Abstract

"What Virtue and Wisdom Can Do": Homer's *Odyssey* in the Renaissance Imagination

Sarah Phillips Van der Laan

2008

If the *Iliad* is a poem about what it is to be mortal, the *Odyssey* is a poem about what it is to be human. The *Odyssey* charts the attempts of one man and his world to reassemble the fragments of their lives after a devastating war. It is no historical accident that this vision of the *Odyssey* became central to late Renaissance literature and criticism. The *Odyssey* presented opportunities to interrogate the possibilities and limits of the humanist ethos so enthusiastically propounded during the first heady decades of the Renaissance and so powerfully challenged by real-world crises. More than any other epic, the *Odyssey* provided a potential foundation for a poetic ethics—tools for living developed in poetry—for belated, post-war, post-humanist societies. This dissertation explores the use of the *Odyssey* in the Renaissance epic tradition; in doing so, it assembles readings of these individual works into a narrative that traces the rediscovery and repeated reinvention of the *Odyssey* through several countries and two centuries.

Despite the centrality of the *Odyssey* and the figure of Odysseus to the Renaissance, the intertwined histories of their scholarly and creative reception in the period remain essentially unwritten. Yet this rich and complex reception left its traces alongside those of Homer's poem on the masterpieces of the Renaissance epic and romance traditions: Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Each

captures a stage in the development of readings of the *Odyssey* and of its increasingly multivalent role in the Renaissance imagination. In each chapter, I situate readings of an author's use of the *Odyssey* against a background of contemporary readings of the *Odyssey*; I use translations, editions, paratexts, handwritten marginalia, and criticism to reconstruct the horizon of expectations for a reader of the *Odyssey* at the moment of that author's appearance in print. By doing so, I contribute to a more precise understanding of an important Renaissance cultural development and participate in current attempts to reassert a role for the author within a culture of reading practices and discourses.

"What Virtue and Wisdom Can Do": Homer's *Odyssey* in the Renaissance Imagination

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Sarah Phillips Van der Laan

Dissertation Director: Professor David Quint

December 2008

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

ProQuest LLC
789 E. Eisenhower Parkway
PO Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction 1

Chapter 1. Fractures and Failures: The Odysseys of *Orlando Furioso* 35

Chapter 2. Fusions and Fissures: Odyssean Ethics and Poetics in *Gerusalemme Liberata* and *The Faerie Queene* 89

Chapter 3. Milton's Odyssean Ethics: Homeric Allusion and Arminian Thought in *Paradise Lost* 152

Chapter 4. Further Voices, Fragmented Voices: *Paradise Lost* as Odyssean Text 203

Valediction 257

Bibliography 261

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the many debts outstanding at this caesura in my studies. The origins of this dissertation lie in three seminar papers written for Anne Dunlop, Giuseppe Mazzotta, and Ellen Rosand; although none of that material survives in this dissertation, all three professors offered perceptive comments and suggestions during my early explorations of Homer's fortunes in the Renaissance. Lawrence Manley and Nicole Rice read long versions of early chapters and offered much useful advice. John Rogers responded thoughtfully to a preliminary paper on Tasso and Spenser and allowed me to test my ideas on Milton on his students. Traugott Lawler improved my Latin and Timothy Robinson taught me Greek; both have kindly answered my questions about matters of translation, and I have profited from their knowledge of and enthusiasm for literary matters as well as their command of ancient languages. I owe special thanks to Ellen Rosand, who has provided constant encouragement along with her inspiring courses on opera and oratorio for many years. My greatest intellectual debt is to my advisor, David Quint, who supervised this dissertation with unfailing patience and generosity.

Parts of this dissertation were researched and written while I was a visiting scholar at the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters, Queen Mary, University of London. I wish to thank Lisa Jardine for the invitation to join CELL and, together with Robyn Adams and Jan Broadway, for the warm welcome I received there. The curators and staffs of the British Library and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University assisted me in many ways, for which I am grateful. I have benefited from the opportunity to present work at the Yale English Department's Medieval/Renaissance Colloquium and the British Studies Colloquium. I would also like to thank the Beinecke Library for a James M. Osborne Fellowship and the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for a Robert M. Leylan Dissertation Fellowship.

