

HOMER'S VIVIDNESS: AN ENACTIVE APPROACH

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Abstract: The vividness of Homeric poetry has been admired since antiquity, but has been difficult to pin down with precision. It is usually thought to come about because readers are prompted to visualize the storyworld in the form of mental images seen with the mind's eye. But this cannot be right, both because there are serious scientific problems with the concept of 'pictures in the head' and because Homer does not offer many detailed descriptions, which are a prerequisite for eliciting detailed mental images. This article presents a different, and cognitively more realistic, take on the imageability of Homeric epic, which is based on recent reader-response studies inspired by the enactivist theory of cognition. These studies make a compelling case for readerly visualization as an embodied response, which does not depend on bright or detailed mental images. An analysis of the chariot race in *Iliad* 23 identifies specific features of what may be called an 'enactive style', notably the description of simple bodily actions. The final part of the article demonstrates that an enactivist take on Homer's vividness is not incompatible with the ancient concept of *enargeia*, the chief rhetorical term with which Homer's vividness is characterized in ancient criticism.

Keywords: Homer, style, cognition, enactivism, *enargeia*

I. Homer's vividness: a paradox

As a recent commentary on the *Iliad* notes, 'there have been many different responses to Homeric epic in the course of its long history, but audiences of different ages have been impressed by its vividness.'¹ As the list of rather disparate features compiled by Graziosi and Haubold – besides 'detailed observations' and 'grand panoramic scenes' also particles and 'bright words' – illustrates, vividness can signify a variety of things. However, listeners and readers of Homer appear above all to have been impressed by the imageability of the scenes described:² at least at times, the spatial and temporal distance between recipients and the narrated world seems to collapse, so that they seem to see and experience it directly.³ That sense comes out, for example, in a scholion on the beginning of the horse race in *Iliad* 23: 'He [i.e. Homer] has projected the entire mental image in a vivid way so that the listeners [i.e. Homer's readers] are captured no less than the spectators [i.e. the intradiegetic audience of the funeral games]' (Σ bT *Il.* 23.363–72: πᾶσαν φαντασίαν ἐναργῶς προβέβληται ὡς μηδὲν ἦττον τῶν θεατῶν ἐσχηκέναι τοὺς ἀκροατάς).⁴ Here and in other scholia, the key term *enargeia* is used to signify that the audience is transported to the narrated world.

This kind of vividness, the imageability of Homeric epic, is also a staple of modern scholarship. Ford, for instance, identifies it as the very purpose of epic song: 'The delight in the tale is not the satisfaction of accuracy or the communication of some higher truth but the pleasurable of a convincingly full picture ... The effect [i.e. on the audience] has been variously named as a sense of "participation" or "Vergegenwartigung" [sic], but I prefer to take a name out of Homer, via the

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¹ Graziosi and Haubold (2010) 23.

² For our definition of 'imageability', see n. 16 below.

³ Lowe (2000) 83 speaks in this respect of the 'Homeric epic's cult of transparency', which became a defining feature of what he calls the 'classical plot' in Western literature.

⁴ On *enargeia* in the scholia, see, for example, Rispoli (1984); Meijering (1987) 29–52; Nünlist (2009) 194–98.

Greek literary critics, *to enarges*, “vividness”.⁵ Coming from the very different angle of cognitive linguistics, Bakker states: ‘Even without a cognitive interest, any reader of Homer can testify to the graphic, concrete images in which Homeric narrative proceeds.’⁶ A number of recent publications indicate that the upsurge of work on the ancient concept of *enargeia* has further reinforced scholarly interest in the vividness of Homer. Strauss Clay, for example, while mostly concerned with the spatial layout of the battlefield in terms of entrances and exits, calls Homer ‘the most visual of poets’ and claims: ‘In following the changing tide of the battle, we will find that Homer’s complex and dynamic vision is ordered in such a coherent and vivid fashion that we can mentally transport ourselves to the Trojan plain.’⁷

Yet, there is one major issue. Detailed descriptions of spaces, characters and objects are rare in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In his investigation of early epic scenery, Andersson concludes about Homer: ‘The reader is given only sparse and poorly visualized information.’⁸ While pointing out that the references to space are not as random as Andersson has it, Richardson and de Jong confirm his observation that Homeric epic lacks a clear spatial layout: ‘Features of the setting appear only when they play a part in the plot.’⁹ Even Strauss Clay, who takes pains to show the coherence of space in the *Iliad*, admits that Homer ‘does not pause to give us a lengthy descriptive passage’.¹⁰ But how, it must be asked, does the vividness of Homeric narrative, felt so strongly by ancient and modern readers alike, square with the near absence of detailed descriptions of spaces, characters and objects. In the words of a German scholar: ‘Wie wird also – so muß man das Paradox formulieren – Homer anschaulich, ohne anschaulich zu sein?’¹¹

Recent attempts to solve the paradox have come at the cost of de-emphasizing Homer’s visual appeal. Thus, Radke-Uhlmann’s attempt to understand Homer’s vividness in terms of Aristotle’s concept of *energeia*, that is, the inherent but invisible quality of things, has little to do with the ancient claims concerning *enargeia*, by which readers are turned into ‘spectators’.¹² Allan, de Jong and de Jonge apply Ryan’s concept of the reader’s ‘immersion’ in the narrated world to the *Iliad*, but this concept is ultimately concerned with a specific mode of attention (directing one’s consciousness to the narrated world instead of on the text) and not with virtually ‘perceiving’ the narrated world.¹³

In this paper, we propose a new approach to imageability as an important aspect of Homeric vividness.¹⁴ We agree with Strauss Clay and others that the listener or reader is made to ‘perceive’ the narrated world imaginatively. We also retain the idea that the *Iliad* can be called a highly ‘imageable’ text, if it can be shown that it prompts the audience through verbal cues imaginatively to connect with the narrated world as they would perceptually connect with the real world.¹⁵ However, we take issue with the claim that it is cognitively realistic to suppose that perception and the imagination primarily depend on building up detailed internal pictures which are read off by ‘the mind’s eye’ and with the corollary claim that detailed, ‘picturesque’ descriptions are particularly vivid. This ‘pictorialist’ model conforms to our intuitions and has therefore dominated Homeric scholarship, but recent cognitive research has shown that perception and imagination are

⁵ Ford (1992) 53–54.

⁶ Bakker (1997) 56.

⁷ Strauss Clay (2011) 11, 51. See also Radke-Uhlmann (2009); Allan et al. (2014). On *enargeia*, see, for example, Zanker (1981; 2004); Manieri (1998); Otto (2009); Webb (2009) 87–106; on epic memory and vision, see Bakker (1993; 2005); Minchin (2001a); on visualizing the plot of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Purves (2010) 24–96; on vision in epic poetry in general, see Lovatt (2013); Lovatt and Vout (2013).

⁸ Andersson (1976) 17.

⁹ Richardson (1990) 50–69, quotation at 61; de Jong (2012) 21. See also de Jong and Nünlist (2004) 74–75.

¹⁰ Strauss Clay (2011) 101.

¹¹ Radke-Uhlmann (2009) 12.

¹² Radke-Uhlmann (2009).

¹³ Allan et al. (2014), relying on Ryan (2001). Cf. Caracciolo (2014) 160 for a similar critique of ‘immersion’.

¹⁴ Next to plot, mental imagery is one of the things people tend to remember best about their reading of narrative texts (Sadoski 1990), and it has been shown to have strong correlations with other aspects of reader response, notably emotion (Sadoski and Krasny 2008).

¹⁵ For perception and the imagination as analogous phenomena, see Strauss Clay (2011) 27; Jajdelska et al. (2010) 443–44; Troscianko (2010) 152.

in fact best thought of as 'enactive', that is as a specific way of acting. Drawing on this research we will suggest that narratives which allow readers to 'enact' the narrated world are cognitively realist and vividly 'imageable', that is, they encourage the reader to undergo a quasi-perceptual experience of the narrated world (II).¹⁶ To prove this claim, we will discuss an example from the *Iliad*, namely the chariot race in book 23 (section III). At first sight, our argument may seem to clash with the ancient emphasis on the visual quality of Homeric epic. However, as we will finally suggest, the ancient notion of *enargeia* ought not to be equated with the pictorial approach popular among classicists; in fact, it seems to tie in well with an enactive approach (section IV).

II. An enactive account of the readerly imagination

In this section we propose to dissociate the notion of 'vividness' from detailed descriptions. Since this 'pictorialist' view of the readerly imagination corresponds with our intuitive understanding of perception, we will first expose the assumptions on which it rests before pitting an alternative, 'enactivist' account against it.

Pictorialist views of perception start out from a well-known paradox: there exists a strange discrepancy between the many shortcomings of our visual apparatus – for instance, we can only concentrate on, or foveate, a very small area of our visual field, and where the optic nerve exits the eye there is a 'blind spot' on the retina without photoreceptors – and the phenomenology of our perceptual experience, which consists of an inescapable impression that what we 'see' is a detailed and extended display that truthfully corresponds to the scene before our eyes. The pictorialist solution to this problem is to claim that bits of visual information taken in through the eyes are processed by the brain to form picture-like internal representations (or mental images), which are sufficiently rich to support our high-resolution and gap-free perceptual experience of the world: 'seeing' is cast as a process by which we form and then interpret internal mental images.¹⁷ This account of perception can easily be extended to the imagination; 'imagining' is very much like 'seeing', except for the fact that the internal representations are not built up from visual information, but composed of items called up from a long-term memory store of 'deep representations'. If this is how the imagination works, it would seem that an author who wishes to make his readers vividly imagine a narrated world can do no better than provide them with accumulative descriptive details. This would allow the readers to call up from memory mental images, painstakingly combining them until a detailed model of the narrated world has been formed. This process has aptly been called a 'jigsaw model' of the readerly imagination.¹⁸

However, while it comes naturally to us to think about the imagination in overtly pictorialist terms (as when we claim that we can 'picture' the face of a character in a novel or the room she is in), it has proved difficult to capture the nature of 'mental images' in rigorous scientific terms.¹⁹ For example, evidence from much-discussed perceptual phenomena such as inattentional blindness and change blindness suggests that the perceived world is much less like a gap-free and detailed photograph than is often thought, and rather supports the claim that perception is, to a substantial degree, selective and attention-dependent.²⁰ This has led some scholars to challenge the idea that

¹⁶ Thus, we use the verb 'to imagine' to refer to the imaginative *experience* of 'seeing'; we also use (for want of better terms) 'imageable' and 'imageability' in this sense: these terms do not, in an enactivist view, have to do with mental 'images', but with an imaginative *experience* of perception.

¹⁷ See, for example, the classic works of Kosslyn (1980); Marr (1982); Kosslyn et al. (2006).

¹⁸ Jajdelska et al. (2010) 440–41.

