Narrative Patterns in the *Odyssey*: Repetition and the Creation of Meaning

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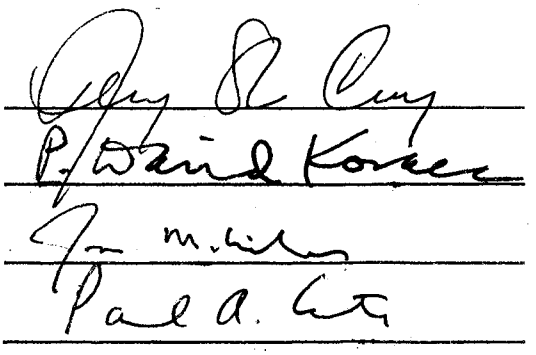

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Dissertation Abstract

My goal in this dissertation has been to investigate the use of narrative repetition in the *Odyssey,* and to show how the poet employs this device to suggest possible meanings to his audience. The poet, I argue, signals to the audience through the device of repetition that X and Y are alike, but through variations in those repetitions he poses questions and possible answers.

Chapter One examines the position and function of the Telemachy in the *Odyssey*. Since father and son both travel by sea and face many similar trials, the traditional approach assumes the poet is showing how Telemachus is becoming like his father. The son does resemble his father, but the many qualitative differences between both the father and son should not be overlooked. From these differences I argue that the Telemachy occupies such a prominent position and has such an extensive narrative scope because the poet wished to represent, through the youthful and naïve character of Telemachus, the end of the age of heroes.

In Chapter Two I maintain that the *Odyssey* poet has Odysseus reprise the role of the Cyclops on Ithaca to emphasize Odysseus' successful combination of *bie* and *metis*. The Cyclopean motif is, I argue, also linked with the character of Achilles, who in the *Odyssey* is known simply for his glorious death and failure to take Troy by storm. Odysseus is revealed as the man who unites that apparent *metis/bie* polarity that is nowhere more vividly described than in the *Cyclopeia*. Hence, the intertwining of the Cyclopean and Achillean themes. I propose that our poet is making the claim that his hero deserves the title of "Best of the Achaeans."

Chapter Three investigates the role of three groups of young men in the poem (crew of Odysseus, young men of Phaeacia, and suitors), all of whom share several significant similarities and differences in their interactions with Odysseus. These three groupings of young men, I argue, afford comment on the nature of government and those governed. The Trojan war, the many years away from Ithaca, and the long return trip home, all dramatically highlight the very real problems that arise when men return home from a prolonged conflict.

Introduction

Though repetition has long been recognized as a distinctive feature of Homeric poetry, it has often been misunderstood. Before the twentieth century, for example, it was explained either as a natural component of archaic poetry, or, according to the analytical school, evidence for the imperfect, patchwork job of a final redactor. It was not until the work of Milman Parry and his student Albert Lord that any systematic and rigorous attempt was undertaken to explain certain types of repetition (namely, those now known as formulae) as integral to oral poetry and necessary for its very composition.[1] Book length studies have also been undertaken, for example, on type scenes[2] (scenes of arrival and treatment of guests, arming, supplication, etc.) and character doublets.[3] More recent scholarship, benefiting from new methods and ideas gleaned from studies in neoanalysis, orality, and narratology, has uncovered greater levels of sophistication with regard to repetition than had once been thought possible in an orally composed work. Still other scholars have begun to examine repetition that occurs over the length of the entire poem, a type known as narrative repetition.

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[1] Parry (1971), Lord (1960).

[2] Though the application of terminology is not always consistent, type scenes are also known as 'themes', and were labeled as such by Parry, who was followed in this practice by Lord (1960) 68-98; for the earliest study of type scenes, see Arend (1933). Powell (1977), applying Lord's 'thematic' approach to composition, identifies numerous themes in the *Odyssey*; for work specifically on scenes of arrival, see Reece (1993).

[3] For a good discussion of a variety of doubling patterns, see Fenik (1974).

Lowenstam's (1993) investigation of this phenomenon in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* shows just how effective an interpretive tool this method can be. He focuses, for example, on the contrast between public and private in the *Odyssey*, noting the importance of this repeated opposition and how each new occurrence is in conversation with the one that precedes it and looks ahead to the one that is to follow.[4] In other words, the argument is continually being refined and reshaped by the poet over the course of the poem. Most recently, Bruce Louden has applied Lowenstam's approach to both poems as well, offering some valuable but, in the end, much more mechanical insights.[5] Though work of this nature has been done, there is still much to be investigated. It is with this type of repetition, one which occurs over larger distances and reflects/mirrors larger plot events and motifs, that this dissertation is concerned.

Reworking of material by recombining elements scattered throughout the story is a method employed in both Homeric epics.[6] I do not mean here the verbatim repetition of a

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[4] (1993) 145-244.

[5] Louden (1999; 2006) insists on a compositional principle of patterns that are repeated three times over great lengths (for example, he argues [1999, 69-103] that there is a pattern of three scenes of divine wrath in the *Odyssey* [Zeus-Helios, Zeus-Poseidon, Zeus-Athena]). While I agree with his view that the differences in each repeated scene are most significant, his procrustean determination to force the facts to fit the concept rather than the other way round mars some of his otherwise provocative insights. Why, for example, should we limit these scenes between gods to three? What of the first and second assembly scenes between Zeus and Athena? Are they merely preludes? Are they not part of this same pattern? Then maybe there are four parts to it? Would it not be less reductive to approach the material with the principle in mind that the differences in each subsequent narrative pattern, whether that be two or three or four repetitions, are used as a form of poetic argumentation, all parts of which are significant? This last point would also help to avoid overloading the final repetition with most of the significance, as Louden tends to do.

[6] See, for example, Edwards (1980) 1-28 and Lowenstam (1993).

single phrase, line or whole paragraph, nor even type-scene repetition, but rather a combination of repeated elements of plot, language, and situation, a sort of mirror of earlier actions or events without perfect correspondence. Of course such repeated elements will either contain differences or occur in situations that are different, and these differences will be important, for it is through the differences that the poet, I will argue, makes his point. That is, the poet(s) of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* uses, among others, two important principles of composition, principles that not only aid the poet in composition, but also guide the audience's understanding. These principles are the use of juxtaposition and repetition. The poet generally tends to compare two things not to say how they are alike, but how, in fact, they are different.[7]

It is no accident, for example, that in the final scene of the first book of the *Iliad*, shortly after we have witnessed the explosive conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles, we are privy to a meeting of the gods (1.533-611). Here, too, there is a conflict. Hera chides Zeus for keeping her in the dark about his designs for the future. Zeus puts her squarely in her place, remarking that none of the other gods would be able to offer her any help once he laid his implacable hands upon her (1.565-7: ἀλλ' ἀκέουσα κάθησο, ἐμῷ δ' ἐπιπείθεο μύθῳ, / μή νύ τοι οὐ χραίσμωσιν ὅσοι θεοί εἰσ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ / ἄσσον ἰόντ', ὅτε κέν

[7] As Lowenstam (1993) 9 puts it, "Very often in the *Odyssey*, repetition in narrative situations works in such a way that one occurrence presents a standard by which the next and subsequent occurrences can be judged."

τοι ἀάπτους χεῖρας ἐφείω).[8] The other gods are said to be disturbed at this turn of events, but instead of any groundswell of opposition to Zeus, the tense moment passes due to the intervention of Hephaestus, who attempts to persuade his mother not to push Zeus further. To make his point Hephaestus recounts how Zeus once threw him out of Olympus. His unintentionally humorous anecdote and his awkward appearance as cupbearer incite the gods to laughter, and the scene ends in general good cheer (1.571-600). Morever, the scene which immediately follows this depiction of divine bliss contains a complete reversal of the image of Zeus as king: Agamemnon's ill-advised test of his men's committment to the overthrow of Troy.[9]

These mirroring scenes serve several functions. On the one hand, they serve to emphasize the difference between gods and men, how human affairs are truly tragic.[10] On the

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[8] The sentiment in these lines is very similar to that in Agamemnon's words to Achilles (1.185-7): αὐτὸς ἰὼν κλισίην δὲ τὸ σὸν γέρας ὄφρ' ἐὺ εἰδῇς / ὅσσον φέρτερός εἰμι σέθεν, στυγέῃ δὲ καὶ ἄλλος / ἶσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην.

[9] There are further parallels, of course. Odysseus saves the day, and in the process of returning the troops from a rush to the ships back to the assembly, he has to deal with Thersites. Now Thersites (whose introduction by the poet focuses on his physical shortcomings) clearly recalls Hephaestus from the previous scene (Thersites is said to have a limp [φολκὸς ἔην, χωλὸς δ' ἕτερον πόδα, 2.217] as well), and the abuse of Thersites by Odysseus also rouses laughter among the troops just as Hephaestus' scene did among the gods. But once again, the emphasis is on the difference between the gods and mortals, ugliness among the gods elicits laughter, among men both laughter and hatred and pain. There is still another parallel: Zeus sends a deceptive dream, which eventually achieves its goal; Agamemnon attempts to deceive his troops, but the outcome is not what he intends (see Whitman [1958] 161). And, thus, Agamemnon's assertion of authority is contrasted once again with Zeus' example of actual authority.

[10] Gods' quarrels end in laughter, or at worst in wounds that are easily healed (compare 5.416-7, 899-906), while the conflicts of men end in death and the destruction of entire families, homes, cities, etc.

other hand, the poet's juxtaposition of two scenes involving rulers, one who is obviously in charge of his fellows (Zeus), the other (Agamemnon) who has had his authority undermined on several occasions (first by Achilles, then by his own troops, and finally by Thersites), calls into question the legitimacy of the authority upon which Agamemnon stands. Immediately before this scene with Zeus among the gods, we hear of background events, of an earlier struggle in which Zeus was in danger of being subdued by his fellow Olympians. [11] This obviously refers to a time antecedent to Zeus' consolidation of power, which he accomplished, in part, by the fair distribution of honors to the other gods. This is precisely what Agamemnon is accused of not doing as the leader of the assembled Greek force,[12] and it is this shortcoming that sets in motion a series of events that will lead to the eventual loss of so many Argive lives.

Another brief example from the opening of the *Iliad* will suffice to illustrate the ubiquity, the logic, and the importance of this pattern of repetition or 'mirroring' in Homeric epic. At the *Iliad*'s outset (1.11-305) Agamemnon is asked by Chryses, priest of Apollo, to

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[11] In Achilles' request to Thetis (1.396-406) he recalls a curious scene in which Zeus was severely threatened by the main divine proponents of the Achaeans, i.e., Poseidon, Hera and Athena, who tied him up; and it was only through the intervention of Thetis, who released him and summoned Briareus/Aegaeon, that Zeus was saved. Several other comments are made by Zeus and others that refer to conflict/competition among the gods, but in these incidents Zeus' authority is never truly compromised (8.5-27, 15.18-24, 19.95-133). It is useful here to recall Hesiod (*Theogony* 885), for there Zeus' fair distribution of honors is one of the means by which he is able to ensure harmony among them.

[12] At 1.166-8 Achilles says: χεῖρες ἐμαὶ διέπουσ'· ἀτὰρ ἤν ποτε δασμὸς ἵκηται, / σοὶ τὸ γέρας πολὺ μεῖζον, ἐγὼ δ' ὀλίγον τε φίλον τε / ἔρχομ' ἔχων ἐπὶ νῆας, ἐπεί κε κάμω πολεμίζων.

return his daughter Chryseis. Agamemnon, despite his men's objections, refuses and threatens the old man, who then walks along the sea shore and calls upon Apollo to avenge this affront to his honor. Apollo grants his request, and after a nine-day plague that destroys many in the army, Agamemnon is confronted by Achilles. Agamemnon begrudgingly agrees to return Chryseis, but he demands compensation for this loss, and eventually takes Achilles' girl Briseis. This action by Agamemnon is in itself a variant of the cause of the Trojan war: a woman taken from a man by another. Now Achilles, like Chryses before him, separates himself from his companions, sits upon the sea strand and prays to his mother, asking her to plead with Zeus to give him the honor he deserves. Zeus nods his assent to Thetis' demands, and the end result, of course, is the loss of many of the Argives in battle with the Trojans for as long as Achilles remains in his tent unconsoled.

The parallels here are obvious: both Chryses and Achilles have lost a woman, both are abused by Agamemnon, both appeal to divine help for revenge, and both are ultimately vindicated. Critics have recognized these similarities in theme and situation, but have not focused on the differences.[13] In the case of Chryses we learn that Agamemnon was wrong to disregard the god's prophet and his requests. This encounter between Agamemnon and Chryses sets the pattern against which we are to judge similar actions later in the poem.

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[13] See, for example, Lord's (1960) 186-95 discussion of this passage. He analyzes the similarities from the point of composition by theme, how a poet envisions his poem in units that allow ready expansion or contraction.

When Agamemnon, for example, immediately involves himself in a similar situation, we might begin to wonder about his behavior, whether he is right to act as he does.[14] And there is one more point to remember, one thing that sets these two scenes apart: Chryses accepts the offer from Agamemnon and prays to Apollo to relent, but Achilles will not accept Agamemnon's later offer in Book 9. And that is the source of much of the poem's tragedy. In this respect, Achilles actually shares in Agamemnon's earlier failure with regard to Chryses: the rejection of a proper ransom, properly offered.[15] This is not to suggest a simple solution to a hotly debated question, i.e, whether Achilles is right to refuse Agamemnon's offer in Book 9. Rather I wish to demonstrate that this kind of repetition with changes is one of the poet's powerful tools for the presentation of ideas to his audience. He does not determine an orthodox 'reading' but suggests possibilities with this logic of repetition. The scene reminds the audience what losses men suffer when their leaders ignore what is best for the people. To remark, as many do, that such scenes or actions foreshadow those that follow misses half the point. This 'mirroring' accomplishes much more than merely preparing the

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[14] Compare also Rabel (1988).

[15] The sequence of supplication with ransom is revisited, of course, in the most powerful way in the final supplication scene between Achilles and Priam in Book 24. See Wilson (2002a) 71-108 for an insightful discussion of the embassy to Achilles and a summary of previous scholarship on the topic (1-12). Beginning with a close reading of the language employed by Agamemnon and Achilles in Books 1 and 9, Wilson offers a nuanced interpretation of both Achilles' refusal of Agamemnon's offer in the latter book, and the larger issue of compensation in the *Iliad*.

audience for events to come; it provides a point of comparison, a means to interpret actions by the intentional close juxtaposition and repetition of similar actions and situations.

From the above examples, it is clear that there is much potential interpretive value in this approach. This type of repetition with differences, then, will be the subject of study of this dissertation. While the methodology itself is not new, the application of it to particular portions of the *Odyssey* is. Though both poems employ this method, I have chosen to focus on the *Odyssey* because its more complex narrative (i.e., it offers an expansive scope in space and time, looking now forward and now back; now here, and now there) and, consequently, more intricate interweaving of themes, will yield more significant results. The goal, then, of this dissertation is to demonstrate, following Austin's formulation of the Homeric corpus as "one vast and joyful paean to correspondence,"[16] how the poet of the *Odyssey* uses narrative repetition to explore a variety of complex ideas.

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[16] Austin (1975) 273.

Chapter One: Telemachus and the Telemachy

Why does Telemachus make the trip to Pylos and Sparta, and why the Telemachy's prominent position in the poem?[17] These two questions form the subject of the following chapter. Many answers have been proposed. That the Telemachy, for example, is a sort of *paideia* for Telemachus;[18] that Athene leads Telemachus down the path to take revenge on the suitors and, in so doing, Telemachus becomes the sort of son who is a complement to his multi-faceted father;[19] that the poet can thus have an occasion for relating the *nostoi* of the other Trojan heroes;[20] that we learn about Odysseus through the narratives that others tell about him before we see him.[21]

While these suggestions certainly help explain the poet's possible motives for beginning not with the hero but with his son, each is an insufficient cause on its own. It is true that Telemachus receives something of an education from Nestor and Menelaus concerning the character of his father and the world of heroes. But one could argue that his

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[17] The term itself appears to have been coined by Hennings (1858) 135ff. For a history of early analystic research on the problem of the Telemachy, see Klingner (1944) 5-55, and for a discussion of both early and later bibliography see Heubeck (1974) 87-113. The *opinio communis* today, however, is that the Telemachy is an integral part of the poem; see, for example, Heubeck (1987) vol. 1 17-8, and West (1987) vol. 1 51-66.

[18] Delebeque (1958) 137; Jaeger (1934) 55ff.; Kirk (1962) 359; Reinhardt (1948) 47; Scott (1917-18) 423-7; Woodhouse (1930) 210-14.

[19] Rose (1967) 391-8.

[20] Kirk (1962) 359; Woodhouse (1930) 209.

[21] Scott (1917-18) 420-1.

real education or at least his motivation to act is achieved from the sudden arrival of Athena-Mentes, who effects an almost immediate change in the young man (1.320ff.) over the course of one meal-time conversation.[22] As for Telemachus as avenger, how does he become more of an apt son for his father if he merely speaks to Nestor and Menelaus? To be sure, he is introduced to examples of proper behavior in the households of Nestor and Menelaus, but these examples of proper hospitality and respect do not educate Telemachus; this is apparent from his first encounter with Athena-Mentes (1.113-318), which shows that he has been well-schooled in the treatment of guests.[23] Thus, these juxtaposed scenes of proper and improper *xenia* are more for the audience's benefit than for Telemachus', paradigms for the audience to compare and contrast and, ultimately, judge the moral quality of the suitors. While it may be true that on this trip Telemachus learns not only about his father, but also how to negotiate safely among the world of men, it does not follow that the Telemachy exists in its present position for this reason. The poet could simply have chosen to begin with

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[22] See West (1987) 55 for a reasonable objection to the view of Telemachus' trip as a *paideia*. This is not to suggest that Telemachus does not undergo any change over the course of the poem. Rather we should ask whether that change is the result of his experiences gained in the first four books and whether those changes are sufficient cause for the Telemachy's prominent position and length. For more recent discussion of Telemachus' character changes, see Beck (1988-9) 121-41and Heath (2001) 129-57. For a different view of Telemachus' development, see Olson (1995), especially 78-9.

[23] Telemachus is said to spot Athena long before all others (1.113). He greets her and says, in words reminiscent of old Nestor (3.69-70) and Menelaus (4.60-4), that when she has eaten, they will talk about what she needs (1.123-4): χαῖρε, ξεῖνε, παρ' ἄμμι φιλήσεαι· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα / δείπνου πασσάμενος μυθήσεαι ὅττεό σε χρή. He then, following all proper guest/host protocol, leads her to a seat and offers her food and drink.

Odysseus. Or, if the poet felt it necessary to include Telemachus at the outset, he could just as easily have started with a brief summary of Telemachus' trip and his imminent return to Ithaca. As for the fact that the Telemachy conveniently allows the poet to relate the *nostoi* of the other Trojan heroes, this material could just as easily have been included in the *Nekyia*, where some of it is related: the story of Agamemnon's death, for example, is related by Agamemnon himself (11.405-34). And though we do learn more about Odysseus through the Telemachy, could not the same have been accomplished by more scenes set in Ithaca, from conversations between Penelope and Telemachus, Penelope and Eurycleia, Eumaeus and Philoetius, or other visitors to the palace?

While each of the above suggestions may have been operative in the poet's decision to start with Telemachus, they do not account either for the considerable length or the prominent position of the Telemachy in our text. Each of the previous arguments simply assumes the Telemachy's existence, and most were formulated in defense of the poem's unity against the accusations of analysts, who asserted that it was artlessly tacked onto the front of our poem by a poetic hack.[24] But no suggested answer fully explains why it is there in the first place.

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[24] Page (1955) 165-82 catalogues the many ways that the Telemachy has been faulted by previous Analytical scholars.

Before proposing an answer, I must first note one other point about the Telemachy, namely that it has often been observed that Telemachus' trip to Pylos and Sparta is in essence a mini-Odyssey, a sort of microcosm of the larger plot of Odysseus' travels and adventures.[25] And the most common interpretive approach to this similarity between father and son is to assert that the poet, by giving the son a voyage, is attempting to show how he resembles his father. Given, however, Homeric epic's equal propensity to use repetition to call attention to differences, as argued in my Introduction, and, hence, meanings, I contend that the poet preposes the Telemachy to invite the audience to compare the young hero and those of his generation to Odysseus. In this comparison, I will argue, Telemachus and his peers fall far short of the heroic capabilities and adventures of Odysseus and his Trojan war fellows. The poem is, in this view, a nostalgic look back at the greatness of the past and how that past is forever beyond reach except through the medium of song. In this interpretation I follow Richard Martin, who states that "by preposing the Telemachy and thus foregrounding the whole problem of father-son relations, the poet of the *Odyssey* made a conscious attempt to perform a poem about the *end* of a tradition."[26] In other words, the *Odyssey* can be said to be a song of lament for a bygone era.

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[25] For example Seitz (1950) 131-7; Heubeck (1954) 56-7; Clarke (1963) 138-45 and (1967) 40-44; Rüter (1969) 141-2, 238-40; Austin (1975) 182-91; Powell (1977) 50-6; Apthorp (1980) 12-22; Tracy (1997) 374-5.

[26] Martin (1993) 240; he also links this argument to the notion that the *Odyssey* is also about the end of a type of oral poetry, for he comments, "Moreover, to speak of the end of heroic tradition, tailing out with the quite ordinary Telemachus, is also to comment on the end of a *poetic* tradition, epic verse as practiced by the poet of

This interpretation of the Telemachy dovetails nicely with a scholion to *Iliad* 1.5 which suggests that the phrase employed there (Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή) refers to Zeus' desire to rid the earth of the race of heroes. Zeus, the scholiast suggests, was prompted in this decision by Gaia's complaints.[27] Indeed, the Trojan war brought about the extinction of nearly all of the race of heroes. And in this post-Iliadic world those few that remain (primarily Nestor and Menelaus) play an almost ossified role, heroes condemned to recount the stories of past exploits but no longer engendering deeds worthy of song. In this poem, then, it is only Odysseus who represents the final threat to the now jealously guarded division of the mortal and divine spheres,[28] but even he, by the poem's end, firmly and intentionally reestablishes himself in the post-heroic world of Ithaca.[29]

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the *Odyssey* itself, for the two are symbiotic." While I agree, in the main, with Martin's conclusions, I look at a different set of material that he has left uninvestigated, namely the detailed relationship of the Telemachy to Odysseus' *nostos* and to other related themes in the poem.

[27] van Thiel (2000) 5-6, D Scholiast on *Iliad* 1.5's "Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή". ἄλλοι δὲ ἀπὸ ἱστορίας τινὸς εἶπον εἰρηκέναι τὸν Ὅμηρον. φασὶ γὰρ τὴν γῆν βαρουμένην ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων πολυπληθείας, μηδεμιᾶς ἀνθρώπων οὔσης εὐσεβείας, αἰτῆσαι τὸν Δία κουφισθῆναι τοῦ ἄχθους, κτλ.

[28] See Clay (1983) 180-212 and (1999).

[29] I say *intentionally* here because Odysseus realizes and explicitly recalls, on at least one occasion, the danger of reaching too far, a danger faced by many heroes. In his boast to the Phaeacians about his prowress in archery, he is careful to compare himself only to those men who live today (8.215-28). He includes the example of Eurytus as a negative examplar of vying with the gods. A similar portrayal of impiety and its consequences as a result of heroic over-reaching is the story of the return and death of the lesser Ajax as related by Menelaus to Telemachus (4.499-511). Odysseus appears to have learned from his Trojan War peers' failures to curb that excessive striving that could result in impiety, the very offense that the scholiast mentions as the cause of the Trojan War. For a discussion of Odysseus' relationship with Athena and the former's careful and clever adoption of humility vis-à-vis the goddess, see Clay (1983) 186-212.

Eurytus' bow is an excellent example of Odysseus' relation to the gods. He tells the Phaeacians in Book 8 that he is an outstanding archer, but that he will not compare himself with the heroes of the past, some of whom actually vied with the gods. He mentions examples of those who did not know their place, and specifically names Eurytus who challenged Apollo in archery (8.223-5). We later learn that the bow that Eurytus used to compete with Apollo now belongs to Odysseus (21.11-41). But instead of challenging Apollo to an archery contest, Odysseus notes that the success of his shot at Antinous with this very bow is dependent upon Apollo's will (22.5-7).

There really is no better hero to represent the end of the age of heroes. Odysseus is the quintessential everyman, but also the everyman idealized. He is a transitional figure to the degree that he partakes of the heroic and the banausic in equal portions. True, even when he does do carpentry work, his display of skill could be called heroic, such as the creation of the raft (5.243-62), his challenge to Eurymachus concerning farmwork (18.366-75), and the construction of his marriage bed (23.183-204), but these are not skills in which one imagines an Achilles to excel. Furthermore, Odysseus himself, while he does look back to the past and did partake in the Trojan war, is also a forward looking character. He alone of the heroes refers to himself on two occasions in the *Iliad* (2.260 and 4.354) not by his patronymic but by

his son's name, which shows that he can also define himself by his future and not simply by tradition.[30]

There are early indications in the poem that Homer invites his audience to compare Odysseus and his generation to that of Telemachus and his peers. One may object to a comparison of the young and inexperienced Telemachus with a man world famous for his cunning and courage. Given Telemachus' age, this seems an unfair comparison, but if we look back at some incidents in Odysseus' adolescence we will see that the poem indicates that Odysseus could accomplish impressive deeds even at an early age. These passages imply that, though Odysseus certainly has learned through his experiences, he nonetheless always possessed the traits for which he has become famous.

The hunting incident (19.386-466) that left him with a scar on his thigh is one such example. Odysseus is clearly quite young here, and, despite the obvious danger to himself, he stands his ground against the onslaught of the wild boar; and though he is wounded, he

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[30]Futhermore, Odysseus returns home and there he recovers his bow, the weapon that he left upon his departure to Troy. For the bow as an example of a lesser heroic weapon, one associated with inferior men, one need only recall the cowardly archer Paris. Shewan (1911) 168-9 calls this characterization of archery into question. He notes that some important Iliadic characters (Teucer, Meriones, Philoctetes, and Apollo) were bowmen. Shewan's list of heroes, however, proves the point that archery was viewed as a lesser heroic weapon: notably absent from his list are the most important fighters of the *Iliad*. Edwards (1985) 24-5 rightly points out the dichotomy between proponents of archery and of spearmanship in the exchange between Paris and Diomedes after the latter was wounded in the foot by Paris (*Iliad* 11.369-95).

delivers a death blow to the animal with his spear. This scene, of course, emphasizes his endurance in the face of danger.

More pertinent still is the story of how Odysseus came to possess the bow with which he kills the suitors (21.13-41). Iphitus, we are told, on his way to reclaim some horses from Heracles in Messene, met Odysseus, who was on a public mission to reclaim a flock of three hundred head and their herdsmen. Iphitus and Odysseus exchanged gifts, and Odysseus himself presumably returned with the cattle (21.17-21).

> ἦλθε μετὰ χρεῖος, τό ῥά οἱ πᾶς δῆμος ὄφελλε·
> μῆλα γὰρ ἐξ Ἰθάκης Μεσσήνιοι ἄνδρες ἄειραν
> νηυσὶ πολυκλήϊσι τριηκόσι' ἠδὲ νομῆας.
> τῶν ἕνεκ' ἐξεσίην πολλὴν ὁδὸν ἦλθεν Ὀδυσσεύς,
> παιδνὸς ἐών· πρὸ γὰρ ἧκε πατὴρ ἄλλοι τε γέροντες
>
> He came to collect a debt, which a whole people owed him. For men from Messenia stole flocks from Ithaca, three hundred head, and some herdsmen, and loaded them all in many-benched ships. It was for this that Odysseus took this mission, a long journey, though just a boy, for his father and the other elders sent him out on this task.

There is one phrase that stands out clearly here: that Odysseus was still quite a young man (παιδνὸς ἐών) when he went on this expedition.[31] The fact that his father and the city elders sent him on this mission at such a young age attests to his maturity and their confidence in his abilities. He is, after all, retrieving a herd of three hundred head, which represents a

[31] At 24.338 this adjective (the only other occurrence in the poem) is used by Odysseus to describe himself as a young boy following behind his father in the garden and asking him for a number of trees to plant. The word clearly refers to a rather youthful state.

considerable sum of money. The passage also implies, though this is not certain, that Odysseus would have been able to string and use the bow at this young age.[32] He may, in fact, have used the weapon to recover the sheep. Even if he could not or did not use the bow, this episode was, then, surely a test of his skill as a speaker and negotiator. Thus this important action of Odysseus establishes him, though a very young man, as a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.

Now, if we look again to the *Iliad*, we will see that the comparison between father and son that I am suggesting is, in fact, 'natural' to Homeric epic. For it is a common practice in the *Iliad* to motivate a warrior to fight bravely by reminding him of his father's exploits and calling into question either the son's paternity or inherited excellence, and sometimes both. This is exactly what Agamemnon does when he comes upon Diomedes, who seems to be delaying before battle (4.372ff.).[33] He reminds Diomedes of his father Tydeus' lone fight against overwhelming numbers of Cadmaeons and how he overcame them all single-handedly. Agamemnon concludes his harangue with this biting statement (4.399-400):

> τοῖος ἔην Τυδεὺς Αἰτώλιος· ἀλλὰ τὸν υἱὸν
> γείνατο εἶο χέρεια μάχῃ, ἀγορῇ δέ τ' ἀμείνω

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[32] The importance of the practicality and the timeliness of gifts is twice mentioned in the poem: Athena to Telemachus (1.314-8), and Telemachus to Menelaus (4.600-19). This suggests that the young Odysseus was able to use the bow.

[33] Compare also *Iliad* 5.800-1. For a discussion of fathers and sons in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see *inter alios* Finlay (1980) 267-73, Wöhrle (1999), and Felson (1999) 89-98 and (2002) 35-50.

> Such was Tydeus of Aetolia, but he fathered a son inferior to him in battle, but better in speech.

In the *Odyssey*, by prefacing the poem with an extended narrative on the son, the poet, working within this poetic tradition, invites the audience to compare the son to the father. But the comparison is made not merely between the father and the son, but also, as we will see, between the age of heroes and the diminished generation that succeeds them. Telemachus and Odysseus are, in this interpretation, the representatives of each. This comparison between father and son is not only implicit, as I have suggested by the position of the Telemachy, but is made explicit in several statements over the course of the poem.

The first exchange between Athena and Telemachus clearly reveals the power an appeal to paternity has to motivate a young man. Following traditional guest/host protocol, Telemachus waits until after Athena has eaten to ask her why she has come to Ithaca and if she knew his father. Athena in turn asks Telemachus if he really is Odysseus' son, noting that the young man shares his father's looks and eyes (1.207-12). Athena's approach here is clever. She knows the answer to her question already, but by asserting that the son shares features with his father, she begins the process of awakening Telemachus' conciousness of a connection to his father; however, Telemachus' response (οὐ γάρ πώ τις ἐὸν γόνον αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω that 'no one really knows for certain who his father is' [1.214-6]) reveals the degree to which his father's absence and the suitors' presence have eroded his sense of self.

So Athena once again says with confidence that Telemachus will amount to something since he is the son of Penelope. This time Athena makes an assertion about his mother, a parent of whom Telemachus actually has first-hand knowledge. Athena's next step is to arouse his indignation at the current situation (before this time Telemachus appears to have mingled with the suitors without much complaint).[34] She then advises him to take an active role in his affairs, suggesting that, after he takes a trip to learn of his father's fate, he should consider how to destroy the suitors in his home (1.294-6).

Athena's strategy is hardly different from the examples listed above from the *Iliad*. Though here the goddess does not explicitly state that Telemachus is acting in a way inferior to his father, she realizes, perhaps, that Telemachus is too fragile for such a direct approach, and so instead she reinforces the connection that he has to his father and mother, hoping thereby to rouse him to action. Finally, after all these positive assertions, she does chide him, noting his large size, and she tells him to put aside his childish ways (1.296-302). It is at this point that she makes an appeal for him to follow the example of one of his own agemates, Orestes. Once again, Athena is fully aware that Telemachus will not need to follow Orestes' example, nevertheless she mentions his famous deed. This approach, advising Telemachus to prepare for events that will not happen, is one cleverly applied by Athena. Like Odysseus,

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[34] 2.303-20, 18.227-30 and 20.310-3.

she clearly knows how to mix falsehood and truth in such a way that it persuades and motivates.