My parents, sister, and grandparents have provided support of every kind for my odyssey through the higher education systems of two countries—a journey now longer than Odysseus's own. I am grateful for their love and their confidence in me, and I regret that my grandmothers will not read the dissertation that, in place of Odysseus's Phaiakian treasure, I carry home with me at last.

INTRODUCTION

If the *Iliad* is a poem about what it is to be mortal, the *Odyssey* is a poem about what it is to be human. The *Odyssey* charts the attempts of one man and his world to reassemble the fragments of their lives after a devastating war, to identify the core elements necessary for human existence and to cling to those values in the face of overwhelming adversity. It is no historical accident that this vision of the *Odyssey* and its titular hero became central to late Renaissance literature and criticism. The *Odyssey* presented sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scholars and writers with opportunities to interrogate the possibilities and limits of the humanist ethos so enthusiastically propounded during the first heady decades of the Renaissance. Far more so than the *Iliad* or the Latin epics, the *Odyssey* provided a potential foundation for a poetic ethics—tools for living developed in poetry—for belated, post-war, post-humanist societies. This dissertation explores the use of the *Odyssey* and the figure of Odysseus in the Renaissance epic tradition; in doing so, it assembles readings of these individual works into a narrative that traces the rediscovery and repeated re-invention of the *Odyssey* through several countries and two centuries.

This study revolves around the four great Renaissance epics: Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. I situate each author's use of the *Odyssey* in his own work against a background of contemporary readings of the *Odyssey*; I use imaginative literature, translations, editions, paratextual material, handwritten marginalia, and critical and scholarly works of various genres to reconstruct aspects of the horizon of expectations for a reader of the *Odyssey* at the moment of that author's appearance in

print. By doing so, I uncover literary engagements with the *Odyssey* that have not previously been noticed and suggest new readings of passages that have been recognized as indebted to the *Odyssey*. I complicate the portraits of the Renaissance Odysseus that others have already painted, and I argue that the *Odyssey* played a wider range of roles in Renaissance poetics and ethics than has been realized. Guided by the epics I consider and the gaps in previous studies of the *Odyssey* in the Renaissance, I concentrate on the possibilities and the optimism summed up in a classical text widely read and widely cited in the Renaissance: Horace's *Epistle* 1.2. Horace advises Lollius to take the *Odyssey* as a model for living:

> Rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
> utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulixen,
> qui domitor Troiae multorum providus urbes,
> et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per aequor,
> dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
> pertulit, adversis rerum immersabilis undis.
> Sirenum voces et Circae pocula nosti;
> quae sicum sociis stultus cupidusque bibisset,
> sub domina meretrice fuisset turpis et excors
> vixisset canis immundus vel amica luto sus.[1]
>
> [On the contrary, of what virtue and what wisdom can do, Homer shows us a useful example: Ulysses, the prudent conqueror of Troy, who observed the cities and the manners of many men, and on the broad ocean for himself and for his companions seeks return, endured much hardship, never submerged by the waves of adversity. He knew the voices of the Sirens and the potions of Circe; which if he, stupid and greedy like his companions, had drunk, he would have been under a whorish mistress and would have lived deformed and senseless, as an unclean dog or a pig, the friend of mud.]

The readings that follow reveal that the *Odyssey* provided its Renaissance readers with a source of ethical, theological, and exemplary models. In their different ways, Ariosto, Tasso, Spenser, and Milton revive and revise Horace's exhortation for their own readers, their own wanderings, their own Circes and Falls of Troy.

---

[1] Horace, *Satires and Epistles*, ed. Edward P. Morris (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 17-26.

