

SPACE, TIME AND REMEMBERING IN THE ORCHARD OF LAERTES: A COGNITIVE APPROACH¹

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Introduction - Laertes and his *Lístron*

Λιστρεύοντα φυτόν

Rhapsody xxiv of the *Odyssey* is (or at least it contains) the short epic of Laertes. He is finally introduced — after having been much talked about² — and presented firstly as a father, but also as an old king, indeed still capable to act as an effective warrior³. More than this, he is pictured as a skilled farmer and, most important for this study, he is the terraced orchard caretaker: he shows up just there where the luxuriant fruit trees he once gifted to his only child live and prosper after so many years, their roots so steady as Odysseus's desire to accomplish his *nóstos*. So, we encounter old Laertes at *Od.* xxiv 226: like Odysseus, he enters his own epic in accusative form, for his beloved son, after looking in vain for Dolios, “finds [him], alone” (τὸν δ' οἶον [...] εὔρεν). Line 226 is geometrically construed with the verb εὔρεν at its middle, dividing two adjective-noun couples:

τὸν δ' οἶον πατέρ' εὔρεν ἐϋκτιμένη⁴ ἐν ἀλωφῆ

but he found his father, alone in the well-tilled orchard [...]

Od. xxiv 226.

¹ When I mention cognitive science, I do not refer to classical cognitive science, characterised by an association with the computational theory of mind and represented by the Chomskian-Fodorian tradition, nor, to use Mark Rowlands's expression, to “*Cartesian cognitive science* (Rowlands 2010: 2; author's italics – here and in following passages)”, that is an approach assuming that mental processes and, more in general, all the machinery of mind occur inside the head of the (human) thinking organism. I explicitly adopt here the so-called *4e* conception of the mind, according to which “mental processes are (1) *embodied*, (2) *embedded*, (3) *enacted*, and (4) *extended* [...] The idea that mental processes are *embodied* is, very roughly, the idea that they are partly constituted by, partly made up of, wider (i.e., extraneural) bodily structures and processes. The idea that mental processes are *embedded* is, again roughly, the idea that mental processes have been designed to function only in tandem with certain environment that lies outside the brain of the subject. In the absence of the right environmental *scaffolding*, mental processes cannot do what they are supposed to do, or can only do what they are supposed to do less than optimally. The idea that mental processes are *enacted* is the idea that they are made up not just of neural processes but also of things that the organism *does* more generally – that they are constituted in part by the ways in which an organism acts on the world and the ways in which world, as a result, acts back on that organism. The idea that mental processes are *extended* is the idea that they are not located exclusively inside an organism's head but extend out, in various ways, into the organism's environment (Rowlands 2010: 2).” Such views of cognition are epitomised by Barnier & alii as follows: “Paradigms in which human cognition is conceptualised as “embedded”, “distributed”, or “extended” have arisen in different areas of the cognitive sciences in the past 20 years. These paradigms share the idea that human cognitive processing is sometimes, perhaps even typically, hybrid in character: it spans not only the embodied brain and central nervous system, but also the environment with its social or technological resources (Barnier & alii 2007: 33).” Also, I partly owe my approach, situated at the intersection of literary studies, narrative theory and cognitive science, to the ‘transdisciplinary’ framework proposed by David Herman (2013; 2013b), who intends to promote a sort of “cross-fertilisation” between research on narrative and mind.

² Cf. *Od.* i 187-193, 430; ii 99; iv 111, 555, 738; viii 18; ix 505, 531; xi 187-196; xiv 9, 173, 451; xv 353, 483; xvi 118, 138-145, 302; xix 144; xxii 185, 191, 336; xxiv 134, 192, 206-207. It is noticeable that in the ‘concurrent’ Iliadic tradition Laertes survives only in Odysseus's patronymic (cf. *Il.* II 173; III 200; IV 358; VIII 93; IX 308, 624; X 144; XXIII 723): his ‘place’ as acting character is not at Troy, but at Ithaca.

³ Cf. *Od.* xxiv 521-524. The old king's final restoration and the killing of Eupheithes are discussed by Ruth Scodel in relation with the Ithacan narrative and the role of the gods in the episode: “The sequence is thus exceptionally clear. Odysseus completely fails to provoke his father into behaving as his parentage and standing demand, but after the recognition, with Athena's intervention, Laertes quickly begins to act as a hero. Furthermore, the gods intervene to end the battle very much as Odysseus implies they will intervene to help him when he first plans the killing of the suitors. If the removal of the arms seemed designed to make the audience expect more direct intervention by the gods than the narrative finally presents, in the last episodes, the role of the gods could hardly be more emphatic (1998: 15).” Scodel thinks that Odysseus's elaborate lie to his father is “aimed at provoking a heroic response (p. 14).”

⁴ According to LSJ the adjective ἐϋκτιμένος is used to describe “anything on which man's labour has been bestowed:” it qualifies cities, islands, threshing floors and, obviously, orchards. The landscape surrounding Odysseus and Laertes, and ‘scaffolding’ their spatial and diachronical relation, is not purely ornamental or even external with regard to human presence: on the contrary, as I shall try to demonstrate, vegetal entities, natural space and human beings moving through it are parts of an interacting and relational system.

Odysseus, Laertes and the orchard emerge at one point as the (not only grammatically) related characters⁵ of this last and crucial episode. In particular, Laertes and the Orchard (in capitals, as a character and cognitive agent) have a tight and mutually dependent relationship: the old farmer cares for the plants, grows and maintains them, and the plants, in turn, keep Laertes active and busy, though permitting him to rest and be refreshed⁶ in their natural embrace. The agricultural landscape, which is unequivocally foregrounded after the Odyssean scene is moved from Ades to Ithaca⁷, is the stage on which this reciprocal relationship is enacted: old Laertes is toiling in the fields as we could expect after what has been said previously⁸, when he is portrayed constantly grieving and longing for his son while hard working in his vineyard, living like the slaves in the farmhouse. Odysseus, then, finds Laertes plowing, or, better, breaking ground for a plant with a tool, λιστρεύοντα φυτόν (xxiv 227): the verb λιστρεύω – a *hapax* which received a fair amount of attention from ancient scholarship⁹ – is a derivative of the word λίστρον, meaning a tool for levelling, smoothing or breaking ground, whose etymology is unclear¹⁰.

The tool used by Laertes will presently be the entry point for addressing my argumentation devoted to peculiar aspects of Odyssean space-time and remembering, as they come up in this episode. To begin the analysis of *Odyssey* xxiv 226-348, and as theoretical framework for the following discussion, I shall recall some current concepts in anthropology, cognitive science and neuroscience concerning tools and the use of tools in relation with the human brain, the human body and the space surrounding it.

⁵ In the following discussion, it may seem that I apply mind reading, or ‘Theory of Mind’ ability (that is, assuming and attributing particular mental states to others) in explaining Odysseus’s and Laertes’s behaviour, as they were real persons and not fictional characters. It is partly true and it is far from being a nonsensical attitude. As Lisa Zunshine explains in her 2006 book about fiction and ‘Theory of Mind’, this posture is precisely what makes literary fiction possible. ‘Theory of Mind’ enables us to engage with narrative and to deal with characters *as they were real persons*: “[...] I can say that by imagining the hidden mental states of fictional characters, by following the readily available representations of such states throughout the narrative, and by comparing our interpretation of what the given character must be feeling at a given moment with what we assume could be the author’s own interpretation, we deliver a rich stimulation to the cognitive adaptations constituting our Theory of Mind (p. 25).” Discussing the “illusion” that there is much more to fictional characters than meets the reader’s eye on the page, Sunshine writes: “Our Theory of Mind allows us to make sense of fictional characters by investing them with an inexhaustible repertoire of states of mind, but the price that this arrangement may extract from us is that we begin to feel that fictional people do indeed have an inexhaustible repertoire of states of mind (p. 20).” In the field of cognitive psychology, Jerome Bruner discusses more broadly the relationship between narrative and reality, narrative fiction and narrative truth: “There seems indeed to be some sense in which narrative, rather than referring to “reality,” may in fact create or constitute it, as when “fiction” creates a “world” of its own—Joyce’s “Dublin” where places like St. Stephen’s Green or Grafton Street, for all that they bear familiar labels, *are no less real or imaginary than the characters he invents to inhabit them*. In a perhaps deeper sense, indeed, it may be that the plights and the intentional states depicted in “successful” fiction sensitize us to experience our own lives in ways to match: which suggests, of course, that the distinction between narrative fiction and narrative truth is nowhere nearly as obvious as common sense and usage would have us believe [my italics] (1991: 13).” On characters and fictional worlds, see also Eder & alii 2010, in particular pp.11-16; the authors invoke an “ontological incompleteness” to distinguish fictional characters from real people: “If we conceive of characters as beings in fictional worlds, to which the audience ascribes intentionality or action, we must ask what precisely the difference between characters and real persons is. The differences concern especially the textual construction and fictional representation of characters, their ontological incompleteness, and, in connection with that, the difference between the audience’s knowledge about characters on the one hand and about persons on the other [...] Readers, listeners, or viewers focus on media text, activate media knowledge and communication rules, they cannot interact with the represented persons but can think about their meaning, as well as about causes and effects (p.11).”

⁶ Cf. *Od.* i 190-193.

⁷ Cf. *Od.* xxiv 203-207.

⁸ No less than Mentēs-Athena informs us in detail at *Od.* i 187-193; the goddess’ words are pathetically amplified by Antikleia at xi 187-196; according to Eumaios, the state of affairs even worsened after Telemachos’s departure from Ithaca (xvi 137-145).

⁹ Apollonius *LH* 108.34 explains λιστρεύω with ζύω (λιστεύοντα ἀντί τοῦ περιζύοντα), as also Pseudo-Zonaras does (*Lexicon* lambda 1313 19: λιστρεύω. τὸ ζύω). The same is to read in Eustathius, who, commenting line 227, write as follows: λιστρεύειν δὲ τὸ περιζύειν παρὰ τὸ λίστρον, ὃ ἐστὶ ζύστρον, περὶ οὗ καὶ αὐτοῦ προέγραπται. αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ, λιστρεύειν φυτόν, ὁμοίον ἐστὶ τῷ, φυτόν ἀμφιλαχίαιεν· καὶ γὰρ ὁ λιστρεύων φυτόν ὁρᾷται καὶ ὁ λαχίαιων φυτόν, ἐπεὶ λαχίαιεν ταυτὸν ἐστὶ τῷ διασκάπτειν [...] *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 2.320.34-36. Περιζύειν and περισκάπτειν are the glosses proposed by Q and V scholia and Hesychius as well (lambda 1132.1: λιστρεύοντα· ζύοντα. περισκάπτοντα).

¹⁰ See Chantraine 1977: 644. Hesychius proposes a series of synonyms for the rare word: ζυστήρ. σκαφίον. πτόν σιδηροῦν. ὁμάλιστρον. ἔνιοι ἔδαφιστήριον (lambda 1131.1); Eustathius (2.320.34) and Pseudo-Zonaras (lambda 1312.8) have the form ζύστρον. The choice of the V scholia (*ad Od.* xxii 455) is ζυστήρ.

Experimental studies suggest that humans extend their internal representation of peripersonal space – defined as the space immediately surrounding our bodies, where objects can be grabbed and manipulated¹¹ – to “include” a tool¹² (such as sticks or rakes) which they are using; moreover, researchers have experimentally ascertained that when we use a tool, even for just a few minutes, it changes the way our brain represents the size and extension of our body¹³, the tool becoming a part of what is known in psychology and neuroscience as body schema¹⁴. I would like to mention here the famous blind man’s stick (BMS) example, as re-formulated by Gregory Bateson in his *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, when the anthropologist is considering the relationship between the stick and the blind man’s perceptual and motor apparatus:

Consider a blind man with a stick. Where does the blind man's self begin? At the tip of the stick? At the handle of the stick? Or at some point halfway up the stick? These questions are nonsense, because the stick is a pathway along which differences are transmitted under transformation, so that to draw a delimiting line across this pathway is to cut off a part of the systemic circuit which determines the blind man's locomotion.¹⁵

The example, introduced in literature by Henry Head¹⁶ and frequently cited since then, has been used by Merleau-Ponty to explain how a stick, under certain circumstances, becomes an extension of the body, an extrasensory organ that significantly extends the scope and radius of the blind man’s touch, that is his ‘tactile’ peripersonal space and, thus, his capacity of ‘tactile’ sight.¹⁷

To conclude these preliminary remarks, I have to make clear that I do not intend to interpret a key episode of the *Odyssey* strictly through cognitive science hypotheses or anthropological and philosophical contemporary thinking; rather, I am taking that *bricoleur* attitude to which Bjørnar Olsen refers in his book *In Defence of Things*, when defending his methodological approach: “I have tried to let myself be guided by the declared *bricoleur* attitude, searching around for usable bits and pieces that may be reassembled with other appropriate spare parts (2013: 151).”

As a matter of fact, the text of the *Odyssey* tends to describe the relationship between Laertes and his land not only as positive and life-sustaining, but also as complex and, at least initially and in part, difficult ([...] κτεάτισσεν, ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὰ μόγησεν “won with

¹¹ See Holmes and Spence 2004: 94: “Peripersonal space is defined as the space immediately surrounding our bodies [...] Objects within peripersonal space can be grasped and manipulated; objects located beyond this space (in what is often termed ‘extrapersonal space’) cannot normally be reached without moving toward them, or else their movement toward us [...] It makes sense, then, that the brain should represent objects situated in peripersonal space differently from those in extrapersonal space.”

¹² See Holmes 2012: 273: “The fascinating idea that tools become extensions of our body appears in artistic, literary, philosophical, and scientific works alike. In the last 15 years, this idea has been reframed into several related hypotheses, one of which states that tool use extends the neural representation of the multisensory space immediately surrounding the hands (variously termed peripersonal space, peri-hand space, peri-cutaneous space, action space, or near space). This and related hypotheses have been tested extensively in the cognitive neurosciences, with evidence from molecular, neurophysiological, neuroimaging, neuropsychological, and behavioural fields.”

¹³ See Martel & alii 2016. The authors discuss at length evidence for tool-use exerting modifications on the sensorimotor system and plastic changes at the level of the body representation used by the brain to control our movements, i.e., the body schema.

¹⁴ For a brief definition of ‘body schema’ see Martel & alii 2016: 5: “[T]he B[ody] S[chema] has come to a relatively consensual definition: a highly plastic representation of the body parts, in terms of posture, shape, and size, that can be used to execute or imagine executing movements accurately.” On the complex relation between peripersonal space and body schema, see Cardinali & alii 2009.

¹⁵ Bateson 1972: 324.

¹⁶ See Head: 1920. The neurologist Henry Head was among the first to systematically study bodily perception or body schema: he hypothesized that spatial perceptions of the body are achieved through central integration of incoming afferent information from the periphery. Studying phantom limb cases, he described how a stick became a projection of the user’s body — a ‘reverse’ phantom limb.

¹⁷ “The blind man’s stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and the active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 143).”

plenty of struggle” xxiv 207) or potentially dangerous; several parts of Laertes’s body are mentioned, along with the means by which they can be preserved from the intrinsic and ‘natural’ dangers of the agricultural practice:

[...] ῥυπόωντα δὲ ἔστο χιτώνα,
ῥαπτὸν ἀεικέλιον, περὶ δὲ κνήμησι βοείας
κνημίδας ῥαπτὰς δέδετο, γραπτὸς ἀλεείνων,
χειρῖδας τ’ ἐπὶ χερσὶ βάτων ἔνεκ’· αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεῖν
αἰγείην κονέην κεφαλῇ ἔχε, πένθος ἀέζων.

[...] he was wearing a patched,
dirty and unsuitable tunic, and around his shins he had tied
stitched oxhide shin guards to ward against scratches.
His hands had gloves, to protect from thorns,
and he wore a goatskin cap on his head, nourishing his sorrow.

Od. xxiv 226-231.

On the one hand, the specification of the elements belonging to this agricultural *panoplia* is useful to implicitly compare Laertes to the typical Homeric warrior wearing his protective gear (helmet, breastplate, shin guards and shield – Laertes is also wielding an appropriate kind of sword¹⁸, his *lístron*...), both alluding to the future battle scene where the old king, in full battle dress, throws the first spear and kills Eupheithes¹⁹, and drawing attention to the agonistic, risky and potentially painful side of his relationship with the land and the orchard; on the other hand, a contextual mapping of Laertes's own body from head to toe is conducted and displayed through these same elements: Laertes is described and situated in his orchard by the very parts (limbs and tool) that are active and in motion, or steady and safety-ensuring, during the agricultural work. The peculiar role of Laertes's *lístron*, the tool connecting his hand and the well-tilled ground of his orchard is, in neuroscience terminology, to extend his peripersonal space, also establishing a physical bridge between his body and the soil.

