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Homer's Ethical Geography: Country and City in the *Odyssey*[*]

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The latter half of the *Odyssey* is distinguished by its vivid portrayal of the countryside—the ἀγρός—and its inhabitants, and by the resultant contrast between ἀγρός and city, the πόλις. Homer is indeed otherwise generally silent about the region outside the city walls, though such an ellipsis of the great majority of humanity is already in a certain sense a way of representing them. But here Homer turns his attention to the region and its people, and presents them in a sympathetic light. Meanwhile the Ithacan πόλις in this section of the poem contrasts starkly with the cities of Sparta, Pylos, or Phaeacia. While those cities exemplify the hospitality, generosity, loyalty, and formality that structure the life of Homer's elite and even the very conventions of his narrative, the Ithacan πόλις is plagued by violence, treachery, and greed. This prominence accorded the ἀγρός is due to circumstances in the narrative that reverse the normal ethical geography of the epos: a king dressed in rags, seeking safety in the ἀγρός, and surviving as a beggar while the πόλις is occupied by violent usurpers. This reversal opens a space allowing the ἀγρός and its inhabitants to emerge upon the stage of epic representation. Yet these figures bring with them a voice alien and at points discordant to the ideology and ethical hierarchy organizing the *Odyssey*. Their presence in the narrative opens a dialogue between the normative ideology promoted by the epos and a contrasting ideology grounded in the world of the ἀγρός. In order to recover this latter voice it is, however, necessary to read against the *Odyssey*'s grain, in a manner contrary to its own ethical priorities.[1] Yet such an analysis will

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[1]Exemplary of this approach to analyzing ideological conflicts within a narrative is W. G. Thalmann's important study "Thersites: Comedy, Scapegoats, and Heroic Ideology in the *Iliad*," *TAPA* 118 (1988) 1-28. In general, see Fredric Jameson 18-20 on the problems of historical literary scholarship and a work's "political unconscious." Edward Soja 73-75

reveal the techniques which the *Odyssey* employs to subject this voice of the country to its own values as well as the points where its attempts to manage and to control it are inevitably stalemated.

My argument falls into three major parts. Part I outlines Homer's representation of geographical space and the ethical values with which it is invested as a social terrain. Part II turns to consider how the presence of the suitors in the Ithacan πόλις inverts the conventional relationship between the country and the city. I conclude by analyzing several passages from the latter portion of the *Odyssey* in which the perspective of the city and that of the country come into direct conflict.

I

Several Homeric passages illustrate the normative conceptualization of space in the epos. In the introduction to the Cyclops episode Odysseus pauses to survey the goat-inhabited island across from that of the Cyclopes (9.116-41). Odysseus's eye progresses from the wilderness to the site suitable for a city: upon this island there are no hunters, nor are there flocks or cultivated fields (119-124). After an explanation of why the Cyclopes have not colonized this island, Odysseus again marvels at the potential fertility of its land, and comments upon its excellent harbor with a spring at its head (125-41). Odysseus organizes this empty landscape into a progression of four regions in terms of their utility to man: the wilderness suited to hunting, grazing land, farm land divided into plow land and vineyard, and the site for a city with a spring and a good harbor. The island's undeveloped state is an index of the savagery of the Cyclopes, but for Odysseus, as he claims the land in his imagination, the panorama before him is legible only as something radically other than what it is. Odysseus's mental ordering of this landscape in terms of the degree to which the land is shaped by human intervention expresses, moreover, an implicit hierarchy favoring the πόλις, the protected center, the space most thoroughly transformed for human ends. The geography of human life depicted on Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18.490-606) is similarly divided into three contiguous regions: the city (491 ff.), the fields (541 ff.), and farther out still the pasture lands (573 ff.). Each region is divided in turn into subordinate vignettes: the city at peace and the city at war; plowing, reaping, and the

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proposes something similar, precisely in arguing for the analysis of history and society from the perspective of space, geography. Though Soja's interests are remote from Homer and his poetry, I have found his book especially suggestive.

vintage, corresponding to the three seasons; and the cattle herd versus the sheep station. The spatial context of social life is not organized here by a binary opposition of country and city, but as a progression from more to less civilized regions: the πόλις, the fields, and the grazing lands. Only the final stage is omitted, the wilderness, where men go to hunt.[2] The authority of this model and the social values with which it invests the landscape are reinforced by the cosmogonic resonances of Hephaestus, the craftsman god, creating the image of a balanced and orderly cosmos.[3]

Other passages, however, conceptualize the landscape strictly as a binary opposition, intensifying the hierarchical contrast between what is within and what outside the walls of the city. For example, the founding of the Phaeacian πόλις is described as follows:

> ἔνθεν ἀναστήσας ἄγε Ναυσίθοος θεοειδής,
> εἶσεν δὲ Σχερίῃ, ἑκὰς ἀνδρῶν ἀλφηστάων,
> ἀμφὶ δὲ τεῖχος ἔλασσε πόλει, καὶ ἐδείματο οἴκους,
> καὶ νηοὺς ποίησε θεῶν καὶ ἐδάσσατ' ἀρούρας.
>
> From here godlike Nausithous had removed and led a migration,
> and settled in Scheria, far away from men who eat bread,
> and driven a wall around the city, and built the houses,
> and made the temples of the gods, and divided up the fields.[4]
> (*Od.* 6.7-10)

Nausithous first drives a wall around the city to separate its site from the rest of the landscape.[5] Then he organizes the space within by erecting houses for men and building temples for the gods, reconstituting the opposition which

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[2]See D. Halperin, *Before Pastoral: Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry* (New Haven 1983) 89-94, on the parallel Sumerian treatment of this topos. Aristotle, *Politics* 1256A.30-40, distinguishes precisely the three options of herding, hunting, and agriculture as possible sources of livelihood for humans. Homer uses ἀγρός to designate both the fields under cultivation and the pasture lands. See Richter's discussion of Homer's vocabulary for worked land, 93-98. The region beyond the fields, the grazing land and wilderness is designated the ἐσχατιή, 'margin': see Donlan 1989: 137.

[3]See duBois' discussion of the cosmogonic significance of the Hoplopoeia in *History, Rhetorical Description, and the Epic* (Cambridge 1982) 19-27. Scully 25 notes the cosmogonic facet of city-founding generally.

[4]For continuous passages I rely upon the translations of Richmond Lattimore with occasional alterations.

[5]The wall is a conventional feature for a Homeric πόλις: see p. 37 below. See the observations on the rift between the ἀγροικοί and city-dwellers produced by the appearance of the city offered by Richter 3, and by Morris 1991: 34-40, esp. 37.

structures the cosmos as a whole. The region outside is brought into order last through the division of the land into fields. Nausithous's δασμός cuts up the continuous surface of the land in order to subordinate it to the interior organization of the city: as the totality of the city within the wall is linked to its territory as a whole outside the wall, so each of the city's constituent οἶκοι is linked to its own ἄρουραι. These originative acts for the city of Scheria also possess a cosmogonic quality in the process of separation and designation and through the creation and construction which brings order out of chaos. In this context the line marked by the wall is decisive. Within its interior, space is filled with human artifacts, places of habitation, and by implication gods and men. But except for the boundary marks imposed there by the city there is no mention of the contents of the country, its inhabitants and their dwellings.[6] This passage testifies not only to Homer's sense of a fundamental distinction between country and city marked by the wall, but also to the authority of the city and its population over the rural district.[7]

The sense that the wall constitutes a profound cultural boundary is reinforced by the indications of habitation patterns supplied by Homer. At *Iliad* 20.215-18 Aeneas recounts for Achilles the prehistory of Troy:

> Δάρδανον αὖ πρῶτον τέκετο νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς,
> κτίσσε δὲ Δαρδανίην, ἐπεὶ οὔ πω Ἴλιος ἰρὴ

[6]As Rose 59 puts it: "Actual production—agriculture, animal husbandry, and craftwork—is a sort of structured silence...an ideologically suppressed element in the poem." The absence of this region from Homer's poetry in general is illustrated by Richter's frequent observations of Homer's lack of interest, and so of evidence, for his subject: e.g., farmers (15), rural slaves (21), rural settlements (23), pastoral economy (46), the herds of small farmers (67), sowing of grain crops (118), vegetable cultivation (123, 125). Elliger 24-127 stresses throughout his discussion that Homer's presentation of landscape is filtered by his narrative's thematic priorities, and that the region only enters the narrative as an effect of the story line. Similarly, M. Treu discusses the *Iliad*'s lack of interest in rural landscape, and the *Odyssey*'s subordination of the presentation of this region to larger themes: *Von Homer zur Lyrik: Wandlungen des griechischen Weltbildes im Spiegel der Sprache.* Zetemata 12 (München 1968) 82-112.

[7]Other passages attesting to the link between individual households within the city and their holdings in the countryside: *Il.* 15.494-99, *Od.* 4.318-20 and 756-57, and 22.46-47. For the opposition of city and fields: *Il.* 21.446-49, *Od.* 3.484-85, 6.177-78, 8.559-60, 11.187-88, 14.263-65, 24.212. A. Richel, *Worte für Erde, Boden, Land und Erdoberflächengebiete in der homerischen Sprache*, vol. 1-2 (Frankfurt am Main 1936) discusses the opposition of πεδίον to πόλις, ἄστυ, and πτολίεθρον (236-39) as well as that of ἀγρός with the same terms for city (276-81). Richel demonstrates that the opposition between πεδίον and the city is not a necessary one, and that in fact the πεδίον is portrayed on occasion as containing the city. The ἀγρός and city, however, are mutually exclusive both conceptually and practically for Homer, and the distinction between them is as much cultural as physical.

ἐν πεδίῳ πεπόλιστο, πόλις μερόπων ἀνθρώπων·
ἀλλ' ἔθ' ὑπωρείας ᾤκεον πολυπίδακος Ἴδης.

First of all Zeus who gathers the clouds had a son, Dardanos
who founded Dardania, since there was yet no sacred Ilion
made a city in the plain to be a center of peoples,
but they lived yet in the underhills of Ida with all her waters.

Before Dardanus had established his city or Troy had been founded, the people simply inhabited the foothills of Ida in a settlement possibly resembling that of the Cyclopes (*Od.* 9.112-14)—a community perhaps, but not a πόλις. Following a city-founding such small settlements no doubt would have persisted in the surrounding region much as Homer portrays satellite πόλεις around the Trojan metropole.[8] The creation of the πόλις initiates a division between rural and urban regions. This same habitation pattern appears in Odysseus's account of his assault upon an Egyptian settlement (*Od.* 14.257-84). His men commence to pillage the lovely ἀγροί of the Egyptians, carrying off women and children and killing the men. Since the narrative suggests a night attack (265-67), the victims must actually dwell amid the fields, perhaps in small hamlets. The presence of the women and children also implies as much. With daybreak the king leads the army out from the πόλις to rout the invaders. Here those who work the fields also dwell in them while the king and the martial elite make their homes within the fortified precinct of the city.[9] The *Iliad* refers to this rural population as the λαοὶ...ἀγροιῶται ('men of the fields': *Il.* 11.676) or the ἀνέρες ἀγροιῶται (*Il.* 11.549=15.272; cf. *Od.* 11.293, Hesiod *Sc.* 39). Such an individual may be depicted in the simile of a man without neighbors nearby who secrets away an ember ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιῆς ('at the outer border of the fields': *Od.* 5.488-90).[10] At *Il.* 23.831-35 Achilles introduces the shot-putting contest with the boast that the shepherds

[8]Even during the Dark Age (roughly 1150-750) the *damos*, or district, composed of small nucleated settlements, was organized around a central, usually fortified, community: Donlan, 1989b: 18-20.

[9]In view of Homer's economy of narrative conventions and patterns it is improbable that he presents here a uniquely Egyptian city distinct from those he pictures in Greece. This contrast between rural and urban populations seems to surface as well in Alcinous's reference to Odysseus's compatriots as ἄλλοι θ' οἳ κατὰ ἄστυ καὶ οἳ περιναιετάουσιν (8.551), and at *Od.* 2.64-66 where Telemachus refers to περικτίονας ἀνθρώπους, / οἳ περιναιετάουσι (cf. *Od.* 2.239-41 and 16.374-82).

[10]Ἀγρός here refers to the territory of a settlement, not to a specific field: cf. *Il.* 5.137, *Od.* 1.185.

and plowmen of the winner of the lump of iron to be used in the event will not need to come into the city (ἐς πόλιν) for iron even if his land lies at a great distance (ἀπόπροθι πίονες ἀγροί).[11] While Achilles probably refers here to the slaves of a fellow βασιλεύς rather than to free men, still the inclusion of the plowman along with the shepherd, whom one might expect to find in distant pastures, leaves no doubt that agricultural workers as a group dwelled in the country. As further examples, Dolius and his family are presented as dwelling on the land they cultivate (*Od.* 24.205-12, 384-93), and Hephaestus places dwellings for the shepherds in the pasture depicted upon Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18.587-89).[12] The geopolitics of mount Olympus also exhibit the habitation pattern observed here, separating an urban elite in the πόλις from cultivators and herders who dwell in the ἀγρός. When Zeus calls an assembly, Themis darts off in every direction summoning the gods so that not even any of the rivers were absent or the nymphs who inhabit the groves, springs, and meadows (*Il.* 20.4-12). Clearly these rustic deities are the divine counterparts of the λαοὶ ἀγροιῶται mentioned in the *Iliad*.[13]

These scattered passages attest to a rural population composed of free men and slaves engaged in the agricultural and the pastoral economies. Homer, however, does not inform us whether these people dwelled in settlements, as we might expect for the cultivators, or on isolated homesteads, as seems likely for the herders.[14] Granting the likelihood that the λαοὶ ἀγροιῶται dwelled in small settlements of some sort or even small πόλεις, from the perspective of a district's main settlement, its fortified πόλις, this population nonetheless resided in the ἀγρός. Reciprocally, Homer does not tell us that the πόλις is reserved as the exclusive sanctuary of the martial elite, but it is these that he

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[11]As the specification of shepherd and plowman makes clear, it is not assumed that the owner of the land dwells upon it himself . Cf. *Od.* 4.754-57, where Odysseus's house (in the πόλις) is mentioned along with his ἀπόπροθι πίονας ἀγρούς. Regarding the interpretation of ἀπόπροθι, see *The Iliad*[2], W. Leaf, ed. (Amsterdam 1960) ad 23.832.

[12]Laertes' presence in the ἀγρός is extraordinary, as I discuss below, pp. 49-50, 63-64. The *Iliad* makes frequent reference to isolated herding outposts in its similes: *Il.* 2.470, 5.140, 12.304, 16.642, 17.110, 18.589, 19.376-77.

[13]This scene on Olympus finds an implicit parallel in the βουλή of *Odyssey* 2. After Eurymachus commands the assembled λαός to return to their ἔργα, or farms (*Od.* 2.252), the poet states that while the suitors remained in the house of Odysseus, the rest returned to their own homes. The passage thus appears to take for granted that the homes and the farms of the λαός are in the same place.

[14]See Richter 11-16 regarding small farmers and their holdings. This is presumably the same class of individual as represented by the persona of Hesiod's *Op.* For the view that this segment of the population has no business in the city, see p. 46 below.

shows living there with only domestic slaves and craftsmen. Homer's representation of the landscape conveys the image of a central settlement, the locus of political and legal power and inhabited by the elite, surrounded by fields and pastures serving as home to those whose lives are devoted to tilling and herding.

The passages we have examined deal not simply with Homer's organization of space, but with the organization of social space. They thus entail what I term an ethical geography, a geography upon which an ethical hierarchy has been mapped.[15] These ethical-geographical distinctions are expressed more forcefully in another group of passages. Early in *Odyssey* 5, for example, Hermes sets out for Ogygia with Zeus's message that Odysseus is to be sent on his way. As Hermes approaches Calypso's cave, the poet lingers on the natural beauties of the island, the trees and birds, vines, springs, and the surrounding meadows of violets and parsley, and comments that Hermes, even though a god, took a moment to look around and enjoy such an attractive landscape (5.56-76). When Calypso asks why Hermes has come, however, his answer is abrupt and contrasts with what has gone before:

> Ζεὺς ἐμέ γ' ἠνώγει δεῦρ' ἐλθέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα·
> τίς δ' ἂν ἑκὼν τοσσόνδε διαδράμοι ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ
> ἄσπετον; οὐδέ τις ἄγχι βροτῶν πόλις, οἵ τε θεοῖσιν
> ἱερά τε ῥέζουσι καὶ ἐξαίτους ἑκατόμβας.
>
> It was Zeus who told me to come here. I did not wish to.
> Who would willingly make the run across this endless
> salt water? And there is no city of men nearby, nor people
> who offer choice hecatombs to the gods, and perform sacrifice.
> (*Od.* 5.99-102)

This passage recapitulates the opposition between the city and the wilderness evident in the description of the goat island. Hermes' response conveys in this context the general attitude of the city-dweller toward the region outside the city walls: who would ever wish to go there, away from the institutions, wealth, and society of the city? For all its natural beauty, Ogygia holds little attraction for Hermes since there is no πόλις there, no worship or hecatombs.[16] The same bias is fundamental to the negative characterization of the

[15]See Soja's discussion of "spatiality" as socially constructed space: 79-80, 120-22, 129-30.