Now Athena departs, and Telemachus rejoins the suitors. We have come full circle from the moment he first spied Athena. This sort of ring construction here is very effective: Telemachus finds himself once again in the midst of the suitors, but because of what has intervened he is no longer the same. The following action progresses rapidly, and Telemachus, if not matured, at least makes some attempts at asserting his role as 'man of the house'.

First, comes the important interaction between Telemachus, the suitors and his mother. Phemius, we are told, is singing of the baleful return of the Achaeans (1.325-7). The subject of this song is important. Not only does it once again bring up the missing Odysseus,[35] but it now does so in the context of epic song. Telemachus has just been told by Athena-Mentes about his father and how he looks like him, and now Phemius, too, sings of the events in which his father was enmeshed. This combination has a strong effect on Telemachus.[36] Men who listen to such songs not only enjoy the performance, but they are

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[35] Odysseus is not mentioned directly, but his absence is conspicuous and therefore a very felt presence, as Penelope's comments to Phemius and her complaint that the song reminds her too much of the husband she has lost (1.340-4) make clear.

[36] Pucci (1987) 195-208 discusses the bewitching power of Phemius' poetry and the effect it has on Telemachus. Pucci also makes many intriguing comments, here, about Penelope's (vs. Telemachus') sober 'reading' of Phemius' song, and the relationship of Homer's song to Phemius'.

encouraged by the recounting of such deeds to emulate and perhaps hope to outdo their predecessors. In this context, Telemachus makes his first attempt to take control of the house of Odysseus.

Penelope's plea to Phemius to put an end to the song is quickly cut short by her son (1.354-9):

> οὐ γὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς οἶος ἀπώλεσε νόστιμον ἦμαρ
> ἐν Τροίῃ, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι φῶτες ὄλοντο.
> ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε,
> ἱστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε
> ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι· μῦθος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει
> πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
>
> For Odysseus wasn't the only one to lose his homecoming at Troy; many other men perished too. But go to your room and see to your work, your web and shuttle, and tell your attendants to be about their tasks. Speech will be the concern of all the men, but especially to me. For the might in this house is mine.

We are immediately taken aback by the abruptness of this speech and the powerful tone with which Telemachus addresses Penelope, who, herself, is struck by the sudden change in her son (1.361-2). But some have seen in this attempt by Telemachus to assert his authority in the house a clumsy and awkward overreaching by an inexperienced young man.[37] The events

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[37]Compare Martin (1993) 236-7, who likens Telemachus' assertion of authority to Hector's overbold attempt to act the part of the warrior and to remind Andromache of her proper place and occupation (the household, childcare, and weaving) despite the good information, both tactical and practical, that she was offering (*Iliad* 6.490-493). Martin also remarks that the one man who utters a very similarly phrased utterance in the *Odyssey* does so in order to assert an authority that his wife appears to have usurped. This is the exchange between Alcinous, Echeneus, and Arete in the intermezzo (11.347-53, which end with these lines (352-3): πομπὴ δ'

that immediately follow further buttresses this interpretation. Telemachus calls upon the suitors to leave his house, but if they will not, he summons them to an assembly on the next day before the assembled Ithacans (1.368-80). When Antinous sarcastically says that he hopes Telemachus is never made king of Ithaca, Telemachus then sets out the praises of kingship (1.389-98).[38] This from a young man who until that very morning was content to sit among the suitors and think wishfully about his father's return.

The final and illuminating detail in this display of Telemachus' new found boldness is his response to Eurymachus' query about the identity and purpose of the recent visitor to the palace. He tells the suitors exactly what Athena told him, with one exception. He knows

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ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει / πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ δήμῳ). For a similar opinion of the tenor of Telemachus' statement, see West (1988) 120, who would rather see 1.356-9 excised since they are absent from some ancient editions and were athetized by Aristarchus. She also notes that these lines are similar to *Iliad* 6.490-3, Hector's admonition to Andromache to leave the matter of military tactics to men, and as such function too much like a quotation. In defense of these lines, Clark (2001) 337 makes the useful observation that Homeric poetry repeatedly reuses and recasts much traditional phraseology and that not all of these repeated lines can be taken as a quotation. He also asks this very perceptive question, which points out West's somewhat illogical approach to the lines in question (337): "If the passage from Book 1 of the *Odyssey* is a quotation of the passage in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, then is the passage from Book 11 of the *Odyssey* a quotation of Book 6 of the *Iliad* or Book 1 of the *Odyssey*?" While I agree with Clark's assessment of the genuineness of these lines, I differ with his view of the nature of Telemachus' words to Penelope. Following up on Martin's (1989) study of *mythos* and *epos* in the *Iliad*, Clark is inclined to think that Telemachus' assertion of authority here is positive, the attempt of a young man to claim his rightful place in the household through the appropriation of language designated as masculine. But Clark himself (352-3) also admits that Odyssean usage of *mythos* and *epos* is different from the Iliadic, and, as such, the results of his study are equivocal and allow for both readings of Telemachus' language here.

[38] This praise of kingship recalls the later and more charming interchange between Nausicaa and Odysseus (6.187-90), in which the former instructs the worldly wise veteran in the facts of life as handed down by Zeus.

that the visitor is not who he claims to be but an immortal god (1.420: ὣς φάτο Τηλέμαχος, φρεσὶ δ' ἀθανάτην θεὸν ἔγνω). Significantly, not only does Telemachus, unlike the suitors, have some insight into the true identity of Athena-Mentes, but he also hides this information from the suitors. By doing so, he has taken on, though it be an ever so small amount, some aspect of his father's *metis*.

We are, however, ultimately disappointed in this aspect of Telemachus. His only other employment of deception is when he keeps the fact of the beggar's identity from his mother and Eumaeus. Then there is also his failure to close firmly the door to the storeroom that houses the weapons that he hid from the suitors (22.151-9). This oversight on Telemachus' part allows the suitors a fighting chance and ultimately lends Odysseus full heroic honors since he is able to show that he can fight not only with the bow but also with the real hero's weapon, the spear. Telemachus' error here also characterizes the young man as still immature and lacking in his own father's foresight even near the poem's end.

On the day following Athena-Mentes' visit to Ithaca, Telemachus calls the first assembly to order, the first convened since Odysseus left for Troy (2.25-7). Despite Athena's attempts at making Telemachus more comely in appearance (2.12-3), the young man is disheartened at the results of this first assembly.[39] Athena-Mentor now appears before

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[39] Athena does the same for Odysseus at Phaeacia (8.18-23), but the results of his day in the *agora* and back in the palace are markedly different.

him (2.260-9) as he walks the beach alone. The sequence, throwing down the speaker's scepter, withdrawing from the assembly, and conversing with a goddess, is reminiscent of another and more famous scene: Achilles' quarrel with Agamemnon and his subsequent withdrawal to the sea strand in *Iliad* 1.245-6, 348-427. The two also share another feature, the tears shed in frustration and anger. Achilles, however, does not weep in the assembly, only afterwards when he is alone and later with his mother; Telemachus, on the other hand, bursts into tears during the assembly (2.80-1).[40] Perhaps this similarity is meant to be a comment on the marked difference between the young Achilles and the young Telemachus; the former had already sacked many a city when he was roughly Telemachus' age and could lay claim to the title of 'Best of the Achaeans' in warfare.[41]

Athena must now boost the young man's confidence and firm up his resolve once again. In her statements to Telemachus we find one of the clearest expressions of an idea already implicit in her earlier discussion, and one that is a commonplace in Greek literature throughout its history: the idea of progressive degeneration. It is present in the earliest surviving poetry: openly stated here in 2.270-80, in the *Iliad* (4.372ff., 5.800-1), and also in

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[40] Martin (1993) 235

[41] *Iliad* 9.438-41 shows that he was very young when Peleus sent him off to fight for Agamemnon (. . . σοὶ δὲ μ' ἔπεμπε γέρων ἱππηλάτα Πηλεὺς / ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε / <u>νήπιον οὔ πω εἰδόθ' ὁμοίου πολέμοιο / οὐδ' ἀγορέων</u>, ἵνα τ' ἄνδρες ἀριπρεπέες τελέθουσι).

Hesiod's didactic epic (*Op.* 106ff.).[42] Athena as Mentor tells Telemachus outright that most children are inferior to their father (2.276-7):

> παῦροι γάρ τοι παῖδες ὁμοῖοι πατρὶ πέλονται,
> οἱ πλέονες κακίους, παῦροι δέ τε πατρὸς ἀρείους
>
> For few sons are like their father, the majority worse, few better.

It is clear that she leaves room for the possibility that some few children may not only be as good as their father, but that some will also be even better. The *Iliad* is a poem devoted to one such son.[43] It is important, however, to remember the context of this statement, what Athena is attempting to accomplish. She wants to encourage Telemachus to give up the passive role that he has been playing and to take some decisive action concerning his father's whereabouts. Given Athena's consistent pattern,[44] it is fair to say that, though Athena leaves room for Telemachus either to equal his father or even surpass him, she does not literally entertain that idea. While the audience is certainly not aware of Telemachus' final outcome at this point, only one of those statements will apply to Telemachus: that children are often inferior to their parents. The events of the poem itself bear this sentiment out, for Telemachus in the end will be no match for his father and will simply take on the role of

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[42] See also Nestor's comments *Iliad* 1.259-74, 7.155-60.

[43] Odysseus, too, appears to be superior to his father. Compare also Sthenelus', son of Capaneus, assertion to Agamemnon, that he and Diomedes are better than their father's generation because they and their companions accomplished what their fathers could not, the sack of Thebes (4.403-10).

[44] She similarly sets Nausicaa on track for a marriage with Odysseus, and similarly dismisses her when she is no longer needed.

subordinate son. Nonetheless, what we should glean from this passage is the poet's emphasis on the past as a point of comparison with the present and the near certainty that each generation is less good than the one that preceded it.

We reviewed the above material in order to convey a sense of the importance of the past as a means of motivation for the present generation, even when that present generation has little or no hope of actually surpassing or even equalling the accomplishments of the heroes of the past. This implies, even though the poet believes that he and his audience live in a diminished age, that poetry still serves a valuable function: it can motivate each succeeding generation to emulate its ancestors in much the same way that Athena sets Telemachus in motion by reminding him of his patrimony. Heroic poetry certainly played such a role; Plutarch's statement that Alexander's tutor, Lysimachus, called himself Phoenix, Alexander Achilles, and Philip Peleus, is evidence enough (*vit. Alex.* 5.8.1-6, 8.2.1-6).[45]

The statements about the greatness of the past, how the heroes of old were far better than contemporary mortals, are voiced by representatives of the older generation. Nestor offers the most obvious example of this practice when he attempts to persuade Agamemnon and Achilles to listen to his advice; Nestor reminds them that he once fought men that were far superior to either of them (1.259-74). In the end, they do not heed his words of wisdom:

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[45] Plutarch goes on to say that Alexander used to keep a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow at night (*vit. Alex.* 8.2.1-6).

Agamemnon takes Briseis, and Achilles withdraws from battle in his rage over Agamemnon's treatment of himself. The recognition that one's ancestors were great not only ennobles one's current status (hence the emphasis on identifying oneself by a patronymic),[46] but this recognition is also a source of great anxiety, as the exchange between Agamemnon and Diomedes makes clear (4.365-418). The attitude toward the past, then, is a complex one with the young prideful of their lineage, yet conscious of the need to outdo their predecessors.[47]

We can now return to the ways in which the *Odyssey*'s father and son are linked together by the narrative. The first and foremost example is the trip that Telemachus makes at the instigation of Athena. As we already noted, the similarities in the father's and son's voyages are significant enough to suggest that these are not here by chance, but by design. The very fact that Telemachus takes a trip at all may also be considered a point in favor of this interpretation. The poet's choice to have him journey to Pylos and Sparta is an odd one. At a time when his home and family are in great danger, it would behoove him to stay put, especially if he wants to keep watch over his own possessions and to ensure his mother's loyalty, a point brought up by numerous characters: Eurycleia (2.363-70), Nestor (3.313-6), Penelope (4.707-10), Athena herself (15.10-42), and Eumaeus (14.178-82). Odysseus, too,

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[46] Compare, for example, Glaucus' lengthy description of his noble lineage to Diomedes (*Iliad* 6.145-211).

[47] For a discussion of intergenerational conflict and rivalry, see Querbach (1976) 55-64.

when he hears from Athena that Telemachus is in Sparta, is perturbed and raises this pertinent question (13.417-19):

> τίπτε τ' ἄρ' οὔ οἱ ἔειπες, ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πάντα ἰδυῖα;
> ἦ ἵνα που καὶ κεῖνος ἀλώμενος ἄλγεα πάσχῃ
> πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον, βίοτον δέ οἱ ἄλλοι ἔδωσι;
>
> You who know everything, why didn't you tell him? Or was it so that he might wander and suffer pain on the barren sea and that others devour his livelihood?

Despite the apparent illogicality, the poet gains some advantage from having Telemachus visit these venerable heroes: fill in the gaps since the war (a complement to the narrative of the *Iliad*), tell of the events of Agamemnon's death and Orestes' revenge, introduce motifs of the exotic (primarily in Menelaus' travels), explain the disastrous homecomings as a result of divine wrath, and show how it could take up to ten years for someone to make it home from the war.

Telemachus as the narratee of these stories is a sort of filter for the audience. We desire to hear these stories as much as Telemachus does, not only to hear the fate of Odysseus, Telemachus' reason for going in the first place, but of the returns of the remainder of the heroes. As the young son learns more about his father and the traits they share, so too do we, the audience, get our first glimpse of Odysseus, the real hero of the story.

The scope of Telemachus' trip is important here, too. The young man travels from a known point on the compass, to other known points, and returns home firmly fixed in the

geography of the visible world. The unexotic nature of this trip, contrasts with Odysseus' tales of his own wandering. Telemachus' trip is a purely human experience, one that men of Homer's audience might have taken or have known people who had. The young man encounters the heroic in words (stories) alone and not in deeds. Odysseus' travels, on the other hand, take him to the ends of the earth, beyond any mortals' ken.

Telemachus' trip, in broad outline, shares elements with his father's in the following ways. Both are started and assisted on their journeys by Athena, both are tempted to forget their homecoming, both encounter powerful women, both have to seek advice from venerable figures of the past, both are faced with the danger of death at the hands of their enemies. An examination of the specifics of each of these similarities will make clear not only how the two are similar, but, and more importantly, to what degree they are different.

Divine Assistance

In the first assembly of the gods, Athena asks Zeus for permission to send Odysseus on his way home. In the course of their conversation, it is decided that Hermes will be sent to start Odysseus in motion, but that Athena herself will go to Ithaca and get Telemachus to inquire after his father by taking a trip to Pylos and Sparta (1.80-95). The father and the son are linked, once again, in the second assembly of the gods, in which Athena reiterates the urgency of Odysseus' *nostos* and also notes the dangerous situation in which Telemachus

now finds himself because of the suitors' ambush at Asteris (5.7-27). The twin purposes of the first and second divine assembly, then, explicitly link the travels of Odysseus and Telemachus.

When Athena-Mentor suddenly leaves Nestor and Telemachus, the old man suddenly realizes that he had been entertaining Athena. He exclaims that Telemachus surely will not turn out too badly if he has divine assistance at such a young age (3.375-9):

> ὦ φίλος, οὔ σε ἔολπα κακὸν καὶ ἄναλκιν ἔσεσθαι,
> εἰ δή τοι νέῳ ὧδε θεοὶ πομπῆες ἕπονται.
> οὐ μὲν γάρ τις ὅδ' ἄλλος Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἐχόντων,
> ἀλλὰ Διὸς θυγάτηρ, ἀγελείη Τριτογένεια,
> ἥ τοι καὶ πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἐν Ἀργείοισιν ἐτίμα.
>
> Friend, I don't think that you will turn out to be base and helpless if the gods are your escort at such a young age. For of the gods who hold Olympus, this was none other than the daughter of Zeus, who drives the booty home, who also honored your good father among the Argives.

Once again the father and the son are explicitly linked here, but it is fair to say that Athena's relationship with Telemachus is of a very different nature than the one that she shares with Odysseus. A few examples will easily illustrate this point.

After Eumaeus leaves the farm to head back into town to let Penelope know that Telemachus has arrived, Athena beckons to Odysseus to come outside (16.159-62):

> στῆ δὲ κατ' ἀντίθυρον κλισίης Ὀδυσῆϊ φανεῖσα·
> <u>οὐδ' ἄρα Τηλέμαχος ἴδεν ἀντίον οὐδ' ἐνόησεν</u>, –
> <u>οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς</u>, -
> ἀλλ' Ὀδυσεύς τε κύνες τε ἴδον, καί ῥ' οὐχ ὑλάοντο

> She stood by the door to the hut, making herself visible to Odysseus. Telemachus neither saw her nor noticed her presence. For the gods do not appear openly to all men, but Odysseus and the dogs saw her, and they didn't bark.

Not only does Telemachus not see her, but the poet adds the important comment that the gods do not make themselves visible to all men. In other words, Telemachus is not in the inner circle, as Achilles and Odysseus certainly are.[48]

A still more remarkable passage is the exchange between Athena and her protégé upon his arrival in Ithaca. There Athena not only discloses her identity to Odysseus, but she actually compares herself with him, noting that he is as superior to other humans in *metis* as she is to the rest of the gods (13.296-9).[49]

Erukein and *Thelxis*

Temptation is another theme that both father and son share on their journeys.[50] For Telemachus these temptations can be put into two categories: the demands of *xenia* and the

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[48] Athena does appear to Telemachus in a dream (15.1-9), but it is not stated there what form if any she adopts. Given the fact that she does not appear openly to him in any other scene, it is unlikely that she revealed herself to him here as Athena; compare de Jong (2001) 363-4. Hoekstra (1898) 232, on the other hand, thinks Athena does appear in *propria persona*, but then he notes that it is odd that Telemachus does not act surprised. I would add that it would be peculiar for Athena to show herself to Telemachus here and yet not do so at Eumaeus' hut, particularly since no one else was there to see her besides father and son. Why also the need to be invisible to Telemachus at 19.31-46, if she had already shown herself in person to him earlier? Odysseus realizes that the light they see reflected on the ceiling and walls comes from Athena, who carries a lamp for them.

[49] For an insightful reading of this interaction and the possiblity that Odysseus actually excels even Athena in *metis*, see Clay (1983) 186-212.

[50] See, for example, Apthorp's (1980) 13-22 excellent discussion.

allure of storytelling. These can be further defined as introducing the themes of 'holding back' and 'bewitching', both of which are central to many of Odysseus' adventures.

The protocol of the guest-host relationship is something Telemachus follows as carefully as his two hosts Nestor and Menelaus; however, these two men, zealous as they are in the duty to entertain their guest, actually threaten Telemachus' timely *nostos* with their prolonged hospitality.[51] In the fourth book, before we leave Telemachus and Peisistratus at Sparta and move on to Odysseus, Menelaus invites Telemachus to remain in Sparta for eleven or twelve days (588). Telemachus says that he would stay for up to a year, but he insists that Menelaus not keep him from home as he currently is doing (594, 599: Ἀτρεΐδη, μὴ δή με πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἔρυκε . . . σὺ δέ με χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἐρύκεις).

Again, in the final scenes before Telemachus departs from Menelaus' house, we witness Telemachus insisting once again that he must leave for home now as the situation there is dire, and his goods are in danger (15.64-66, 86-91). Menelaus, then, talks at some length about the importance of the host not forcing a guest to remain beyond his wishes and, conversely, not forcing the guest to leave before he is ready (15.68-74):

> Τηλέμαχ', οὔ τί σ' ἐγώ γε πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἐρύξω
> ἰέμενον νόστοιο· νεμεσσῶμαι δὲ καὶ ἄλλῳ
> ἀνδρὶ ξεινοδόκῳ, ὅς κ' ἔξοχα μὲν φιλέῃσιν,
> ἔξοχα δ' ἐχθαίρῃσιν· ἀμείνω δ' αἴσιμα πάντα.

[51] Compare Reece (1993) 93-99 who suggests that this rather awkward departure scene, containing more and varied elements of traditional departure scenes, portrays Menelaus' excited and zealous attempts at keeping his guest in place.

ἶσόν τοι κακόν ἐσθ', ὅς τ' οὐκ ἐθέλοντα νέεσθαι
ξεῖνον ἐποτρύνῃ καὶ ὃς ἐσσύμενον κατερύκῃ.
χρὴ ξεῖνον παρεόντα φιλεῖν, ἐθέλοντα δὲ πέμπειν.

Telemachus, no way will I hold you back here, eager as you are for home, for a long time. I'd get angry at any host who hosts to excess or who mistreats his guests to extremes. All things proper is best. It is equally wrong to urge on a guest who does not want to go and to detain the guest who is in a hurry to leave. One must treat well a guest when he's present, and send him on his way when he wants to leave.

Immediately after uttering such sage advice, he somewhat paradoxically asks Telemachus if he would like to go immediately with him on a tour of Hellas and mid-Argos, filling their wagon with guest gifts. He assures Telemachus that no one would let them go away empty-handed (15. 80-5). Telemachus wisely, if belatedly, rejects the offer, reiterating his need to head home immediately.

Perhaps after having learned from his encounter with Menelaus, Telemachus avoids another possible delay on his trip home by asking Peisistratus to drop him at his ship instead of taking him back to Pylos (15.199-201):

μή με παρὲξ ἄγε νῆα, διοτρεφές, ἀλλὰ λίπ' αὐτοῦ,
μή μ' ὁ γέρων ἀέκοντα κατάσχῃ ὦ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
ἱέμενος φιλέειν· ἐμὲ δὲ χρεὼ θᾶσσον ἱκέσθαι

Don't drive me past the ship, Peisistratus, but leave me here, lest the old man hold me back against my will in his house, though I desire to go. I really need to go quickly.

Once again Telemachus is concerned about being 'held back' from his home. His anxiety is confirmed by Peisistratus' response (15.209-14):

εὖ γὰρ ἐγὼ τόδε οἶδα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν·

οἷος κείνου θυμὸς ὑπέρβιος, οὔ σε μεθήσει,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς καλέων δεῦρ' εἴσεται, οὐδέ ἑ φημι
ἆψ ἰέναι κενεόν· μάλα γὰρ κεχολώσεται ἔμπης.

For I know this well in my mind and heart, so over-bearing is his temper that he will not let you go, but he himself will come here and invite you back, nor do I think that he will return empty-handed; for he will be very angry nevertheless.

While both Menelaus and Nestor represent a real threat to Telemachus' timely homecoming because of their overzealous hospitality, Menelaus' stories represent Telemachus' second temptation. Telemachus says, in words very reminiscent of Alcinous' to Odysseus (11.362-76), that he could sit right there and listen to Menelaus for a whole year and no desire for his parents or home would seize him (4. 594-8):

Ἀτρεΐδη, μὴ δή με πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ' ἔρυκε.
καὶ γάρ κ' εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἐγὼ παρὰ σοί γ' ἀνεχοίμην
ἥμενος, οὐδέ κέ μ' οἶκου ἔλοι πόθος οὐδὲ τοκήων·
αἰνῶς γὰρ μύθοισιν ἔπεσσί τε σοῖσιν ἀκούων
τέρπομαι· ἀλλ' ἤδη μοι ἀνιάζουσιν ἑταῖροι

Son of Atreus, don't now keep me here for a long time. I'd gladly sit right here at your side for a year, nor would any longing for my home or my parents take hold of me, for I delight in hearing your stories and words exceedingly. But now my companions are getting impatient.

The word Telemachus uses here (*terpomai*) to describe his joy in listening appears frequently in descriptions of the pleasure derived from poetic performance.[52] We will see with Odysseus how the power of words has the potential not only to please and hold back but also to destroy.

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[52] 1.422-3; 4.17-8; 8.44-5, 91, 368, 429, etc.

Though Helen does not figure as prominently as someone like Agamemnon does, she is a powerful presence in Sparta, and, as such, has some part to play in detaining Telemachus there. The narrator, emphasizing her importance, dilates at length on her entrance and her retainers, enumerating the various accoutrements that they bring for their mistress (4.120-37). And she takes immediate charge when she appears, instantly identifying Telemachus as the son of Odysseus (4.138-46). And in the course of the meal, the narrator offers a lengthy story of the power and the provenance of the drug that Helen puts in their cups to kill pain (4.219-34). And, here too, before Helen begins her story, she enjoins the three men to sit and eat and listen to her words with pleasure (4.238-9: ἦ τοι νῦν δαίνυσθε καθήμενοι ἐν μεγάροισι / καὶ μύθοις τέρπεσθε, "Now, then, remain seated in the hall and dine, and take pleasure in story-telling"). Though her drugs seem merely to have had the effect of a soporific on Telemachus,[53] her presence and her stories, combined with those of Menelaus, prove a very seductive force for Telemachus, who in the end appears to have stayed in Sparta a lot longer than he had originally intended.[54]

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[53] His response to the stories is that they caused him more pain and that he wishes to go to sleep now (4.294-5). For a discussion of this passage and the effect these drugs may have had on Telemachus, see Clay (1994) 44.

[54] There has been much discussion generated about this topic, and opinions are varied. For a good review of the problem, scholarship, and bibliography on the topic, see Olson (1995) 91-119. I disagree, however, with Olson's interpretation of the facts; he claims that Telemachus stayed away from Ithaca for a total of only nine days. In his attempt to brush aside some very reasonable objections to such an interpretation (100-1 n. 24), Olson is forced to quibble over ambiguities. In one particular instance he overlooks a glaring fact: the problem of Telemachus' new found urgency in Sparta to get home quickly. Olson suggests that this comes from Telemachus' sudden realization that his goods in Ithaca are in danger of being lost to the suitors. I would agree

Odysseus, on the other hand, faces manifold temptations that endanger his and his men's homecoming: the lure of booty among the Cicones nearly costs his men their lives and, consequently, their *nostos* (9.39-61). The charms of the lotus plant (9.82-104) are said specifically to make whoever tastes of them forget his *nostos*.[55] The attractions of exploration and the expectation of a guest gift in Polyphemus' cave costs Odysseus still more men and almost his own life (9.106-564). Circe's drugs cause Odysseus' men to forget completely the return home (10.233-6).[56] These *pharmaka lugra* recall Helen's own special drugs (4.230: φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ μεμιγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρά). And the similarities between the experiences of father and son are here closer than they first appear. For just as

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with this interpretation if he had not been reminded (and probably already had been aware of beforehand) of this fact by Eurycleia (2.363-70) in very specific language (τίπτε δέ τοι, φίλε τέκνον, ἐνὶ φρεσὶ τοῦτο νόημα / ἔπλετο . . . / οἱ δέ τοι αὐτίκ' ἰόντι κακὰ φράσσονται ὀπίσσω, / ὥς κε δόλῳ φθίῃς, τάδε δ' αὐτοὶ πάντα δάσονται). I follow Shewan (1926) 31-7, Delebecque (1958) 18-41, Apthorp (1980) 1-22 (esp. 1-13), Reece (1993) 71-99, and de Jong's (2001) 362-4 interpretation that Telemachus actually stays in Sparta for a much longer time, for thirty-eight days in Delebecque's reckoning. I would also argue that, on the level of narrative time alone (ten books intervene before we see Telemachus again), the poet intentionally creates the impression that Telemachus has been gone from Ithaca far too long. If this impression were not desired, the poet could easily have put Telemachus back in Ithaca before turning to the story of Odysseus; however, by postponing the story of Telemachus' return, and synchronizing it with Odysseus' arrival in Ithaca, the narrative is more complex and satisfyingly interwoven. The father's and the son's trips are also more closely linked thereby. Moreover, why should the narrator have Athena rouse Telemachus from Sparta with such urgency (15.1-42) if he has only been there for eight days?

[55] τῶν δ' ὅς τις λωτοῖο φάγοι μελιηδέα καρπόν, / οὐκέτ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι πάλιν ἤθελεν οὐδὲ νέεσθαι, / ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ βούλοντο μετ' ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισι / λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν <u>νόστου τε λαθέσθαι</u>.

[56] εἶσεν δ' εἰσαγαγοῦσα κατὰ κλισμούς τε θρόνους τε, / ἐν δέ σφιν τυρόν τε καὶ ἄλφιτα καὶ μέλι χλωρὸν / οἴνῳ Πραμνείῳ ἐκύκα· ἀνέμισγε δὲ σίτῳ / <u>φάρμακα λύγρ', ἵνα πάγχυ λαθοίατο πατρίδος αἴης</u>.

Telemachus seems not to have been affected by Helen's 'good' drug but neverthless spent more time than he intended in Sparta, so, too, does Odysseus ultimately succumb to Circe. Despite Odysseus' cleverness and his ability, with the help of Hermes, to overcome Circe's drugs and power, his men have to remind him a whole year later that they need to be on their way home (10.471-4).[57] The seduction of the Sirens' song, which bewitches all who hear it (αἵ ῥά τε πάντας / ἀνθρώπους θέλγουσιν: 12.39-40), would have lured a lesser man to his death (12.39-54, 177-200). Significantly, the order of their songs suggests that it is the stories of Troy that would most likely entice Odysseus, and it is this same allure of stories of the past that tempted Telemachus in Sparta. Calypso's offer to Odysseus to share her immortality and to enjoy her ageless beauty (5.135-6, 23.334-6) distracts him for some time at least.[58] She, more than any other character, exemplifies the act of 'holding back' Odysseus from his homecoming.[59] The penultimate challenge to Odysseus' successful return home is his stay in Phaeacia. Alcinous, too, it seems wants to make him his own, offering him land and his daughter as wife (7.313-14). Odysseus, like Telemachus in Sparta, says to his host on one occasion that he would be willing to stay in Phaeacia for an entire year if he could

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[57] καὶ τότε μ' ἐκκαλέσαντες ἔφαν ἐρίηρες ἑταῖροι / δαιμόνι', ἤδη νῦν μιμνήσκεο πατρίδος αἴης.

[58] That he was once enamored of Calypso and perhaps forgot for a while his homecoming is hinted at with such lines as these: οὐδέ ποτ' ὄσσε / δακρυόφιν τέρσοντο, κατείβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν / νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἤνδανε νύμφη.

[59] She is said both to bewitch and to hold Odysseus back on numerous occasions; 1.55-7 is the most explicitly stated example: τοῦ θυγάτηρ δύστηνον ὀδυρόμενον κατερύκει, / αἰεὶ δὲ μαλακοῖσι καὶ αἱμυλίοισι λόγοισι / θέλγει, ὅπως Ἰθάκης ἐπιλήσεται.

return home with more goods (11.358-61). Ultimately, despite Alcinous' offer of marriage and a plethora of gifts, Odysseus' insistence on returning home and seeing his wife, combined with his gifts as a story-teller, wins him a safe escort home.

Powerful women

Strong women are a constant theme of the *Odyssey*. The focus on women in relation to men in this poem emphasizes the ambivalent nature of women. While Telemachus is staying with Menelaus, for instance, he has the opportunity to spend time with Helen, the renowned cause of the Trojan war and, therefore, indirectly the cause of Odysseus' long absence. She appears to be the real power in the house, anticipating Menelaus' thoughts and offering advice when he is stumped. For example, she correctly identifies Telemachus while her husband is still sitting and wondering who this stranger is (4.120-46). And when Menelaus is confounded by Peisistratus' request for an interpretation of the bird sign, Helen steps boldly forward and offers her explanation without hesitation (15.167-8). She also knows the arts of *pharmakeia*, a skill that is the epitome of ambiguity, which perhaps symbolizes her ambiguous position as the most beautiful woman and the most baleful to man.[60]

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[60] Helen is also a mortal parallel to the immortal Circe who plies her drugs and beauty to snare Odysseus and his men.