Laertes is probably breaking ground for a plant (λίστρεύοντα φυτόν xxiv 227): vegetal life and cultivated space are coupled with human intervention and presence in a way that, as we will see in the following sections, is not occasional and contingent, but systemic and cognitively significant. Anticipating what will be presented in detail later, the point I would make is that the environment may have an active role in driving the cognitive process of remembering, recognition and, more importantly, in establishing ‘the truth’ about the “stranger” (ξείνῃ xxiv 281) and about his identity in the story of the *Odyssey*. Even though the agricultural landscape, where the trees are planted and grow, is actually situated in Laertes’s extrapersonal space, as the use of a tool is capable to transcend (not

¹⁸ For a sword ‘extending’ a Mycenaean’s warrior arm see Malafouris 2008, in particular pp. 115-116: “The argument I intend to make is that material culture (tools for the body) has the ability to change and shape our bodies by transforming and extending the boundaries of our body schema. I should clarify at the outset that the notion of ‘body schema’ does not relate to our beliefs about the body – i.e. ‘body image’ (Campbell 1995) – but to the complicated neuronal action map associated with the dynamic configurations and position of our body in space (Campbell 1995; Gallagher 1995; 2005). As I shall be discussing below the body schema is not a simple percept of the body, but it is closely associated with cortical regions that are important to self recognition and recognition of external objects and entities (Berlucchi and Aglioti 1997: 562). Thus the body schema cuts across the reflexive and pre-reflexive levels of our bodily experience and having a concrete biological basis offer a powerful means for linking neural and cultural plasticity within the general frame of embodied cognition and the Material Engagement approach (Malafouris 2004, 2008b). To explore these ideas from an archaeological perspective I shall be concentrating on the relationship between the Mycenaean body and the Mycenaean sword. Focusing on the early Mycenaean period I shall be arguing that the sword becomes a constitutive part of a new extended cognitive system objectifying a new frame of reference and giving to this frame of reference a privileged access to Mycenaean reality and to the ontology of the Mycenaean self.” On the relation between self, memory and body schema, as it is conceived by neural Darwinism, see Eakin 1999: 20: “[S]elf and memory are emergent, in process, constantly evolving, and both are grounded in the body and the body image [Eakin uses ‘body image’ in the sense of ‘body schema’].”

¹⁹ See above n. 3.

strictly metaphorically) the skin boundary²⁰, that is the boundary between Laertes's limb and his *listron*, the latter is also a bridge to the cultivated ground: Laertes's self and the plants become coupled as environmentally embedded parts of a definite system, the Orchard, in which the returning hero Odysseus will be also dovetailed as an essential and active element in the process of distributed cognition²¹ and shared remembering.

Obviously, I am not going to defend here the status of the Orchard as a *stricto sensu* cognitive system²², nor to check the applicability of Rowlands's criterion of the cognitive for the Orchard (i.e. analytically verify if bodily and/or environmental processes going on within the Orchard fulfil the "Mark of the Cognitive"²³ criterion); rather, I shall content myself with a more 'pragmatic' (or, as I said, a *bricoleur*) approach, knowing that assuming the status of the cognitive for the Orchard is, so far, to beg the question. Nevertheless, I shall try to demonstrate how cognition in the ecology of the Trees does not simply derive from or amounts to a non-structural interplay between 'internal' mind and 'external' world, but it is actually extended and emergent. In the Orchard "[c]ognitive emergence owes as much to the functional layout of the environment as it does to the local interactions of individuals with each other (Lintern 2007: 400)" and with certain physical resources (i.e. the Trees and the scar as embodied exogram²⁴), which act as re-minders and can reveal ontological relationships²⁵. Hence, the cognitive architecture of the Orchard will qualify as an integrated network built on the functional structure of the environment and the individual (extended) minds; similarly, its cognitive capability will be defined and produced by the synchronic and diachronic processual interaction between the constitutive elements of the system itself. Along these lines, the Trees of Laertes will serve as fundamental elements not only to go beyond the old Cartesian dichotomy of *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (or dualism of mind and body) and the vision of mind as

²⁰ On body, flesh and skin in the Homeric epics see Gavrylenko 2012. The author interprets the word *chrós* as 'body without skin': "[...] *chrós* [can be perceived] as a tangible substance that always finds itself not only in a superficial contact with, but also in a profound mixture with, the 'outer' world. This circumstance, too, may explain the absence of the Homeric notion of the human skin if its function is to serve as a barrier, a border, a cover protecting the body from outside influences (p. 490)."

²¹ The classical narrative description of a distributed cognitive system in action is the one by Hutchins (1995), who described the activities of a shipboard navigation team; the author argued that the team, together with navigational artifacts and procedures, is a cognitive system that performs the computations necessary for navigating through enclosed waters.

²² "A cognitive system is a one that performs the cognitive work of knowing, understanding, planning, deciding, problem solving, analyzing, synthesizing, assessing, and judging as they are fully integrated with perceiving and acting [...] Traditionally, we are used to thinking that cognition is an activity of individual minds but from the perspective of distributed cognition, it is a joint activity that is distributed across the members of a work or social group and their artifacts. Cognition is distributed spatially so that diverse artifacts shape cognitive processes. It is also distributed temporally so that products of earlier cognitive processes can shape later cognitive processes (Lintern 2007: 398)."

²³ See Rowlands 2010: 86. In his process-oriented version of extended cognition, Rowlands set out four conditions that are jointly sufficient for a process to count as cognitive. On Rowland's Mark of the Cognitive see also van Holland 2013: 68-73.

²⁴ "[E]xtended M[ind], an offshoot of mainstream functionalist information-processing cognitive science, has been focused in particular on our abilities to hook up with what Merlin Donald calls "exograms" or external symbols, by analogy with the brain's memory traces or "engrams" (Donald 1991, pp. 308-333; 2001, pp. 305-315). These abilities allow us to create and support cognitive profiles quite unlike those of creatures restricted to the brain's biological memories or engrams alone. Among other typical features, Donald points out that exograms last longer than engrams, have greater capacity, are more easily transmissible across media and context, and can be retrieved and manipulated by a greater variety of means (1991, pp. 315-316); so our skilled use of such crafted aids changes both the locus of memory in general and the role of our biological memory within the new larger systems [...] (Sutton 2010: 189-190)" On 'exograms', exographic storage and externalisation of human memory see also Malafouris: 2004. For 'embodied' exograms and the skin as location of exographic storage see Sutton 2009: 80-84.

²⁵ See Lintern 2007: 399: "A distributed cognitive system is one that dynamically reconfigures itself to bring subsystems into functional coordination. Many of the subsystems lie outside individual minds; in distributed cognition, interactions between people as they work with external resources are as important as the processes of individual cognition. Both internal mental activity and external interactions play important roles as do physical resources that reveal relationships and act as reminders. A distributed system that involves many people and diverse artifacts in the performance of cognitive work is therefore properly viewed as a cognitive system. The theory of distributed cognition forces a shift in how we think about the relationship between minds, social interactions and physical resources. Interactions between internal and external processes are complex and unfold over different spatial and time scales and neither internal nor external resources assume privileged status [italics mine]."

substantially disembodied²⁶, thus “mitigating the excessive separation of the human mind from the context of its embeddedness”²⁷, but also to set aside intentionality²⁸, identical thinking and the teleological separation of *nóēsis* and *nóēma*²⁹ as well.

I think that adopting this theoretical framework and methodological approach is further justified (or suggested, indeed) by the fact that, anthropologically and philosophically speaking, concepts emerging from Homeric epics seem to locate themselves away from any dualistic interpretation of self, human nature (in the sense of a mind/body dichotomy) and cognition, for they do not basically show a cohesive conception of both mind and body³⁰, let alone a clean separation (or ideological demarcation) of mind from body and (of this supposed unity³¹) from the larger context; as Lambros Malafouris writes: “for Homer there is no mental part or true self that can be distinguished from the body because the ‘body is indistinguishable from the human whole’. For Homer, the parts of the soul are not of a different kind than the parts of the body (2008b: 1994).”

In addition to being such elements, the Trees are *living things*, with a typical epistemic reality and, according to the philosopher Michael Marder, their own manners of thinking, not fitting into the schema of identitarian thought: “[...] plant-thinking is so closely entwined with its other (i.e., with non-thinking) that it does not maintain an identity as thinking. It rejects the principle of non-contradiction in its content and its form (2013: 164) [...]”³² The Orchard, as a Batesonian eco-mental system³³, has the living *phutá* at the

²⁶ See Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 400-404. Malafouris offers an essential definition of embodied cognition in his cited article: “The general idea behind embodied cognition is quite simple: the body is not as conventionally held, a passive external container of the human mind that has little to do with cognition per se but a constitutive and integral component of the way we think. In other words, the mind does not inhabit the body, it is rather the body that inhabits the mind. The task is not to understand how the body contains the mind, but how the body shapes the mind [...] (2008: 2)”

²⁷ Marder 2013b: 137.

²⁸ Nevertheless, the concept of intentionality is the intuitive assumption at the basis of Theory of Mind and, intended as “disclosing activity,” is the starting point of the final part of Rowlands’s book. Anyway, Rowlands’s intentionality “is not restricted to processes occurring inside the brain (2010: 207).” See also p. 163: “[c]ognition is revealing activity because cognition is intentional. And, ultimately, intentional directedness toward the world is best understood as revealing activity.” A final remark by Rowlands is also useful to shed light on this matter: “There is a pervasive tendency to misunderstand the nature of intentional directedness: to think of it as an essentially inner process [...] Intentional directedness is something we encounter when we turn our attention inward; an object of our inner, introspective engagement [...] Intentional directedness is something we encounter when we turn our attention inward; an object of our inner, introspective engagement [...] But I have argued that we will not find intentional directedness if we turn attention inward; all we can find are objects of this directedness (pp. 218-219).”

²⁹ On this peculiar aspect see Marder 2013: 153: “Above all, the non-intentional is not directed to itself, eschewing the reflex movement of all conscious and critical-theoretical activity that attends to itself while attending to the other. Something of this non-intentionality is present in the plant, which boasts neither a self to which it could return, nor a fixed, determinate goal or purpose that it should fulfill. Although not synonymous with the collapse of meaning, the breakdown of intentionality is a harbinger of the dissolution of the Aristotelian teleology that governed everything Husserl had to say on the subject of the relation between the intending (*nóēsis*) and the intended (*nóēma*). Instead of pursuing a single target, non-intentional consciousness uncontrollably splits and spills out of itself, tending in various directions at once, but always excessively striving toward the other. The plant, on its part, is a living attestation to the crisis of teleology and to the exuberant excess of the living and its meanings, which accords with and perhaps feeds, without ever satisfying, the ethical excess.”

³⁰ On this conception see Phillips & alii 2014; Cairns 2014; Pelliccia 1995. The original argumentation goes back to Snell’s *The Discovery of the Mind* (1953). The apparently fragmented body and self of the Homeric hero is very apt to be conceptualised as and become an extended self, open to be coupled with environmental elements. For a recent contribution on the subject, see also Holmes 2017.

³¹ Michael Clarke, engaging the mind/body dualism in Homeric poems in a well known book (1999), argues that the texts do not allow us to assume the dualistic categories of body and mind, and describes the relationship between mental life and corporeal elements emerging from them rather in terms of unity.

³² See also Marder 2013: 166-167: “What befits the life of a plant in its environment and what shapes plant-thinking, exercised by the plant and its other (that is to say, its milieu) as a single unit, is not the same thing that is appropriate to the integrated thinking of the human being and its life-world, though, due to the role plant-soul in making a shared life possible, one may expect certain overlaps between the two kinds of intellection. It is the exigency of life in the midst of organic nature that such a fit be continually reconfigured, fine-tuned, and readjusted, because immutable and solidified concepts are useful only for orienting us in an environment made entirely of steel and blocks of concrete. Plant-thinking performs this function for the plant, suiting it to its milieu. The issue of environmental justice, conceived in the ancient sense of *dikē* (which, as Heidegger reveals in his reading of Anaximander, names in the same breath a jointure or a juncture), thus delineates the horizons of this thinking, conjoining the plant and its other.”

³³ See Bateson 1972: 484-492 (in particular 489-90); 1979: 89-128.

core of its relational being. The *phutá*, as sessile beings, with their particular ‘being in place’, interact in a specular way with humans and their “transitory”³⁴ here: the non-locomotive and sessile type of plant movement, that is growth, will be of great interpretive importance if compared to Odysseus’s perpetual switching of places, restless motion and polytropic identity, as well to his ‘reversible’, and at times (apparently) blocked, aging³⁵. While *polútropos* Odysseus keeps wandering, the Trees, ‘his’ trees, are always there, or rather ‘here’, as I shall explain presently.

Epic Bodies, Space and Extended Selves

Ἡ τοι ὁ μὲν κατέχων κεφαλῆν φυτὸν ἀμφελάχαινε

The discussion about the relationship between Laertes’s body³⁶ and the space surrounding it, mediated and modulated by the use of the *lístron*, is the basis for introducing the first step in my argumentation, concerning Laertes’s and Odysseus’s selves and minds, as they can be conceptualised in the spatial frame of the Orchard and in the vegetal environment. In this and in the following sections, I shall progressively shift from making the case of Homeric embodied mind and extended self to one of distributed cognition and shared memory. I start here reiterating the famous question at the beginning of Clark and Chalmers’s seminal paper *The Extended Mind* (1998): “Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?” and reformulating it in our terms: how can we consider and analyse the Orchard of Laertes (Laertes’s and Odysseus’s extended selves³⁷ and their activity³⁸, the Trees, the terraces of the *alōē*) as a cognitive system, or better, as a kind of cognitive ecology whose parts are partly human, partly vegetal, and which is more spatially distributed than situated? The *lístron* has been a useful tool for pointing at the indeterminacy of bodily boundaries³⁹ and cognitive extension, as well for stressing the entangled relationship existing between Laertes and his land. It is now to remark how also

³⁴ See Marder 2015: 186.

³⁵ The promise of immortality and never ending youth made by Kalypso appears to be more than that, if we take a closer look to Odysseus’s condition in Ogygia: he is out of time, both linear and narrative, and, in a proper sense, also secluded from spatial continuity with other mortals. The price to pay, then, in our perspective, is to be cut off from his environmental self and to renounce the authentic traits of his identity, never to be re-recognised again as Odysseus.

³⁶ On what she calls the ‘corporeal’ theme, see the cited article by Gavrylenko (2012): “Homeric language possesses a rich vocabulary with regard to the ‘body’ and the ‘corporeal’, and the reader finds a range of diverse terms for ‘body’, none of which match contemporary notions of the human body. Perhaps for this reason, one could say that the notion of the body is beyond Homer’s understanding, a proposition that would be both true and false. The most radical view on the problem could be formulated as being that there is no ‘body’ in the Homeric epics, and there is no ‘not-body’. This briefly summarises research over the last fifty years on the Homeric hero’s ‘not-body’ – psychic processes, (organs of) consciousness, identity, ‘I’, soul, etc. The difficulty of distinguishing between ‘body’ and ‘not-body’ is, in other words, a difficulty of perceiving the difference between the so-called psychic/mental and somatic phenomena ‘within’ the Homeric man. Both are more or less ‘corporeal’/‘physiological’ on the one hand, and ‘mental’ on the other (pp. 481-482).” For a rich examination of this area see also the cited book by Clarke (1999): the author tries to offer an integrated interpretation of the Homeric man and his perception of the self as an indivisible unity of mental and corporeal elements. As for the self in relation with body and environment, one can also recall the closure of Gavrylenko’s paper: “The Homeric poems explicate the condition where the epic body finds itself and which by no means suggests that heroes lack their ‘self’. This is the condition of a mixture, of a mutual penetration of objects and other bodies (p. 500).”

³⁷ Reflecting on environmental rights, Liz McKinnell writes: “[E]nvironmental rights are generally considered to be important only in an instrumental sense. The extended mind hypothesis has the potential to complicate this analysis dramatically. The reason for this is that Clark and Chalmers’ approach blurs the boundaries between what is inside and what is outside. The possibility is raised that it is not merely cognitive processes, but also the self, that is extended. If we accept a psychological or cognitive theory of personal identity, and if my thought processes do not end at the boundary of my skin, this suggests that elements of my self are continuous with my environment (2011: 96-97) [...]”

³⁸ An interesting discussion on the Homeric self in the framework of the ‘extended self’ theory is developed in Malafouris 2008b: 1994-1995. In the words of the author, one could say that Laertes and Odysseus have an “extended acting self (1995).”

³⁹ See Barad 2007: 157.

Odysseus is put on stage *via* his entering the space of Orchard⁴⁰ and by his physical placement, or, better, the placement of his body, under a tree⁴¹:

στάς ἄρ' ὑπὸ βλωθρὴν ὄγγνην κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβε

[...] he stood beneath a tall pear-tree and shed tears.

Od. xxiv 234.