[16]The description of the landscape around Calypso's cave may be related to the theme of the *locus amoenus*, discussed below pp. 47-48, but it is clear from Hermes' reply that Homer

pastoralist Cyclopes, whose lawlessness, violence, lack of communal spirit, and failure to worship the gods finds geographical expression in their isolated life outside the institutions of the πόλις (9.105-115, 187-92).

The city's attitude toward the country is expressed more directly in the frustrated rebuke directed by Antinous at Eumaeus and Philoetius as they weep at the sight of their master's bow: νήπιοι ἀγροιῶται, ἐφημέρια φρονέοντες ("You foolish countrymen, who never think of tomorrow," *Od.* 21.85). Antinous goes on to complain that their tears only make Penelope's woe the greater. He thus insults the herdsmen by reference to their origins in the ἀγρός for behavior he regards as unsophisticated and too little concerned for the feelings of others. Eumaeus and Philoetius are νήπιοι, fools, and ἐφημέρια φρονέοντες, unable to see beyond the ends of their noses. The accompanying terms here leave no doubt of the abusive intent of ἀγροιῶται. Even though Antinous speaks in anger and is characteristically rude in any case, this use of ἀγροιῶται as an insult presupposes a general condescension towards the rural population. Achilles expresses a similar contempt for rural inhabitants in his contrast of the heroic death he might have hoped for from the hands of another ἀγαθός with the wretched death (λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ) by drowning he now fears, one more fit for a boy herding swine (ὡς παῖδα συφορβόν: *Il.* 21.280-83).[17]

The attitudes voiced overtly in the passages just noted towards the region outside the πόλις and its inhabitants find a subtle but more profound expression in a passage already briefly touched upon, the scene of reaping from Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18.550-60). Homer describes a τέμενος βασιλήϊον, a 'kingly precinct,' worked by mowers, binders, and boys to carry off the sheaves. Half way through the scene the poet turns away from the toiling men:

> . . . βασιλεὺς δ' ἐν τοῖσι σιωπῇ
> σκῆπτρον ἔχων ἑστήκει ἐπ' ὄγμου γηθόσυνος κῆρ.
> κήρυκες δ' ἀπάνευθεν ὑπὸ δρυῒ δαῖτα πένοντο,

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embeds the description within the country-city topos. A. Parry, "Landscape in Greek Poetry," *YCIS* 15 (1957) 24-25, observes that the contrast between the beauty of Calypso's island and Odysseus's tearful desire to get back to Ithaca expresses this same preference for the πόλις.

[17]Similarly, in the midst of his praise of warfare and of his own prowess as a warrior (*Od.* 14.214-226), Odysseys observes that he never cared for farming (ἔργον) or the increase of his house (οἰκωφελίη). Nestor appears to exhibit the same warrior's prejudice against the rural population when he specifies that it was the λαοὶ...ἀγροιῶται (*Il.* 11.676) who fled after he slew their leader. Condescension for the ἀγρός generally is exhibited as well by the Muses' abusive address to Hesiod: ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἷον (*Th.* 26).

βοῦν δ' ἱερεύσαντες μέγαν ἄμφεπον· αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες
δεῖπνον ἐρίθοισιν λεύκ' ἄλφιτα πολλὰ πάλυνον.

...and by them the king in silence
and holding his staff stood near the line of reapers, happily.
And apart and under a tree the heralds made a feast ready
and trimmed a great ox they had slaughtered. Meanwhile the women
scattered, for the workmen to eat, abundant white barley.
(*Il.* 18.556-60)

The brief vignette presents many oppositions. The king, from the city, contrasts with the working men of the ἀγρός. The king stands in silent gladness while the reapers move in a line across the field; in his hands a scepter, in their hands tools. The setting itself of the τέμενος calls attention to the respective statuses of those controlling land and those working it. The scene concludes with preparation of a meal, the strongest expression of community and reciprocity for Homeric society. Under the shade of an oak the king's retinue slaughter a bull for a δαίς, 'banquet.' At the same time another repast is prepared, a δεῖπνον, simply a 'meal.' This meal is of barley porridge, and prepared by the women, perhaps here the wives, expressly for the laborers (ἐρίθοισιν). The men harvesting the king's τέμενος do not share his table, and while he eats beef, they make do with barley. This passage does not express the contempt or distaste of the other two passages, but merely a sense of hierarchy, and is perhaps more significant as evidence in view of this lack of polemic. The contrasts organizing the picture of life on the shield—war and peace, country and city, pasture and field—are meant to express an order innately harmonious and just. The gulf separating those who live on and work the land and those who possess it and control its produce while dwelling in the city is seen as part of the nature of things.[18]

[18]Homer's examples of noble shepherds contradict the distinction between urban and rural populations for which I argue: *Il.* 5.311-13 (cf. *H. Ven.* 76-80 and 172-73), 6.21-26, 6.421-24, 11.101-106, 14.442-45, 20.188-94; cf. *Od.* 13.221-23. These aristocratic herders perhaps indicate the importance of livestock to an economy in which it served as the form of wealth separating the elite from their inferiors. Indeed it may be that the youth of Homer's elite were expected to put in some time in the pastures, though I find it difficult to imagine Homer's Telemachus, Antilochus, or Diomedes routinely herding livestock alongside a Eumaeus or Philoetius. More likely to my thinking, these passages represent a traditional motif which had become historically obsolete and so anomalous by Homer's time. All of these passages are formulated as reminiscences rather than events in the narrative present, and they are dominated, moreover, by the two themes of the birth or the capture of heroes.

This division between a rural and urban population and the accompanying social attitudes imply of course a relatively developed social hierarchy. It is generally agreed that Homer describes the contemporary world of early Archaic Greece (circa 750-700 B.C.). The πόλις, arising from scattered, smaller settlements and not yet consolidated as a true state, is ruled through the unstable institution of a chieftainship and by an elite still to emerge as a landed aristocracy. Indeed, arable land is neither so economically crucial nor in such short supply as to suffice as the basis for an aristocracy's power.[19] Can such a simple and unstratified society support the regional distinction I propose? In my view, one need not reject these reconstructions of Homer's historical context to observe that his poems nonetheless include wealthy palaces, stone temples, and massively fortified cities. These elements of the narrative, implying a more intensive extraction of surplus value, a steeper social hierarchy, and a more concentrated political authority than what is supposed by historical analyses of the poems, simply remind us that Homer mixed anachronistic materials in composing his narrative. This process of mixing was not, however, haphazard, but generally guided by principles of selection and combination which were ideological in character.[20] If Homer's distinction between rural and urban remains problematic from a historical perspective, that fact makes it all the more significant as an element of the social vision which his narratives promote since it must therefore be seen as a purposeful and tendentious departure from a familiar, everyday reality.

The differences between the region within the walls of the city and that without are illustrated as well by a comparison of the facilities and monuments located in each. Taking up the city first, at *Odyssey* 6.259-72 Nausicaa contrasts the ἀγρός and farms with the πόλις of the Phaeacians, enumerating the characteristic features of the Homeric city. She describes the high wall of the city, its harbor and the docks along the road, and the ἀγορή and Ποσιδήϊον, assembly place and temple to Poseidon, located there.[21] Among the houses of the Phaeacians the halls of Alcinous are distinguished by their grandeur (*Od.* 6.296-303, 7.82-111). These are the institutions which typify the city and express its power and preeminence: its wall; the port, associated through ships

[19]See Donlan 1989b: 5-29; 1989: 141-45; Qviller 109-56 (who dates the "Homeric world" somewhat earlier than the generally accepted 750-700 BC: 113); Morris 1991: 34-43.

[20]See Morris 1986: 120-29, and Scully 81-89.

[21]See Roland Martin's discussion of the ensemble of port, ἀγορά, and temple in Miletus and Lato at *Recherches sur l'agora grecque. Études d'histoire et d'architecture urbaines* (Paris 1951) 56-62.

with τέχνη ('craft'); the ἀγορή, connoting justice and the legal and moral power of the city; the stone temples of the Olympian gods; and the stone houses of the nobles, especially the king's.

1. The Wall: The erection of a wall is presented as integral to the founding of a city in the case of Phaeacia (*Od.* 6.7-10) even though it is in no danger of attack (*Od.* 6.199-205). At *Il.* 21.446-47 Poseidon reminds Apollo of how he built the walls of Troy so that the πόλις would be impregnable (ἄρρηκτος).[22] Zethus and Amphion similarly built a wall for Thebes since they could not hold it otherwise in spite of their strength (*Od.* 11.263-65). In *Iliad* 7 (337-43, 436-63), Nestor proposes the erection of a wall around the Achaean camp, which is treated in the narrative on the model of a πόλις, as a protection to the Achaeans and their ships. Homer also notes the wall around the city of war on Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18.514-15).[23]

2. The Harbor: Homer associates πόλις and harbor in Odysseus's description of the goat island (*Od.* 9.136-41), in the Laestrygonian city (*Od.* 10.87-94), and he describes the Ithacan harbor of Phorcys (*Od.* 13.96-104). For the link of ships with τέχνη, see *Il.* 5.59-63, 13.390-91=16.483-84, 15.410-12, and *Od.* 5.233-61, 6.268-72, 9.383-88. In contrast, it is a mark of the Cyclopes' lack of τέχνη that they have no ships (9.123-130). In general Homer presents the city as the home of the various craftsmen: *Od.* 17.340-41, 381-87, 19.55-57, 21.43-45, *Il.* 6.313-17.[24]

3. The 'Αγορή: The Achaean camp has an assembly place (*Il.* 2.91-99, 11.806-10) as do Troy (*Il.* 2.788-89, 7.344-46, cf. 18.273-74), Ithaca (*Od.* 2.35-37, 24.420), Pylos (*Od.* 3.31), and the city of peace on Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18.497). The ἀγορή is characteristically adjacent to the king's dwelling: see *Il.* 2.788-89 and 7.344-46 for Troy; *Od.* 24.420 and 439-41 appear to suggest as much for Ithaca, depending upon how ἐκ μεγάρων 'Οδυσῆος is taken, as do *Od.* 10.111-15 for the city of the Laestrygonians, and *Od.* 3.404-17 for Pylos.[25] The ἀγορή is associated with Θέμις and heroic excellence at *Il.* 9.440-41, 11.806-7, 16.385-89, 18.497-508, 20.4-5, and *Od.* 2.68-69. In contrast, the barbaric Cyclopes have neither ἀγοραὶ βουληφόροι nor θέμιστες (*Od.* 9.112-15), and Polyphemus ἀθεμίστια ἤδη (*Od.* 9.188-89).

4. The Temple: Athena has a temple on the acropolis of Troy (*Il.* 6.297-300) as does Apollo (*Il.* 5.445-48); Erechtheus possesses one in Athens (*Il.* 2.547-49) with a sanctuary for Athena (*Od.* 7.80-81); and the Achaeans have constructed altars in their ἀγορή (*Il.* 11.808).

5. The House: The houses of kings are characterized by construction in stone and precious metals. Homer describes Priam's at *Il.* 6.242-50, Odysseus's at *Od.* 17.264-71, Antiphates' at *Od.* 10.111-12, Menelaus's at *Od.* 4.43-47, 71-75, and Nestor's at *Od.* 3.386-92. The house of Paris is also described at *Il.* 6.313-17, noting that Priam's, Hector's, and Paris's houses are all located on the acropolis, the site of Athena's temple and the Trojan ἀγορή.

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[22]But cf. *Il.* 6.433-37, where Andromache refers to a weak point in the wall.

[23]See Scully's discussion of the religious and symbolic value of the wall for Homer, 31-53.

[24]Scully 49-53 discusses the associations of the city wall as well with craft.

[25]Coldstream notes the association at several geometric sites of the ἀγορά with the acropolis and the μέγαρον of a settlement's chief man: *Geometric Greece* (New York 1977) 314-15. Interestingly, Thucydides (III.72-73) observes that the wealthy Corcyreans lived around the ἀγορά next to the harbor.

The coherence and prestige of this plan is supported by its projection onto the divine plane: the gods themselves dwell in such a πόλις complete with houses (*Il.* 1.605-11), a wall (*Il.* 5.749-51=8.393-95), and an ἀγορή adjacent to Zeus's dwelling (*Il.* 20.4-6, but cf. 8.1-3), though Olympus apparently lacks temples and harbor.

The πόλις as a fortified citadel is also the locus of wealth and hoarding, a theme again closely associated with the king's 'palace' (μέγαρον). The descriptions of the houses of Menelaus and Alcinous foreground this quality (*Od.* 4.43-47, 71-75, and 7.82-111), and Priam's wealth is proverbial (*Il.* 24.543-46, cf. 9.401-405). The πόλις is the center of legal, political, economic, religious, and cultural power for the world depicted by Homer. The wealth, exclusivity, and institutions of the πόλις support the characteristic aristocratic customs and values of generosity, hospitality and the banquet, friendship (φιλία), τέχνη, and the martial tradition.

To turn to the contrasting depiction of the ἀγρός, Homer, as we have seen, does not represent that region through the built environment, as in the city, but as the site for different sorts of labor. Farmland is opposed to grazing land, and the former is subdivided into plow land, vineyard, and orchard while the latter is distributed among sheep, cattle, goats, and hogs.[26] The music of the countryside is the λίνος song of the grain threshing (*Il.* 18.569-71) or the shepherd's pipe (*Il.* 18.525-26) rather than the heroic songs of court singers like Phemius and Demodocus.[27] Homer does not refer to temples outside the city walls, but rather to shrines or sacred places such as the cave of the nymphs with its stone looms and jars (*Od.* 13.103-112), the spring and grove sacred to Athena where Odysseus pauses before continuing into the city of the Phaeacians (*Od.* 6.291-92), the grove of the nymphs containing the spring supplying the Ithacan πόλις with water (*Od.* 17.204-211),[28] or the peak of Ida from which Hector sacrificed (*Il.* 22.170). Similarly, the κλισίη, or 'hut,' of the country

[26]See *Il.* 6.191-95, 9.578-80, 12.313-14, 20.184-85 for these divisions of the land. Homer's conception of the country as the site of toil is further illustrated by his similes for the battlefield at, e.g., *Il.* 4. 452-55 or 11. 67-69 and 86-89.

[27]Cf. the settlement between Apollo and Hermes towards the end of the *Hymn to Hermes* (475-512), according to which Apollo returns to the company of the gods on Olympus with the κιθάρα, companion of feast, song, revel, and euphrosyne generally, while Hermes, who has just been awarded jurisdiction over herding, invents the σῦριγξ to banish dull care.

[28]Springs outside the city walls are mentioned for Troy (*Il.* 22.145-52) and the city of the Laestrygonians (*Od.* 10.103-8). Scully, 13-14, suggests that the spring marks the boundary between πόλις and ἀγρός, a transition signaled by the shrines associated with the spring.

population (*Il.* 18.589, *Od.* 14.194) contrasts with the μέγαρον of the city.[29] The ἀγρός is also portrayed as a region of danger and risk as is evident from the susceptibility of the country to pillage, the murders and kidnappings perpetrated there, and the similes of lion attacks upon herds.[30]

Just as the city possesses wealth in the form of treasure and the products of τέχνη, so the countryside has its peculiar wealth, but this is owned and controlled by the inhabitants of the πόλις. The view of the ἀγρός as a form of wealth is illustrated when Eumaeus, asserting that Odysseus was as wealthy as twenty men, proceeds to catalogue his flocks, not the valuable treasures kept within his house (*Od.* 14.96-108).[31] Again, when Telemachus takes leave of Menelaus, he explains that it makes sense for his host to keep horses in view of the produce of the broad plain he rules over, though for himself in Ithaca they would be extravagant (*Od.* 4.601-608).[32] This attitude toward the country as a source of wealth is evident as well in Athena's eulogy of Ithaca (*Od.* 13.242-47) and Odysseus's description of the goat island (*Od.* 9.131-141). Both enumerate the types of crops and livestock the land would support, and emphasize its fertility. Bellerophontes and Meleager are each offered a rich τέμενος, an allotment of choice agricultural land, as a reward and a source of wealth (*Iliad* 6.191-95, 9.576-80).[33] Diomedes describes Tydeus's δῶμα/ ἀφνειόν ('wealthy hall') with reference to ἄρουραι/ πυροφόροι, φυτῶν ...ὄρχατοι, and πολλὰ...πρόβατ' ('wheat-bearing fields, orchards of trees, and numerous flocks': *Il.* 14.121-24).[34]

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[29]The temporary quarters of the Achaean army at Troy are also designated κλισίαι. The outpost as a whole of the herders is the σταθμός, apparently both house and outbuildings as well as the livestock pens: *Il.* 2.470, 18.589, *Od.* 14.358 (cf. 5-20), 16.318. See Richter's discussion of rural dwellings and buildings, 23-29.

