The author of this book discusses an important narrative technique: misdirection, i.e., the creation of false expectations in the audience. Misdirection can be seen as the opposite or complement of the better known device of foreshadowing, the reliable informing of the audience concerning events still to come. The expectations of the implied audience of the Iliad are based on (i) their familiarity with the epic tradition, and (ii) predictions made in the text by the characters (prophecies, prayers, threats, suggestions, etc.) and by the narrator. Foreshadowing means that predictions are fulfilled and hence are true, misdirection that they are not, or later, or differently fulfilled and hence are inaccurate in some respect.

According to many scholars, surprises and unexpected turns in the narrative are absent from the Homeric epics, in which the audience is always carefully and truthfully kept informed by the narrator. This picture has been modified for the Odyssey, by, amongst others, Holscher and Rutherford), but Morrison is the first to attempt a revision for the Iliad. Let me say right away that I am not convinced by all of his examples of Iliadic misdirection, but nevertheless I do value his book because of its methodological rigour and conclusions. It is written in a clear, though somewhat repetitious style.

After an introductory chapter, summarizing the main contents of his book, M. sets out his method and defines his terms in chapter 2. Here we find many good principles and observations. Thus he notes (pp. 12-13) that the implied audience of the Iliad on the one hand is familiar with the epic tradition (as can be gathered from the allusive way in which certain events, e.g. the Judgment of Paris or Helen's abduction, are referred to), on the other is a first-time audience of the Iliad, which is in need of guidance as it hears the story of Achilles' wrath (hence the extensive system of foreshadowing, e.g. around Patroclus’ death). This is a crucial distinction, which we must keep in mind even if it is often difficult to decide
what is familiar and what new. M.'s criterion (information provided by foreshadowing is new) is not waterproof, since the death of Achilles, which is repeatedly anticipated, is certainly traditional. Illuminating, too, is M.'s analysis of the narrator's strategy in constructing his narrative (p. 15): "At each point of his narrative, the narrator makes several choices. (1) He may either introduce or not introduce a prediction. Naturally there are countless points in the narrative without future-oriented statements, but the narrator always has the option to introduce one. (2) If the narrator chooses to present a prediction, the prediction may or may not be persuasive. Only persuasive predictions generate expectations. (3) If the narrator introduces a persuasive prediction, that prediction may be accurate or inaccurate (true or false) with respect to the latter narrative.") On pp. 17-19 M. sets out a hierarchy of predictions: the most authoritative are those deriving from the narrator, next come divine predictions, which usually come true (e.g. when Athena in 1.212-24 promises Achilles gifts), but not always (e.g. when in 8.5-17 Zeus threatens to hurl to Tartarus any god who opposes his plans, but responds only with a second threat when Hera disobeys him: 15.4-33). Mortal predictions are least authoritative, though they can be persuasive when they form part of a set of predictions (e.g. when Achilles predicts a Greek defeat).

In Chapter 3 M. broaches the interesting subject of a narrative describing not only what happens but also what might have happened (cf. the recent discussion of the "disnarrated" by the narratologist Gerald Prince). The virtual realities of the Homeric epics (type 'and then for the Argives a homecoming beyond fate might have been accomplished, if Hera had not addressed Athena') have already received ample attention, most recently in a monograph by H.-G. Nesselrath. M. studies, however, a less dramatic (and less illuminating) form: unpersuasive false predictions by mortal characters. Let me give one example: the priest Chryses begins his appeal to the Greeks in Iliad 1 with the wish that the Greeks sack Troy and return home. His appeal meets with two reactions: a positive one by the other Greeks (22-3) and a negative one by Agamemnon (24-32). According to M., the effect of this arrangement is that the audience for a brief moment (two lines long) considers the alternative course of events, viz. that Chryses' appeal is accepted (and hence that the Greeks sack Troy and return home immediately). I find this hardly convincing, the more so, since the other Greeks' reaction takes the form of an "Ενθ' ἄλλοι μεν