

In a well known ambiguity, Achilles responds to Odysseus' speech in the embassy by saying "as hateful (*ekhthros*) to me as the gates of Hades is the man who hides one thing in his thoughts, but says another." Some commentators argue that Achilles means Odysseus, others that he targets Agamemnon. Nagy in particular maintains that he intends Odysseus (*Best of the Achaeans* 1979: 42-58, *Homeric Responses* 2003: 50-5). But there are problems with Nagy's argument. By adducing parallels, and noting the *Iliad's* specific deployment of the word *ekhthros*, we remove the ambiguity.

Noting the *Odyssey's* mention of a quarrel between Odysseus and Akhilleus (8.75), Nagy aligns it with "the baneful *neikos* between Agamemnon and Achilles in *Iliad* 1" (1979: 22). But the *Iliad* does not use *neikos* for the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, but *eris* (1.8, 1.177, 1.210, 1.277, 1.319, etc.). A *neikos* between Odysseus and Achilles makes sense within the *Odyssey*, thematically introducing the tension that both the narrator (8.158) and Alkinoos (8.239) characterize as *neikos*, which the rude Euryalos initiates against Odysseus only eighty lines later. There is no evidence that it alludes to events in the *Iliad*.

Odysseus has a thematic function in the *Iliad* as diplomat, leading missions in which he speaks for Agamemnon, or the Greek cause, rather than his own agenda. B. Hainsworth notes (1993: 81), "Diplomatic business in the *Iliad* is conducted by Odysseus alone." Achilles himself witnessed an earlier instance (11.766-89). In book 1 when Agamemnon sends the heralds Eurybates and Talthibios, Achilles is well aware that he ordered them, and is not angry with them, "Welcome, heralds . . . you are not at all to blame in my eyes, but Agamemnon" (1.334-35). He would know that in the embassy Odysseus serves as diplomat for Agamemnon, not himself.

Commentators downplay Achilles' hospitality in book 9. When the delegation arrives Achilles greets them with exemplary hospitality, parallel to his greeting in book 1, "Welcome . . . these are my dearest Akhaian friends, even in my anger" (9.197-98). As in book 1, Achilles makes it clear that, though angry, his anger is not directed at the delegation. As Heiden notes (2002: 431-44), if Achilles does target Odysseus with his remark, he not only violates hospitality, entirely out of character, but Achilles himself, having greeted Odysseus as "dear friend," falls under his own classification, the hateful man who says one thing but means another. Is Achilles such a hypocrite?

When he exclaims, "For as hateful (*ἐχθρός*) to me as the gates of Death is he / who hides one thing in his heart, but speaks another" (9.312-13), he depicts Agamemnon (9.344: "he has deceived me"). Achilles is the only character who uses the word *ekhthros*, always line initial. Sixty-six lines later he uses it again in the same speech, "hateful (*ἐχθρᾶ*) to me are his gifts" (9.378), clearly of Agamemnon. In book 16 he repeats it, "the voice of the son of Atreus, speaking from / his hateful (*ἐχθρῆς*) head" (16.76-77), again clearly of Agamemnon. The only other occurrence in the *Iliad* is the passage in question (9.312). In the *Iliad* *ekhthros* designates Agamemnon as object of Achilles' wrath, the poem's chief theme.