[30]Similes: e.g., *Il.* 12.299-306, 17.61-67, 18.161-62, 21.282-83, *Od.* 6.130-34; Pillage: *Il.* 9.539-42, *Od.* 14.262-64; Attacks: *Il.* 4.392-97, 6.187-89, *Od.* 6.127-40 and 199-205, 13.267-68, 15.427-28, 16.383. Thus the σταθμός or the orchard is itself generally enclosed within a wall or fence. Elliger discusses the city wall as a boundary between security and danger, 60-62. Cf. *Il.* 18.273-79 regarding the protection afforded by a wall.

[31]Cf. *Il.* 14.121-24, 22.488-89, *Od.* 4.318-20. Richter discusses the prestige attached to livestock as a form of wealth at Richter 32-37 and 68-69, and the pastoral economy generally at 44-69.

[32]Cf. *Od.* 14.96-108, where most of Odysseus' herds are said to be on the mainland (and 20.209-225 regarding the Cephallenian herds), and 13.242-43 where Athena notes that Ithaca is rocky, not broad, and bad for horse rearing, but nonetheless not that poor.

[33]The τέμενος is presented as a source of wealth and something controlled by the urban-dwelling elite at *Il.* 12.310-14, 18.550-60, and *Od.* 11.184-87 as well. See the comments of Donlan 1989: 124-34, 142-43.

[34]The epithets for cities, conveniently listed by Scully 129-36, exhibit a division between πόλις and ἀγρός reinforcing the contrast of country as a source of wealth and the city as a

We must also consider the people dwelling in the ἀγρός, both the λαὸς ἀγροιῶτης and the slaves of the elite. Do the mowers pictured harvesting the land of a wealthy man in a simile from the *Iliad* (ἀνδρὸς μάκαρος κατ' ἄρουραν: 11.68) or the reapers shown upon Achilles' shield clearing the τέμενος of a king (18.550-60) work for a μισθός or do they discharge through their labor some obligation to a wealthy and powerful member of their community? Are these laborers independent peasants, are they the thetes of the landowner, or his slaves? It is impossible to answer such questions about these generic vignettes of agricultural labor due to the general obligation of the rural population to the inhabitants of the city. Both groups living in the countryside, the δῆμος, composed of autonomous farmers and thetes, and slaves, are obliged in some way to the city-dwelling elite, the ἄριστοι or βασιλῆες.

Both terms δῆμος and λαός can designate all free inhabitants of a community, but commonly refer in a restricted sense to the non-nobles—those not ἄριστοι or βασιλῆες.[35] The distinction between the βασιλῆες and the men

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locus of power. The epithets referring to the walled settlement, Scully's second category (132-33) stress size, wealth, fortification, and fame. Epithets from his first and third categories (things natural: 130-31, and things natural but altered by man: 135), however, emphasize the natural fertility (or infertility) of a place, and wealth in the form of crops and livestock. Richter 107-109 discusses agriculture as the foundation of the Homeric economy in spite of the prestige of husbandry in Homer's poetry. He considers the cultivation of grain and other crops at 109-45. Donlan 1989: 142 discusses this problem from a social and economic perspective. See also P. duBois' analysis of the links of fertility and sexuality with the land in Homer's poetry in *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago and London 1988) 40-43. Hesiod's Γῆ πάντων μήτηρ (*Op.* 563) corroborates this perspective upon agriculture as does his insistence that only a full καλιή, 'corn crib,' saves men from starvation: *Op.* 299-302, 306-08, 411-12, 500-503.

[35]For the meanings of δῆμος and λαός see Donlan 1970: 381-85; and H. van Effenterre, "Laos, Laoi, et Lawagetas," *Kadmos* 16 (1977) 36-50. Recent discussions of the historical society to which Homer's representations correspond agree that the distinction between the δῆμος/λαός and the ἄριστοι/βασιλῆες is far narrower in the Homeric poems than previously thought: G. M. Calhoun, "Classes and Masses in Homer," *CP* 29 (1934) 192-208, 301-16; B. Qviller, "The Dynamics of Homeric Society," *SO* 56 (1981) 109-56; A. G. Geddes, "Who's Who in 'Homeric' Society," *CQ* 34 (1984) 17-36; W. Donlan, "The Social Groups of Dark Age Greece," *CP* 80 (1985) 293-308; J. Halverson, "Social Order in the 'Odyssey'" *Hermes* 113 (1985) 129-45; I. Morris, "The Use and Abuse of Homer," *Classical Antiquity* 5 (1986) 81-138; H. van Wees, "Leaders of Men? Military Organization in the *Iliad*," *CQ* 36 (1986) 285-303. Fundamental to this reevaluation of the relative statuses of δῆμος and βασιλεύς is the observation that Homer portrays a pre-state social formation, in which leadership relies upon consensus, personal prestige, and informal obligations rather than upon the administrative regularity, social discipline, and coercive power of a state. See W. G. Runciman, "Origins of States: The Case of Archaic Greece," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24 (1982)

of the δῆμος is expressed in the bluntest of terms by Odysseus when in the wake of Agamemnon's disastrous testing of his troops (*Iliad* 2.188-206) he plies the fleeing βασιλεύς with 'gentle words' (*Il.* 2.189), but goads the fleeing δήμου...ἄνδρα (*Il.* 2.198) with his scepter and, calling him a coward, orders him to obey his βασιλεύς.[36] The differences between these two groups can be mapped onto the terrain of country and city in both ethical and economic terms.

Telemachus observes (*Od.* 1.389-93) that being βασιλεύς is no bad thing for a man since straightway his house becomes wealthy (δῶ/ ἀφνειὸν πέλεται: 392-93) and the man himself gains in esteem. Agamemnon sheds some light upon Telemachus's comment when he offers to Achilles seven cities inhabited by ἄνδρες . . . πολύρρηνες πολυβοῦται who will honor him like a god with 'gifts' (δωτίνῃσι: *Il.* 9.154-55=296-97). The epithets πολύρρηνες πολυβοῦται suggest that these gifts will be in the form of the produce of the countryside.[37] Agamemnon's implication that the king's wealth is derived from the δῆμος is supported by Eurymachus's pledge (*Od.* 22.54-55) to recompense Odysseus for his property through a collection from the δῆμος: ἄμμες ὄπισθεν ἀρεσσάμενοι κατὰ δῆμον. In another passage Alcinous urges the Phaeacian nobles to offer more gifts to Odysseus, whose expense they will make good with a collection from the δῆμος: ἡμεῖς δ' αὖτε ἀγειρόμενοι κατὰ δῆμον/ τεισόμεθ' (*Od.* 13.14-15). As in Eurymachus's speech, Alcinous presupposes a distinction between the nobles, whom he addresses, and the δῆμος, from whom contributions will be solicited.[38] Elsewhere, Odysseus prays that Alcinous and Arete be permitted to pass on to their children both their κτήματ' ...γέρας θ', ὅ τι δῆμος ἔδωκεν ('possessions...and the gift which the demos granted': *Od.* 7.150).[39]

351-77; Donlan: 1989b: 5-29; Morris 1991: 26-57. It is now the consensus that the βασιλεύς is better described a chieftain than a 'king,' and that βασιλῆες or ἄριστοι constitute an emergent aristocracy for whom hereditary succession and social privilege are insecurely established. In my view, however, Geddes and Halverson go beyond the evidence in diminishing the status of the βασιλῆες as an elite. Finley's discussion (esp. 51-107), though now needing modification at points, still has much to offer.

[36]See Thalmann's illuminating analysis of this passage, 9-14. In other instances δῆμος or λαός are used inclusively to refer to the entire community, including the elite: e.g., *Il.* 11.328, 17.576-77. Fifth century usage of δῆμος exhibits the same ambivalence of restrictive and inclusive meanings: Donlan 1970: 381-82.

[37]Cf. Phoenix's recollection that Peleus μ' ἀφνειὸν ἔθηκε, πολὺν δέ μοι ὤπασε λαόν. (*Il.* 9.483).

[38]Alcinous addresses here the Phaeacian βασιλῆες. See *Od.* 8.536, to which cf. 8.387-91.

[39]The γέρας as a form of gift recalls in this passage the δωτῖναι promised by Agamemnon to Achilles. Note also *Od.* 19.194-97 where Odysseus-Aethon recounts how he entertained

The obligation between δῆμος and the βασιλῆες was conceptualized as a form of reciprocity, and was not based upon the imbalance of power associated with feudalism or serfdom, though it is evident enough that the elite realized a material benefit from this system. Thetes, however, as members of the δῆμος unable to support themselves, have entered into a more restrictive obligation. Antinous, asking who was crewing Telemachus's ship, links thetes more closely to slaves than to Ithaca's elite: Ἰθάκης ἐξαίρετοι, ἦ ἑοὶ αὐτοῦ/ θῆτές τε δμῶές τε (*Od.* 4.643-44). The possessives and the association with slaves indicate that a thete was dependent upon the lord of a wealthy house in some way.[40] The dependence of the thete is formalized in the conditions of his labor: he works for a μισθός.[41] The precariousness of the thete's position is illustrated by Poseidon's reminiscence of how Laomedon dismissed Apollo and him at the end of their term with threats rather than the payment they had agreed upon (*Il.* 21.450-55). The thete, moreover, is habitually associated with agricultural labor.[42] While labor for hire in the city is the province of craftsmen, the δημιοεργοί, who are of relatively high status, that of the countryside is organized by the relationship of thetage.

Hector rationalizes the economic relationship between the elite of the πόλις and the rural δῆμος through an ideology of service and merit. He asserts to the allies that in the expectation that they would defend Troy he has worn down his own people with contributions of gifts and food for them: δώροισι κατατρύχω καὶ ἐδωδῇ/ λαούς (*Il.* 17.225-26). In Hector's view the burden of donations placed upon the λαός is recompensed in the heroic deeds of the allies.[43] These passages not only leave the status distinction between

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Odysseus on Crete and provided food for his crew: δημόθεν ἄλφιτα δῶκα...ἀγείρας (19.197). See Finley 96-97. This system of accumulation and redistribution concentrating political and economic power in the hands of the βασιλῆες is analyzed by Qviller 120-31; and by W. Donlan, "Reciprocities in Homer," *CW* 75 (1982) 158-69.

[40]What may be presupposed here is the year's term of employment mentioned at *Il.* 21.441-45. See Finley 57-58, and Richter 17-19.

[41]See *Il.* 21.443-57, *Od.* 18.357-58, and cf. *Od.* 10.84-85. The μισθός is also mentioned at *Il.* 12.433-35, 10.304, and *Od.* 4.525 without suggestion of thetage.

[42]See *Od.* 10.84-86, 11.489-90, 18.356-61, and *Il.* 21.446-49.

[43]Cf. Menelaus's address to the Achaean leaders who sit at the table of the Atreidae and δήμια πίνουσιν (*Il.* 17.248-51). Sarpedon provides a fuller articulation of this principle at *Il.* 12.310-28, in which τις...Λυκίων contrasts with the βασιλῆες whom this imagined observer admires (317-19). Thalmann 3-7 discusses Sarpedon's speech as an ideological rationale for the division between commoners and elite. This ideology of merit may explain Priam's rebuke to his remaining sons that they are ἀρνῶν ἠδ' ἐρίφων ἐπιδήμιοι ἁρπακτῆρες (*Il.* 24.262)—that is, the support they receive from the δῆμος is simply extortion since, in view of their cowardice, they do not merit gifts. Merit is consistently emphasized as the source for the

δῆμος and βασιλεύς unmistakable, but also lay bare the economic relationship which complements that distinction. The *Iliad*'s preoccupation with warfare leads it to foreground the ideology of merit in which the ἄριστοι cloak themselves, but the *Odyssey*, concerned with the formalities of hospitality, emphasizes rather the wealth which this social hierarchy puts at the disposal of a βασιλεύς.

Homer's concept of merit cannot be accurately understood apart from another principle distinguishing the βασιλῆες from the δῆμος, that of lineage or descent, γένος. For in general Homer regards γένος as the very vehicle of the ethical and physical excellence of the ἄριστοι. So at *Il.* 21.184-87 Achilles boasts over the slain Asteropaeus that the son of a mere river (ποταμοῦ γένος: 186) cannot prevail over the offspring of Zeus (γενεὴν μεγάλου Διός).[44] Telemachus serves as a clear example of the specific link between status as βασιλεύς and descent group, γένος. When, for example, Antinous proposes another attempt on Telemachus's life, one of the suitors hesitates explaining: δεινὸν δὲ γένος βασιλῆϊόν ἐστι/ κτείνειν: ('...for to destroy a kingly lineage is a monstrous thing.': *Od.* 16.401-2). Even Antinous acknowledges that status as βασιλεύς is Telemachus's patrimony (γενεῇ πατρώϊον: *Od.* 1.387), and Theoclymenus interprets a bird sign to declare that there is no more kingly family on Ithaca (ὑμετέρου δ' οὐκ ἔστι γένευς βασιλεύτερον ἄλλο: *Od.* 15.533) and that it will continue to rule there.[45] A similar link is mentioned

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authority of Homer's elite in discussions of the historical basis of the society portrayed by Homer: Geddes 17-19; Halverson 133-36; Qviller 115-17; van Wees 303; Donlan 1989b: 22-25; Rose 61-91. See D. Claus's discussion of the delicate relationship between the performance of heroic deeds and the rewards which those deeds elicit, 13-28. The broader sociological role of gift-relations as the mechanism for creating and maintaining social hierarchy is discussed by Qviller 120-34; cf. Donlan 1989b: 21-26.

[44]Assertions of this relationship between lineage and personal excellence abound in the poems: *Il.* 5.252-54, 633-42, 6.190-91, 207-11, 14.112-27, 20.104-109, *Od.* 4.231-32, 15.223-25, 241-55, 21.334-36, 24.506-9. Horses likewise inherit their superiority: *Il.* 5.265-70, 23.344-48. Cf. the observations of Theognis on the continuity of breeding noble rams, asses, and horses with the breeding of good men at 183-92.

[45]Cf. *Od.* 1.221-23, 16.117-20. Rose 102-106 analyzes the *Odyssey*'s systematic promotion of the principles of inherited excellence and hereditary monarchy. In an important passage (*Od.* 1.389-98) Telemachus responds to Antinous that while being βασιλεύς is no misfortune, there are many βασιλῆες in Ithaca and one of them can have 'it' (τόδ': 396—that is, the role of βασιλεύς for the entire region). Telemachus appears to deny any hereditary claim upon the office of βασιλεύς. Yet in evaluating this remark it is important to attend to his speech's central contrast between being βασιλεύς of Ithaca and ruling his own household. Telemachus dismisses in this way Antinous's side issue of being βασιλεύς in order to emphasize his main point further: he will at least rule in his own house. Telemachus responds in this speech to the reality of a situation in which he lacks the power to make good on his legitimate claim. See

between the Dardanids and the kingship of Troy at *Il.* 20.300-308, and is implied both by the genealogy of Agamemnon's royal scepter at *Il.* 2.100-108 and in the description of Nestor taking up the seat once occupied by Neleus at *Od.* 3.408-412. As these passages attest, the βασιλῆες are distinguished from the δῆμος not only on the basis of individual merit but also through descent, the qualities passed on within a γένος. Indeed, γένος as an essence would appear in Homer's view to find expression precisely in the manifestations of merit by which the best men are set apart.[46] The ethical and economic distinctions between δῆμος and βασιλῆες manifest themselves geographically in the opposition between ἀγρός and πόλις.

Finley (53-55) supposes that for any historical society to which Homer's narrative might correspond, the δῆμος must have been far the largest social group, the masses or commons—an assumption I consider to be quite probable. Yet, as Geddes points out, in Homer's poetry this group is all but invisible, an observation leading him to conclude that a class of free commoners distinct from an elite must not have existed.[47] In my view, however, this peculiarity of

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West's comment ad 386-87 (*A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey, A. Heubeck, S. West, J. B. Hainsworth, edd., vol I [Oxford 1988]). The passage thus attests rather to the difficulties of implementing hereditary succession in a social formation permitting its leaders only a minimal accumulation of coercive power. Qviller 127-32 and Donlan 1989b: 22-25 discuss the inherent instability of the "pyramids" of personal authority erected by Homeric βασιλῆες.

