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THE HERO TELLS HIS NAME: FORMULA AND VARIATION IN THE PHAEACIAN EPISODE OF THE ODYSSEY

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Odysseus' conduct as the guest of the Phaeacians has occasioned much scholarly debate. According to a commonplace of Homeric criticism, the norms of heroic society require a host to provide food and drink before asking about a guest's identity and the purpose of the visit; by the same token, the guest, once fed, owes his host an explanation. Yet Odysseus accepts three meals, a night's lodging, and copious entertainment before he reveals his identity. Why does he fail to give his name after dinner on the first night? According to the analysts,[1] the fault is that of one or more interpolators. Unitarians have tended to blame either Odysseus or Alkinoos for violating the canons of politeness.[2] The only escape has seemed to be the argument that thematic considerations override the demand for literal plausibility; Fenik has shown convincingly that Odysseus' delay in giving his name contributes dramatic suspense and forms part of a thematic pattern of disguise and retarded disclosure.[3]

Certainly the pace of Odysseus' self-identification does have an important thematic and dramatic function. I shall argue, however, that the poet has not sacrificed plausibility to achieve the effects Fenik analyzes. If Odysseus' and Alkinoos' interactions are interpreted in terms of conventional expectations, we can attain additional insight into the story and its resonances. Neither host nor guest is rude, but both deviate from the ordinary forms of social intercourse in ways which reveal that their situation is unique, and which culminate in an exchange intended to startle the poet's audience by its boldness.

The following analysis presupposes Milman Parry's demonstration that the Homeric epics were composed in an oral formulaic language which provided a fixed expression for a given idea.[4] Scholars since Parry have struggled to explain how "the free play of creativity and genius that is so obvious...to every unprejudiced reader" could operate within these rigid constraints.[5] My analysis

[1] W. Schadewaldt's "Kleiderdinge," *Hermes* 87 (1959) 13–26, is a relatively recent analytic treatment of the present problem.

[2] N. Austin ("Name Magic in the Odyssey," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 5 [1972] 1–19) is rather hard on Odysseus; G. Rose ("The Unfriendly Phaeacians," *TAPA* 100 [1969] 387–406) criticizes his host.

[3] B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey,* Hermes Einzelschriften 30 (Wiesbaden 1974) 5–60.

[4] In Parry's classic formulation, the formula is "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea." ("Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making I. Homer and Homeric Style," *HSCP* 41 [1930] 73–147; reprinted in *The Making of Homeric Verse: the Collected Papers of Milman Parry,* ed. A. Parry [Oxford 1971].)

[5] M. N. Nagler, "Towards a Generative View of the Oral Formula," *TAPA* 98 (1967) 274. Nagler has challenged the division between "conventional" and

views the very regularity of the formula system as an expressive medium. If the formulaic language provides a standard formula but allows variation or deviation from it, the poet can bring out the special meaning of a key passage by choosing to vary the formula. The expected form passes unnoticed, but the contrasting variation commands the audience's attention.[6] Such a deviation from a formulaic pattern appears at a key point in the Phaeacian episode.

The Conventions of Hospitality

The identification of guests is an important theme of the *Odyssey*. Its significance results in part from the nature of institutionalized hospitality. The society depicted in the poem is made up of a network of interdependencies, most strikingly realized in guest-friendships, in which reciprocal hospitality both creates personal ties and provides for a fair exchange of goods.[7] But, in any single visit, the dependency is all on one side; the guest arrives empty-handed, and the host must provide comforts and send the guest on his way with gifts. The guest provides nothing in return but the information that will enable the host to claim reciprocal hospitality. The guest's self-identification, then, is his gift to the host. The Cyclops makes this crudely explicit when he says to Odysseus, "Tell me your name and I'll give you a nice present" (*Od.* 9.355f).[8]

Because self-identification is all that the host needs from the guest, the restrictions on asking for it are stressed. At the same time, however, we observe that no guest tells who he is without being asked. Scholars have observed that it would be as impolite for a guest to "blurt out his name" at the wrong time as to refuse to give it at the right time.[9] If this is true, the host is as much obligated to ask the guest who he is at the appropriate time as to withhold the question until then.[10] According to accepted interpretations, the Phaeacian king and queen do ask this question at least once before the final identification scene. However, a close analysis of formulaic conventions reveals significant deviations in their phrasing. In the *Odyssey*, whenever someone asks an individual to

"original" poetic language, distinguishing between a generative level at which "all is traditional" and a performance level at which "all is unique."

[6] In the terminology introduced by the linguists of the Prague school and widely used at many levels of description, the standard formula can be viewed as an "unmarked" member of a contrast, the variation as a "marked" form. For a discussion of "markedness" see J. Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge 1968) 79–80.