In addition to Helen, however, there is at least one more woman who is a potential obstacle to Telemachus' voyage. That is his old nurse Eurycleia. When we first see the two interact, it is apparent that she has a very close and maternal relationship with Telemachus. After Athena's first visit, after all the excitement that ensues when Telemachus makes his first awkward attempts at asserting his authority in his house, the poet ends the scene quietly (1.439-42):

> ἡ μὲν τὸν πτύξασα καὶ ἀσκήσασα χιτῶνα,
> πασσάλῳ ἀγκρεμάσασα παρὰ τρητοῖσι λέχεσσι,
> βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐκ θαλάμοιο, θύρην δ' ἐπέρυσσε κορώνῃ
> ἀργυρέῃ, ἐπὶ δὲ κληῖδ' ἐτάνυσσεν ἱμάντι
>
> She folded and smoothed out his tunic, hanging it on a peg beside his corded bed. She went to go from his bedroom, pulled his door shut with the silver handle, and locked it.

These lines are a powerful comment on the young man's actual authority, and his dependence upon his nurse, despite the heady events of the day. Surely our poet delivered these lines with a smile. It is surprising, then, when Telemachus actually overrides her sensible objections to his trip to Pylos and Sparta. She reasonably appeals to his father's loss at sea, and the uselessness of such an enterprise at this time, especially when his possessions are in danger of being divided up by the suitors and his life under possible threat upon his return (2.363-70).

Unlike his son, Odysseus is threatened in some way by every women he meets: Circe first with drugs and then with forgetfullness (9.31-2, 10.281-301,316-35, 472-4), the

Laestrygonian princess and queen with death (10.104-14), Calypso with her promise of immortality (5.202-13), Nausicaa with marriage (7.308-15),[61] and Arete with the power to deny his request for escort home (6.310-5).

Threats to life from the Suitors

The fear of landing among hostile peoples and the danger that they represent is a common theme in Odysseus' travels (6.119-21, 9.174-5, 13.200-2). Odysseus' fears are justified by the actual threats of death he faces on his travels: Cicones, Cyclops, Laestrygonians, suitors. We hear fairly early in the narrative that the suitors have plans to kill Telemachus (4.663-72), a real threat and one that he and others rightly fear. Father and son share this same last threat. Telemachus' escape from this singular danger to his life mirrors in a small way his father's eventual escape from the threat of the suitors. Telemachus escapes by avoiding their trap, Odysseus by trapping them.

Sources of information

There are also similarities in the way father and son obtain vital information. Both must seek information from unerring sources. Nestor is described by Athena-Mentor as a

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[61] He must skillfully flatter her on the beach to obtain an entrée with the king, and yet at court he has to diplomatically reject the offer of marriage to Nausicaa and also explain the fact that he is wearing clothes that Nausicaa has just been washing at the beach.

man who will not tell a lie (3.19-20). Menelaus, too, is said to speak only the truth (3.327-8). Circe informs Odysseus that Teiresias, alone among the dead, still has the capacity of clear thinking (10.490-5). And Teiresias tells Odysseus to stand back from the trench so that he can speak unerringly to him (11.96). Both father and son are also initially reluctant about their need to obtain information from such awe-inspiring sources. Telemachus, for example, is hesitant and afraid to approach Nestor at first (3.21-4), and, a little later, when he asks Nestor for the details about Agamemnon's death, Telemachus says that Nestor seems like an immortal to him (3.246). Likewise, at Menelaus' palace Telemachus quietly whispers in awe (σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα) to Peisitratus that this must be what Zeus' house is like (4.71-5). And Menelaus' house is described by the narrator as a divine building (4.43 θεῖον δόμον). Odysseus, of course, is greatly disturbed by the news that he must travel to Hades to consult Teiresias (10.496-500), and when he is there, he is rightly filled with fear of his surroundings as he awaits the arrival of the seer (11.42-50).

There is still another feature that ties the two men's trips and adventures: that is the first *Nekyia*. Odysseus' exploits abroad culminate in this trip to the underworld. There he accomplishes a superhuman feat, one shared only by two other heroes in history (Sisyphus and Heracles, both of whom he meets in Hades). Both Teiresias (11.92-4), Anticleia (11.155-62), Achilles (11.473-6), Heracles (11.617-26), and Circe (12.21-2) comment on the extraordinary nature of this particular voyage. Odysseus not only consults Teiresias (the

purpose for his trip), but also encounters his mother, fellow soldiers from the Trojan war, heroines and heroes of old. In other words his trip is not only a quest for vital information but also a sort of grand review of the past, both of the mortal world (heroes and heroines) and of semi-divine/divine villains and heroes. This review invites us to evaluate Odysseus and see how he fares in comparison with the past.

Telemachus' trip to the Peloponnese share another similarity with Odysseus' to Hades. Not only do both scenes allow the poet to fill in gaps from the *nostoi* of the other heroes from the Trojan War, but Telemachus' trip to Nestor and Menelaus, a search for information too, constitutes a trip to the past, to the world of the Trojan heroes. Both Nestor and Menelaus are viewed as gods by their young guests (3.244-6, 4.71-5), extraordinary men that represent the great war and, in the case of Nestor, several previous generations of men. While in the Peloponnese Telemachus hears some of these stories of the past, discovers vital information about his father, and learns additional facts that he did not go there to discover, such as the story of the death of Agamemnon and Orestes' revenge. This is the same pattern followed in Odysseus' voyage to Hades, where he consults Teiresias first and then spends a great deal of time learning about the heroes and heroines of the past.[62] Thus, Telemachus' trip can be seen as a symbolic *Nekyia* which, of course, pales in comparison with Odysseus'.

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[62] Menelaus' conversation with Proteus follows a similar trajectory. Sauzeau (2003) 90-1 notes that Menelaus' trip to Egypt has been previously suggested to be an equivalent to the underworld by Powell (1970) 420. Powell

Recent work done by Pierre Sauzeau bolsters this interpretation.[63] He suggests that Pylos was, in Homer's day, thought to be aligned with the infernal regions. Other work, drawing on names from the Linear B tables discovered in Pylos, also suggests that Pylos was connected in the minds of the Greeks of the archaic period with the land of the dead.[64] Sauzeau and Bernard Sergent also adduce the curious passage in the *Iliad* (5.395-7) which mentions Hades in Pylos among the corpses (ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι),[65] and the name of Pylos itself (*pyl-*) may have brought with it images of Hades, whose gates (*pylai*) are referred to frequently.[66]

A connection with the underworld is certainly intriguing and would strengthen the argument that Telemachus' trip to Pylos and Sparta corresponds to Odysseus' voyage to Hades; however, it is not necessary for the argument's validity that this absolutely be the case. It is quite clear that Telemachus' trip to both Nestor and Menelaus functions in much the

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comments on the similarity between the death and burial of Elpenor and the loss of Menelaus' helmsman Phrontis, and he suggests (420) that each death is "somehow integral to the descent to the other world."

[63] Sauzeau (2003) 77-102 sees in Telemachus' trip to Pylos a rite of passage, and the symbolic overtones of Hades suggested by Pylos represent Telemachus' encounter with death and his return to life and home through the help of a hero (Nestor) whose name is connected etymologically (82-3) with the notion of return (*nostos*).

[64] Sergent (1986) 5-39, especially 6-7, describes how, since no place had been identified with certainty as Homer's Pylos, the view that Pylos was a mythical entrance to the underworld held sway among scholars in the 19th century. After the discovery of a 'real' Pylos at Ano Englianos, however, this view of Pylos quickly fell out of favor. Yet, Sergent argues, there is sufficient evidence in place and personal names in the Linear B tablets and from other Indo-European parallels (31-3) that supports the original idea that Pylos was once associated with Hades in Mycenean and even archaic Greece.

[65] Sergent (1986) 7-9 and Sauzeau (2003) 80-83.

[66] Sergent (1986) 17-8 and Sauzeau (2003) 80-1.

same way as Odysseus', who is also sent to question a venerable figure who holds unerring information that is vital for his future plans with regard to his home, his mother, and her suitors.

More points of comparison

When Menelaus was deprived of Helen, a pan-Hellenic army was recruited to retrieve her and to take vengeance on the Trojans. Though the suitors note that Telemachus might seek military aid from Nestor or Menelaus (2.325-7), this help never materializes and the topic is never broached by Telemachus.[67] This is odd, since Menelaus repeatedly emphasizes the degree to which Odysseus was his greatest benefactor in the war, for whom he would even vacate one of the neighboring cities to inhabit as his own (4.171-82). After such a strong declaration of devotion, it is surprising that Menelaus does not once mention the possibility of sending help to Ithaca. He merely says that the suitors have made a grave mistake by wooing such a powerful man's wife, and he ends with the wish that Odysseus return and destroy the suitors (4.333-46). Now the poet, of course, can not have had Nestor or Menelaus seriously entertain and then refuse such an idea, an unthinkable move for these

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[67] Surprisingly, the idea is mentioned in passing by Nestor in 3.216-7 (τίς δ' οἶδ' εἴ κέ ποτέ σφι βίας ἀποτείσεται ἐλθών, / ἢ ὅ γε μοῦνος ἐὼν ἢ καὶ σύμπαντες Ἀχαιοί;). And Peisistratus, when he first announces Telemachus to Menelaus, notes that his friend is in need of some advice or some action (4.163: ὄφρα οἱ ἤ τι ἔπος ὑποθήεαι ἠέ τι ἔργον).

once courageous heroes. Yet both Menelaus and Nestor appear to act as if there is nothing to do but hope that Odysseus returns.

That the suitors themselves, however, discuss Telemachus' mustering of a pan-Achaean army is telling. This is not the only time the suitors air ideas left unpursued by Telemachus. In the passage mentioned above (2.325-30), the suitors are also said to wonder whether Telemachus may go to Ephyra to obtain poison to kill them by mixing it in their wine. If this idea has occurred to the suitors, presumably it could also have occurred to Telemachus. Perhaps the poet's immediate concern is to show the motivation behind the suitors' later decision to kill Telemachus (4.663-74): they are just starting to see him as a possible threat. This may be a partial explanation, but why bring up matters more than once that reveal a possible solution to the present crisis, solutions which, left uninvestigated by Telemachus, reveal his shortcomings vis-à-vis Odysseus? There is still another interpretation available that gives our poet credit for the ability to see beyond the immediate scene when introducing details into the narrative.

We must remember that this is not the first time that Ephyra and poison have been mentioned. When Athena-Mentes informed Telemachus of her previous relationship with Odysseus, she recalled that her father had given this poison to Odysseus to use on his arrows (1.254-65). The fact that Ephyra and the poison are mentioned again, and within a relatively short distance, is remarkable. Again, one might object that poisoning the suitors would not

be very heroic, but, when one considers that Odysseus himself was content to use poisonous arrows, the objection loses force. Odysseus is not your typical hero; his son who, according to some, is supposed to be developing into a clever young man like his father, should follow suit. One could also argue that it was not the poet's intent here to write a poem in which Telemachus does away with the suitors himself. It is true that our story would then be quite a different one, but once again, just as with the tacit rejection of a pan-Hellenic army, the mere fact that this possibility is mentioned must be explained. It is not enough to say that the poet is only interested here in characterizing the wiles of Odysseus, an argument that would be stronger had Ephyra been mentioned only one time. My answer is twofold: 1) Telemachus is being compared with his father in the matter of the poison; and 2) that Nestor's and Menelaus' failure to offer military aid, or any help for that matter, is an intentional contrast between the times of the Trojan War and the realities of the post-heroic world.

Telemachus as we have seen already, is not only young and inexperienced, but he also fails to resemble his father both in the degree of his cunning and daring. And Telemachus' youth, apparently, is no excuse as we saw already in the few enlightening stories about Odysseus' young adulthood. While Odysseus is not only capable but willing to use less than honorable means to achieve his goals, evidence for which is rife in the Apologue and in his Cretan tales,[68] Telemachus, though given the hint that such a poison was

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[68] Compare also the *Doloneia*.

available, and one that the suitors too were aware of, does not even consider such a tack.[69] He is not Telemachus *polytropos*, but Telemachus *pepnymenos*, a sober and cautious young man, whose main function is to present a contrast to his father's polytropic nature.

While Telemachus is certainly inferior to his father, Nestor[70] and Menelaus do not fare well by comparison either. They primarily fall short when compared with their own previous behavior. These were men who could lead warriors to another land to defend their own honor and, importantly, for the sake of a woman. Penelope's situation, though certainly different from Helen's, is really a more just cause for aid. She, unlike Helen, is innocent of any infidelity, yet she is being forced to remarry against her will, while her suitors are mistreating her son and household. What fitter cause for rallying troops and going to war? This thought may have entered the mind of Homer's audience when they first heard of Telemachus' proposed trip, but it certainly did not escape their notice when the suitors in the courtyard of Odysseus' house discuss this very possibility as a motive for Telemachus' trip (2.325-7). And this further strengthens the argument that Telemachus' trip to the Peloponnese is really a mini-*Nekyia*. These heroes from the past are now retired, no longer

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[69] Certainly, when Athena first broaches the topic of the poison that her own father had given to Odysseus, Telemachus might have paid more attention and, if he were really like his father, he would at least have inquired into the possibility of getting some for himself.

[70] Nestor's prayer to Athena, when he learns it is she who has been accompanying Telemachus, sums up the help he will provide Telemachus. He has just heard how the young man is beset by suitors, but he prays for *kleos* for himself, his children and his wife (3.380-4) with no mention of Telemachus' plight.

efficacious, men who, Siren-like, merely recall past events and enchant the young men with their recollections, but are themselves now incapable of action.

There remains yet another indicator within the same episode discussed above (2.324-36) that the poet intends his audience to hear these statements by the suitors as an invitation to compare Telemachus and Odysseus. While the first anonymous suitor expresses his concern that Telemachus might use this trip to garner support in Pylos or Sparta or even obtain poison from Ephyra to use against them, a second suitor takes the opposite approach, suggesting that Telemachus' proposed voyage may be the best thing for them since who knows, perhaps the young man will suffer the same fate as his father (332-3):

> τίς δ' οἶδ', εἴ κε καὶ αὐτὸς ἰὼν κοίλης ἐπὶ νηὸς
> τῆλε φίλων ἀπόληται ἀλώμενος ὥς περ Ὀδυσσεύς;
>
> Who knows whether he himself, too, will board the hollow ships and perish, wandering far from his family just as Odysseus did?

The anonymous suitor finishes with the hope that they all will be able to divide up his property evenly among themselves. While this sentiment is surely meant to be damaging to the suitors and is the first indication that they are not merely misguided youths but have designs on more than marriage; nevertheless, this clear statement of the paired fates of father and son links the two voyages and individuals, and necessarily draws a contrast between the two.

References to the end of age of heroes

Over the course of Odysseus' travels, we encounter another element that reiterates the difference between the past and present: the relationship that men have with the gods. In the first *Nekyia*, we hear of heroes of old who certainly were greater than Odysseus' peers, and some of these even vied with the gods (11.572-600). And the heroes of the Trojan war that we meet were either direct descendants of gods themselves or openly favored by the gods as they performed super-human feats of strength and courage. As for the living men that Odysseus meets, some share this affinity with the divine that seems the prerogative only of heroes. At the poem's outset we hear that Poseidon is absent from the divine council because he is visiting the Ethiopians who are offering him up a hecatomb (1.21ff.). This brief mention of Poseidon surely sets out from the poem's very beginning the vast distances that our hero will wander, from one edge of the world to the other;[71] the scene also reminds us that the Ethiopians are an isolated people, much like the god who is visiting them. Line 1.26 (ἔνθ' ὅ γε τέρπετο δαιτὶ παρήμενος) implies that Poseidon is visibly present at the banquet.[72] Furthermore, the Ethiopians, as they are characterized here, live at the ends of the world, and are the furthest of men (1.22-6). Their liminality suggests their special status, a

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[71] The Ethiopians, like Calypso and later the Phaeacians, function as boundary markers for our poet: they inhabit the lands of the extreme west and east.

[72] Compare also *Iliad* 1.423-5 in which Thetis informs Achilles that Zeus and the all the other gods have gone to spend eleven days with the Ethiopians.

trait shared also by the Phaeacians, who appear to live in the far west. But more importantly, since they are super-human, they share an additional feature with the Ethiopians: the gods openly walk among them. This Alcinous makes very clear, when he notes that it would be odd for Odysseus to be a god in disguise since the gods are not wont to appear in disguise among them (7.199-206).

Alcinous' comment draws attention to the fact that such a face to face relationship with the gods is unusual elsewhere among men. We hear often from Ithaca and elsewhere how hard it is actually to see a god in person. The suitors even comment on this aspect of the gods (17.483-7):[73]

> Ἀντίνο', οὐ μὲν κάλ' ἔβαλες δύστηνον ἀλήτην.
> οὐλόμεν', εἰ δή πού τις ἐπουράνιος θεός ἐστι·
> καί τε θεοὶ ξείνοισιν ἐοικότες ἀλλοδαποῖσι,
> παντοῖοι τελέθοντες, ἐπιστρωφῶσι πόληας,
> ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες.
>
> Antinous, you didn't do right to hit that wretched wanderer. You're done for, if he's some god come down from the sky. The gods take on the guise of foreign men, all sorts and types, and they wander among their cities, taking note of their lawlessness and also of their good order.

In fact, Odysseus and Menelaus alone in our poem actually converse with lesser gods, and Odysseus is the only one to speak face to face with a god of the stature of Athena. What

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[73] The narrator's comment that the gods know each other on sight (5.79: οὐ γάρ τ' ἀγνῶτες θεοὶ ἀλλήλοισι πέλονται) only makes sense as an explanation if this is not the case between gods and men. Cf. also 16.160-2: οὐδ' ἄρα Τηλέμαχος ἴδεν ἀντίον οὐδ' ἐνόησεν, – / <u>οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς</u>, – / ἀλλ' Ὀδυσεύς τε κύνες τε ἴδον, καί ῥ' οὐχ ὑλάοντο.

does all this have to do with the end of the age of heroes? As the exploits of the heroes are qualitatively superior to those of Telemachus' age, so too do the heroes have access to the divine that is neither shared by their offspring's generation nor by the poet's audience.[74] The fact that liminal peoples, not necessarily heroic or strictly human, for that matter, enjoy this privilege, only emphasizes this difference. These exceptional people are now cut off from our existence and our experiences.

Thus in the poem we have a stratification of layers of existence vis-à-vis the gods: 1) giants/ancient heroes/ancient villains (whom the god fought or fostered), 2) Phaeacians/Ethiopians/ (with whom the gods feast) 3) Trojan heroes (to some of whom the gods revealed themselves, and some they fostered and punished), 4) contemporary mortals (to whom the gods never appear directly, but appear via bird signs, omens, and prophecies). Hades contains all the former heroes and villains, the Phaeacians become inaccessible, the Ethiopians, practically speaking, are inaccessible, and the heroes have all faded away.

The single most dramatic and explicit embodiment of the gap between the age of heroes and that of the suitors in the *Odyssey* is represented by Odysseus' bow. This is the *pons asinorum* of their time, the feat that literally separates the man from the boys. When the

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[74] Compare, too, Menelaus' conversation with Eidothea and Proteus. Helen also has prophetic insight (15.172-8), and Nestor instantaneously and correctly divines that the god guiding Telemachus is Athena (3.375-9). There are, of course, numerous instances in the *Iliad* in which the gods appear directly to the heroes or they easily see through the gods' disguise (1.357ff., 3.395ff., 5.330ff., 5.815ff., etc.). The most famous encounter between god and man in the *Iliad* is Athena's appearance to Achilles in 1.194-221.

suitors fail to string Odysseus' bow, Eurymachus bemoans this sad fate. His words are most instructive. He repeatedly laments the fact that he and his peers are so far inferior to Odysseus that they can not even string the bow, let alone attempt to shoot an arrow from it (21.249-55). He also states his concern that all of them will be a shame to later generations (21.320-9). This statement combines the dual aspect of looking to the past as a means of self-definition and projecting an image of oneself from the present that others will emulate in the future. In the end, however, the suitors are ultimately the object of shame, causing themselves to be remembered in a song of blame, like Clytemnestra's στυγερὴ ἀοιδή and χαλεπὴ φῆμις.

Even Telemachus' actions here are illuminating. He tries three times to string the bow and three times he fails (21.124-7). On the fourth pull, he would have achieved his goal, but his father's nod of disapproval makes him feign failure (21.128-9). In this respect, he proves himself physically superior to the suitors, with the exception of Antinous,[75] but we hardly believe that Telemachus would have been able to draw back an arrow, hold it steadily enough, and shoot it through the ax heads. Furthermore, it is clear that this test requires his

[75] We wonder if Antinous, who never has the chance to string the bow, may not have been able to perform as well as Telemachus at this competition. Antinous is certainly concerned about it, and by suggesting that they put off the competition to the next day he is trying to buy time (21.257-68).

entire strength, but his father strings it as easily as a bard strings his lyre, and he does all this while sitting down (21.404-23).[76]

The second *Nekyia* (24.1-204), as well as the first, is important for our argument. In both underworld scenes, we see and hear from heroes of the past. In the final *Nekyia*, the narrator reintroduces some of the same heroes from the Trojan war featured in the first *Nekyia* and the souls of the recently deceased suitors. Where scenes occur in a poem often mean as much or more than what they actually say or show. This scene is no different. As the first *Nekyia* firmly defines Odysseus with respect to the past, so the second *Nekyia* defines Odysseus and his peers with respect to the present generation. For it is now, in Book 24, that we have nearly come to the end of the poem. Our hero has defeated his young enemies and is preparing for the final conflict. The first *Nekyia*'s panel of heroes gave us a look into the remote past, with examples of both good and bad behavior, both male and female. Now, too, the most important heroes from the Trojan War return once again to signal the end of the performance. The scene functions much like an encore in theatre,[77] and

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[76] Again, that Telemachus is actually able to string the bow characterizes him positively as the son of Odysseus, but the degree to which his father's strength outstrips him is highlighted in this scene. One could object that this is an unfair comparison, a young Telemachus vs. a mature Odysseus, but the exploits of Odysseus as a young man (discussed above) argue against such a characterization.

[77] For a similar view, see Martin (1993) 240.

in this underworld episode, our hero is represented as outshining even the great Agamemnon and Achilles.[78]

We might expect, given the strong Iliadic atmosphere that is recalled here by the second *Nekyia*, that there would be some sort of Iliadic battle to follow; the poet surely uses this scene to create a sense of the danger and excitement that is to come in the combat between Odysseus and the suitors' parents and relatives. The entire final section of the poem beginning with the *Nekyia* and ending with Athena's intervention is rife with Iliadic motifs, imagery, details.[79] But the battle itself is hardly of epic proportions and hardly fulfills the expectations created by the scenes preceding it. The final battle is somewhat dissapointing. Laertes' one-kill *aristeia* looks heroic, but the enemy is quickly made to scatter by Athena. Odysseus pursues the enemy despite Athena's warning and is only stopped from killing all

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[78] See Chapter Two for a discussion of this aspect of the second *Nekyia*.

[79] Scenes of arming (22.113-15, 122-5), drawing swords (22.88-93), throwing spears (22.252-286), and vaunting over a fallen enemy (22.287-91). At 22.93-4, during the *mnesterophonia*, we find ὤμων μεσσηγύς, διὰ δὲ στήθεσφιν ἔλασσε· / δούπησεν δὲ πεσών, χθόνα δ' ἤλασε παντὶ μετώπῳ, the first line of which occurs four times in battle scenes in the *Iliad* (5.41, 57; 8.259; 11.448) and one time with a different ending (16.807); and similarly at 24.524-6 (battle with Ithacans) we see καὶ βάλεν Εὐπείθεα κόρυθος διὰ χαλκοπαρήου. / ἡ δ' οὐκ ἔγχος ἔρυτο, διαπρὸ δὲ εἴσατο χαλκός· / δούπησεν δὲ πεσών, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε' ἐπ' αὐτῷ; we find 525 twice in the *Iliad*; 526 occurs six times in the *Iliad*, the first half of which (δούπησεν δὲ πεσών) occurs thirteen times. There are numerous other occurences of lines and half lines that also appear in the *Iliad*; for example, the second half of 22.82 appears four times in the *Iliad*. One might object that there is no real reason to connect these lines with the *Iliad* since the language of battle belongs to a long epic tradition, to which the *Odyssey* belongs and is making free use of here. But given the numerous references to the Trojan War in this poem, and the fact that Athena-Mentes goads on Odysseus in the *mnesterophonia* by reminding him specifically of the nine years war at Troy (22.226-35), it is highly unlikely that no reference to the *Iliad* is being made here.

his *own* people by Zeus' thunderbolt and Athena's second admonition. What is not Iliadic is the opposition, the townsmen of Ithaca. They are not heroes, they did not go off to the Trojan war, they are more akin to the poet's audience than to the heroes. And thus the poem ends on a truly disturbing note: a hero returns home only to come dangerously close to destroying his own people.[80]

Conclusion

We have shown, then, the many ways that Telemachus' trip to Pylos and Sparta mirror his father's wanderings, and we have also pointed out those aspects of the poem that make reference to a diminished age. We have also discussed some of the differences between Telemachus and Odysseus. We have now to review those differences and to speculate as to what they might mean.

While Telemachus' trip is short and remains entirely in the 'real' world, Odysseus' is lengthy and takes in all horizons. Telemachus encounters temptation, but his temptations are limited to the allure of stories and the pleasures of *xenia*. Odysseus' temptations test the very mettle of the hero and constantly threaten his return home. Telemachus enjoys the protection and guidance of Athena, while Odysseus converses with her face to face. While Telemachus may not, according to Athena, fall entirely short of Odysseus and Penelope, Odysseus is

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[80] For more on the tactic of ending the *Odyssey* in this way, see the discussion in chapter three.

called by the goddess herself a match for the gods in his wit, and as far above the rest of mortals in his *metis* and *doloi* as she is above the other gods. Telemachus travels in relative safety, with a goddess to guide him, to consult two old men from nearby towns; Odysseus journeys to Hades, consults the seer Teiresias, converses with heroes and heroines from the past, and is compared favorably to the great Heracles. Telemachus, with the greatest of difficulty, can string Odysseus' bow, and the suitors fail to accomplish even this; Odysseus himself strings the weapon with consummate skill and the greatest of ease. In sum, the differences are both quantitative and qualitative.

These differences suggest that Telemachus, though he shares some of his father's characteristics, and though he certainly becomes capable of fighting beside his father,[81] is no Odysseus. The suitors and their generation of young men are more like us than Odysseus. When we see, via the poet's special vision, the gods arrayed against the suitors who are blind to the divine anger that they have aroused, we see in their situation our own. That is, the suitors, like the audience, have no insight or vision into the workings of the divine. Nowhere is this division between the age of heroes and the present diminished age more aptly depicted than in the final verses of our poem. There Odysseus destroys with ease all opposition and the people, no match for an Iliadic hero, flee in fear. More importantly still, Athena, who is

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[81] So, too, is the cowherd Philoetius. Eumaeus does also, but we eventually learn that he is a king's scion.

said to make peace between both parties, does so not openly as a powerful goddess but in the guise of Mentor, a mere human being (24.546-8):

> ὅρκια δ' αὖ κατόπισθε μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε
> Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη, κούρη Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
> Μέντορι εἰδομένη ἠμεν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ αὐδήν
>
> And then afterwards she made pacts between them, Pallas Athena, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, like Mentor in form and voice.

The poem, then, ends quietly yet firmly in a time we all know, a time when the gods no longer openly mingle with men. And we are reminded that now it is only the poet who, through the aid of the Muses, has access to the divine machinery of the universe. One may object that the gods often disguise themselves elsewhere in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and so this ending does not emphasize the withdrawal of gods from men. Yet in the former poem, the gods are both more openly and secretly involved in man's affairs; in the latter, the gods appear openly only to a much smaller number of individuals, and all of these people (Ethiopians and Phaeacians), by the poem's end, are no longer accessible to the rest of humanity. By closing the poem with a god in disguise, given the ever diminishing appearance of the gods in the Odyssey, the poet emphasizes two aspects of the diminished age in which the poet and his audience now live: the gods are forever inaccessible to men, and only the poet can see this divine apparatus.[82]

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[82] It is also possible in this final scene that Odysseus recognizes Mentor as Athena in disguise, which, if true, would further underscore the gap that exists between the world of heroes and the currently diminished age. Athena appears as Mentor in Book 22, and the lines that describe her appearance and Odysseus' joy at the sight

The *Iliad* ends similarly with its portrayal of the funeral of the all too human Hector, but that ending is only a moment's breathing space, the calm before the storm. Hector's death and funeral are, after all, a narrative substitute for the eventual and inevitable fall of Troy itself. Many acts of heroism are still to come, and much death. In our poem, on the other hand, the poet ends with an image of reconciliation. This brief scene looks ahead to that time when Odysseus will rule his people in peace as Teiresias prophesied to Odysseus in Hades. Odysseus will travel far into the interior to plant his oar to appease Poseidon, but he will return home to end his days in a land flourishing and tranquil until an easy death from the sea overcomes him. There remain no more obstacles that call for heroic characters to master.

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of her (22.206-7: Μέντορι εἰδομένη ἠμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ αὐδήν. / τὴν δ' Ὀδυσεὺς γήθησεν ἰδὼν καὶ μῦθον ἔειπε) are almost identical to these lines (24.405-6: Μέντορι εἰδομένη ἠμὲν δέμας ἠδὲ καὶ αὐδήν. / τὴν μὲν ἰδὼν γήθησε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς). The narrator adds, after Odysseus' address to Athena in Book 22 that he knew that it was Athena (22.210: ὣς φάτ' ὀιόμενος λαοσσόον ἔμμεν' Ἀθήνην). The two passages are nearly identical, and so are the situations in which Odysseus finds himself. In each he is faced with a very difficult task and would benefit greatly from Athena's aid. Another similarity between these two passages suggests the poet may have expected his audience to recall the former when hearing the latter. In Book 22 (224-38) after Odysseus addresses Athena-Mentor, she motivates him to fight harder by reminding him of his earlier exploits in Troy and mockingly suggesting that perhaps he has lost his earlier fighting spirit. In the poem's final scene, we find a similar pattern, but this time Odysseus adopts Athena's earlier role. After he rejoices at the sight of Athena-Mentor, he immediately turns to Telemachus and motivates him to fight by playfully mocking Telemachus in a way that recalls Athena's earlier words to himself. And, so, perhaps Odysseus stands in here for the goddess who may no longer return to Ithaca.

Chapter Two: Cave Man of Ithaca

The story of Odysseus and Polyphemus in Book 9 of the *Odyssey* is, on one level at least, a charmingly gruesome portrayal of brain vs. brawn (or *metis* vs. *bie*), with Odysseus starring as *metis* or cunning and Polyphemus *bie* or might. This scene is not only amusing and pleasing, but its themes of guest-host relationships and the proper and improper treatment of strangers is a central one to the *Odyssey*. And, accordingly, most scholarship on this episode's importance for the poem has focused on Polyphemus' 'bad' behavior as a model that looks ahead to, and ultimately condemns, the behavior of the suitors in Ithaca.[83] Indeed, there are quite a few parallels here. What follows is a brief survey of a few notable examples.

Polyphemus offers Odysseus a cruel guest gift, promising that he will eat him last of all his companions (9.369-70:

> Οὖτιν ἐγὼ πύματον ἕδομαι μετὰ οἷσ' ἑτάροισι,
> τοὺς δ' ἄλλους πρόσθεν· τὸ δέ τοι ξεινήϊον ἔσται.
>
> I will eat Nobody, along with his companions, last, the others before; that will be your guestgift.

Similarly, among the suitors, one Ctesippus says he, too, will give Odysseus a guest gift (20.296-300):

> ἀλλ' ἄγε οἱ καὶ ἐγὼ δῶ ξείνιον, ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὸς
> ἠὲ λοετροχόῳ δώῃ γέρας ἠέ τῳ ἄλλῳ
> δμώων, οἳ κατὰ δῶματ' Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο.

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[83] See, for example, the studies of Reece (1993), and Saïd (1979).

ὣς εἰπὼν ἔρριψε βοὸς πόδα χειρὶ παχείῃ,
κείμενον ἐκ κανέοιο λαβών· . . .

Come on, let me give him a guest gift so that he himself can give it as a reward to the water bearer or some other of the servants who work in godlike Odysseus' halls. So he spoke and with his strong hand he grabbed an ox's hoof that was lying in a basket and threw it.