[46]It is precisely on this point that I depart from Rose's otherwise incisive and convincing analysis of this problem (Rose 61-91). Rose overstates Agamemnon's lack of merit and Achilles' lack of inherited wealth and political power, and by focusing upon these two figures presents as the norm what is in fact a catastrophic aberration with which Homeric society is consequently unprepared to deal: an instance in which the preeminent warrior for a political unit does not also hold preeminent political authority. See my "*Aristos Achaion*: Heroic Death and Dramatic Structure in the *Iliad*," *QUCC* ns 17 (1984) 61-66, and W. Donlan, "The Structure of Authority in the *Iliad*," *Arethusa* 12 (1979) 51-66. The fact that empirical observation contradicts an ideological assumption (e.g., men of noble descent naturally exhibit the greatest merit) does not necessarily imperil or make ironic that assumption, which likely serves precisely to mask, to provoke the misrecognition of, empirical reality. Homer's vision of a functioning hereditary succession, moreover, need not reflect a historical reality at all since such an ideology of descent might well be an attempt to legitimate hereditary succession in a historical setting where it was yet emergent and contested. See note 45 above, and Morris's acute discussion of Homer's historicity versus his ideological content, 1986: 127-29. Agamemnon's appeal at *Il.* 10.237-39 strikingly illustrates Homer's awareness that an individual's descent and his merit are not always commensurate.

[47]Geddes 27. Geddes infers from the absence of peasant small farmers that either Homer's world constitutes in this regard a fantasy resembling no real world, or else, as he prefers, it is socially homogeneous and allows for no distinction between noble and commoner. In the second stage of his argument (28-36), however, he goes on to conclude that Homer's βασιλῆες are necessarily therefore "literary fictions"—if Homer's society is homogeneous,

Homer's narrative is not the direct reflection of a historical reality, as Geddes thinks, but the product of an ideologically selective mode of representation. There are two ways in which Homer's poems might be said to be historical: first, by accurately representing in their narratives what really existed at some point; second, as artifacts themselves which functioned within their historical context in a specific way. In the first instance the narrative would serve as a transparent window upon a distant object. In the second, however, it would resemble more a lens that systematically distorts what lies beyond it according to the interests of specific social groups, but whose curvature and imperfections are at points detectable. The nature of these distortions, of course, reveals much about the narrative's intentions and desires. In my view human representations of the world offer no such windows for gazing directly upon the past as it really was, but only lenses producing varying degrees of distortion. While the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in their representation of habitation patterns, of the built environments of city and country, or of the δῆμος, cannot be historical in the first sense, they are certainly so in the second sense in that they reproduce a historical vision—one which really existed, no matter how slanted—of those components of social reality. The very distortions, elisions, and absences which mediate the distance between Homer's narrative and what really existed are themselves historical as elements of a historical ideology. For this reason I prefer to approach Homer's poems less as comprehensive reflections of a historical moment than as interested and polemical interventions into such a setting which reproduce the view point of a specific social group.[48] The general invisibility of the δῆμος in Homer's narrative may simply constitute the demographic manifestation of his erasure of the countryside as a region. This group, as opposed to rural slaves, is missing even from the latter half of the *Odyssey* since it is superfluous to the poem's encomium of Odysseus.

While slave status spans the boundary between πόλις and ἀγρός, male slaves are restricted almost exclusively to herding and cultivation, and recapitulate in their relationship with their masters the general subordination

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then the elite βασιλῆες have got to go. Contra, see Morris's helpful discussion of demographics, hierarchy, βασιλεύς, and state formation (1991: 40-43).

[48]See Jameson's discussion of the literary work as a form of "symbolic action": 20-23, 74-76, 81-84. This is not to deny the possibility of reconstructing a reasonably accurate picture of a historical reality in broad outline through critical and comparative analysis. Indeed, I rely upon such work for the present argument.

of the country regions to the city.[49] The *Odyssey* presents the life of the herdsman through the figures Eumaeus and Philoetius and that of the agricultural slave in Dolius and Laertes, who lives like a slave even though a member of the elite (*Od.* 24.249-53). In spite of the surprising autonomy enjoyed by these rural slaves, their subordination to the lord in the city is secured through conventions of property: the lord's ownership of the herds, the land, and their produce. This relationship is best illustrated by the suitors' feasting upon livestock πάντοθεν ἐξ ἀγρῶν ('from all over the countryside': *Od.* 17.171), arousing Eumaeus's complaint that the best pork is sent in to them (*Od.* 14.80-82; cf. 14.56-61, 96-108, 20.209-25, and 3.421-22).

The hierarchy of statuses distinguishing the elite from their inferiors finds spatial expression in the attitude that slaves and commoners have no business in the πόλις. The attraction of the city for a beggar is illustrated by Irus, characterized as a πτωχὸς πανδήμιος ('beggar for the whole district') who begs κατὰ ἄστυ ('in the city': *Od.* 18.1-4), and Odysseus, who states πτωχῷ βέλτερόν ἐστι κατὰ πτόλιν ἠὲ κατ' ἀγροὺς/ δαῖτα πτωχεύειν ('It's better for a beggar to beg his dinner in the city than in the countryside': *Od.* 17.18-19; cf. 15.308-9). Antinous's rebuke, however, of Eumaeus for bringing another beggar, Odysseus, into the city (*Od.* 17.375-79), Eurymachus's challenge to Odysseus to accept a job in the country and earn his keep rather than freeloading (*Od.* 18.357-64), and the criticism of Theoclymenus as a wandering beggar unable to work (*Od.* 20.376-83) all express the opposing perspective of the elite that the city is a place of indolence and freeloading for the lower orders. Eumaeus voices this same prejudice when he accuses Melantheus of neglecting his herd by spending time in the city (*Od.* 17.244-46), as does Melantho when she chidingly asks Odysseus why he does not go to the λέσχη or the blacksmith's shop to take a nap rather than making trouble in Odysseus's house (*Od.* 18.326-31).[50]

An alternative vision of the productive land offers a final illustration of the extent to which Homer's valuation of the region outside the city is

[49]See Finley 54 on the role of women slaves, and Richter 15 on the exclusion of women from agricultural labor. The impression, discussed both by Finley and Richter 21, that female slaves far outnumber males may simply result from Homer's greater interest in the elite households of the city rather than reflect the true demographics of the slave population for a historical period. Indeed, Hesiod's *Op.*, focused upon the life of the ἀγρός, would give the opposite impression.

[50]Cf. *Op.* 493-503 where Hesiod recommends the blacksmith's and the λέσχη as attractive retreats when it is too cold to work, but only to warn at much greater length against the ruin that comes to the man who lounges around the λέσχη when there is work to be done.

controlled by a social hierarchy. At *Odyssey* 7.112-35 Odysseus stops on his way into Alcinous's palace to admire the king's marvelous garden. This garden, distinct from Alcinous's τέμενος located outside the city walls (*Od.* 6.293-94), is divided among orchard (7.114-21), vineyard (7.122-26), and herb garden (7.127-28), all of which produce continuously. Zephyr warms the trees as some fruits ripen and others fall to the ground, the vines are at all stages of development from the blossoming to the vintage, and the herbs green perennially. The garden is watered by a spring and lies outside his courtyard wall near its entrance, surrounded by its own enclosure, and so clearly within the encompassing walls of the πόλις.

The passage exhibits the same careful and orderly division of space noted in the descriptions of Achilles' Shield and of the founding of Scheria, with perhaps the same cosmogonic implications. The beauty, order, and continuous fertility of the garden, warmed by gentle Zephyr, distinguish Alcinous's garden as an example of the enchanted *locus amoenus* as much as it is a working farm.[51] This distinction is emphasized by the strange absence of labor and laborers from the garden precinct. In the entire passage only the subjectless τρυγόωσιν (124) and τραπέουσι (125), referring to the harvesting and crushing of the grapes, adumbrate the necessity of labor in this description which otherwise eclipses an entire class of the population (the vast majority) and a fundamental social relationship. Such a complete ellipsis of a verb's subject is uncharacteristic of Homer, and distracts attention from the activity itself to its result.[52] The processes of cultivation, dressing, and irrigation, moreover, are submerged in the passage as are those of gathering the fruits of the orchard or harvesting the vegetables.

This description exemplifies a topos represented by a number of descriptions in the *Odyssey* incorporating the themes of distant location, mild weather and fertility, and an easy livelihood. Elysium (*Od.* 4.563-68) is located

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[51]I perhaps use the term "*locus amoenus*" a little loosely. E. R. Curtius (*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* [NY 1953] 192) quotes Isidore's definition, "loca solius voluptatis plena...unde nullus fructus exsolvitur," which of course disqualifies Alcinous's garden. See, however, the discussion of Schönbeck 18-77, esp. 70-77, where Alcinous's garden is considered.

[52]Cf., for example, the descriptions of plowing, harvest, and vintage at *Il.* 18.541-572, where the laborers are much more visible. Scully 10-13 provides a detailed analysis of the plain of Troy illustrating Homer's attention to its natural beauty and fertility. As a set piece, the description resembles that of Ogygia in the *Odyssey*. Yet Homer does not even mention cultivation or the plain as the site of agriculture. Richter 3-4 also comments on this aspect of the portrayal of Troy. See note 6 above.

at the boundaries of the earth and offers the easiest livelihood (ῥηΐστη βιοτή) without snow or rain but warmed by the gentle breezes of Zephyr. Eumaeus's home, the island of Syrie (*Od.* 15.403-14), lies by the turnings of the sun and offers abundant cattle, sheep, wine, and grain, but is afflicted by neither famine nor disease. In Libya (*Od.* 4.85-89), the rams quickly grow horns and the sheep bear three times per year, suggesting the fertility of continuous spring weather, and neither lord nor shepherd lacks cheese, meat, or milk. Unfailing plenty signals here too a land of easy prosperity. Finally Olympus (6.41-46), the inaccessible seat of the gods, is not beset by wind, snow, or rain, but is always cloudless and clear. This is the life of Hesiod's golden generation (*Op.* 112-19), who live under the rule of Cronus without πόνοι or ὀϊζύς (113), and take pleasure in plenty while the soil brings forth its produce of its own accord (αὐτομάτη: 118).[53]

Alcinous's garden exhibits the generic elements of gentle weather, unfailing fertility, an effortless livelihood, distant location (Scheria: 6.203-5), and even the quality of divinity associated with Olympus and Elysium. Yet the description simultaneously emphasizes the fertility of the soil and the variety of crops, which invoke from their side the opposing model of the productive land, the site of labor. The enclosure of this hybrid of *locus amoenus* and farm within the circuit of the city's walls as *rus in urbe* heightens the tension between the easy fertility of the one and the toil of cultivating the land associated with the other.[54] We witness in Alcinous's garden the city's utopian dream of an ideal ἀγρός, constructed from the *locus amoenus* as a countryside purged of labor (and laborers), and as a consequence admissible within the space encircled by the city's walls.

II

The contrast between the region within the wall and that outside is fundamental to Homer's conception of social geography. As I have argued, this opposition expresses itself in habitation patterns, the built environment, and in Homer's ideology of sovereignty. Yet in general the countryside, its pop-

[53]Cf. the similar fate of the race of heroes on the Isles of the Blessed (*Op.* 168-173e) while the γένος σιδήρεον is worn down with κάματος and ὀϊζύς (176-77). In general on these passages see the discussion of D. Roloff, *Gottähnlichkeit, Vergöttlichung, und Erhöhung zu seligen Leben* (Berlin 1970) 93-101. The αὐτόματος βίος is discussed by Baldry.

[54]Schönbeck 70-77 considers fertility and fruitfulness to be the central aspect of this passage as a realization of the *locus amoenus*, even though it is precisely its deemphasis of pleasure and enjoyment which in his view disqualifies it as a true example of the topos as strictly defined.

ulation, and the labor of agriculture and husbandry are absent from the world represented by Homer. This lacuna can hardly represent historical reality for any period of ancient Greek history. It is rather an ideologically produced effect reflecting the interests and orientation of an important fraction of Homer's audience. To this extent Homer's voice is the voice of the πόλις. Where the ἀγρός does intrude upon Homer's attention, its inhabitants are presented as inferior to those of the πόλις. The perimeter of the wall thus establishes a hierarchy with economic, social, legal, and political ramifications. Yet the terms of this ethical geography are disturbed in the latter books of the *Odyssey* where Homer presents the paradox of a vulgar city and a noble countryside. This disruption of the normal relationship between these two regions results from the peculiar circumstances of Odysseus's return which offer the ἀγρός and its inhabitants an unprecedented role in epic narrative.

The protagonists' view of the Ithacan πόλις as a place strictly to be avoided serves as a good index of its character. Eumaeus expresses this opinion in several places. After asserting that Odysseus will never return, Eumaeus comments upon his own life

> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ παρ' ὕεσσιν ἀπότροπος· οὐδὲ πόλινδε
> ἔρχομαι,
>
> But I keep away and with my pigs, and I do not go now
> to the city,
>
> (*Od.* 14.372-73)

The absence of Odysseus is linked in Eumaeus's mind with his avoidance of the city, which is now divided between those loyal to his master's memory and their opponents (*Od.* 14.373-77).[55] In spite of his loyalty to Odysseus and his family, Eumaeus avoids the city. Yet it is not strictly the city and the house of Odysseus that Eumaeus flees, but these places so long as the suitors hold sway there. Laertes too, as Athena states, no longer comes πόλινδε, 'to the city,' but lives ἀπάνευθεν ἐπ' ἀγροῦ ('far off in the fields': *Od.* 1.189-90). It is one thing for a swineherd like Eumaeus to avoid the city, and another for a member of the city's ruling house to dwell in the countryside in a self-imposed exile. Anticleia states that Laertes lives in the ἀγρός out of his desire for Odysseus's return (*Od.* 11.195-96), and Eumaeus also mentions Laertes' life on

[55]Eumaeus repeats these sentiments at *Od.* 15.374-79. Cf. Philoetius's similar opinion at *Od.* 20.218-25 and Odysseus's question at *Od.* 21.193-97.

the farm while grieving for Odysseus (*Od.* 16.138-41). Throughout the *Odyssey* longing for Odysseus's return is directly tied to the desire to be rid of the suitors.[56] Within the thematic logic of the *Odyssey* Laertes' preference for the ἀγρός, as in the case of Eumaeus, results from the suitors' control of the πόλις.

These respective attitudes toward country and city reappear in advice given Odysseus. Athena warns him away from the suitors and the πόλις and sends him to Eumaeus, 'near the rock of the crow and the spring Arethusa,' who remains loyal to him and his family (*Od.* 13.404-11; cf. 15.325-36, 16.78-89). This same ethical division between the country and the city may be reflected in the sons of Aegyptius:

> τρεῖς δέ οἱ ἄλλοι ἔσαν, καὶ ὁ μὲν μνηστῆρσιν ὁμίλει,
> Εὐρύνομος, δύο δ' αἰὲν ἔχον πατρώϊα ἔργα·
>
> He had three other sons. One of them, Eurynomos,
> went with the suitors; the other two kept the estates of their fathers.
> (*Od.* 2.21-22)

The couplet contrasts the company of the suitors with the locale of the farm, and perhaps expresses through a geographic opposition the divided loyalties of a family. A similar division occurs in the family of Odysseus's slave Dolius, whose children Melantheus and Melantho frequent the city and are favorites of the suitors (*Od.* 17.254-60, 18.320-36) while Dolius and the rest of his family remain loyal to Odysseus and dwell in the country (*Od.* 4.735-38, 24.384-411 and 495-99).[57]

The avoidance of the city dovetails with the theme of ξενίη, 'hospitality,' whose importance to the *Odyssey* can hardly be overstated (Finley 99-103). Eumaeus's role as host to Odysseus draws him into a parallel with Menelaus, Nestor, or Antinous as providers of ξενίη in the poem (*Od.* 14.53-61, 80-82, 414-17, 443-45). Similarly, Telemachus, whose hospitality is promised to Odysseus in advance (*Od.* 15.337-39; cf. 16.78-81), prefers to entertain the old stranger at Eumaeus's rather than in the city where the suitors would likely

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[56]See in particular *Od.* 1.253-66, 2.58-62, and 20.213-25. Note also *Od.* 3.211-17, 4.333-46, 17.240-46, 19.81-88, 21.193-204. The *Odyssey* does, however, clearly exhibit uncertainty regarding the chronology and motives for Laertes' departure from the πόλις. See my discussion in *Achilles in the* Odyssey*: Ideologies of Heroism in the Homeric Epic.* Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 171 (Königstein/Ts. 1985) 54-56.