¹⁹ For detailed accounts of the problems involved, see Thomas (1999); Troscianko (2014a) 43–50. Among other things, Troscianko notes that, although Kosslyn et

al. (2006) 136 state explicitly that the internal representation on which their account hinges 'is not a picture', they still rely on the metaphor for the explanatory purchase of their model.

²⁰ Inattentional blindness occurs when someone fails to recognize an unexpected visual stimulus that is in plain sight because the viewer does not consciously pay attention to it. Change blindness occurs when a change in a visual stimulus is introduced but the observer does not notice it. See Noë (2004) 49–55; Troscianko (2014a) 50–53; for an in-depth discussion of selective visual attention, see Zhang and Lin (2013).

mental images are responsible for generating the phenomenology of perceptual experience. One of the most fully developed alternative theories is the enactive account championed by Noë.²¹ Noë posits that the character of perceptual experience is primarily determined by an ongoing, attentive interaction between the embodied mind and the physical environment. We experience the world relative to an egocentric standpoint and attend to aspects of it which can be explored through appropriate movements of our eyes, heads and bodies. The world as experienced emerges from actual and potential bodily activities; to perceive a particular object is to know how the perceptual input would change if we or the object moved in a certain way. In other words, perception depends on our mastery of sensorimotor contingencies. Perception, then, is a skilful activity; it is something we do, not passively undergo; what we store in our brains are not so much mental images of the world as routines we have learned for how to extract useful information about it.

Two factors explain why the perceived world nonetheless feels detailed and gap-free. First, the world functions as its own (re)presentation: we know we *can* always look, by moving our bodies, heads and eyes, as and when we need to; the world, that is, emerges on a ‘just in time’ basis. Secondly, although many details may escape us, we are, according to Noë, particularly good at perceiving our environment in terms of its affordances for embodied action: when we look at, say, a hammer, we do not so much perceive the object in all its details as rather perceive how we could use it, if we picked it up; and when we have visually assessed the hammer in terms of how it can serve our pragmatic intentions, we feel we have a complete ‘picture’ of it, even if in reality we do not.²²

On the assumption that perception and the imagination are analogous, to imagine something is, in enactivist terms, to engage in an embodied exploration of a non-actual world. It is like ‘going through the motions’ of actual perception, but with sensorimotor resonances provided from memory rather than from the immediate environment.²³ This view of the imagination differs from a pictorialist view in one crucial aspect in particular: on a pictorialist account, the similarity between ‘seeing’ and ‘imagining’ is grounded in what is claimed to be the content (or object), namely mental images; on an enactive account, by contrast, the similarity is grounded in the active, embodied structure of experience.²⁴ In the words of Thompson, ‘we do not experience mental pictures, but instead visualize an object or scene by mentally enacting or entertaining a possible perceptual experience of that object or scene’. It is, to be sure, possible that ‘deep representations’ are involved, but they are, at most, the means through which we ‘reach toward’, or probe, the intentional object of our imaginative experience: they are ‘undergone’ rather than inwardly ‘seen’.²⁵ Certainly, they do not have to be detailed in order to ensure a vivid imaginative experience: an imaginative experience of, say, stroking a cat, may simply not fill in many of the details about the cat, such as, for instance, whether it has white paws or not. It would be wrong to suppose that the mental image of the cat is noticeably lacking something, that there is a smudge or blurry patch on the ‘canvas’; as long as the colour of the cat’s paws is irrelevant to the imaginative experience of stroking it, it neither has nor does not have white paws. In other words, mental images may be ‘inexplicitly noncommittal’.²⁶

²¹ See Noë (2004); (2009); helpful summaries are offered by Troscianko (2013) 184–85; (2014a) 75–84. Noë’s research is part of a growing number of studies on what has become known as ‘4E cognition’; its proponents argue that cognition is extended (i.e. not taking place only inside the brain), embodied (i.e. dependent upon characteristics of the physical body of an agent), embedded (i.e. bound to social, cultural and physical contexts) and enactive (i.e. dependent on interaction with the environment). For the philosophical background in the phenomenological tradition of, among others, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, see Gallagher (2009).

²² Noë (2004) 21, 105–06; for ‘affordances’, see also Gibson (1986) 127–46.

²³ Troscianko (2014b) 20. Evidence from eye-tracking experiments suggests that imagining involves the same tracing of sensorimotor patterns as actual perception; *cf.*, for example, Spivey and Geng (2001); Johansson et al. (2006).

²⁴ Caracciolo (2013) 89.

²⁵ Thompson (2007) 156.

²⁶ Troscianko (2013) 186. A now famous anecdote (recounted by, for example, Caracciolo (2013) 81) has it that the renowned narratologist F.K. Stanzel once asked

If the enactivist account of the imagination is on the right track, then this should have consequences for our view of the 'imageability' of narrative texts. The enactivist account suggests that, for all its initial intuitive plausibility, the 'jigsaw model' of the readerly imagination is not in fact cognitively realistic. In particular, lengthy and detailed descriptions contradict the economy and selectivity which are intrinsic to the normal perceptual attention which we give to the world around us.²⁷ In addition, such descriptions are often presented in separate blocks of the narrative and so disconnected from the narration of actions, which makes it difficult to assess their relevance for embodied action. Both impediments to a fluent readerly experience of the narrated world can be illustrated with the following passage, the opening of Fontane's novel *Irrungen, Wirrungen*:²⁸

At the intersection of the Kurfürstendamm and Kurfürstenstrasse, diagonally across from the Zoological Garden, there was still, in the middle of the '70s, a large market garden, which stretched out in the direction of the fields; the house belonging to this, small and with three windows, situated some hundred paces back in a little front garden, could still, despite the fact that it was so small and secluded, be readily spotted from the street that led past it. Yet another part of the market-garden as a whole, what in fact amounted to its real core, was hidden by precisely this little residence, as if by a stage-curtain, and only a little wooden tower, painted red and green, with a clock-face, half broken off, below the tower's top (no question of an actual clock being there) suggested that behind this curtain something else must be hidden – a suspicion which came to be confirmed by a flock of doves that flew up from time to time, swarming around the turret, and even more so by the occasional barking of a dog. Where this dog was actually to be found was, however, beyond the powers of perception, although the front door, hard by the left corner of the tower, always ajar from dawn till dusk, permitted a glance into a little piece of courtyard.²⁹

While some readers may be able to imagine a holistic picture of the scene, this passage arguably emphasizes the scene's visual complexity in a cognitively unrealistic way; for many readers, the quantity and the meticulousness of the detail provided may detract from, rather than add to, the vividness of the impression which they have of this particular intersection in Berlin. The absence of human actors who interact with the described environment also makes it difficult to keep track of all the details: it is not clear whether and how the descriptive material is relevant.

The question now arises whether an enactivist account of the readerly imagination allows us to say what kinds of linguistic cues *are* conducive to eliciting a vivid imaginative experience of the narrated world. Enactivist approaches to literary narrative are still in their infancy.³⁰ There

a class of about 300 students to imagine a man running across a square. He then asked whether the man wore a coat and a hat, but none of the students knew how to answer: they had imagined the man without deciding whether he wore a coat and a hat or not.

²⁷ Kuzmičová (2012b) 36.

²⁸ Fontane (1971) 319, cited and translated by Troscianko (2013) 188.

²⁹ The original German runs: 'An dem Schnittpunkte von Kurfürstendamm und Kurfürstenstraße, schräg gegenüber dem »Zoologischen«, befand sich in der Mitte der siebziger Jahre noch eine große, feldeinwärts sich erstreckende Gärtnerei, deren kleines, dreifenstriges, in einem Vorgärtchen um etwa hundert Schritte zurückgelegenes Wohnhaus, trotz aller Kleinheit und Zurückgezogenheit, von der vorübergehenden Straße her sehr wohl erkannt werden konnte. Was aber sonst noch zu dem Gesamtgewese der Gärtnerei gehörte, ja die recht eigentliche Hauptsache derselben ausmachte, war durch eben dies kleine Wohnhaus wie durch eine Kulisse versteckt,

und nur ein rot und grün gestrichenes Holztürmchen mit einem halb weggebrochenen Zifferblatt unter der Turmspitze (von Uhr selbst keine Rede) ließ vermuten, daß hinter dieser Kulisse noch etwas anderes verborgen sein müsse, welche Vermutung denn auch in einer von Zeit zu Zeit aufsteigenden, das Türmchen umschwärmenden Taubenschar und mehr noch in einem gelegentlichen Hundegeblaff ihre Bestätigung fand. Wo dieser Hund eigentlich steckte, das entzog sich freilich der Wahrnehmung, trotzdem die hart an der linken Ecke gelegene, von früh bis spät aufstehende Haustür einen Blick auf ein Stückchen Hofraum gestattete.'

³⁰ Ground-breaking studies include Grünbaum (2007); Troscianko (2010); (2013); (2014a); (2014b); Bolens (2012); Kuzmičová (2012a); (2012b); (2013); Caracciolo (2013); (2014); Kukkonen and Caracciolo (2014), a special issue of *Style* on second-generation cognitive approaches to literature. Cave (2016) now provides a good starting point that demonstrates the usefulness of cognitive approaches to literary criticism.

appears to be a growing consensus, however, concerning at least some items, which can be illustrated with the help of the following passage taken from Jacobsen's short story *Mogens*.³¹

When Camilla had entered her room, she pulled up the blind, leaned her brow against the cool pane, and hummed Elisabeth's song from 'The Fairy-hill'. At sunset a light breeze had begun to blow and a few tiny, white clouds, illuminated by the moon, were driven towards Camilla. For a long while she stood regarding them; she followed them from a far distance, and she sang louder and louder as they drew nearer, kept silent a few seconds while they disappeared above her, then sought others, and followed them too. With a little sigh she pulled down the blind. She walked to the dressing table, leaned her elbows against it, rested her head in her clasped hands and regarded her own picture in the mirror without really seeing it.

Despite the absence of detailed descriptions, Grünbaum thinks this is a highly imageable passage which supports his conclusion that 'it is not primarily in reading explicit descriptions of visual and spatial properties of things that we experience the visibility and spatiality of the presented world in literary narratives.'³² The following aspects arguably contribute to the imageability of the narrated world.

1. *Simple bodily movements*. The passage from *Mogens* largely consists of the narration of simple, intentional bodily actions: Camilla enters the room, pulls the blinds up and down, walks to the dressing table, leans against it and rests her head in her hands. According to Grünbaum, it is the narration of such actions which generates an immediate and quasi-perceptual understanding of what is going on. This is so, because the relevant verb phrases indicate schematically the various elements of the experience of agency as posited by the enactivist account, which relates pragmatic intentionality, bodily movement and perception to each other in systematic and unifying ways; we know what it is like to enter a room or pull up blinds in terms of the bodily poses and the change in visual input which comes with such actions, because it is at the level of such actions that we ourselves perceptually-enactively experience the world and know others to experience it.³³ To imagine such actions as performed by a character to some extent cuts across an inner-outer dichotomy; it is for this reason that the focalization of a passage such as that from *Mogens* is somewhat ambiguous.³⁴ In any case, simple bodily-action narration makes manifest, without much effort on the part of the reader, a spatial situation as strung together by deeply familiar patterns of movement and orientation. The anthropocentric way in which objects are introduced ('she pulled up the blinds', *not* 'there were blinds') also plays on our sensitivity to their affordances for embodied action and is more likely effortlessly to evoke a 'feel' of their properties (including perceptual ones) than isolated and detailed descriptions of objects.³⁵

³¹ Jacobsen (1979) 29–30, cited by Grünbaum (2007) 307.