Ctesippus, here, clearly perverts the guest/host protocol with this hostile joke, offering the guest an ox's hoof as a *xeinion*.[84] In addition, the phrase with which Ctesippus is introduced (ἀνὴρ ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς) is applied elsewhere in the poem only to Polyphemus (9.189, 428). This combination, then, of a mockery of guest-gifts and the repeated negative formula (ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς) indicates that the poet is linking the suitors with Polyphemus.

Excessive eating is another characteristic shared by the suitors and Polyphemus. The suitors are constantly described as devouring the house and livelihood of Odysseus.[85] They drink endless wine and meat in their effort to force Penelope to make a choice to marry one of them, a sort of punishment for her delaying tactic with the shroud of Laertes. Polyphemus, of course, is notable for his devouring of Odysseus' men, despite their pleas for mercy and the rights of guests.

The poet, then, inserts elements from the *Cyclopeia* in his depiction of the suitors on Ithaca into the second half of the poem, creating thereby a damning portrait of the young

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[84] Reece (1993) 176-9 offers a fine analysis of the many verbal and behavioral correspondences between Polyphemus and Ctesippus. See also Saïd (1979) 31-2.

[85] Reece (1993) 174 notes the following examples: βιβρώσκω 2.203; δαρδάπτω 14.92, 16.315; ἔδω 1.160, 375; 14.377, 417; 18.280, 21.332; ἐσθίω 4.318; κατέδω 17.378; φάγω 15.12.

men's behavior. This interpretation, however, focuses solely on how the two parties (i.e., the suitors and Polyphemus) are alike and how this similarity between the two parties functions as an indictment of the suitors. Not only are they alike in their mistreatment of Odysseus, but both also suffer punishment at his hands. In other words, their similarities suggest comparison and an equality between them. What the first deserves, so also does the second. This paired behavior that leads to the paired fates of both, however, is only one example of how the poet uses repetition. The use of repetition to imply that one person or event is like another and deserves, whether good or bad, the same treatment or result as another person or event is straightforward, simple, and so obvious that it hardly merits mentioning. That a one-eyed, cave-dwelling ogre does not respect normal human customs is no real surprise, but for the very elite of a human society to behave in ways reminiscent of this beast is a far greater transgression, and one worthy, presumably, of divine punishment at the hands of a returning hero.

Focusing solely on the obvious similarities between these two parties, has, however, led scholars to overlook the many correspondences between Odysseus among the suitors and Polyphemus.[86] Now this type of repetition is rather more interesting because it does not

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[86] Signficant previous discussion of some similarity between the two is limited to: Austin (1983), who offers a Freudian analysis of the pair; Alden (1993), who is the most thorough and includes a useful discussion of the many ways in which the two share features, offers a somewhat unsatisfactory explanation for this phenomenon, relying on Fenik's (1974: 133-232, and especially 142) work on character doublets; and Bakker (2002) who, following Alden's lead, takes a different approach, noting the connections between Odysseus and Polyphemus in

simply suggest a one to one relationship between Odysseus and Polyphemus. The repetition of phrases, scenes, imagery, etc., that functions on the principle not of sameness (except, of course, initially in order to get the audience's attention) but of difference is much more dynamic and suggests possible answers but does not, as the simple form of repetition does, determine meaning. It opens up the audience's experience of the narrative and allows the listener to participate more actively in grasping the poem's possible meanings.

The idea that Odysseus and Polyphemus are linked in some way is certainly intriguing, and also, on first glance, seems somewhat absurd. The question immediately comes to mind, Why does Odysseus among the suitors co-opt so many aspects of Polyphemus, who plays in that earlier episode Odysseus' polar opposite? As with the preceding chapter, here, too, the approach will be to look first at the similarities and then the differences in order to attempt to answer this very perplexing question. A possibility that I will suggest is that the character of Achilles as he is presented in the *Odyssey* lies at the heart of this question.

A.T. Edwards has demonstrated the numerous ways in which the *Odyssey* poet clearly pits Odysseus' *metis* against Achilles' *bie*, ultimately claiming for his hero and his

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regard to the latter's name and its relation to Odysseus' many epithets that begin with *poly-*. Bakker remarks that Polyphemus' name only becomes known through Odysseus' telling of his story, which links the beast also with the poet Phemius, whose very name is part of Polyphemus'.

poetry superiority over Achilles and, therefore, the *Iliad*.[87] Through an investigation of the ways in which the two heroes gain *kleos*, Achilles as front fighter (*promos aner*) and Odysseus through ambush (*lochos*), Edwards shows how Odysseus in Ithaca sets an ambush for the suitors but defeats them in the capacity of a *promos aner*. In other words, Odysseus is ultimately superior to Achilles because of his ability to combine in his person both *metis* and *bie*.[88] It is this very synthesis that I will argue our poet is attempting to create in the many correspondences he develops between Odysseus among the suitors and Polyphemus.

References to the *Cyclopeia* in Ithaca

First, what clues are there that the *Cyclopeia* is in the mind of the poet when Odysseus arrives in Ithaca and mingles with the suitors? There are two prominent ones. The first takes place when Odysseus awakes on the shores of Ithaca but is unaware that he is home (13.200-2). He exclaims:

> ὤ μοι ἐγώ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἱκάνω;
> ἦ ῥ' οἵ γ' ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,
> ἦε φιλόξεινοι καί σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής;
>
> Damn! Whose land have I come to now? Are they violent and savage and unjust or friendly to strangers and god-fearing men?

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[87] Edwards (1985).

[88] For a discussion of this synthesis of *metis* and *bie* in Odysseus, see below and also Wilson (2005) 16-17 and Cook (1995) 145-52 and (1999) 149-67.

Odysseus utters this same phrase just two other times in the poem, the first on his arrival at Scheria (6.119-21) and the second before he sets out to reconnoiter the land of the Cyclopes (9.175-7). Now, finally on the shores of Ithaca, he is asking, in effect, will this land be inhabited by people like the Phaeacians or the Cyclopes? And the answer, interestingly, is both. Just as Odysseus recombines elements of the *Cyclopeia* in his home so, too, do the Ithacans represent examples of both good *xenia* (Eumaeus) and bad (suitors).

The second scene and one that explicitly recalls the *Cyclopeia* takes place the night before Odysseus kills the suitors. As he lies down to sleep he can hear his maids running about the place for a night time tryst with the suitors. This causes him to exclaim aloud to himself:

> τέτλαθι δή, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης,
> ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε μοι μένος ἄσχετος ἤσθιε Κύκλωψ
> ἰφθίμους ἑτάρους· σὺ δ' ἐτόλμας, ὄφρα σε μῆτις
> ἐξάγαγ' ἐξ ἄντροιο ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι.
>
> Come on now, heart, endure! You endured far worse on that day when the Cyclops, monster-man, devoured my mighty comrades. Still you endured until your cunning led you, certain you were dead, out of the cave (20:18-21).

Here, Odysseus mentions directly the beast and his cave. His reference to the narrative of the events in the cave is a verbal reminder to himself that just as he had then to endure Polyphemus' cannibalism,[89] so now, too, he must endure the maids' infidelity if he is not to

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[89] When Odysseus, enraged at Polyphemus' first meal of manflesh, contemplates stabbing the monster, he suddenly realizes that to do so would mean their certain doom since they would not be able to remove the stone

be the victim again, this time in his own 'cave'. The connection with events in Polyphemus' place is made even stronger in the very next verses, in which Odysseus, unable to sleep, is visited by Athena. He asks a most pertinent question, "What happens if I do kill the suitors?" (20.41-3):

> πρὸς δ' ἔτι καὶ τόδε μεῖζον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμηρίζω·
> εἴ περ γὰρ κτείναιμι Διός τε σέθεν τε ἕκητι,
> πῇ κεν ὑπεκπροφύγοιμι; τά σε φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.
>
> And this, too, is an even bigger concern: If you and Zeus will it and I kill the suitors, how can I possibly escape? Tell me your plan.

As with the maids, Odysseus must not act without thinking or he will be caught in his own house and be surrounded again, this time not by the assembled Cyclopes but by his own townspeople. In fact, this is just what Odysseus fears, when he tells Telemachus, immediately after the *mnesterophonia*, how important it is that the people imagine that a wedding feast is being celebrated in the courtyard (23.137-40):

> μὴ πρόσθε κλέος εὐρὺ φόνου κατὰ ἄστυ γένηται
> ἀνδρῶν μνηστήρων, πρίν γ' ἡμέας ἐλθέμεν ἔξω
> ἀγρὸν ἐς ἡμέτερον πολυδένδρεον. ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτα
> φρασσόμεθ', ὅττί κε κέρδος Ὀλύμπιος ἐγγυαλίξῃ.
>
> Lest the rumor of the suitors' slaughter spread abroad before we get out to our orchard. And there, then, we'll see what plan Olympian Zeus will hand us.

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from the cave's entrance (9.299-305). For a discussion of the similarities between these two situations, see also Clay (1983) 121-5.

These, then, are some concrete examples of the poet returning to the theme of the *Cyclopeia* immediately upon the arrival of Odysseus in Ithaca and on the very night before Odysseus destroys the suitors. As the final example above illustrates, there are also many parallels that Odysseus and Polyphemus share in their situations.

Situational Parallels

Polyphemus returns home to find strangers there who have eaten his food (9.231-3), and who have also planned to pack up whatever cheeses they can carry and drive off the sheep penned in the cave (9.226-7)—as they eventually do (9.464-6). Similarly, Odysseus arrives home to find a band of young men consuming his flocks, drinking his wine and wooing his wife. These same suitors also intend to divide up Odysseus' possessions (16.384-5, 20.215-6).

Polyphemus, to ensure that the interlopers in his cave have no means of escape, sets an enormous rock over its entrance (9.240-3). When Odysseus disguised as a beggar first arrives at his home, he remarks to Eumaeus on how well built the king's palace and doors are, noting that no one could take the house by force or storm (θύραι δ' εὐερκέες εἰσὶ / δικλίδες· οὔ κέν τίς μιν ἀνὴρ ὑπεροπλίσσαιτο,[90] "The double doors are stout;

[90] There is some disagreement about the verb's (ὑπεροπλίσσαιτο) meaning here. LSJ note that according to Aristarchus it means 'to take by force', while others have interpreted it as 'to despise or belittle'. For a discussion of its various meanings, see Russo (1992) 32. The meaning 'to despise' here makes little sense since

no man could overpower them" [17.267-8]). And, like Polyphemus, Odysseus, too, locks tight the doors to his home so that the suitors will not be able to escape (σοὶ δέ, Φιλοίτιε δῖε, θύρας ἐπιτέλλομαι αὐλῆς / κληῖσαι κληῖδι, θοῶς δ' ἐπὶ δεσμὸν ἰῆλαι [21.240-1]: "But you, noble Philoetius, I order to bolt shut the doors of the courtyard and quickly bind them").

The blinded Polyphemus removes the stone from the cave's doorway and sets himself squarely in the middle of the exit in anticipation of his enemies' attempted escape (9.415-8):

> Κύκλωψ δὲ στενάχων τε καὶ ὠδίνων ὀδύνῃσι,
> χερσὶ ψηλαφόων, ἀπὸ μὲν λίθον εἵλε θυράων,
> αὐτὸς δ' εἰνὶ θύρῃσι καθέζετο χεῖρε πετάσσας,
> εἴ τινά που μετ' ὄεσσι λάβοι στείχοντα θύραζε
>
> And the Cyclops, groaning and moaning in pain felt around with his hands and took the stone from the door. He himself sat down then in the doorway spanning the entrance with his hands in the hope that he might catch someone walking out with the sheep.

Compare this to Odysseus' response to the suitors' attempt to break through to the outside (22.126-30):

> ὀρσοθύρῃ[91] δέ τις ἔσκεν ἐϋδμήτῳ ἐνὶ τοίχῳ,

Odysseus had just commented upon the stateliness of the place in comparison to its surroundings (17.264-5: Εὔμαι', ἦ μάλα δὴ τάδε δώματα κάλ' Ὀδυσῆος· / ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίγνωτ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν πολλοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι). Regardless of the meaning operative here, both interpretations support the notion that Odysseus' walls are mighty.

[91] There is no certainty as to the exact definition of this word. It clearly must mean something like a passageway. For one discussion of the possible layout of the *megaron* of Odysseus' house, see Pocock (1965) 23-32; see also Fernández-Galiano (1992) 244-5.

ἀκρότατον δὲ παρ' οὐδὸν ἐϋσταθέος μεγάροιο
ἦν ὁδὸς ἐς λαύρην, σανίδες δ' ἔχον εὖ ἀραρυῖαι·
τὴν Ὀδυσεὺς φράζεσθαι ἀνώγει δῖον ὑφορβὸν
ἑσταότ' ἄγχ' αὐτῆς· μία δ' οἴη γίνετ' ἐφορμή

There was a backdoor in the well-built wall, which was hard by the edge of the threshhold of the finely columned megaron and led to a passageway. Well-fitted double doors kept this route shut. Odysseus told the godlike swine-herd to stand beside this door and guard its single approach.

When Agelaus considers taking this doorway, Melanthius comments on the futility of the effort, noting that one brave man alone can keep away all attackers (22.135-8). Thus Odysseus here has covered all his bases to ensure that the suitors will not be able to get out. Odysseus, ever resourceful, even sees to it that the maids are kept quiet by telling Eumaeus to order the women to shut themselves up in the inner part of the house (21.234-9, 381-5).

Odysseus' attempt to completely seal off his house, allowing no escape, recalls another detail of the events in the Cyclops' cave: his use of the false name *Outis*. There the beast shouts to his fellow Cyclopes and receives no help because they think Polyphemus is mad (9.409-12). In a clever reversal of events in the cave, Odysseus now makes sure that not only will the suitors not escape, but that they will also not be able to alert the townspeople by shouting to them from one of the exits (22.76-8, 132-4). In both situations Odysseus keeps his enemy from seeking external aid, but this time he is the one keeping his victims inside and their allies unawares.

Finally, in what is surely a parody of Odysseus' and his companions' escape from the cave by hiding under Polyphemus' sheep, the herald Medon avoids death at the hands of the 'monstrous' Odysseus by cowering under an oxhide until he gets the all clear from Telemachus (22.361-3):

> ὣς φάτο, τοῦ δ' ἤκουσε Μέδων πεπνυμένα εἰδώς·
> πεπτηὼς γὰρ ἔκειτο ὑπὸ θρόνον, ἀμφὶ δὲ δέρμα
> ἕστο βοὸς νεόδαρτον, ἀλύσκων κῆρα μέλαιναν
>
> So he spoke, and the wise herald Medon heard him; for he had crouched down and was hiding under a chair, and he had wrapped around himself the newly flayed skin of an ox, avoiding grim death.

While this scene is comic, it is also instructive. Unlike the man-eating ogre, Odysseus exhibits some humanity and justice by sparing the life of the good herald.

In addition to these situational parallels, Odysseus and Polyphemus share numerous elements in regard to *bie*, some of which are parallels in behavior and others in language.

Bodily Stature and Strength

Odysseus likens the ease with which Polyphemus sets the rock, which not even twenty-two four-wheeled wagons could move (9.241-2),[92] upon the cave's entrance to a man

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[92] This description of Polyphemus' door (rock), which would require many wagons to move it, is not unlike the description of the door to Achilles' hut in *Iliad* 24.453-6, albeit on a grander scale: θύρην δ' ἔχε μοῦνος ἐπιβλής / εἰλάτινος, τὸν τρεῖς μὲν ἐπιρρήσσεσκον Ἀχαιοί, / τρεῖς δ' ἀναοίγεσκον μεγάλην κληίδα θυράων / τῶν ἄλλων· Ἀχιλεὺς δ' ἄρ' ἐπιρρήσσεσκε καὶ οἷος. For more on the connection between Achilles, Polyphemus and Odysseus, see below.

putting a lid on a quiver of arrows (9.313-4: ῥηϊδίως ἀφελὼν θυρεὸν μέγαν· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα / ἂψ ἐπέθηχ', ὡς εἴ τε φαρέτρῃ πῶμ' ἐπιθείη). This brief archery simile looks forward to the slaughter of the suitors by a master bowman. For in Ithaca, Odysseus himself, even while seated, strings the bow that the suitors cannot begin to bend with the same ease that a bard strings his lyre (21.404-11):

> ὣς ἄρ' ἔφαν μνηστῆρες· ἀτὰρ πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς,
> αὐτίκ' ἐπεὶ μέγα τόξον ἐβάστασε καὶ ἴδε πάντῃ,
> ὡς ὅτ' ἀνὴρ φόρμιγγος ἐπιστάμενος καὶ ἀοιδῆς
> ῥηϊδίως ἐτάνυσσε νέῳ περὶ κόλλοπι χορδήν,
> ἅψας ἀμφοτέρωθεν εὐστρεφὲς ἔντερον οἰός,
> ὡς ἄρ' ἄτερ σπουδῆς τάνυσεν μέγα τόξον Ὀδυσσεύς.
> δεξιτερῇ δ' ἄρα χειρὶ λαβὼν πειρήσατο νευρῆς·
> ἡ δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν ἄεισε, χελιδόνι εἰκέλη αὐδήν.
>
> So spoke the suitors. But wiley Odysseus, when he had tested the great bow and looked it all over, just like a man who knows his lyre and his song easily stretches a string round a new peg, fitting the well-spun sheep's gut to both ends, just so without any effort did Odysseus string the great bow. Taking hold of it with his right hand, he tested the string. It sang out beautifully, with a voice like that of a swallow.

In other words, just as Polyphemus' strength far exceeds that of Odysseus and his men, so too does Odysseus' might far outstrip the suitors', a fact that is mentioned at least three times in the narrative by the suitors themselves, who are ashamed before future generations that they may fall so short of Odysseus in this archery competition.[93]

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[93] 21.184-5, 21.253-5 (ἀλλ' εἰ δὴ τοσσόνδε βίης ἐπιδευέες εἰμεν / ἀντιθέου Ὀδυσῆος ὅ τ' οὐ δυνάμεσθα τανύσσαι / τόξον· ἐλεγχείη δὲ καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι) and 24.170-1. And at 21.85-95

In addition to sheer physical strength, the size of both Polyphemus[94] and Odysseus is commented upon on several occasions. Odysseus notes the huge size of Polyphemus, even once comparing him to an enormous mountain:

> ἔνθα δ' ἀνὴρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος, ὅς ῥα τὰ μῆλα
> οἷος ποιμαίνεσκεν ἀπόπροθεν· οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους
> πωλεῖτ', ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ἤδη.
> καὶ γὰρ θαῦμ' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, οὐδὲ ἐώκει
> ἀνδρί γε σιτοφάγῳ, ἀλλὰ ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι
> ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὅ τε φαίνεται οἷον ἀπ' ἄλλων.
>
> And there dwelt a monstrosity of a man, who shepherded his sheep far off and all by himself; he didn't spend time with the others; he kept his distance and recognized no laws. He was a shock to see, a real giant, not like a man fed on grain, but like a wooded peak in the mountains, high and visible above all the rest (9.187-92).

The suitors, too, are surprised by the great size of Odysseus' limbs when he strips down for a fight with the beggar Irus (18.66-71):

> αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ζώσατο μὲν ῥάκεσιν περὶ μήδεα, φαῖνε δὲ μηροὺς
> καλούς τε μεγάλους τε, φάνεν δέ οἱ εὐρέες ὦμοι
> στήθεά τε στιβαροί τε βραχίονες· αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη
> ἄγχι παρισταμένη μέλε' ἤλδανε ποιμένι λαῶν.
> μνηστῆρες δ' ἄρα πάντες ὑπερφιάλως ἀγάσαντο·
>
> So Odysseus tucked up his rags and wrapped them round his middle, revealing fine, large thighs, broad shoulders and a mighty chest and arms; and

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we hear from Antinous himself how much Odysseus excells all other men, for he had once, as a young boy, seen the hero with his own eyes.

[94] In addition to the passage cited above, there are numerous other comments that attest to Polyphemus' size and strength (9.233, 241, 296, 340, 423, 481, 499, 537-8), especially the description of his massive club that Odysseus compares to a ship's mast in length and width (9.319-24).

> Athena stood near the shepherd of the people and filled out his limbs. Then the suitors, all of them, were overcome with awe.

Polyphemus' combination of size and strength, as the passages cited above illustrate, makes him a formidable opponent to men of normal size. Odysseus also, in relation to the suitors, is an indomitable foe, whose hands are twice described by the latter as invincible (ἀάπτους 22.70, 248), a phrase reserved in the *Iliad* primarily for heroes during their *aristeia*. This adjective occurs only one other time in the *Odyssey*, and there it is used by Achilles of his own hands (11.502).[95]

Lawlessness/Own Lawgiver

When Odysseus first introduces the Cyclopes to his Phaeacian hosts, he declares that they regard no laws, and defines them with the line: Κυκλώπων δ' ἐς γαῖαν ὑπερφιάλων ἀθεμίστων ("lawless Cyclopes" [9.106]). He adds that each Cyclops makes his own rules in his own household for his wife and children (ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι, θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος / παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων, οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσι [9.114-5]). Odysseus, too, sets up the rules in his own household,[96] flatly rejecting, for example, Eurymachus' offer of a fair compensation for the flocks that he and his fellow suitors have consumed and for the

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[95] On this connection between Odysseus and Achilles more will be said below.

[96] Alden (1993) 87 and Bakker (2002) 137 both note this shared feature.

wrongs that they have done (22.60-7).[97] While it could be argued that Eurymachus' offer is disingenuous,[98] he does make a strong appeal, combining his offer of a more than ample recompense with the injunction to Odysseus to spare his 'own people' (22.54-9):

> νῦν δ' ὁ μὲν ἐν μοίρῃ πέφαται, σὺ δὲ φείδεο λαῶν
> σῶν· ἀτὰρ ἄμμες ὄπισθεν ἀρεσσάμενοι κατὰ δῆμον
> ὅσσα τοι ἐκπέποται καὶ ἐδήδοται ἐν μεγάροισιν,
> τιμὴν ἀμφὶς ἄγοντες ἐεικοσάβοιον ἕκαστος
> χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τ' ἀποδώσομεν, εἰς ὅ κε σὸν κῆρ
> ἰανθῇ.
>
> But now he's (Antinous) been killed, and deservedly so, but you spare your own people. We afterwards, to appease you, will go out into the country and gather up as much as we have drunk and eaten in your halls. We, in addition, will bring you payment of twenty cattle, each of us, and pay you back bronze and gold till your heart is soothed.

We should also include here the punishment of the maids (22.436-73). Certainly some form of punishment other than execution would have been possible: public shaming, dismissal, exile, etc. The emphasis in the narrative, however, is upon the complete and total retribution that Odysseus and his family visits upon any and all who proved disloyal in any way.

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[97] We have already seen positive examples of offers made to offended parties in Book Eight: 1) Ares and Aphrodite to Hephaestus (8.347-58), and Laodamus to Odysseus (8.396-415). We might expect Odysseus at this point to follow this pattern.

[98] For example, he blames all the wrongs perpetrated by the suitors on Antinous (22.47-9) although he himself is also culpable for planning Telemachus' death (16.448).

Blood, Death and Food Imagery

While Odysseus compares Polyphemus' eating habits to a mountain ranging lion (ἤσθιε δ' ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, οὐδ' ἀπέλειπεν, / ἔγκατά τε σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα μυελόεντα [9.288-93]), the narrator likens Odysseus' appearance as he walks among the dead to a lion who has just eaten an ox, spattered with blood on his hands and his feet (22.401-6):

> εὗρεν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ κταμένοισι νέκυσσιν
> αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον ὥς τε λέοντα,
> ὅς ῥά τε βεβρωκὼς βοὸς ἔρχεται ἀγραύλοιο·
> πᾶν δ' ἄρα οἱ στῆθός τε παρήϊά τ' ἀμφοτέρωθεν
> αἱματόεντα πέλει, δεινὸς δ' εἰς ὦπα ἰδέσθαι·
> ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς πεπάλακτο πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὕπερθεν
>
> She found him then among the corpses spattered with blood and gore like a lion who has come from just having eaten an ox in the field, and his chest and jowls, all of them are bloodied, and he is a fright to see, just so was Odysseus spattered with blood on his feet and on his hands above.

Unlike the *Iliad*'s over forty examples, lion similies in the *Odyssey* are relatively rare. Of the seven that appear in our poem, five are applied to Odysseus, one to Polyphemus, and one to Penelope.[99] The lion similes applied to Polyphemus and Odysseus all belong to the marauding lion type.[100] As we saw above, the simile applied to Polyphemus emphasized his

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[99] Of Odysseus: 4.332-40 = 17.124-31, 6.130-6, 23.48 = 22.402; of Polyphemus: 9.288; of Penelope 4.791. For a discussion of the importance of lion similes to the overall plan of the *Odyssey*, see Wilson (2002) 231-54; for a different interpretation of lion similes, see Redfield (1975) 186-92 and Mueller (1984) 116-20.

[100] The simile applied to Penelope is a beleaguered lion simile, a different class of lion similes than the aggressive lion type according to Wilson (2002) 231-2.

animal savagery, noting how he ate Odysseus' companions, bolting them down flesh, bones, guts and all. The lion similes applied to Odysseus serve several purposes. Each obviously emphasizes his overwhelming strength in the face of defenseless or foolhardy opponents, as is clearly the case in 4.332-40 and 6.130-6, where he is likened to a lion that returns to his lair only to find a group of young deer left by their mother. While that simile mentions their unseemly death (ἀεικέα πότμον), it does not graphically portray the details, focusing instead on the folly of the mother's choice. The simile quoted above, however, dwells on the gory details of slaughter, emphasizing the blood-bespattered body of the lion who has just killed his prey. What clearly links Odysseus in this scene with Polyphemus, then, is not only the fact that both are compared to lions but that the emphasis in both similes is on the bestial nature of the two characters.

While Polyphemus makes a meal of Odysseus' men, Odysseus himself speaks of the death that he will inflict upon the suitors as a prepared meal (21.428-30: νῦν δ' ὥρη καὶ δόρπον Ἀχαιοῖσιν τετυκέσθαι / ἐν φάει, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα καὶ ἄλλως ἐψιάασθαι / μολπῇ καὶ φόρμιγγι· τὰ γάρ τ' ἀναθήματα δαιτός, "Now the time is right for a dinner to be set for the Achaeans while there is still light, but later also it will be time for other merry making to the sound of song and lyre; for these are the accompaniments of a feast").[101]

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[101] Earlier the narrator himself had employed similar language with regard to the death of the suitors (20.392-4: δόρπου δ' οὐκ ἄν πως ἀχαρίστερον ἄλλο γένοιτο, / οἷον δὴ τάχ' ἔμελλε θεὰ καὶ καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ /

Odysseus' reference to song and music is pointed here since the narrator had just likened Odysseus' stringing of the bow to a bard stringing his lyre (21.405-13). In other words, Odysseus is beginning to regain control of the reins of his own house. As host, he now offers a dinner banquet to his guests with all of the trappings that accompany any good communal meal. But this banquet is a complete reversal of a normal one, and now turns the tables on the suitors much as they had turned the guest/host protocol on its head. In other words, now Odysseus offers death instead of food and the twanging of a bow string in the place of the lyre's sweet strains.[102]

Continuing with the imagery of the suitors as food, the narrator describes the routed young men, attempting to find places to hide, as small, defenseless birds chased by marauding raptors (22.302-6). Lastly, when all the suitors have been cut down and are lying stretched out on Odysseus' floor, the narrator compares them to fish caught in a net, poured out upon the sand and left to die in the sun's rays (22.381-8).[103] This final scene has greater resonance since it recalls Hephaestus' clever net, with which he caught his adulterous wife and her lover Ares (8.296-9). This simile, then, emphasizes both the might of Odysseus and

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θησέμεναι· πρότεροι γὰρ ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο, "Nothing else could be less charming than a dinner such as a goddess and a mighty man were about to set before them; the [suitors] were the first to commit wrongs").

[102] Reece (1992) 178-81.

[103] Compare also the gruesome scene of the Laestrygonians as they net and spear Odysseus' men (10.121-4), which lends a shade of cannabilism to this scene's simile.

his use of cunning, his twin tools, to defeat the seemingly overwhelming multitude of suitors arrayed against him.[104]

The repeated images of flowing blood and brains abound in both episodes. Polyphemus dashes the heads of his victims against the ground like puppies, wetting the earth with their brains and blood (9.289-90: σὺν δὲ δύω μάρψας ὥς τε σκύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ / κόπτ'· ἐκ δ' ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέε, δεῦε δὲ γαῖαν). While the dying suitors lie groaning in Odysseus' *megaron* from death blows to the head, the floor is said to flow with blood (22.308-9: τύπτον ἐπιστροφάδην· τῶν δὲ στόνος ὦρνυτ' ἀεικὴς / κράτων τυπτομένων, δάπεδον δ' ἅπαν αἵματι θῦεν, "They struck them left and right; an awful groan arose from them as they were struck in the head, and the whole floor flowed with blood").[105] And Polyphemus says that if he could only catch 'Nobody' he would spatter the floor with his brains (9.458-9: τῶ κέ οἱ <u>ἐγκέφαλός γε διὰ σπέος</u> ἄλλυδις ἄλλῃ / θεινομένου ῥαίοιτο <u>πρὸς οὔδεϊ</u>, κἀδ δέ τ' ἐμὸν κῆρ / λωφήσειε κακῶν, τά μοι οὐτιδανὸς πόρεν Οὖτις, ["Then his brains throughout the cave, hither and yon, would be splattered when his head is dashed against the floor, and that would relieve my heart of pains, which that good-for-nothing Nobody inflicted upon me"]). Likewise, Athena assures Odysseus that the suitors will certainly spatter the floor with their brains and blood (13.394-6:

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[104] Compare also 21.241 that mentions the binding (the same word Demodocus uses of Ares' net [δέσμος]) with which Odysseus has Philoetius ensure that his palace doors are firmly shut.

[105] Similarly expressed at 24.184-5.

καί τιν' ὀΐω / αἵματί τ' ἐγκεφάλῳ τε παλαξέμεν ἄσπετον οὖδας / ἀνδρῶν μνηστήρων, οἵ τοι βίοτον κατέδουσιν, "And I think that one of the suitors who devour your livelihood will spatter the boundless earth with his blood and brains").

In this connection, we should also take note of the narrator's description of the suitors and Theoclymenus' eerie prophecy to them, in which the seer claims the walls and the beautiful column bases are spattered with blood (20.347-57):

> οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελώων ἀλλοτρίοισιν,
> αἱμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὄσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων
> δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόον δ' ὠΐετο θυμός.
> τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε Θεοκλύμενος θεοειδής·
> ἆ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμέων
> εἰλύαται κεφαλαί τε πρόσωπά τε νέρθε τε γοῦνα,
> οἰμωγὴ δὲ δέδηε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί,
> αἵματι δ' ἐρράδαται τοῖχοι καλαί τε μεσόδμαι·
> εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,
> ἱεμένων Ἔρεβόσδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἠέλιος δὲ
> οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀχλύς.
>
> And now they laughed, but with jaws not their own, and they ate meat defiled with blood. Their eyes filled with tears, and their hearts turned to lament. And among them spoke god-like Theoclymenus. "O wretched men, what is this awful thing you suffer? Your heads and faces and knees beneath are all wrapped up in night, and lament overtakes you, and your cheeks are tear-stained, and the walls and the beautiful pillar bases are spattered with blood. The forecourt is full, full too is the inner court, of shades making for the shadows, seeking Erebos. And the sun has disappeared from the sky, and an evil mist has encircled you."

While the opening lines clearly recall the gruesome omens on Thrinakia,[106] the emphasis on blood and darkness here is also reminiscent of the gore in Polyphemus' cave; this time, however, it is the imagined gore and blood spilled by Odysseus' soon to be victims instead of the life blood of his companions in Polyphemus' cave.

Finally, in the case of Antinous, Odysseus' first kill, the blood that flows from his nostrils is described with an adjective ἀνδρόμεος 'of man, human'(22.19) that is used only four times in the *Odyssey*; the other three occurrences are all applied to Polyphemus' meals of man-flesh (9.297, 347, 374).[107] Odysseus' first victim, then, is connected semantically with the Cyclops' victims, which suggests that the type of slaughter that is to ensue will be as bloody and inexorable as Polyphemus'.