I. The Renaissance of the *Odyssey*

The *Odyssey* did not enjoy full equality with the *Iliad* in Renaissance Europe. The *Iliad* was printed and taught more frequently than the *Odyssey*, and this preference was classically sanctioned. The scholia to the *Iliad* are more copious than those to the *Odyssey*. The *Ilias Latina* made the subject matter if not the text of the *Iliad* available to medieval audiences, while no such epitome of the *Odyssey* existed. The late classical forgeries attributed to Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrygius, which claimed to be accounts of the Trojan War by soldiers who had fought in it, challenge the veracity and the honor of the *Odyssey* more than they do those of the *Iliad.* The Latin epic tradition, especially Virgil and Dante, blamed Odysseus above all Greeks for the fall of Troy; Achilles' martial heroism was easier to accommodate within ideas of epic shaped by the *Aeneid.* Despite Aristotle's use of the *Odyssey* as the model epic in the *Poetics*, Renaissance poetics found the *Odyssey* more difficult than the *Iliad* to assimilate to the neo-Aristotelian unities of time and place. If the *Odyssey* was not treated solely or even primarily as a sequel, it was thought to be the later and the more problematic poem. Yet its belatedness, both in composition and in subject matter, enabled the *Odyssey* to speak to its Renaissance readers' sense that they followed in the footsteps of a great, lost, only partially recoverable civilization. The *Odyssey* addressed the recurring social and intellectual problems of the Renaissance, problems governed by present conditions as well as by the relationship to the past: the return to civil life and the restoration of civil society after a traumatic war, the experience of exile, the recovery of a cultural tradition across a chasm of time or history. In his preface to a 1558 editon of Homer, Laurence Humphrey likens his experience as a Marian exile to Odysseus's wanderings:

"permanentem hic ac stabilem ciuitatem non habemus, sed futuram quærimus" [we have no permanent and lasting city here, but we search for the city to come]; later he adds that "nihil est enim nostra uita quam Odyssæa, id est, Vlyssea peregrinatio" [our life is nothing but an odyssey, that is, Odyssean wandering].[2] The French humanist Jean de Sponde compares Odysseus's return to a recent *cause célèbre*: the return of a man claiming to be Martin Guerre to his hometown after an eight-year absence. He was exposed after three years as an impostor during a series of trials which culminated with the dramatic return of the real Martin Guerre and which led to his execution in 1560; an account of those proceedings by one of the judges who heard the case was published in 1572 and circulated widely. Sponde, writing eleven years later, cites this case to justify Penelope's caution when confronted with her husband in *Odyssey* 23:

> Quanto prudentiùs nimirum illa in sua tarditate se gerit quàm illa Martini Guerræ uxor in agro Tolosatum in sua περιπέτεια, quæ Arnaldum Tillium adulterinum coniugem pro uero illo coniuge suscepit, integrumq; triennium cum eo uixit: contrà uerò reuersum illo elapso tempore, uerum Martinum Guerram diu pro uero marito non agnouit.[3]
>
> [How much more prudent, certainly, she behaves in her tardiness than that wife of Martin Guerre in the territory of Toulouse in her reversal, who acknowledged Arnaud de Tilh, the counterfeit spouse, as her true spouse and lived together with him for three years: conversely, when the real Martin Guerre did return after that time had passed, she did not recognize him as her true husband for a long time.]

Sponde offers a stark demonstration that the problems of the *Odyssey* are still real and immediate, and he illustrates the utility of the *Odyssey* more compellingly than any platitudes about Odysseus's exemplary prudence or patience could do. It cannot have been lost on Sponde's readers that the real Martin Guerre turned out to have spent some

---

[2] Homer, *Copiae Cornv sive Oceanvs enarrationvm Homericarvm, ex Evstathii in eundem commentarijs concinnatarum, Hadriano Iunio autore* (Basel: Froben, 1558), *2^{r}, *4^{v}. Philip Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque: Réception des épopées homériques à la Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 2007), 116, draws attention to these passages and to Humphrey's identification with Odysseus.