³² Grünbaum (2007) 310.

³³ Grünbaum (2007) 309–10; see also Kuzmičová (2012b) 29; (2013) 114–16 on what she calls 'transitive bodily movement'.

³⁴ Grünbaum (2007) 308. Bolens (2012) 37–39; Kuzmičová (2012b) 29 and (2013) 116 make the stronger claim that simple action-narration stimulates readers' sensorimotor resonances up to the point that they imaginatively simulate such actions entirely from a first-person perspective. This presupposes a radically embodied view of language, such as that of Zwaan (2004) 36: 'Language is a set of cues to the comprehender to construct an experiential (perception plus action) simulation of the

described situation. In this conceptualization, the comprehender is an immersed experiencer of the described situation, and comprehension is the vicarious experience of the described situation.' However, the question of the extent to which the unconscious processes involved in language comprehension make for a phenomenological feeling of bodily involvement has not yet been answered.

³⁵ Kuzmičová (2012b) 28; and especially (2013) 117: 'The imaginary world is unlikely to feel tangible and present unless physical stimuli that can be interacted with are mentioned (or strongly implied), that is, unless the furnishing of the imaginary world is reached, grasped, manipulated, leaned against, and so forth.'

2. *'Just in time'*.³⁶ The absence of a separate description of Camilla's room to set the scene for the narrative action is in itself cognitively realistic. As Troscianko comments on the similar absence of a description of the bedroom of Josef K., in which Kafka sets the opening of his novel *Das Schloß*: 'We're unlikely to regret the absence of a verbally painted picture of K.'s bedroom ..., because we make no detailed, lasting internal picture of rooms anyway.'³⁷ Although we may, from time to time, pause to contemplate a landscape or an object, our experience of the world is on the whole not one of stopping, 'taking in' the scenery and then proceeding to act within it. When we perceive or imagine a room like that of Camilla's, it is not part of our phenomenological commitments to have all the detail in our heads from the start; rather, ever new aspects come to our attention as and when they become relevant. *Mogens* mirrors this process in cognitively realistic ways; it focuses our attention on the blinds as they are pulled up, on the pane as Camilla leans against it, on the dressing table as she walks towards it and on the mirror as she looks into it.

3. *Dynamic veracity*. In order to stimulate the reader's imagination, the narration of actions should be dynamically veracious; that is, the time a text passage takes to read ought to be commensurate with the duration of the described action as performed in the real world.³⁸ The passage from *Mogens* abides by this principle, too; it briskly states the simple action of Camilla taking a few steps towards the dressing table, but the more protracted movement of the clouds is analysed into three separate moments, as they 'were driven towards Camilla', 'drew nearer' and then 'disappeared'. A similar principle holds for properly descriptive material; the textual duration of the attention given to an object or space should ideally correspond to the attention given to such an object or space in real life.³⁹ Thus, in *Mogens* the blinds are simply mentioned, reflecting the unthinking, perfunctory way that we routinely handle everyday objects, while the clouds, the object of a brief moment of contemplation for Camilla, are given some epithets.

4. *Affordances*. It is not only the quantity and distribution of descriptive details which matter, but also their quality, which should ideally correspond to our affordance-directed interaction with the world. Descriptions of objects should focus on aspects that are relevant to potential and actual ways of interacting with them. A particular claim related to affordances is Troscianko's argument that a text which deals in basic-level concepts (for example 'blind') is more readily imageable than one that deals either in more specific or in less specific concepts ('window covering', 'cellular shades'), because basic-level concepts are cognitively privileged in that we have general sensorimotor actions for such concepts stored in our memories, but not for non-basic-level ones.⁴⁰

The juxtaposition of Fontane with Jacobsen may suffice to illustrate the impact that an enactive approach has for our understanding of narratorial vividness. A focus on bodily movements which describes objects only insofar as they pertain to the action engages the reader's imagination far more strongly than a minute description would do. It is now time to prove that the shift from a pictorialist to an enactive approach permits us finally to comprehend Homer's acclaimed vividness.⁴¹

³⁶ Cf. Kuzmičová (2012b) 13; Troscianko (2014a) 125–26.

³⁷ Troscianko (2014a) 129.

³⁸ Kuzmičová (2012b) 28–29; cf. Grünbaum's arguments in favour of what he calls 'simple' bodily action narration (as opposed to summaries and detailed descriptions of such actions): (2007) 301–03.

³⁹ Kuzmičová (2012b) 39.

⁴⁰ Troscianko (2014a) 137–38, 142; (2014b) 21–22; see also Kuzmičová (2012b) 31 on 'canonical affordances'.

⁴¹ Enactive approaches have been developed with the modern reader in mind; ancient audiences, however, listened to bards singing the *Iliad*. While this is a considerable difference that has been duly stressed in Homeric scholarship, we do not think that it affects the validity of an enactive approach. It will be an important task for cognitive studies to deal with different modes of reception, but such criteria as simple action verbs and affordance are doubtlessly relevant to oral performances as well as reading.

III. The chariot race in *Iliad* 23

In his account of Olympia, Pausanias provides a description of the site of the horse races. While not as exasperating as Fontane's account of a street intersection quoted in section II, Pausanias' description is still elaborate and painstaking (6.20.10–11):⁴²

The starting-place is in the shape of the prow of a ship, and its ram is turned towards the course. At the point where the prow adjoins the porch of Agnaptus it broadens, and a bronze dolphin on a rod has been made at the very point of the ram. Each side of the starting place is more than four hundred feet in length, and in the sides are built stands.

Pausanias continues with the altar and, after describing the starting mechanism, proceeds to the two sides of the racecourse (6.20.15): 'The racecourse has one side longer than the other, and on the longer side, which is a bank, there stands, at the passage through the bank, Taraxippus, the terror of the horses.' After referencing various theories about the origin of Taraxippus, Pausanias comes to the shorter side (6.21.1): 'The other side of the course is not a bank of earth but a low hill. At the foot of the hill has been built a sanctuary to Demeter surnamed Chamyne.'

Readers who look for a similarly elaborate description of the racecourse in *Iliad* 23 will be disappointed.⁴³ Homer has Nestor muse on the turn-post, a dry stump in the midst of two white stones, perhaps a grave-marker or already a turn-post in the past (23.326–33), but he does not lay out the racecourse.⁴⁴ The scant information with which we have to make do is encapsulated in the account of the action: 'Achilles showed them the turn-post / far away on the level plain' (23.358–59: σήμηνε δὲ τέρματ' Ἀχιλλεὺς / τηλόθεν ἐν λείωι πεδίωι).⁴⁵ The 'level plain' is mentioned again as the area through which the chariots 'fly' (23.372, 449). The direction of the course has to be gleaned from the narration of the start – 'they swiftly made their way / away from the ships quickly' (23.365: οἱ δ' ὄκα διέπρησσαν πεδίωι / νόσφι νεῶν ταχέως) – and what is described as the final part of the race (23.373–74): 'But as the rapid horses were running the last of the racecourse/ back, and toward the gray sea ...' (ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ πύματον τέλεον δρόμον ὠκέες ἵπποι / ἄψ ἐφ' ἄλος πολιῆς ...). The only detail we learn about the racecourse, a narrowing of the path by a gutter (23.419–22), is given because it is crucial to the risky manoeuvre in which Diomedes passes Menelaos.

However carefully we read the *Iliad*, we will not be able to locate the racecourse in the Trojan plain beyond the fact that the charioteers first have the ships in their back and then on their return race towards the sea. Nor do we have an idea of the distance covered.⁴⁶ The vagueness of spatial indicators comes to the fore in a controversy over where Diomedes overtakes Menelaos. Against the traditional view that the manoeuvre takes place on the way back to the ships, Gagarin locates it at the turn-post.⁴⁷ Gagarin's thesis is ultimately not convincing, because, as he himself admits, it conflicts with the explicit reference to the final part of the race in 23.373–74.⁴⁸ And yet, the problems listed by Gagarin concerning how to square this reference with the description of the narrowing path illustrate how far away the Homeric account is from giving us a clear and detailed picture of the setting.

⁴² For Pausanias' handling of space, see Akujärvi (2012).

⁴³ On Homer's chariot race and the funeral games in general, see Stawell (1909) 82–92; Willcock (1973); Redfield (1975) 204–10; Dunkle (1981); (1987); Macleod (1982) 30–32; Gagarin (1983); Laser (1987) 21–25; Bannert (1988) 129–51; Taplin (1992) 251–60; Brown (2003); Rengakos (2006); Grethlein (2007).

⁴⁴ Nestor's description of the turn-post has been interpreted as an intricate reflection on memory: Lynn-George (1988) 266; Dickson (1995) 218; Grethlein (2008) 31.

⁴⁵ The translations of Homer follow Lattimore (1984), with some modifications.

⁴⁶ Ancient critics wondered about the location and distance: scholion b 23.365 claims that the race went from Sigeion to Rhoiteion and adds that according to Aristarchus the racecourse extended from the sea to the wall and was five stadia long.

⁴⁷ Gagarin (1983).

⁴⁸ For a critical discussion of Gagarin's thesis, see Lohmann (1992) 298 n. 9.

On a pictorialist view, the absence of a detailed and exact description must seriously impede the vividness of Homer's account of the horse race. The approach outlined in section II, however, makes us understand that it does not stand in the way of vividness – on the contrary; just as we do not process visual data to form picture-like mental representations, but perceive our surroundings in terms of actual and potential bodily interactions, it is less a photographic description than an enactivist account that gives the reader the feeling of being right on the spot. Not: 'The race took place on the level plain. The turn-post was five stadia north from the starting point at the ships ...', but 'Achilles showed them the turn-post / far away on the level plain' and 'they swiftly made their way / away from the ships quickly.' In this section, we set out to explore the devices that render the Homeric chariot-race so vivid.⁴⁹ Besides demonstrating the salience of enactive features, we will identify other devices which complement the vividness generated by the enactive narration.