A continuous path is created from the crown of the pear-tree to the soil, where Odysseus's tears fall, bringing also down part of his 'melted' body, according to the Homeric conception of crying and its meaning in relation to bodily fluids and constitution⁴². Odysseus permeates the farmland with his 'liquid' body, blurring the boundaries between himself, *his self*, and the environment: similarly to what happened with Laertes, physical manipulation and contact may hint to a self that extends into the environment, literally leaking⁴³ into it. After catching sight of his father, Odysseus stops and ponders the next move to make in the final accomplishment of his *nóstos*. He stays, perhaps, *a l'ombre* of one of the thirteen pears Laertes gifted him so long ago: the tall tree lends to Odysseus not only its stature⁴⁴ but also its significative location and environmental embeddedness. The hero shy away from straightforwardly embracing and kissing his father: their bodily encounter will be enabled only at a later moment, sustained by the vegetal world and secured by shared remembering of that distant walk across the terraces; instead, he will introduce himself as Eperitos, son of Apheidas, son of Polypemon, a stranger from Alybas who entertained Odysseus four years before⁴⁵, though. Eventually approaching Laertes, 'Eperitos' contrasts right away the well cared orchard with the old man's shabby appearance⁴⁶ and unkempt clothes: Laertes apparently takes care of the *órchatos* but not of himself:

“ὦ γέρον, οὐκ ἀδαημονίη σ' ἔχει ἀμφοιπολεύειν
ὄρχατον, ἀλλ' εὖ τοι κομιδὴ ἔχει, οὐδέ τι πάμπαν,

⁴⁰ Cf. *Od.* xxiv 221.

⁴¹ On the metaphorical value of the pear-tree in the episode see Pucci (citing Henderson 1997)1996: 8: “When our scene begins, Odysseus finds his father alone hoeing around a tree (227): λιστρεύοντα φυτόν. A little later we have again the description of Laertes curved in tending a phuton (242): ἦ τοι ὁ μὲν κατέχων κεφαλὴν φυτὸν ἀμφελάχαινε. And Odysseus, seeing his father in the shameful outfit of a slave and worn out by old age, stops beneath a lofty pear-tree and weeps (234): στάς ἄρ' ὑπὸ βλωθρὴν ὄγγνην κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβε. Henderson is the first one, among the critics I have read, to realize that there is a tight analogy, a metaphor between the tree and the son. He is certainly right and I add only the celebrated simile of Thetis who in *Iliad* XVIII 57 speaks of her son Achilles as of a phyton [sic] [...]”

⁴² On this aspect see again Gavrylenko 2013: 492-493: “Some difficult passages in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* touch upon the corporeal transformations produced by emotions on the body. In particular, the manifestation of the ‘effect of liquefaction’ that results is sometimes found in Homer. When Penelope is listening to the story the stranger tells her about Odysseus, she pours out tears and her body melted (*Od.* 19.204). Somewhat later, Odysseus the stranger, whom Calypso asked earlier not to waste his *aiôn* (*Od.* 5.160–161), persuades Penelope not to waste away her beautiful *chroa*, not to melt her *thumos* weeping so much (*Od.* 19.263–264). *Tékô* is a verb that expresses the corporeal changes of a hero overwhelmed with grief and suffering. In *Od.* 2.376 Telemachus fears that his mother may hurt or dry out (*iaptô*) her beautiful *chroa* crying for him. So Odysseus at Alcinoüs' palace is melting while he listens to the song of Demodocus about the Trojan War (*Od.* 8.521–522). He sheds excessive tears from beneath his brows, and his cheeks are wasted away in grief (*achei phthinuthousi*), just like those of a woman mourning near her dying husband (8.530–531). *Tékô*, *iaptô*, *phthinuthô* describe one and the same process in which the whole body is involved. It is the liquefaction and desiccation that are the result of bodily liquid loss. The body *téketai* – attenuates, decays, liquifies – together with its *thumos* when a hero is seized with grief and pain (*achos, ponos, goos*). Pain may attack the phrenes too, together with a warrior's flesh. Apart from the *thumos* and *phrenes*, the *êtor* (heart) can be ‘consumed’, ‘wasted away’ as well (*Od.* 19.136).”

⁴³ On mind leaking outside its assumed boundaries see Clark 1997: 53: “Mind is a leaky organ, forever escaping its ‘natural’ confines and mingling shamelessly with body and with the world.”

⁴⁴ Priamos speaking: μέϊων μὲν κεφαλῆ Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἀτρεΐδου “He is shorter in stature than Agamemnon, son of Atreus” *Il.* III 193.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Od.* xxiv 304-305.

⁴⁶ So Murnaghan, who explains the difference between the condition of the farm and that of Laertes “as an account of the disjunction between Laertes's true and apparent states that makes his condition similar to a disguise (2011: 21).”

οὐ φυτόν, οὐ σικκῆ, οὐκ ἄμπελος, οὐ μὲν ἐλαίη,
οὐκ ὄγγυνη, οὐ πρασιή τοι ἄνευ κομιδῆς κατὰ κήπον.
ἄλλο δὲ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δὲ μὴ χόλον ἐνθεο θυμῷ·
αὐτόν σ' οὐκ ἀγαθὴ κομιδὴ ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἅμα γήρας
λυγρόν ἔχεις ἀρχμείς τε κακῶς καὶ ἀεικέα ἔσσαι.

“Old man, no lack of skill in caring for gardens
restrains you. You care so well that nothing at all here,
none of the fig-trees, grapevines, hardly an olive,
pear-tree or garden-plot, lacks care in the orchard.
But I will tell you, and don't put pique in your heart now,
you lack good care for yourself. Together with sorry
old age you live in squalor and your clothing is wretched.

Od. xxiv 244-250.

In our line of reasoning, this remark can be translated as follows: Laertes cares more for his spatially ‘extended self’ than for himself, that is, he is more preoccupied for the well being of the *phutá* than for his own personal appearance, even if, as Odysseus makes clear, his physical traits (εἶδος καὶ μέγεθος) are well suited to a proper king (βασιλῆι γὰρ ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας xxiv 253). In fact, while Father and Son entertain a kind of disguised appearance and identity, remaining *de facto* reciprocally un-recognized because of real and ‘verbal’ camouflage, there are external elements (the scar, the trees, the terraced space) that have not changed and that will permit the process of remembering and recognition. In particular, to re-member the past and construct the truth of the present, Odysseus and Laertes need eventually to call upon their once dis-membered limbs, the Trees, and to reactivate the Orchard as a system and *locus* of cognitive articulation: the Trees will be re-articulated as parts of Father and Son’s body, reestablishing their epic embodiment⁴⁷.

To borrow the title of Michael Marder’s paper⁴⁸, the ‘place of the plants’ has not changed because it cannot: the Trees of Laertes have remained⁴⁹ in their unchangeable ‘here’, their sessile nature being essential (counter)part of Odysseus’s unresting movement⁵⁰, as the well-tilled orchard is of Laertes’s sloppy outfit. While the ‘here’ of Odysseus is transient *par excellence*, in fact he experienced and pronounced many: “here” which soon (or relatively soon, think of Ogygia) became ‘over there’⁵¹ — he is doomed to

⁴⁷ It may be helpful to recall here what Guillaumette Bolens has named the “articulate body” logic: according to Bolens, the peculiar embodiment of the Homeric hero should be understood primarily in terms of joints and movement. Accordingly, death is often depicted in the *Iliad* through disrupted joints, tendons and limbs (see Bolens 1999; 2000). In the episode of the Orchard, re-joining the Trees as part of the heroic living body is the key to the final return to life and light, that is *nóstos*, of Odysseus.

⁴⁸ Marder 2015.

⁴⁹ For the Trees as *empeda sēmata* see Bottino (2014). Interestingly, the adjective *empedos* is used to point at the fact that the dead body of Patroclus will not be anyway corrupted by death, it will “remain firm as it always was (αἰεὶ τῷ γ’ ἔσται χρώς ἔμπεδος) *Il.* ix 33.” The Trees are part of an ‘extended’ heroic body that also will escape death, partly at least and through epic, as it is for Patroclus (and Achilles), whose immortalisation is though only alluded to: “[c]hrōs empedos is, thus, a state of body in which flesh does not decay, *oude* [. . .] *chrōs sēpetai* (*Il.* xxiv 414). It’s *sōma aphthoron* (*Scholia D in Homeri Iliadem ad* 19.39) opposed to the living *trōtos chrōs* (Gavrylenko 2012: 499).” The explanation *sōma aphthoron* of the scholia reminds of the *klēos aphthiton* granted by the epics themselves to the dead heroes: also the body of the epics will not be touched by decay as long as they will be sung, bestowing unwithering fame on the heroes.

⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the philosopher argues that also plants, as growing beings, possess their peculiar form of movement: “But why should movement be limited to locomotion? Such a limitation is indeed of a relatively recent mintage. In the Aristotelian universe, “change of place” was but one of four meanings of movement, the other three being growth, decay, and change of state or metamorphosis. Now, plants not only participate in the non-locomotive types of movement but are also, to a great extent, defined by them. The Greek word for “plant” is *phutón*, “a being that grows,” while decay is the underside of all finite growth. Metamorphosis is equally fundamental for vegetal life, as Goethe conveys in his influential botanical monograph, *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (Goethe 2009). There, different plant organs are theorized as a transformed (thickened, rarified, elongated, or condensed) leaf, the original building block of the plant. Of the three types of plant movement, then, I would like to concentrate on growth because it defines the activity in which plants excel the most (Marder 2015: 186).”

⁵¹ See Marder 2015: 186.

leave again, also as re-turned hero: he is *essentially* and inescapably πολύτροπος⁵², “of many turns” — the ‘here’ of the Trees expresses a stable relation to space, to the environment that encompasses (now, and back then did) the interaction of Father and Son. Being together in the place of the Trees also engages basically different time scales and temporalities⁵³, that of the plants, ‘slow’ and seemingly ‘detached’ from events, and that of human consciousness and body. The canonical, Odyssean ‘twenty years’⁵⁴ of war and wanderings are incorporated into the (much) longer life-span of fig, apple and pear trees and grapevines, which ‘stayed’, stuck in their seasonality (ὅπποτε δὴ Διὸς ὦρα ἐπιβρίσειαν ὑπερθεν “whenever Zeus weighed them down in their season” xxiv 344), untouched by the warrior’s deeds and by the wanderer’s sufferings, as well as immune from their caretaker’s grieving, although a solace to it, perhaps.

When all the system elements are put back into place as necessary joints and the donation of the trees is re-played by the same actors, we are faced with the original set of the “sacred ground”⁵⁵ where a pre-Odyssean Odysseus experienced his rite of passage from early, proto-linguistic childhood (ἦτευν σε ἕκαστα παιδνὸς ἐὼν 337-8) to a new stage of linguistic⁵⁶ and computational fluency (ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα [...] ὄγχνας [...] τρεισκαίδεκα [...] δέκα μηλέας [...] συκέας τεσσαράκοντ[α] [...] ὄρχους [...] πεντήκοντα 339-42): as we will see in the next section, the narration of the gifting, performed and learned back then, is remembered and re-enacted (ἔειπες 338, εἶπω 336) or, rather, re-enacted and so remembered in and through the Orchard (κατὰ κήπον

⁵² On this compound see below, notes 119 and 139. Line Hendrikssen, building on Pucci’s reading of πολύτροπος presents Odysseus as a “character of spiral motion.” The definition, albeit not strictly etymologically supported, is attractive as apt to describe the complexity of Odysseus re-turning, both real and metaphorical, circular and centred, in physical and semantical space. On the relation between spiral movement, body-memory and metaphor (the authors argue that body movements executed in the absence of speech may provide the experiential source for multimodal metaphors) see Kolter & alii 2012: 211-212. Daniel Mendelsohn, in his recent book (2017) compares “convoluted” narrative movement of the poem to Odysseus’s “elaborate circlings through space and time:” “[*polytropos*] also refers to the shape of the hero’s motion through space: he is the man who gets where he is going by travelling in circles (pos. 558-560).”

⁵³ If we imagine the scenery and imagine it as a landscape encompassing humans, plants and natural elements, we can put forward Tim Ingold’s vision of the landscape as complex composition of concurrent chronotopes and differentiated, interweaving temporalities: “Like organism and environment, body and landscape are complementary terms: each implies the other, alternately as figure and ground. The forms of the landscape are not, however, prepared in advance for creatures to occupy, nor are the bodily forms of those creatures independently specified in their genetic makeup. Both sets of forms are generated and sustained in and through the processual unfolding of a total field of relations that cuts across the emergent interface between organism and environment (Goodwin 1988). Having regard to its formative properties, we may refer to this process as one of embodiment (1993: 156).”

⁵⁴ *Od.* xxiv 322: ἦλοθον εἰκοστῷ ἔτει ἔς πατρίδα γαῖαν well represents this contraposition / correlation between time and space: the verb, although grammatically linked with the final section of the line (πατρίδα γαῖαν), expresses a notion of movement that ontologically fits better the first εἰκοστῷ ἔτει: Odysseus’s going to war and successive wanderings end when twenty years have passed and he finds himself again in his unmovable homeland, Ithaca. The space of homeland puts an end to the flowing of the ‘twenty years’ time and stabilises the final Odyssean strive to reach it.

⁵⁵ See McNeil 1996: 351: “In Homer’s *Odyssey*, the importance of returning to the sacred ground of tradition by becoming storied is made clear to the hero, Odysseus. In this oral epic poem, the prophet Tiresias tells Odysseus that in order to reach his home and kingdom in Ithaca, he must first descend to the land of the dead to visit his deceased ancestors. Once there, he is immediately surrounded by the spirits of family, friends, and the heroes and heroines of his land, pressing him to hear their stories and to retell them to the living. James Applewhite has compared Odysseus to the poet in that ‘He or she gathers stories out of cultural and personal history: old stories that will be seen in the new form of their retelling. Like Odysseus, the poet learns from the past how to get back home to the present, how to live in it more vitally, how to proceed into the future. When we’ve come to the past as free persons, able to accept and internalize its mighty echo, it can send us along our way, abler and more confident, surer of our mission, and of who we are’ (Applewhite, 1994, p. 44). The idea of preserving ancestral knowledge, while retelling their stories in a way that is meaningful both personally and to the present audience, describes the fundamental nature of all narrative production, and in particular, one of its earliest literary forms, revisionist myth-making”

⁵⁶ On the entrance of Odysseus into language see also Pucci 1996: 5-6. Odysseus pre-linguistic infancy and his ‘ecological’ self, the self cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser deems to operate as the infant affirms himself as the person who is “here in this place, engaged in this particular activity (1988: 386)”, are also implicitly alluded to in the episode.

ἐπισπόμενος, διὰ δ' αὐτῶν ἰκνεύμεσθα 338-9).⁵⁷ If Laertes, daily, and Odysseus, lastly, *returned* ‘there’, the Trees *remained* ‘here’ because ‘there’ is always ‘here’ for their sessile and rooted nature: movement and rootedness, detachment and involvement, planted-ness and movement, narration and practical activity, script and choreography, silence and speech, all contribute to re-membering as recombination of processes developing in the space of the Orchard.

As neuroscience has shown, workings of memory are supported by the same neural areas processing notions of space⁵⁸, so that space and memory are inextricably linked⁵⁹; it is also known that memories can be triggered by special spatial locations facilitating the remembrance of events we have been exposed to sometimes only once. The Homeric text suggests that the gift of the trees is first remembered when Odysseus is back again in the Orchard together with his father, *als ob* this particular event never occurred again to his mind since then. It is not a case that the sign of the trees comes for second, as decisive, intrusive and sudden addition, after the scar⁶⁰, which is less unique and significant; presumably, all older members of the *oikos* knew about it⁶¹:

οὐλήν μὲν πρῶτον τήνδε φράσαι ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
 τὴν ἐν Παρνησῶ μ' ἔλασεν σὺς λευκῶ ὀδόντι
 οἰχόμενον· σὺ δέ με προΐεις καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
 ἐς πατέρ' Ἀυτόλυκον μητρὸς φίλον, ὄφρ' ἂν ἐλοίμην
 δῶρα, τὰ δεῦρο μολῶν μοι ὑπέσχετο καὶ κατένευσεν.
 εἰ δ' ἄγε τοι καὶ δένδρε' εὐκτιμένην κατ' ἄλωϊν
 εἶπω, ἃ μοί ποτ' ἔδωκας, ἐγὼ δ' ἤτευν σε ἕκαστα
 παιδνός ἐών, κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος· διὰ δ' αὐτῶν
 ἰκνεύμεσθα, σὺ δ' ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα.

