos* (μένος μέγα, 6.261; cf. Sarpedon of Hektor at 5.472), and defends his neighbours (ἀμύνων σοῖσιν ἔτησι, 6.262). The strength of her character-based assumptions allows us to see Hektor, in his character and in his role, through Hekabe's eyes.

Hektor's response (his first spoken response in the epic) reiterates Hekabe's relationship to him, as he addresses her as 'lady mother' (πότνια μήτηρ, 6.264). He turns down her offer of wine, thinking it might diminish, rather than increase, his battle-fury and his courage (6.264f.).⁷⁷ And he denies any prayer to Zeus, as he is still spattered in battle-filth (6.265–8): here, he gives us some clue of his appearance, with its implications that he has been *killing* men (cf. 5.703–10). He reinforces this impression of his piety, especially towards Zeus (cf. 6.257f.; 4.44–9). Then Hektor recaps Helenos's orders to Hekabe (6.269–80 recaps 6.87–97). But Hektor then moves the plot forward in an unexpected direction by proposing an additional mission; to go find Paris and see if will listen to him and return to battle (6.280–5). The narrative has made no mention of Paris since 3.448, over two hours ago without any performance breaks, and we have no idea how Hektor might have guessed that Paris is back in Troy. But somehow this feels like a completely natural plot progression because of how strongly Hektor's and Paris's relationship was drawn in their encounter several episodes ago. Here again, Hektor expresses his frustration with his brother: 'I'll go look for Paris, so I can call him, if he'll listen to what I say' (ἐγὼ δὲ Πάριον μετελεύσομαι ὄφρα καλέσω/αἶ κ' ἐθέλῃς' εἰπόντος ἀκούμεν, 6.280f.). Hektor's conditional suggests he fully expects Paris *not* to listen to him; this again gives the illusion of a shared past between them that Hektor bases his expectations on, while it also plays on the audience's narrative memory of the tension between the brothers that they have already seen.

Mission impossible: 6.286–311

In the next beat, the narrator attaches to Hekabe and Laodike on their mission to get the woven cloth for an offering and to lay it at Athena's feet and pray, following Helenos's and Hektor's orders (cf. 6.86–98; 6.286–310). But the narrative lends two ominous details to their mission that point to its impossibility in succeeding, playing on those ironies that previous beats have brought in as to why it might fail (cf. 6.241). The first is implicit, when the narrative mentions that Paris brought the cloth that Hekabe chooses as an offering on his same trip when he

brought Helen to Troy (6.290–2): so Hekabe's offering to Athena is linked to Paris's original crimes, not just of taking Helen, but, obliquely, of slighting Athena in the Judgement. The narrator then explicitly says that the offerings fail, as he describes Athena 'turning her head away' (ἀνένευε δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη, 6.311), refusing the Trojan women's prayer to have pity on them, and their city, and their young children (6.309f.).

Mission (Paris and Helen): 6.312–68

The next beat jumps back to Hektor, fulfilling the audience's expectation to see him on his self-prescribed mission to find Paris (6.313; cf. 6.280–5). As with Hektor's initial entrance into the city, the narrative gives us a clear setting for Hektor to move through, along with the backstory of Paris's well-built home, near Priam's palace and Hektor's own home (6.314–7). Hektor already emphasized that he is covered in battle-filth (6.268) – here the narrative gives us a visual re-introduction of Hektor that focuses on his spear, eleven cubits long, gold-tipped and gleaming (6.318–20). This sets up a strong contrast with Paris, whom we find with Helen, readying his bow:⁷⁸ it also paints him as a warrior out of place, which this beat and the next will reinforce. Hektor speaks first to his brother, addressing him with another vocative: the affectionate, frustrated, 'strange one' (δαίμόνι, 6.326; cf. 2.190).⁷⁹ Then Hektor assumes Paris's motivation for leaving the battlefield, chiding him for his 'anger' (χόλον τόνδ', 6.326).⁸⁰ Like the exchange between Hekabe and Hektor, this projection of motivations gives the relationship, and the characters in it, more depth, hinting at a shared past being drawn on for guessing the other's emotions. The *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure comes into play again here: the audience knows Paris left the battlefield in an Aphrodite cloud-teleportation move (3.375–82), where he ended up in his bedroom, having sex with Helen (3.447f.); but Hektor does not know this. Hektor *does* know that Achilles has withdrawn from the fighting because of his anger (χόλον): Apollo tells the Trojans this at 4.512f. So perhaps Hektor has drawn this parallel. Or perhaps Paris is prone to having angry fits. The ambiguity of Hektor's assumption forces the audience to engage, to access their own memories, to try to piece together who knows what, and why, in recalibrating their allegiance to either or both characters.