It is, to start with, noteworthy that Homer does not give us a full account of the race. He commences with a panoramic description of the start and then concentrates on two scenes, both on the way back – namely the duel between Eumelos and Diomedes, and Antilochos' tricking of Menelaos – before he shifts the focus to the internal audience watching the chariots reach their goal.⁵⁰ Homer recounts no individual action occurring during the race's first half and, most strikingly, does not even touch on the circling of the turn-post, according to Nestor's advice to Antilochos the crucial part of the race; here a charioteer, if he is bold and cunning, has a chance to get the better of his competitors equipped with better horses.⁵¹ The chariot-race thus offers a nice example of the economy of Homeric narrative which proves (partially) wrong Auerbach's thesis that Homer cannot but cover everything (we will see that in another regard Auerbach's take on Homer is still illuminating).⁵² Homer not only abstains from providing a detailed rendering of the setting, but is also highly selective in his treatment of the action. Gripping vignettes take precedence over complete coverage. In the following, we will discuss the race scene by scene.

Providing the backdrop to the two duels, the panoramic description of the start (23.362–72) cannot be expected to be highly enactive. Summary narrative violates the principle of dynamic veracity. Moreover, there is no bodily, goal-directed action, no individual movement in such iterative descriptions as 'the chariots / rocking now would dip to the earth who fosters so many / and now again would spring up clear of the ground' (23.368–69: ἄρματα δ' ἄλλοτε μὲν χθονὶ πίλνατο πουλυβοτείρη, / ἄλλοτε δ' ἀΐξασκε μετήορα). That said, even the beginning of the race has enactive features. The charioteers 'lifted the whips above the horses' and 'struck with the whip-thongs' (23.362–63: ἐφ' ἵππουιν μάστιγας ἄειραν, / πέπληγόν θ' ἰμάσιν). A bodily action is here split into two discrete simple movements that stimulate the recipients' imagination.

Three different adverbs, all referring to the action, emphasize the speed (ἔσσυμένως, ὄκα and ταχέως). As Kuzmičová notes, such action-related adverbs create a higher degree of motor resonance than adverbs that are agent-related (for example 'obediently').⁵³ What is more, the speed is not only stated but also expressed through sensorial phenomena: 'The dust lifting / clung beneath the horses' chests like cloud or a stormwhirl. / Their manes streamed along the blast of the wind' (23.365–67: ὑπὸ δὲ στέρνοισι κονίη/ ἴστατ' αἰρομένη ὡς τε νέφος ἠὲ θύελλα, / χαῖται δ' ἐρρόοντο μετὰ πνοῆς ἀνέμοιο). The brief simile renders the dust vivid; while the cloud illustrates its thickness, the storm highlights the movement and thereby drives home the speed which is at the same time thrown into relief by the heroes 'standing in their chariots' (23.370: ἔστασαν ἐν δίφροισι). It therefore does not come as a surprise that this is the passage on which the scholion quoted at the

⁴⁹ Cf. Taplin (1992) 255, who, focusing on the ethical issues of the chariot race, admits that 'it is excitingly narrated in its own right.'

⁵⁰ On the perspective from which the chariot-race is viewed, see Lohmann (1992) 297–302.

⁵¹ Cf. Bannert (1988) 131. On the *mêtis* of Nestor's

speech, see Dunkle (1987) 1–9.

⁵² For a critique of Auerbach's reading of Homer, see Lynn-George (1988) 1–49; de Jong 1999; Haubold 2014. For a more positive assessment from an oralist perspective, see Bakker (2005) 56–70.

⁵³ Kuzmičová (2012b) 30.

beginning of this article comments: ‘He [i.e. Homer] has projected the entire mental image in a vivid way so that the listeners [i.e. Homer’s readers] are captured no less than the spectators [i.e. the intradiegetic audience of the funeral games]’ (Σ bT II. 23.363–72: πᾶσαν φαντασίαν ἐναργῶς προβέβληται ὡς μηδὲν ἦττον τῶν θεατῶν ἐσχηκέναι τοὺς ἀκροατάς).

Ps.-Demetrius in *De elocutione* picks verses from the first detailed scene of the race, the fight for the prime position between Diomedes and Eumelos, to illustrate his understanding of *enargeia* (210). We quote the lines he refers to in their context (words quoted by Demetrius in bold; 23.377–81):

τάς δὲ μετ’ ἐξέφερον Διομήδεος ἄρσενες ἵπποι
 Τρώϊοι, οὐδέ τι πολλὸν ἀνευθ’ ἔσαν, ἀλλὰ μάλ’ ἐγγύς·
αἰεὶ γὰρ δίφρου ἐπιβησομένοισιν ἔϊκτην,
πνοιή δ’ Εὐμήλοιο μετάφρενον εὐρέε τ’ ὦμω
 θέρμετ’· ἐπ’ αὐτῷ γὰρ κεφαλὰς καταθέντε πετέσθην.

and after him [i.e. Eumelos] the stallions of Diomedes,
 the Trojan horses, not far behind at all, but close on him,
 for they seemed forever on the point of climbing his chariot
 and the wind of them was hot on the back and on the broad shoulders
 of Eumelos. For they flew, laying down their heads on him.

Ps.-Demetrius praises the account of the chariot-race for ‘leaving out nothing that is happening or has happened’ (ἐκ τοῦ μηδὲν παραλελειφθαι τῶν τε συμβαινόντων καὶ συμβάντων), and his focus on events (‘what happens’) rather than spatial settings is in itself revealing. Perhaps the specific lines which he highlights betray his sensitivity to the fact that it is not so much an abundance of detail, but the selection of specific details which renders the account of the horse race so vivid.⁵⁴ The framework adopted here allows us to state more precisely that it is the enactivist and embodied mode of the narrative that does the trick. Instead of simply stating the closeness between the chariots of Diomedes and Eumelos, Homer represents it in terms of a goal-directed action and transitive movements – Diomedes horses seem to ‘climb upon’ (ἐπιβησομένοισιν) Eumelos’ chariot and ‘lay down’ (καταθέντε) their heads on him. The prepositions and prefixes (ἐπι-, ἐπί, κατα-) specify the movements spatially and make the pursuit tangible to the listener/reader. The perspective of an eye-witness is complemented by the stance of the charioteer and the visual perception by a tactile sensation, as Eumelos is said to feel the breath of the horses on his back. Multi-sensorially and plastically expressed, the movement gains in force. The scholion states that ‘the competition of the contenders *stirs up* love of victory for the audience’ (Σ 23.378b: φιλονεικίαν κινεῖ τοῖς ἀκούουσι τὸ ἐφάμιλλον τῶν ἀγωνιστῶν). What the scholiast seems to say is that Homer gives the audience a keen sense of the competition and makes them themselves adopt the eagerness of the contenders. The verb κινεῖν nicely captures the enactive character of the narration that makes the φιλονεικία almost palpable.⁵⁵

The following verses are not particularly enactive, but heighten the experiential appeal of the narration in a different way (23.382–84):

καὶ νύ κεν ἢ παρέλασσε ἢ ἀμφήριστον ἔθηκεν,
 εἰ μὴ Τυδέος υἱὲ κοτέσσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,
 ὅς ῥά οἱ ἐκ χειρῶν ἔβαλεν μάστιγα φαεινὴν.

And now he might have passed him or run to a doubtful decision,
 had not Phoibos Apollo been angry with Diomedes,
 Tydeus’ son, and dashed the shining whip from his hands.

⁵⁴ Cf. Otto (2009) 79–80.

⁵⁵ On κινεῖν in the scholia, see Meijering (1987) 44–

47 and Nünlist (2009) 139–40, who, however, play down the idea of movement.

In sketching an alternative course of events, the counterfactual goes against the teleological tendency of narrative.⁵⁶ The narrator's retrospect, tangible in the preterite as the default tense of narrative, quickly comes to bear the sense of inevitability. Against this, counterfactuals alert the reader to the openness of the past for various developments and thereby restore presence to the action. The vividness of the enactivist account is thus reinforced through a temporal perspective which envisages the action rather as still in process than as something that has already come to an end. In the words of the scholion, Homer 'makes the observers share in their anxiety, as Pindar states [*Ol.* 6.11]: "Many will remember a fine deed, when it was accomplished with much pain"' (*Σ II. T 23.382a*: συναγωνιᾶν αὐτοῖς ποιεῖ τοὺς θεατὰς κατὰ Πίνδαρον· πολλοὶ δὲ [καὶ] μέμνανται, καλὸν εἶ τι ποναθῆι). While the Pindaric line concentrates on the risk and suffering that make achievements memorable, the scholiast's deployment of συναγωνιᾶν stresses the empathy triggered by the verses. This is closely related to the kind of vividness analysed here, which gives the recipient the feeling of being on the spot of the action.

Apollo's assault provokes an intervention of Athena which is narrated in a string of verbs relating the kind of volitional transitive movements that, if we follow an enactivist approach, are highly imageable. The goddess 'swept in speed to' Diomedes (23.389: μάλα δ' ὄκα μετέσσυτο), 'gave him his whip' (23.390: δῶκε δὲ οἱ μάστιγα) and 'put strength into his horses' (23.390: μένος δ' ἵπποισιν ἐνήκεν). Then she 'went on after' Eumelos (23.391: μετ' Ἀδμήτου υἱὸν κοτέουσ' ἐβεβήκει) and 'smashed his chariot yoke' (23.392: ἵππειον δὲ οἱ ἤξε θεὰ ζυγόν). Homer here provides 'the narration of simple, bodily actions' which, in the words of Grünbaum, 'generate (quasi-)visibility and (quasi-)presence of the narrated world'.⁵⁷ Having a strong resonance in the imagination, the representation of bodily action gives the recipients a sense of direct access to the narrated event.

Eumelos' crash is then reported in the passive voice, which highlights Eumelos' role as a victim. The passive voice may be less conducive to generating resonance in the listener's and reader's imagination, and yet the narration is highly embodied (23.392–97):

αἱ δὲ οἱ ἵπποι
 ἀμφὶς ὁδοῦ δραμέτην, ῥυμὸς δ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἐλύσθη.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ δίφροιο παρά τροχὸν ἐξεκυλίσθη,
 ἀγκῶνάς τε περιδύφθη στόμα τε ῥῖνάς τε,
 θρυλίχθη δὲ μέτωπον ἐπ' ὀφρύσι· τῷ δὲ οἱ ὄσσε
 δακρυόφι πλησθεν, θαλερῆ δὲ οἱ ἔσχετο φωνή.

and his horses

ran on either side of the way, the pole was solved down on the earth.
 He himself was sent spinning out of the chariot beside the wheel,
 so that his elbows were all torn, and his mouth, and his nostrils,
 and his forehead was lacerated about the brows, and his eyes
 filled with tears, and the springing voice was held fast within him.

The spatial rendering of the action is just as remarkable as the relative dearth of precisely rendered spatial layouts in Homeric epic: the horses on both sides of the path, the pole down on the earth, Eumelos flung out of the chariot and lying beside the wheel. This kind of spatial referencing, which is bound to action, stimulates the reader's imagination far more than the graphic description of places. It is cognitively more realistic in that it corresponds to our perception, which, instead of photographing the environment, registers it in terms of actual and potential interactions.