[57]I see no reason to posit more than a single character named Dolius.

mistreat him (*Od.* 16.82-89; cf. 17.492-504, 18.394-409). Finally, when in book 24 Odysseus has left the city in fear of the suitors' families, he finds refuge and hospitality in Dolius's house in the ἀγρός (*Od.* 24.356-411). Odysseus's own fame for hospitality (19.313-16, 24.281-86) underlines the positive ethical value attached to the ξενίη offered by these figures. The suitors' influence over the πόλις, however, undermines the provision of hospitality there (*Od.* 1.130-34, 15.509-17, 16.85-89). The theme of ξενίη, so central to the Telemacheia and the Periplous, is identified in the second half of the poem primarily with the country and its inhabitants.

The country population similarly remains loyal to Odysseus. Both Eumaeus and Philoetius immediately express their continuing devotion to Odysseus (*Od.* 14.40-44, 20.204-10), voicing sentiments again drawing them into comparison with the kings Nestor and Menelaus (*Od.* 3.120-29, 193-224, 4.168-82, 332-46). This loyalty is demonstrated when Eumaeus, Philoetius, and Dolius join battle with Odysseus's foes in his defense (*Od.* 21.193-204, 24.497-501). Courage and loyalty, along with the other virtues, are more at home in the ἀγρός than in the πόλις in the latter books of the *Odyssey*.

The character of the city in the latter half of the poem is a reflection of the character of the suitors, a principle already evident in the theme of flight from the πόλις. The suitors' distinctive trait is ὕβρις, arrogance and violence. With only a few exceptions the term is reserved to describe them and their deeds, to whom it is attributed as a generic quality. This character is particularly evident in their violent and greedy hospitality, drawing them into comparison with such figures as Polyphemus or the Laestrygonians.[58]

It is a repeated theme of the poem that the suitors 'consume' the household and livelihood of Odysseus.[59] Their behavior places Telemachus in the unparalleled position of a host asking guests to leave (*Od.* 2.48-67, 138-40), and their refusal to do so leaves him in the equally unprecedented role of providing ξενίη unwillingly. In the absence of anything approaching a concept

[58]The phrase ὕβριν ἔχοντες serves, in Milman Parry's terminology, as a "distinctive epithet" for the suitors: *Od.* 1.368, 4.321, 627, 17.169, cf. 16.86, 418 (with 16.410), 17.588, 20.170, and 20.370. Note also *Od.* 1.227, 17.483-87, 23.64, and 24.351-52. The suitors' rough hospitality is depicted at *Od.* 1.224-29, 17.375-79, 17.446-67, 18.357-64, 20.292-302, 20.376-83. See S. Saïd's discussion of Homer's portrayal of the suitors: "Les Crimes des prétendants, la maison d'Ulysse et les festins de l'Odyssée," *Études de la littérature ancienne* (Paris 1979) 9-49, and Rose 99-102. The surprising contrast between noble peasants and shameless suitors is discussed by W. Donlan, "The Tradition of Anti-Aristocratic Thought in Early Greek Poetry," *Historia* 22 (1973) 151-54.

[59]*Od.* 1.160, 250-51, 14.377, 16.127-28, 21.331-33; cf. 1.231-48, 14.89-108.

of sale, the suitors' behavior can only be presented by Homer through the otherwise unique notion of νήποινον. This term, used by Homer only to describe the suitors' destruction of Odysseus's wealth, expresses the idea that this is done without ποινή, without the recompense called for when the normal balance of reciprocity between individuals has been disturbed.[60] This formulation of the relationship with the suitors pushes it outside the only other concept able to accommodate it, and which normally would accommodate that relationship, that of ξενίη. Telemachus clarifies the implication of νήποινον when he explains in the assembly that if it were rather his friends (φίλοι) thus dissipating his wealth, he would exact recompense (τίσις), going through the town and demanding 'goods' (χρήματα) from them until all was paid back (*Od.* 2.70-79). So it is not surprising that such a repayment is precisely what Eurymachus offers Odysseus in a desperate bid for his life (*Od.* 22.54-59). The suitors' relationship to Odysseus's family can only be presented by reference to the punitive compensation of the ποινή, but with the simultaneous qualification that this payment will never be rendered (νη—). This relationship is thus expressed through a catachretic overlay of ξενίη, the very underpinning of peaceful relationships outside the οἶκος, and ποινή, the mechanism of restoring balance and avoiding bloodshed between feuding households.

Much as avoidance of the πόλις is a mark of nobility for Odysseus's loyal servants, so frequenting the city is an index of disloyalty and vice. When the cowherd, Melantheus, strikes Odysseus as he and Eumaeus walk to town, the swineherd rebukes him for his ἀγλαΐαι,

> τὰς νῦν ὑβρίζων φορέεις, ἀλαλήμενος αἰεὶ
> ἄστυ κάτ'· αὐτὰρ μῆλα κακοὶ φθείρουσι νομῆες.
>
> [glories] you wear now in your insolence, forever loitering
> here in the town, while useless herdsmen ruin the sheepflocks.
> (*Od.* 17.245-46)

[60] Ποινή designates a payment rendered by one party for a loss he has caused another. The term appears in juridical contexts (*Il.* 18.498, 9.633, 636), and can designate a punitive payment meant to exceed the value of the loss (*Il.* 3.284-91). Ἄποινα, another related term, generally designates gifts made in advance as recompense for a thing to be turned over in exchange—'ransom' (*Il.* 1.13, 24.137), though ἄποινα can also mean recompense (*Il.* 9.120, 19.138). The connotation of recompense is underlined by the contextual association of both ποινή and νήποινος with τίω, τίσις, and τιμή, each of which bears the notion of indemnity or repayment: ποινή: *Il.* 3.284-91, 14.483-84, *Od.* 23.312-13; νήποινος: *Od.* 1.376-80=2.141-45.

Eumaeus links Melantheus's violence and haughtiness with frequenting the ἄστυ. The city is then contrasted in turn with the country as the site of the labor and responsibilities which he shirks. The slaves serving the suitors are also portrayed as disloyal and violent. Melantheus betrays Odysseus when he goes to fetch arms for the suitors (*Od.* 22.135-99) while Melantho accuses Odysseus of making eyes at the other slave women, and tells him to leave, thankful for the food he has already received (*Od.* 19.66-69). Melantho's promiscuity and that of the other maids is a mark of their disloyalty (*Od.* 20.6-16). Indeed, the loyalty of Phemius and Medon is suspect precisely because they have remained in the city with the suitors (*Od.* 22.330-80).

The suitors' domination of the πόλις requires a revaluation of the region outside the city walls and a consequent inversion in this section of the poem of the normative ethical hierarchy relating country to city. This inversion is clearly evidenced by the flight from the city of those loyal to Odysseus. It is outside the city that memory of Odysseus and loyalty to him continue to live, that generosity and hospitality remain virtues, and that Odysseus finds refuge and recruits allies. The πόλις, in contrast, is characterized by ὕβρις, greed, breeches of ξενίη, and open disloyalty.[61]

While the country is ennobled in this segment of the *Odyssey* as a foster home to the aristocratic virtues of greatest significance to the poem, still the ἀγρός is not presented as a model for aristocratic life. The Ithacan ἀγρός is preferable to the Ithacan πόλις under the suitors, but it is not elevated above a Sparta or Phaeacia. Although the herders Eumaeus and Philoetius are silhouetted as examples of nobility against the background of the country, Laertes' presence there is regarded as shameful and degrading for him. This privileging of the country, then, is provisional and limited. It represents a disruption that will be resolved when Odysseus resumes his proper role in the πόλις. This principle is illustrated by Odysseus's promise that if he overcomes the suitors he will provide Eumaeus and Philoetius with wives, possessions, and a house next to his own, and they will become the companions (ἑτάρω τε κασιγνήτω τε) of Telemachus (*Od.* 21.213-16). A dwelling in the city is an integral element in the social elevation of the two slaves. The *Odyssey* does not

[61]Hesiod's contrast of two cities, one of δίκη and one of ὕβρις, parallels the terms of the present opposition between countryside and city. The description of the city of justice focuses especially upon the fruitfulness of the land (*Op.* 230-34) while that of the city of *hubris* emphasizes plague and famine, and destruction of the city, its army, walls, and ships (*Op.* 242-47). Odysseus's praise of Penelope by comparison to a just king also focuses upon the fertility of the earth (*Od.* 19.107-14).

fundamentally question the hegemony of the πόλις or the aristocratic values and political institutions which support it. Rather it asserts the unbreakable link of this hegemony with a kingly lineage, a βασιλήϊον γένος.

III

There can be little doubt that the historical relationship between πόλις and ἀγρός was one which operated to the city's advantage. The elite of the πόλις simply owned whatever their slaves could produce, and were able to appropriate the surplus produced by the poorer free population through the institution of thetage. Informal obligations within an ideology of reciprocity, moreover, guaranteed to the lords of the πόλις a continuing if less regular flow of contributions from the autonomous members of the δῆμος. This set of relationships is paralleled by political institutions and social attitudes.[62] Yet Homer's characteristic attitude towards this process of domination and the class of individuals who are its object is overall one of indifferent silence. What is remarkable in the first place about the presentation of the country in the latter half of the *Odyssey* is not so much the terms in which it is characterized, but that it appears upon the epic stage at all. Homer narrates many battles, assemblies, feasts, and so forth in which slaves, laborers, and commoners move in complete silence and, indeed, seem almost to be absent. It is only the paradoxes of Odysseus's return that produce the *Odyssey*'s detailed portrait of the ἀγρός and the members of Odysseus's household dwelling there. It is, moreover, only due to the poem's interest in discrediting the suitors and vindicating Odysseus that it turns its attention to the unequal social and economic relations between country and city.

In my view it is quite natural, if not unavoidable, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as works of literature should express the perspective of a historical social group—in this case, that of the elite. In order, therefore, to represent figures of the countryside in any depth and detail, the *Odyssey* must, as I argue, incorporate in some part the viewpoint and the rhetoric of a distinct social group, one whose views and interests were fundamentally opposed to those of the elite. Homer attempts to reterritorialize this alien and potentially dissonant voice within the frame of his narrative so as to strip it of its unwanted implications while exploiting it in the interest of his tale's protagonist. Yet this voice of the ἀγρός cannot be freed completely of its

[62]Soja 148-49, 153 comments on the characteristic relations between urban nodes and their peripheries.

attachments to a real social context, and necessarily brings with it an ethics and an outlook fundamentally at odds with those dominating Homer's narrative.

I should digress at this point to clarify the notion of "voice" since it is important to an understanding of the relationship I assume between the *Odyssey* and its historical context. Voice, as I use the term, is intended to highlight certain aspects of ideological discourse, with which it can otherwise be equated. In particular, the concept of voice calls attention to ideology as a sort of rhetoric and to its dialogic character.

Among other functions, ideology serves to naturalize and to universalize the values and beliefs legitimating a given social order. That is, through the lens of ideology a society's peculiar forms of hierarchy assume an appearance of naturalness and rationality, and the values and assumptions underlying this naturalness successfully lay claim to a universal validity.[63] Ideology, however, ought not to be considered so much one monolithic "total system" as a collection of semiautonomous systems which share, however, the common elements necessary to social harmony and to the hegemony of a dominant group. For the "truths" of ideology are subject to a ceaseless checking against lived, empirical experience, and the explanations making sense of that experience for an elite will not altogether suffice for the respective subaltern groups com-posing the majority of any community. This disjuncture spawns minor or counter ideologies ("subideologies" as they are sometimes called). At points such minor ideologies dovetail with a dominant ideology to naturalize the otherwise frustrating inequality of the social order as these groups experience it, while at other points they offer the grounds for questioning and resisting domination.[64]

These minor ideologies are adapted to the specific conditions of the groups whose experience they are devised to explain. The construction of a "voice" thus occurs within the determinants of political, legal, and economic status, in the context of a specific way of life, and in response to the voices of

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[63]In general see Eagleton, who discusses the ideological effects of naturalization and universalization at *Ideology* 56-61.

[64]A minor ideology cannot be purely oppositional in character since in such a case there would be no ideological basis for the cooperation among social groups necessary to a community's survival. See Eagleton's discussion of Gramsci at *Ideology* 112-20, and Gramsci's sketchy observations at A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, trans. and edd. (New York 1971) 11-13, 57-58, 275-76. The penetration of the voice of the ἀγρός by the dominant ideology of the urban elite can be discerned in Eumaeus's use of the lazy peasant topos against his fellow slave, Melantheus (see pp. 52-53 above), or in the pride Eumaeus and Philoetius take in having increased Odysseus's flocks. This pride combines a valorization of labor native to the countryside with a sense of loyalty to the lord, a sentiment serving the interest of the city's elite.

other socially defined groups. The factor guaranteeing the relative coherence and specificity of a voice in this sense is its grounding in the experience and circumstances of a distinct group of individuals. A voice thus corresponds to an established subject position. The voice of the ἀγρός, for example, serves as a mode of representing the views and interests of the ἄγροικοι, and is formed in dialogue with the opposing voice of the πόλις. Yet, in addition to the voices of city and of country one might alternately speak of the voice of the warrior, the female, or the slave, while the voice of the ἀγρός itself can be dissolved into the contrasting subject positions of slave-thete-small holder, herder-cultivator, male-female, and so forth, each potentially with its own "voice."[65] By the "voice of the ἀγρός," then, I do not designate the thoughts and words of an integrated and autonomous self. This voice belongs rather to a region as a whole and is composed of a set of topoi to express the common experiences and interests of its inhabitants.

Voice as a socially located idiom calls attention to the formal, conventional quality of ideological discourse as a rhetoric. A voice is composed of a set of topoi which are expressive of the experiences and attitudes of a socially distinct group, but which like all rhetorical topoi are reversible and adaptable to new contexts and ideological orientations.[66] Within literary representation such aggregates of topoi function in effect as collective personae. Voice can be viewed as ideology congealed into a socially distinct ethos.

The definition of ideology as the intersection of language and power focuses upon the struggle under way among a society's constituent voices. Ideology emerges at the points where language, as an epistemological system through which reality is known, impinges upon social relations of power, of dominance and subservience. Consequently, language, as the locus of ideology, necessarily serves as well as the site of the struggle to control meaning, to

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[65]The concept of voice does not preclude a basis for ideology in class as defined by social relations of production. But it focuses rather upon the ideologically constructed personae or subject positions into which classes in this sense are fragmented within a society's perceptions. In any case, through the model of a rhetoric composed of topoi I specifically intend to avoid reifying voice as an autonomous and undivided structure of identity.

[66]An example of a single topos exploited by opposing voices is provided by the association of the city with laziness. Within the voice of the πόλις it rationalizes excluding the rural population from the city, but within the voice of the ἀγρός it questions the privilege of the urban elite and their right to the produce of their land. See pp. 72-73 below. See Voloshinov's discussion of "ideological accents" through which the class struggle is waged in language and the consequent reversibility of the ideological sign (22-24, 103-04). Cf. Jameson's concept of the "ideologeme" (83-88) through which "...opposing [class] discourses fight it out within the unity of a shared code" (84).

interpret and evaluate reality for society at large. In its social setting ideology is a fundamentally dialogic phenomenon, encompassing processes of alliance, negotiation, and conflict among socially grounded voices.[67]

This conflict among voices can be waged through both refutation and silence. A dominant voice naturally possesses the advantage both in discrediting opposing voices through contradiction and in silencing them through indifference and repression. A more complex strategy, however, is that of deterritorializing and reterritorializing.[68] A voice can attempt to absorb opposing arguments into itself through a process of recontextualization which strips them of much of their critical force by reinscribing them within its own logic. This gesture naturalizes an alien voice and turns it to the service of its adversary. Here again the voice of the elite possesses an advantage through its control of elements common to the entire ensemble of voices composing a given culture and through the consequent power to frame social dialogue.[69]

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[67]Eagleton examines this definition of ideology at *Ideology* 5-8. Taken in this way, it straddles the two approaches he identifies to the concept, the epistemological and the sociological (*Ideology* 3). I find his cautions regarding this definition somewhat overstated. Eagleton discusses the dialogic character of ideology at *Ideology* 9-10, 101-102. Voloshinov 9-13 and 85-91 also argues for the dialogic quality of ideology, locating it in that linguistic intersubjectivity of a community which constitutes even inner speech as dialogic. Mikhail Bakhtin's discussions of the dialogic quality of literary language have exerted a great influence upon my thinking. See especially his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Caryl Emerson trans. (Minneapolis 1984) 181-85 and 194-202, and "Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination*, C. Emerson and M. Holquist trans. (Austin 1987) 259-422. For the purposes of the present argument, however, I have chosen to focus rather upon Voloshinov's work since it explicitly draws the connection between "voices" in a dialogic context and socially constructed subject positions, a link in which Bakhtin for his part remains relatively uninterested. Otherwise, the positions associated with the names Bakhtin and Voloshinov respectively are so close as to be attributable to a single individual, as some believe they ought to be. E. Balibar and P. Macherey argue that literary language in particular incorporates unresolvable ideological conflicts which specific works enact in futile attempts to impose resolutions upon them: "On Literature as an Ideological Form," *Untying the Text*, Robert Young, ed. (Boston 1981) 87-89.