Hektor goes on to vaguely recap the battle sequences from beginning of Book 6 and much of Book 5 under the Achaian onslaught, simply saying the people are dying, giving us a glimpse of the carnage still happening on the battlefield while

the audience is attached to Hektor inside Troy's walls (6.327f.). In giving a cause for the men dying and fighting, Hektor also reasserts Paris's role in starting the conflict (6.327–9; cf. 3.46–51; 3.99f.). Finally, he says that Paris himself would have fought with a man who avoided his war duties (6.329f.): this also adds depth to their relationship and to their characters, suggesting that in Hektor's past experience, Paris has shown himself to be a capable military commander, and that they *share* this value of punishing deserters.⁸¹ Hektor is not necessarily a 'reliable' narrator, but he has hardly been praising of his brother so far (cf. 3.39–57), so an audience might accept this piece of information about Paris's character. Hektor ends his speech asking Paris to get up and save the city from burning (6.331): it is the first time Hektor imagines the end of Troy, but it is hopeful, and invests quite a lot of faith in Paris as a possible saviour for the city.

Paris responds with the same line he responded to Hektor with before: 'Hektor, you've told me off right – not more than what's right' (Ἑκτορ ἐπεὶ με κατ' αἴσαν ἐνείκεσας οὐδ' ὑπὲρ αἴσαν, 6.333 = 3.59), again suggesting a relationship that has a past beyond the epic itself, where Paris is used to Hektor telling him off. Then Paris, like Hektor with Hekabe before him, moves to correct the other's assumptions, claiming that it was not anger that drove him off the battlefield, but 'grief' (ἄλγχι, 6.366).⁸² Here, too, the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure plays with audience knowledge of previous events in contrast to that of its characters. The audience knows that Paris was not grieving when he arrived back in his bedroom with Helen. But they do not know what he has been doing since then, so Paris's declaration (as much as Hektor's finding him 'readying his bow') creates the illusion of continuity between his last appearance and now, a lived experience that the audience just has not directly seen. In this illusion, the narrative forces us to question what he has *actually* been feeling (and performance could play on this ambiguity), and this level of engagement would create allegiance, negative or not, to his character. Then Paris again excuses himself of any wrongdoing towards the Trojans, while, casual as ever, he says his wife says (and he thinks, too) it might be best to get back to battle (6.337–9). 'Victory, you know, can go both ways' (6.339; cf. 3.439f.). Here, again, Paris's lack of consideration for the oaths sworn might unsettle the attentive audience. Paris ends his response with the same kind of casual options that he did in his last exchange with Hektor: 'now wait for me . . . or go' (6.340f.; cf. 'now if you want me to fight' at 3.67). The exchange once again deepens both characters, particularly Paris, through these subtle strategies of constructing their shared pasts that their present dialogue draws on. Hektor's 'mission' to find his brother resolves, but we see as the beat switches, that Hektor quickly gives himself a new mission.

The beat changes as Helen addresses Hektor and she immediately defines his relationship with her as she calls him ‘my brother-in-law’ (δᾶερ ἐμεῖο, 6.344). Helen wishes she had died, ‘before these things happened’ (πάρος τάδε ἔργα γενέσθαι, 6.348): this tips to the traditional audience, who would need no filling-in as to what ‘things’ (ἔργα) she refers to; this also responds to Hektor’s own reference to the start of the Trojan War at 6.328f. Then she insults Paris, whose heart is ‘not steadfast,’ ‘but,’ she says, ‘I think he will pay’ (τὼ καὶ μιν ἐπαυρήσεσθαι ὄω, 6.353): her use of the future creates anticipation (will he pay in *this* story?) but it would also resonate with traditional audience members who know Paris’s fate.⁸³ Then she asks Hektor to sit, and recaps *his* social role, as the one ‘whom the war-work falls on most’ (6.355, cf. Helenos at 6.77). Last, she once again reiterates that it is for her and Paris that this war rages, reinforcing Hektor’s view at 6.327–9, and she says that songs will be sung of them (6.356–8) – a wonderful meta-poetic moment.⁸⁴ This, too, is a moment where Helen winks at the audience, an audience that must realize in that moment that they are listening (right now) to one of those songs sung about Paris and Helen. These meta-poetic moments happen all the time in serial television, often to the delight of the viewer.⁸⁵