[3] Homer, *Homeri quae extant omnia* (Basel: Eusebii Episcopii Opera, 1583), EE1^{v}.

of his eight years' wanderings serving in the Spanish army that was attempting to quash the revolt by the Dutch Protestant provinces against their Catholic masters; the European wars of religion were just as endless, and took just as heavy a toll on the soldiers' families and the civic life of their towns, as the Trojan War.

Literary texts too turn to the *Odyssey* to consider the problems of the aftermath—for Ariosto, the aftermath of the optimistic projects of humanist education; for Tasso, the aftermath of war; for Milton, the aftermath of the Fall and, implicitly, the failure of the English Commonwealth. Tasso and Milton propose similar solutions to the problem of recovery from rupture: in the *Gerusalemme liberata*, Rinaldo and Armida convert their youthful romance into a marriage, while in *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve draw strength from their repaired marriage. Reunion in marriage, in one form or another, plays an integral role in the endings of all four poems under consideration, and all four include revisions of Penelope and Odysseus's reunion in *Odyssey* 23. All four, too, rework a moment that has largely been ignored by classicists and scholars of Renaissance epic alike. In *Odyssey* 7, Alkinoös, the king of the utopian island Scheria, offers Odysseus either a speedy return home to Ithaka in one of his magical ships or his daughter Nausikaa's hand, together with wealth and land. Odysseus immediately chooses to return home to Ithaka and Penelope. This choice receives almost no attention from either allegorical or exemplary readings of the poem, yet several Renaissance readers marked the passage in their copies of the *Odyssey*, and each of the poets under discussion clearly responded to it; each of the epics studied here includes its own "choice of Odysseus." In this rare case, the prescriptive readings of the *Odyssey*, those paratexts that attempt to guide their readers' reading of the text, are virtually silent on a topic, yet the descriptive

readings, the evidence we have for actual readers' responses to the text, reveal a Renaissance practice of reading Homer. This choice becomes paradigmatic for the *Odyssey* as the "choice of Achilles" is for the *Iliad.* Achilles, we learn in *Iliad* 9, has been offered the choice of two fates: a long life at home as king of Phthia and anonymity after death, or an early death at Troy and a lasting reputation as the greatest of warriors. His choice epitomizes the warrior ethos of the Achaian fighters and the economy of honor that governs their lives; its emphasis on martial action, public duty, personal glory, and epic telos sums up the values that Renaissance theorists often attributed to the epic. The "choice of Odysseus," made after twenty years' absence from home and ten years of wandering through a seascape filled with the marvelous and the supernatural, similarly sums up the values that Renaissance readers found in the *Odyssey*: the emphasis on recovery from a catastrophic rupture in both personal and civic life, the attempt to take control of romance wandering and direct it towards an epic purpose, the concept of experience as a heroic subject and marriage as a heroic end. The outcome of that choice is the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope. Imagined in similar terms by each poet, the resumption of the happy marriage that Odysseus describes to Nausikaa in *Odyssey* 6 forms one Renaissance pattern for epic closure, for the "sense of an ending."[4]

By now, my repeated use of the term "Renaissance" will have begun to concern some readers. I use it partly because I need a concise way to refer to the period and the cultural assumptions I discuss, partly because the term "early modern" makes a poor fit for a set of reading practices and interpretations so obviously different from our twenty-first century methods of reading Homer, but mostly because in this case the term is

---

[4] The phrase, of course, is from Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

unusually accurate. Firsthand knowledge of Homer really did die out in medieval Europe and was revived only with great difficulty and enormous effort on the part of scholars and readers driven by curiosity and love for humanistic studies. This effort, though it took varying forms in different countries, was to some extent a pan-European one. As we will see in the following chapters, an Italian academic read a Latin translation of Homer published in Basel; an English grammar school library held copies of the Greek text printed in Geneva and Paris; a German humanist at the University of Wittenberg penned the preface to a Greek edition printed in Strasbourg; an English educational theorist discussed the versification and the literary qualities of a Spanish vernacular translation. The humanists and many of the anonymous readers who left traces of their readings in the margins of their books really did feel that they were restoring Homer to his place at the head of the literary tradition, as the fount from whom all poetry flowed. The rebirth of Homer was one of the great projects of the "republic of letters" of Renaissance Europe.