Well, first look here: see with your own eyes the scar
 that a boar gave me with his white tusk, on Parnesos, when I went there.
 You and my honoured mother had sent me to mother's
 well-loved father, Autolykos, so that I could take on

⁵⁷ We should not neglect the growing literature about the emergence of language from interactions among different agents: see Hutchins 2010: 711 and Hutchins & Johnson 2009. Similarly, the relational and environmental aspect of remembering is more and more present in memory studies: “Remembering is an active process which occurs in time and over time. Our memory abilities in a sense soak in from the sociocultural world in which we develop, rather than unfolding in any biologically-determined maturational pattern: in specific (and culturally variable) narrative environments, caregivers and children gradually establish abilities for joint attention to past events, in ways which profoundly sculpt the child's later capacities for spontaneous recall (Sutton 2015: 426).”

⁵⁸ See Groh 2014: 2699: “Not only is memory an integral part of building a sense of space, but space in turn serves as a kind of filing system for storing and accessing memories. And the brain's memory-space connection relies on shared neural infrastructure.”

⁵⁹ “Much of what we remember has a spatial component to it [...] Memories that are not spatial may still be indexed by the spatial location that the original event occurred in (Groh 2014: 2823).”

⁶⁰ The gifted trees are thematically evoked by the “gifts” Odysseus went to collect from Autolykos (δῶρα [...] ἔδωκας): for the fundamental role of gifting and gift-exchange in the episode see below, in particular pp. 15-16 and 23-24.

⁶¹ On the knowledge of the scar, see Catalin 2014. The scar is here a kind of ‘negative’ sign, because the recognition it triggers (cf. *Od.* xix 392-475) has to be silenced and the sign itself has to be immediately occulted as soon as Eurykleia rediscovers the well-known trace on his master's leg, above the knee — the scar is mentioned three more times in the *Odyssey*: at xxii 205–227, when showed to Eumaios and Philoitios; at xxiii 70–79, when Eurykleia tells Penelope that she recognised Odysseus by this sign; and, lastly, at xxiv 327–335 when Odysseus shows the scar to Laertes. It is not secondary for our analysis that Eurykleia re-cognises Odysseus not only at the mere sight of the scar, but, notably, when she touches it (τὴν γρηῖς χεῖρεςσι καταπρινέσσει λαβοῦσα / γῶ δ' ἔπιμασσαμένη xix 467-8): it is a clear case of bodily memory: Eurykleia remembers how she felt the scar under her finger's skin as she experiences the sensation again, doing again what she usually did before Odysseus's departure. As in the case of the Orchard, re-cognition has an essential ‘embodied’ and relational dimension, crucially happening when the same act, washing Odysseus's legs by Eurykleia, is reenacted. Washing was a fundamental and ritual element in the guest reception; the place for it was the interior of the house, where it is performed for Aithon/Odysseus. So, the scar, Eurykleia and Odysseus interact in a cognitive system (call it the House?) as Odysseus Laertes and the Trees do in the Orchard. The fundamental difference is that in the first case cognition *has not to happen*. Still on the themes of identity and recognition, the wound inflicted on Odysseus by the wild boar can be curiously paralleled by the severe leg injury the neurologist Oliver Sacks sustained fleeing from a white bull: he experienced a loss of feeling in the leg and a sense of alienation from the limb and, in the *Afterword* (1993) to the second edition of his well known book describing the facts (1984), referred that the incident disrupted his body image and, thus, his sense of identity.

gifts he had promised the time he came here and said so.
Yes, and I will also tell you the trees in your well-tilled
orchard you gave me once when I asked about each one,
trailing along as a child. We walked through this very
grove and you named them all, you told me about each one.

Od. xxiv 331-339.

The sign of the Trees is known only to (and its memory is shared by) Laertes and Odysseus (ἐγὼ, σὺ), indeed the Odysseus who is back ‘here’ (κατ’ ἀλωήν), and who had presumably not yet reminisced about the gift during the past ‘twenty years’. Bodily presence across the terraces is then necessary to remember, because, in some way, *it* is the remembering⁶², as I shall discuss later.

To further understand how bodies and trees construct and share this cognitive space is necessary to go beyond the “ontological regime of dualities and negativities (Olsen 2010: 9):” humans and plants in the Orchard are non-oppositional, their specific difference in nature (sessile *vs* motile) and temporality (non-event-related *vs* event-related) contributes to the constitution of that particular system, that cognitive *ecology* which will entail recognition and, on a narrative level, will bring to closure the story of the *Odyssey*, once the identity of the returning hero is eventually stabilised.

The Cognitive Ecology⁶³ of the Trees Ἴκνεύμεσθα, σὺ δ’ ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα

In Edwin Hutchins’s words, I shall now briefly analyse the Orchard as “the locus of knowledge”⁶⁴, where knowledge does not amount to what an individual knows, but to what can be accomplished within an active cognitive environment. This environment, the Orchard, may be viewed, still in Hutchins’ terms, as a cognitive ecosystem, in which cognition emerges from the active interaction of elements⁶⁵ (biological and environmental) and is qualified as distributed⁶⁶. The particular form of cognition, and

⁶² “If we were to make a map of areas of the brain that have been shown to play a role in other cognitive functions, such as memory, attention, planning and deciding, we’d find that it would superimpose on top of the sensory/motor map described above [...] Furthermore, areas that have only attention or memory signals have not been found [...] The implication of this overlap between cognition and sensory and motor processing is that perhaps the operations of cognition are implemented at least in part via sensory and motor structures (Groh: 2014: 2895).” “We see memory as the ability of a dynamic system that is folded by selection and exhibits degeneracy to repeat or suppress a mental or physical act (Edelman and Tononi: 2001: pos. 1608).”

⁶³ “Cognitive ecology is the study of cognitive phenomena in context. In particular, it points to the web of mutual dependence among the elements of a cognitive ecosystem (Hutchins 2010: 705).” Distributed cognitive ecologies are “the multidimensional contexts in which we remember, feel, think, sense, communicate, imagine and act, often collaboratively, on the fly, and in rich ongoing interaction with our environments (Tribble & Sutton: 2011: 94).”

⁶⁴ Hutchins 1995: xii.

⁶⁵ “[I]nteractions that define a distributed cognitive system do not occur only among individual human agents but also occur among humans, objects, and materials of various sorts. The common idea about space and the environment as a static external resource devoid of agency comes under question (Malafouris 2013: 79).”

⁶⁶ The concept of ‘cognitive ecosystem’ is linked by David Herman to narratological tradition: forms of narrative correspond to particular “exploratory processes” in making sense of the world through stories. This ‘narratological ecosystem’ conceptualisation explains narrative as a human act in the exploration of the world and as a cognitive resource for making sense of it: “[S]tories provide crucial resources for making sense of what goes on in terms of persons’ interconnected reasons for acting within complex, dynamically evolving social and material environments (2013: 16).” For a cross-disciplinary approach to storytelling, encompassing both evolutionary and narratological perspective see also Sibierska 2017.

distribution of cognition, we are interested in here is memory⁶⁷. At the end of the re-enacted walk across the terraces mutual re-cognition between Father and Son will be factually realised, for only the two of them could possibly retrace their own footsteps in rehearsal, performing again the same movements, uttering and hearing the same words, computing the same trees, all in the same populated space that afforded and affords numbers and rhythms, names and relations, vehicle and contents⁶⁸ of memory. This agricultural space is the final destination of Odysseus the sailor⁶⁹, and it is enucleated as the focus of attention from the very beginning of the episode:

ὡς εἰπὼν δμῶεσσιν ἀρήϊα τεύχε' ἔδωκεν.
οἱ μὲν ἔπειτα δόμονδε θοῶς κίον, αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
ἄσσον Ἴεν πολυκάρπου ἀλωῆς πειρητίζων.

He stopped and gave his War-God tools to the two slaves
who walked in the house at once. However Odysseus
walked in the fruit-filled orchard to search.

Od. xxiv 219-221.

The ἀλωή⁷⁰ is singled out as the spot where Odysseus is going to meet his father, and no-one else:

οὐδ' εὔρεν Δολίον, μέγαν ὄρχατον ἐσκαταβαίνων,
οὐδέ τινα δμῶων οὐδ' υἴων· ἀλλ' ἄρα τοί γε
αἵμασιὰς λέζοντες ἀλωῆς ἔμμεναι ἔρκος
ῶχοντ', αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσι γέρων ὁδὸν ἠγεμόνευε.
τὸν δ' οἶον πατέρ' εὔρεν εὐκτιμένη ἐν ἀλωῇ [...]

Moving down through the spreading orchard
nor did he find any of Dolios's slaves, nor his children;
that had gone off to gather stones for the vineyard
wall and Dolios, an elderly man, was their leader.
But he found his father, alone in the well-tilled orchard [...]

Od. xxiv 222-226.

As time is concerned, two different references are individuated, and also framed, by εἶπω (xxiv 337) and ἔειπες (339), but, for the object of the verbs is the same in both cases, the Trees that are still 'here' κατ' ἀλωήν, the distance between the two temporal fringes results eventually collapsed into their vegetal physicality. As for the subjects, their past interaction shape and guide the present one. However (and consequently), if the original gift was performed by Laertes and now the subject of εἶπω is Odysseus, numbers and

⁶⁷ In the discussion below, I shall not take into account the distinction, proposed by Russell (1921) following Bergson, between 'true memory', as cognitive and 'habit memory', as non-cognitive. The hypothesis of embodied cognition speaks rather for the contrary, supporting the view that 'true memory' as embodied necessarily implies elements of 'habit memory'. Paul Connerton (1989) sketches briefly Bergson's position before reassessing the fundamental importance of habit memory: "[T]he memory of how to do something is simply the retention of a 'motor mechanism' and [...] this 'habit-memory' is radically different from the recollection of unique events that is 'memory *par excellence*' [...]" (p. 23)" Connerton explains that "[...] a meaningful practice does not coincide with a sign; meaning cannot be reduced to a sign which exists on a separate 'level' outside the immediate sphere of the body's acts. Habit is a knowledge and a remembering in the hands and in the body; and in the cultivation of habit it is our body which 'understands' (p. 95)."

⁶⁸ On content and vehicle externalism see Garcia Rodriguez 2011: 5-7.

⁶⁹ Agricultural landscape and seascape, as well navigational and agricultural tools seem to be enigmatically linked and semiologically interchangeable within Odysseus's history and circumstances: as a most telling example I recall the oar/winnowing shovel of *Od.* xi and xxiii. On the 'winnowing oar' see Nagy 2013: 335-337.

⁷⁰ This 'difficult' word is discussed by Stephanie West in her commentary to *Od.* i 193: "[è] strano che lo stesso termine possa significare "terreno coltivato, vigneto, frutteto", come qui, e "aia". Probabilmente il suo significato era in origine alquanto più generico, sicché esso poteva essere usato per indicare qualsiasi appezzamento di terra non occupato da costruzioni; o forse si tratta di due parole diverse; ne ignoriamo del tutto l'etimologia (Heubeck & West:1981: 219)."

names cannot be exclusively allotted as objects to one or another of the speakers, because the Trees tend to maintain their autonomy in the process of remembering, as we will see in the next section:

εἰ δ' ἄγε τοι καὶ δένδρε' εὐκτιμένην κατ' ἄλωϊν
εἶπω, ἃ μοί ποτ' ἔδωκας, ἐγὼ δ' ἤτευν σε ἕκαστα
παιδνὸς ἐών, κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος· διὰ δ' αὐτῶν
ἰκνεύμεσθα, σὺ δ' ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα.
ὄγγυας μοι δῶκας τρεῖσκαίδεκα καὶ δέκα μηλέας,
συκέας τεσσαράκοντ'· ὄρχους δέ μοι ὧδ' ὀνόμηνας
δώσειν πεντήκοντα [...]

Yes, and I will also tell you the trees in your well-tilled
orchard you gave me once when I asked about each one,
trailing along as a child. We walked through this very
grove and you named them all, you told me about each one.
You gave me thirteen pear-trees and ten apple-trees,
forty fig-trees; then you named
fifty rows in the vineyard for me [...]

Od. xxiv 336-342.

The naming (σὺ δ' ὠνόμασας) of the Trees occurred while Odysseus followed his father's trail (κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος), walking through the fruit-tree grove (διὰ δ' αὐτῶν / ἰκνεύμεσθα). Linguistic and motor skills are equally prominent in the episode⁷¹ and they are difficult to divorce from each other and from the landscape as their performative context: the ordered presence of the trees on the field paces the rhythm of walking and the sequence of the names as well. Numbers lead ultimately to amount of space in the orchard, and to use of space, not only to allocate plantation but also to encode memories. As a consequence, memory does not manifest itself as a cognitive capacity exercised at will: recollective experience is not merely triggered by the environment but supported and enabled by it because the autobiographical memory it entails consists essentially in a performance, participated by and distributed among the elements (movable and rooted) of the system, the Orchard. If walking through the orchard can be equated to a sort of epistemic action⁷², the space of the Orchard allows that cognitive integration that is the basis for distributed cognition: biomemory and extended memory (the pure presence of the Trees, their being 'here') co-operate and complement one another along a pattern of correlation across human and vegetal elements. Cognitive processing does not occur in one of the elements, it is not a 'within' property, it is a "between property"⁷³: remembering emerges as collaborative and distributed, implying "a constitutive intertwining of brains, bodies and things in a specific cultural setting (Malafouris: 2013: 77)."

The supportive role of the environment is clearly to be noticed in Odysseus's words: the Trees he is re-counting are situated κατ' ἄλωϊν (336) and the preposition does not mark only the place where the Trees are planted but also the space across which Father and Son once moved (κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος 338) and are now moving. Laertes's original gift has to be imagined as a didascalic narrative, with the Father naming the Trees

⁷¹ It is useful to report here a passage from the analysis in Vygotsky about the relationship between speech and act in four- and five-year-old children: "Levina posed practical problems for four- and five-year-old children such as obtaining a piece of candy from a cupboard [...]. In such circumstances it seems both natural and necessary for children to speak while they act; in our research we have found that speech not only accompanies practical activity but also plays a specific role in carrying it out (1978: 25)."

⁷² "Epistemic actions — physical actions that make mental computation easier, faster, or more reliable — are external actions that an agent performs to change his or her own computational state (Kirsh & Maglio 1992: 513-14)."

⁷³ Malafouris 2013: 85.

and pointing at them while moving from one spot to another (διὰ δ' αὐτῶν / ἰκνεύμεσθα 338-9), from terrace to terrace⁷⁴, and, by virtue of the sheer numbers⁷⁵, we can infer that it was quite a walk for little Odysseus. The succession of καί and δέ⁷⁶, spacing and isolating the species of fruit trees, is useful to infer also the stops that punctuated the walk, each and every time Laertes orally labeled (ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα 339) a new item. Odysseus's vegetal inheritance is claimed on the same factual basis: from under the fig-tree the hero starts to map again the place, then approaches his father and re-performs the donation (δῶκας 340 [...] δώσειν 342).

An intricate entanglement of sensorimotor activity, linguistic articulation and physical locomotion characterises the episode: in a sense, Laertes and Odysseus rehearse and put again on stage a learned choreography⁷⁷, whose exact steps and passages are known solely to them, who placed and moved their bodies according to it. Shared memory between Father and Son dwells in corporeality and in capacity to gesture as well as in the ability to narrate and re-narrate. Similarly, communication does not reside in the transmittal of positive information but is substantially committed to activities that rely on procedural memory⁷⁸. The succession of the items, their order in the narration, their numerical and physical consistency reproduce and complements the steps of the definite choreography by which Laertes gifted the Trees to his son.

The gestures are reproduced by Odysseus at the closure of his journey, in a sort of inverted perspective, as he reciprocates the gift to his father in a distinctive epistemic stance toward re-collection and re-cognition. The strict requirement Laertes imposed on Eperitos to be accepted finally as Odysseus

(εἰ μὲν δὴ Ὀδυσσεύς γε, ἐμὸς παῖς, εἰλήλουθας,
σημὰ τί μοι νῦν εἰπὲ ἀριφραδές, ὄφρα πεποιθῶ.

if surely you have come as Odysseus, my son,
give me a clear sign so that I can be persuaded.

Od. xxiv 328-9)

⁷⁴ Cf. *Od.* xxiv 222 (μέγαν ὄρχατον ἔσκαταβαίνων “moving down through the spreading orchard”) and *Od.* i 193 (ἐρπύζοντ' ἀνὰ γουόνν ἀλωῆς οἰνοπέδοιο “climbing hard knolls in his wine-bearing orchard”). The text in rhapsody xxiv insists on the preposition κατά (xxiv 247; 336; 338), while the word pointing to terraces is αἶμασιά (xxiv 222). On ancient Greek agricultural terraces, see the fundamental work by Price & Nixon (2005); the authors, discussing the ancient literary and documentary evidence for the existence of terraces bring into play *Odyssey* xxiv: “The earliest meaning of αἶμασιά, as found in Homer, is of stones for building a dry-stone wall. In the last book of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus goes out into the hinterland of Ithaca to find his father. Laertes was alone because the servants had left “to assemble haimasiai which would protect the cultivated land” [...] The activity of “assembling “haimasiai” for agricultural purposes was normal in the Homeric world (p. 2).” On the traditional Mediterranean polycultural landscape see Barbera and Cullotta 2016; on terraced farmland and orchards Rackham & Moody 1992; Ito 2016.