The narrative repeats Hektor’s name and epithets ‘great’ and ‘shiny-helmed’ (μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ, 6.359), which, like with Hekabe (6.263), reasserts Hektor’s battlefield image in this domestic space before he responds (cf. 2.816, 3.324, 5.680). He calls Helen by name, and, rather than give her role, simply says that she ‘loves’ him. But he refuses to sit down, saying that his heart is already ordering him to go back to the battlefield and fight for his men who long for him in his absence (6.361f.). Hektor knows he is out of place, knows he has to get back. He enlists Helen as a last aid to complete his self-imposed ‘mission’ of bringing Paris back, asking her to rouse him (6.363f.). But now he gives himself yet another new mission, to see his family again, since he is not sure whether he will make it back this way again, or if the Achaians will kill him (6.365–8). So this new mission looks forward to Hektor’s encounter with his family in the next beat, but also to the farther-off possibility of his death: the juxtaposition is intentionally and successfully pathetic.⁸⁶ Hektor pushes aside Helen and Paris for his men, and for his own family.

Mission (Andromache): 6.369–502

The narrative keeps the audience attached to Hektor as he goes and looks for his family. It is not just the previous beat, where Hektor set out his new mission,

which has built up our anticipation for his encounter with Andromache. The last episodes have seen a slew of hints at the connection between warriors on the battlefield and their wives and children at home. Hektor has, right now, an opportunity to see his family again, an opportunity that Pandaros did not have: that we might still wonder if Sarpedon will have (he will not). If the audience already knows that he is going to die, it makes every moment of this encounter particularly meaningful. And for all these reasons, the narrative builds to it a little longer, milks the anticipation of the moment for all that it is worth.⁸⁷ The narrator attaches to Hektor so that the audience is with him when he does not find Andromache, and shares in that experience with him. Then the narrator plays up the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure, and gives the audience extra knowledge that it does not share with Hektor, that Andromache stands on the ramparts, tearfully lamenting (πύργῳ ἐφεστήκει γοοῶσά τε μυρομένη τε, 6.373),⁸⁸ an important image for both the next beats and for future episodes. In terms of structure, the narrative portrays two parallel actions, as with a split screen, or a cut, that makes them both extremely significant: Andromache watching the battlefield, lamenting the fates of the Trojans; Hektor at home, looking for his wife.⁸⁹ Like Hektor's speech to Paris, where he said that men fighting around the city and the wall were dying (λαοὶ μὲν φθινύθουσι περὶ πόλιν αἰπύ τε τεῖχος/ μαρνάμενοι 6.327f.), Andromache's action draws the audience's attention to the parts of the storyworld that the narrator does not show us. Andromache's being on the walls makes her an internal audience for actions the audience has not seen, and cannot see, because they are with Hektor, so it is another way in which the narrative creates the illusion of continuity in its different storylines. The audience do know that the Trojans were on their back foot when it attached to Hektor as he came to Troy (cf. 6.73–101): the maid that Hektor asks about Andromache's whereabouts tells us that she went to the wall because she had heard the Trojans are losing (6.386f.). Hektor is not the only thing that connects the battlefield to Troy.

When Hektor hears Andromache is at the wall, he turns back the way he came, and the narrative is startlingly unclear whether or not he is still looking for Andromache: he heads for the gates, from where he is just about to go back into the fray (τῇ ἄρ' ἐμελλε διεξιμεναι πεδῖον δέ, 6.393). The narrative keeps the audience attached to him, causing them to think, for a moment, that he might miss her.