⁵⁶ On this function of counterfactuals in historiography, see Grethlein (2013) 69, 242–44.

⁵⁷ Grünbaum (2007) 311.

The description of Eumelos' fall closely follows the body's movement: he first lands on his elbows and then, with the head dropping to the ground, tears his face. Even the list of the facial parts appears to mirror the order in which they touch the earth: first the mouth, then the nose and finally the forehead. A scholion draws our attention to a further aspect that contributes to the vividness of the passage (Σ bT 23.396): 'The onomatopoeia of $\theta\rho\upsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\chi\theta\eta$ expresses the trouble of the shattered protagonist' (η $\acute{o}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\alpha}$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\theta\rho\upsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\chi\theta\eta$ $\tau\eta$ $\tau\alpha\rho\alpha\chi\eta$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\theta\rho\alpha\upsilon\sigma\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$ $\delta\eta\lambda\omicron\iota$). The phonetic mimesis, the harsh sound of $\theta\rho\upsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\chi\theta\eta$ (and, if we may, of $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\delta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\phi\theta\eta$ as well) which mimics the grinding of the body against the ground at high speed, reinforces the narration which, in its focus on bodily action, is premised on a mimesis of our cognition.⁵⁸

The second event of the chariot race on which Homer zooms in is Antilochos' reckless overtaking manoeuvre. At the very beginning of the scene, Homer has Antilochos comment on Diomedes and his uncontested lead (23.404–06), thereby indicating that the scene follows upon Eumelaos' crash. Köhnken, however, claims that both events have to be imagined as taking place simultaneously. It is, he argues, only the inability to present simultaneous events, pinpointed by 'Zielinski's law', that prompted Homer to establish this 'künstliche Nachzeitigkeit'.⁵⁹ Now while the debate about simultaneity and sequence in Homeric epic has not abated, it has become clear that Homer certainly knew how to represent events as simultaneous even if he has to narrate them consecutively.⁶⁰ Far from being a foul compromise, the representation of events as sequential, in the chariot race as well as in other cases, can be seen as a part of Homer's striving for vividness. The avoidance of going over the same time-span twice makes the flux of narrative time mimic that of narrated time. Just as narrative time continuously moves forward, narrated time is, by and large, not allowed to rewind.

The parallel movement of narrated time and narrative time is an important aspect of dynamic veracity as defined in section II. The idea of dynamic veracity goes further, as it means that narrative time is commensurate with narrated time. The relation between narrative and narrated time is notoriously elusive, however; both sides of the equation are hard to pin down. How long, we wonder, does it take Antilochos to pass Menelaos? Here, as in general, Homer does not measure the duration of actions. And how should we calculate narrative time – as the time it takes to sing the verses or as the time it takes me (or you) to read them? That said, the cases of summary and slow-motion narration highlight that dynamic veracity is a valid criterion of enactivist narration. Perhaps, the issue can be solved in the following way: dynamic veracity is a natural expectation – it takes Antilochos precisely as long to overtake Menelaos as it takes us to peruse the narrative. The recipient upholds this expectation as long as possible, until, for instance, a summary account breaks it down.

We have already noted that the only feature of the racecourse that is described besides the turnpost is the gutter, which leaves room for only one chariot. The gutter is mentioned because it is relevant to the action – Antilochos makes use of the narrowing of the path to overtake Menelaos; it is even introduced as something that Antilochos sees and towards which Menelaos steers (23.419–22):

στεινός ὁδοῦ κοίλης ἴδεν Ἀντίλοχος μενεχάρμης.
 ῥωχμός ἔην γαίης, ἧ χειμέριον ἄλὲν ὕδωρ
 ἐξέρρηξεν ὁδοῖο, βάθυνε δὲ χῶρον ἅπαντα·
 τῆ ῥ' εἶχεν Μενέλαος ἀματροχιάς ἀλεείνων.

Battle-stubborn Antilochos saw where the hollow way narrowed.
 There was a break in the ground where winter water had gathered
 and broken out of the road, and made a sunken place all about.
 Menelaos shrinking from a collision of chariots steered there.

⁵⁸ Ps.-Demetrius (*Eloc.* 219–20) states that onomatopoeia contributes to *enargeia*.

⁵⁹ Köhnken (1981) 144.

⁶⁰ Cf. besides Rengakos (1995) also Patzer (1990); Nünlist (1998); Scodel (2008); all discussing Zielinski (1899–1901).

Firmly embedded in the action, this description of a spatial feature nicely illustrates the idea of 'just in time'. Our attention tends to focus on those aspects of the environment that relate to our actual and potential interactions with it. Simply put, we attend to what matters at the moment. Accordingly, cognitively realistic narratives are those which, instead of providing fully fledged and isolated descriptions, introduce objects as and when they are entangled in the action.

In order to avoid a collision, Menelaos slows his horses down and Antilochos, who 'drove on all the harder / with a whiplash for greater speed' (23.429–30: Ἀντίλοχος δ' ἔτι καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔλαυνε / κέντρῳ ἐπισπέρχων), gets significantly ahead of his opponent. A simile makes the emerging lead palpable (23.431–33):

ὄσσα δὲ δίσκου οὐρα κατωμαδίῳ πέλονται,
ὄν τ' αἰζιῆος ἀφήκεν ἀνὴρ πειρώμενος ἦβης,
τόσσον ἐπιδραμέτην ...

As far as is the range of a discus swung from the shoulder
which a stripling, trying out the strength of his manhood, throws,
so far they [i.e. Antilochos' horses] ran ...

If the model sketched in section II is correct, then such a periphrastic indication of distance is far more vivid than a precise measurement. While the exact distance would be needed to draw a picture of the scene, it is the action in the simile that triggers a strong resonance in the recipient and gives an embodied sense of the lead. Besides making the distance palpable, the image of the discus hurled by an athlete also lets the audience sense more acutely the speed with which Antilochos' horses move than a mere statement of swiftness or even a measurement could do.

There is something paradoxical about the effect of this and other similes. Similes interrupt the narration and jolt the reader out to another scene; at the same time, they are capable of rendering the account of the narrated world more vivid. An enactive approach can help us to understand better this paradox.⁶¹ As Minchin points out, it is through 'internal evaluation' that similes 'draw us into the story'.⁶² However, we do not think that it is through the detailed picture evoked, but through the enactive quality of the scenes narrated that similes make a feature of the narrated world palpable.⁶³ In our case, the bodily motion of throwing a discus lets the audience 'feel' the distance between the chariots.

In the discussion of the contest between Eumelos and Diomedes we saw that counterfactuals help create the openness that the past had when it still was a present. The following sentence has a similar effect: the horses of Menelaos fell back (23.434–37):

αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐκὼν μεθέηκεν ἐλαύνειν
μή πως συγκύρσειαν ὁδῶι ἐνὶ μώνυχες ἵπποι,
δίφρους τ' ἀνστρέψειαν ἐϋπλεκέας, κατὰ δ' αὐτοὶ
ἐν κονίησι πέσοιεν ἐπειγόμενοι περὶ νίκης.

for he of his own will slackened his driving
for fear that in the road the single-foot horses might crash
and overturn the strong-fabricated chariots, and the men
themselves go down in the dust through their hard striving for victory.

⁶¹ For an enactivist perspective on similes, see Caracciolo (2014) 105–09.

⁶² Minchin (2001b) 37, who analyses similes as a part of 'visual memory'.

⁶³ Ready (2012) 73–74 notes perceptively that Homeric similes are pictures focusing on actions: actors are acting and being acted upon.

Homer here gives us access to Menelaos' mind. Now, in current literary theory, so-called 'fictional minds', that is, the representation of processes of consciousness, are often singled out by scholars such as Palmer as one of the main reasons why narrative is vivid and engages readers.⁶⁴ Our passage shows that such claims need not be incompatible with the vividness that is generated by the imageability of the storyworld. For here both modes are entwined, as Menelaos' thoughts are couched in highly enactive language. Homer fully spells out the scenario: the crashing of the horses, the overturning of the chariots and the falling of the men. It may seem that Homer here as in other passages drifts off and indulges his obsession with detail, but the plastic account of what could have happened forcefully reminds the audience that a different outcome was possible and thereby bestows presence on the scene. The presentation of the action as open to various developments contributes to the vividness of the narration. Like the scene featuring Eumelos and Diomedes, Antilochos' overtaking manoeuvre embeds an enactivist account in a temporal perspective that presents the action in flux to transport the recipient right to the scene.

For the final part of the race, Homer shifts to the Greeks awaiting the arrival of the chariots. The quarrel between Idomeneus and Ajax about who will come in first has attracted much scholarly attention, just as has the later controversy over the prizes.⁶⁵ It has been noted that Achilles, one of the parties in the quarrel which triggers the plot of the *Iliad*, this time serves as a mediator and prevents the altercation from escalating. For the purposes of our argument here, we will hone in on devices that bestow vividness on the narration. On an enactivist account, an internal audience helps place Homer's audiences on the spot of the action, because it provides them with a concrete anthropocentric point of reference vis-à-vis the objects located in space.⁶⁶ The embedded observers provide the lens through which the audience can follow the action. Together with the internal audience the external recipients learn, for example, that the horse coming in first is red with a white moon-like mark on the forehead (23.454–55): another illustration of the idea of 'just in time'. Individual features are given as and when they play a role in the action, here for the purposes of identification. It is also plausible that the description of Diomedes' chariot as 'overlaid with gold and tin' (23.503: χρυσῷ πεπυκασμένα κασσιτέρῳ τε) reproduces the perception of the Greek spectators who first see the gleam of the metals.⁶⁷

By no means, however, are the perspectives of external and internal audiences identical. Whereas the Greeks fiercely debate who will be the victor, listeners and readers of the *Iliad* know that Diomedes will achieve the victory. But even for them, the dispute of the heroes creates suspense. Idomeneus hears the 'shouter' who remains anonymous and then states that, 'there are other horses leading / and that another charioteer can be seen' (23.459–60: ἄλλοι μοι δοκέουσι παρόιτεροι ἔμμεναι ἵπποι, / ἄλλος δ' ἠνίοχος ἰνδάλλεται). Nowhere can he spot the horses which he saw circle the turn-post first. However, Idomeneus does not identify the man he is speaking about. It is only in the last two lines of his speech that he explicitly mentions Diomedes as the new leader, giving the name as the very last word (23.472). This is not new information for the external recipients, but nonetheless Homer artfully titillates his audience in deferring the confirmation of their expectations. There is suspense as to how Idomeneus' perspective will match their own superior knowledge.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Palmer (2004); (2010). For a critique of Palmer, see n.69

⁶⁵ For example Macleod (1982) 30–32; Taplin (1992) 253–55.

⁶⁶ Kuzmičová (2012b) 40; cf. Strauss Clay (2011) 12.