Savagery/Brutality

Polyphemus summarily rejects Odysseus' plea for mercy, saying he would not spare Odysseus or his companions in order to avoid the wrath of Zeus, but only if he himself wills it (9.277-8: οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος πεφιδοίμην / οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ'

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[106] The connection between Odysseus' companions and the suitors is already drawn in the poem's first book. In the proem, for example, Odysseus' companions are said to have died because of their own folly, that is, that they ate the cattle of the sun (1.7-9). When we first encounter the suitors, we are told that they are sitting on the skins of the cattle of Odysseus that they themselves have slaughtered (1.106-8).

[107] Saïd (1979) 40-1 and Reece (1993) 174-5 both discuss this connection but to make a different point: that the poet is linking the punishment visited upon the suitors with that applied to Polyphemus.

ἑτάρων, εἰ μὴ θυμός με κελεύοι, "I would not spare, not even to avoid the hostility of Zeus, either you or your companions, unless my heart so bid me"). When Leodes, whom even the narrator sympathetically describes as disgusted with the other suitors' reckless acts (ἀτασθαλίαι [21.146-7]), begs for mercy, Odysseus' reply is pitiless and terse. He asserts that Leodes, as the suitors' prophet, probably prayed for his death, and, without further ado, cuts off Leodes' head (22.321-5).[108] Likewise, when Eurymachus makes an offer of compensation for wrongs done, Odysseus rejects this offer out of hand, only accepting death as compensation (22.61-4: Εὐρύμαχ', οὐδ' εἴ μοι πατρώϊα πάντ' ἀποδοῖτε, / ὅσσα τε νῦν ὔμμ' ἐστὶ καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλ' ἐπιθεῖτε, / οὐδέ κεν ὣς ἔτι χεῖρας ἐμὰς λήξαιμι φόνοιο, / πρὶν πᾶσαν μνηστῆρας ὑπερβασίην ἀποτεῖσαι, "Eurymachus, not even if you give back to me all your inheritance, as much you now have and even if you add others from elsewhere, not even so would I cease my hands from slaughter before you suitors pay back all your wrongdoings"). Moreover, knowing full well that his slaughter of the suitors will precipitate reprisals,[109] Odysseus nevertheless carries out his wishes and even takes on the assembled Ithacans, his own people, and is narrowly dissuaded from killing them all (καί νύ κε δὴ πάντας ὄλεσαν καὶ θῆκαν ἀνόστους, / εἰ μὴ Ἀθηναίη, κούρη Διὸς

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[108] Note the parallel here between Odysseus' original warning conversations with the suitors and later his attitude of mercilessness toward Eurymachus and Leodes.

[109] In his discussion with Athena he cannot sleep because he is worried about how he will escape the wrath of the suitors' family and friends (20.36-43)

αἰγιόχοιο, / ἤϋσεν φωνῇ, κατὰ δ' ἔσχεθε λαὸν ἅπαντα, "And now they would have destroyed them all and kept them from returning home, if Athena, the daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, had not shouted aloud, and checked all the people." [24.528-30]).[110]

Polyphemus' gruesome meal preparations (9.288-93, 311, 344) also find an echo in Odysseus' and his allies' treatment of the unfaithful maids and the cruel goatherd Melanthius. Odysseus, for example, instructs Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus to kill the maids by hacking them with swords until they die and forget the sex that they had had with the suitors in secret (22.440-5). So, too, is Melanthius dealt with savagely. During the battle with the suitors, Odysseus instructs Philoetius and Eumaeus to bind Melanthius with a rope, hoist him up a column till he hits the rafters, and leave him to dangle in pain (22.172-77). In the aftermath of the slaughter, we are told that in their anger they (presumably Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus) mutilate[111] his body (22.474-7):

> ἐκ δὲ Μελάνθιον ἦγον ἀνὰ πρόθυρόν τε καὶ αὐλήν·
> τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ μὲν ῥῖνάς τε καὶ οὔατα νηλέϊ χαλκῷ
> τάμνον μήδεά τ' ἐξέρυσαν, κυσὶν ὠμὰ δάσασθαι,
> χεῖράς τ' ἠδὲ πόδας κόπτον κεκοτηότι θυμῷ
>
> They led Melanthius out the door and into the courtyard. They cut off his nose and ears with pitiless bronze and ripped his genitals out and gave them

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[110] Compare also 24.542-5: διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ, / ἴσχεο, παῦε δὲ νεῖκος ὁμοιΐου πτολέμοιο, / μή πώς τοι Κρονίδης κεχολώσεται εὐρύοπα Ζεύς. / ὣς φάτ' Ἀθηναίη, ὁ δ' ἐπείθετο, χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ.

[111] It is unclear whether they are mutilating his corpse, or whether they are torturing and killing him. See Fernández-Galliano (1992) 304-5 for comment on the ambiguity of these lines.

> to the dogs to eat raw, and they chopped off his hands and feet in their great anger.

Melanthius suffers the very fate with which Antinous first threatened the beggar Irus (18.83-87):[112]

> αἴ κέν σ' οὗτος νικήσῃ κρείσσων τε γένηται,
> πέμψω σ' ἠπειρόνδε, βαλὼν ἐν νηῒ μελαίνῃ,
> εἰς Ἤχετον βασιλῆα, βροτῶν δηλήμονα πάντων,
> ὅς κ' ἀπὸ ῥῖνα τάμῃσι καὶ οὔατα νηλέϊ χαλκῷ
> μήδεά τ' ἐξερύσας δώῃ κυσὶν ὠμὰ δάσασθαι
>
> If he defeats you and proves himself stronger, I will throw you into a black ship and send you off to the mainland, to king Echetus, the destroyer of all mortal men, who will cut off your nose and ears with pitiless bronze and rip out your genitals and feed them raw to the dogs.

The language used to describe the mutilation done to Melanthius is worded very similarly to the earlier threat of what Echetus would do to anyone who comes under his control. It is no accident that, though Antinous threatens to send the beggar off to Echetus ("the destroyer of all men," βροτῶν δηλήμονα πάντων), it is Odysseus who actually proves to be the destroyer of men in Ithaca, overseeing, as he does, the total destruction of the suitors and even the gruesome deaths of the maids and Melanthius.[113]

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[112] Antinous later threatens Odysseus with the nearly the same consequences in his story of the fate of Eurytion (21.288-310).

[113] While Odysseus does not take a direct part in the death of the maidens or in the mutilation of Melanthius, he does give the orders that end in the death of both. For more on the mutilation of Melanthius and the death of the maids, see chapter three below.

If we recall here Theoclymenus' prophecy and its emphasis on darkness and death, it may not be too far-fetched to suggest that Odysseus' house has become an entranceway to the underworld. The adoption of Echetus' practices further emphasizes this link with the underworld, for Echetus' name may have some connection with infernal regions. Besides the transparent meaning 'Holder', at least one scholar has suggested that this character may represent a popular folktale ogre, a kind of troll or underground demon.[114] This connection with Hades suggested by Echetus is further buttressed by Theoclymenus' prophecy, which emphasizes the darkness and lamentation of Odysseus' house, a sort of antechamber to the next world. Compare Theoclymenus' words cited above, for example, with the following lines from the *Nekyia* (11.14-9):

> ἔνθα δὲ Κιμμερίων ἀνδρῶν δῆμός τε πόλις τε,
> ἠέρι καὶ νεφέλῃ κεκαλυμμένοι· οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτοὺς
> Ἠέλιος φαέθων καταδέρκεται ἀκτίνεσσιν,
> οὔθ' ὁπότ' ἂν στείχῃσι πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα,
> οὔθ' ὅτ' ἂν ἂψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν προτράπηται,
> ἀλλ' ἐπὶ νὺξ ὀλοὴ τέταται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι
>
> And there is the land and city of Cimmerian men, covered up in mist and cloud. Never once does bright Helios look down upon them with his rays, neither when he goes up to the starry heaven, nor when he turns earthward from the sky, but deathly night is stretched across wretched mortals there.

[114] Fernández-Galiano (1992) 181 on lines 21.299-304.

In both scenes men are covered in night and darkness; they are described as wretched mortals, on whom the sun ceases to shine. This recalls the darkness[115] and brutality of the cave of the Cyclops, who fully intended to spare no one, eating Nobody himself last of all (9.369-70).

Differences and Interpretation

Now that we have reviewed some of the many parallels of situation, behavior, imagery, and language shared by Odysseus and Polyphemus, how do we account for them? Clearly, despite the many similarities between the two characters, Odysseus does not become a Cyclops in Ithaca. The differences between them are numerous. Odysseus, for one, finally does relent and intentionally chooses not to kill all his enemies. He does not actually eat his victims. While the suitors are certainly not all bad and do not all deserve the death that they receive, Odysseus does, in confronting them, attempt to right a manifest injustice; Polyphemus' actions, on the other hand, have nothing to do with justice. Odysseus also gives his enemies warnings and a chance either to leave or to reform their behavior. And while Odysseus surely is like Polyphemus in his sheer size and strength in comparison to the suitors, he greatly differs with his former opponent in the employment of cunning. The poet humorously points out Polyphemus' mental hebetude in those moments when he attempts to

[115] While the darkness of the cave is not directly mentioned, Polyphemus' fire (9.251: καὶ τότε πῦρ ἀνέκαιε καὶ εἴσιδεν, εἴρετο δ' ἥμεας), which he did not kindle for cooking, is what alerts the Cyclops to the presence of the intruders.

outwit Odysseus (9.282-3, 402-14, 440-3). The suitors, on the other hand, face in Odysseus an opponent who is not only very powerful but also exceedingly clever, an enemy of the worst kind. Thus Odysseus is able, through the use of both *bie* and *metis* to do that which Polyphemus could not: avenge the harm done him by his enemies. It is only through this combination, then, of cleverness and physical strength and violence that Odysseus can overcome his enemies.

This brings us to yet another question: why it is important that Odysseus exhibit both cunning and might? The answer we suggested at the beginning of this chapter, following Edwards' lead, is that this synthesis of *metis* and *bie* is employed by the *Odyssey* poet to claim for his hero primacy over Achilles and, thus, the rightful title of 'Best of the Achaeans'. But why connect this synthesis of *metis* and Cyclopean *bie* to the Achilles vs. Odysseus theme in the first place? A review of the portrayal of Achilles in the *Odyssey* will illustrate how the themes of Achilles and Polyphemus and Odysseus are interwoven by the poet.

Achilles in the Odyssey

The most explicit depiction of the two heroes in direct conflict is Demodocus' first song (8.73-82), in which Achilles and Odysseus, who are described as the best of the Achaeans, are said to have quarrelled (νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλεΐδεω Ἀχιλῆος, / ὥς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ θαλείῃ / ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν, ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν

Ἀγαμέμνων / χαῖρε νόῳ, ὅ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο, "[He sang] of the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, son of Peleus, how they once exchanged harsh words at a fine banquet of the gods, and the lord of men Agamemnon rejoiced in his heart since the 'Best of the Achaeans' were quarrelling" [8.75-8]). It is clear from the passage that a conflict is present, but the cause of contention is unnamed; however, the scholia to this passage suggest that the disagreement was over the best means of sacking Troy: Achilles championing *bie*, Odysseus *metis*.[116] This brief scene, then, that shares many features of vocabulary and language with the opening of the *Iliad*, may attest to an alternative epic tradition in which not Agamemnon but Odysseus was pitted against Achilles. Homer's audience, then, would need no comment on the quarrel's content.[117]

Though it is true that the substance of their quarrel is not explicitly mentioned, the content of Demodocus' following two songs, both of which emphasize the superiority of *metis*, appears to support the observations of the scholia. The bard's second performance is about Ares and Aphrodite who are literally 'caught' in bed by Hephaestus. This story is

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[116] Dindorff (1855) vol. 1, 362 (B.E. scholia: καὶ ὁ μὲν Ἀχιλλεὺς ἔλεγε δι' ἀνδρείαν ἁλῶναι τὸ Ἴλιον, ὁ δὲ Ὀδυσσεὺς διὰ μηχανῆς καὶ φρονήσεως); Nagy (1979) 15-25, 45-6; Clay (1983) 96-112.

[117] Or, as Clay (1983) 102 puts it, this song of Demodocus' refers not to any real poem or even poetic tradition but presents the *Iliad* through the lens of the *Odyssey* poet, whose hero is Odysseus, not Achilles. This interpretation is also taken up by Edwards (1985) 69, who describes the *Odyssey* poet's stance toward the *Iliad* as one of cunning: "It lays a verbal, poetic ambush for Achilles and the tradition which promotes him as an ethical and spiritual model." For the view that the Odyssey poet simplifies Achilles' character in order to highlight his hero's accomplishments, see King (1987) 45-9. Wilson (2005) 16-17 argues similarly on the relation of Achilles to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.

replete with the vocabulary of cunning and skill. For example, Hephaestus' net is called a δόλος at least three times (276, 282, 317), it is also called clever (δολόεντα, 281), Hephaestus himself is termed κλυτοτέχνην (286), his net is described as full of skill (δεσμοὶ / τεχνήεντες 296-7), and Hephaestus is given the eptithet πολύφρονος, 'ingenious', τέχνας εἰσορόωσι πολύφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο (327), which epithet, in fact, he shares solely with Odysseus (1.83, 14.424, 20.239, 329, 21.204).[118]

Demodocus' third song once again returns us to the topic of the Trojan war, specifically the wooden horse (8.499-520), the very means by which Odysseus' *metis* overcame the impregnable city of Troy. If this is indeed what Achilles and Odysseus' quarrel was about, then the poet cleverly reminds us whose position on taking Troy was successful. The first song sung by Demodocus, then, sets out the paradigm of *metis* vs. *bie* as represented by the struggle between Achilles and Odysseus, while the next two songs argue for the priority of *metis*.

There are two additional places in the *Odyssey* in which Achilles is prominently featured, the two *Nekyia* scenes from books 11 and 24. In the first and most famous scene

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[118] For more on the connection between the song of Ares and Aphrodite and the larger plot of the poem, see Rose's (1969a) dissertation on this topic. Burkert (1960) 130-44 also discusses this episode in his attempt to show how it is integral to the many themes of the larger poem: the victory of cleverness over nature. Burkert uses this episode to explain what he believes is a unique development of the *Odyssey* poet, namely a separation of the burlesque presentation of the gods from the morally 'pure' Zeus, who takes no noticeable part in this humorous scene.

Odysseus meets Achilles among a group of Iliadic all-stars, a sort of who's who list of Trojan war heroes: Agamemnon, Patroclus, Ajax, and Antilochus. Edwards has done much to elucidate these two encounters between Odysseus and Achilles. He notes that the very first words that Achilles uses to address Odysseus betray a competitive attitude towards the latter (11.473-6): [119]

> διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ,
> σχέτλιε, τίπτ' ἔτι μεῖζον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μήσεαι ἔργον;
> πῶς ἔτλης Ἄϊδόσδε κατελθέμεν, ἔνθα τε νεκροὶ
> ἀφραδέες ναίουσι, βροτῶν εἴδωλα καμόντων;
>
> Zeus born, son of Laertes, much-resourceful Odysseus, what bolder deed still, stubborn as you are, will you contrive? How did you dare to come down to Hades, where witless corpses dwell, the shadows of dead men?

Note especially the begrudging tone in σχέτλιε and almost exasperated amazement in the phrase πῶς ἔτλης. Achilles' choice of words betrays an irritation that this former rival of his has pursued him even into the depths of Hades.

After Odysseus' brief attempt at assuaging Achilles' feelings, Achilles' response is once again hostile and extreme as he warns Odysseus not to talk to him about death. Achilles even renounces his own heroic death as now meaningless, preferring to be a *thete* on earth to a king among the dead (11.488-91). And his questions concerning his father and his son reveal, in part, why he is disenchanted with a warrior's *kleos* (11.492-503). He focuses

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[119] Edwards (1985) 49-50.

mostly on his father, expressing his anxiety over Peleus' vulnerability to his enemies without his famous son's might there to protect him. Moreover, despite the fact that he is elated at the news of Neoptolemus' heroic exploits (11.538-40), his disavowal of Iliadic *kleos* and his longing for even a servant's life should not be overlooked. And Odysseus' manipulation of Achilles by choosing to dispense with the topic of Peleus[120] and to focus on Neoptolemus is key. As Edward notes: "In his second speech, Odysseus presents a Neoptolemus who equals the achievement of his father as a spearfighter, but submits to Odysseus as his mentor."[121] In other words, while Neoptolemus is a glorious fighter like his father, he nevertheless is inferior in counsel to Odysseus, to whom he looks for the signal to leave the wooden horse; and it is the latter who brings him to Troy (11.505-37). More importantly still, Achilles' anxiety over his father and son suggests a comparison with the fate of Odysseus. For Odysseus will, unlike Achilles, return home, even from Hades, and be able both to enjoy the presence of his son and his father and to ensure his father's safety; in fact, in the poem's final scenes all three are arrayed together against the people of Ithaca (24.513-5).

The importance of Achilles in the second *Nekyia* lies both in the content of his conversation and in the position of this conversation in the narrative. When we encounter him this second time, he is talking to Agamemnon about his own funeral at Troy. On the

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[120] Achilles specifically asks about both his son and his father (11.492-503), focusing the majority of his thoughts on his father's condition.

[121] Edwards (1985) 65.

surface of things, his appearance here seems loosely connected at best with the death of the suitors. The motive for Agamemnon's presence is much more explicit: his *nostos* and murder offers a clear point of contrast with Odysseus and Penelope, emphasizing the degree to which this couple has excelled even the great Agamemnon and his unfaithful wife Clytemnestra. His sad and most pitiable death at the hands of his wife is mentioned specifically by Achilles (24.24-34), a point Agamemnon repeats again in his conversation with the shades of the suitors and draws a direct parallel between Clytemnestra and Penelope, praising the latter, and cursing the former (24.192-202).

In both *Nekyia* scenes Agamemnon and Achilles are the only Trojan war heroes to have speaking parts, and both characters were the prime contenders in the *Iliad* for the title of 'Best of the Achaeans'. The poet then invites us to compare the fates of these two heroes with Odysseus.[122] Agamemnon is clearly bested: a failed Odysseus who, though he makes it home successfully, is killed at a banquet in his own palace. Again, the comparison with Odysseus is clearly made by Agamemnon himself (24.192-202). As for Achilles, he receives an encomium from Agamemnon that is remarkable for its length and detail (about sixty lines), which glorifies Achilles' life and death, and claims for Achilles an eternal κλέος ἐσθλόν (24.35-97). Despite this lengthy praise of Achilles, the entire discussion is framed on both

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[122] See, for example, King's (1987) 45-9 succinct discussion of the comparison of the three heroes, with Odysseus enjoying preeminence; compare also de Jong (2001) 4 and 565-7.

sides by the appearance of the suitors in Hades. This lends the scene between Agamemnon and Achilles a digressive quality. In other words, the results of Odysseus' *aristeia* with the suitors frame this important scene. Indeed, as soon as Agamemnon hears Amphimedon's tale of the *mnesterophonia*, he launches into an ebullient hymn of praise for both Odysseus and Penelope. We have here, then, in a very short space and in the same scene, praise of both Achilles and Odysseus. It is this juxtaposition of Achilles' claim to fame with Odysseus' that invites us to compare the two heroes.

Agamemnon's form of address to each hero further strengthens the point of comparison: each speech opens with the same honorific adjective followed by each hero's father's name, and ends with an epithet particularly appropriate to each in this context: ὄλβιε Πηλέος υἱέ, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ (24.36) and ὄλβιε Λαέρταο πάϊ, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ (24.192).[123] Achilles is truly god-like, for even the gods were present at his funeral; and Odysseus is certainly a man of many devices, for he just defeated the suitors with his cunning plans. They are both blessed, but Achilles remains in the underworld while Odysseus is in the very process of winning back his kingdom and ensuring a peaceful old age and a secure throne for himself, his wife, and his son. His *kleos*, too, just as Achilles', albeit shared with Penelope, will never perish but form the stuff of song for generations to come (24.196-8). Odysseus, then, not only achieves the κλέος ἄφθιτον of Achilles, but also the

[123] Heubeck (1992) 380.

νόστος that was denied to both Agamemnon and Achilles. And, thus, it is apparent that the stories of Agamemnon and Achilles are included, in part, to further emphasize Odysseus' accomplishments: he succeeds where the other two fail.

There are still other indications in the text that lead us to compare Achilles and Odysseus. One has to do with a phenomenon known as *omophagia*, or the eating of raw flesh.[124] As noted above, the Cyclops is most horrifying to Odysseus and his men for this very reason. It is true that if he cooked Odysseus' companions, they still would have been terrified, but the image of Polyphemus devouring the men raw certainly emphasizes his cruelty and savagery, and renders his defeat at the hands of Odysseus all the more remarkable. Though this trait of the Cyclops is a clear indication of his savagery and barbarity, he shares this attribute with both Achilles and Odysseus.

In one of the most memorable scenes from the *Iliad*, Achilles answers the dying Hector's plea for a proper burial with this caustic rejection (22.345-7):

> μή με κύον γούνων γουνάζεο μὴ δὲ τοκήων·
> αἴ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνήῃ
> ὤμ' ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι οἷα ἔοργας
>
> Don't, you dog, supplicate me by my knees nor by my parents. Would that somehow my might and my heart would drive me to cut you up and eat you raw! Such wrong you have done me!

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[124] For a discussion of the link between destructive *bie* and *omophagia*, see Wilson (2002) 238-48.

Though Achilles does not actually eat Hector raw, he does go on to mutilate his body in direct disregard of human convention (24.39-54,113-19). At Patroclus' funeral, he also sacrifices twelve Trojan youths on the pyre (23.175-6).[125] Hecuba refers once to Achilles as an *omestes* man (24.27).[126]

As we saw earlier, Odysseus' treatment of the suitors had been described by the narrator and by Odysseus himself with language that emphasized his own savagery. While he represents the forces of culture and civilization in his encounter with the Cyclops, among the suitors he takes on much of his former adversary's ruthlessness. This is most evident in the treatment of the goat herd Melanthius. Though Odysseus himself does not mutilate Melanthius, his minions do. And this act of theirs, the feeding of Melanthius' genitals to the dogs, is a violent and even cannibalistic act.[127] Even if we grant our hero some pardon here since he himself did not participate in this mutilation, his treatment of the suitors was certainly savage. The several lion similes discussed above that referred to the suitors as prey and Odysseus as predator further link Odysseus to the bestial realm. And, as we also noted

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[125] The narrator describes his action thus: κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ μήδετο ἔργα.

[126] She herself, at 24.212-3, says that she would eat Achilles' liver in requital for his treatment of Hector. Otherwise, reference to the eating of raw flesh is very rare in the *Iliad*, and with one exception is only applied to animals. That exception is Hera's outrage toward the Trojans (4.34-6). Segal (1974) 298, notes that this word (*omestes*) is reserved elsewhere only for "lions or fish that devour human bodies," and he observes that when it is "applied to humans it marks a special intensity of hatred exceeding civilized limits."

[127] Saïd (1979) 27 on this passage comments that dogs are inherently linked with their masters and that this action is a sort of cannibalism. For another discussion of dogs in relation to men (especially with reference to nature vs. culture themes) and for the term 'vicarious cannibalism', see Redfield (1975) 193-99.

above, while Odysseus is walking among the corpses of the dead men, he is described in a simile as a blood-spattered lion who has just eaten an ox, a comparison applied in the *Odyssey* only to one other character, Polyphemus (9.291-3). In the lines that immediately follow this simile, there is also a very grim depiction of Odysseus walking among the sprawled bodies of the suitors to ensure that none have escaped death, a scene which further develops Odysseus' animal-like savagery (22.381-2).

Again, though Odysseus and Achilles do not actually eat raw human flesh as Polyphemus does, the linking of this theme with both heroes indicates the degree to which they have removed themselves from the usual order of things. The threat of the breakdown between the spheres of the human and the bestial[128] connects them to Polyphemus, who embodies this very combination of uncivilized and human features.[129]

The second answer to our question of why we should connect the Odysseus/Polphemus complex with the Odysseus/Achilles conflict lies in the organization of material. The themes of *metis* and *bie* that inform the *Cyclopeia* and reappear in the slaughter of the suitors are inextricably linked with the appearances of Achilles in the *Odyssey*.

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[128] See Segal (1974), especially 298-9.

[129] Segal (1974) 299-300.

Demodocus' first song (8.73-82), as we saw above, in which Achilles and Odysseus, described as the best of the Achaeans, are said to be quarrelling, appears to propose an argument on the subject of *metis* vs. *bie*. Demodocus' next two songs embody this very theme, with his final song (8.499-520) about the wooden horse proving that Odysseus' choice of strategy was, in the end, the right one. It is in this context, one replete with themes of *metis* vs. *bie*, that the tale of the Cyclops (most of Book 9) follows almost immediately. Likewise, at the climax of the adventure stories, the first *Nekyia* (Book Eleven), Odysseus himself meets Achilles in the underworld. Thus, the appearances/mentions of Achilles in the first half of the *Odyssey* frame the *Cyclopeia*.

In the poem's latter half a similar interweaving occurs. Nearly all the parallels between Odysseus and Polyphemus occur immediately *before, during*, or immediately *after* the *mnesterophonia* (that is, Books 20-22). Achilles reappears in the second *Nekyia* (beginning of Book 24), in the presence of the recently slaughtered suitors. Thus, Achilles' appearance with them in Hades links him once again with the Odysseus/Polyphemus complex. This nexus of narrative and theme, then, is a strong argument for reading Odysseus' adoption of Cyclopean *bie* as one more expression of the poet's desire to demonstrate his hero's superiority over Achilles.

Odysseus' Achillean Attributes

An additional feature that invites us to compare Odysseus and Achilles is the former's adoption of Achillean attributes in Ithaca on both the level of vocabulary and action. The phrase *cheiras aaptous* 'irresistible hands' which was mentioned above links Odysseus and Achilles. This phrase occurs eight times in the *Iliad* and three times in the *Odyssey*. In the latter, it is applied once to Achilles (11.502) and twice to Odysseus (22.70, 248). Edwards notes that in the *Iliad* this phrase is reserved almost exclusively for a man fighting as a *promos aner* and often in an *aristeia*. From this fact, he argues that Achilles' use of the phrase in the *Odyssey* is an expression of that hero's wish for one last *aristeia*, the very means by which he has always received *kleos* in the capacity of a *promos aner*.[130] But, ironically, it is Odysseus who is given that honor by the poet.

There are several scenes in the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus' actions and speech appear to allude to passages from the *Iliad*. Compare, for example, Odysseus' response to Eurymachus' offer of compensation with Achilles' reply to Agamemnon's offer in the embassy scene from book 9:

> τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς·
> Εὐρύμαχ', οὐδ' εἴ μοι πατρώϊα πάντ' ἀποδοῖτε,
> ὅσσα τε νῦν ὔμμ' ἐστὶ καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλ' ἐπιθεῖτε,
> οὐδέ κεν ὣς ἔτι χεῖρας ἐμὰς λήξαιμι φόνοιο,
> πρὶν πᾶσαν μνηστῆρας ὑπερβασίην ἀποτεῖσαι (*Od.* 22.60-7)

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[130] Edwards (1985) 58-9.

> Wiley Odysseus scowled at him and said: "Eurymachus, not even if you gave to me all your paternal inheritance, as much as you now possess and whatever else you might add to it from elsewhere, not even so would I stop my hands from killing until you suitors pay back your wrongdoing in full."

Compare this to Achilles' response to Agamemnon's ambassadors (*Il.* 9.379-80, 386-7):

> οὐδ' εἴ μοι δεκάκις τε καὶ εἰκοσάκις τόσα δοίη
> ὅσσά τέ οἱ νῦν ἔστι, καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλα γένοιτο,
> * * *
> οὐδέ κεν ὣς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει' Ἀγαμέμνων
> πρίν γ' ἀπὸ πᾶσαν ἐμοὶ δόμεναι θυμαλγέα λώβην.
>
> Not even if he should give to me ten times, even twenty times as much as he now offers, and even if there be more that comes to him from elsewhere... not even so would Agamemnon persuade my mind until he first pays back to me all his heart biting disgrace.

While Achilles' sentiments are given much greater treatment and his rejection of Agamemnon's offer is quite lengthy, Odysseus' response to Eurymachus resembles Achilles' famous words, employing similar phrases, the same rhetorical progression (not even if you offered X and Y and added Z, would I . . .), and the same final insistence on retribution.[131] Odysseus' words here are also reminiscent of Achilles' comments to the dying Hector (22.344-5, 349-52):

> Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς·
> μή με κύον γούνων γουνάζεο μὴ δὲ τοκήων· ...
> οὐδ' εἴ κεν δεκάκις τε καὶ εἰκοσινήριτ' ἄποινα
> στήσωσ' ἐνθάδ' ἄγοντες, ὑπόσχωνται δὲ καὶ ἄλλα,

[131] See also Schein (1999) 352-6 and Wilson (2002) 248 for a discussion of the similarities between these two passages.

οὐδ' εἴ κέν σ' αὐτὸν χρυσῷ ἐρύσασθαι ἀνώγοι
Δαρδανίδης Πρίαμος ...

> Swift-footed Achilles scowled and said to him: "Don't, you dog, supplicate me nor appeal to my parents.... Not even if they gathered and set up here ten, even twenty times the ransom, and promised still more, not even if Dardanian Priam ordered to pay your weight out in gold...

Finally, when Odysseus is pursuing the Ithacans, whom Athena's sudden appearance has sent into headlong flight, it is the goddess herself who must stop Odysseus from destroying all his own countrymen (24.526-48). This recalls an equally important scene in the *Iliad* in which Athena stops Achilles from killing Agamemnon (1.188-222). It is after all a result of this quarrel that Achilles is partly responsible for the countless deaths that ensue among the Greek forces at Troy. In other words, Odysseus in the last few lines of the poem is coming dangerously close to becoming an Achilles, and is only stopped by Athena's warning. Odysseus finally does relent, recalling his former self-restraint, brought on by none other than the very same goddess of good counsel.

In addition to inviting the audience to compare the two heroes, Odysseus' adoption of Achillean behaviors and attitudes in Ithaca also underscores the dangers associated with the employment of brute force. While Odysseus certainly must regain control of his household

and his kingdom, the means of accomplishing such a task also threaten to undermine the very thing that the hero wishes to establish: a peaceful kingdom.[132]

Conclusion

As we have seen, then, the poet, since he endows Odysseus in the Ithacan sequence with Cyclopean and Iliadic characteristics, while also granting him his usual *metis*, does not simply argue for the priority of *metis* over *bie*. Odysseus' superiority over Achilles, in fact, lies in his capacity to employ both qualities equally. In other words, it is not simply a matter of brain vs. brawn. Odysseus' ambidexterity, so to speak, is neatly summed up in these lines from the *Iliad* (11.5-9):

> στῆ δ' ἐπ' Ὀδυσσῆος μεγακήτεϊ νηῒ μελαίνῃ,
> ἥ ῥ' ἐν μεσσάτῳ ἔσκε γεγωνέμεν ἀμφοτέρωσε,
> ἠμὲν ἐπ' Αἴαντος κλισίας Τελαμωνιάδαο
> ἠδ' ἐπ' Ἀχιλλῆος, τοί ῥ' ἔσχατα νῆας ἐΐσας
> εἴρυσαν, ἠνορέῃ πίσυνοι καὶ κάρτεϊ χειρῶν·
>
> [Hera] stood on Odysseus' black, wide-bellied ship, which was in the very middle, to shout out to both sides, both to the huts of Ajax, son of Telamon, and to that of Achilles, for they had beached their well-balanced ships at either end, trusting in their manliness and in the might of their hands.

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[132] As Cook (1995) 152 puts it, "The *Odyssey* affirms that the very qualities which make heroism possible inherently threaten the social order, even as they are used to punish the suitors for their crimes against it. ... The *Odyssey* does not shrink from dramatizing the paradox of cultural foundation: as Odysseus restores order he becomes assimilated to the forces of disorder."