⁷⁵ Presenting the “Yeoman Laertes” Victor Hanson (1999: 86) implies that the numbers cited by Odysseus represent not only the gifted trees, but *all* trees that grow in the orchard: I do not agree with this conclusion, as it would be equal to say that Laertes gifted *all the trees* in his orchard to Odysseus.

⁷⁶ On the “compartmentalizing effect” of this particle see Bonifazi & alii 2016: 2.2.1.

⁷⁷ See Stevens 2003: 299: “Rehearsal and performance of new and complex movement material requires memory for material that is visual, spatial, kinaesthetic, motoric, temporal [...] Thus contemporary dance can be seen as a highly complex instantiation of human cognitive processes — short- and long-term memory, multi-modal imagination, learning, performance, and expressive communication.”

⁷⁸ On communication and procedural memory see Taylor 2008: 328.

is fundamentally satisfied through the ‘cognitive ecology of the Trees’. The mere statement of identity by Odysseus (κεῖνος⁷⁹ μὲν δὴ ὄδ’ αὐτὸς ἐγώ, πάτερ, ὄν σὺ μεταλλᾷς 321) does not win Laertes’s recognition, nor reveal familiar features, such to accommodate ‘twenty year’ older Eperitos’s lineaments to that missed and beloved face of young Odysseus. To ask if and how Laertes at the end recognises his son is not a matter concerning Odysseus’s physical traits, nor come the scar or the sign of the Trees into question as matching data to check out. Re-cognition is the capacity to (re)produce a cognitive act, to remember collaboratively, bodily, and in collusion with the environment. The question to be answered is not: does Laertes finally recognise Odysseus?⁸⁰ because, in the common sense of the expression, the answer should be: he does not — although his son approached him maintaining his natural form and shape from the beginning.

On the contrary, the Homeric text informs us about the physical effects produced on Laertes by his son’s narration: he tries to hug Odysseus, then swoons, σῆματ’ ἀναγνόντος (xxiv 346), without saying a word or calling his son by name (this name remains, in Laertes’s words, preceded by a hypothetical εἰ at line 328). Re-cognition is realised through the resuming of roles as a son and as a father: by the re-enactment of the gift, Laertes is reaffirmed as king while Odysseus postures as legitimate heir of that king, back in his place, that is in the immanent ‘here’ of the Trees at Ithaca. Significantly, these roles turn out to be true in spite of appearance and of verbal clouding, for, in Odysseus words, Laertes, the farmer in rags, does not actually act as a king (even if he resembles to one) and he himself is not the king’s son: what does count is the possibility to reestablish a relation which cannot be equated to a static intellectual achievement. If the verb

⁷⁹ On the peculiar use of κεῖνος in the first four books of the *Odyssey* see Bonifazi 2012: the demonstrative could be a linguistic trace that the absent Odysseus is also a “cognitive landmark” for people in Ithaca. “The absence of the main hero leaves space for telling the stories of other people and other heroes, which ultimately serves to foreground the specific adventures and peculiar story of Odysseus. This latter point bridges the first section of this chapter to the current one. I have argued that Odysseus is a highly accessible referent for the external audience from the very beginning of the poem. In what follows, I will show that he is most present in the mind of the internal audience as well. He is a kind of common cognitive landmark for the people that act in Ithaca during his physical absence. The linguistic trace of that is the demonstrative pronoun (ἐ)κεῖνος, which, curiously enough, is uttered almost exclusively by characters; with only a very few exceptions, κεῖνος is never used by the primary speaking ‘I’, not only in the first four books but also in the rest of the poem. According to Cornish’s model, a distal demonstrative pronoun in English and in French may correspond to a low accessibility of the referent, the knowledge about him/her being located in long-term memory. My analysis of the Homeric uses of κεῖνος will present a picture that is more complex. The need to recall somebody who was not a fully activated referent in the immediately preceding discourse is certainly there. However, further communicative intentions mark the utterance of κεῖνος. In brief, they concern a temporary visual recall of the referent and some social/emotional implications relating to that recall. Furthermore, the repeated use of κεῖνος instead of Odysseus’s name has the effect of creating a cross-referencing mark of identity, which may be consciously exploited by the speakers (as we will see in chapters 2 and 3). As Odysseus’s disguise and recognition proceeds, κεῖνος marks different aspects of the hero and different communicative intentions by the individuals surrounding him. These cognitive and social/emotional implications of the use of such a demonstrative may well explain why the primary speaking ‘I’ avoids its utterance (ch. 1).”

⁸⁰ In framing this discussion, I benefited from medical anthropologist Janelle Taylor’s insights on the problem of individual recognition in dementia. About the question she calls the ‘politics’ of recognition she writes: “Developing philosophical arguments about “the politics of recognition” that might more easily accommodate the predicament of people with dementia will, I suspect, likely require looking for other ways of understanding “selves.” We may need to stop looking only to individuals as the bearers of “selfhood,” and start looking more at how “selfhood” is distributed among networks, sustained by supportive environments, emergent within practices of care. The critique that Ingunn Moser (N.d.) levels at a narrowly biomedical understanding of dementia is, I think, relevant also to political theory, to the extent that it too is premised on a rationalist and individualist understanding of the “self” [...] To address how “recognition” in its narrowly cognitive sense gets implicated in the “politics of recognition” on a broader scale, arguments about the “politics of recognition” must be stretched to encompass what Annemarie Mol terms a “politics of what” (Mol 2003:177). “Recognition” is inseparable from “caring,” and both can be understood as not just the interior emotional or intellectual states of individuals, but as practices, particular forms of activity, at once social, representational, and very concretely material (2008: 326).” Having my thoughts fixed on the *Odyssey*, I was struck by the fact that Taylor’s mother called her many names in the past, and at some point of the illness started to call her “the Stranger”: “Even before she became impaired, however, my mother rarely ever called me Janelle. That was the name she gave me at birth, and it has always been the name I use outside my family, but over the years my Mom gave me many other names as well [...] And now, I am Stranger. One day some months ago, I walked into the activity room of the secure dementia unit where my mother now lives, and found her sitting at a table with three other white-haired ladies and two pretty young aides, playing some version of poker with a set of enormous playing cards. Mom saw me, and a smile slowly spread over her face, as she raised her hand to point at me, and said: “Well, hello there, Stranger!” It’s a name that one would use, of course, only for someone who is very familiar. When she calls me Stranger, I know that I am no stranger to her (315).”

ἀναγνώσκω⁸¹ indicates well knowledge, acknowledging and recognition, this very knowledge is especially gained through perception and experience: exactly what is achieved in the Orchard, where cognition is perceptually-based⁸² and context-dependent⁸³. Laertes and Odysseus stage a “narrative act of remembering (McNeil 1996: 351)” that leads both ‘back then’ and ‘here now’, into one another footsteps, creating a mirror effect that blurs more than it defines their somatic traits.

Remembering Trees
Εἶπω, ἃ μοί ποτ’ ἔδωκας

Laertes and Odysseus, as memory agents, gain their capacity when they rely on the resource of the Trees⁸⁴ and they practice⁸⁵ a type of remembering that is embodied⁸⁶ in actions and mimicry. Doing so, they go beyond autobiographical memory in a weak and in a strong sense: weak, because their memory, although personal, is shared and relational and results from a collaborative performance, staged and reenacted in the space of the Orchard, strong because it is not ‘their’ memory, but a memory emerging from the Orchard as a system of distributed cognition. So, Odysseus can remember and name again the Trees, presumably in the same order⁸⁷, and Laertes can check the computation out and collaborate to the process because the Trees themselves remember, by their sheer, rooted presence: the Trees, whose number and location demarcated the boundaries of the

⁸¹ On this verb, denoting cognition and re-cognition, see the analysis by Barnouw 2004: 261: “[...] the verb *anagnōskein* has the sense, ‘to know for certain, know again’, a sort of recognition.” It follows a discussion on the usage of *gignōskein* and *anagnōskein* in the *Odyssey* for the recognition of a person at pp. 267-68. See also below, n. 84.

⁸² See McNeil 1996: 350: “In oral, or even transitionally oral-literate, cultures, knowledge is perceptually-based and context-dependent, that is, embedded in the human and natural worlds. Anthropologist Jack Goody writes about the three sources of knowledge in oral cultures: pragmatic, primary knowledge from immediate experiences; traditional knowledge transmitted by elders or through ceremonies and ritual (myths, stories); and supernatural, oracular or special knowledge transmitted by ghosts (or ancestors) (Goody, 1982, pp. 210-216). Rituals of initiation, included under the second type, are one of the primary means of transmitting traditional knowledge by combining gestural (dance, dramatic enactment), iconic (figurines, masks and costumes), and oral (mythic narrative) communication.”

⁸³ On human memory’s dependence on the coincidental environmental see also Smith & Vela 2001. The authors’ approach goes along the following lines: introspective thought (e.g., remembering, conceptualizing) requires cognitive resources normally used to represent the immediate environment.

⁸⁴ See Barnier & alii 2008: 33: “Paradigms in which human cognition is conceptualised as “embedded”, “distributed”, or “extended” have arisen in different areas of the cognitive sciences in the past 20 years. These paradigms share the idea that human cognitive processing is sometimes, perhaps even typically, hybrid in character: it spans not only the embodied brain and central nervous system, but also the environment with its social or technological resources.”

⁸⁵ On memory as a practical activity see Sutton 2015: 421-422: “Enactivists about memory rightly stress the practical nature of remembering (Moyal-Sharrock 2013). Wittgenstein notes that ‘If I say, rightly, “I remember it”, the most varied things may happen; perhaps even just that I say it’ (PG 42). Remembering is in general, in most of its forms, an activity, something that we do. Even though involuntary remembering is surprisingly pervasive in everyday life (Berntsen 2009), what happens even in such cases is in principle public and ‘isn’t at all the mental process that one imagines’ (PG 42).” PG stays for *Philosophical Grammar* (1974).

⁸⁶ “Embodied remembering occurs in a social and material world in which objects and other people may support or transform the processes, form and content of memory. If memory is embodied, it is also arguably situated and distributed (Sutton & Williamson 2014: 324).”

⁸⁷ The ‘repetition’ of the past, or rather of the present that was the past, at the core of the episode does not provide for the possibility of “reverse order;” endangering repetitive experience and extension across time through the possibilities of linguistic construction, as described in Penelope Lively’s *Oleander, Jacaranda: A Childhood Perceived* (2006): “We are going by car from Bulaq Dakhrur to Heliopolis. I am in the back. The leather of the seat sticks to my bare legs. We travel along a road lined at either side with oleander and jacaranda trees, alternate splashes of white and blue. I chant, quietly: ‘Jacaranda, oleander... jacaranda, oleander...’ And as I do so there comes to me the revelation that in few hours’ time we shall return by the same route and that I shall pass the same trees, in reverse order — oleander, jacaranda, — and that, by the same token, I can look back upon myself of now, of this moment. I shall be able to think about myself now, thinking this — but it will be then, not now (ch. 1).” In the *Odyssey*, the repetition and the re-instantiation of present is stressed through the modulation εἶπω / ἔειπες, which I discussed earlier and that is also useful to grasp the relational basis of remembering, identity and recognition. The episode from *Oleander, Jacaranda* is amply commented in Paul Eakin’s book (1999) about autobiography and autobiographical writing: “[the author’s] memory of the trip will also be a memory of herself experiencing the trip. Interestingly, these recognitions are generated by her intuition of the spatial/temporal structure of her movement through the flowering trees; “jacaranda, oleander... oleander, jacaranda” — it is this embryonic narrative form that will preserve the present episode for recall later on, “in a few hours’ time” and fifty years later as well as the memoir’s title suggests (p. 105).”

system decades earlier, are ‘here’ not only to facilitate remembering, but to re-instantiate the past as actually present.

As I have said, memory seems to be profoundly connected to spatial navigation and access to memories to be affected by position in space⁸⁸: as soon as Odysseus and Laertes are placed again within the coordinates of the Orchard, walking across the terraces, with Odysseus naming and indicating the trees, re-narrating the story of the gift, recollection takes place not only as psychological experience but as performative reality: the Trees in their living and growing materiality are the key external factor to scaffold⁸⁹ and even to substitute bio-memory.

Despite Odysseus’s words (αἶ κέ μ’ ἐπιγνώη καὶ φράσσεται⁹⁰ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν: “whether he’ll know me now with his own eyes” xxiv 217), it is noticeable that in the *Odyssey* no crucial episode of recognition comes down to mere visual phenomenology, triggered by facial or, more broadly, somatic recollection: again, contrary to Odysseus’s expression (ἦέ κεν ἀγνοῖησι πολλὸν χρόνον ἀμφὶς ἔόντα: “or maybe he’ll fail to. I’ve been gone for a long time” xxiv 218) elapsed time and physiognomic change are not really in question; rather, memory and recognition seem to work on the basis of a different logic in the poem and do not ordinarily depend upon visual appearance — often affected by disguise — or skills, at least when it is Odysseus who has to be re-cognized⁹¹ and mortal humans are cast in the process⁹². For Odysseus approaches his father not in disguise and having his natural traits, Laertes’s episode features a unique case of ‘missed’ recognition. In the next section I shall treat this aspect also from a sort of ‘clinical’ perspective, when dealing with Odysseus’s identity; now, I am interested in showing how the Trees uphold the past as trace of an absent present⁹³, enabling memory and recognition by their material capacity.

The very presence of the Trees invites Father and Son to play again the part they once played, it cues the spatial knowledge that helped them to navigate the agricultural space

⁸⁸ See Bisiach and Luzzatti 1978. The researchers studied how patients affected by hemineglect deficit, or hemispatial neglect (a syndrome resulting from lesions of right parietal cortex and leading to an unawareness or unresponsiveness to objects, or people in the left side of space) relate themselves to spatial locations: they demonstrated that the deficit involves also remembered items and their spatial reference frame.

⁸⁹ Discussing social origins of mediated memory Vygotsky writes: “Even such comparatively simple operations as tying a knot or marking a stick as a reminder change the psychological structure of the memory process. They extend the operation of memory beyond the biological dimensions of the human nervous system and permit it to incorporate artificial, or self-generated, stimuli, which we call *signs*. This merger, unique to human beings, signifies an entirely new form of behaviour (1978: 39).”

⁹⁰ On φράζω and φράζομαι see Barnouw 2004: 269-70.

⁹¹ At *Od.* xxiv 257-8 Odysseus himself apparently wonders “wether he’ll know me now with his own eyes. / Or maybe he’ll fail to. I’ve been gone for a long time (αἶ κέ μ’ ἐπιγνώη καὶ φράσσεται ὀφθαλμοῖσιν, ἦέ κεν ἀγνοῖησι πολλὸν χρόνον ἀμφὶς ἔόντα.)” Laertes will not recognise Odysseus with his own eyes: Odysseus will actually try to deceive his father, succeeding in it. Indeed, Laertes does not recognise his son even after the verbal disclosure of his identity, and asks for a “sign (σημα xxiv 329).” Laertes then re-cognizes the *sēmata*, not Odysseus’s physiognomic traits. On the ‘cognitive’ value of *sēma* and its relation with *nóēsis* see Nagy 1990: 202-22. For *sēma* and recognition in the *Odyssey* see in particular p. 203: “It seems easiest to begin with illustrations of *sēma* as the key to a specific aspect of cognition, namely, recognition. Homeric diction deploys *sēma* as the conventional word for the signs that lead to the recognition of Odysseus by his *philoī*, those who are ‘near and dear’ to him. Thus, for example, the scar of the disguised Odysseus is specified by him as a *sēma* for his old nurse Eurycleia (*Odyssey* xxiii 73), for his loyal herdsmen Eumaios and Philoitos (xxi 217), and for his aged father Laertes (xxiv 329). An appropriate word for the ‘recognition’ of this *sēma* is the verb *anagignōskō* (ἀναγνόντος xxiv 329, in the case of Laertes). The same verb recurs in the context of Penelope’s ‘recognizing’ (ἀναγνοῦσθι xxiii 206) the *sēmata* (plural, same line) specified by the disguised Odysseus as the clothes given to the real Odysseus by Penelope herself (that the clothes are the *sēma* is confirmed at xix 255-257).”

⁹² The case of “immediate recognition (Louden 2011: 80-81)” by Argos (cf. *Od.* xvii 290-327) and the divine capacity of Athena (cf. xiii 287-310) are out of question here: in fact, both incidents are witness of different levels of cognition and recognition. It is meaningful that in the episode of rhapsody xiii Odysseus acknowledges his initial inability, as a mortal, to recognise a disguised Athena (ἀργαλέον σε, θεά, γῶνα βροτῶ ἀντιάσαντι xiii 312). Before being again active part of his native environment, Odysseus is unable to recognise his surroundings when he first perceives Ithaca, its landscape covered by a magical mist (cf. xiii 194-6).