But there she is – she is coming, running to her husband (6.394). The beat takes time to clearly introduce Andromache first *through* Hektor: his richly-dowered wife (ἄλοχος πολύδωρος, 6.394), then her name, Andromache, then

she is the daughter of great-hearted Eëtion (6.395). Hektor's name, too, repeats, when the narrative again restates their relationship, when it finishes introducing Eëtion: 'his daughter belonged to bronze-helmed Hektor' ("Εκτορι χαλκοκορυστῇ, 6.398).⁹⁰ The narrative also re-introduces Hektor in the introduction of their son, strongly establishing their relationship: Skamandrios is the boy's proper name, but others call him Astyanax, because Hektor alone guards the city (οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἴλιον Ἴεκτωρ, 6.403). This confirms audience experience of Hektor from several previous beats: Hektor with his large shield, running towards Troy (6.116–8); Hekabe seeing Hektor as defending his neighbours (6.261); Hektor himself saying that his heart compelled him to get back to the battlefield (6.361f.). But also further back, to Sarpedon's accusation, only about an hour ago now, that Hektor boasted he 'alone' could defend the city (οἷος, 5.474).⁹¹

Amidst these introductions, the narrative litters the two's encounter with gestures: a particular kind of visual vividness (*enargeia*) that, like some of the most graphic wounds in the *Iliad*, stays in the mind long after.⁹² Hektor smiles at the child (6.404); Andromache (like Hekabe before her, 6.253), takes Hektor's hands and cries (6.405): these kind of gestures happen throughout the scene. Television serial narratives use similar techniques to mark out relationships, particularly romantic relationships, as memorable. In the sixth episode of *Alias's* second season, Sydney and Vaughn, romantically interested in each other but not yet romantically involved, have to be quarantined together. The beat before a commercial break sees nearly thirty seconds of silence as Sydney walks over to Vaughn, sits down, he sits next to her, puts his arm around her, and she rests his head on his shoulder. After the break, Vaughn watches Sydney sleep, she wakes up, smiles, he smiles back at her – another twenty seconds of silence. One of these gestures was significant enough that Vaughn references it two seasons later, delighting devoted audience members, when he asks Sydney to marry him: 'Sometimes I wake up before you do, and I watch you sleep. And I'm overwhelmed, because, you're so amazing ...'⁹³ For 'shippers', those who encourage romantic relationships between main characters in serial narratives, these kind of small gestures mean everything.

After this strongly painted meeting between husband and wife, Andromache speaks first. Andromache's speech looks forwards and backwards, while contributing significantly to our understanding of her character, of Hektor, and, oddly, of Achilles. First, she tells Hektor that his *menos* will kill him and that he is without pity in letting this happen, in letting her become a widow and his son an orphan (6.407–9). She makes Hektor's battle-fury an inherent trait, something *his* (τὸ σὸν μένος, 6.407), not connected to past action (compared to how

Sarpedon seemed to view Hektor's battle-fury at 5.472). But she does suggest that it will cause his death at the Achaians' hands (6.409f.), echoing Hektor's own consideration of his possible death, just a few moments earlier (6.368). Then Andromache gives us her backstory, which intersects with and builds on Achilles' own past. When he sacked Thebe, Achilles killed her father and killed all her seven brothers on the same day (6.421–4). This was not part of Achilles' description of his sacking that city to Thetis (1.366; now around four and a half hours ago without considering breaks), but here it adds depth and credence to this shared past between the characters. Andromache also creates a picture of Achilles as a fair warrior: he burned Eëtion in his armour and buried him, out of respect (6.417–9), and he ransomed her mother (6.425–8). This is the second time in this episode that a character makes mention of Achilles in a speech to Hektor (6.99f.; twenty minutes ago), as though these characters remind Hektor (and, in turn, the audience) that Achilles is waiting.

Andromache then shifts to the more recent past when she asks Hektor to defend Troy from the spot near the fig tree where she has seen the greatest Achaian warriors rushing the wall, listing the Aiantes, Idomeneus, the Atreidai, Diomedes (6.430–7). This new information invites the audience to try to remember any of these attacks, though they have not happened within the narrative time: they give depth to this war, and Andromache's experience of it, and her knowledge of their Achaian enemies. At the same time, her request necessarily builds anticipation for what Hektor will say in response: the audience knows that he claimed with Helen that he wanted to get back to his men (6.361f.); tradition dictates that he must die, out there, on the battlefield.