Both Ajax and Achilles take the outer positions, presumably the more open to attack, precisely because they trust in their physical prowress.[133] Odysseus, on the other hand, assumes the middle position, one which could be considered less heroic but perhaps more emblematic of his avoidance of extremes, a hero more fully integrated and in tune with the troops.[134]

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[133] For an interpretation of Odysseus' place in the Catalogue of Ships and in the arrangement of the ships at Troy, see Clay (1999a) 363-7. While I agree with Clay's reading of the significance of this passage, I would add that the position of the passage in the *Iliad*'s narrative also contributes to such a reading. There are two parallel scenes that frame the embassy to Achilles in Book 9 and the *Doloneia* in Book 10: 8.222-6 and 11.5-9. In the first, Hera motivates Agamemnon to rouse the troops, which he does from the prow of Odysseus' ship; in the second, quoted above, Eris lands on Odysseus' ship immediately after the *Doloneia*, a scene in which Odysseus' *metis* receives special notice. It is perhaps noteworthy that Diomedes carries out the violent activity (*bie*) in the *Doloneia*, while Odysseus plays the role of adviser and planner of events (*metis*); in other words, the *Doloneia* can be seen as a dramatic enactment of *metis* working with *bie*. Additionally, since Diomedes is an ersatz Achilles in this portion of the *Iliad*, his co-operation with Odysseus perhaps highlights the failure of Agamemnon to effectively employ Achilles in this war against the Trojans. Moreover, the position of Odysseus' ship on the shores of Troy mirrors the position that the *Doloneia* takes in the narrative. That is, the *Doloneia* immediately follows the failed embassy to Achilles (Book 9) and immediately precedes the *aristeia* of Agamemnon (Book 11), two heroes in this poem who lay claim to the title of 'Best of the Achaeans'. Perhaps this suggests that the pair Odysseus/Diomedes, the combined operation of *metis* and *bie*, would be a better choice to lead the war against the Trojans. Moreover, each time that Achilles and Agamemnon either quarrel or attempt to reconcile, Odysseus can be found in their midst as a kind of mediator. In addition to the example from Books 9-11 discussed above, after the assembly has been dismissed in Book 1 and Agamemnon is about to send his men to take Briseis, Odysseus is the one who escorts Chryseis to Chryses and ends the plague. That scene is immediately followed by Achilles' withdrawal to the shore and his interview with Thetis. Thus, Odysseus' useful trip interrupts the hostility of the earlier events in Book 1 and contrasts sharply with Achilles' subsequent prayer to Thetis for revenge. Likewise, after the death of Patroclus, when Achilles wishes to return to battle in Book 19, Odysseus not only ensures that Agamemnon present Achilles with Briseis and the other gifts, but he also argues most effectively against Achilles that the men need a break from the fighting.

[134] His argument with Achilles about the soldiers' need to eat before entering battle (19.215-37) is an excellent example. So, too, is his silencing of Thersites and the restraining of the troops in the *Diapeira* of Book 2.

This nexus of Achillean, Cyclopean and Odyssean themes is reiterated by the inclusion of details from the story of the sacking of Troy in Odysseus' return to and eventual reintergration with Ithaca and the Ithacans. As Demodocus' stories in Phaeacia vindicated Odysseus' approach to the overthrow of Troy, so the same hero, employing similar devices in new situations, overcomes the obstacles that beset him at home. We hear from Helen, for example, that Odysseus disguised himself as a beggar in order to enter Troy town and obtain vital information (4.244-61); in Ithaca he also takes on the role of beggar, but this time to enter a beseiged house, the first step in the recovery of his kingdom.[135] Similarly, in the cave of the Cyclops, he took on an assumed name (*Outis*), which facilitated his escape; and in order to avoid that monster's clutches, he hid himself and his men under the belly of sheep (9.424-36). Now, in Ithaca, he calls himself Aethon and, on the night before the *mnesterophonia* when he readies himself for sleep, he lies down under the fleece of sheep that have been killed by the suitors (20.1-3). This detail recalls the cave of the Cyclops, but now instead of hiding under the ram to escape, he is literally wrapped in an emblem of the suitors' consumption of his goods; nevertheless he must endure the suitors' outrageous behavior and their sexual liaisons with his maids to ensure that he will be able to exact complete vengeance from them. Yet he is only able to succeed by resolutely assuming another persona and suffering, as at Troy and in the cave, the consequences of the adoption

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[135] This parallel is already noted by the Q scholiast (Dindorff [1855] vol. 1, 197).

of a false identity. Like Proteus, Odysseus always appears able to penetrate and escape by means of disguise, himself a sort of shapeshifter. Like Helen in Troy, only Penelope is able to cause Odysseus to reveal himself by her clever lie about their marriage bed.[136] Throughout the poem Odysseus *in propria persona* is in charge of his own representation and story, but on that one occasion he is finally caught, like Proteus by Menelaus, and forced by Penelope to reveal his true self.

By revisiting Trojan war themes in Odysseus' recovery of his home, the poet has brought the Trojan story full circle: the hero who brought down Troy by a ruse, regains his home by a ruse. While the *Cyclopeia* told by Odysseus and the stories about him in Troy (related by Helen, Menelaus, and Demodocus) set out Odysseus' claim to *metis* and *doloi*, it is the poem's end that highlights his *bie*, but a *bie* tempered with *metis*. Thus, Odysseus in Ithaca recalls the Cyclops, but he does not become the Cyclops. In the *Cyclopeia*, the

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[136] Helen alone recognized Odysseus in Troy (4.250), and after bathing him she finally extracted from him his plans for taking Troy (4.251-8). Penelope's behavior at times is also reminiscent of Helen's. In fact in one passage (23.215-30), in an attempt to explain her own hesitation in accepting Odysseus' claim to be her husband, she actually exonerates Helen, saying that she would not have left her husband and home had she known that she would be led back home again and that so many men would die on her behalf. She had no real recourse since, according to Penelope, she was led on by a god. This is an implicit comparison of Helen and Penelope (Heubeck [1992] 337). It also reminds us that Penelope, like Helen, is the cause of the death of many men. The difference, of course, is that Penelope, unlike Helen, has been proved faithful, and her husband has recovered her without the help of an army. In fact, it is possible to see in the characters of Penelope, Clytemnestra, and Helen a pattern similar to that in Odysseus, Agamemnon, and Menelaus. As Odysseus wins renown for his clever homecoming (vs. Agamemnon's) and for his wife's fidelity (in this he more fortunate than both Agamemnon and Menelaus), so does Penelope stand out as exceptional when compared to the faithless Helen and the treacherous Clytemnestra.

competition was of *metis* vs. *bie*. Now, at home in Ithaca, it is *metis* joined with *bie* vs. the younger generation who possess neither. He recalls the *Cyclopeia* only to outdo it. Likewise, he recalls Achilles, only to outstrip him. In other words, the Achilles themes that appear in the *Odyssey* are there to remind us of the competition our hero has with the hero of the *Iliad*. But unlike Achilles, who in this poem is known simply for his glorious death and failure to take Troy by storm, championing only one element of the *metis/bie* polarity, Odysseus is now revealed as the man who unites that apparent polarity that is nowhere more vividly described than in the *Cyclopeia*. Hence, the intertwining of the Cyclopean and Achillean themes. As with the comparison of Odysseus with Agamemnon and Achilles discussed above, where we saw that both heroes were necessary to represent the two arenas in which Odysseus ultimately triumphs (*nostos* and *kleos*), so, too, do Achilles and Polyphemus highlight two additional aspects of our hero. In a comparison with Polyphemus, Odysseus' cunning is clearly emphasized. But, through the use of *bie*, Odysseus is able to do what Polyphemus could not: punish his enemies. And what of Achilles? The hero represents not only *bie* in this poem but, and perhaps equally important, the rewards of *kleos* from a glorious death in battle. Achilles himself is made to undercut this type of *kleos* in the poem when he claims that it would be better to be a poor man on earth than a king in the underworld (11.488-91). This admission proclaims that Odysseus' successful *nostos* makes Odysseus the more blessed and ultimately a greater hero than one who dies bravely and

gloriously in battle. The Iliadic ideal of glory on the battlefield loses its pride of place when viewed from the perspective of the survivors of war. And, again, Odysseus' combination of cunning and force, that synthesis of *bie* and *metis*, is the winning ingredient in his eventual return home and defeat of the suitors and their parents.

Chapter Three: Odysseus and Bands of Young Men

In the *Odyssey* there are from the outset numerous incidents in which groups of young men play an important role. These youths can be separated into three discrete units: 1) the companions of Odysseus, 2) young noble men in Scheria, 3) youthful suitors in Ithaca. Odysseus' interaction with these three groups is vital to the plot of the poem: he loses the first group, faces a challenge to his honor with the second, and by overcoming the third he clears the way for the final reintegration into his *oikos* and the resumption of the kingship of his land. These three sequences are linked together by our poet with a variety of repetitions: scenes, motifs, situations, attitudes, and behaviors.

I am not the first to suggest that these three groups be compared. Horace already connects the three in his *Epistles*.[137] More recently at least two scholars noted the three bands of young men shared some similarities.[138] More recently still, Bruce Louden has discussed some of the ways that these three groups are linked and what this connection might mean. While I agree with Louden's arguments for connecting the three parties, I differ in my

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[137] *Epistle* I.2.24-31 (cf. Louden [1999] 14, n. 65). Horace considers the Phaeacians as given over to luxury, an accusation already hinted at in the scholia to *Odyssey* 8.100 and 248; see Dickie (1983) 244 for additional references to the attitude of the ancients toward the Phaeacians. For a discussion of this passage in Horace see Mayer's (1994) commentary on this section, 115-16. While he does not include the crew of Odysseus, Rose (1969) 391 does see an implied comparison between the young men of Phaeacia and the suitors of Penelope, particularly in the use of the term *hyperphialoi* to describe them both.

[138] Powell (1977) 33, Farron (1979-80) 87.

conclusions regarding the import of such a linkage.[139] That is, I concur with Louden's stated methodology, looking at patterns of repetition and noting how the differences suggest questions and perhaps answers, but his interpretation of these three groups relies in the main on their similarities. He argues, with resort to Near Eastern parallels (principally the Sodom and Gomorrah story from *Genesis*), that all the three are linked because they are all punished by a divine power. That is he sees Odysseus' return and revenge on the suitors as belonging to another story type that features the breaking "of a divine interdiction followed by an angry god destroying a large population."[140] Though the idea is intriguing, the Phaeacians cause Louden some difficulty since their fate is left uncertain in the poem, and Louden is forced to appeal to the Phaeacian ship that Poseidon turns into a rock (petrifying, of course, the entire crew) as the link that keeps these three groups and his interpretation (that each major sequence ends in an apocalyptic scene of divine vengeance) intact.

In our interpretation of these three groups, what these repetitions with differences suggest will be our focus.[141] Just as Odysseus' journey from people to people offers the

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[139] Louden (1999) 14-30, 31-4, 90-103. He follows Kearns (1982) 2-8 and Reece (1993) 181-7 in this theoxenic interpretation.

[140] Louden (1999) 95.

[141] That there are three groups of young men here and not four or two does not support Louden's thesis of the importance of three in composition. This simply happens to be the number the poet used to make his point on this particular occasion. The many couples (the most prominent are: Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, Menelaus and Helen, Alcinous and Arete, Hephaestus and Aphrodite) in the *Odyssey* that provide paradigms of matrimonial harmony or the lack thereof, against which Odysseus and Penelope are to be judged, make this clear.

audience some perspective on the variety of governments and societies available to mankind,[142] so too do these three groupings of young men afford comment on the nature of government and those governed: Odysseus' relationship to his men, Alcinous' to his subjects, and the Ithacans to the suitors and to Odysseus. Perhaps another way of putting it is that this poem is also a story of generational conflict and how best to handle the education of the young and successfully transfer power to the succeeding generation without bloodshed. Young men are also at a transitional point in a culture and represent a danger to the established order; generational conflict is inevitable, but a society and its individuals can be judged by the way each channels or directs those youthful energies toward a positive end or its opposite. The Trojan war, the many years away from Ithaca, and the long return trip home, all bring to the fore such issues in a rather dramatic and stark fashion, highlighting the very real problems that arise when men return home from a prolonged conflict.

We will proceed topically, listing each shared element and discussing the examples. Finally, we will attempt an interpretation based on these shared elements, noting what is like and what is different and what those differences tell us.

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[142] See, for example, Clay (1983) 125-32, Austin (1975) 132-78, and Vidal-Naquet (1996) 38-53.

All three groups abuse Odysseus

From the moment we are introduced to Odysseus' companions they are uncompliant. On their very first stop on the return voyage home (9.39-66), intent on pillaging and pleasure they disregard Odysseus' advice to take the recently won booty and run. They pay dearly for this decision when the other Cicones rally to their defeated townsmen's aid. After several incidents occur, however, that call into question Odysseus' leadership skills or, at least, his judgment, real divisions begin to be seen between Odysseus and his men. Having suffered a considerable loss of comrades (*Ciconeia*, *Cyclopeia*) and most recently all of their ships and crew but one (Laestrygonian episode), his men begin to chafe under his command.

While the abusiveness of the crew is largely limited to one outspoken individual, Eurylochus, it is clear, at least in the final incident on Thrinakia, that the other members of the crew share his sentiments. On the island of Aeaea, Eurylochus directly accuses Odysseus of poor leadership and faults him for the loss of the lives of his fellow crew members (10.435-7):

> ὥς περ Κύκλωψ ἔρξ', ὅτε οἱ μέσσαυλον ἵκοντο
> ἡμέτεροι ἕταροι, σὺν δ'ὁ θρασὺς εἵπετ' Ὀδυσσεύς·
> τούτου γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο.
>
> Just like the Cyclops did when our mates entered his sheeps' pen, and with them went impetuous Odysseus. Those men died because of *his* folly.

Here the crew does not rally behind Eurylochus, instead they side with Odysseus and plead with him to spare Eurylochus' life and leave him beside the ship (10.428-45). Odysseus does

just that, and Eurylochus, not wanting to be left alone on the beach, grudgingly follows them to Circe's lair.

The most direct confrontation and one that clearly shows Odysseus' loss of command happens when they arrive at the island of Thrinacia (12.261ff.). Once again, Odysseus warns his men that they should not stop, and once again Eurylochus leads the abusive complaint (12.278: αὐτίκα δ' Εὐρύλοχος στυγερῷ μ' ἠμείβετο μύθῳ), charging Odysseus with heartlessness and lack of concern for his men's welfare (12.279-93). This time we hear that not only does Eurylochus complain, but all his companions heartily agree with his rebuke (12.294: ὣς ἔφατ' Εὐρύλοχος, ἐπὶ δ' ἤνεον ἄλλοι ἑταῖροι). We move, then, from individual complaints to corporate mutiny.

The situation in Phaeacia, however, is quite different. Odysseus' stay there is notable for the generally good hospitality he receives at the hands of the Phaeacian nobles. Yet all is not perfect, and there is some indication early on that not all the citizens are so favorably disposed to visitors. First we hear from Nausicaa that Odysseus should avoid being seen with her for fear of meeting some of the insolent (*hyperphialoi* 6.274)[143] inhabitants of her

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[143] An epithet they share with Penelope's suitors and Polyphemus (9.106). For this epithet used of the suitors, see note 158 below. The only time in the poem that this epithet is used of a positive character is when the suitors express amazement and anger that Telemachus has arrived safely in Ithaca and avoided their ambush (4.663, 16.346). This usage illustrates the importance of perspective. From the point of view of the suitors, Telemachus has accomplished something with possibly dangerous repercussions for them. For a discussion of the use of this adjective to describe the Phaeacians, see Rose (1969) 390, and 387-406 for a fine analysis of the quality of the *xenia* of these important hosts of Odysseus.

society. She adds that the sight of the two of them together might rouse some jealousy on the part of her suitors (6.273-88). And when Athena, in the guise of a young girl, gives Odysseus a brief history of the island's inhabitants, she informs him that not all of the islanders appreciate visitors (7.30-33). Nausicaa's concern about her fellow citizens' possible reaction to the stranger are realized in the course of the athletic games in Book 8. Here a group of young noble men are competing for prowress in a public arena. The instigator of the challenge to Odysseus is actually Alcinous' son Laodamus (8.132-157). His request seems innocuous enough, and Odysseus, while offended by the invitation to compete, politely refuses.[144] The tension is almost instantly increased when Euryalus steps up and accuses Odysseus of being some sort of lowly captain of a merchant ship, a man concerned with the making of money and not versed in the noble arts of athletics (8.158-64). While Laodamus' invitation to Odysseus to try his hand at some athletic event is motivated simply by youthful exuberance, Euryalus' abusive comments stem from another motive. He, unlike Laodamus who is Nausicaa's brother, represents the hopes and jealousies of the other young men on Phaeacia for Alcinous' daughter. This scene, however, does not end in bloodshed, or even portend more trouble, for Alcinous agrees that Odysseus is rightly outraged by the

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[144] Though Odysseus' response (Λαοδάμα, τί με ταῦτα κελεύτε κερτομέοντες;) to Laodamus at 8.153 implies that he perceives a slight against him in this request, too. Rose (1969) 390-1 sees this word choice (κερτομέοντες) as a deliberate attempt by the poet to indicate hostility, not simply teasing, as Rose notes that it can occasionally signify.

young man's comments, and he calls for music and dancing, revising his earlier comments about the pursuits (athletic and otherwise) in which his people excel (8.235-55).[145] The song of Ares and Aphrodite is sung, followed by a virtuoso dance performance, and it is only then, when both parties to the offense have been entertained and humored that Alcinous asks Euryalus to make amends to Odysseus for his foolish comments.

The instances of abuse heaped upon Odysseus by the suitors are too numerous to recount and discuss each one. This fact alone tells us something about the nature of the relationship of the suitors to the other two groups. The suitors are the most transgressive. As with the other two groups, it is primarily the leaders who are openly abusive towards Odysseus, yet the distribution of blame is greater and more developed among the suitors than with either Odysseus' men or the Phaeacian youths. This is, in part, because the story of the suitors of Penelope takes up nearly half of the entire poem, while the other two groups receive varying degrees of attention.

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[145] In 8.101-3 Alcinous had just said that he wanted to demonstrate to his guest how the Phaeacians excel all others in boxing, wrestling, jumping, and running. Now, after Odysseus challenges any and all to compete with him in all contests but the foot race, Alcinous drops the first two categories, and adds new ones (to do with food, drink, dance, dress, and sleep) that could hardly provoke Odysseus. Rose (1969) 402-4 rightly questions Alcinous' ability as ruler and host here, noting that Alcinous does not ask Euryalus to apologize immediately, but that he only does so after Odysseus' complimentary remarks about the excellence of the Phaeacian dancers. Rose asserts that it is Odysseus who manipulates the situation and manages it so skillfully (by praising the dancers) that he actually ends up being the beneficiary of Alcinous' largess.

Aside from Melanthius, whose abusive languange and threats to Odysseus at the spring Neriton before Odysseus actually arrives in Ithaca proper (17.212-53), the suitors' initial response to his presence is kind and even compassionate when, at Athena's instigation, Odysseus makes his rounds asking for handouts from the suitors. They enquire into his origins and feel pity for his beggarly condition (17.367-8),[146] and they give food to him without stint and complaint. The real hostility from the suitors is initially limited only to Antinous, who takes exception to Odysseus' begging at his table (17.375-9). Antinous is so incensed by the beggar's presence and persistence that he actually hits Odysseus with a foot-stool (17.462-3). Once again in this first instance of mistreatment of the guest, the other suitors somewhat surprisingly respond to Antinous' violence with outrage and concern, reminding Antinous that sometimes the gods travel among men in disguise and observe their behavior (17.483-7):

> 'Αντίνο', οὐ μὲν κάλ' ἔβαλες δύστηνον ἀλήτην.
> οὐλόμεν', εἰ δή πού τις ἐπουράνιος θεός ἐστι·
> καί τε θεοὶ ξείνοισιν ἐοικότες ἀλλοδαποῖσι,
> παντοῖοι τελέθοντες, ἐπιστρωφῶσι πόληας,
> ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες.
>
> Antinous, you didn't do right to hit the wretched wanderer. You're a dead man, if he's some god from above. The gods take on the guise of foreigners from afar, all types, and wander about the cities and take note of men when they're violent and when they're good.

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[146] οἱ δ' ἐλεαίροντες δίδοσαν καὶ ἐθάμβεον αὐτὸν / ἀλλήλους τ' εἴροντο, τίς εἴη καὶ πόθεν ἔλθοι. "And they took pity on him and gave (food) to him and looked on him in wonder and asked each other who he was and whence he came."

As the scenes in Ithaca progress, however, the burden of guilt is eventually spread across a wider spectrum of the suitors.[147] Eurymachus soon joins Antinous in heaping abuse on Odysseus, and here, too, Eurymachus is led on by Athena. First he makes fun of the beggar's bald pate (18.346-55), then when Odysseus' response irritates him, like Antinous he attempts to hit Odysseus with a foot-stool (18.394-6). He misses and hits a servant instead. The suitors' response is now slightly different. This time all complain that the beggar's arrival has brought with it an interruption of their pleasures in the *dais* (18.399-404). When Telemachus suggests they employ self-control and perhaps head home, Amphinomus stands up and seconds Telemachus' advice, and so the night ends peacefully (18.405-21).

Finally, to these two, is added the scene in which Ctesippus also throws something at Odysseus (20.284ff.). Once again we are told that Athena has decided to goad the suitors on to brazen acts to further embitter Odysseus against the suitors 20:284-6:

> μνηστῆρας δ' οὐ πάμπαν ἀγήνορας εἴα Ἀθήνη
> λώβης ἴσχεσθαι θυμαλγέος, ὄφρ' ἔτι μᾶλλον
> δύη ἄχος κραδίην Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος.
>
> Athena did not allow the arrogant suitors to entirely quell their heartbiting abuse so that pain might yet penetrate further the heart of Odysseus, son of Laertes.

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[147] Compare the same type of progression among the companions of Odysseus, who initially rebuke Eurylochus for his complaints to Odysseus (on the island of Aeaea) and finally take his side against Odysseus on Thrinakia.

In a scene intentionally reminiscent of Polyphemus,[148] Ctesippus offers to give Odysseus a *xeinion*, and like Polyphemus before him, Ctesippus' offer is sarcastic. Unlike the first two instances in which the suitors as a group refrained from abusive behavior, now when Agelaus stands up and tries to check any further outburst they all break out in raucous laughter, which incites Theoclymenus' prophecy. And all are thereby implicated in this gross mistreatment of the beggar.

Folly

In the very first lines of the poem, the narrator describes Odysseus' companions as foolhardy and responsible for their own deaths (1.6-9):

> ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὡς ἑτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἱέμενός περ·
> αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
> νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἠελίοιο
> ἤσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.
>
> But not even so did he save his companions, though he longed to; for they perished by their own folly, the fools, who devoured the cattle of Helios Hyperion. Then he took from them their day of homecoming.

The conjunction here of the two words νήπιος (foolish) and ἀτασθαλίη (criminal folly) are important. The primacy in the poem of the concept of deserved punishment (in this case

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[148] The narrator introduces Ctesippus (20.287: ἦν δέ τις ἐν μνηστῆρσιν ἀνὴρ ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς) with the same words that Odysseus used twice of Polyphemus (9.189: ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ἤδη, and 9.428: τῇσ' ἔπι Κύκλωψ εὖδε πέλωρ, ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς), and Ctesippus' cruel offer of the ox's hoof as a *xeinion* is surely meant to recall the earlier scene in the Cyclops' cave; see also Reece (1993) 139 n. 22 and Saïd (1979) 31-2.

death) for one's own foolish behavior is made clear by the repetition of the same language in fewer than fifty lines. Zeus applies this term to Aegisthus' behavior in the matter of wooing Clytemnestra, when he says (1.32-5):

> ὢ πόποι, οἷον δή νυ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται.
> ἐξ ἡμέων γάρ φασι κάκ' ἔμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
> σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν,
> ὡς καὶ νῦν Αἴγισθος ὑπὲρ μόρον Ἀτρεΐδαο
> γῆμ' ἄλοχον μνηστήν, τὸν δ' ἔκτανε νοστήσαντα,
> * * *
> νῦν δ' ἀθρόα πάντ' ἀπέτισεν.
>
> Damn, look how mortals blame the gods. They say their ills come from us, but they themselves suffer beyond their fate because of their own folly, as even now Aegisthus beyond his fate wed the wife of the son of Atreus, and killed that man when he returned home. ... Now he has paid all in full.

If it were not already apparent that Odysseus' companions sowed the seeds of their own destruction, Zeus' musings on the fate of Aegisthus clearly link the two seemingly unconnected incidents on the level of culpability.

While the killing of the cattle of the Sun is the most notable example of the crew's folly, the attribution of foolhardiness is applied to Odysseus' companions on several other occasions. As mentioned above, the first place they stop on their way home is the land of the Cicones. Their behavior here is not only insubordinate but also foolish, as Odysseus notes (ἔνθ' ἦ τοι μὲν ἐγὼ διερῷ ποδὶ φευγέμεν ἠμέας / ἠνώγεα, τοὶ δὲ μέγα νήπιοι οὐκ ἐπίθοντο [9.43-4])[149], because by ignoring his advice they lose six men from

[149] "Then I urged that we high tail it out of there, but the fools, ignorant fools, did not obey."

each ship to the enemy.[150] Finally, we encounter in Odysseus' retelling of events for the Phaeacians a more fully developed narrative of the events that lead up to the killing of the cattle of the Sun and the subsequent destruction of Odysseus' men. And here, Odysseus, warns them twice about the dangers associated with the cattle of the Sun, noting that they should eat the provisions given them by Circe and avoid the folly that would lead them to kill any of the island's herd animals (12.297-302):

> Εὐρύλοχ', ἦ μάλα δή με βιάζετε μοῦνον ἐόντα.
> ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν μοι πάντες ὀμόσσατε καρτερὸν ὅρκον·
> εἴ κέ τιν' ἠὲ βοῶν ἀγέλην ἢ πῶϋ μέγ' οἰῶν
> εὕρωμεν, μή πού τις ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῇσιν
> ἢ βοῦν ἠέ τι μῆλον ἀποκτάνῃ· ἀλλὰ ἔκηλοι
> ἐσθίετε βρώμην, τὴν ἀθανάτη πόρε Κίρκη.
>
> Eurolochus, you really overpower me, since I'm alone here, but come now all of you swear a mighty oath. If we come upon some herd of cattle or great flock of sheep, no one in their witless folly will kill either a cow or any sheep; but restrain yourself, and eat the food that the goddess Circe gave us.

To be sure, Odysseus' companions fail to heed this warning only after their food supplies run out. Whether it is fair to accuse Odysseus' companions of the same sort of bad behavior as the suitors is not the point here;[151] it is clear, however, from the language the poet uses

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[150] Seventy-two men (we learn later [9.159] that there were twelve ships that accompanied Odysseus home) is not an insignificant number. There is also the incident with the bag of winds from Aeolus (10.28ff.), which both highlights Odysseus' distrust of his crew and their lack of trust in his honesty to them as a commander.

[151] For more on the ambiguity of the evidence against Odysseus' crew, see below. Nearly all would agree, however, that the failures of the crew are less extreme than those of the suitors, who controvert the laws of hospitality and actively seek to kill the poem's hero and son. But the suitors themselves, while they are a dangerous group of young men, are incapable of carrying out the threats that they make. As Odysseus gains more power in the household, the suitors inversely become less effective in pursuing their goals. The best

throughout the *Odyssey* that he is setting up a pattern of behavior and reprisal that meets its ultimate fulfillment in the punishment of the suitors.

On the island of Scheria, there is really very little to mention in the way of overtly foolhardy behavior, with the exception of the behavior of the young men. And here, as with Odysseus's men, only one individual represents the group. Odysseus is, after all, a possible suitor for the hand of Nausicaa, at least in the eyes of the young men assembled here. They have not all been privy to Odysseus' refusal of the offer of marriage from her father,[152] but they have noticed his priority of place in the palace of Alcinous. Their feeling of envy and rivalry concerning Nausicaa may account for this one serious flaw in the otherwise exemplary hospitality afforded Odysseus by the Phaeacians.[153] Nausicaa herself wishes to have such a man as Odysseus for her husband (6.244-6), and she even mentions that the locals might think that she has brought this stranger from afar as her husband (6.275-84), snubbing the local suitors' advances. Euryalus' treatment of the guest, though, is considered

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example is Amphinomus' suggestion, after an eagle flies by with a dove in its talons, that their plot against Telemachus will not prevail so they might as well turn their attention to eating (20.240-7). The suitors voice no objections, immediately drop the matter, and turn happily to slaughtering animals for their upcoming meal.

[152] Alcinous' offer (7.311-5) is somewhat odd and foolhardy, if we are to take him seriously. He offers and nearly dismisses it in one line. For more on Alcinous as a host and ruler, see below.

[153] That is not to say that the Phaeacians do not falter initially in their behavior towards Odysseus. It is noted quite early on that there are hostile people among the citizens, and that Alcinous is not the best host (Echeneus has to remind him that a guest ought not be left sitting in the ashes on the floor). But this oversight seems primarily motivated by an attempt to heighten the narrative tension in scenes that will prove the Phaeacians a hospitable people, especially when we consider the juxtaposition of Odysseus' treatment here vs. that which he receives in Ithaca.

inexcusable, an action that he will repent of later. But it is Odysseus' response to Euryalus' challenge that we need to focus on for a moment. Odysseus chides the young man, claiming that his mind is not commensurate with his looks (8.166-8):

> ξεῖν', οὐ καλὸν ἔειπες· ἀτασθάλῳ ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας.
> οὕτως οὐ πάντεσσι θεοὶ χαρίεντα διδοῦσιν
> ἀνδράσιν, οὔτε φυὴν οὔτ' ἂρ φρένας οὔτ' ἀγορητύν.
>
> Friend, you have not spoken properly. You seem to me to be a foolish man. Thus, the gods do not give charm to all men, neither shapeliness, nor wits, nor the ability to speak well.

Odysseus' choice of words here is key; he says that Euryalus is like a foolish man, using the same marked term (ἀτάσθαλος) that the narrator uses so often of Odysseus' crew and especially of the suitors. Odysseus does not stop here, however, but proceeds to accuse Euryalus of appearing noble while actually being base. Both the language and the circumstance is repeated in Odysseus' later rebuke of Antinous when the young nobleman is the only suitor to refuse to give the beggar any food (17.454).[154] Fortunately for Euryalus the incident ends without any violence and the offender makes public amends, offering an apology and a gift to Odysseus.

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[154] A similar rebuke of Antinous by Penelope is made at 16.418-20. Ironically, while Odysseus makes the claim that the gods do not distribute good looks and good speaking skills evenly to men, he is admired for exactly both of these qualities among the Phaeacians.

Lack of self-control

In the first scene that we witness the actions of Odysseus' men, albeit through Odysseus' account, they clearly display a lack of self-control. After successfully sacking the city of the Cicones, they break out into drinking and eating and ignore Odysseus' warnings of danger (9.45-6: ἔνθα δὲ πολλὸν μὲν μέθυ πίνετο, πολλὰ δὲ μῆλα / ἔσφαζον παρὰ θῖνα καὶ εἰλίποδας ἕλικας βοῦς, "There much wine was drunk straight, and they slaughtered many sheep by the seashore, and many shambling, spiral-horned cattle"). This is not the first time that the army has been too much given to wine and excess. Nestor tells the story of the return of the army from Troy, and he notes that the Atreidae called an assembly when the men were drunk and unruly (3.137-40):

> τὼ δὲ καλεσσαμένω ἀγορὴν ἐς πάντας Ἀχαιούς,
> μάψ, ἀτὰρ οὐ κατὰ κόσμον, ἐς ἠέλιον καταδύντα, –
> οἱ δ' ἦλθον οἴνῳ βεβαρηότες υἷες Ἀχαιῶν, –
> μῦθον μυθείσθην, τοῦ εἵνεκα λαὸν ἄγειραν.
>
> The two summoned all the Achaeans to an assembly, recklessly and not properly, as the sun was setting—the sons of the Achaeans came drunk with wine—the two made their proclamations, why they assembled the people.