⁹³ See Olsen 2010: 108-109: “My most important objective, however, is to highlight the crucial role that things play in upholding the past, thus enabling various forms of memory. Things are not just traces or residues of absent presents; they are effectively engaged in assembling and hybridizing periods and epochs. As durable matter, things make the past present and tangible; they constantly resist the regime that has subjugated time to the prevailing image of it as instantaneous and irreversible.”

back then. The bodily practice yielded as outcome will constitute (the ground for) memory and recollection. Considering this, we can easily envision remembrance in the Orchard as a “site-specific”⁹⁴ act of remembering: during the process, bodily, material and extended memory interact peculiarly with personal recollection and this interaction produces the sign in itself; accordingly, recognition is *acted*⁹⁵ more than it amounts to an intellectual or visual endeavour. As I said, visual phenomenology is not essential in recognition, and, anyway, it is not sufficient; in this episode it is limited to the sign that is external to Odysseus’s traits, being rather a mark of time upon his skin, an exogram⁹⁶:

οὐλήν μὲν πρῶτον τήνδε φράσαι ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
τὴν ἐν Παρνησῶ μ’ ἔλασεν σὸς λευκῶ ὀδόντι
οἰχόμενον [...]

Well, first look here: see with your own eyes the scar
that a boar gave me with his white tusk, on Parnesos,
when I went there [...]

Od. xxiv 331-333.

For their part, the Trees ontologically endure whereas both Odysseus’s and Laertes’s memory could have failed: as they finally gather in the “well-tilled orchard” and start to negotiate the process of recognition, the Trees are already in place (δένδρε’ ἐυκτιμένην κατ’ ἄλωρην xxiv 336), still ‘here’ to be counted and to count in the process. The past Odysseus and Laertes will investigate and query in order to recollect the necessary data is not gone, because the very data to retrieve are the *phutá* that grow in the Orchard: the past *resides* in the Trees that never got away. Memory of the Trees commits itself to coming into being and eventually prevents the cognitive process to go awry because of Odysseus’s callous mendacity or ageing Laertes’s own problems.

As I stressed above, the dialogical exchange does not posit the sign of the Trees from the beginning, Laertes is not exclusively going after it and Odysseus acts as if it had occurred to him as a second thought (εἰ δ’ ἄγε τοι καὶ δένδρε’ xxiv 336): in other words, happened their encounter elsewhere, both Laertes and Odysseus could have forgotten the counting of the Trees forever and the possibility of repetition could have been erased⁹⁷. Paradoxically, the Orchard as ecology of memory is also able to transform memory into forgetting: Odysseus and Laertes do not need to remember because the data they are going to process become directly available in the system, transcending their own biological limitations and mental attitudes. Simply being out there, that is ‘here’, the Trees

⁹⁴ Connerton 2009: 7.

⁹⁵ Presenting ‘active externalism’ theory Malafouris writes: “Whereas mainstream externalism (or the idea of external symbolic storage) implies externalisation of cognitive *content*, active externalism implies externalisation of cognitive states and processes [...] Cognition and action arise together, dialectically forming each other. There is a huge ontological distance between a mind able to externalise his contents to material structures and a mind whose states and processes aren’t limited by the skin (2013: 74).”

⁹⁶ See above p. 5 and n. 24.

⁹⁷ Discussing collective remembering Olsen (2010) writes: “Elaborate political and ritual performances are also always enmeshed with materials enabling the performed conducts, their organization and their (eventual) public reception [...] Without such “mnemonic” devices, it is hardly conceivable how any incorporating habitual memories could be actualised and remembered [...] [I]ncorporating practices are actually ‘trace-producing’ as inscribing practices — or rather, the ‘traces’ are the material constituents of the bodily remembered (123-124).” Odysseus seems to forget also about the scar, as Catalin notes: “indeed, just before being bathed by Eurycleia he suddenly (αὐτίκα) remembers the scar but it is already too late; his attempt to avoid being recognized by turning away from the light of the fire fails (2014: 147).” Once more, Odysseus’s remembering (and forgetting) appears to be context dependent.

remember what Father and Son may have forgotten during the (more than) ‘twenty years’ time span⁹⁸.

The different temporality of the Trees, which openly manifests itself in seasonality⁹⁹, points also to ‘their’ peculiar memory, a memory that derives from “the language of things themselves, interpreted not in symbolic sequences but in spatial configurations (Marder 2014: 183)”, and that permits them to remember the things as things, encoding them as living storage, as in the case of light when acting photosynthesis¹⁰⁰. Trees memory complement human remembering and diverge from it; this type of remembering cannot be phenomenologically interpreted nor is dependent from intentionality and/or conscious states: they possess memory as “primal quality”, inherent in their vegetal being¹⁰¹.

The performance (or the re-enactment) of Eco’s “inferential walk”¹⁰² across the orchard — we can easily imagine Odysseus and Laertes walking down the terraced ground while, respectively, enumerating and checking the amount of (once upon a time) gifted plants — represents a clear instance of habitual, bodily memory apt to re-instantiate knowledge¹⁰³, and more in general, to allow cultural transmission within family and kin. The remembered (and re-performed) narrative/walk is the most important element and premise in establishing Odysseus’s identity. Through the Father-Son walking couple, we gain what Alva Noë calls “sensorimotor knowledge”¹⁰⁴, that is the ability to experience the totality of an object without actually seeing the whole of it. The “mnemonic power”¹⁰⁵ of this episode goes beyond “willful control and human selection (Olsen 2010: 126),” it lies exactly in the ritual repetition of the gift act within the same space, by the same actors and in equivalent, but narratively reversed, terms, from Father to Son. As Paul Connerton rightly underlines, “[t]he mode of encoding operative in gift exchange precipitates a form of cultural remembering [...]”: “[g]ift exchange potentiates memory because, as Mauss first perceived, it rests upon a triple obligation: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to reciprocate (2009: 53).” It is important to note that the function of Odysseus, here as elsewhere, is to re-count, to narrate: he re-presents in a narrative this very gift act, this story, in a way divorcing it from

⁹⁸ My analysis was inspired by what Malafouris wrote about the Linear B system: “Linear B is no longer seen as a disembodied abstract code; now it is seen as a situated technology instantiating a new way of remembering and a new way of forgetting. The Mycenaean simply reads what the Linear B tablet remembers [...] To put it simply, the numerals and iconographic signs that constitute the mnemonic component *par excellence* of the Linear B system did not simply help Mycenaean to remember the precise quantities of the recorded commodities; rather, *they were part of the process by which the Linear B system remembered*. From the system’s viewpoint, it is not the individual scribe that remembers; it is the linear B tablet (2013: 79; 82).”

⁹⁹ Cf. *Od.* xxiv 344 and above p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ “But what do creatures like ourselves, who cannot perform the simplest act of photosynthesis, know about openness to “light as light”? For us, light is always refracted through symbolic language, even when it blinds us, as a consequence of having raised our gaze toward the sun. For the plant, the memory of light, stored at the cellular level, is the trace of light itself, ready to be retrieved and interpreted at any given moment, for instance, as a cue to the best blossoming time (Marder 2014: 183).”

¹⁰¹ “Whereas humans remember whatever has phenomenally appeared in the light, plants keep the memory of light itself. Conceived in a non-anthropocentric fashion as a “primal quality,” memory, inherent in plants at the cellular and molecular levels, comes to describe any network of traces, of which consciousness is a highly circumscribed instance. It is the very fact or facticity of impression, of an imprint, or better, an ex-print, that forms the register of what a living being has undergone in its lifetime. Conscious memory is but one constituent of the vibrant and multidimensional intelligence of plants [...] (Marder 2013: 156)”

¹⁰² See Eco 1984: 214.

¹⁰³ So Connerton on “keeping the past in mind” through habitual memory: “Many forms of habitual skilled remembering illustrate a keeping of the past in mind that, without ever advertising to its historical origin, nevertheless re-enacts the past in our present conduct. In habitual memory the past is, as it were, sedimented in the body (1989: 72).”

¹⁰⁴ See Noë 2004 (speaking about the experience of looking at a cube): 77: “As you move with respect to the cube, you learn how its aspect changes as you move – that is, you encounter its visual potential. To encounter its visual potential is thus to encounter its actual shape. When you experience an object as cubical merely on the basis of its aspect, you do so because you bring to bear, in this experience, your sensorimotor knowledge of the relation between changes in cube aspects and movement. To experience the figure as a cube, on the basis of how it looks, is to understand how its look changes as you move.” The passage is also cited by Rowlands 2010: 72 when explaining the enactivist position.

¹⁰⁵ Connerton 1989: 43.

the straightness and unidirectionality of the arrow of time while translating it from a single occurrence in the ever-present of performance, under the condition of possibly being “indefinitely repeated.¹⁰⁶” Through this specific and intertwined “pattern of remembering (Connerton 1989: 19)” epic can be globally interpreted as a linguistic ‘tool’ for enacting remembrance and for re-creating the past¹⁰⁷ in order to shape present experience and identity for the individual character(s) as well for the audience.

Lies and Truth in the Orchard: Odysseus’s Environmental Identity
Κεῖνος μὲν δὴ ὄδ’ αὐτὸς ἐγώ¹⁰⁸

The Greek subtitle of this section indicates that the long absent Odysseus is now present, or, more precisely, that the Odysseus who remained always present and accessible in the discourse and in the mind of Ithaca dwellers as a “cognitive landmark” (Bonifazi 2012: ch. 1) while he was physically far and away, is again ‘here’ and near as a present person and active self (ὄδ’ αὐτὸς ἐγώ 321); what was distal is now proximal, because ‘that-one’ is ‘me-this-one-here’.¹⁰⁹ This simple statement, apparently at odds with the principle of individuation — at least linguistically — calls for a suitable redefinition of Odysseus’s personal identity in accordance to what I proposed about the role of the Orchard in the re-cognition process. The Trees, as sessile beings, are apt to capture and stabilise in time and space the elusive and mobile Odysseus, the *polútropos*, the one who, contrary to the *phutá* and their absolute ‘here’, is always projected to the ‘over-there’¹¹⁰, subject to change in himself and in place. I propose that Odysseus’s personal identity can be best understood as ‘environmental’ identity, when ‘tied down’ to this particular place in Ithaca

¹⁰⁶ See Garcia 2013: 153: “[...] epic tradition functions only under the condition of its being ‘indefinitely repetaed’.” Discussing the case of the prophetic sign observed many years before at Aulis the author writes: “Odysseus literally represents the past [...] he re-creates the event for his audience and eventually makes the past present once again [...] Odysseus’s mnemonics bridge the distance between past and present, spatializing time and drawing it near (p. 63).”

¹⁰⁷ The type of re-creation of the past enabled by epic oral performances can be conceptually grasped through what modern neuroscience stresses about relieving of memories: “[It] is not the simple act of accessing a storehouse of readymade photos in a stable neural album, preserved with complete fidelity to the moment of their formation. Rather, each act of recall is a re-creation, drawing upon multiple, dynamically changing modular fragments to shape a new mosaic (Young & Saver 2010: 193).”

¹⁰⁸ On the interplay of the two pronouns in the episode and, more in general, in the second part of the *Odyssey* see Bonifazi 2012: ch. 3: “The interlacing of references to Odysseus through αὐτός and κεῖνος in the second half of the poem is due to the potentially polyphonic character of every utterance of the two pronouns. Following Ducrot, polyphony is detectable whenever a seemingly monologic utterance is read as a crystallized dialogue (some scholars call it diaphony). In Bakhtin’s terms, through polyphony the literary text makes evident the centripetal forces that are inherent in the work. Homeric uses of αὐτός and κεῖνος reflect the centripetal force of overlapping and cross-referential values that blur the unity of action and the unity of characters: Odysseus is αὐτός even when he is disguised; he is κεῖνος even when he is close and present to the speaker.”

¹⁰⁹ See Bonifazi 2012: ch. 3: “The last book of the poem leaves us with an emblematic balance between Odysseus κεῖνος and Odysseus αὐτός. It is a numerical as well as a symbolic balance, which resumes not only all the previous values but also what the Ithacan hero is eventually ready to say about the multiple aspects of his own personality. I believe it is not casual that all the final instances of κεῖνος and of αὐτός are uttered exclusively by Odysseus ipse. The occurrences at issue are all in the recognition scene with Laertes, who is the last — and, thus, the highest — entry in the scale of affection [...] Finally, the two pronouns occur together in Odysseus’s revelation to his father [...] Far from simply being the first instance of an idiom that associates the two pronouns, this line presents an extraordinary convergence of indications and implied meanings. Polyphony eventually comes full circle, with respect to both the previous hints in book twenty-four and the whole poem. Odysseus uses κεῖνος to explicitly refer to all the previous uses of κεῖνος: “the Odysseus κεῖνος all of you were lamenting over and were looking for,” “the one that was referred to by κεῖνος,” and “the one that already appeared to the eyes of several people.” The hero resumes all the previous values of the pronoun and, at the same time, makes it the mark of his sudden appearance to Laertes. Revelation through αὐτός is not new (see 21.207 and 22.38); however, this time Odysseus’s acknowledgment of his true identity and of his “self” cannot be disassociated from the acknowledgment of his being κεῖνος. In other words, he eventually admits to being and to having been both, αὐτός and κεῖνος. This solemn statement closes the whole series of utterances of both pronouns throughout the various episodes.”

¹¹⁰ See Marder 2015: 189: “There is nothing more difficult for us than to linger patiently in the “here,” without as much as fantasizing about something that lies “over there”, where we are not. Heidegger, for his part, understood human existence precisely as the possibility of “being-there” (i.e., not here, despite the literal translation of existence, or *Da-sein*). By implication, he deemed other living beings, tethered to the immanence of the “here” and to pure present, to be outside the sphere of existence, which hinges on a temporal stretching between the past of thrownness and the future of projection (Heidegger 1962). The plant’s relation to space—not to mention that of the animal—testifies to the problematic nature of this assumption.”

and thought in relation to a past that does not linearly match with the ‘twenty-year’ Odyssean span, but is re-constructed and re-instantiated through (self-)narrative time¹¹¹.

To define the identity Odysseus reasserts in the environment of the Orchard, I shall advocate initially bioethics through David DeGrazia’s theoretical framework distinguishing between numerical identity and narrative identity. If numerical identity is “what makes someone considered at a particular time one and the same individual as someone considered at a different time (DeGrazia 2005: 82),” narrative identity can be described as the self-narrative answering the question “Who am I?”¹¹² Narrative identity is not primarily concerned with identifying a person across time: it has at its core the traits that, according to the narrator, *authentically* characterise his self. It represents a (or one) life story¹¹³. It is not difficult to understand the *in se* open and fluid nature of such a self-narration, given the possibility to re-shape or re-create¹¹⁴ it at different moments and to the benefit of different audiences¹¹⁵. It is also evident that, in our case, tying the two types of identity, or provide a clear demarcation between the two, is apparently further complicated by the essence of Odysseus’s self-narratives, which are ordinarily not issued as a result of self-inquiry, but prompted upon external request and/or constructed *ad hoc* whenever disguise is needed. A clear example is represented by the ‘mother’ of all Odyssean self-narratives¹¹⁶ about identity, that is the answer to Polyphemus’s last question to the stranger:

“Κύκλωψ, εἰρωτᾶς μ’ ὄνομα κλυτόν; ἀντάρ ἐγώ τοι
ἐξερέω· σὺ δέ μοι δὸς ξείνιον, ὥς περ ὑπέσθης.
Οὗτις ἐμοί γ’ ὄνομα· Οὗτιν δέ με κικλήσκουσι
μήτηρ ἠδὲ πατήρ ἠδ’ ἄλλοι πάντες ἑταῖροι.”

“Kuklops, you asked for my well-known name, and I will tell you.

¹¹¹ According to Van Nortwick, two different and contrasting versions of Odysseus are demarcated by the “twenty-year” hiatus, so that: “[...] the magical Odysseus, unmarked by time and change — and the corresponding world of Ithaca, showing no effects from the twenty-year hiatus — cannot so easily coexist with the centrifugal, evolving hero we see struggling to make his way home (2008: 41).” The sessile being of the Trees avoids this hiatus as ‘resident’ part of Odysseus’s self and final narrative re-creation of his elusive identity.

¹¹² “The more ordinary sense of “Who am I?” inquiries about one’s identity in a familiar sense of the term that we may call *narrative identity*. Such related questions as “Who shall I become?” or “In what direction should I take my life?” ask about what we may call *self-creation* [...]. A self-narrative can answer the question “Who am I?” as this question is most commonly asked. The answer provides the person with her narrative identity. But who I am has a great deal to do with who I will become if I take an active role in shaping my future. Thus projects of self-creation flow from narrative identity and, as they do so, continue to write and often edit the narratives from which they flow (2005: 78; 82).”