[7] "It may be stated as a flat rule of both primitive and archaic society that no one ever gave anything, whether goods or services or honours, without proper recompense, real or wishful, immediate or years away, to himself or to his kin. The act of giving was, therefore, in an essential sense always the first half of a reciprocal action, the other half of which was a counter-gift." M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (Penguin 1965^2) 64. Cf. M. Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. Cunnison (New York 1967).

[8] A. J. Podlecki ("Guest-gifts and Nobodies in *Odyssey* 9," *Phoenix* 15 [1961] 132) has so analyzed Odysseus' trading of his name for presents in the Cyclops episode.

[9] Fenik (above, note 3) 20; W. Mattes, *Odysseus bei den Phäaken* (Wurzburg 1958) 156.

[10] For explanations of this stricture in terms of universal principles of politeness, cf. R. Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (New York 1975) 64ff. and E. N. Goody, "Towards a Theory of Questions," in *Questions and Politeness* (Cambridge 1978).

identify himself, a single one-line formula is always used. Only in the Cyclops episode and at the Phaeacian court is the formula absent or varied. This paper first establishes the regularity of the formula and then suggests interpretations of the departures from neutral language.

The *Odyssey* contains four major hospitality scenes which may be viewed as more or less paradigmatic: (1) Telemakhos' reception of Athena/Mentes in Book 1, (2) Nestor's reception of Telemakhos and Athena/Mentor in Book 3, (3) Menelaos' reception of Telemakhos and Peisistratos in Book 4, and (4) Eumaios' reception of the disguised Odysseus in Book 14. Three other important hospitality episodes are less than paradigmatic: the Cyclops episode inverts and perverts the conventions; Circe's eerily ambiguous hospitality differs from that of ordinary mortals; Odysseus appears among the suitors as a humble beggar rather than an aristocratic guest, and even their initial good treatment (17.367ff.) differs from that accorded an equal. Nor do the suitors accept the role of hosts here; although they have taken control of the resources of the house, they consistently refer to the beggar as Telemakhos' *xeinos*, not theirs. A fourth example, the interview with Penelope, is only a partial hospitality scene, since the beggar has already been fed. These episodes provide most of the available evidence about the conventions of Homeric hospitality.[11]

Most of these visitors are strangers to the host. Except for the deviant case of Odysseus among the suitors, the host always learns the guest's identity, whether real or fictitious. This usually happens through a question-and-answer exchange: the host asks the guest who he is and the guest tells him. The pattern is broken only twice. In one atypical hospitality scene, Circe puts the standard question, then answers it herself (10.325–30). A more elaborate variation appears in Telemakhos' visit to Menelaos. Both Helen and Menelaos come to suspect who their guest is; they compare notes and are heard by Telemakhos' companion Peisistratos, who speaks up, confirming their guess (4.137–67). This deviation from the norm creates a special effect in a scene which is characterized throughout by indirect communication and marked by Telemakhos' absence from the conversation.[12]

We have seen that a guest is always identified in the course of the visit. He never takes the initiative in identifying himself. In only one exceptional case does the host fail to ask the guest who he is. The host's question, then, is the normal and expected precursor of the guest's self-identification.

The Formula

There is more to the convention than this, however. The convention not only requires the host to put the question, but also provides the words. Of the

[11] In addition to these major episodes, the poem contains a number of minor hospitality scenes: Kalypso's reception of Hermes (Bk. 5); Aiolos' reception of Odysseus (two episodes: 10.1–27 and 10.58–76); Eumaios' welcome of Telemakhos (16.1–153); Telemakhos' provisions for Theoklymenos upon reaching Ithaka (15.508–46: the notions of *xenia* are invoked, but the offering of hospitality is not dramatized). Nausikaa performs for Odysseus some of the central offices of hospitality, providing food and drink, a bath, and needed clothing, but because she is not a head of household receiving a guest at home and because of the sexually-charged situation, the introduction conventions are not relevant here.

[12] Fenik (above, note 3) 21–28 describes the qualities of this scene well, but concentrates on the clear and important thematic parallels with Odysseus' story to the exclusion of interpretation of the scene's own unique character.

eight[13] instances outside the Cyclops and Phaeacian episodes in which someone asks someone else to identify himself, six use a single formula:

τίς πόθεν ἐσσ' ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;[14]

Often this line begins a more-or-less standardized series of questions.[15] The line appears in full or partial hospitality scenes addressed by Telemakhos to Athena-Mentes (1.170), by Circe to Odysseus (10.325), by Eumaios to the disguised Odysseus (14.187), and by Penelope to the disguised Odysseus (19.105). It is used in non-hospitality situations by Theoklymenos to Telemakhos (15.264) and by Laertes to Odysseus (24.298). There remain only two instances in which a host in a typical hospitality scene asks a stranger's identity without using the formula. One (19.162) is merely Penelope's abbreviated repetition of the full formula (used at 19.105). The other is Nestor's question to Telemakhos and Athena-Mentor:

ὦ ξεῖνοι, τίνες ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθ' ὑγρὰ κέλευθα;
ἤ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἢ μαψιδίως ἀλάλησθε
οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ὑπεὶρ ἅλα, τοί τ' ἀλόωνται
ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι, κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες; (3.71–74)

The same four lines are spoken by the Cyclops when he first meets Odysseus and his crew (9.252–55).[16] Apparently this, too, is a regular formula for asking strangers to identify themselves. What, then, conditions the choice? The alternative formula is usable only for groups of visitors, and then only for those who are known to have arrived by sea. Nestor's cordial demeanor prevents us from finding coldness and suspicion in his words about piracy.[17] Since this formula appears only in the two cases where two or more people are asked to identify themselves collectively, it seems to function as the plural form of the question "Who are you?" If this is true, then the τίς πόθεν formula is standard for all cases where an individual is asked to identify himself.

Scholars most often paraphrase the τίς πόθεν formula with the statement "X asks Y's name." This interpretation, however, misses an important shade of meaning. The formula clearly constitutes an invitation to self-introduction, but its internal structure and its precise meaning are difficult to analyze. The initial double interrogative is unusual, and the formula may be very old.[18] The first half-line appears to ask about personal identity, the second about homeland and parentage. Broken down in this way, the line as a whole seems to comprise a

[13] Including two scenes not involving hospitality (where there are no evident restrictions on the question); excluding indirect statements.

[14] I follow Wackernagel and Schmitt (below, notes 18, 24) in reading ἐσσ' for OCT's εἰς or εἶς.

[15] There are some suggestions that the entire question-series is invoked when part of it is asked. This paper does not attempt to place the formula-question and its answer in the context of the question-series.

[16] The four-line block also appears at *h.Ap.* 452–55.

[17] Cf. Thucydides 1.5.2, where the historian may be drawing on additional texts lost to us when he says that the people depicted in ancient epic attached no blame to piracy.

[18] Rüdiger Schmitt (*Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* [Wiesbaden 1967] 135–38, §§ 251–56) cites parallels for the question from Indic, Avestan and Germanic epic (however, exact verbal correspondences are lacking) and posits a common Indo-European origin for the "Frage nach dem Namen des Gegners, auf den man im Kampf trifft."

question in three parts: "What is your name? Who is your father? Where are you from?"

If this interpretation is correct, the answers given to the formula question by the interlocutors within the poem are surprisingly uncoöperative. Athena in her disguise as Mentes answers Telemakhos by telling name, father's name, and people ("Mentes" is lord of the Taphioi), and then answering his other questions more or less in order (1.179ff). The early placement of this answer and the divine status of the respondent suggest that the reply is meant to be paradigmatic; if it is a model reply, however, it is far from typical. Odysseus answers Eumaios by first telling his purported native land; after sketching the circumstances of his birth, he brings in his father's name and patronymic, using them in his story rather than stating them directly:

ἀλλά με ἶσον ἰθαγενέεσσιν ἐτίμα
Κάστωρ Ὑλακίδης, τοῦ ἐγὼ γένος εὔχομαι εἶναι. (14.203–4)

He never gives a name for himself in this long and circumstantial account of his purported life story. In the interview with Penelope, the proportions are even more exaggerated: six lines are devoted to a description of Crete, another three to his purported city and genealogy; his own supposed name is slipped in at the end of a line:

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν νήεσσι κορωνίσιν Ἴλιον εἴσω
οἴχεθ' ἅμ' Ἀτρεΐδῃσιν, ἐμοὶ δ' ὄνομα κλυτὸν Αἴθων...
(19.182–83)

It is true that Odysseus has special reasons for indirection in this interview, but his simpler lie to his father (24.304–6) is ordered in the same way: country, father's name, personal name. Telemakhos answers Theoklymenos with country and father's name only (15.266–67). Nor is this pattern of speech peculiar to Odysseus and his son. Nausikaa tells Odysseus her father's name, but not her own. The Phoenician slave girl in Eumaios' story responds in similar terms to the question of the sailor who seduces her (15.425–26).[19] And it is not only women who are known by their father's names; the warriors of the *Iliad* identify themselves in the same way, by country and genealogy, but not by personal name (*Il.* 6.145–211; 21.153–60).[20]

In most cases, then, an individual identifies himself by stating, first, his homeland; then, his father, and perhaps other ancestors; and, last and optionally, his own name. A similar result emerges from an examination of the successive paraphrases of the formula in the gentle wrangling between Penelope and the disguised Odysseus. Penelope first asks him the formula question (19.105). He begs to be excused from answering: μηδ' ἐμὸν ἐξερέεινε γένος καὶ πατρίδα γαῖαν (116). She returns to her questioning, insisting that he tell τεὸν γένος, ὁππόθεν ἐσσί (162). He replies: οὐκέτ' ἀπολλήξεις τὸν ἐμὸν γόνον ἐξερέουσα; (166). With each successive repetition, the request is rendered more concisely. Odysseus' first answer preserves "family" and "homeland" as distinct elements but contains no element corresponding to the question word τίς. Penelope's repetition of the question omits "homeland": ὁππόθεν ἐσσί appears

[19] Odysseus out of deference has not asked Nausikaa directly to identify herself. The Phoenician sailor's question is an indirect discourse version of the formula: εἰρώτα...τίς εἴη καὶ πόθεν ἔλθοι.