National schools of interpretation did develop: most significantly in France, where Greek studies received support from a centralized state government.[5] Evidence from the printed copies of Homer in circulation suggests that these national differences are outweighed by the similarities found across Europe. In part this is because there were never more than a few centers of Greek printing at any one time; Greek type was difficult to design and cast efficiently because of the many possible combinations of vowels and

---

[5] This is perhaps why Homer's fortunes in France are the exception to the general rule of scholarly neglect of the Renaissance reception of Homer, and why Homeric echoes in French Renaissance literature have received more attention. See two studies by Noémi Hepp, "Homère en France au XVI^{e} Siècle," *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino II. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche* 96 (1961-62): 389-508, and *Homère en France au XVII^{e} Siècle* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1968); Gérard Defaux, *Le curieux, le glorieux, et la sagesse du monde dans la première moitié du XVI siècle: l'exemple du Panurge (Ulysse, Démosthène, Empédocle)* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1982); and Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*. Ford, "Homer in the French Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006): 1-28, offers an English-language overview of the argument and some of the findings of the immensly valuable *De Troie à Ithaque*.

diacritical marks and because of the high number of ligatures between letters.[6] The cities where editions of Homer were printed in quantity shifted over time, from Florence and Venice through Strasbourg to Basel and Geneva; the editions produced continued to circulate throughout Europe. In the early part of the sixteenth century, most of these editions were in Greek only; the Latin translations of the *Odyssey* were in prose (Griffolini, Ubelin, Divo), or in prose with passages of verse (Maffei). Not until 1549 was a Latin hexameter translation of the *Odyssey* published. The middle of the sixteenth century also saw the emergence of vernacular translations into German (by Simon Schaidenreisser in 1537), Spanish (Gonçalo Perez, 1550-56), Italian (Lodovico Dolce, 1573; Girolamo Baccelli, 1582), English (George Chapman, 1612). A Dutch translation of the first twelve books by Dirck Coornheert appeared in 1561. Only in French was there no substantial translation of the *Odyssey* available in the sixteenth century: partial translations of the first two books by Jacques Peletier du Mans and Amadis Jamyn were printed in 1547 and 1580, with Jamyn adding the third book to his edition of 1584. The first full translation, by Salomon Certon, appeared in 1604.[7] Vernacular translations remained very much a minority phenomenon, however; the majority of the editions printed in Renaissance Europe were Greek, Latin, or bilingual. As such, the physical books themselves could circulate freely; a good text by one printer could also be pirated by a printer in another country and put into circulation in a far-flung market—and often was.

---

[6] Robert Proctor, *The Printing of Greek in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Bibliographical Society, 1900), explains the technical and aesthetic challenges facing designers of Greek fonts (usually the same printers who would then cast and use the type) in great detail.

[7] Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*, 316-17; R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 516-17.

The relative paucity of critical apparatus available also contributed to the development of a reading community that spanned national and linguistic borders. In the early sixteenth century, the only substantial paratexts available to be printed with the Homeric texts were survivals from antiquity: the life of Homer by Dio Chrysostom and the lives attributed to Plutarch and Herodotus, the allegorical interpretations in Heraclitus's *Allegories* and Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* and *Cave of the Nymphs*, the scholia that serve primarily as glosses on difficult words and obscure dialect forms. Angelo Poliziano, today best known as the greatest Italian poet of the late Quattrocento, was in his day the most highly regarded Italian-born Greek scholar and perhaps the first Westerner to write and interpret Greek with native fluency; his *Oratio in expositione Homeri*, delivered in his public lectures on Homer in 1486-87 in Florence and published in the *Opera omnia* of 1498, and its poetic prelude *Ambra*, published in the *Silvae* in 1485, are perhaps the first substantial Renaissance contribution to the discussion of Homer, and they quickly became popular; Poliziano's *Oratio* was printed together with school texts of the *Odyssey* in Basel in the early sixteenth century.[8] The *Oratio* is heavily indebted to pseudo-Plutarch's claims for Homer as the source of all human knowledge and wisdom, as are many of the dedicatory epistles and letters to the reader that extol the virtues of reading Homer in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions. These texts were supplemented by a series of Latin judgments on Odysseus: the poetic portraits of Virgil, Ovid, and Statius, the comments of Cicero and Seneca, and the epistle of Horace that