And then there is Elpenor, whose death in Circe's palace is a result of his excessive drinking (οἰνοβαρείων, ἀθέσφατος οἶνος [10.552-61, 11.51-65]), which may be taken to represent the general behavior of the men during their stay at Circe's, where they are said to eat and drink abundantly for an entire year (10.467-8: ἔνθα μὲν ἤματα πάντα

τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν / ἥμεθα, δαινύμενοι κρέα τ' ἄσπετα καὶ μέθυ ἡδύ).[155]

Finally, at the island of Thrinacia, we observe in Eurylochus' words a crucial difference between Odysseus and his men with regard to endurance, a form of self-control (12.279-83):

> σχέτλιός εἰς, Ὀδυσεῦ, περί τοι μένος, οὐδέ τι γυῖα
> κάμνεις· ἦ ῥά νυ σοί γε σιδήρεα πάντα τέτυκται,
> ὅς ῥ' ἑτάρους καμάτῳ ἀδηκότας ἠδὲ καὶ ὕπνῳ
> οὐκ ἐάας γαίης ἐπιβήμεναι, ἔνθα κεν αὖτε
> νήσῳ ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ λαρὸν τετυκοίμεθα δόρπον
>
> You're harsh, Odysseus. Sure, you beat the rest of us in endurance—never get exhausted. You've got to be made entirely of iron, not letting us, your companions, racked by exhaustion and teased by sleep, to disembark where we could make a fine meal on a sea-splashed island.

Eurylochus harps on Odysseus' steely nature. He is able to endure exhaustion and sleeplessness far beyond that of the rest of his men.[156] Eurylochus has a point: the men are exhausted, and the dangers of the future are often easily disregarded in favor of present relief from hunger and tedium; they lack the self-control that will be so necessary to Odysseus' survival among the suitors.[157]

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[155] "There for an entire year we sat, feasting on boundless meat and sweet wine." For more on this theme of drinking to excess, see Louden (1999) 38-40.

[156] Of course, Odysseus does happen to fall asleep at the most inopportune times, and both occasions harm him and his men (after their departure from Aeolia, and here again on Thrinacia).

[157] Much-enduring (πολύτλας) is, in fact, one of Odysseus' distinctive epithets. For a discussion of this aspect of Odysseus, see Pucci (1987) 45-9 and Cook (1995) 60-65.

The Phaeacians as a whole rarely exhibit lack of self-control,[158] and this principally in the person of Euryalus, who taunts Odysseus, and is unable to restrain his feelings of rivalry. He is, the narrator tells us, the best and finest looking of the young men after Laodamus (8.115-7), which may account for this one overt failure in the Phaeacians' initially awkward but eventually excellent hospitality: that is, he sees in Odysseus a potential rival for Nausicaa's hand.

The suitors on Ithaca, on the other hand, constantly exhibit excessive behavior. Words used to describe them and their actions are often prefixed with *hyper-*.[159] They share with Odysseus' men a lack of restraint with regard to food and drink. On several occasions, some of the most offensive things said and done by the suitors are accompanied by exessive drinking.

All of the above examples demonstrate how the three groups of young men are linked together. In the following examples, the lines that connect the groups of young men are clear but not inclusive. That is, there are numerous elements that Odysseus' crew shares with the

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[158] Again, this depends on how one reads the Phaeacians' manner of living. The reading favored as early as our scholia and adopted by Horace (see note 1 above) accuses these people of hedonism, a charge not completely off the mark since, in Alcinous' own words, the Phaeacians excel the rest of men in dining, dancing, dressing, bathing, and sleeping.

[159] ὑπερβασ-: 3.206, 13.193, 22.64; ὑπερβι-: 1.368, 4.321, 14.92, 14.95, 16.315; ὑπερηνορεοντ-: 2.266, 2.324, 2.331, 4.766, 4.769, 17.482, 20.375, 21.361, 21.401, 23.31; ὑπερφιαλ-: 1.134, 1.227, 2.310, 3.315, 4.774, 4.790, 13.373, 14.27, 15.12, 15.315, 16.271, 17.481,18.167, 20.12, 20.291, 21.285, 21.289.

suitors but not with the Phaeacian young men, and conversely there are some features that the Phaeacian young men share with the suitors but not with Odysseus' crew.

Leaders cannot control their charges

Odysseus' crew clearly offers its leader some resistance over the course of the return trip home. For the Phaeacians, however, things are very different. Alcinous is honored by his people and rules them with fairness.[160] It is worth noting that on the one occasion that Alcinous overtly fails to act appropriately (i.e., his delayed response to Odysseus' original supplication), Echeneus quickly reminds him of the proper guest-host behavior. This is important because Echeneus, a Nestor-like figure, represents the wise older councilor whom the king obviously reveres and honors for his sage advice.[161] In other words, the hierarchical status of age and wisdom and kingship is quite intact on this remote island nation.

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[160] It is true that Arete presents something of a problem for Alcinous. Nausicaa tells Odysseus to bypass her father and supplicate Arete to be sure of a homecoming. Arete speaks out of turn in the intermezzo, and, only after Echeneus reminds the queen that she is not the decider (11.335-53), Alcinous clumsily reasserts his authority as king. Nevertheless, the largely tranquil and peaceable society on Scheria does not show many signs of internal trouble.

[161] For another way of reading this exchange between Echeneus and Alcinous, see Rose (1969) 395. Rose recalls the conversation between Menelaus and Eteoneus from Book 4 (20-36), in which the king corrects his subordinate's suggestion that they dismiss rather than host the recently arrived strangers, Telemachus and Peisistratus. While I agree with Rose that Menelaus here represents the importance of the king in establishing proper *xenia*, Echeneus' age and wisdom puts him in a different category (more like a Nestor figure) than Eteoneus, who is truly a subordinate (θεράπων) of Menelaus and not his counselor.

The suitors, even more than Odysseus' men, have no regard for authority, which highlights their transgressive nature. At first glance it looks as if the suitors have no leaders and, therefore, that they should not be included in this discussion of the relationship of rulers to ruled. But in the power vacuum created by the absence of Odysseus, the elder men of Ithaca, the very fathers of many of the suitors themselves, should control their sons. As the assembly convened by Telemachus in Book 2 makes clear. Aegyptius, the old man who inquires respectfully into the occasion for the assembly, has four sons, one of whom was killed by Polyphemus, two work on their father's farm, and the fourth is one of the suitors (2.15-24).[162] When Mentor stands up to register his complaint about the suitors' behavior, he blames the people of Ithaca for not putting a stop to their excesses (2.239-41):

> νῦν δ'ἄλλῳ δήμῳ νεμεσίζομαι, οἷον ἅπαντες
> ἧσθ' ἄνεῳ, ἀτὰρ οὔ τι καθαπτόμενοι ἐπέεσσι
> παύρους μνηστῆρας κατερύκετε πολλοὶ ἐόντες.
>
> But I'm actually angry with the rest of the people, since all of you sit here silent, nor do you, though you are in the majority, rebuke and restrain the suitors, who are but few.

Leocritus' response to Mentor is as abusive and dismissive as Eurymachus' was earlier to Halitherses' augury. Clearly here the suitors neither respect religious figures (Halitherses), nor elder statesmen (Mentor), nor even their own fathers (Aegyptius).

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[162] The narrator's brief introduction to Aegyptius serves at least two purposes: 1) it shows just how much the Ithacans have suffered directly and indirectly at the hands of Odysseus; 2) it also clearly links the suitors with Odysseus' crew.

Divine warnings

The warning to Odysseus' crew not to eat the cattle of the Sun is repeated on several different occasions. As noted above, they decide under the pressure of extreme hunger to disregard this warning, killing and eating the cattle anyway.[163]

Poseidon's warning to the Phaeacians via Nausithous, however, is a very different type of warning.[164] It is more of a statement about Poseidon's jealousy of the Phaeacians' effortless travel over the sea as they ferry strangers to distant destinations (8.564-71). No clear reason is given why Poseidon begrudges the Phaeacians for their ferrying services except that in some way this may lessen his *tīmē*. How this is so is unclear, but perhaps they threaten with their ships to tame the untameable sea.[165] Furthermore, this warning that Alcinous has heard has is only tangentially related to the group of Phaeacian young men, who happen to be the ones selected to transport Odysseus. Moreover, the Phaeacians, unlike the suitors, have not treated their guest in an outrageous fashion nor disregarded the gods.

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[163] Clay (1983) 213-39 reviews previous opinions of the culpability of the crew and the theodicy of the *Odyssey* in general; Cook (1995) revisits the topic; most recently Newton (2005) 135-46, through an investigation of the *Ciconeia*, comes to the conclusion that Odysseus himself might be as much to blame as his men for their ultimate demise.

[164] It does, however, fit into the pattern that whereever Odysseus goes he causes or suffers pain, and most of his victims have been forewarned of his eventual arrival. For Odysseus as a source of pain to himself and to others, a reflection of the meaning of his name, see Clay (1983) 54-64 and Dimock (1956) 52-70 and (1989) 256-60.

[165] For a different perspective on the Phaeacians vis-à-vis Poseidon, and an argument for Poseidon as a representative of wild and uncivilized nature, the antithesis of Athena, see Cook (1995) 128-39.

Instead, they find themselves in an awkward position: to ferry strangers home may incur the wrath of a god, but to deny safe passage to Odysseus they run the risk of incurring the wrath of the gods for ignoring the needs of their guests.

The suitors receive two different divine warnings. The first has already been mentioned (the augury of Halitherses in the assembly in Book 2). The second is spoken the evening before they die (20.351-7). Theoclymenus, Telemachus' guest and a prophet, suddenly sees the suitors as they will appear the next day, and describes an eerie scene in which the suitors are likened to shades of the dead, their food and the walls spattered with blood. Their response to his prophecy is to deride him and drive him out of the palace.

Punished by the gods

The theme of divine punishment is necessarily connected with the category of divine warnings. Once again, Odysseus' crew have much in common with Penelope's suitors: both are given divine warnings, both ignore them, and both are punished with complete destruction. The Phaeacians, however, are not destroyed. In fact, one of the oddest things about the Phaeacian episode is that we leave them in mid-verse and never learn their fate, whether Poseidon will choose to cover their island with a mountain or not (13.162-87). It is as if they dropped off the face of the poetic earth. And perhaps that is the point.[166]

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[166] For more on the role of Phaeacia in the poem, see below.

Some additional elements that link one group to another

One of the most obvious shared features that links the suitors with the young Phaeacians is that they are both suitors for the hand of a princess/queen. More important, perhaps, is Odysseus' position vis-à-vis both of these competing groups; in each instance the band of young men either mistake his intentions or his position among them. The Phaeacian young men, for example, think Odysseus is a potential rival, when he is not, and so treat him accordingly; the suitors think Odysseus is merely a beggar, and mistreat him, but do not consider him seriously as a rival, which he actually is.

Another point that links the suitors to the Phaeacians is Odysseus' boast that he can handle a bow better than any man of his own time save Philoctetes and would be the first to shoot his man even in the midst of the enemy (8.215-8):

> εὖ μὲν τόξον οἶδα ἐΰξοον ἀμφαφάασθαι·
> πρῶτός κ'ἄνδρα βάλοιμι ὀϊστεύσας ἐν ὁμίλῳ
> ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων, εἰ καὶ μάλα πολλοὶ ἑταῖροι
> ἄγχι παρασταῖεν καὶ τοξαζοίατο φωτῶν.
>
> I know well how to handle a nicely crafted bow, and in the midst of enemy men I would be the first to shoot and hit my man, even if very many companions should stand beside me and be shooting at the men.

The mention of the bow seems unmotivated in the immediate context, since Alcinous does not bring up archery at any time before this, and every other competition to which Odysseus challenges his young opponents is one that has been described previously. Furthermore, the

true aristocratic fighter would use a spear not a bow to fight his enemies.[167] Nausicaa, however, did mention archery to Odysseus (6.270) when she was describing the Phaeacians and their city to Odysseus, but only to dismiss it as an item of interest to her people. The somewhat strained inclusion of the bow motif here is evidence of the poet's desire to link these two groups of young men. Perhaps in the world of Phaeacia, where the way to win honor is through athletic competition and not in battle (8.147-8), this less heroic instrument of war is a more apt choice for our hero to focus on. On the other hand, by emphasizing his prowess in archery, of which the Phaeacians are not practitioners, he is making a boast that will not likely meet any challengers.

In antiquity commentators already noted that Odysseus' boast looks ahead to the *mnesterophonia* in Ithaca.[168] Odysseus not only mentions the bow, the instrument of revenge that he will employ against the suitors, but he also mentions, albeit in passing, the spear, the other weapon that he will wield in Ithaca (8.229). And as the bow in Ithaca takes priority of place, so, too, here it receives greater emphasis than the spear. But through the successful use

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[167] Danek (1998) 151-3 argues that the *Odyssey* here is claiming for the bow a heroic status that is not true of the *Iliad*. This is to miss the point of the contrast between the two modalities that these weapons represent. See Edwards (1985) and Chapter Two above. It is clear from the songs of Demodocus that the Phaeacians are no strangers to tales of heroism in war and would, presumably, be familiar with the spear as the hero's weapon of choice.

[168] QT scholia (Dindorff [1855] vol. 1, 373); cf. Kirk (1962) 290, Lang (1969) 166, Hainsworth (1988) 359 n. 215-18, Cook (1995) 149, Louden (1999) 16.

of both Odysseus is able to defeat his enemy.[169] Odysseus' brief outburst, then, creates a connection between the Phaeacian young men and the suitors of Penelope.

In the opening scenes of the poem, the suitors of Penelope and Odysseus' crew are closely connected by their actions and the poet's use of vocabulary. The suitors are described as sitting on the skins of cattle that do not belong to them and that they themselves have killed (1.108). Their actions link what Zeus has just said about man's suffering beyond what is fated to the narrator's comment in the proem that Odysseus' companions died by their own folly because they devoured the cattle of the Sun (1.7-9: οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἠελίοιο/ἤσθιον).[170] Not only is the word that will be so important for this poem (ἀτασθαλίη) repeated by Zeus, but the slaughter of the cattle, a deed emblematic of the folly of the companions of Odysseus, is a feature they share with the suitors. This series of interlocking repetitions forms the narrative net that will eventually ensnare the young men who court Penelope.

The suitors and Odysseus' companions are linked again with regard to what they eat. The grotesque description by the narrator of the blood-stained food that the suitors eat (20.348: αἱμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον) finds its counterpart in the equally disturbing

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[169] For the importance of the combination of the bow (weapon of the *lochos*) and spear (weapon of the *promos aner*) in the vengeance of Odysseus, see chapter one above.

[170] A similar expression is used several times of the suitors to describe their 'excessive' consumption of Odysseus' herds and goods: 2.76-7 ὑμέας ἐσθέμεναι κειμήλιά τε πρόβασίν τε᾽/ εἴ χ᾽ ὑμεῖς γε φάγοιτε; 3.315 and 15.12 κατὰ πάντα φάγωσι.

picture of the feast on the cattle of the Sun, in which steaks bellow and moo in protest at their treatment and as a sign of divine wrath (12.394-6) [171]:

> τοῖσιν δ'αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα θεοὶ τέραα προὔφαινον·
> εἶρπον μὲν ῥινοί, κρέα δ'ἀμφ'ὀβελοῖσ'ἐμεμύκει,
> ὀπταλέα τε καὶ ὠμά· βοῶν δ'ὡς γίνετο φωνή

> And immediately then the gods made appear before them omens: the hides crawled, the meat on the spits bellowed, both the cooked and the raw meat. And the sound was just like that of live cows.

While the immortal cattle of the Sun, although dead, continue to act out in their several parts what they had done as whole animals previously, the suitors are described by what their individual parts are doing while they are still whole, which perhaps looks ahead to their imminent death and physical dissolution. Athena has knocked them out of their wits (20.346: παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα). Their eyes fill with tears, they laugh with other men's jaws, and their hearts lament; yet they are completely unaware of what is actually happening to them (20.347-9). It is as if they have been stripped, momentarily, of all volition. This description of Athena's intervention is immediately followed by Theoclymenus' ominous prophecy, in which the suitors are said to be covered in darkness and surrounded by spectres of the dead in a room whose walls and pillars are splattered with blood (20.351-7). Thus, both scenes function as a warning, but a warning that comes too late.

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[171] Louden (1999) 32-5.

Finally, in at least two places, a character in the poem links the suitors with Odysseus' crew.[172] In one of Odysseus' Cretan Tales, in this case recounted to Antinous, Odysseus describes how his sailors gave into their own folly, despite his advice, and so were destroyed (17.425-41). While these sailors are not, strictly speaking, Odysseus' crew, the story is certainly modeled on his actual crew's behavior among the Cicones. In the second, after the death of the suitors, Antinous' father, Eupeithes, notes that Odysseus not only destroyed the men he sailed with to Troy but now, upon his return, has killed many of the best men from Ithaca (24.426-9).

Interpretation

Now if these three groups are similar and ought to be considered together, several questions arise: why does the poet link them and what is gained from this connection? How are they different, and how might that help us in formulating answers to these questions?

While each of the three bands of young men interact with Odysseus in some fashion, the relationship of each to Odysseus is quite different. With the suitors it is one of unmitigated antagonism toward an apparent intruder and outsider; with the crew, a sometimes healthy but ultimately failed interaction between a military leader and his men; with the Phaeacian young men, a brief antagonism and rivalry toward an outsider and older

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[172] Olson (1995) 63 cites these two passages and comments briefly on the link between the two groups.

rival for the hand of a young woman. Odysseus' arrival, absence, or presence is a cause of some turmoil or uncertainty in each group, and this disturbance brings to the forefront in each case questions of governance; that is, the relationship of the ruler to the ruled. We will examine, then, the various ways in which this topic is handled and what it might suggest.

It has been said that the *Apologoi* of Odysseus to the Phaeacians prepare the audience for what is to come on Ithaca, and that it also offers "a powerful initial comment on the question of how men behave (misbehave) in groups and how they must be handled as a consequence."[173] Olson argues that the average man generally makes poor decisions and that subjection of the will to the good leader results in life and success, even when all the facts of a situation are unclear. This he claims is evident from what happens to Odysseus' crewmen, who obviously make some bad decisions, while Eumaeus, Philoetius, Eurycleia and Telemachus, all of whom only know partial aspects of Odysseus' plan and yet submit freely to his leadership, fare quite differently.

While I agree that the relationship between Odysseus and his men is primarily political (i.e., one of a leader to his men) rather than personal, the importance of the wandering tales lies in the situation that Odysseus and his men find themselves, a situation which also is at play on Ithaca. The current status of Odysseus' crew and the people of Ithaca

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[173] Olson (1995) 63. He also remarks (61) that Odysseus' tales of wandering describe a "series of political rather than personal developments, as Odysseus' relationship with his men slowly deteriorates and they bring about their own ruin."

are both the direct result of the Trojan War. The crew no longer belongs to a social group that contains fathers, mothers, wives, siblings and children. They are freed from the social constraints that can act as natural curbs to their youthful appetites. Its behavior among the Cicones, Lotus Eaters, and cattle of the Sun, for example, show that the crew is constantly, though it wishes to return home as strongly as its leader, in danger of losing its homecoming because of its pursuit of immediate pleasures. Not even Odysseus is completely immune to the allure of rest, food, sex, and wine, as his prolonged stay with Circe demonstrates.[174] Similarly, on Ithaca, with the removal of the king[175] and in the absence of any governmental structure,[176] the suitors have assumed the role of soldiers on campaign, which is to plunder and pillage other men's property, above all, in relation to eating and drinking. In the midst of these two negative portraits of the results of war, Phaeacia appears to be an ideal land, with an ideal political structure, a place where peace and order reign supreme. One of its poetic purposes is to emphasize the chaos and upheaval that characterizes Ithaca in Odysseus' absence. But it is a mistake, I think, to treat Phaeacia as a goal or a template, as Olson does, that the poet wishes either his hero or his audience to strive towards.

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[174] The one occasion on which his men had to remind him of the importance of the return home (10.472-4).

[175] Who, if we credit Olson's reading of the suitors, is like a father figure of the state. In fact, numerous characters (Athene, Telemachus, Mentor, Penelope, Eurycleia) describe Odysseus' rule as gentle as that of a father.

[176] They have not had a public assembly in twenty years (2.25-7). Their fathers are present, but, without the authoritative presence of the 'father' of the state, they appear unable to restrain their sons.

There are several key elements of the Phaeacian episode that tie into some larger themes in the poem that should cause us to rethink the 'idyllic' nature of Phaeacia. First is the relationship of Arete to Alcinous: every couple that we meet in the poem offers us a point of comparison with Odysseus and Penelope, the couple that represents true *homophrosyne*, a goal that Odysseus asserts is the happiest state.[177] First we hear of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, a woman mismatched with her husband, and one treacherous to boot. We also witness the interaction of Helen and Menelaus, who on the surface appear to have a happy relationship, but over the course of Telemachus' stay we become aware of a sort of miscommunication and disparity between Menelaus and his queen.[178] Helen, in at least three scenes (the recognition of Telemachus [4.138-46], the stories of Odysseus in Troy [4.241-89], the augury for Telemachus [15.169-78]) appears to have an intellect that is superior to her husband's, who seems a bit unsure and occasionally slow. There are several reasons to consider that this is also true of Alcinous and Arete. Odysseus is told by Nausicaa and Athena (in disguise) to bypass Alcinous and seek out Arete for surety of a trip home (6.310-12, 7.75-7). Arete is said to be honored by her husband and the people of the city like no other woman (7.66-74). Odysseus appears to construct the first half of the *Nekyia* in such a way as to appeal particularly to his female host, whose appreciation of his efforts is made

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[177] In his first conversation with Nausicaa, Odysseus claims that the best thing to hope for is a like-mindedness between husband and wife that results in grief to their enemies and joy to their friends (6.181-5).

[178] Thalman (1992) 44-6 contains a nice description of this lack of communication between the husband and wife.

clear by her outburst that Odysseus is her guest and that the people should not be so eager to send him on his way without more gifts (11.335-41). When the Phaeacian elders all leave the palace for the evening, it is Arete, not Alcinous, who asks the most perceptive question of Odysseus (7.234-9): if you came here from elsewhere, who gave you the clothes that you are wearing? And on Odysseus' departure from the island, his last words are not directed to Alcinous but to Arete, blessing her, her family, and her home (13.56-62). Finally, when Echeneus praises Arete's comments but censures her forwardness, Alcinous clumsily asserts that such decisions belong to him alone since he is king (11.348-53). The phraseology of his assertion is reminiscent of Telemachus' fledgling and bungled attempt to assert his manhood for the first time with his mother in Ithaca: compare Alcinous' words (πομπὴ δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει / πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ δήμῳ [11.352-3]) to Telemachus' response to Penelope (μῦθος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει / πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ([1.358-9]). Both characters appear to lack real authority and attempt to overcome this deficiency by strong verbal assertion.[179]

Alcinous himself adds to the sense that he is not necessarily as astute as his wife or daughter. After a brief conversation with the stranger, he actually offers his daughter's hand to a man whose name he does not even know (7.311-15). One may argue that this is merely rhetorical, since Odysseus had just asserted that he wanted conveyance home, and this offer

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[179] A point also made by Martin (1993) 236-7 and reiterated by Lateiner (1995) 144.

of marriage is a safe way to honor this unexpected guest.[180] But surely there are ways to honor a guest that do not involve the possibility of social upheaval. We have, after all, just heard from Nausicaa how the Phaeacians would be quite angry if they saw Odysseus walking back into town with her (6.273-88). A concern for the rights of suitors and their feelings is important; and yet Alcinous is ready to dismiss his subjects' claims to his daughter's hand without any hesitation or concern for what social chaos might ensue if his guest takes him up on the offer. The brief but potentially disastrous altercation between Odysseus and Euryalus in Book 8 illustrates what hostility these young suitors harbor against this honored guest.

If Phaeacia is supposed to be a model society,[181] then its leaders should represent model behavior, but, as this brief review of Alcinous' behavior shows, his leadership skills are at least suspect. This is a leader who invites Odysseus to watch the young men compete in athletics so that his guest can later relay the greatness of the Phaeacians to the Ithacans (8.102-3). There is nothing amiss here, but once Odysseus throws the discuss and all the Phaeacians cower at the mere sound of this whirring disc, Alcinous backtracks rapidly, drops boxing and wrestling from his list of Phaeacian *aristeiai*, and now insists that his people are the best only in dancing, eating, dressing, and sleeping (8.246-9).[182] From his behavior here, it is likely that were he to to meet the suitors in his house, he would simply relinquish the

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[180] As do Ahl and Roisman (1996) 62-3.

[181] As, for example, Olson (1995) 184-223 sees it.

[182] Compare Dickie (1983) 237-76, especially 252-4.

palace to the young men. After all his father Nausithous did just that when his people suffered repeated attacks by the Cyclopes (6.4-8). They have opted for a peaceful and secluded existence, and one that necessarily precludes heroism.

Then there is also something about Scheria that is sterile, despite Alcinous' flourishing gardens.[183] Aside from one named individual, Rhadamanthus, the just judge in Hades, no one ever appears to arrive on the island or to leave it.[184] And, as on the island of Aeolus, the noble family on Scheria is very closely connected; Arete is, after all, Alcinous' niece.[185] Like Aeolus and his incestuous children, whose perfectly even numbers of male and female allow for no increase or decrease in population, this circularity of existence on Phaeacia, broken momentarily by Odysseus' arrival, is certain to return whether Poseidon surrounds them with a mountain or relents and leaves their island as is. For after Poseidon turns the ship that ferried Odysseus to Ithaca to stone, Alcinous urges his people to pray to Poseidon for mercy and no longer to offer escort to anyone who arrives on the island (13.180-3). The result, then, is that Scheria will eventually become, albeit on a larger scale

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[183] Even the guard dogs in Phaeacia appear to be both immortal and, hence, non-generative (7.91-4).

[184] 7.321-4. Presumably, therefore, this escort took place many years before.

[185] 7.54-5 and 7.63-8 seem to contain a contradiction: the first passage appears to say that the Alcinous and Arete are children of the same parents (ἐκ δὲ τοκήων / τῶν αὐτῶν), while the second clearly indicates that Arete is Alcinous' niece. For one discussion and resolution (that τοκήων must mean here 'ancestors') of the problems of this passage, see Hainsworth (1988) 324-5. Vidal-Naquet (1996) 51, would like to press the point of possible incest a bit further and notes that there is in the ancient tradition some evidence that Alcinous and Arete are brother and sister; he adduces the scholia (B.P.Q.T., Dindorff [1855] vol. 1, 325) to *Odyssey* 7.55, where Hesiod is said to have thought the two were brother and sister.

than Aeolia, a society wholly turned in on itself.[186] As such, the people of Scheria and their government, while both appear perfect in their home environment and serve as an indictment of the suitors' treatment of strangers, can not really be a functional model for kingship or the king's subjects in a world such as Ithaca's that is not only exposed to war but also to the other constant of human existence: change. Change in polity, change in status, change in welfare, change in war.

We return now to the crew and the suitors, whose stories bookend the Phaeacian episode. As mentioned above, the two groups are both inextricably linked to the Trojan War.[187] While the crew labors without homeland and seeks to return to it, the suitors bring the elements of war to the homeland. That is, the latter's consumption of the house of Odysseus is described in terms similar to the pillaging and plundering done by the crew among, for example, the Cicones.[188] We will look first at the crew of Odysseus.

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[186] For a discussion of Aeolia as a circular and endogamic society without decrease or increase, a stagnant state, see Clay (1985) 285-91. Both Clay and Vidal-Naquet (1996) 51-3 comment on the many similarities between the two peoples and their situations. For a different view of Aeolia, one that interprets this lack of increase or decrease as the representation of the twelve winds, see Austin (1975) 133-5.

[187] Again, this is most clearly exemplified in the narrator's description of Aegyptius' four sons (2.17-22).

[188] Compare, for example, these lines describing the suitors' behavior (βοῦς ἱερεύοντες καὶ ὄις καὶ πίονας αἶγας, / εἰλαπινάζουσιν πίνουσί τε αἴθοπα οἶνον [2.56-7, 17.535-6]) with these applied to the crew of Odysseus among the Cicones (ἔνθα δὲ πολλὸν μὲν μέθυ πίνετο, πολλὰ δὲ μῆλα / ἔσφαζον παρὰ θῖνα καὶ εἰλίποδας ἕλικας βοῦς [9.45-6]). For a discussion of this language and the suitors' conflation of the elements of the banquet and the distribution of booty, see Saïd (1979), especially 23-4.

The tale of wanderings can be read as a description of the social dissolution that results when men are removed from the steady constraints of a society. In order to keep his men in line and bring them home safely, Odysseus must take on the roles of king, father, and homeland all at once (10.406-21), an impossible task despite his heroic nature. On the island of Aeaea, for example, Odysseus' companions are momentarily relieved at the return of their commander, who is, in fact, likened to their homeland (10.414-6). But their joy is only temporary. Just as they all, including Odysseus, face the temptation to forget their *nostos*, so does the crew forget that Odysseus is their 'home' away from home. This is no surprise when we consider that Odysseus is no longer surrounded by the trappings of society to buttress his authority: there are no parents on the ship to stress the importance of obedience, and no wives and children present to urge restraint.[189] What the men do on these all male forays is to plunder, pillage, and feast; this is, after all, the only payment that they would receive for their efforts.[190] The relaxation of many of the normal rules of society for such an extended duration surely had to have an effect on the men's subsequent behavior.

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[189] See 2.64-9 for Telemachus' appeal to just this sort of public shame and divine censure in his attempts to persuade the Ithacans to oust the suitors from his home.

[190] They complain about the fact that they are coming home empty-handed (10.34-45). This is likely an exaggeration, but the disparity between commander and crew still remains an issue. They do say that Odysseus has brought much booty on board from Troy (his share of the spoils would presumably be greater than theirs; Sarpedon and Glaucus' discussion [*Iliad* 12.309-28] of their privileges and responsibilities as leaders supports this 'unfair' [from the crew's point of view] division), but Odysseus asserts that they divide the booty up evenly after they defeat the Ciconians (9.41-2). What spurs them on to look into the sack now is their suspicion and assertion that he gets many a guest gift (*xeinion*) from all the people that he meets (these belong, evidently, to

The gradual[191] dissolution of order due to the suspension of societal norms may be the larger problem that our poet is attempting to discuss in the story of the wanderings and the men's disobedience to their leader and their eventual death. That is the poem examines, among other things, the difficulties that men face when away from home. On the other hand, one could attempt simply to fault Odysseus as leader,[192] but his intentions toward his crew appear to have been honorable, and for the most part, if we can believe his and the poet's version of events, he did what he could do to protect them, even when he put their life in danger because of his own recklessness, as he did in the *Cyclopeia*.[193] The evidence for

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him alone), which may explain his acquisitiveness and why he insists on staying in Polyphemus' cave in anticipation of a *xeinion*. The greater the host, the more magnificent the gift.

[191] While the crew is disobedient on its very first stop (*Ciconeia*), on the second (Lotus Eaters) Odysseus appears to regain his ability literally to whip his men into shape, binding them under the benches despite their complaints (9.98-104). Odysseus, however, undermines his authority by disregarding his men's sage advice to leave the Cyclops' cave as soon as possible (9.224-30). Odysseus begins to show signs of distrust toward his men after Aeolia (10.31-3), and his men reciprocate that distrust when they open the bag of winds (10.34-47). Next his crew make another equally foolhardy decision to anchor themselves in a bay with a very narrow inlet (10.90) when they arrive at the land of the Laestrygonians. Finally, it is in this atmosphere of mutual distrust that the crew mutiny on Thrinacia.

[192] As, for example, Newton (2005) does in the events among the Cicones (see note 162 above).