[68]I adapt these expressive if ungainly terms from G. Deleuze and F. Guattari ("What is a Minor Literature," *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature* [Minneapolis 1986] 16-27), who designate through them a defamiliarizing and subversion of the standard literary signifier, as exemplified by Kafka's use of the Prague dialect of German. I am more interested in the topos, the signified, than the signifier, and as interested in the opposite process by which a dominant voice alienates and appropriates a "minor" voice as I am in the counter movement of subversion. See also Eagleton *Ideology*, 45-46, on the necessity that ruling ideologies incorporate elements from the ideologies of the ruled in order to appeal to those groups.

[69]Descat, for example, shows in his analysis of ἔργον that the word designates both agricultural labor as well as the activities of the elite in the areas of hospitality, cult ceremonies, and warfare. Homer presents the ἔργα of the ἄριστοι, especially warfare, as nutritive, corresponding to the labor of cultivation and herding, and values them more highly within his

This conflict among voices constitutes a continuing struggle for ideological dominance, the mechanism of reproducing in all members of a society the attitudes and assumptions legitimating a given social order and its elite.[70]

Within this dialogic setting, competing voices struggle for dominance in part through strategies of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Let us consider Homer's reterritorialization of the voice of the ἀγρός within that of the πόλις, one of the voices dominating the *Odyssey*. Such a reterritorialization entails at least three stages of processing.[71] In the first place, the historical voice of the ἀγρός must be accommodated to the stylistic conventions of the epic genre, the formulaic language and episodes through which Homer conveys his world view. At this level there emerge such surprising collocations as δῖον ὑφορβόν ('godlike herder of swine': *Od.* 21.80) and συβώτης, ὅρχαμος ἀνδρῶν ('swineherd, leader of men': *Od.* 14.22) used of Eumaeus, and Φιλοίτιος, ὅρχαμος ἀνδρῶν ('Philoetius, leader of men': *Od.* 20.185). Related, though distinct, is the ideological processing bringing material into line with the values and assumptions organizing an entire genre or narrative tradition.[72] The differing treatments given the ἀγρός by Homer and Hesiod respectively, in spite of their similar diction, illustrate this level of processing. A final stage occurs at the point of adaptation to the requirements of a

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ethical hierarchy. See Descat 137-45, cf. 48-53, and Loraux 181-91. Homer draws upon the labor of the ἀγρός to express the events of warfare through similes of woodcutting, cultivating, and herding. See *Il.* 2.474-75, 4.482-87, 5.499-502, 11.558-62, 12.421-24, 451-52, 13.389-91, 492-93, 588-90, 703-707, 16.633-34, 17.61-67, 742-46, 18.161-62, 20.495-97, 21.257-62, 282-83. Such figures of speech, embedded within the Homeric ethical hierarchy, serve to deterritorialize the values of the land, its fertility, and its labor, from the rural population and reterritorialize them for the elite of the πόλις.

[70]Louis Althusser offers a fundamental analysis of how social relations are reproduced through the mechanism of ideology in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York and London 1971) 127-86. Balibar and Macherey 93-97 analyze literature in particular in this light. While both of these arguments are specific to modern (French) society, they are nonetheless illuminating for human societies generally. Apropos of the intersection of such conflicts with geography, Soja comments: "Concrete spatiality—actual human geography—is thus a competitive arena for struggles over social production and reproduction, for social practices aimed either at the maintenance and reinforcement of existing spatiality or at significant restructuring and/or radical transformation (130)."

[71]In general regarding such processing see Eagleton, *Criticism* 80-89 and 95-100, and his comments at *Ideology* 22-23 comparing the operation of literary representation to that of an ideology. See as well Voloshinov's analysis of reported speech within a literary text (115-23), though he neglects the potential for conflict between reported speech and reporting speech in terms of both content and ideological orientation.

[72]In this line, cf. the complex model proposed by Eagleton, *Criticism* 44-63. Genre in particular is subsumed under Eagleton's "aesthetic ideology" (*Criticism* 60).

particular story line, the scenario of the *Odyssey* for example. The *Odyssey*'s specific processing of the voice of the ἀγρός is crucial since the local motive for introducing this voice is precisely to blame the πόλις, an intent at odds, as I have argued, with the ideology of the genre as a whole. I wish to suggest that the *Odyssey*'s local interest in blaming the πόλις of the suitors disables the ideological censorship operating at the level of genre, permitting the historical voice of the ἀγρός to evade that stage of processing. As a result, in the latter portion of the *Odyssey* the representation of the voice of the countryside maintains a mediated connection to a contemporary historical reality—it evades active deterritorialization. As we shall see, however, this evasion simply provokes further measures of reterritorialization, largely through the irony of Odysseus's disguise, at the level of the poem's scenario.[73]

The *Odyssey* must either incorporate the voice of the country or else abandon what is presumably a traditional story line. Within the unconventional contrast of a noble countryside and a vulgar city this rural voice is in fact mobilized by the *Odyssey* as a means of discrediting the πόλις of the suitors. But, for such an alien element as the voice of the ἀγρός to be accommodated to the ideology and ethics of the *Odyssey*, it must undergo a process of reter–ritorialization. The *Odyssey* strives to enclose this necessary but alien voice within the perimeter of its own dominant voice, that of the πόλις, and so to present a world in which the preeminence of its culture and inhabitants remains unchallenged, where its values are universal, and where its voice is the only voice. As I shall argue, however, the *Odyssey*'s encounter with this other voice finally produces only undecidability since the countryside in turn unleashes a critical perspective upon the poem's dominant values and threatens to reverse its ethical hierarchy.[74]

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[73]See on this point the discussions of Morris 1986: 83-94. One might of course argue that Homer simply invented an imaginary countryside, limited only by the formal and ideological conventions of the epic genre. Yet in order to remain comprehensible and to avoid over-whelming irony, such a portrait of the countryside must maintain some degree of cor-respondence with the extra-literary world of reality as an audience experiences it. Homer's rep-resentation of the country and its inhabitants certainly incorporates what we might term "fictional" elements, no doubt appealing to fantasies and stereotypes in which influential frac-tions of Homer's audience have a vested interest. Yet it includes historical elements as well that Homer has selected and deployed according to the logic of his tale. Homer's need at this point for a perspective critical of the πόλις, his emphasis upon toil, hardship, and shortage in his portrayal of country life, and parallels from Hesiod's *Op.* to the topoi central to Homer's criticism of the πόλις all serve to vouch for the historicity of the *Odyssey*'s voice of the ἀγρός.

[74]Pucci passim tracks the ubiquitous and fundamental role of undecidability as a poetic effect of the Odyssean narrative.

The Simple Life

The *Odyssey* offers another vision of country life responding to the presentation of the ἀγρός as a hybrid *locus amoenus*. If that latter portrayal idealizes the countryside from the perspective of the city, then this opposing view idealizes it from the perspective of the ἀγρός. To the almost otherworldly attractions of the *locus amoenus*—location at the ends of the earth, mild weather, unfailing fertility, an effortless livelihood, and near-divine status—the *Odyssey* counterposes the simple charms and rhythm of Eumaeus's life.

The opening of *Odyssey* 14 (5-28) describes Eumaeus's pig station and introduces the swineherd himself. The architecture is characterized by rustic touches—a circuit of oak stakes driven into the ground, and enclosed within the twelve large pig sties, all of this built by Eumaeus—but the description conveys nevertheless an impression of careful order.[75] The poet notes the cleared site, the enclosure of stone crowned with a hedge, and then the interior where each of the pens houses fifty sows while the boars remain outside the yard. Odysseus finds Eumaeus sitting on his porch making himself sandals (23-24), suggestive of the autonomy and self-sufficiency of his outpost. Eumaeus's reception of Odysseus emphasizes the sentiments not only of ξενίη, as the situation demands, but also of sympathy for an old man down on his luck (45-59). This scene introducing Eumaeus and his life in the ἀγρός invests the country with the qualities of a certain orderliness, autonomy, and material and spiritual generosity.

Eumaeus's generosity, however, differs from that typical of the πόλις in that it is limited by shortage, as is evident from his qualification:

> . . . δόσις δ' ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε
> γίνεται ἡμετέρη· ἡ γὰρ δμώων δίκη ἐστίν
>
> ...our gift is a light and a dear one,
> for such is the way of us who are slaves
> (*Od.* 14.58-59).

Eumaeus's offering is paltry but with no lack of friendly intention, for this is the rule with slaves, who must fear their masters. This thought is repeated in the same scene when Eumaeus invites Odysseus to eat:

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[75]Note the similar rude construction of Polyphemus's enclosure at *Od.* 9.184-86 and the description of the σταθμός worked onto Achilles' shield at *Il.* 18.587-89. Richter, 23-32, discusses the plan of Eumaeus's hog farm. R. Vischer, *Das Einfache Leben*, (Göttingen 1965) 32-33, notes Eumaeus as exemplary of his topic. Cf. Farron 89-91.

ἔσθιε νῦν, ὦ ξεῖνε, τά τε δμώεσσι πάρεστι,
χοίρε' · ἀτὰρ σιάλους γε σύας μνηστῆρες ἔδουσιν

Eat now, stranger, what we slaves are permitted to eat:
young pigs, but the fattened swine are devoured by the suitors
(*Od.* 14.80-81)

The geographical contrast implicit in the δμώων δίκη is made overt in this passage contrasting the sparse means of the slaves responsible for the productivity of the land with those of the lords in the city.[76] The scarcity of the countryside, however, does not diminish the spirit of Eumaeus's hospitality. This theme of shortage surfaces again in *Odyssey* 14 when Eumaeus offers Odysseus a cloak for the night with the proviso that it must be returned in the morning since there is only one cloak and one tunic for each man and no extra (510-14).[77] The role played by shortage and thrift in Eumaeus's sense of identity as a slave is complemented by his contempt for Melantheus's ἀγλαΐαι (*Od.* 17.244-46)—'haughtiness' as well as some sort of ornaments or finery—which he links to the cowherd's frequenting the city. Similarly, Eumaeus's description of the suitors' young servants in the city as beautifully arrayed in cloaks and tunics, and with glistening heads and handsome faces as they move amidst tables laden with food (*Od.* 15.330-34), would appear to betray more contempt than admiration for the luxury and refinement of the πόλις.[78] In spite of the short resources in the ἀγρός, the impression over the course of meals and conversations shared by Odysseus and the swineherd is one of contentment, tranquillity, and sufficiency. For Eumaeus sympathy and generous intentions serve as an adequate basis for virtuous behavior in the absence of the extravagant means of the city, and the approbation of Eumaeus's vagrant guest that ζώεις δ' ἀγαθὸν βίον ('you lead a good life': *Od.* 15.491) expresses plausible envy.

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[76]Cf. *Od.* 14.414-18, discussed below, pp. 66-70. Eumaeus of course directs his complaint against the suitors, integrating his sentiments with the thematics of Odysseus's return. Yet the formulation is generally valid for the relationship between country and city.

[77]So, Odysseus explains that he wishes to leave for the city ἵνα μή σε κατατρύχω καὶ ἑταίρους (*Od.* 15.309; cf. 16.82-84, 17.17-19).

[78]Cf. the suitors' factotum, Irus, who is said to be weak and a glutton, but εἶδος δὲ μάλα μέγας ἦν ὁράασθαι (*Od.* 18.1-4).

The simple life of the country is distinct from both the *locus amoenus* and the refined life of the πόλις in the central role taken there by labor.[79] Life at Eumaeus's pig station is measured by the morning departures of the swineherds and their return at evening (*Od.* 14.24-28, 410-13, 16.3).[80] Eumaeus displays his willingness to undergo hardship and toil to see to his responsibilities when he passes a stormy night outside watching over his swine while the others sleep within (*Od.* 14.524-33). Indeed, Eumaeus speaks with pride of how he has increased the herd entrusted to him by Odysseus and might expect rewards for his good service were his master alive (*Od.* 14.62-67; cf. 107-8). Philoetius exhibits the same sense of achievement in his success with his herd (*Od.* 20.209-12). Both, however, complain about the suitors' ceaseless consumption of their livestock, showing neither ἐλεητύς nor φειδώ ('pity,' 'thrift': *Od.* 14.41-42, 80-93, 20.213-23). Eumaeus takes pride in the toil which regulates his life and in the responsibilities he has been given to oversee on his σταθμός, and would expect to be rewarded well for what he has achieved. This pride is formalized in an ethic of thrift and conservation. These values serve the interest of the βασιλεύς in accumulating wealth, but from Eumaeus's perspective they stand as autonomous virtues of the ἀγρός.[81]

Eumaeus's pride in his accomplishments and expectation of a reward adumbrates a merit standard, but one which is not anchored in an essentialized principle of γένος. Eumaeus remains indifferent to his descent while grounding his sense of personal merit in external signs of a success won from unfavorable circumstances. The absence of γένος as an explanation for achievement displaces the reckoning of personal worth onto variable, social criteria. So, Eumaeus observes

> ἥμισυ γάρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνυται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
> ἀνέρος, εὖτ' ἄν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἦμαρ ἕλῃσιν
>
> For Zeus of the wide brows takes away one half of the virtue
> from a man, once the day of slavery closes upon him.
> (*Od.* 17.322-23).

[79]Hesiod's vignette of life during the summer time offers a similar picture of exhausting labor tempered with rustic pastimes and refreshments (*Op.* 582-595).

[80]The Polyphemus narrative is similarly structured by the rhythm of the shepherd giant's departure for the pasture in the morning and his evening return to milk and pen his sheep.

[81]Cf. Hesiod's judgment that agricultural toil is the path of righteousness, but also a life of hardship. See, e.g., *Op.* 27-29, 42-48, 90-92, 111-18 with 176-78, 298-319, 403-12. See Richter 7-8 and Loraux 181-85.

A man's character and worth by this calculation depend upon his location within a social hierarchy, and these can be transformed along with his fortunes. If there is nothing intrinsically slavish about Eumaeus, but only the constraints and necessities imposed upon him by his δούλιον ἦμαρ, the day of slavery, then conversely a βασιλεύς is not preeminent due to his γένος, but rather by the opportunities and prestige conferred by that station. Similarly Odysseus in his guise as a beggar explains his dependency and humiliating inferiority not by his γένος, but by his γαστήρ, belly, the necessity imposed by the external condition of poverty.[82] He is κακός by circumstance, not by nature. Just as the elite of the πόλις wish to attribute their privilege to an innate superiority, so Eumaeus credits his inferior lot to the accident of fortune that made him a slave. As a result of this judgment he measures himself against a standard of merit relative to the limits of slavery.

Though qualified by slavery and poverty, Eumaeus's simple life presents a bucolic vision of great power, one which cannot easily be accommodated by Homer's normative ethical geography. The provisional status of this vision within the *Odyssey*'s general contrast of country and city becomes apparent, however, when it is compared to the realization of the same topos in the case of Laertes. He has no bed, but by winter sleeps in the dirt by the fire along with the slaves, wearing foul clothing, and by summer he rests on a pile of leaves collected from the garden (*Od.* 11.187-96; cf. 1.188-93, 16.136-45). Odysseus comes upon him at work, wearing a dirty, patched chiton, knee pads and gloves, and a dog skin peasant's cap (*Od.* 24.226-34). This clothing worn for the sake of his labor serves as an indication of Laertes' misery and an unworthy way of life.[83] In both passages he is said to experience πένθος and ἄχος, 'sorrow' and 'grief.' This grim picture conveys none of the charm of Eumaeus's existence, but only an image of harsh toil and hopelessness. While the *Odyssey* is at pains to present the loyal servant Eumaeus in a positive light over against the villainy of the πόλις of the suitors, in Laertes' case the dynamics of the tale require an opposite treatment of life in the country. Here

[82]See *Od.* 7.215-21, 15.341-45, 17.283-89, 468-76, 18.52-54, 380. Odysseus's appeal to the compulsion of his belly is colored in context by the irony of his assumed identity, but he nevertheless speaks in character as a πτωχός. The role of the γαστήρ in the *Odyssey* is discussed by Farron 86-87; Rose 108-11, and by Pucci 157-87. Cf. also Philoetius's sympathetic blame of Zeus for the old stranger's condition (*Od.* 20.199-203).