[8] Homer, *Homerou Odusseias Bibloi A kai B. Homeri Ulysseae Lib. I. & II. Angeli Politiani in Homerum Præfatio* (Basel, 1520). Christiane Deloince-Louette, *Sponde: Commentateur d'Homère* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 69-70, describes Poliziano's text as as a primary conduit for the dissemination of pseudo-Plutarch's ideas to a much broader, non-Greek-reading audience: "très connu à la Renaissance et très utilisè. Pour des générations de commentateurs des textes anciens, il justifie la visée encyclopedique" [well known to the Renaissance and much used. For generations of commentators on classical texts, it justifies the encyclopedic goal].

provides the title for this study. A series of Renaissance reference books and compendia of all descriptions gathered and repackaged information from these and other sources. Erasmus's *Adagia*, Ambrosius Calepinus's *Dictionary*, and Johannes Ravisius Textor's *Epitheta* and *Officina* each appeared for the first time in the early sixteenth century and were reprinted in increasingly copious form throughout the century. In 1551 they were joined by the first edition of Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata*, which was also reprinted many times in ever-larger editions, and in 1567 by Natale Conti's *Mythologiae*, the first and most extensive of the Renaissance encyclopedias of classical mythology. As the sixteenth century wore on, more detailed commentaries began to appear in print; these too had a pan-European readership. The most substantial was the commentary of the twelfth-century Byzantine archbishop Eustathius of Thessalonika, first printed in Rome between 1542-50. Original commentaries by Renaissance humanists also appeared; the most important for the following study is the already-mentioned edition of Jean de Sponde, the French Huguenot-educated scholar and poet who wrote an extensive commentary on Homer in 1583.[9] These editions too circulated widely and, like all the other texts mentioned above, were liable to be cited, plagiarized, and pirated as soon as they reached print. The Swiss humanist Isaac Casaubon, who worked first in France and then in England, owned a copy of Homer with Eustathius's commentary that had been printed in Basel in 1559-60. George Chapman cites Sponde in his English translation of Homer, and it appears on a list of the volumes held by Edmund Spenser's grammar school; it may have been known to John Milton as well. Reviving Homer was a

[9] Deloince-Louette, *Sponde*, is a book-length study of Sponde's commentary and its cultural contexts; see also Marc Bizer, "Men Are from Mars: Jean de Sponde's Homeric Heroes and Vision of Just French Leaders," in *Masculinities in Sixteenth-Century France*, ed. Philip Ford and Paul White (Cambridge: Cambridge French Colloquia, 2006), 167-79.

transnational project, one governed by a great deal of historical continuity (some might say inertia) as well as historical change.

In the course of this explanation I have undoubtedly created a new batch of skeptics: any classicists who have stumbled upon this study and who will be appalled by my use of the name "Homer" as if it denoted an actual, historical writer or the unified poetic corpus of such a person. The explanation for this choice is much simpler. As far as the Renaissance readers and poets I study were concerned, there really was a man called Homer, and he really did write two poems. Renaissance readers knew that there were problems with the transmission of the text. Eustathius claims in his commentary on the *Iliad* that the rhapsodes of antiquity were responsible for reassembling the Homeric corpus, not for creating it: "σποράδην γαρ, φασί, κειμένης καὶ κατὰ μέρος διῃ ρημένης τῆ ς Ὁμηρικῆ ς ποιήσεως οἱ ᾄ δοντες αὐ τὴ ν συνέρραπτον οἷ ον τὰ εἰ ς ἓ ν ὕ φος ᾀ δόμενα" [for they say that Homeric poetry, after it had been scattered about and divided into separate parts, was sewn together by those who sang it, like songs sung into a single fabric].[10] Cicero, in *De oratore*, identifies the sixth-century Athenian tyrant Peisistratos as the man who reassembled the Homeric books into their present (and original) order: "qui primus Homeri libros confusos antea sic disposuisse dicitur, ut nunc habemus" [he is said to be the first person ever to have arranged the books of Homer, previously scattered about, in the order that we have today].[11] Despite the roles they imagine for intermediaries, both Eustathius and Cicero assume the existence of an original text, whole and unified, whose parts were scattered by the action of time and had to be reassembled