¹¹³ Still in bioethics, William Ruddick offers an interesting definition of lives as “verbal objects,” insofar, from an autobiographical or social perspective, they are constituted by narrated events in a story: “Arguably, we can regard history and lives as “verbal objects,” or in view of their larger temporal scope, let’s call them “narrative objects.” In living, most people create lives that have a structure and content that can only be grasped through narrations, more or less detailed, selective, and dramatically organized. Admittedly, we on occasion talk about lives as if they had more important non-narrative properties — life is compared to a rich feast or spare meal, a piece of harmonious or discordant music, a journey or treadmill, and so on. I am not claiming that lives have only narrative properties, but rather that these are the properties by which they are best grasped and presented (2005: 510).”

¹¹⁴ On ‘creation’ of selves and narratives processes see Hardcastle 2003: 37-52. The author discusses in particular the relation between memory, veridicality and the social performance of self-narratives: “In short, things aren’t remembered just to be remembered or analysed just to be understood, but they are remembered and analysed so that we can later use them in stories about ourselves. Indeed, veridicality has never been particularly important in our conversations [...] The social performance itself is what counts. For selves aren’t static entities to be preserved in our stories. Instead they are created through the narrative process, and then they are revised and reworked as we tell and retell our life story (49).”

¹¹⁵ On this aspect see Fireman & alii 2003: 5-6: “The telling of a personal story, as a selective and imaginative process, is also powerfully influenced by the audience one has or anticipates having: an inevitable and necessary tension results as the fictive (ultimately from Latin *fungere*, “to form or fashion”) process is imposed on real events in an effort to re-present the self to others with a suatory purpose. As the line between the imagined and the factual blurs, the difficult question of how to determine what makes a “good” (e.g., coherent, organised, meaningful, compelling) personal narrative becomes crucial.” Eakin (1999) underlines how “our sense of continuous identity is a fiction, the primary fiction of all self narration (p. 95)” and that the lesson identity narratives teach is “that the self is dynamic, changing and plural (p. 98).”

¹¹⁶ In fact, the longest self-narrative lasts four entire rhapsodies (9 through 12) and covers the wanderings from Troy to Scheria: Odysseus, finally answering Alkinoos’s question about his name and identity, tells him the name, patronymic plus a rough 2200 lines before getting a little passionate about storytelling.

But give me the guest gift, just as you promised.
My name is No-one: No-one's the name they have called me —
my Mother and my Father, and all the rest of my friends.”

Od. ix 364-367.

In the cave of the Kuklops Odysseus is really No-one¹¹⁷, he is the “stranger (ὦ ξεῖνε ix 273)” because the social and environmental elements which are essential parts of his identity and self, as Odysseus son of Laertes, are separated from him. In fact, No(-)Mother, No(-)Father and No(-)member of his kith and kin calls him No-one, nowhere in the world: No-one is created and lives in self-narrative only. When the stranger finally reaches the much-desired homeland he was heading to (cf. ix 261 οἴκαδε ἰέμενοι), the identity and recognition problem is definitely crucial. As Jeffrey Barnouw wrote: “[t]he return also requires that [Odysseus] establishes his identity in the rich sense of showing that he is still Odysseus [...] [F]or ultimately he must recover a sense of self that is partly defined and sustained by his relations to his father and wife [...] all three must regain their full identities through mutual recognition, involving tests posed by signs or posed to elicit signs (Barnouw 2004: 259).” Who returned, lastly? Odysseus, an impostor or, simply, a pathological liar? First of all, accordingly to the analysis conducted so far, we have to rethink how we can conceive Odysseus's identity as we consider “certain parts of the environment to be constituents of the self (McKinnell 2011: 99).” Within the cognitive ecology of the Trees, signs extend from Odysseus's body to environmental space: ‘marked’ limbs and Trees present themselves as parts of an extended¹¹⁸ and relational self. If constitutive elements of Odysseus's self persist in the environment as well as within the boundaries of his body, the role of belief and veridicality in self-narratives can be adequately accounted for when understood in structural relationship with the space and time that encapsulate them. That amounts to say that, in the space of the Orchard, there is enough place for both Eperitos and Odysseus, as we understand that Eperitos is Odysseus as much as Odysseus is (truly) Eperitos¹¹⁹. In other words, the environment of the Orchard is fundamental in defining Odysseus's identity, because it constructs facts, attitudes, beliefs and memories that are essential to it.¹²⁰ Among them, Odysseus's “characteristic cleverness,”¹²¹ which expresses itself in his typical, unflinching and usually deceptive narrative self-creation. To provisionally jump to the conclusions,

¹¹⁷ On Οἷτις as a “truly” proper name of Odysseus see Peradotto 1990: 154-155: “Outis becomes the only *proper* [author's italics] name for the emptiness that in reality all narrative persons share, but that is nonetheless the improper ground on which their spurious claims to absolute distinctness rest. Odysseus's deliberate abrogation of distinctness displays him as the narrative agent par excellence, as therefore capable of becoming any character, of assuming any predicate, of doing or enduring anything, of being, in a word, *polytropos*.” Odysseus reciprocates in advance the ‘mocking’ and negative guest gift promised by Polyphemus to No-body (it will be “to be eaten as last after his friends” οὐτιν ἐγὼ πάρατον ἔδομαι μετὰ οἷσ' ἑτάροισι ix 369, that is the most substantial and cruel negation of hospitality) with an equally ‘negative’ and mocking (and truthful) narrative: in fact, the Kuklops will eat nobody after Odysseus's companions. On guest-gifting in the cave see Schein 2016: 36-37.

¹¹⁸ So McKinnell on metaphysical and ethical questions about identity and persistence of personal identity in relation to an extended self: “What is the ‘self’, and what would it mean for the self to be extended? Perhaps unfortunately, the term ‘personal identity’ is often used to describe a number of distinct but related issues. We may for example want to distinguish metaphysical questions about the nature of the self from questions about persistence conditions for the self over time. Similarly, it may be that the question of what matters practically and ethically about personal identity is not the same as what we *are* at the most fundamental metaphysical level (2011: 98).”

¹¹⁹ See Peradotto 1990: 114-115: “He calls himself Eperitos, son of Apheidas, and grandson of Polypemon, and says he comes from Alybas [...]. Both Eperitos, which looks like “man of *eris* (strife),” and Polypemon, the grandfather's name, which looks like “man of much woe,” would be synonymous with *odyssemenos* and *polyraos*. So also would Alybas, “land of distress (or struggle)” even if only by poetic or folk etymology, giving Eperitos, like Calypso, metaphoric geography to match the condition signified by his name [...] Epeitos, Polypemon, Alybas: all are easy transformations of *odyssemenos*, the condition of mutual hostility. The action is active and/or passive, and in that it is analogous to the status of *polytropos*: the man of many turns is much turned against.” Eperitos, the “stranger” (ξεῖνε xxiv 281), will speak “truly indeed” (μᾶλ' ἀπρεκέως 303).

¹²⁰ See McKinnell 2011: 106.

¹²¹ Barnouw 2004: 259.

Odysseus is the “man (ἄνδρα ἰ 1)” who is ‘authentic’ in lying: it is his capacity as narrator, that is as creator of lies similar (and equivalent) to the truth, that makes the man from Crete really Odysseus and, by the same token, the so-called Cretan lies a true part of Odysseus’s and Odysseus’s ‘real’ story¹²². It is not surprising that such an archetype of ‘true liar’ decides to test his father’s loyalty for no apparent reason¹²³: if he had not, reasonable doubts could have been cast on the identity of the returning hero. In this context, the sessile being of the Trees has the role of stabilising and ‘rooting’ in the homeland environment this disconcerting Odyssean personhood, indeed providing material and external elements of identity.¹²⁴

As I shall consider at length in the last section, the *anēr polútropos* is also the *polúttas*, the man who is enduring and persisting through time, capable to bind past and present *via* (self-)narrative description. By virtue of his performance about the gift of the Trees he “recreates the event for his audience and essentially makes the past present once again [...] Odysseus’s mnemonics bridge the distance between past and present, spatializing time and drawing it near (Garcia 2013: 63).” The Orchard is the system whose cognitive processes are able to tie numerical and narrative identity, whose spatial context represents the centripetal anchor materially inhibiting Odysseus’s fractal narrative self-creation.

Apart from that environmental anchor, Odysseus’s persistent and (apparently) unmotivated lying could be cognitively and ‘clinically’ approached through William Hirstein’s discussion about the relationship between confabulation¹²⁵, sociopathy and disinhibition.¹²⁶ As Autolykos’s grandson and Hermes’s great-grandson, it does not prove so difficult to envisage Odysseus as an individual with a complicated relationship with truth. As Hirstein writes, “[t]he sociopath tells lies with an ease and confidence that resembles the act of confabulation, even if the confabulator is not actually lying (2006: 72).” As a matter of fact, Odysseus telling a last, perhaps unmotivated and unnecessary lie to his father, behaves like a “disinhibited” patient, whose brain processes “that would normally have been blocked or suppressed by other brain processes (Hirstein 2006: 72)” are actually not. Protracting the clinical metaphor, Laertes himself, not being able to recognise his son, undisguised but wearing a ‘verbal camouflage’, could be imagined as an old patient affected by dementia, terribly in need of elements outside his memory, steadily

¹²² At *Od.* xix 203 the Narrator comments on Aithon’s story of his meeting with Odysseus in Crete explaining how the hero made the many falsehoods seem like the truth (ἴσκει φεόδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτό μοισιν ὁμοῖα). Also Hesiodic Muses know how to speak lies like truth (*Theog.* 27: ἴδμεν φεόδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτό μοισιν ὁμοῖα). On the peculiarity of narrative ‘realism’ see Bruner 1991: 4: “Narratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and “narrative necessity” rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness [...]”

¹²³ For a different opinion, see Scodel 1998: 15-17 and above n. 3.

¹²⁴ Again, this kind of ‘environmental’ identity can also reconcile the two different versions (or identities) of Odysseus, as they are individuated by Van Nortwick: “When he defeats the suitors and wins back Penelope, the centripetal Odysseus is revealed to be his true self in all his various roles. But the centrifugal Odysseus, created by his own self-assertion in the face of the powers of oblivion, cannot exist in stasis, must always be making himself anew. While the centripetal Odysseus exists only insofar as the masks are off, the centrifugal version can only experience the marriage bed, anchored at the center of the house by Athena’s olive tree, as the milieu of the detaining woman; while the centripetal Odysseus reaches fulfilment while at rest in his own home, the centrifugal version will always be adopting the role of stranger (2008: 40).” The material anchors of the Orchard not only *evoke* memory, but are parts of Odysseus’s remembered self and peculiar markers of identity. The rootedness of the Trees is not merely in contrast with the centrifugal self-assertion of the stranger, but it is able to factually determine the final narrative self-creation of the hero as the ‘returned-stranger-who-is-not-a-stranger’.

¹²⁵ For clinical confabulators as restless developers of narratives see Young & Saver 2010: “Confabulating amnesic individuals offer an unrivaled glimpse at the power of the human impulse to narrative. The astonishing variety of plots they create arises not from a desire to impress, entertain, instruct, or deceive, but simply from a desire to respond to another human being’s query with a story, albeit in unusual circumstances. These unique storytelling circumstances are a complete freedom to draw upon all materials for narrative content (free of limiting memories) and a willingness to accept all self-generated narratives as veridical (p. 190).”

¹²⁶ See Hirstein 2006: 74: “Lying is a complicated art, especially when the stakes are high. The order of three abnormal conditions in the chapter’s title is deliberate: first liars, then sociopaths, then confabulators. It represents a gradient in the amount of awareness the speaker has that what he is saying is false and in the amount of tension this creates in him. This awareness involves the possession of representations contrary to what the person claims, but also it often involves an accompanying emotion [...] In sociopaths, these emotional reactions are either blunted or absent, and in clinical confabulators the brain systems that produce these emotional reactions are damaged so that they are completely gone from the patients’ mental life.”

placed in his orchard (his long term memory), to accomplish the recognition of Odysseus. Anyway, mutual recognition escapes from individual problems and pathologic attitudes thanks to the role of environment: the space of the Orchard grants a safeguarding framework from Odysseus's peculiar 'authenticity' and also scaffolds his narrative reconstruction, in the same way Laertes's agricultural panoply both protects him and facilitates work.

Admittedly, contemplating Odysseus's inventive attitude to self-narratives, he could be *sic et simpliciter* considered a 'natural born liar', not only because of his ancestral lineage, but even more so because "[e]volutionarily speaking, it would seem that we are born liars", as Mark Freeman writes (2003: 124) when discussing Gazzaniga's interpretation of autobiographical recollection ("hopelessly inventive"¹²⁷): such a paradox is only apparent, for the particular constructiveness of narrativity, its unavoidable fictionality, cannot be conflated, neither ontologically nor cognitively, with untruthfulness. Definitely, such a conflation is particularly inadequate (or even nonsensical) in the case of Odysseus, whose 'authentic' traits call for a quite opposite understanding.

As I stated earlier, the complexity, but not ambiguity, concerning Odysseus's self and identity, as they emerge from and are determined by self-narration, can be successfully reduced or resolved if substantial elements of both identity and self are traced in the environment, notably within the cognitive ecology of the Trees. The extended mind hypothesis, blurring the boundaries between what is inside and what is outside, raises the possibility "that is not merely cognitive processes, but also the self, that is extended. If we accept a psychological or cognitive theory of personal identity, and if my thought processes do not end at the boundary of my skin, this suggests that elements of my *self* are continuous with my environment (McKinnel 2011: 97) [...]" In keeping with this view, environment represents not only a structural aspect of personal identity, but it enables integrative processes that, in our case, are very useful to grasp the puzzling complexity of Odysseus's verbal self-creation: the relational self of Odysseus, developed collaboratively (or contrastively) with others in narration, is primarily an environmental self, which becomes what it is when defined and moulded by the environment it actively inhabits.

Reinstantiating that past day when the gift was made and when Odysseus was exposed to the narrative of the gift, firstly making that narrative his own narrative, is tantamount to lend a 'sessile' and stable reality to whatever verbal self-creation he may possibly conceive. The *émpeda sémata* Laertes is asking for are finally *narrated* by Odysseus through a shared speech act of memory¹²⁸: they are there/here to be intrinsic part of the stranger's (or the liar's) personal identity¹²⁹. In conclusion, to discern truth from lies in a descriptive manner and in an ordinary sense within Odysseus's self-narratives would amount to predicate reality and truth in terms of individual and not extended self, as well in the language of linear time¹³⁰, not (self-)narrative time, which ultimately is the only valid in this episode, as we will see presently. The only 'truth' and true self to be established, and

¹²⁷ Gazzaniga 1998: 2.

¹²⁸ On the role of what she calls "speech acts of memory" in trauma narratives and in the remaking of the self, see Brison 1999: 39-54. The author discusses how traumatic memory can be transformed or replaced by narrative memory in a process towards the reconstitution of the self from the sherds of disrupted memory.

¹²⁹ Neuroscientists and neurologists seem to agree that the connection between narrativity and personhood be hard-wired in structures of human brain: on the neural substrate of the memory-narrative-identity connection see Young & Saver 2010 ("We come to see our lives as understandable because of their apparent integration, logic, even order: our narratives and their consequent memories tell us that our lives were so [...] To desire narrative reflects a kind of fundamental desire for life and self that finds its source in our neurologic makeup (pp. 194-195).") The authors also highlight how possession of narrative skills and competence is necessary for the formation and persistence of a coherent identity, that is of a *self*: "Texts that tell our "life stories," such as autobiographies, function as the written versions of what we first did when we brought narrative language to experience orally in order to approach a coherent identity called "the self." Not only does the activity of story production prompt, then, the production of memories, but it as well encourages an arranging of events into a state of coherence, consecution, and consequence — features of what constitute a narrative (p. 193)."

¹³⁰ See Freeman 2003: 124.

re-cognized, will remain those “made available by narrative and by the poetic processes that go into the telling of the past (Freeman 2003: 126).”

‘Time Travel’ in the Orchard and the Wandering Mind
Παιδνός ἐών, κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος

As I have just suggested, “[m]oving beyond clock time and seeing in narrative time¹³¹ a possible inroad into rethinking the problem of truth (Freeman 2003: 124)” may represent a viable solution to the problem of Odysseus’s identity. Little Odysseus not only entered fully into the linguistic world through the Orchard, but he started to develop his narrative capacity being ‘adopted’ into the narrative of the Trees. At the end of the story, the trees narration is re-instantiated along with the past and the self originally shaped by it: a self extended into the environment.¹³²Talking about remembering, recognition and identity, I proposed that this episode not only witnesses the ultimate narrative re-creation of Odysseus’s identity, but it is an instance of practical memory and *acted* narration: we will presently see how it is constructed upon the ability of mental time travel (MTT)¹³³, which extends self across time.