[20] Fenik (above, note 3) 18–19 cites additional examples of self-identification without name.

to be appositive to τεὸν γένος and to refer not to country but to extraction. In Odysseus' final response, the point at issue is reduced to the word γόνος. Thus, as the formula question is reduced to its essential kernel of meaning, we find that parentage is the most important element of a self-identification; next is one's country, while the personal name is the first thing to be dropped.

Scholars have observed that characters in Homer often introduce themselves without giving their names. For Fenik, this is usually "an interesting poetic convention" without significance;[21] Muellner has seen the omission of the personal name as the norm, treating cases in which a person introduces himself by name as "marked" usages requiring explanation.[22] Most authors, however, have failed to distinguish between self-identification and name-giving. Both of these are subject to regulation by social conventions, but these conventions do not equate the two. Apparently it is up to the guest whether or not to give his name when introducing himself. Why is the personal name dispensable? Partly, perhaps, because it is not important; a stranger's homeland and birth are more informative than his name. But there may be an additional reason: the name is too important to require. Austin has drawn attention in this connection to the prevalence of name taboos in primitive societies;[23] on this view the convention allows a person to identify himself without giving the interlocutor a hold on the essence of his being.

Although these scholars have treated the question of how one introduces oneself, no one has yet considered the relation between the form of the "Who are you?" question and the form of the self-introduction. If the formula seems to ask three questions, but often receives only two answers, we may have to revise our interpretation of the formula. The foregoing survey has shown that asking, "Who are you?" is not the same as asking, "What is your name?" I suggest that τίς ἐσσι; is a vague and general question whose details are spelled out by the remainder of the formula. This hypothesis helps to explain the odd asyndeton between the two initial interrogative words: πόθεν is appositive to τίς rather than conjoined with it, forming a single compound question "Who-whence?" Wackernagel's argument about the interpretation of πόθεν in this formula offers a way to complete the analysis.[24] He points out that the partitive genitive ἀνδρῶν must be construed with both initial interrogatives; thus πόθεν must mean "from whom?" rather than "from what place?" The first half-line should therefore be translated, "Who are you, and who was your father?" The remaining half-line, which contains only the spatial interrogative πόθι ("where?"), adds "die...besondere Frage nach der Heimat." If we modify this account according to the analysis given above, the first half-line asks, "Who (that is, of what parentage) are you?"[25] and the second adds, "Where are you from (where are your city

[21] Loc. cit. He means, I take it, that the audience knows people really do tell their names when introducing themselves, but the poet need not always represent the statement in direct discourse.

[22] L. Muellner, *The Meaning of Homeric εὔχομαι Through its Formulas* (Innsbruck 1976) 74 n. 9.

[23] Above, note 2, especially p. 3.

[24] J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax*[2] *Erste Reihe* (Basel 1926) 299–300.

[25] Wackernagel's comparative example of question and answer in a 2nd c. Orphic fragment from Crete (Olivieri *Laminae aureae* S.14, Diels-Kranz[6] I.16.5) bears out this interpretation: τίς δ' ἐσί; πῶ δ' ἐσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἠμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος. Here two separate questions "who?" and "whence?" are answered with a single statement about parentage.

and ancestors)?" This explanation is persuasive and workable, but I question whether πόθεν and πόθι are so clearly differentiated. Πόθεν in questions and answers about identity so frequently means "from what place?" (15.423, 17.368, 3.71 = 9.252, and especially 3.80) that the question πόθεν ἐσσί; in this context seems likely to be understood as "Where are you from?" The partitive genitive should determine the sense as personal, but πόθεν ἀνδρῶν could mean "of what father," "of what ancestors," or "of what people," while "people" and "homeland" are not always clearly distinguished. A person's "source" includes parentage, ancestry, race, and birth-place, and epic language sometimes uses the same vocabulary for all of these. Γένος, for example, can refer to paternity (14.204, 21.335), to line of descent (4.62–63, 24.508–12), and to place of birth (Crete: 14.199; Ithaka: 15.267). On the other hand, the relative adverb ὅθι, properly "where," is used at 6.34–35 with the personal referent Φαιήκων. Athena says in a dream to Nausikaa:

> ἤδη γάρ σε μνῶνται ἀριστῆες κατὰ δῆμον
> πάντων Φαιήκων, ὅθι τοι γένος ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτῇ.

I suggest, then, that the first half-line of the question formula asks the general question "Who are you: that is, what is your origin?" The second half-line adds a specific question about πόλις and τοκῆες.