---

[10] Eustathius, *Commentary on the* Iliad, quoted in and translated by Gregory Nagy, *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 78.

[11] Cicero, *De oratore* 3.137, quoted in and translated by Nagy, *Poetry as Performance*, 79. Nagy emphasizes Eustathius and Cicero's focus on the *re*assembly of an original text.

in their original order. Neither questions the existence of an original poet called Homer. The Analysts' revolutionary claim that the poems were collections of songs by many authors still lay a century in the future when Milton published *Paradise Lost*, and the oral composition theories of Milman Parry and his successors were literally inconceivable to an audience raised on Virgilian epic. For a discussion of Renaissance uses of the *Odyssey*, references to "Homer" are entirely appropriate.

II. Methods and Predecessors

Homer's fortunes in the Renaissance have been neglected compared to those of other authors, or to those of Homer in other periods. Nonetheless, there have been important studies that trace the character of Odysseus through myth and literature, that explore the reception of the character of Odysseus or the myth of Troy in a given cultural or historical moment, and that reconstruct the print history of the Homeric poems in a single country in the Renaissance.[12] These studies have difficulty in agreeing on a portrait

[12] In addition to the studies cited in the following paragraph, many other studies that deal with Homer in the Renaissance have been useful to me. On Homer in sixteenth-century England, see Gordon Teskey, "Homer," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 374-76; Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Claudia Corti, "Viaggiatore, governante, o cortigiano? Ulisse nel Rinascimento inglese," in *Ulisse: Archeologico dell'uomo moderno*, ed. Piero Boitani and Richard Ambrosini (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998); and the essays in Alan Shephard and Stephen D. Powell, eds., *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004), especially James Carscallen, "How Troy Came to Spenser," 15-38. On Homer's fortunes in the early Renaissance, see Agostino Pertusi, *Leonzio Pilato fra Petrarca e Boccaccio: Le sue versioni omeriche negli autografi di Venezia e la cultura greca del primo Umanesimo* (Venice and Rome: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1964), and Robin Sowerby, "Early Humanist Failure with Homer," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 4 (1997): 37-63, 165-94. The literature on Homer in the French Renaissance is the most extensive; see, in addition to the studies cited individually, Philip Ford, "Jean Dorat and the Reception of Homer in Renaissance France," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995): 265-74; Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997). Older but still-useful studies include Arthur M. Young, *Troy and Her Legend* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1948), and W. B. Stanford and J. V. Luce, *The Quest for Ulysses* (New York: Praeger, 1974).