If we go back to Aurelius Augustinus, we learn that, according to the Christian writer, our recollection of the past and expectation of the future amount to a capacity to project and think ourselves back in time or in the future.¹³⁴ Endel Tulving describes nothing essentially different when, a fifteen centuries later, he is aiming at explaining auto-noetic consciousness by the ability to think our selves in the past and in the future.¹³⁵ Being placed in the Orchard, and being parts of the Orchard as extended selves, Odysseus and Laertes do travel in time: they share the space of the Orchard in a diachronic modality,

¹³¹ “A narrative is an account of events occurring over time. It is irreducibly durative. It may be characterizable in seemingly nontemporal terms [...] but such terms only summarize what are quintessential patterns of events occurring over time. The time involved, moreover, as Paul Ricoeur has noted, is “human time” rather than abstract or “clock” time. It is time whose significance is given by the meaning assigned to events within its compass (Bruner, 1991: 6).”

¹³² See Nelson 2003: 22: “[I]t is a developmental view that sets narrative not aside as some kind of special individual human gift but as part and parcel of the wide-ranging developments that take place during the critical years when the child can enter fully into the linguistic world but is not yet a participant in formal schooling. These developments include awareness of self and other, of the wider world beyond self, of past and future; in traditional cognitive developmental terms, they include theory of mind, prospective taking, autobiographical memory, and self-concept.” The particular Odyssean self that emerges from the episode recalls to the first three ‘selves’ enucleated and distinguished by Neisser’s analysis (1988): the *ecological* self (perceived with respect to the physical environment), the *interpersonal* self (perceived as engaged in social interaction), and the *extended* self (the self of memory and anticipation).

¹³³ “The capacity to mentally relive past events and imagine possible future ones comprises has been termed mental time travel (Suddendorf and Corballis, 1997, 2007), taking us into an imagined future as well as into an imagined past. Both are essentially constructive processes. Brain imaging shows considerable overlap in brain activation between the two, with slightly more frontal-lobe activity in imagining the future (e.g., Addis et al., 2007) (Corballis 2013: 1).” The expression was first used by Tulving when defining episodic memory (1983).

¹³⁴ Even more interestingly, Augustine called emotional memory “the stomach of the soul” (*memoria quasi venter est animi Conf.* 10.14.21). Marya Schechtman (1996) cites and discusses the passage (pp. 113-114) when explaining how we appropriate actions and experiences to be part of our consciousness. On this metaphor see also De Mijolla 1994: 22: “Even in this odd image for the oddly compliant workings of emotional memory, Augustine touches upon the chief characteristics of almost all his images for memory: the characteristics of a container, and of a capaciousness within it.”

¹³⁵ For a brief *resumé* of Tulving’s theory of episodic memory and autonomic consciousness see Tulving 1985: 5-6. Tulving proposed back in 1972 the fundamental distinction between episodic memory (the ability to encode and retrieve autobiographical events) and semantic memory (comprising all our knowledge and understanding about the meaning of words, objects, concepts, and events independent from autobiographical time and space), as two different memory categories and systems. His 1983 book *Elements of Episodic Memory* has since then become a classic in modern memory theory. For a (partially) alternative view on scene construction for past (as well as future) events see Eacott & Easton 2012.

projecting themselves backward in time and plunging into the depths of “memory talk”^{136,137}

At the very beginning, Odysseus stops under a pear-tree as he sees his father working near a shrub: they are both physically connected to the cultivated environment. At the end, the re-counting of the trees and the re-enacted inferential walk across the terraces allow re-remembering and clear re-cognition. The Orchard, as cognitive system, is able to mark, tell and organise subjective time within its space. Here Now: literally *after* the ‘odyssey’ (indeed as a metaphorical one: all the wandering and suffering Odysseus experienced, separated from (t)his archetypal environment) and *after* all life-sustaining narrative self-creation. There/Here Back Then: *before* the odyssey/*Odyssey*, when, as a child, Odysseus entered in the linguistic world and developed the “awareness of self and other, of the wider world beyond self, of past and future (Nelson 2003: 22);”¹³⁸ *before*, from his very name a story was entitled and a metaphor created. The twenty-year span is eventually subsumed in and the twenty-year hiatus avoided through the time travel happening in the Orchard. Odysseus, the child who inherited the Trees, that is an essential element of his self, has endured through time and his seminal ‘odyssey’: he is able to imagine himself in that distant past *before*, in the company of his father with whom he shares this memory, decisive for the mutual benefit of stabilising a coherent identity.

It is useful to recall here that one of the πολυ- compounds serving as Odysseus’s epithets, πολύτλας,¹³⁹ can be itself understood in a diachronic modality associated with duration and enduring. As Garcia writes, πολύτλας is related to one of the basic meanings of τλάω: “as “to dare to do something” [this use] seems to follow from the sense of holding up and enduring through time: while enduring, one develops a kind of future orientation, an anticipation of the day when one will no longer be under duress (Garcia 2013: 53).”¹⁴⁰ Being the πολύτλας, Odysseus can project himself to that day (νόστιμον ἡμῶν i 9) when the suffering is over, and he is *after* it. Psychologically speaking, it has been noted that pain and suffering tend to produce a “bipartite structure”¹⁴¹ of subjective time,

¹³⁶ “[One form of the] ability to locate the self in several distinct worlds [...] is the *memory talk* between children and adults, in which the two partners move between comments made in the present tense and recollections couched as historically distant. In this talk, as children take an increasingly prominent role, they use at least two *voices* in the conversation: the person who identifies with the younger, distant person (the object of the memory) and the person who engages in recollection (the subject who currently has the memory) (Palmer Wolf 1990: 192).” In the Odyssean episode, this interplay is condensed within the opposition εἶπω/ἔειπες, which is apt to render “the same experience in a variety of formats (Palmer Wolf 1990: 185)” and also to allude to the interchangeability of the role narrator/audience.

¹³⁷ “Analyzing parent-child conversations about the past, [developmental psychologists] stress the interpersonal context in which the extended self emerges, they highlight the role of rules and conventions in the formation of autobiographical memories, and they show how the young child gradually assimilates these narrative practices (Eakin 1999: 4).”

¹³⁸ On this aspect see also Eakin 1999: 113: “The extended self [i.e. extended across time] emerges, then, during a peculiarly rich developmental phase in which newly acquired language and narrative skills combine with temporal awareness [...]”

¹³⁹ In addition to mobility in space, the compound πολύτροπος points in a sense to narrativity and linguistic self-creation as expression of cunning. As Douglas Frame well summarised in his introduction to his book *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (1978), πολύτροπος describes what Odysseus do (:he wanders) in the poem and who, or better how Odysseus is (:wily). If we recall the occurrences of the epithet in the Hymn to Hermes (in particular line 13: καὶ τότε ἐγένετο παῖδα πολύτροπον, αἰμολομήτην “and she gave birth to a son resourceful, of winning wiles”), immortal father of Autolycus, it is apparent that the adjective is used to describe baby-Hermes’s precocious and exceptional cunning and versatility of mind, a sort of ‘shifty’ mind. On πολύτροπος and the concept of mobility see also Bolens 2001: in her study the Swiss scholar proposes an intriguing relationship between oral culture and the peculiar body image she calls “articulated”. Oral tradition itself would form an articulate body whose members and joints are able to communicate the idea of mobility “[...] textuality has one fundamental and non-negotiable limit: it is irremediably still (p. 124)”. An extended analysis on πολυ-epithets of Odysseus is that of Jenny Strauss Clay (1997: 31-34), who stresses how the first lines of the poem “programmatically announce the multiplicity that is Odysseus, both as active agent and as passive sufferer (34).” For πολύτροπος as expressing a centrifugal movement of re-turn “that will not end with [the hero’s] landing at Ithaca” see Pucci 1987: 14.

¹⁴⁰ See also Garcia 2013: 185. Occurrence of aches, physical pain and suffering can be taken as a means to measure subjective time and to interpret and project ourselves in time — often with consistent alteration in perception of time itself (on this psychological — and neurological — aspect see the cited article by Morris 2010). On the interplay between time and pain, intended as cognitively modulated perceptual abilities see Wing 2013. In particular, the author investigates the relationship between pain intensity and distortions in duration-estimation.

¹⁴¹ Morris 2010: 54.

divided into a *before-and-after* pattern, a structure that can, in extreme case, challenge also the sense of the self and of one's identity. It is also recognised how human "narrative brain"¹⁴² is both able to produce reported evidence about painful experiences and to 'anecdotalize' them, endowing such experiences with a meaningful status, mostly as Paul Ricoeur argues it happens in general for time becoming human *solely* when articulated through a narrative mode¹⁴³. The way Odysseus's identity is reconstructed despite the twenty-year span and through the medium of shared temporality cannot but be anecdotal in form and narrative as result. If we agree, at least partially, with the hypothesis that "[n]arrativity served early and modern humans' biological and social needs to define and communicate social identities [...], as well as to preserve, transmit, and revise socially-constructed knowledge (McNeil 1996: 336)," phylogenetic evolution of social identity can be paralleled with 'ontogenetic' redefinition and communication of the returned hero's personal identity.

Before I conclude my argumentation, it is also worth mentioning that recent studies suggest that MTT is one of the cognitive capacities and devices at the base of narrative¹⁴⁴ and that it may be considered a cognitive precursor¹⁴⁵ for the origin of language as well¹⁴⁶. The latter hypothesis is particularly enticing, if we consider "the role of language as a means of communicating about events displaced in space and time from the present (Corballis 2014: 39)," even though latest research tends to dissociate MTT and the origin of language, suggesting rather an incremental approach and a development of language from pantomime (allowed in turn by MTT and the ability to build narrative representations of reality)¹⁴⁷. As I underlined above, the gestural and choreographic component is likely to be imagined and it results crucial when analysing the suggested scenario of the episode: Odysseus experienced the gifting he now re-tells *κατὰ κήπων ἐπισπόμενος* (xxiv 338), following his father across the terraces of the orchard, while Laertes named, and (we are supposed to imagine) probably pointed at, the various species of fruit-trees growing in his luxuriant land. The time travel in the Orchard is then the episodic recall (arguably comprehensive of rehearsal) of an original, past and, perhaps, educational (*παιδνός ἐών* xxiv 338) 'navigation' in the space of the Orchard. This

¹⁴² See Newman 2005. Newman's paper presents three dimensions, or themes, of the "narrative brain" (species-wide predisposition for narrative; the significance of individual narrative tendencies in causing responses to an interactive system; the case for a set of species wide archetypal narrative scripts), arguing that they are fundamental in understanding the way individuals experience interactive systems. Obviously, I think epic diction and performance (that is 'composition') occurred exclusively in the frame of interactive and relational systems. The Orchard itself, as a cognitive system, is an interactive and relational system that can analogically represent the performer(s)-audience relationship, which, in its synchronic and diachronic dimensions, was not fixed neither in role-playing aspects nor in performance-related, material contingencies. An ample overview and discussion on these themes is to be read in Newman's PhD thesis (Newman 2007), in particular chapter 2.

¹⁴³ See Ricoeur 2012: 3 (cited in Morris 2010: 53): "[T]ime becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience."

¹⁴⁴ See Ferretti & alii 2017.

¹⁴⁵ See Ferretti & alii 2017: 111: "[O]ur idea is that the origin of language has to be considered in reference to (at least) three different cognitive systems (that we called "Triadic System of Grounding and Projection": cf. Ferretti and Cosentino, 2013): mindreading (the system that allow us to read others' minds), mental space travel (the system that allow us to navigate in space) and mental time travel." In particular, Francesco Ferretti tries to explain the origin of language appealing to the resources of "the ecological brain (i.e. the cognitive devices at the base of our ability to navigate in space and time). The first move to examine the specific role played by the ecological brain in the origin of language is to justify the narrative character of human communication (Ferretti 2016)."

¹⁴⁶ See Corballis 2013.

¹⁴⁷ See Ferretti & alii 2017: "Based on this research, we hypothesize that an important cognitive device involved in narrative is Mental Time Travel (MTT), that is, the system that allows humans to project themselves into the past and future. We show that such a system is present (to a greater or lesser extent) even in non-human animals. By virtue of this, we argue that MTT is independent of language and that it may be considered a cognitive precursor for the origin of language. Specifically, we propose that MTT allowed our ancestors to develop a form of pantomimic communication that might be considered as the foundation of the narrative origin of language."

instance of MTT amounts also to a mental space travel (MST¹⁴⁸). I suggested an ‘environmental’ self for Odysseus, that is a self extended in a particular environment whose traits become intrinsic and authentic traits of his personal identity; I build this conceptualisation upon considering the existence of a cognitive system, which I called the Cognitive Ecology of the Trees, which is able to produce knowledge, in the form of declarative memory, and recognition. To sum up, across and through the orchard/ Orchard, Odysseus manifests “an ecological extended self,” that is a self “able to navigate through space and time” whose specific kind of consciousness¹⁴⁹ depends “on the self-oriented perspective of the processes of space-time navigation that characterize it (Cosentino & Ferretti 2014: 267).”

The provoking question, which is part of the title of Riccardo Manzotti’s article, “Is consciousness situated?”¹⁵⁰ can well accompany us toward the end of this paper. The author thinks that consciousness may be not eventually situated, that is strictly neurally situated: similarly, I would say that, to better understand the closure of the *Odyssey*, we have to leave aside a ‘situated’ approach to the identity of its protagonists and to reinterpret them in a fully relational and environmental mode. As the time-lag between humans and plants is substantially overcome by the narrative coordination of the system, and the rhythms of the Trees match those of the human consciousness¹⁵¹, time travel in the Orchard crosses the boundary between auto-noesis and environmental noesis. Odysseus is not only the ‘wanderer’, feared by Eumaios to be the prototypical liar¹⁵², but he has a ‘wandering’ mind¹⁵³: his journeys through space and time are both physical and mental and the ‘natural’ attitude he shows towards narrative and self-narrative allows the ‘automatic sharing’ of these journeys and stories with others within a performative context. At the very end, under the Trees, we know that Odysseus really is who he says he is¹⁵⁴.

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Passages from the *Odyssey* are quoted from von der Mühl 1962. Translations of the *Odyssey* are taken from Powell 2014, and McCrorie 2004. Quotations from the *Iliad* follow Allen 1931. For Augustine, I have consulted Hammond (2016). I made minor changes to produce a translated text fully consistent with my argumentation. All other translations are my own. In transliterating proper names, I have adopted a ‘hybrid’ system, using Latinized forms for names that are largely familiar but otherwise adhering to a precise transliteration of the Greek. When using someone else’s translation, I revised

¹⁴⁸ According to Erica Cosentino and Francesco Ferretti, “the ability to project oneself in time (Mental Time Travel: MTT) is based on the ability to project oneself in space (Mental Space Travel: MST) (2014: 267).” “[T]he close relationship between mental space travel (MST) and mental time travel (MTT) [...] justifies the assumption that a temporally extended and fully reflective self is built on a quasi-reflective and ecological extended self (p. 268).”

¹⁴⁹ Lynda McNeil (1996), discussing the evolution of narrativity from an evolutionary standpoint, also tries to individuate the brain structures and processes that underlie pre-narrative and narrative capacities: these evolved from movement through space to narrative movement and then to linguistic capacity. See in particular p. 331: “embodied schemata generated from perceptual experiences; the cross-modal association of neuronal, knowledge-structuring processes responsible for the ‘conversion of function’ from one schemata (motor) to another form (language); and the gradual elaboration of narrative scripts from everyday routines and gestural word/signs over time into conventionally sanctioned, archetypal narrative plots.”

¹⁵⁰ Manzotti 2011.

¹⁵¹ See Marder 2015: 187.

¹⁵² Cf. *Od.* xiv 122-27. On this episode see Segal 1994: the author tellingly speaks of the “performative truth” of the wanderer and of his “lying truth (p. 181).”

¹⁵³ See Corballis 2013; 2015.

¹⁵⁴ I am not simply echoing Benveniste’s (1971) assertion about the ego (“the ‘ego’ is he who says ‘ego’ (p. 25)”), when explaining how linguistic categories create the very parameters of human self-consciousness, but I refer more broadly to the self as product of narrative construction: on this self’s ontology see Kerby (1991) who argues that “the self is perhaps best construed as a character not unlike those we encounter almost every day in novels, plays and other story media. Such a self arises out of signifying practices rather than existing prior to them as an autonomous or Cartesian agent (p. 1).” According to Kerby, self-narration is not only descriptive but “fundamental to the emergence and reality of that subject (p. 4).”

the text for consistency with this system. In citing articles and books, transliteration of Greek words within footnotes (as well as in body text) maintains original authors' criterion. Passages from scholia, ancient scholars, and lexicographers are cited according to the TLG editions.

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