[83]Laertes' appearance contrasts with that of the garden itself, whose order Odysseus praises (*Od.* 24.244-50). Does Laertes represent the element of labor missing from Alcinous's beautiful and orderly garden? Vidal-Naquet, 26-27, contrasts Alcinous's garden as representative of the regime of Cronus with Laertes' garden as representative of the regime of Zeus.

it is Laertes' misery and mean conditions which serve as an indictment of the suitors. For the assumption supporting the values invested in these descriptions is of course that Laertes as a noble is out of place in these surroundings: he is an exile from the city.

When compared with this portrayal of Laertes, the stranger's judgment that Eumaeus lives a good life (ζώεις δ' ἀγαθὸν βίον) seems equivocal. Taken in character, the old beggar might well envy the relative prosperity of Eumaeus, but viewed through the irony of Odysseus's disguise, this praise assumes a patronizing, self-serving ring.[84] This is hardly the life which Odysseus in fact envisions for himself or Telemachus, and these words of approbation are framed in a eulogy of Eumaeus's gentle master—Odysseus himself. The *Odyssey*'s local requirements for the portrayal of Laertes in his garden are congruous with Homer's normative evaluation of the ἀγρός as a place whose condition is mean and disgraceful. The dissonance between the respective portrayals of Laertes' and Eumaeus's lives in the country, and the congruity of the former depiction with Homer's normative evaluation of life in the country, unleashes a reevaluation of the ensemble of rustic virtues combined in Eumaeus including parsimony, pride in toil, and faithfulness to the lord's interests along with such standard heroic virtues such as loyalty, martial courage, and hospitality. From this perspective Eumaeus risks appearing as a chimera, an oxymoronic hybrid of the servile and the noble. The *Odyssey*'s interpretation of the simple life in Laertes' case departs radically from the sympathetic view taken of Eumaeus in the same context, and reasserts the normative ethical hierarchy of city over country.[85]

The *Odyssey* further attempts to manage the disruptive force of Eumaeus's portrayal by deploying the principle of descent, γένος, as a counter to Eumaeus's own insistence upon objective circumstances. The virtue exiled in the ἀγρός is insulated from its new surroundings by posing it as the expression

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[84]Pucci, 33-123, analyzes the fundamental role in the *Odyssey* of the irony produced by the audience's knowledge of disguises which nonetheless take in the poet's characters.

[85]The opening description of the Cyclopes' life (*Od.* 9.106-115) offers an even more dramatic example of the power of the *Odyssey*'s πόλις-centered perspective. They neither plant nor sow, but their crops mature without cultivation since Zeus's rain makes them grow; they have neither councils nor laws and do not live in cities; they make no ships and do not sail (9.125-28; cf. Hesiod *Op.* 236-37 and West's note ad loc.). All of these motifs typify the golden age and lead us to expect the *locus amoenus* topos. (See Baldry's discussion of the αὐτόματος βίος.) Yet the *Odyssey* perverts this picture into one of savagery by recontextualizing the Cyclopes within its local formulation of the country-city topos. Cf. Vidal-Naquet 15-18 on the ambivalence of the Age of Cronus between golden age and savagery, and Scully 110-11 on the Cyclopes as representing an anti-πόλις.

of a nature which remains uncompromised by the accidents of fortune. So when Odysseus comes upon Laertes in his garden, he draws a contrast between the carefully manicured orchard and Laertes' own poor appearance, but adds

> οὐδέ τί τοι δούλειον ἐπιπρέπει εἰσοράασθαι
> εἶδος καὶ μέγεθος· βασιλῆι γὰρ ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας.
>
> ...nor is your stature and beauty, as I see it, such as
> ought to belong to a slave. You look like a man who is royal.
> (*Od.* 24.252-53)

This same topos is used again of Odysseus. In spite of Athena's transformation of his appearance, rendering him completely unrecognizable (*Od.* 13.429-38), still Philoetius remarks as he looks upon him, δύσμορος· ἦ τε ἔοικε δέμας βασιλῆϊ ἄνακτι· ("Unlucky man; he is like a king and a lord in appearance," *Od.* 20.194).

The nobility of Odysseus and Laertes escapes disguises which the *Odyssey* does not wish to be completely impenetrable.[86] In similar fashion an alibi is provided as well even for Eumaeus himself, reterritorializing what is from the perspective of the πόλις an improbable nobility of spirit for a man of the ἀγρός. As we learn, he is in fact the offspring of a noble line, son of the king of Syrie (*Od.* 15.403-14). While the *Odyssey*'s dominant ethical geography does permit virtue to inhabit the countryside, it is presented as a resident alien, not a naturalized citizen.

The gentle weather, magical fertility, and easy living of urban fantasy are banished from Eumaeus's simple life, in which the toil, hardship, and shortage of the countryside assume a positive value. The life on the hog farm is one of autonomy, refuge, hard work, and contentment with what is adequate but hardly luxurious. The positive vision of this rustic simple life is for the *Odyssey* a side effect of its hero's itinerary back to the city, a side effect opening up a dialogue between the voice of the country and the normative voice of the πόλις. The pride exhibited by Eumaeus in his labor and responsibilities, his commitment to increasing his flocks, and his disregard for the ease and refinement of urban life represent, in my view, the topoi of a

[86]Cf. *Od.* 18.66-74, 21.334-35. Likewise Menelaus hazards about Telemachus and Peisistratus before he learns their identities ἀλλ' ἀνδρῶν γένος ἐστὲ διοτρεφέων βασιλήων/ σκηπτούχων, ἐπεὶ οὔ κε κακοὶ τοιούσδε τέκοιεν (*Od.* 4.63-64). The same sentiment is expressed at *Od.* 4.27 and 611. At *Od.* 13.223 Athena, disguised as a handsome young noble, is described οἷοί τε ἀνάκτων παῖδες ἔασι.

historical regional ethics, the real values of the ἀγρός at a specific moment. While the *Odyssey* exploits Eumaeus's country accent to discredit the foes of its protagonist, it simultaneously takes measures, through the contrasting portrayal of Laertes toiling in his garden and by the link established between virtue and γένος, to contain the power of this voice which threatens to disrupt the poem's ethical geography. Yet these counter measures at best establish an indecisive dialectic of country virtue and country squalor, of external social circumstance and γένος. This dialogue and similar attempts to manage it also surface at other points in the poem.[87]

Eumaeus

As the swineherds return from the pastures, Eumaeus orders a feast in honor of his guest:

> ἄξεθ' ὑῶν τὸν ἄριστον, ἵνα ξείνῳ ἱερεύσω
> τηλεδαπῷ· πρὸς δ' αὐτοὶ ὀνησόμεθ', οἵ περ ὀϊζὺν
> δὴν ἔχομεν πάσχοντες ὑῶν ἕνεκ' ἀργιοδόντων·
> ἄλλοι δ' ἠμέτερον κάματον νήποινον ἔδουσιν.
>
> Bring in the best of the pigs, to sacrifice for our stranger guest from afar, and we ourselves shall enjoy it too, we who long have endured this wretched work for the pigs with shining teeth, while others at no cost eat up our labor.
> (*Od.* 14.414-17)

Eumaeus's speech draws upon the *Odyssey*'s highly developed contrast of country and city and the unequal economic relationship between the two regions. The necessity of sending the best livestock in to the suitors in the city is a repeated complaint underlining the power of the city over the countryside. Eumaeus proposes, however, to keep the choicest hog back from the city, and

[87]In his recent *Sons of Gods, Children of Earth,* Peter Rose (92-140) focuses upon this tension between an ideology of inherited excellence and the *Odyssey*'s sympathy for the impoverished and disenfranchised to argue that the former is simply negated by the latter. This conclusion is anchored in the view that the poet was himself aligned ideologically and socially with society's lower strata—not withstanding the consistent links shown between poets and elite in both poems. At the risk of oversimplifying Rose's rich argument and appearing to reject a discussion to which I owe a great deal, I believe that the closure Rose imposes upon this conflict and his view of the poet's role oversimplify matters in view of the irony produced by Odysseus's disguise and the extraordinary demands of the poem's plot. To reify in effect the poet as the locus of this textual contradiction, moreover, blocks recognition of this "sympathy" as a full-blown counter ideology or discouse engaging the dominant discourse of γένος in an intense dialogue.

to consume it there in the country in honor of a man like himself rather than send it to the suitors. Eumaeus's rationale for seizing the hog demands our attention. Eumaeus argues from his own toil (ὀϊζύς), but then goes beyond this to describe the hog as ἡμέτερον κάματον, 'our own labor.' On this occasion he and his men will profit from their efforts (πρὸς δ' αὐτοὶ ὀνησόμεθ') rather than the suitors, who consume it νήποινον, without recompense. Through the metonymic reference to the hog as his κάματος the swineherd formulates a principle of ownership based upon the effort invested in a product by the laborer himself.[88] This startling declaration that he and his men have a right to the hog on the basis of the labor which they expended in raising it of course threatens to undermine the property relations supporting the social structure depicted by Homer.

Hesiod provides two passages verifying the specificity of this topos to the voice of the ἀγρός, though he speaks from the perspective of the free peasant rather than the slave. At *Theogony* 594-99, in the midst of a diatribe against women, Hesiod likens them to the drones who, remaining in the hive while the other bees are hard at work, ἀλλότριον κάματον σφετέρην ἐς γαστέρ' ἀμῶνται ('they gather the toil of others into their own bellies': 599). The designation of the bees' honey as ἀλλότριον κάματον when consumed by the idle drones parallels exactly Eumaeus's designation of the hog as ἡμέτερον κάματον. In an appeal to Perses to apply himself to his work at *Op.* 298-307, Hesiod warns that gods and men fault an idle man resembling the drones οἵ τε μελισσάων κάματον τρύχουσιν ἀεργοί/ ἔσθοντες ('who consume the bees' labor, eating in idleness': 305-6). Here again we meet the paradox of those who do not work themselves consuming the κάματος of others, and the counter assertion of a right to the product of one's own efforts.[89] This same topos appears elsewhere in the *Odyssey* in the mouth of a female slave who, as she grinds away at her mill late into the night, prays ominously to Zeus that the

[88]See R. Descat's discussion of this use of κάμνω/κάματος to refer in this way to the product of labor, 121-22.

[89]From a legal perspective, the relationship of a slave to his master's property differs from that of a peasant such as Hesiod to his own crops and livestock. While a Hesiod might have a clearer claim on this topos, a slave might easily experience such a sentiment. The immediate context of *Op.* 298-307 concerns evading hunger through labor. It develops, however, into a warning that it is better to keep to one's own work and turn one's thoughts from others' possessions (ἀπ' ἀλλοτρίων κτεάνων: 315), recalling the themes of 27-41 in which Hesiod inveighs against turning away from one's work and to the βασιλῆας / δωροφάγους (38-39) in order to acquire another man's wealth. The opposition between Hesiod in the countryside and the βασιλῆες in the city (cf. 28-30) parallels closely that between Eumaeus and the suitors in the present context.

suitors who have loosed her knees with κάματος θυμαλγής ('heart-grieving labor': *Od.* 20.118) will dine today for the last time in the house of Odysseus (*Od.* 20.98-121). The mill woman's prayer for an end to her κάματος, toil and the fatigue accompanying it, is in principle a prayer for an end to the condition of her servitude, a fundamental social and economic relationship of the Homeric world.

Eumaeus underlines the injustice expressed in the contrast between others (ἄλλοι) and the swineherds (ἡμέτερον) with the adverb νήποινον. The preceding argument from κάματος threatens to uncouple νήποινον from its habitual association in the *Odyssey* with Odysseus's legal claim upon his possessions, material and human, and realign it with the contrast of country and city. For by reasoning from his own toil rather than from Odysseus's legal title to his possessions, Eumaeus asserts in principle that those who consume his livestock in the city owe him recompense for the labor he has invested in them in the ἀγρός. Eumaeus appears to presuppose that an individual, even a slave, "owns" his own physical efforts, and continues to own them even after they have been incorporated into another object or animal. Eumaeus's introduction of his ὀϊζύς and κάματος unleashes an argument which might be turned with equal force against both the claims of the suitors and of Odysseus himself. When read from the perspective of the ἀγρός, Eumaeus's assertion repudiates the legal basis of the city's domination over the rural population and their region.

Yet this scene is controlled locally by the ironic logic of Odysseus's disguise: Eumaeus boldly seizes one of the hogs in order to divert it from the suitors and towards a luckless beggar, but does so only to present it unwittingly to the legitimate lord of the estate himself. Within this broader context the sacrifice of the best hog of the herd in his honor and the presentation of the choice cut to Odysseus largely block the implications of Eumaeus's remarkable speech since the true identity of the beggar, as the occasion and beneficiary of the feast, serves to reassert at an ironic level the dominant form of ownership and property relations. Eumaeus merely renders the meat to its rightful and legitimate owner in what is from an ironic perspective a banquet in honor of his return. Odysseus's participation in the feast is thus posed as an anticipation of the restoration of order on Ithaca, when hogs will move from the ἀγρός to their proper destination on Odysseus's table in the πόλις.[90]

[90]The mill woman's prayer, mentioned just above, experiences the same sort of reter–ritorialization within the overarching theme of Odysseus's return. Her prayer to Zeus that this be the final day of the suitors' feasting is provoked by a thunderclap that unknown to her responds

The implications of Eumaeus's speech are also managed by themes structuring the poem as a whole. In the first place the fierce loyalty to Odysseus's memory evidenced by Eumaeus throughout the poem reinforces the ironic recuperation of his speech within the immediate limits of the scene. In the second, while the immediate frame of Eumaeus's speech threatens to resituate νήποινον within an opposition of πόλις and ἀγρός, the broad significance of the theme in the *Odyssey* operates to attract his act of protest into the overarching conflict between Odysseus's household and the suitors. Opposing interpretations of Eumaeus's speech thus vie with each other within the immediate dynamics of the scene itself and in the broader contextualizing themes of the *Odyssey*. One interpretation is grounded in the voice of the ἀγρός as it rejects the authority of the πόλις, and the other in the *Odyssey*'s program to discredit the regime of the suitors in favor of Odysseus's cause, a program asserting the perspective of the city as it is tied to a βασιλήϊον γένος. The *Odyssey*'s interpretive measures are inadequate, however, to efface completely the rustic genealogy and implications of Eumaeus's speech, and produce rather an unresolvable dialogue in which two geographical voices discredit each other with equal power and conviction. The dissension between these irreconcilable frames for recuperating Eumaeus's speech resonates, moreover, at a still more general level of epic narrative.

In his response to Odysseus in *Iliad* 9 Achilles compares himself to a mother bird who supplies her nestlings with morsels of food even though she must take it from her own mouth to do so (*Il.* 9.323-27). Achilles goes on to explain his own simile as a claim that he expended his efforts beyond all others in the fighting on behalf of the Atreidae but has benefited only a little in consequence.[91] Achilles' argument assumes the same continuity of effort with ownership as does that of Eumaeus. Does Achilles in this extraordinary speech avail himself of the rhetoric of slaves and the countryside, appropriating their speech when it is useful in the same way that the elite of the πόλις as a whole appropriates their labor, or does Eumaeus deck out a heroic topos in the rags of servitude? Achilles' use of this topos is further complicated by its

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to Odysseus's own prayer for signs, human and divine, that he will indeed destroy the suitors (*Od.* 20.98-101). Within the immediate context, then, the mill woman's rejection of the exploitative relationship between servant and master is mobilized to legitimate that same relationship since it functions as an omen of Odysseus's success and divine favor.

[91]See Claus's analysis (23-27) of the complex ethical problem posed for Achilles by the issue of compensation for his efforts, and L. Collins' discussion of Achilles' complaint against Agamemnon's division of the spoils of war: *Studies in Characterization in the Iliad.* Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 189 (Frankfurt am Main 1988) 89-96.

appearance in Thersites' speech (*Il.* 2.225-31) when he likewise claims that Agamemnon reaps undue benefits while he and the rest of the Achaeans do all of the fighting. Does Thersites aspire unjustifiably to the language of Achilles, or does Achilles turn to a proletarian topos? In view, finally, of Hesiod's use of this commonplace, we must ask as well whether Eumaeus puts on the airs of a free man when he slaughters the hog, or simply voices a sentiment which all exploited groups feel. There is no decisive answer for these questions since this topos is available equally to all social groups to be adapted freely to their respective points of view.[92] As a result of this undecidability the *Odyssey*'s dominant ideology, the voice of city and elite, once again finds itself stalemated in its encounter with the voice of the ἀγρός.