In the *Odyssey* outside the Phaeacian episode, the first half-line never appears without the second. The full line, therefore, is the normal and expected form of the question. Only with the addition of the specific request to name country and ancestors does the request to the stranger to identify himself become a polite social question. We can test this hypothesis by comparing a passage in the *Iliad* where the first half-line appears without the second. At 21.150, Achilles, meeting Asteropaios on the battlefield, asks, τίς πόθεν ἐσσ' ἀνδρῶν, ὅ μευ ἔτλης ἀντίος ἐλθεῖν; Asteropaios answers by giving his country and parentage, but he also includes information about his military status: he is the leader of the Paeonians and he has been at Troy eleven days. He concludes his speech with a challenge to Achilles to fight. The basic content of his answer and the paraphrase-question τίη γενεὴν ἐρεείνεις; with which he sums up Achilles' question indicate that he takes Achilles to have asked him to identify himself—meaning, broadly, the same thing that the people in the *Odyssey* mean by this—but the specifics of his answer are slanted toward the question "Who are you *that you dare to come against me*?"

When Diomedes meets Glaukos, he asks his identity differently: τίς δὲ σύ ἐσσι, φέριστε, καταθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων; (*Il.* 6.123). This constitutes an expansion of the first half-line of the basic formula to a full line; ἀνδρῶν becomes καταθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων, stressing the notion of mortality in keeping with Diomedes' central thought: "If you are a mortal, you are going to die now; but if you are a god, I will not fight you." This, then, is a specifically slanted question: "Who are you among mortals...or are you a god?" Glaukos' answer, like Asteropaios', begins with the paraphrase question τίη γενεὴν ἐρεείνεις; indicating that he has understood Diomedes to ask about his ancestry, and he answers the question in terms of native land and family tree. His opening reflections on the evanescence of the generations of man (146–49) correspond to the emphasis on mortality in Diomedes' question and establish a link between the implied question "Are you a mortal?" and the naming of ancestors. He concludes (207–11) by making explicit the connection between his ancestry and his claim to prowess. In these two battlefield introductions, as in the examples previously considered, the question "Who are you?" in any form is understood as primarily

a question about parentage. However, the battlefield self-introduction has the specialized purpose of stating the speaker's credentials as a warrior, and the form of the question to which such a self-introduction replies differs accordingly from the question form found in the *Odyssey*. The warrior who asks an opponent, "Tell me who you are before I kill you," is participating in a different convention from the host who says, "Now that we are friends, tell me all about you."[26]

The answers to the plural form of the question used by Nestor and the Cyclops (3.71–74 = 9.252–55) are in keeping with the other evidence. Respondents to this question provide different information than individual respondents, but these differences correspond to the differences between individuals and groups. Telemakhos paraphrases Nestor's question with the statement εἴρεαι ὁππόθεν εἰμέν (3.80); in his answer, he tells his host (1) that he and his companion have come from Ithaka; (2) that their business is private and not public;[27] (3) what that business is. He mentions his father's name only in connection with his business. Odysseus, answering the same question asked by the Cyclops (who, however, has not first offered a meal), says that he and his men (1) are Akhaians on their way back from Troy, (2) have been blown off course, and (3) are Agamemnon's men, who have earned glory by sacking Troy. Both answers concentrate on explaining the source and purpose of the expedition. No part of Telemakhos' answer corresponds to the question τίνες ἐστέ; Odysseus does answer this question, but he identifies his group in terms of its purpose in travelling. Apparently the information required to identify an expedition is different from that required to identify an individual. As the central identifying features of an individual are his parents and city, the central identifying features of an expedition are its point of origin and its purpose.

In both formulas, then, the words τίς ἐσσι; / τίνες ἐστέ; contribute little content, but serve to introduce the questions which follow. In the following discussion, only the basic formula will be relevant. The argument depends on the following two points: (1) deviation from or variation on the regular formula draws attention to itself; (2) an individual identifies himself primarily by telling "from what people he stems": homeland, father, perhaps other ancestors, and, last and optionally, his own name.

When the Question is Absent

Such, then, are the norms of hospitality. To what extent does the Phaeacian episode conform? Odysseus does not behave like a normal guest: he dines, converses, and spends a full additional day with his hosts before giving his name. But neither do the Phaeacian king and queen act like normal hosts: at no point during the episode do they ask the standard question. Three speeches before the final banquet scene at the end of Book 8 have been taken by scholars for invitations to Odysseus to introduce himself, but none of them uses the full formula-line and only one is a direct question.

Alkinoos' first speech about Odysseus' identity (7.186–206) is addressed not to Odysseus but to the Phaeacian nobles. Odysseus has appeared suddenly out of a cloud of invisibility while the Phaeacians were making a libation to Hermes. A supper (*dorpon*) has been provided for him, and he has been eating. Only Odysseus eats, since the rest had dinner before he arrived. Because there is

[26] I owe these observations to a suggestion of L. Slatkin.