⁶⁷ On the description of Diomedes' chariot, see also the scholion T *Il.* 23.503–04: διὰ τῆς πολυτελείας

θαυμαστὴν δείκνυσι τὴν θέαν. ἐνύχωσε δὲ αὐτά, ὡς καὶ αὐτῶν ὀρμώντων αὐτοκινήτως (Because of the extravagant costliness [Homer] makes the sight wondrous. And he has given life to it [the chariot], as if it moves of its own accord).

⁶⁸ On various forms of suspense that do not hinge on an unknown outcome, see Baroni (2007) 269–95.

Moreover, there is genuine suspense as to who will be second. Menelaos slows down his horses to avoid a collision, but then goads his horses to catch Antilochos. Homer closes the scene saying that 'they [i.e. the horses of Menelaos] fearing the voice of their master / ran the harder, and soon were close up behind the others' (23.446–47: οἱ δὲ ἄνακτος ὑποδείσαντες ὁμοκλήν / μᾶλλον ἐπιδραμέτην, τάχα δὲ σφισιν ἄγχι γέροντο). Will they be able to make good the ground lost? The quarrel between Idomeneus and Ajax delays the revelation of the outcome and thereby keeps the audience on their toes. A temporal orchestration that generates suspense adds force to an enactive account, here tangible in the spatial orientation conveyed by the compound ἐπιδραμέτην and σφισιν ἄγχι γέροντο, as it intensifies the recipient's attention to the action.

When Homer finally narrates the arrival of Diomedes, he elaborately describes it in highly enactive terms. Diomedes' movements are closely mapped: 'he lashed them [i.e. his horses] always with the whip-stroke from the shoulder' (23.500: μᾶστι δ' αἰὲν ἔλαυνε κατωμαδόν), then 'placed himself in the middle of the assembly' (23.507: στῆ δὲ μέσῳ ἐν ἀγῶνι), 'vaulted down to the ground from his shining chariot' (23.509: αὐτὸς δ' ἐκ δίφροιο χαμαὶ θόρε παμφανώοντος), 'leaned his whip against the yoke' (23.510: κλῖνε δ' ἄρα μᾶστιγα ποτὶ ζυγόν) and 'unfastened the horses' (23.513: ἔλυνεν ὑφ' ἵππους). Once more, Homer foregrounds simple actions and takes care to situate the movements of the body spatially. The appeal to the imagination of the listener/reader is thus strong. What is more, many of the movements described qualify as volitional and transitional, and therefore belong to the kind of action which Kuzmičová deems most stimulating to the imagination.

The speed of the chariot is again not only stated, but also expressed indexically. The cloud of dust stirred up by hooves and wheels becomes palpable when it appears as the subject of a simple action: 'Dust flying *splashed* always the charioteer' (23.502: αἰεὶ δ' ἠγίοχον κονίης ραθάμιγγες ἔβαλλον). The metaphorical 'flying' of the chariot appears to become literal when 'there was not much / trace from the running rims of the wheels left / in the thin dust' (23.504–05: οὐδέ τι πολλή / γίγνεται ἐπισσώτρων ἀρματροχίη κατόπισθεν / ἐν λεπτῇ κονίῃ). Finally, the strain of the horses is underlined by the careful and detailed description of how they sweat: 'the dense sweat dripped to the ground from neck and chest of his horses' (23.507–08: πολὺς δ' ἀνεκήκειεν ἰδρῶς / ἵππων ἕκ τε λόφον καὶ ἀπὸ στέρνοιο χαμαῖζε). Together with the focus on simple actions and their careful presentation in spatial terms, the sensorial description of speed yields a highly enactive account.

After the elaborate description of Diomedes' finish, the arrival of Antilochos and Menelaos is stated briefly. However, Homer marshals two devices that underscore the closeness of the race. A counterfactual drives home the point that triumph for Menelaos was within reach (23.526–27): 'If both of them had to run the course any further, / Menelaos would have passed him, and there could have been no argument' (εἰ δὲ κ' ἔτι προτέρω γένετο δρόμος ἀμφοτέροισι, / τῷ κέν μιν παρέλασσ' οὐδ' ἀμφήριστον ἔθηκεν). Before the counterfactual, there is a simile (23.517–25):

ὄσσον δὲ τροχοῦ ἵππος ἀφίσταται, ὅς ῥα ἄνακτα
 ἔλκησιν πεδίοιο τιτανόμενος σὺν ὄχεσφι·
 τοῦ μὲν τε ψάουσις ἐπισσώτρου τρίχες ἄκρα
 οὐραῖαι· ὁ δὲ τ' ἄγχι μάλα τρέχει, οὐδέ τι πολλή
 χώρη μεσσηγὺς πολέος πεδίοιο θέοντος·
 τόσσον δὲ Μενέλαος ἀμύμονος Ἀντιλόχοιο
 λείπειτ'· ἀτὰρ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἐς δίσκουρα λέλειπτο,
 ἀλλά μιν αἴψα κίχανεν· ὀφέλλετο γὰρ μένος ἠὲ
 ἵππου τῆς Ἀγαμεμνονέης καλλίτριχος Αἴθης.

As far as from the wheel stands the horse who is straining
 to pull his master with the chariot over the flat land;
 the extreme hairs in the tail of the horse brush against the running
 rim of the wheel, and he courses very close, there is not much

space between as he runs a great way over the flat land;
 by so much Menelaos was left behind by Antilochos
 the blameless. At first he was left behind the length of a discus
 thrown, but was overhauling him fast, with Aithe
 of the fair mane, Agamemnon's mare, putting on a strong burst.

Like other similes, this one interrupts the flow of the narration. However, as a scholion observes, Homer 'uses a most suitable image, for the distance between the chariots receives its image from the same matter' (Σ T 23.517–21a1: προσφουεστάτη εικόνη χρηταί· τὰ γὰρ διαστήματα τῶν ἀρμάτων ἀπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας χρείας δέχεται τὴν εἰκόνα; cf. Σ b 517–21a2). Tenor and vehicle being identical, the simile is closely tied to the narrated scene. It is rich in simple action: the horse, 'straining himself, pulls his master' (ὄς ῥα ἄνακτα ἔλκησιον ... τιτανόμενος); the hairs of his tail 'brush against' (ψαύουσιν) the wheel; he 'runs' (θέοντος) a long way, which contrasts effectively with the very short distance to the chariot. The closeness is cast further into relief when Homer references the simile of the discus throw for the initial lead of Antilochos: then a discus throw, now the breadth of a hair ... Both similes do more than illustrate one distance with another distance; they translate the distance into the image of an action, which exerts particular force on the recipient's imagination. They interrupt the narration, but nonetheless make it more vivid through the description of bodily action.

This reading of the chariot race in *Iliad* 23 has, we hope, proved the fruitfulness of an enactivist approach to Homer and his acclaimed vividness. Instead of furnishing detailed pictorial descriptions, Homer describes places and objects 'just in time'. He refers selectively to features that are relevant to the action, for example the gutter exploited by Antilochos and the blaze of the horse seen by Idomeneus from afar. Most importantly, the narrative is rich in bodily movements and simple actions: the charioteers strike the horses with the whip thongs; when Apollo dashes the whip from Diomedes' hands, Athena gives it back to him, goes after Eumelos and smashes his chariot yoke. Diomedes' arrival is described blow-by-blow. Even distances are expressed enactively. The representation of volitional and transitive movements in particular has a strong resonance in the recipient's imagination and evokes the feeling of being an eye-witness. Homer applies much care to tie spatial references to agents and actions: the charioteers lift their whips 'above the horses'; the horses of Diomedes seem to 'climb upon' the chariot of Eumelos; when Eumelos crashes, he flies 'out of the chariot' and finds himself 'beside the wheel', while the pole is 'down on the earth' and the horses run 'on either side of the way'; Diomedes lashes the horses with the whipstroke 'from the shoulder', stops 'in the middle of the assembly' and, after jumping 'down to the ground', leans his whip 'against the yoke'; the sweat of the horses runs 'from the neck and chest to the ground'. The persistent spatial mapping of simple movements creates a high degree of imageability.

We have also come across other devices that reinforce the vividness created by the enactive narration. Ancient commentators draw our attention to onomatopoeia and its impact on the audience's imagination. Suspense helps capture the recipient's attention. Counterfactuals alert the reader to the possibility of an alternative course and thereby restore presence to what the preterite tense defines as already past. An action that is presented as open is more vivid than one whose course seems inevitable. Finally, fictional minds, a popular subject in current criticism, are by no means absent from Homer. However, without claiming that Homer's characters are rudimentary or primitive, we can note that, unlike, say Flaubert, James and Austen with their penetrating portrayals of consciousness, Homer does not enthrall us primarily through the inner lives of his characters.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ On fictional minds in the modern novel, see Palmer (2004); (2010). Grethlein (2015a) and (2015b)

Speeches of course take up more space and are indeed an important part of Homeric vividness, but their effect relies not only on the revelation of the characters' minds, but also on their capacity as speech-acts.⁷⁰ As part of the action, direct speeches are in fact an element that fully abides by the principle of dynamic veracity. Even if the 'voiceprint' is lost, words represent words: the word recited by the bard or read by the reader equals the word spoken in the narrated world.

While far from complete, this survey indicates the complexity of Homer's vividness which is the product of a wide range of devices.⁷¹ And yet the imageability generated by enactive narration is of particular importance. Bodily motion and the description of features relevant to the action determine the texture of Homeric narrative and are key to Homer's capacity to transport listeners and readers to the battlefield of Troy. Most *androktasia*-scenes, for example, fully abide by the enactivist principles outlined in this paper: they exhibit scenic narration,⁷² which allows the narrator to analyse the fighters' manoeuvres into simple bodily actions and to make the audience 'look' alternately at the various fighters as they spring into action ('just in time'), while weapons and other objects used (for example stones being picked up) are introduced as and when they are manipulated by the characters. It is not incidental that Lessing in his *Laokoon* championed Homer as his prime example of poetry that concentrates on action and thus exploits the mimetic potential of its form.⁷³

That being said, we need to qualify our argument for the enactive nature of Homeric narrative in three respects. We will argue that not all parts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are equally vivid in the sense in which we use the word in this paper, that an important element of epic is not conducive to an enactive narration and nonetheless contributes to its vividness, and that there are other aspects of Homer's art that (seem to) conflict with his striving for vividness. Exploring readerly immersion, Ryan emphasizes that the reader's absorption is not continuous and stable: 'For immersion to retain its intensity, it needs a contrast of narrative modes, a constantly renegotiated distance from the narrative scene, a profile made of peaks and valleys.'⁷⁴ As Kuzmičová points out, this constant fluctuation of intensity also applies more specifically to enactive narrative. Speaking of a 'periodic diet', she argues that 'presence cues become effective only if moderately dosed. Not only should they appear periodically, once in a while, for a continuous sense of presence to arise. They should appear just once in a while, if presence is to be instantaneously elicited at all.'⁷⁵ The *Iliad* fully proves this thesis: enactive passages are embedded in non-enactive parts.