Odysseus-ξεῖνος

A direct confrontation is staged between the voices of ἀγρός and πόλις when the suitor Eurymachus issues a challenge to the old beggar whom Eumaeus has brought into the palace (*Od.* 18.356-64). Eurymachus proposes that if Odysseus wished to serve as a thete for a wage (μισθός) and to work planting trees and mending walls ἀγροῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιῆς, then he would supply him with clothing and a year's food. Odysseus, however, Eurymachus continues, is accustomed to ἔργα κάκ' ('good-for-nothing occupations') and does not wish to get to work, but prefers to beg across the district. For a vagrant like Odysseus the city is apparently a place of idleness where he can live off of others, but in the country he must work and earn his livelihood through his toil.[93] Eurymachus's offer presupposes and reinforces a relationship between himself and Odysseus of superior and inferior. If Odysseus were to accept, he would exchange his vaguely defined inferior status of beggar for formal dependency as Eurymachus's thete and recipient of a μισθός (cf. 42 above). The foundation upon which Eurymachus constructs his humiliating offer is the status hierarchy mapped onto the *Odyssey*'s ethical geography: the dependency of the rural population upon their lords in the city.

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[92]As regards the origins of this particular topos, however, I note that Achilles alone resorts to figured language, the simile of the bird, whose toil in fact resembles more closely that of Eumaeus, while the others speaks directly of their own circumstances to formulate their arguments. Cf. note 69 above.

[93]See p. 46 above. Melantheus makes a similar offer to Odysseus (*Od.* 17.217-28, 17.226-28=18.362-63), though substituting work at his goat station, in which the same geographic opposition between the country (σταθμός: 223) and the city, where Odysseus and Eumaeus are headed, is explicit. Note also the description of Irus at *Od.* 18.1-2: Ἦλθε δ' ἐπὶ πτωχὸς πανδήμιος, ὃς κατὰ ἄστυ/ πτωχεύεσκ' Ἰθάκης.

While Odysseus's response is initially framed in Eurymachus's own terms of agricultural labor, within that context he boldly reverses the proposed lines of domination by reformulating his relationship to Eurymachus as a competitive one, and so between social equals. Odysseus answers Eurymachus that if there were a contest of work (ἔρις ἔργοιο: 366) between them at mowing grass with scythes all day without food, if there were plowing to be done with a yoke of two oxen, then Eurymachus would see how he plows a straight furrow.[94] And finally if there were fighting to be done, then Eurymachus would find Odysseus among the frontfighters and not fault him for his stomach. Odysseus concludes, though, that Eurymachus commits ὕβρις; he only seems big and strong by comparison to his mean company. If Odysseus himself were to return, the doors would seem narrow as he fled (*Od.* 18.366-86). In Odysseus's response Eurymachus's offer of dependency is transformed into an assertion of social equality in competitions which put Eurymachus's own reputation at risk. Indeed it is just such a test of prowess with a commoner that the suitors reject as a potential source of disgrace when Odysseus later asks to try his hand at the bow (*Od.* 21.285-86).[95] Yet, while Odysseus challenges Eurymachus in this way, the terms of the contest remain those of Eurymachus's initial offer, work in the fields.

Odysseus's transformation of Eurymachus's job offer into a contest between them opens the question of the contest in rural culture and of the unequal social statuses of rural and urban dwellers. In a passage from the *Iliad* the fierce striving of the Achaeans and Trojans, with neither side yielding, is compared to two rows of reapers advancing opposite each other across the field of a wealthy man (*Il.* 11.67-71). The simile is interesting not only for expressing the contest of war through an agricultural image, but also because the description of the reapers suggests a competition at the labor of the fields. The *Odyssey* provides additional hints of an agonal spirit associated with labor. Nausicaa's maids, for example, speed their work with a contest at clothes washing (θοῶς, ἔριδα προφέρουσαι: *Od.* 6.92). When Odysseus initially proposes to go into the ἄστυ to beg (*Od.* 15.307-24) he boasts of his excellence as an odd-job man. He swears by Hermes who grants grace (χάρις) and renown (κῦδος) to the work (ἔργα) of all men that no mortal could compete (οὐκ ἄν. . . ἐρίσσειε) with him in handyman's work (δρηστοσύνη). He goes

[94]Homer uses ἔρις in the sense of an athletic contest at *Od.* 8.209-11; see also *Il.* 7.111, and *Od.* 4.343, 6.92, and 17.134.

[95]It is precisely for breaching this boundary of social propriety that Odysseus rebukes Thersites (*Il.* 2.246-51).

on to specify such tasks as building a fire, splitting wood, cutting and cooking food, pouring wine: the services performed by inferiors (χέρηες) for the noble (ἀγαθοί). In a later passage Odysseus sends the maids off to the women's quarters since he can keep the lamps lit for the suitors: even if they stay up all night, they will not 'conquer' (νικήσουσι) him since he is much-enduring (*Od.* 18.313-19). In the speech from book 15 Odysseus exhibits a pride in his excellence at specifically the tasks performed by a servant for his master. His boast betrays an agonal impulse and standard of excellence for menial tasks too though these find little expression otherwise in the epos. In the second passage this competitive spirit expresses itself as a challenge to the masters themselves. His ability and stamina at work will surpass theirs at the pursuits of leisure. Odysseus's sentiments are echoed in the pride of Eumaeus and Philoetius in the prosperity of their herds and in their identification of their own well-being with that of their livestock.

Odysseus's response, challenging Eurymachus to a reaping contest, may again constitute an epic representation of the institutions and attitudes of the region outside the city wall. Odysseus does not reject labor in the fields, but rather reverses Eurymachus's condescension by boasting of his prowess at reaping and plowing as a claim of superiority to the suitor. Eurymachus relies implicitly upon such urban criteria as possession of land, a genealogy, and expertise at warfare to disqualify the beggar as out of place, an inferior who rightfully belongs to the country and its pursuits. Odysseus responds in the terms of the ἀγρός, where the lord is found to be the inferior. Measured against the skill and strength required for farm labor, Eurymachus for all his excellence appears unequal to the work of the ἀγρός to which he summons the beggar. This judgment, moreover, places in question the assumption that the city is a place of idleness for the peasant or beggar but not for the lord.[96] Odysseus's challenge undermines the hierarchy separating elite from δῆμος and city from country which Eurymachus manipulates in his job offer. Odysseus asserts, finally, the continuity of the labor of cultivation and that of warfare by presenting them successively as possible fields of competition, and

[96]Rose 110 characterizes Odysseus's challenge as "...the angry protest of normally hard-working peasant farmers who have lost their land through economic forces not unlike those that a century later enslaved so many Athenian peasants." The *Odyssey*'s depiction of the suitors' life as one of idleness and luxurious consumption supports this implication: e.g., *Od.* 1.106-12, 1.159, 1.224-26, 4.625-27=17.167-76. The view that the peasant is out of place in the city is discussed above, p. 46. Odysseus's rhetoric in this instance parallels that deployed by Hesiod as a peasant working his own land against Perses, who is associated with the βασιλῆες in the city. See pp. 67-68 above.

so effectively breaches one of the ideological barriers insulating the aristocrat from comparison with his inferiors.

In the context, moreover, of the fabricated biographies recounting Odysseus's fall from wealth and position, the challenge to Eurymachus to compete at such rustic tasks suggests by innuendo the precariousness of social preeminence and the permeability of the boundary separating privilege from toil, and city from country.[97] Odysseus poses implicitly the question of how well Eurymachus would do were he through some calamity to find himself in Odysseus's shoes, compelled to reap and plow in order to survive. Odysseus's final boast of his prowess in battle draws attention to his past in these tales as a hero and to the change of fortune that has reduced him to agricultural labor, but argues as well that the boundary between reaping and fighting, and the social statuses they imply, is not so wide or unbridgeable as Eurymachus imagines. Indeed, Odysseus's equation of Eurymachus's offer with 'taunting [him] for his belly' (γαστέρ' ὀνειδίζων: 18.380) introduces into his speech the topos of the δούλιον ἦμαρ, the view that a man's worth is limited by his position in society and subject to the whims of fortune, by reference to the compulsion of physical need afflicting men like the old beggar (cf. 62-63 above). Eurymachus's confidence and air of superiority originate in a consciousness of innate and essential differences separating him from the beggar, but Odysseus's response threatens to undermine this social barrier by proposing that rather convention and the accidents of fortune have produced the differences between them.

The challenge to a contest at reaping, as a riposte to Eurymachus's charge that Odysseus would rather sponge off his betters in the city than work for his living on the land, foregrounds the ease and absence of toil characteristic of the city, and exposes the idleness of the aristocrat as perceived from the vantage of the country. By opening the possibility of a comparison otherwise precluded in Homer, a view of country and city is further articulated that is already adumbrated in Eumaeus's and Philoetius's resistance to the suitors' plundering of their livestock and in their view of the city as a place of extravagance and idleness. Confronted on its own terms, Odysseus's challenge constitutes a fragment from a rural voice asserting the primary importance of cultivation and herding, and by whose standard the urban population must be judged

[97]See *Od.* 17.415-44 for the story he recounts to Antinous before the other suitors. Odysseus undergoes three rags to riches cycles in the account he offers Eumaeus (14.199-359), and explicitly warns Amphinomus of fortune's mutability (18.125-50). See Rose's perceptive analysis of the *Odyssey*'s incorporation of the beggar's perspective, 106-12.

parasitic, lazy, and inferior. The continuity proposed by Odysseus between the social status of a beggar and that of an ἄριστος, and between toil in the fields and warfare, opens once again the dispute between γένος and fortune as determinants of human excellence. Odysseus's speech draws upon the minor ideology of a historical rural population within which that group defined itself and asserted its values in opposition to the city's economic, political, and cultural domination.

When viewed within the ideological frame of the ἀγρός, Odysseus appears to mount a forceful attack upon the foundations of Eurymachus's social preeminence through his use of the topoi of the contest, labor, warfare, and the γαστήρ. Yet a competing ideological frame for recuperating this speech arises from the irony of Odysseus's disguise. Although Odysseus appears to be a defenseless beggar, in fact he is an aristocrat and a great warrior with a matching fame. Framed in this context, Odysseus's assertions of his prowess even at reaping and plowing appear rather as the Homeric hero's customary expressions of self-confidence and pride, but decked out in the unlikely rags of a πτωχός. Such an ironic interpretation of Odysseus's challenge proceeds backwards retroactively across Odysseus's speech from the final contest to which he summons Eurymachus. Not only would Odysseus surpass the suitor at reaping and plowing, the tasks of a peasant, but he would prove a braver man in armed combat. For an old vagabond, as Odysseus appears to Eurymachus, this seems to be an idle if insolent boast. But our knowledge that it is in fact Odysseus, the hero of Troy, who speaks reverses our evaluation of Odysseus's response so that the challenges to reap and plow are from this perspective filled with irony, but the boast of martial excellence seems both ominous and deadly serious. This final challenge reinterprets the first two retroactively as aristocratic masquerade, and not genuinely popular and rustic. This sense of irony is deepened, moreover, by the conclusion of the speech in which Odysseus predicts his own return and vengeance upon the suitors: if Odysseus were to return, the doors would seem too narrow to Eurymachus in his haste to flee. We recognize here the same strategy of managing the voice of the ἀγρός by anchoring it in the *Odyssey*'s local eschatology as occurred in the case of Eumaeus's insubordinate assertion of the producer's right to the fruits of his own labor.

Beyond this, there is a more general irony produced by the view that the contest is an exclusively aristocratic institution. The central place occupied by the conventions and honors of the contest in aristocratic society is abundantly illustrated by the games of *Iliad* 23. The claim that such competition is the

preserve of the elite, dismissing any demotic games that may have existed, is made explicit in the midst of the preeminently aristocratic Phaeacians (*Od.* 8.131-64). Before Odysseus's true identity has been revealed, one of the young Phaeacians invites him to compete in the athletic contests, since it is right (ἔοικε) that he know them, and there is no greater renown (κλέος) than what a man achieves with his feet and hands (145-48). When Odysseus declines to enter into the competitions, however, Laodamas draws what must appear to him the obvious inference:

> οὐ γάρ σ' οὐδέ, ξεῖνε, δαήμονι φωτὶ ἐΐσκω
> ἄθλων, οἷά τε πολλὰ μετ' ἀνθρώποισι πέλονται,
> ἀλλὰ τῷ, ὅς θ' ἅμα νηῒ πολυκλήϊδι θαμίζων,
> ἀρχὸς ναυτάων, οἵ τε πρηκτῆρες ἔασι,
> φόρτου τε μνήμων καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ἦσιν ὀδαίων
> κερδέων θ' ἁρπαλέων· οὐδ' ἀθλητῆρι ἔοικας.
>
> No, stranger, for I do not see that you are like one versed
> in contests, such as now are practiced much among people,
> but rather to one who plies his ways in his many-locked vessel,
> master over marines who also are men of business,
> a man who, careful of his cargo and grasping for profits,
> goes carefully on his way. You do not resemble an athlete.
> (*Od.* 8.159-64).

To Laodamas's mind Odysseus's unwillingness to strive for the fame won through athletic contests can only indicate that he is not of the elite at all, but of a lower social order unskilled in athletics. The young Phaeacian claims the contest as an exclusive feature of aristocratic life, an impression which is heightened by the vehemence with which Odysseus objects and then demonstrates his prowess with a discus throw which no Phaeacian can equal (*Od.* 8.165-98). The irony of Odysseus's real superiority to Eurymachus and of the reservation of the contest and its values for aristocratic culture serve to reterritorialize Odysseus's challenges to rustic competitions, or his boasts for his δρηστοσύνη, to the terrain of aristocratic ethics. These servile tasks are linked with the excellence and achievement belonging to Odysseus, and mobilized as the medium for expressing his sense of his own superiority. While the rural contests mentioned by Odysseus may well refer to historical institutions of the life of the ἀγρός, the *Odyssey*'s skillful reterritorialization of these references threatens to assimilate them as a further manifestation of Odysseus's disguise, as aristocratic language decked out in the quaint twang of a peasant.

Does this exchange between Eurymachus and Odysseus only presage a coming showdown between members of the elite, the rightful king and lawless usurpers, or does it dramatize the tense if obscure struggle between two regions? Does Odysseus adapt the trappings of peasant talk to the aristocratic topos of the contest in support of the destiny of a βασιλήϊον γένος, or does he adopt the voice of the ἀγρός to issue a challenge to Eurymachus that reverses the ethical hierarchy of country versus city? Is the contest native to aristocratic culture for establishing hierarchy only among the elite, or is it a common Greek institution offering the possibility of breaching the social boundary marked by the city wall? Are the rags of the ἀγρός too thin to veil the aristocratic ethos and its unmistakable charisma, or does the rhetoric of the country finally supplant the identity it masks? In my view these questions remain undecidable. The *Odyssey* strives to manage and domesticate the voice of the ἀγρός, but it remains unable to tame it entirely.

In conclusion, Homer does not offer us a reflection of country and city in their historical fullness and complexity, but rather a partial and systematically distorted picture—more an intervention into a historical setting than a representation of it. The selectivity of Homer's representation both reflects and promotes a social vision in which the πόλις occupies the central position as the preserve of an elite destined for authority, wealth, and ease. The extraordinary circumstances of Odysseus's return, however, disrupt this normative hierarchy of country and city and consequently open the epic narrative to the voice of the ἀγρός. The *Odyssey* mobilizes this voice as part of its program to vindicate and glorify its hero while discrediting his opponents in the city.

Yet in order to harness this voice to its internal program the *Odyssey* is driven to implement certain strategies to manage and control a perspective otherwise alien to it. To this end the *Odyssey* exploits the powerful irony of Odysseus's disguise and the authenticating touchstone of γένος to position the voice of the ἀγρός as an ironic rhetoric to be used and then cast aside like Odysseus's rags when it is of no further use. As I have argued, however, the *Odyssey* can at best achieve only a partial reterritorialization of this boorish and disruptive voice since it brings with it from the countryside a set of ethical assumptions which conflict fundamentally with the dominant values of the Homeric poems. To the principle of γένος the voice of the ἀγρός counterposes the mutability of human fortunes and the limits imposed upon human virtue by social context. The mediated reference, moreover, of the voice of the ἀγρός to a historical reality endows that voice with an autonomy adequate to resist

complete assimilation to the ethical and narrative priorities of the poem through the irony of Odysseus's disguise. These conflicting frames of reference for territorializing and recuperating the voice of the ἀγρός produce a continuous instability in the narrative. Homer strives in his poetry to reproduce, to disseminate and reinforce an ideology that, among other things, locates the ἀγρός in a specific relationship to the πόλις. For in order for the countryside to be dominated in history, it must be subjected in ideology. Yet, as I have argued, the inclusion of the voice of the ἀγρός in the *Odyssey* has the unintended effect of threatening to block this reproductive process. These two voices of πόλις and of ἀγρός remain in an undecidable stalemate, undermining and displacing each other, as each strives to interpret the *Odyssey*'s ethical geography.

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