[27] Cf. Menelaos' question at 4.312–14. Telemakhos makes a similar distinction in his answer to Aigyptios in the assembly (2.42–45).

only one diner, the meal does not conform to the pattern for formal dining. Most obviously, the regular formula for the end of a meal (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο) is not usable because it requires the plural verb. In any case, one traveler's late-night snack is bound to be less ceremonial than the dinner of the first men of the land.

The nobles were preparing to go home to bed when Odysseus arrived (7.136–8), but now Alkinoos proposes a libation to Zeus.

> αὐτὰρ ὁ πῖνε καὶ ἥσθε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς·
> καὶ τότε κήρυκα προσέφη μένος Ἀλκινόοιο·
> "Ποντόνοε, κρητῆρα κερασσάμενος μέθυ νεῖμον
> πᾶσιν ἀνὰ μέγαρον, ἵνα καὶ Διὶ τερπικεραύνῳ
> σπείσομεν, ὅς θ' ἱκέτῃσιν ἅμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ." (7.177–81)

The imperfect verbs πῖνε and ἥσθε in line 177 show clearly that Odysseus is still eating when Alkinoos speaks; however, libations are customarily made after a meal is over, and the seven lines devoted to the proposing, pouring, and drinking of this one (179–85) tend to distract us from Odysseus' meal. Alkinoos begins talking "after they had poured and drunk as much as they wished" (184); this phrasing suggests the opening of after-dinner conversation. We may be somewhat disoriented when we are reminded at 215 that Odysseus is still eating.

Alkinoos, then, addresses the nobles at 186–206. His speech is in two parts: first, he proposes that they provide the stranger with escort home; then he expresses doubt whether the stranger may not be a god in disguise, in which case he will not need this assistance. There is no direct question, which would have been the only proper cue for Odysseus to identify himself; thus, Odysseus is not unduly evasive here,[28] nor on the other hand is he handling the indiscretion of his host with brilliant tact.[29] Rather, this scene is staged so as to avoid making either man's conduct stand out as deviant. If Alkinoos is indiscreet in mentioning his curiosity while the stranger is still eating, the poet distracts attention from his lapse by blurring the end of the meal. But if we feel that the meal is over and Alkinoos should now ask who Odysseus is, the content of his speech may help us to understand why he fails to do so. Before he knows how to treat the stranger, he must classify him; the rules of hospitality appropriate for human visitors may not apply to gods. Odysseus responds to the king's remarks by railing against the importunate demands of the belly; this serves both as denial that he is a god and as excuse for not saying more. These remarks on both sides emphasize the important theme of Odysseus' mortality.

The Phaeacian nobles applaud Odysseus' speech, pour and drink another libation, and go home to bed (226–29), leaving Odysseus alone with Alkinoos and Arete. Arete, whose good will Odysseus has twice been advised to seek above all,[30] now speaks for the first time. She opens with the same introductory line that Penelope will use in this situation, and she asks the first direct question:

> Ξεῖνε, τὸ μέν σε πρῶτον ἐγὼν εἰρήσομαι αὐτή·
> τίς πόθεν ἐσσ' ἀνδρῶν; τίς τοι τάδε εἵματ' ἔδωκεν;
> οὐ δὴ φῂς ἐπὶ πόντον ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἱκέσθαι; (7.237–39)

[28] Thus Austin (above, note 2) 4 remarks, "Among the Phaiakians...he carries caution almost to the point of incivility."

[29] Rose (above, note 2) 396.

[30] By Nausikaa (6.303–15) and by the disguised Athene (7.53–77).

She begins as if she were going to ask the standard "Who are you?" question, but she uses only the vague, introductory portion of the basic formula, omitting the part which asks specifically about πόλις and τοκῆες. Arete's question, like that of Achilles to Asteropaios (*Il.* 21.150), is a challenge rather than an expression of friendly interest. She has recognized his clothes as belonging to her own household, and she asks for an explanation: "Tell me who you are: that is, where did you get those clothes, if you came from over the seas?" Critics have consistently objected that Odysseus should either answer the queen's question or explain why he does not.[31] In fact, Odysseus offers both an explanation and an answer:

> ἀργαλέον, βασίλεια, διηνεκέως ἀγορεῦσαι
> κήδε', ἐπεί μοι πολλὰ δόσαν θεοὶ οὐρανίωνες·
> τοῦτο δέ τοι ἐρέω ὅ μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλᾷς. (7.241–43)

He distinguishes between telling his whole story and answering Arete's question. He goes on to do the latter, telling enough of his long story to address her present concern.