To stick to our test-case, before the account of the chariot race, Homer lists the prizes (23.262–70) and the competitors (23.287–361). The form of the list is un-enactive, the series of items utterly different from a narration of action. The enumeration of prizes and competitors thus helps throw into relief the enactive account of the race which follows it. Note, however, that the lists are not entirely free from enactive elements.⁷⁶ Homer's presentation of the charioteers is not static; it

use the example of the *Aithiopika* to argue that ancient narrative fails cognitive approaches that centre on mind-reading. See also von Contzen (2015) for a similar argument about medieval texts. Fictional minds are by no means absent from premodern narrative, but they seem to be far less crucial for its vividness than for the vividness of the modern novel, which tends to concentrate on processes of consciousness. For an investigation of fictional minds and the Theory of Mind in ancient narrative, see, for example, Scodel (2014). Cave (2016) tries to integrate the Theory of Mind with an embodied approach.

⁷⁰ For a reading of speeches in Homer as speech-acts, see Martin (1989); Beck (2012). Cf. Clark and Gerrig (1990) 774–80 and Vandelanotte (2009) 136 on how *oratio recta* is suitable for highlighting the commu-

nicative aspects (including the illocutionary force) of the represented speech.

⁷¹ For the attempt to sketch a full-blown model of narrative vividness and its application to Homer, see Allan et al. (2014).

⁷² See de Jong and Nünlist (2004) for such narration as the dominant type in Homeric battle scenes.

⁷³ Lessing (2012). Deploying the sequential sign system of language to express the temporal sequences of action, Homer, in the eyes of Lessing, creates a 'comfortable relation' between content and medium.

⁷⁴ Ryan (2001) 137.

⁷⁵ Kuzmičová (2012b) 43, see also 33.

⁷⁶ Sammons (2010) repeatedly notes how catalogues can coalesce into narratives.

conjures up simple actions. Eumelos, for instance, ‘rose up’ (23.288: ὄρτο), and Diomedes ‘led under the yoke the Trojan horses whom he had taken / by force from Aineias’ (23.291–92: ἵππους δὲ Τρωϊοὺς ὑπαγε ζυγόν, οὐς ποτ’ ἀπηύρα / Αἰνεΐαν). Just as the account of the race interlaces more and less enactive sequences, the lists, in themselves un-enactive, include enactive phrases. Something similar can be said about the brief ‘biographies’ of the heroes which punctuate the enactive narration of *androktasia*-scenes. It is the careful calibration of enactive elements that is crucial to the vividness of the chariot race and the *Iliad* at large.

The second point concerns language. In her exploration of Kafka’s realism, Troscianko considers verbal simplicity as an important part of the narrative’s vividness. Prototypical, basic-level terms, she argues, have a stronger sensorimotor resonance than more general or specific terms: ‘We can clearly and easily imagine a chair; we have general motor actions for seeing chairs and sitting in them ... But it takes more effort to imagine a “kitchen chair” or “furniture” (perhaps especially the latter), and we have no motor actions for interacting with furniture in general that aren’t motor actions for interacting with some basic-level object such as a chair.’⁷⁷ Consequently, simple language deploying basic-level terms is conducive to imageability. Now, Homeric epic, as we all know, is couched in a highly artificial language. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* brim with terms that required explanation even for ancient recipients. Moreover, Homer often uses epithets that elaborate prototypical, basic-level terms: Meriones, for example, orders his ‘horses with flowing manes’ (23.351: ἐϋτριχας ... ἵππους) and the chariots are ‘well built’ (23.436: δίφρους... ἐϋπλεκέας). Homer’s diction is thus very different from the simple language that endows Kafka’s narrations with such a strong appeal to the reader’s imagination. There is, however, a different way in which Homer’s *Kunstsprache* ultimately contributes to the image of the narrated world of the epics. It evokes a world far grander than the one in which we move, with heroes who throw stones which men of today would not be able to lift. Homer’s language may be more difficult to process, but it inspires awe and thereby captivates the audience.

A third point that merits contemplation is the digressive nature of many descriptions and epithets. We noted in passing that Auerbach was mistaken in claiming that there is no place for gaps in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At the same time, Auerbach identifies a salient aspect of Homeric style when he notes that epithets and digressions often refer to the ‘sonstige, von der gegenwärtigen Lage nicht voll ergriffene, gleichsam absolute Existenz des Beschriebenen’.⁷⁸ Sometimes epithets comply with the idea of affordance, for example when the horses with which Menelaos wishes to compete in the chariot race are labelled ‘fast’ (23.294: ὠκέας ἵππους).⁷⁹ When, however, ‘fast’ is replaced by ‘single-footed’ (for example 23.398: μόνυχας ἵππους), the epithet names a feature that is not pertinent in its context. As Auerbach observes, in such cases epithets refer to ‘the absolute existence of the described object’, sidelining the specific situation that is crucial for an enactive narration. Extended descriptions in particular detract from the action. For example, when Agamemnon addresses the assembly in *Iliad* 2, Homer interrupts the narration for eight lines to list the previous owners of the sceptre (2.101–08). Like other descriptions, the genealogy of the sceptre stops the flow of narrated time and is likely to diminish the imageability of the scene.

At the same time, such digressions are often semantically charged in Homer.⁸⁰ The sceptre’s divine origin and the eminent list of previous owners illustrate the authority on which Agamemnon literally leans. This significance of the sceptre gains an ironical twist in the plot. The tradition attached to the sceptre and activated through the genealogy jars with the sorry figure that Agamemnon cuts in book 2 and poignantly underlines his shortcomings as a leader. It takes Odysseus to demonstrate how to wield a sceptre with authority. Instead of stimulating the audi-

⁷⁷ Troscianko (2014a) 142.

⁷⁸ Auerbach (1946) 13. Bakker (2005) 56–60 links this form of description to the oral performance of the Homeric epics.

⁷⁹ These cases are played up by Lessing (2012) 116.

⁸⁰ See especially Austin (1966); Griffin (1980) 1–49, 9–11 on the sceptre in *Iliad* 2. On the biography of goods in Homer, see Grethlein (2008) 35–43.

ence's imagination of the narrated scene, the descriptions of the sceptre and other objects enrich the scene with meaning. 'Significant objects' thus show that vividness is not the only aspect of Homer's narrative art. Homer, it emerges, is even willing to sacrifice vividness when he wishes to create meaning. Or, better, extended descriptions help create the balance in which enactive passages become fully effective.

We see that not all parts of Homeric epic are equally vivid. There are lists and, in fact, descriptions that weaken the imageability of the narrated world. Moreover, enactive narration is not the only means of bestowing vividness on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Fictional minds and the shaping of narrative time are two other points that render the Homeric narrative vivid. At the same time, as the comments of such different readers as Ps.-Demetrius and Lessing attest, the privileging of bodily movements and the focus on features that are relevant to the action are key to the spell that Homer has cast on listeners and readers from antiquity to the present.⁸¹

IV. Enactivism and *enargeia*

In the previous section we proposed a solution to the paradox formulated at the outset: how is it that, despite the paucity of detailed, pictorial descriptions, Homeric epic manages to stimulate its readers' imaginations? On the basis of an enactivist account of perception and the imagination, we argued that, among other things, the fact that the texture of Homeric narrative is in large part determined by the linear narration of simple, bodily actions, substantially contributes to its imageability, while the lack of detailed descriptions hardly detracts from it. However, it can now be thought that our solution replaces one paradox with another. After all, we started out by noting that Homer's vividness has been praised from antiquity onwards; and ancient critics seem to leave no doubt that, for them, this vividness resides in the epics' visual qualities: they constantly frame their responses to it in terms of *enargeia* ('pictorial' or 'graphic' vividness),⁸² *phantasia* ('mental image')⁸³ and statements to the effect that Homer turns his readers into 'spectators' (θεαταί).⁸⁴

It is often supposed that the terms *enargeia* and *phantasia* were in fact adopted by literary critics from Hellenistic (Epicurean and Stoic) epistemology, in which *enargeia* is used to denote sensory perception (especially sight) in general, but also, in a more technical sense, the particular clarity with which 'sense impressions' (*phantasiai*) are grasped and which makes us accept them as true.⁸⁵ The use of *enargeia* and *phantasia* in literary criticism, then, appears to be underpinned by a specific, and pictorialist, theory of perception. Furthermore, perhaps on the strength of these pictorialist assumptions, ancient comments on *enargeia* often make strong and literal claims about 'seeing' the narrated world. An example is the following passage from Quintilian, in which he praises a vignette from a lost speech by Cicero.

interim ex pluribus efficitur illa quam conamur exprimere facies, ut ... in descriptione conuiuii luxuriosi [Cic. *Quinct. Gallo*, fr. VI.1]: 'uidebar uidere alios intrantis, alios autem exeuntis, quosdam ex uino uacillantibus, quosdam hesternis ex potatione oscitantibus. humus erat immunda, lutulenta uino, coronis languidulis et spinis cooperta piscium'. quid plus uideret qui intrasset? (Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.66)

⁸¹ An issue that is beyond the scope of this article is the technique of description in later, especially Hellenistic and Imperial poetry. Zanker (1987), for instance, argues for the pictorialism of Hellenistic poetry which he contrasts with Homer's simple descriptions (73–78). Our argument makes clear that, unlike Zanker, we deem Homer's narrative, with due qualifications, cognitively realistic. We also suspect that Apollonius, Theocritus and other Hellenistic poets, while more interested in pictorial detail, are still highly indebted to Homer's enactive style.

⁸² The translations of Zanker (1981) 297 and Nünlist (2009) 194, respectively.

⁸³ Webb (2009) 27.

⁸⁴ Cf., for example, Σ bT II. 23.363–72 (cited in section I above), which conveniently combines these terms. For discussion of these terms in the scholia, cf. Meijering (1987) 39–44; Nünlist (2009) 153–55, 194–98.

⁸⁵ Zanker (1981) 308–10; Manieri (1998) 113–22; Otto (2009) 37–62; Bussel (2013) 61–71.