[193] In the proem the narrator vouches for Odysseus' desire and efforts to save his crew (1.5-6), and his exchange with Circe about the danger of Scylla illustrates Odysseus' wish to protect his crew from danger. His response to Circe's assertion that six will have to die is to ask if there is a way to save his crew, perhaps by fighting the monster (12.112-4: εἰ δ' ἄγε δή μοι τοῦτο, θεά, νημερτὲς ἐνίσπες, / εἴ πως τὴν ὀλοὴν μὲν ὑπεκπροφύφοιμι Χάρυβδιν, / τὴν δέ κ' ἀμυναίμην, ὅτε μοι σίνοιτό γ' ἑταίρους, "Come now, goddess, tell me this truly; is there some way I could avoid the destructive Charybdis, and fend off that other one when she tries to harm my mates?"). Later, when Odysseus first espies Scylla and Charybdis, he exhorts his men to maintain order and keep rowing despite their fear; he adds that he did not tell them about Scylla (12.223-5: Σκύλλην δ' οὐκετ' ἐμυθεόμην, ἄπρηκτον ἀνίην, / μή πώς μοι δείσαντες ἀπολλήξειαν ἑταῖροι / εἰρεσίης, ἐντὸς δὲ πυκάζοιεν σφέας αὐτούς, "But I did not go on to speak of Scylla, an impossible trouble,

Odysseus' culpability in the loss of his crew is clearly ambiguous.[194] Just a brief look at the Aeolian episode will illustrate the ambiguity of the evidence.[195] On the initial departure from the floating island, Odysseus does not share the duty of controlling the sail on his ship (he goes without sleep for nine days) and finally falls asleep as a result (10.31-3). This very lack of trust and secretiveness on his part is what leads to his crew's decision to open the bag of winds. Perhaps this all could have been avoided had he informed his men what was in the skin, but if we look ahead to Thrinacia, when his men were forewarned of the dangers of killing the cattle of Helios, we see that they did not heed his words even then. Though there, too, Odysseus appears to withhold some of the details about the extent of the danger that his men will suffer if they ignore Circe's warning (12.271-6, 297-302, 320-3). There is also the story of Menelaus' return (4.351-592), which is strikingly similar to Odysseus'.[196] He, too, is stuck on an island, his men are starving, he walks off alone. Unlike Odysseus on Thrinacia, a god (Eidothea) pities him and ultimately leads him to Proteus who gives him information that

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lest somehow my mates, in their fear, cease rowing and bunch all together inside"). This is clearly an example of a leader who does not want to accept the fact that he can not save all his men. Thus, his decision to arm himself when he approaches' Scylla's cliff despite Circe's advice to the contrary (12.226-30). In the end, he does accept the loss of a few to ensure the survival of the majority.

[194] For a discussion of the poet's desire to promote a more positive view of Odysseus than the traditional material would suggest, see Clay (1983) 34-8.

[195] Despite the arguments of some, for example, Cook (1995) 114-27 and Louden (1999) 20-3, 98-103, who indict Odysseus' men. In support of the evidence on behalf of the crew as either exculpatory or at least ambiguous, see, among others, Heubeck (1954) 85-7 and Focke (1943) 247-54 [exculpatory], and Fenik (1974) 212-3 [ambiguous].

[196] Powell (1977) 55-6 and (1970) 419-31.

will save him and his crew. Menelaus and nearly all his men make it back home late but safe. Perhaps we are supposed to think that Menelaus is a better leader. Hardly likely. The difference in the two episodes is the intervention of the gods: they help Menelaus, they do not help Odysseus and his men. Furthermore, Menelaus' men had no temptation of forbidden food to induce them to commit sacrilege. Odysseus, by walking off alone to pray to the gods for some way out, follows Menelaus' pattern. This appears to shift the blame upon the crew: if they had been more longsuffering, Odysseus may have prevailed upon the gods' mercy. But, ultimately, the evidence is inconclusive. Odysseus obviously makes mistakes as a leader: too suspicious of his men (Aeolia); too curious about the Cyclops' cave and then too concerned about his boast to Polyphemus, which follows heroic protocol but endangers his companions' lives (*Cyclopeia*); too forgetful of his *nostos* for a year (Circe). His men, also, as subordinates make many mistakes: they disregard his advice (*Ciconeia*); fall prey to the sweet oblivion of the Lotus Eaters' fruits; are suspicious of their leader and open the bag of the winds; apparently ignore their commander's hesitation and lay anchor in the harbor of Laestrygonia; insist on stopping, despite Odysseus' warnings, at Thrinakia.

War fosters and even demands a different set of morals or at least behaviors that are antithetical to those of a society at peace. This reversal of normal controls perhaps encourages unruly behavior. With victory comes pillaging and the enjoyment of those items plundered from the defeated, which can also lead to excesses in behavior. Nestor's

recollection to Telemachus of the final assembly summoned by Agamemnon after the sack of Troy offers another vivid portrait of just this sort of thing (3.137-40):

> τὼ δὲ καλεσσαμένω ἀγορὴν ἐς πάντας Ἀχαιούς,
> μάψ, ἀτὰρ οὐ κατὰ κόσμον, ἐς ἠέλιον καταδύντα,
> οἱ δ' ἦλθον οἴνῳ βεβαρηότες υἷες Ἀχαιῶν,
> μῦθον μυθείσθην, τοῦ εἵνεκα λαὸν ἄγειραν.

The emphasis here is on the the poor judgment of the leaders who try to call an assembly at this time, the disorderliness of the men, and their drunkeness. This theme of drunken behavior is pervasive in the descriptions of the activities of the crew on its return trip home.[197] And one of the crew, Elpenor, even dies from overindulgence in alcohol (10.551-60). Though the suitors are also known for this behavior,[198] Antinous himself actually lectures Odysseus on the dangers of overdrinking (21.287-310).[199]

It is even possible to see in the crew's progressively disobedient behavior the result of time spent without even the limited restraints of the army as organized in Troy.[200] As we

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[197] For the theme of excessive drinking by the crew and the suitors, see Louden (1999) 32-40, especially 38-40.

[198] For example, 2.57-8, 20.252-5, 21.69, 21.263, 21.270-5.

[199] Certainly meant to be ironic since the one who needs to heed his own words is the speaker not the beggar to whom they are addressed.

[200] For example, in the *Iliad* (2.185-211) we witness Odysseus' extraordinary ability to bring to a stop the almost disastrous flight of the army to the ships. And there, importantly, he wielded the scepter of king Agamemnon, a symbol of power and authority. This outstanding action of Odysseus proves the point that even on campaign there remain some communally recognized emblems of authority—in this case, the royal scepter. Odysseus here was also not acting in complete isolation. While he singlehandedly began the process of stopping the men from deserting the battlefield, his action was ultimately supported by the other leaders of the Achaean army, some of whom were aware of Agamemnon's intentions (those at the meeting of elders with Agamemnon [2.53-75]), and some not.

saw above, the crew is disobedient in its very first stop in Ismarus. Its disgruntled attitude is again present in the bag of the winds incident.[201] When Eurylochus confronts Odysseus on the island of Aeaea and points out their leader's rather poor decisions which cost many men their lives, the crew, though Eurylochus' opinions may have been representative of the others, falls in line and rejects, at least in Odysseus' presence, Eurylochus' negative assessments of their commander's ability to lead. Finally, on Thrinacia, once again at Eurylochus' instigation, they concur with Eurylochus' complaints, and their actions here rise to the level of mutiny (12.297: ἦ μάλα δή με βιάζετε μοῦνον ἐόντα). While at this point they are not yet fully apprised of the danger that lies on the island, they are informed that both Circe and Teiresias have warned Odysseus to shun the island:

> κέκλυτέ μευ μύθων κακά περ πάσχοντες ἑταῖροι,
> ὄφρ' ὑμῖν εἴπω μαντήια Τειρεσίαο
> Κίρκης τ' Αἰαίης, ἥ μοι μάλα πόλλ' ἐπέτελλε
> νῆσον ἀλεύασθαι τερψιμβρότου Ἠελίοιο·
> ἔνθα γὰρ αἰνότατον κακὸν ἔμμεναι ἄμμιν ἔφασκεν.
>
> Though you are hard pressed, comrades, listen to my words that I may tell you about the oracles of Teiresias and Aeaean Circe, who greatly insisted that I shun the island of Helios, giver of joy to men; for there, she said, lay our most troublesome danger.

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[201] The Laestrygonian episode may also be included here. There is no mention that they disobeyed Odysseus by entering the harbor, but the possibility remains.

Though Eurylochus' arguments are persuasive, mentioning as he does the hazards of travel by night (12.284-90),[202] the crew had no reason at this time to doubt the goodwill of Circe's advice. Whatever, if anything, the crew may have learned from this incident about the value of listening to one's leader is lost with their destruction by the thunderbolt of Zeus.

The situation on Ithaca is really the obverse side of the same coin: instead of watching the 'inevitable' breakdown of command in a body of young men meandering their way home, we witness what happens when the command structure is removed from a society and its remaining authority figures (primarily the suitors' own fathers [2.51, 24.455-7]) are not willing to restrain the young men who, as young men, naturally wish to assert themselves in opposition to the older generation.[203] Nowhere is this generational conflict more evident than in the assembly summoned by Telemachus in Book 2. Here, both Halitherses, Mentor, and Telemachus appeal to both the suitors and their elders to stop this abuse and to be checked by their mutual shame before their own citizens and even neighboring peoples

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[202] Cook (1995) 114 has objected to the idea that travel by night was dangerous in the Mediterranean, noting Telemachus' nightime trip to and from Pylos. This is to overlook the fact that Athena-Mentor was on board the ship on the outgoing voyage, and on the return trip Telemachus was in a hurry to return home and trying to avoid an ambush: dangerous circumstances call for risky decisions. Furthermore, when Odysseus describes his arrival on Goat Island (9.142-8), he insists that some god must have guided them through the moonless night, which, among other things, includes the notion of danger since their ships beached before they saw the land. If the coast had been rocky or contained hidden shoals, they would have been in real danger. Finally, though Cook objects that Odysseus spent ten days and nights at sea on his voyage to Phaeacia, he again ignores the fact that Odysseus had no alternative since we hear of no islands at which he could put in for the night.

[203] For intergenerational conflict in the *Odyssey*, see, *inter alios*, Olson (1995)169-77. For more on this theme, see chapter one above.

(2.64-6). Antinous, however, responds to Telemachus' accusation with the counter claim that Penelope is to blame for the suitors' continued presence in Odysseus' house, and Halitherses and Mentor are verbally abused and dismissed as dottering old fools (2.84-259). Finally, the suitors themselves dismiss the assembly and the people without any further discussion. They have taken charge of the city.

In effect, then, the suitors have turned the political situation into a private one, locating their games, feasting, and entertainment by poets at the house of the king. Lowenstam has argued convincingly that the suitors have here inverted the spheres of *agora* and *megaron*, and that it is Odysseus' place to reestablish those distinctions once again.[204] I would add that because of their residence in Odysseus' house the suitors have, by conflating the two spheres, rendered a public reconciliation or recompense that much more difficult; they have combined public wrongs with personal ones in such a way as to leave the offended party little choice but to defend and protect his honor and his home. This is most evident immediately following the death of Antinous (22.45-59). There Eurymachus appeals to Odysseus to spare the remaining suitors and to consider a possible compensation from them and the people to him. His language is surprisingly political, emphasizing both Antinous' intention to rule Ithaca,[205] Odysseus' relationship to the suitors as their king, and their promise

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[204] (1993) 201-7.

[205] This assertion of Antinous' intentions deemphasizes the personal rivalry that Antinous engaged in as suitor of Penelope and brings the matter back to politics.

to go throughout the kingdom and bring him satisfaction for the food and drink wrongly consumed by them: (ὄφρ' Ἰθάκης κατὰ δῆμον ἐυκτιμένης βασιλεύοι / αὐτός . . . σὺ δὲ φείδεο λαῶν σῶν . . . ἀτὰρ ἄμμες ὄπισθεν ἀρεσσάμενοι κατὰ δῆμον, "So that he (Antinous) could rule the people of well-built Ithaca.... But you spare your own people...and aftewards we'll go about the land and pay you back"). The phrase, 'to spare your own people', is the most pointed and persuasive. Odysseus' response (22.60-7), reminiscent in its harshness of Achilles' merciless rejection of Hector's plea to return his body to his parents for burial (*Iliad* 22.344-54), puts the matter squarely back in the realm of the personal.[206] No compensation would be enough to make amends for the outrage they inflicted on Odysseus and his household.

If the suitors represent Odysseus' struggle to regain his household, the families represent his struggle to retake possession of his kingdom.[207] The poem's final scene with the house of Odysseus arrayed against a large number of Ithacans is both a picture of the glorious

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[206] This reading of the relationship with the suitors as personal and private vs. public is perhaps further bolstered by Olson's argument (1995) 176-7 that the suitors can be viewed as almost surrogate children of Odysseus. They have, after all, usurped the power from their fathers in the first assembly, and they continue to do so now. Odysseus must, then, in the role of father/ruler set aright this wrong, to put the father back in charge of the sons. The assertion that a king is like a father is made in the poem itself on several occasions. Telemachus (2.47), Mentor (2.234), and Athena (5.12) all claim that Odysseus ruled Ithaca as gently as a father (πατὴρ δ' ὡς ἤπιος ἦεν). This fatherly connection to the suitors is further bolstered by the recollection of Eurymachus that Odysseus used often to dandle him on his knee and feed him roasted bits of meat and offer him red wine (16.442-4).

[207] Another argument for the integrity of the lines following 23.296 *usque ad finem*.

return of the king and an image of internal strife created by the absence of that same king. It, too, conflates the public and private. The fathers and brothers of the dead suitors must avenge their slain family members,[208] a typical and even laudable sentiment.[209] The family members of the suitors meet in the place of public assembly to discuss the action they should take to avenge the personal/familial wrongs done to their sons. And, of course, Odysseus and his family, while private, are also members of the royal and public family.

While Odysseus clearly has the upper hand at the poem's end, there are some indications that this is no simple folktale ending. True, the poem does end neatly with the hero in charge, the wicked punished, and the good rewarded,[210] a sentiment succinctly summed up in Odysseus' words to the herald Medon and the poet Phemius, who both just barely escaped death at his hands. As witnesses to the punishment of the suitors, they can now tell others: κακοεργίης εὐεργεσίη μέγ' ἀμείνων, "Good behavior is far better than bad behavior" (22.374). But some issues arise after the death of the suitors, up to and including the final scenes, that should give an audience a sense of unease. First the treatment of the disloyal maids: Odysseus' orders to kill them were harsh enough (22.440-5), but

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[208] Eupeithes mentions the need to avenge these murders or this will be a source of shame for them in the eyes of future generations (24.432-5).

[209] As the example of Orestes makes perfectly clear.

[210] Thalman (1992) 134 suggests that "the poem seems to open up questions about [kingship] but then closes them off with the ideal solution of the righteous king, whose ruler makes the people and all of nature flourish." Despite this observation, Thalman (135-7) also recognizes that just as Odysseus is an ambiguous character so is the poem centred on him, and that the poet has left many tensions unresolved in its ending.

Telemachus' decision to extend their suffering (22.461-73) by hanging them does not bode well for the future of the kingdom.[211] The mutilation of Melanthius, too, again carried out by the king's subordinates, is horrific and disturbing: Eumaeus, Philoetius, and presumably Telemachus cut off his nose and ears, hack off his hands and feet, and rip out his genitals and feed them raw to the dogs (22.474-7).[212] Finally, in the battle scenes with the suitors' family members, the description of Odysseus' actions seems inappropriate to a man who was formerly described as ruling as gently as a father. Even after Athena's voice routs the Ithacans, Odysseus gives a war cry and swoops down upon his own people like an eagle after

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[211] Fulkerson (2002) 335-50 takes the rare position that the slaughter of the maids by Telemachus is actually more apt a punishment for them than death by sword. While she certainly makes some excellent observations, particularly about gender roles in the poem, her argument is ultimately unconvincing. Her basic thesis is that death by sword is more appropriate for men (as a sign of honor) to suffer than for women, and that the murder of the maids by hanging is more in line with female suicides who take their lives by means of rope. She asserts that Telemachus' decision to change his father's orders from death by sword to death by hanging shows the young man's greater understanding of the type of punishment that should be applied to the unfaithful maids.

First, the one male character in the *Odyssey* that appears to have had the most success with and understanding of the female gender is certainly Odysseus. To assert that Telemachus here outsmarts his father, a young man who clearly lacks his father's foresight and capabilities (see chapter one above), in the area of gender politics is in itself a stretch. Second, if death by sword carries with it notions of purity and/or penetration (with its sexual overtones) as Fulkerson insists, why do we witness in the poem itself the death of Cassandra by a sword (11.421-3). Perhaps Clytemnestra used the wrong instrument? Moreover, in subsequent literature there are examples of faithful and unfaithful women who die by the sword: Deianira (*Trachiniae* 929-31) and Clytemnestra (*Eumenides* 592). The latter was surely unfaithful, and one would think that Orestes would want, at all costs, to avoid anything that would suggest sexual penetration with regard to his mother. Finally, if Fulkerson's interpretation is correct, then we would expect that other poets, when meting out punishment to unfaithful women, might have followed the pattern that Telemachus so wisely established.

[212] Saïd (1979) 27 argues that this is a surrogate cannibalism.

his prey (24.537-8). He comes perilously close to killing all his own citizens, despite the fact that they have been completely routed.

Now we can return to our original question about the value of comparing and contrasting these three groups of young men. The companions of Odysseus play an important part in the poem as a model of poor behavior and its punishment. But while this reading is certainly valid, there are other ways to view the importance of the crew in the poem vis-à-vis the other two groups. I have suggested that we read these interactions through the lens of politics: how war affects those governed and governing. While Odysseus' companions and the suitors are very different and have a very different relationship with Odysseus, nonetheless they share this one very important feature. The Trojan War and its aftermath permanently changed their lives. We saw that the crew, perhaps under the long influence of the 'lawless' conditions of war, never took well to obeying their commander, and, eventually, that they turned upon him *en masse*. This is not to suggest that the poet portrayed their errors as worthy of death,[213] but rather that he showed the slow breakdown of law and custom on the long voyage home that is a 'natural' result of so much time spent away from the beneficial controls of society. While Odysseus did make

[213] The majority of Odysseus' men were dead and gone before Thrinacia. And regardless of one's opinion on the guilt or guiltlessness of the crew on that island, nearly everyone would admit that the poet's description of their pitiful attempts at sacrifice is intended to arouse some sympathy for them (12.352-65).

mistakes as a leader, and Eurylochus' complaints about him were often justified,[214] Eurylochus failed in one important respect: he forgot about the importance of their *nostos*. Though his arguments at times are persuasive and his complaints fairly just, he does the one thing that Odysseus almost never does,[215] lose sight of the homeland, specifically at Thrinacia, where he asserts the primacy of the needs of the moment over the greater goal of a return home. Odysseus has the long view, which his men appear to have lacked; that is, he has the ability to endure (*polytlas*) even at times when he foresees no relief from trouble, as he does on the island of Thrinakia.

The Phaeacians, although somewhat different from the other two groups in their relationship with Odysseus, function as an indictment of the suitors' treatment of strangers. But, in the political arena, they also represent a sort of ideal land that even a mediocre king can control. As a place where everyone appears to live in relative prosperity and harmony, Phaeacia offers little practical political advice to Odysseus or to Homer's audience since their experiences border on the utopian. We did discover, however, that despite Alcinous' occasional lapses as leader, his insistence that Eurylaus publicly apologize to the stranger

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[214] Shay (2002) 60-1 and 236-7 takes a very critical approach to Odysseus' leadership qualities. Shay, however, tends to take the side of the common soldier throughout his study, as this quotation makes clear: "If I am unforgiving about Odysseus' failures as a leader that caused the deaths of his men, I am mirroring not only the angry criticism of enlisted soldiers who pay the butcher's bill, but also the demanding standards of the current American officer corps" (61).

[215] With one apparent exception: on the island of Circe he is accused by his men of forgetting their homeland.

emphasized the importance of a strong social structure and adult censure as necessary tools in curbing youthful excesses.[216] Youthful excess can also lead to heroism, but the Phaeacians have opted out of contact with the outside world where heroism can be displayed on the field of battle.

Finally, the situation in Ithaca with the suitors and their relatives offers an analysis of what it means to be king in the real world, a place in which revolt and wrongdoing happen on a regular basis. Odysseus has to assert his control over both the private and public sphere in order to regain his kingdom. But these gains come at a cost. While he recovers his land, his long exposure to war and his desire for personal revenge almost lead him to destroy the very people that make him king. A strategically placed adjective at 24.528 links the crew of Odysseus to the people of Ithaca (καί νύ κε δὴ πάντας ὄλεσαν καὶ θῆκαν ἀνόστους). Now the theme of *nostos* is rife in the poem,[217] and Odysseus and his companions are constantly faced with the threat of forgetting or losing their homecoming. By the end of this poem, to hear a word affiliated with *nostos* inevitably brings to mind the companions of Odysseus. This one adjective (*anostous*), then, joins the lives of the Ithacans to the

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[216] While curbing youthful excess also means discouraging heroism, the poet of the *Odyssey* is primarily concerned not simply with heroism gained through war but with the return of a war veteran to his home and how he is to regain this home successfully without destroying either himself or his people. Odysseus' *kleos* is inextricably linked with his household; see Edwards' (1985) 79-93 discussion of this aspect of Odysseus' *kleos* vis-à-vis Achilles'.

[217] *Nostos* and its cognates occur 170 times in the *Odyssey* (per *TLG* search).

companions of Odysseus. The former almost suffers the fate of the latter, and yet both groups are subjects of Odysseus.

In the post-heroic world of Ithaca, the qualities that are needed for an Odysseus to regain his home and kingdom are not necessarily those that qualify him to be a good leader. Ruthlessness and cunning surely enabled him to defeat the suitors, but when he faces the assembled people of Ithaca it takes the combined efforts of Athena and Zeus to recall him to his former *metis*. The man who knew how to rule, appeal to, and care for the common soldier at Troy,[218] has spent perhaps too much time trusting solely in his own cunning and power. His battle joy and rush upon the Ithacans is a perfect model of heroic behavior, but this is no longer an heroic arena, these people are not Trojan enemies, they are his own subjects.[219]

While poetry's primary goal is to please, as Phemius' patronymic (Terpiades)[220] makes clear, it can also instruct. On the surface, the *Odyssey* pleases us and teaches us by showing how wrongdoers are punished and the faithful rewarded.[221] Athena-Mentor ties up

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[218] In the *Diapeira* of Book 2, for example, he controls the common soldiers with forceful language, he shuts up Thersites to the joy of the general soldiery, and when in Book 19 Achilles wants to rush into battle, Odysseus insists that the men must first eat if they are to fight all day. He evinces an understanding of the common man that is unusual for a hero.

[219] Compare Dimock (1989) 334-5.

[220] Apparently 'son of Terpis' or 'so of Terpius', rendered by Fernández-Galiano (1992) 278 as 'Giver of delight'. See also Pucci (1987) 195-208 for a complex analysis of the role of Phemius and his songs in the *Odyssey*.

[221] Austin (1975) 132, for example, remarks on this two-fold nature of the story of the *Odyssey*, noting that the poet has used the "simple fairy tale—that the good are rewarded and the bad punished—as but the surface for

all the loose ends, making peace between both parties. And we know from Teiresias' earlier prophecy that Odysseus will grow old and blessed with his people flourishing about him. That is the happy ending, but the description of Odysseus' successful return is fraught with problems that are not so simply resolved. Our poet offers us a complex portrait of the nature of war: its effect on men, on government, and on individuals at home.[222] The dark tones that creep in, the murder of the maids, Melanthius' mutilation, the final scenes with the Ithacans, all suggest that the return of war veterans is difficult for both those who fought and those who stayed behind. The peaceful reintegration of the war hero into his homeland is problematic at best. There is no simple answer, and a great poet does not simply state one. Instead, he weaves into this hopeful and pleasant story truths about the world in which we live, truths which bring us, like Odysseus from Phaeacia, back to this world and not away from it.

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another poem which is on the nature of order and the interconnection of different kinds of order, moral and psychological, natural and physical."

[222] For a fresh and unique perspective on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, how both poems accurately depict many elements of modern combat trauma, including PTSD, see Shay (1995 and 2002). While his work is enlightening, Shay often presses the comparison between modern and ancient combat too far.

Conclusion

My goal has been to investigate the use of narrative repetition over long distances in the *Odyssey*. While repetition in all its forms is a very common feature of epic poetry, and not every repetition is meaningful, my approach has been to examine specifically those forms of repetition (scene, motif, theme, speech, and action) that recur frequently over the course of the poem and are inextricably interwoven into the larger plot. I have focused on those repetitions that function almost as mirrors, reflecting back on past events and anticipating future ones. These repeated scenes and motifs are the structural elements in a poetic argument: each new repetition refines, reshapes, or questions previous images, ideas, or actions. While many scholars have examined the role of repetition on this or that element in the poem, most, until recently, have focused on how repeated elements highlight the similarity of the items being compared. The comparison of the suitors to the Cyclops is one such example that relies solely on the repeated similarities and ignores the differences. My approach, on the other hand, has been to follow both Lowenstam and Louden, who look more closely at the differences in the things that are repeated rather than simply the similarities those repetitions contain. This approach has yielded some very interesting results.

In Chapter One, for example, the position and function of the Telemachy in the *Odyssey*, when viewed from this perspective, offered several new insights. Since father and

son both make a sea voyage and face many similar trials, the most common interpretive approach is to assume that the poet is attempting to show that Telemachus resembles his father. That the son resembles his father in certain aspects is true, but the substantial qualitative differences between both their travels and their experiences en route should not be overlooked. While Odysseus' trip comprises the entire known world and beyond, including a trip to Hades, Telemachus' trip remains firmly fixed in the geography of the Mediterranean littoral. We also witnessed this same difference in Telemachus' relationship to the gods, who never appear openly to him in the poem, nor to any other mortal of his peer group. From these differences, I have argued that the Telemachy has such a prominent position and narrative scope because the poet wished to emphasize, from the very beginning, that the world of Ithaca as Telemachus sees it is the post-heroic world that Homer's audience inhabited. In other words, by beginning with the non-heroic world of Ithaca and ending with the same, the *Odyssey* poet has, through the youthful and naïve character of Telemachus, represented the end of the age of heroes.

The *Cyclopeia* of *Odyssey* 9 has captured imagination from the moment it was first sung. It is a showcase for Odysseus' cleverness against the sheer might of the man-eating ogre Polyphemus. Besides adding humor to the story, the themes on display in this episode (the mistreatment of guests, patience and heroism, identity and its loss, brain vs. brawn, etc.) are replayed again on Ithaca. Here, too, most scholars have focused on the similarities

between the Cyclops and the suitors, how the latter in Ithaca reprise Polyphemus' reversal of the norms of *xenia*.

These similarities are surely meant as a condemnation of the suitors, but we have shown in Chapter Two how it is actually Odysseus who becomes Cyclopean in his own home. He returns to Ithaca only to find men eating his flocks. He locks up the suitors in his house, keeps them from alerting the townspeople, and slaughters the suitors as mercilessly and with as much force as the Cyclops destroyed his own men. Odysseus, however, is not simply like the Cyclops either. He combines all the cunning of his own mind with the force of that monster in such a way as to completely overwhelm the comparatively small and Epimethean suitors.

This reprisal of the *Cyclopeia* by Odysseus is also connected with another important character in the poem: Achilles. We demonstrated how Achilles, Odysseus, and the Cyclops form a narrative web, connected by repeated elements in relatively close proximity. That is the character of Achilles as an advocate of force (*bie*) appears immediately preceding (in the songs of Demodocus) the story of Polyphemus, in which Odysseus plays the role of cunning (*metis*), and again shortly thereafter in the first *Nekyia*. Likewise, in the second half of the poem, nearly all the parallels between Odysseus and Polyphemus occur immediately before, during, or immediately after the *mnesterophonia* (Books 20-22). The differences between Achilles and Polyphemus, on the one hand, and Odysseus on the other, emphasize the degree

to which Odysseus combined within his person both the might of Polyphemus and the heroism of Achilles. From these differences, we suggested that our poet is making the claim that his hero rather than Achilles deserves the title of "Best of the Achaeans."

Finally, in Chapter Three, we discussed the importance of three groups of young men in the poem, all of whom share several significant similarities in their interactions with Odysseus. These are the crew of Odysseus, the young noble men of Phaeacia, and the suitors of Penelope. Once again, many have seen similarities between the crew and the suitors, and some even between the Phaeacian young men and the other two parties. The crew and the Phaeacian young men have been viewed as models of bad behavior that find their fulfillment in the punishment of the suitors in Ithaca. In this interpretation, the first two groups function as a sort of prelude to the final crescendo when Odysseus slaughters the suitors in his halls. Yet, on closer examination, it became apparent that these three groups do not function as mere substitutes for each other. Their relationships with Odysseus, despite some important similarities, are quite varied. The crew do not wish their leader dead, nor mistreat him as a guest; they are merely attempting to return home but fail on several critical occasions to heed the advice of their leader. The Phaeacian young men, while they challenge Odysseus, and Euryalus abuses him verbally, do not as a whole mistreat the guest. Odysseus is, after all, seen by the young men on Scheria as a rival for the hand of Nausicaa. Finally, the suitors do abuse Odysseus, do wish him dead, and mistreat him as a guest, and plot the death of his son.

These similarities suggest that they be compared, but the differences present some difficulties of interpretation. We suggested that each group of young men pose a challenge to Odysseus as leader and offer both Odysseus and the audience insight into the difficulties of controlling the young. Moreover, the importance of the Trojan War must be taken into account, particularly as it relates to the crew and the suitors. The crew fall prey to the temptations of immediate pleasure and/or needs and an equally dangerous lack of trust in their commander and the authority that he represents. Odysseus must be the sole representative of the command structure that was reinforced at Troy by the presence of other commanders, and at home by the institutions of rule as embodied in parents, city elders, and kings. The suitors literally besiege the traditional center of authority in a city currently without a ruler. The Phaeacians, who have no intercourse with strangers, have opted out of the change that both the crew's return trip home and Ithaca represent: exposure to new and possibly dangerous experiences. Consequently, among the Phaeacians the exuberance of young men is relatively easily kept in check since the structure of command appears to be firmly in place, even when a stranger has entered their idyllic and non-heroic world. On the other hand, Odysseus' charges and their failure to make it home safely present the dangers of war that occur not just in battle but on the return home, especially the loss of one's identity. The situation of the suitors and their parents offers the audience not only a neat moral tale about the dangers of abusing strangers and not restraining the youth, but also a further

reflection on the difficulties that a soldier returning from war faces as he attempts to reintegrate himself into his society. Odysseus' total slaughter of the suitors, his complicity in the killing of the maids and Melanthius, and the near destruction of his own people form a very striking and disturbing portrait of the problem of the return of the hero.

This study has by no means exhausted the many similar types of repetition that occur in both epics. For example, I intend to investigate further the relationship of Odysseus' *Apologoi* to the Cretan Tales. There are clear repetitions of material, but with significant changes. Both sets of stories told by Odysseus function on many levels. All of Odysseus' speech in the poem is polysemous, and even a moment's glance at his exchange with Nausicaa in Book 6 illustrates how he uses speech for far more than the simple communication of facts. His manipulation of language is superb, and the Cretan Tales embody his skill in adapting stories to each individual he encounters. The Cretan Tales, then, may serve as a sort of reverse interpretive key to the various stories that Odysseus recounts to the Phaeacians. There is also still room for investigation into both the numerous couples in the *Odyssey* and the couplings of Odysseus with Circe and Calypso. That the two goddesses represent a threat to Odysseus to forget his home and his wife hardly needs mentioning, nor that the various couples in the *Odyssey* serve as a foil to Odysseus and Penelope. A closer examination, however, of the differences between these couples may take us beyond merely pointing out that all other couples in this poem fall short of our ideal couple.

Another topic closely related to repetition and mentioned in my Introduction but which I did not have the opportunity to investigate is the use of juxtaposition. By juxtaposition here I mean the poet's practice of placing two scenes together to compare and contrast the two without overt comment or judgment. The sudden scene change at *Odyssey* 4.625 from Sparta to Ithaca is one such example. The poet clearly invites his audience to compare the situation in Sparta to that on Ithaca. While many scholars have commented here and there on the topic as it relates to their particular argument, I know of no work that attempts to examine the role of this important feature in the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad* as a whole.

Finally, this dissertation has shown how closely interrelated to one another scenes from vastly different portions of the *Odyssey* can be. And our examination of the use of narrative repetition has not only demonstrated once again the artistic unity of the *Odyssey*, but has also served as a reminder of the importance of repetition in the arsenal of the oral poet. Repetition, then, is not simply a crutch for the composition of poems; it is a powerful tool available to the poet as he composes his poems not only to please his audience but also to invite their active participation and learning.

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