On Odysseus' second day among the Phaeacians, the poet keeps us in mind of the hosts' curiosity about the stranger, but the issue of his identity does not come to the point of an explicit question until the end of the day. Alkinoos in his speech to the assembled people (8.26–45) says that he does not know who the stranger is; this remark heightens the suspense, but hardly constitutes an invitation for Odysseus to stand up before the assembly and make a speech about himself. The only setting associated with the identification of a guest is after-dinner conversation; we could not expect a question treated as so important to be asked at other than the ceremonially appropriate time. Two meals are served in the course of the second day; both are followed by Demodokos' songs of the Trojan War; each time, Odysseus hides his tears behind his cloak and only Alkinoos notices his grief (8.83–95, 521–34). Yet only the second of these nearly identical scenes ends in Alkinoos' posing the awaited question. From the point of view of the commentator surveying the written text, this may look like arbitrary stage management; from the point of view of a listener, the first scene offers no contrasts with the norms. For music to follow dinner is unexceptionable; for Odysseus to weep is natural and affecting; for Alkinoos to handle the situation with unobtrusive tact seems the mark of a skillful host. This scene intensifies the dramatic irony of the situation, while the revelation of the guest's identity is postponed until after the more ceremonial evening meal.

The Form of Alkinoos' Question

In the evening, the same sequence of events recurs, and there can be no more question of adjourning the gathering for athletic contests. The time has come to ask. Now Alkinoos addresses the Phaeacian nobles, remarking that the entertainment is distressing their guest, on whose account it has been arranged. At 548, he turns to Odysseus:

[31] Thus Wilamowitz (*Homerische Untersuchungen* [Berlin 1884] 133) objects that Odysseus promises to answer Arete's question and then fails to do so. "Das also ist aus den versen selber zu folgern, dass hier etwas nicht in ordnung ist." In sharp contrast to this view, C. Segal finds Odysseus' response more cooperative than necessary ("The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return," *Arion* 1:4 [1962] 24).

τῷ νῦν μηδὲ σὺ κεῦθε νοήμασι κερδαλέοισιν
ὅττι κέ σ' εἴρωμαι· φάσθαι δέ σε κάλλιόν ἐστιν.
εἶπ' ὄνομ' ὅττι σε κεῖθι κάλεον μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε,
ἄλλοι θ' οἳ κατὰ ἄστυ καὶ οἳ περιναιετάουσιν.
οὐ μὲν γάρ τις πάμπαν ἀνώνυμός ἐστ' ἀνθρώπων,
οὐ κακὸς οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλός, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται,
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τίθενται, ἐπεί κε τέκωσι, τοκῆες.
εἰπὲ δέ μοι γαῖάν τε τεὴν δῆμόν τε πόλιν τε
ὄφρα σε τῇ πέμπωσι τιτυσκόμεναι φρεσὶ νῆες. (8.548–56)

His question is clear and specific, but he uses neither the regular question formula nor a variant of it. He begins by asking explicitly for just that piece of information which is ordinarily unstressed: the guest's name. The content as well as the form of his question is non-standard, even shocking. The unusually personal question "What is your name?" appears only once in the rest of the *Odyssey;* the Cyclops also asks it:

Δός μοι ἔτι πρόφρων, καί μοι τεὸν οὔνομα εἰπὲ
αὐτίκα νῦν, ἵνα τοι δῶ ξείνιον, ᾧ κε σὺ χαίρῃς. (9.355–56)

At first, Odysseus lies to the Cyclops, and this lie is one of his most successful tricks. Later, in a boastful mood, Odysseus tells the Cyclops his real name, enabling the Cyclops to curse him and so bring upon him the wrath of Poseidon.[32] That occasion and this constitute the only times in the poem that Odysseus introduces himself truthfully by name.[33] Alkinoos, then, here invites Odysseus to repeat the worst mistake of his life.

This parallel between Alkinoos' question and that of Polyphemos forms part of a network of references grouping together Phaeacians and Cyclopes.[34] Is the poet suggesting that Alkinoos is a hostile, threatening figure like the Cyclops?[35] This is hard to believe; the tenor of the other references is to juxtapose the two groups as opposites. In the same way, the similarity of Alkinoos' question to Polyphemos' points up their fundamental contrast. Both the king and the Cyclops ask a pointed personal question, but they ask in different contexts and with different intentions. The brutish Cyclops ignores the formula because its request for a socially-defined identification is meaningless to him; for him alone "Who are you?" means no more and no less than "What is your name?" Alkinoos, on the other hand, asks more than the convention prescribes: his polished question elaborates each element of self-identification. His phrasing, as well as the setting, makes it clear that his exceptional personal interest in his guest is sympathetic.

Alkinoos' speech itself provides the explanation of his unusual request. "Tell me," he begins, "the name your mother and father and fellow-citizens used to call you." In speaking of a name in terms of its function in interactions with the important people in one's life, he invites Odysseus to contemplate the social and familial roles long left behind and soon to be resumed. "For no human

[32] C. Brown ("Odysseus and Polyphemus: The Name and the Curse," *Comparative Literature* 18 [1966] 193–202) seems to have been the first to draw attention to these consequences.