Hektor (again here great, shiny-helmed, 6.440) responds to her, that all these things matter to him, too (6.441). But he must fight; his sense of shame is too great not to (6.441–6): Hektor's response gives the audience access to his motivations and how he understands himself within his social system that invites audience allegiance. But as soon as he has said this, Hektor, too, looks forward, in a way that confirms all of Andromache's worst fears. Hektor says that he knows that Troy will fall, ominously repeating Agamemnon's own words after the oath was broken, Menelaos shot (6.447–9=4.163–5, about two hours ago), suggesting that Hektor, too, recognizes that the Trojans have broken their oaths. This is a melodramatic ploy that surprises, this shared knowledge between the audience and two such disparate people, Agamemnon and Hektor. This kind of shared knowledge, whether or not it directly speaks to the broken oaths, comments on the world beyond the individual character, on a fixed set of rules that affects everyone within the world no matter the side they are on. It is like

when in *The Wire*, over and over again, in the mouths of cops and teachers and drug dealers you get ‘the game is rigged’ or in *Game of Thrones*, when from Missandei and Arya you get ‘valar morghulis’ (‘all men must die’).

Hektor then moves beyond this prediction and creates a hierarchy of whom he cares about most *based* on that prediction: Trojans, Priam, Hekabe, brothers, Andromache (6.450–4).⁹⁴ Andromache is first. He sees his own death, and through that death, framed by that death, he sees the tears of Andromache, he sees each future grief inflicted upon her by some Achaian. He *sees* her. All those warnings in previous episodes about the rapes of women, the death of children, the far-off wives who will not greet their husbands returning from war;⁹⁵ all these add up to this moment, create this moment, but are left as shadows by the strength of Hektor’s image of the enslaved Andromache (6.454–63).⁹⁶ All he can do is say that he hopes he is dead when it happens (6.464f.), and of course, he will be. He must be. With this speech, the *Iliad* finally gives us real access to Hektor, and we judge him for it. Feel what you may about this speech, but you feel something. You will care, in one way or another, about what will happen to Hektor.

Then the narrator gives us another series of vivid gestures that leave the family portrait lingering in our mind long after. Hektor reaches out for his son, who is terrified of his father in his helmet: the helmet that has identified him so often so far in the narrative, and that also reminds the audience of his battlefield gore-spattered appearance (6.466; cf. 6.266–8). Both parents laugh and Hektor takes off his helmet, quite literally giving the audience access to another side of him, before grabbing up his son in his arms and praying to Zeus (6.471–81). His prayer hopes for better things for his son, that he should grow up strong, rule Ilion well, and be better than his father; that he should kill his enemy, bring home the gory spoils, delight his mother (6.476–81). The prayer provides another raft of values that the audience can judge Hektor by (and can judge others against): but perhaps the greatest point of his prayer is that his son *survive*. That is what killing your enemy and bringing home spoils to a delighted mother means: it means that his enemy has not killed him. It means that his mother has not been taken captive. And as much as this prayer feels more optimistic than his response to Andromache (she remains free in this version), in both, Hektor sees a future where he is no more.

It feels as though Andromache responds to Hektor’s future absence when she cries as Hektor hands her son back to her (6.482–4).⁹⁷ Hektor does not let her tears go unnoticed: he *sees* (νοήσας, 6.484) and touches her cheek, and tries to reassure her. These tender gestures and even the fact of Hektor’s continuing

conversation (he talks to her longer than he has spoken to anyone) confirm his own statements about this relationship being his most valued. His speech acknowledges his death, which both of them have been speaking about: he tries to reassure her, that he will only die when it is fated and that everyone must die anyway (6.487–9). Hektor tells Andromache to go home, do her work. He will go to the battlefield, do his (6.490–3). The ‘problem’ of Hektor seeing her one last time because he might die, which he proposed at 6.364–8, resolves. Life goes on, as it must, until it does not. Hektor puts his helmet back on (6.494f.). Now all that remains is the other part of his last ‘mission’ that he expressed to Helen (6.361f.): he must return to his men.

The narrator leaves Hektor, for the first time since the women went to the temple (6.312, over ten minutes ago), and the audience attaches instead to Andromache, who keeps looking backwards at Hektor as she returns to his home, the home of ‘man-slaughtering’ Hektor (6.498). Like Andromache’s lamenting on the wall when the narrator first showed her (6.372f.), when she gets home the women raise the lament for Hektor while he is still alive (6.500–2). The narrator identifies him as a killer; the women lament him for being killed. These two are linked, and in switching alignment to Andromache and the household women, the narrative invites the audience to join in the lament for a man it has been following around, meeting the ones who love him. This invitation presents quite a powerful possibility for a break, with two of Hektor’s three missions ‘accomplished’, leaving the audience to linger on the doomed, fragile beauty of Hektor’s family.