Sometimes, the picture we wish to present is made up of a number of details ..., as in the description of a luxurious banquet: ‘I seemed to see some going in, some going out, some reeling with drink, some dozing after yesterday’s potations. The floor was filthy, swimming with wine, littered with wilting garlands and fishbones.’ What more could anyone have seen who had entered the room? (tr. Russell)

While this example provides some information about the appearance of the banquet hall and the banqueters, it is hardly detailed enough to warrant Quintilian’s strong claim. In part for this reason, Vasaly concludes that ancient readers ‘may well have possessed powers of pictorial visualization much greater and more intense than our own’.⁸⁶ Webb, too, supposes that ancient audiences really did make conscious efforts to form mental images which could be seen with the ‘mind’s eye’, assisted in this by the formal training many readers received in the schools of rhetoric.⁸⁷

However, this is not the whole story. The example of modern readers who claim that they can vividly ‘picture’ the narrated world but turn out to be unable to specify more than a few of its features, indicates that the way in which people talk about the imagination may run counter to cognitive realities.⁸⁸ Furthermore, we should not overestimate the importance of the philosophically inspired ‘pictorialist’ language used by some ancient critics. The claim that *enargeia* was adopted from Hellenistic philosophy into criticism remains a hypothesis, and, even if it is correct, that does not mean that the term kept its full philosophical meaning when it was transferred to a new context.⁸⁹ Ultimately, rhetorical theory is a distillation of what worked best in practice, so it is likely that beneath the philosophical veneer our sources preserve a body of implicit knowledge about how perceptual cognition actually works.⁹⁰ Most importantly, the ancient concept of *enargeia* is clearly multifaceted. Current scholarship emphasizes the pictorial aspect of *enargeia* (also, we suspect, because of scholars’ own, largely unexamined thinking about the imagination in terms of mental representations), but it has in fact long been clear that *enargeia* comprises various other aspects. Ancient sources do not only include precepts on detailed description, but also on phonetic effects, onomatopoeic devices, epithets, various kinds of verbal repetition and even temporal features, especially the gradual unfolding of events and the use of the historical present.⁹¹ If there is a common denominator in all of this, it lies in a multimodal sensory, cognitive and emotional appeal.⁹²

⁸⁶ Vasaly (1993) 99.

⁸⁷ Webb (2009) 24–25, 95, though she leaves aside ‘the question of what the mental experience expressed by the claims to “see” actually might have been’ (24, n. 34). On the privileging of sight in antiquity, see also Squire 2016.

⁸⁸ Cf. Troscianko (2013) 187.

⁸⁹ *Mutatis mutandis*, thinking about words as vehicles of images stretches back to Classical and Archaic times; cf. Manieri (1998) 27–75; Sheppard (2014) 1–13. It is also wrong to focus too narrowly on the terms *enargeia* and *phantasia*; cf., for instance, Aristotle’s use of the phrase *πρὸ ὁμμάτων τίθεναι/ποιεῖν* (for example *Poet.* 1455a23; *Rh.* 1410b33–36, 1411a25–12a10). The question whether *ἐνέργεια* in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* is a misreading of, or means the same as, *ἐνάργεια* remains controversial (cf. Otto (2009) 71–76, who perhaps too easily discards the possibility). Further imponderables include Plato’s use of the term *enargeia* (cf. Allen (2010) *Index s.v. enargeia*) and the date of Ps.-Demetrius (cf. Chiron (1993) XIII–XL). It may also be noted that, as Otto (2009) 128 and Bussel (2013) 72–73 observe,

Cicero, at least, distinguishes between philosophical and literary *enargeia*, consistently using *evidentia* for the former and *inlustratio* for the latter (it is Quintilian who blurs the distinction).

⁹⁰ Cf. Heath (2009) for the balance between theory and practice in ancient rhetoric.

⁹¹ Brief, but good analyses which emphasize the variety of devices said to contribute to *ἐνάργεια* are Meijering (1987) 39–44; Allan et al. (2014) 204–08. See also the overviews of the key sources in Manieri (1998) 79–192; Otto (2009) 67–134.

⁹² Otto (2009) 128–29 identifies *Sinnenbezogenheit* (appeal to the senses – the plural is deliberate), *Detailfreudigkeit* (love of detail) and *Emotionalität* (emotional appeal) as the defining characteristics of *enargeia*. Cf. also the conclusion of Allan et al. (2014) 208: ‘We kunnen concluderen dat *enargeia* zich niet beperkt tot visualisering, maar ook cognitieve en emotionele betrokkenheid van het publiek met zich meebrengt (We can conclude that *enargeia* is not limited to visualization, but also involves the cognitive and emotional involvement of the audience).’

We can in fact go even further. Certain uses of the terms *enargeia* and *phantasia* are quite compatible with an enactivist approach to (imaginative) visual experience.⁹³ The operative words in Quintilian's response to Cicero's vignette are *qui intrasset*; with these words he acknowledges a phenomenal sense of being 'transported' into the narrated world, which is also attested in other sources.⁹⁴ There are several features in the passage which match this sense of 'presence'. First, the scene is described from an egocentric viewpoint (inscribed with *videbar videre*) and a sense of spatial concreteness is created by the fact that the guests' comings and goings are described in relation to this intradiegetic viewpoint.⁹⁵ The asyndetic and partly anaphoric clauses, which can be interpreted as so many instances of 'looking', with the observer moving his head and body to take in new aspects,⁹⁶ further heighten the readers' sense that their exploration of the narrated world is anchored in what seem to be the body and sensory systems of an embedded human observer. It would be rash, in our view, to conclude that these textual features played no role in Quintilian's selection of the example.⁹⁷ In fact, picking up on the sense of 'presence', Webb herself has recently warned that an exclusively pictorialist understanding of *enargeia* may be misleading, because it often appears to involve the visualization of a scene, 'not simply as in a distanced, disembodied photograph, but as if we were present ourselves within the same space, in bodily contact with the place and its happenings.' She even cites studies on embodied (though not enactive) cognition to counter the possible objection that such talk of presence is a mere rhetorical hyperbole and to suggest instead that it captures a genuine aspect of mimicked perceptual experience.⁹⁸

We end by noting that many passages which are called *enarges* in the Homeric scholia (and elsewhere) concern narrative rather than descriptive passages;⁹⁹ while one should be careful with *argumenta e silentio*, it may be noted that the scholia include several comments on the *enargeia* of Homer's narrative of the chariot-race (as we have seen), but none on the description of the shield of Achilles. As we have seen in section III, some of the scholia single out enactive passages. In the following scholia, too, it is not simply the addition of overly visual details which is deemed worthy of comment.

[Menelaos is wounded; Agamemnon grabs his hand:] **χειρὸς ἔχων Μενέλαον· ἐπεστενάχοντο δ' ἑταῖροι:** ἄφελε τὸν στίχον, καὶ οὐ βλάπτεις τὴν σαφήνειαν, ἀπολέσεις δὲ τὴν ἐνάργειαν, ἣτις ἐμφαίνει τὴν Ἀγαμέμνονος συμπάθειαν καὶ τὴν τῶν συναχθομένων ἑταίρων διάθεσιν. (Σ bT II. 4.154)

Take away the line, and you will not damage the clarity, but you will destroy the vividness, which is such that it reveals Agamemnon's sympathy and the state of his companions who grieve with him.

πανταχόθεν ἐκίνησε τὴν ἐνάργειαν, ἐκ τοῦ ἰκετεύειν μέλλοντος, ἐκ τῶν διακοπτομένων ἀθρόως τενόντων, ἐκ τῆς φθεγγομένης κεφαλῆς μετὰ τὸ πεσεῖν, ἐκ τοῦ σκυλεύοντος τὰ ὄπλα καὶ ὑπόσ' ἀνέχοντος. (Σ bT II. 10.454–61)

⁹³ See Huitink (forthcoming) for a more detailed argument.

⁹⁴ For *intrasset* some manuscripts read *interesset*, aligning the remark with what may have been the 'technical' term, for which cf. Quint. *Inst.* 6.2.32. For metaphors for being 'present in' or 'transported to' the storyworld, cf. also, for example, Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.123 (*in rem praesentem perducere*), 6.2.29 (*praesentes*); Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 7 (ὡσπερ παροῦσιν); Plut. *Artax.* 8.1 (Ξενοφώντος ... γινομένοις ἐπιστάντος αἰεὶ τὸν ἀκροατὴν); Rufin. *Dian* 15 Halm (*praesentia*).

⁹⁵ Internal audiences are a very common ingredient of passages called *enarges*: cf. Walker (1993); Webb (1997); Otto (2009) 89.

⁹⁶ Cf. Otto (2009) 118.

⁹⁷ Pace Webb (2009) 93; Quintilian (*Inst.* 8.3.63) prefaces his discussion with the statement that he will only touch upon the essentials; so his failure to comment explicitly on these features need not be taken as a indicating their irrelevance.

⁹⁸ Webb (2016) 213.

⁹⁹ Cf. especially Calame (1991) 13–14; the point is also noted by Vasaly (1993) 91; Manieri (1998) 144–45. Webb (2009) 67–68 shows that the authors of the *Progymnasmata* include many observations on the *ekphrasis* of events.

From every side [Homer] has stirred up vividness, on the basis of the one who is about to beg, on the basis of the sinews which are suddenly cut through, on the basis of the head that is still talking after it has fallen, on the basis of the one who is stripping off the armour and lifts it up high.¹⁰⁰

These comments are, to be sure, inspired by the *pathos* which both Homeric passages create. But that *pathos* is created, it would seem, precisely through the narration of the kinds of simple bodily movements on which enactivist accounts also put a high premium. It is in any case noteworthy that the first comment concerns *Il.* 4.154, while in the passage preceding that line there are quite a few more overtly visual descriptive details (149: μέλαν αἶμα; 151: ἴδεν νεῦρόν τε καὶ ὄγκους ἐκτὸς ἐόντας).

We are, to be sure, far from suggesting that a full-blown conception of the readerly imagination as enactivist existed in antiquity. We also do not claim that pictorialist preconceptions did not influence ancient reading habits at all. It is, however, noteworthy that ancient comments on *enargeia* are not confined to visuality but also embrace enactive features. And if it is the case that readers' imaginative responses to literature originate from a combination of biological and cognitive invariables (which we would configure as enactivist) and socio-culturally determined variables (which will indeed have included pictorialist preconceptions), then it is both legitimate and useful to use an enactivist approach to arrive at a fuller picture of what 'vividness' entailed for ancient readers. As Kukkonen and Caracciolo state, 'Historical practices and embodiment as a biological and cognitive condition are not opposed but, on the contrary, caught in a dialectic relationship, so that exploring the background of bodily invariants can improve our understanding of historical specificities, and vice versa.'¹⁰¹

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¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 10.454–59: Ἦ, καὶ ὁ μὲν μιν ἔμελλε γενεῖου χειρὶ παχείη / ἀνάμενος λίσσασθαι, ὁ δ' αὐχένα μέσσον ἔλασσε / φασγάνῳ ἀΐξας, ἀπὸ δ' ἄμφω κέρσε τένοντε· / φθεγγομένου δ' ἄρα τοῦ γε κάρη κονίησιν

ἐμίχθη. / τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ μὲν κτιδέην κυνέην κεφαλῆφιν ἔλοντο / καὶ λυκέην καὶ τόξα παλίντονα καὶ δόρυ μακρόν.

¹⁰¹ Kukkonen and Caracciolo (2014) 266.

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