[33] S. Besslich, *Schweigen,Verschweigen,Übergehen. Die Darstellung des Ungesprochenen in der Odyssee* (Heidelberg 1966) 69, draws a detailed parallel between the self-introductions in the two episodes.

[34] Cf. Segal (above, note 31) 33–35.

[35] Cf. Rose (above, note 2).

being, whatever his status, lacks a name" (552–54). On the surface a truism, this remark, too, speaks profoundly to Odysseus' condition. To tell one's name is to acknowledge one's humanity—as Odysseus must now do, having rejected immortality on Ogygia and overcome the bestial condition in which he arrived in Skheria. In telling his name, then, Odysseus will assert that he is a human being, born of human parents. But the language in which Alkinoos refers to Odysseus' birth is reminiscent of an earlier speech of his, in which, after proposing that Odysseus receive safe conduct home, he says that, once home, the stranger will be subject to his pre-determined portion:[36]

ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτα
πείσεται ἄσσα οἱ αἶσα κατὰ Κλῶθές τε βαρεῖαι
γεινομένῳ νήσαντο λίνῳ ὅτε μιν τέκε μήτηρ. (7.196–98)

In this speech Alkinoos repeats and elaborates upon what everyone concerned with Odysseus has been saying: in Book 5, in which the hero makes the journey from Ogygia to Phaeacia, Odysseus' *aisa/moira* is mentioned by Zeus (41–42), Hermes (114–15, quoting Zeus), Kalypso (206ff.), Poseidon (288–89), and Ino (343–45). At the same time, Book 5 contains two of the poem's five instances of the verb *odussomai,* notoriously a play on the hero's name.[37] The focus on the hero's name and that on his fate come together at last in Alkinoos' long question.

Darker associations, perhaps, come with line 553. This line appears in full only once in the rest of the Homeric corpus: Hektor uses it in reference to the destiny fixed for each human once he is born:

οὐ γάρ τίς μ' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν ἀνὴρ Ἄϊδι προϊάψει·
μοῖραν δ' οὔ τινά φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν,
οὐ κακόν, οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.
(*Il.* 6.487–89)

Two attestations cannot provide a firm basis for generalization, but I suggest that the line was a familiar one, typically used in contexts like Hektor's. If this is true, this line may bring with it into the present passage its habitual association with references to fated death. To tell one's name, then, is to assert one's biological and social identity and to acknowledge the predetermined limits of one's life and death.

But Alkinoos has perhaps implied more in saying that no man is "nameless." Elsewhere in Homer, *anonymos* means not just "lacking a personal name" but "unknown" or "inglorious." *Onoma* usually means simply "name," but in an extended sense it can stand for the reputation the successful person enjoys in life and the fame which survives after the hero's death; it thus becomes equivalent to *kleos* "fame."[38] Alkinoos' unusual usage of *anonymos* creates echoes of this extended sense for *onoma:* his "Tell your name" acquires almost the force of "Recite your *kleos.*" But *kleos* can be the technical term for epic

[36] R. Newton, "The Rebirth of Odysseus," *GRBS* 25 (1984) 18–19 draws attention to this echo, connecting the overtones it creates with his argument that the episode contains references to a rebirth ceremony.

[37] Cf. G. Dimock, "The Name of Odysseus," *Hudson Review* IX:1 (1956) 52–70.

[38] *onoma* as *kleos: Od.* 4.710, 13.248, 24.93.

anonymos (nonymos, nonymnos): Od. 1.222, 13.239, 14.182; *Il.* 12.70, 13.227, 14.70.

song itself;[39] thus, asking the hero's name is like asking him to sing his own praise-song.

This is the invitation Alkinoos extends and Odysseus accepts. It is indeed an act of unusual daring that the king proposes to his guest. As he boasted to the Cyclops of his identity and his prowess, he is now to boast of all his adventurous deeds before a more sympathetic audience. What he once did wrong he will now do right; the act which lost him his *nostos* will now regain it for him. It is always a risk to tell one's name, but, where Odysseus once succumbed to temptation, he will now act with assurance, usurping the role of bard and taking control of his own *kleos*.[40]

Odysseus' hosts are so impressed with his self-defined *kleos* that they shower him with gifts, enough, as Zeus predicted (5.37–40), to more than make up for the Trojan booty he lost. As the ordinary guest trades his identity for guest-presents, Odysseus trades his extended name for exceptionally rich presents, so that he can return home with honor. For the warrior's honor lost in transit, he substitutes a new honor won in a novel way: by testing and defining his own humanity; by showing himself a master of tact and protocol; by keeping an audience entertained; and by acknowledging and asserting the central core of his identity, his name.[41]

[39] G. Nagy, *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter* (Harvard 1974) 244–52.

[40] L. Muellner (above, note 22) and C. Segal ("Kleos and its Ironies in the Odyssey," *L'Antiquité Classique* 52 [1983] 24–25) have remarked that Odysseus in his self-introduction uses in the first person constructions ordinarily confined to third person.

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