of the Renaissance Odysseus. W. B. Stanford, whose *The Ulysses Theme* has long been the principal resource for the history of the character, argues that "the whole atmosphere of the Renaissance with its optimistic humanism, its richness, variety, and adventurousness, was naturally congenial to a figure so versatile as Ulysses."[13] Gérard Defaux, whose attempt to reconstruct the background to Rabelais' use of Odysseus in *Pantagruel* is in some ways closest in method and aims to mine, dismisses this positive view; Defaux argues against Stanford that Renaissance humanists emphasized "l'insatiable curiosité d'Ulysse, curiosité de nature toute intellectuelle" [Odysseus's insatiable curiosity, a curiosity entirely intellectual in nature] as something of a punching bag for the "Renaissance chrétienne, sceptique, fidéiste et anti-intellectualiste" [Christian, skeptical, faith-based, and anti-intellectual Renaissance] in which he locates Rabelais.[14] Where Stanford offers relatively little evidence to support his confident claims for a positive view of Odysseus (a courtesy manual here, a facile reading of a difficult sonnet there) Defaux concentrates on the classical texts dearest to Renaissance humanism (Virgil, Dante, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch) and on the Renaissance dictionaries and compendia of all kinds that extracted, compiled, and generally jumbled together classical opinions on subjects of all sorts. Defaux, like Noémi Hepp in her two studies of Homer in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, makes little use of the editions of Homer or of the readings of the poems that they generated, and he largely neglects Renaissance comments not directly engaged with this Latin tradition; his interest is primarily in the

---

[13] W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954), 159. The more recent study by Piero Boitani, *L'ombra di Ulisse: Figure d'un mito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), considers Odysseus as a literary and mythical figure from a theoretical rather than a historical standpoint.

[14] Defaux, *Le curieux, le glorieux, et la sagesse du monde*, 19, 17.

reception of classical attitudes toward Odysseus and specifically toward his curiosity. Correcting this imbalance is Philip Ford's thorough and extremely useful study of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century editions of Homer. Ford examines texts, translations, prefaces, and commentaries in order to trace a history of the publication and interpretation of Homer in sixteenth-century France.[15] I share Ford's interest in what the editions themselves, together with the content of the translations and of the paratexts that guided their readers' readings of the *Odyssey*, can tell us about their readers.[16] Like Defaux, I use these texts primarily to illuminate major works of literature, but I also begin to sketch the shapes of the various reading practices and communities in which these works participated. By linking reading practices to their literary products, I offer a historicized view of allusive and intertextual poetic practices; by remembering that authors are readers as well as writers, I keep the focus of the chapters to come on the epics at the center of this study.

Renaissance uses of the *Odyssey* run the gamut from textual allusion to the construction of narrative on an Odyssean framework to engagement with themes and questions of genre located in the *Odyssey*; accordingly, this study will take an equally

---

[15] Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*. See also Philip H. Young, *The Printed Homer: A 3000 Year Publishing and Translation History of the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2003), for a broad overview of the subject in English.

[16] On Renaissance readings of Homer, see Howard Clarke, *Homer's Readers: A Historical Introduction to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (London: Associated University Presses, 1981), 60-155; Anthony Grafton, "Renaissance Readers of Homer's Ancient Readers," in *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes*, ed. Robert Lamberton and John J. Keaney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 149-72. The other essays in Lamberton and Keaney deal with earlier periods and are useful for understanding the background of the ancient interpretations, especially Stoic allegory, adopted with enthusiasm by Renaissance readers. On Renaissance reading practices, in addition to the works by Grafton cited above, see Anthony Grafton, "Renaissance Readers and Ancient Texts: Comments on Some Commentaries," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 615-49; Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "Studied for Action: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 30-78; and William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

flexible view of what constitutes a reworking of the *Odyssey*. It draws for its primary theoretical basis on the work of classicists who have developed strong and supple theories of this range of allusive and intertextual practices. R. O. A. M. Lyne's theory of "further voices," allusions to the text or the action of a predecessor that complement, complicate, or even subvert the "official voice" of a text at a given moment, plays an important role in the final chapter's study of Odyssean undertones in Milton's narrative of the Fall.[17] Stephen Hinds's work on systematic allusion invites us to think about how allusive relationships between texts become intertextual conversations: an allusion can also reshape a reader's understanding of the target text, the text from which the allusion is drawn.[18] That work allows us to see Renaissance poets at work shifting the center of the horizon of expectations for the *Odyssey*, as does an important predecessor for Hinds's work: Thomas Greene's category of "dialectical allusion." Greene, influenced by Harold Bloom, imagines a Renaissance text making itself vulnerable to the aggression of a target text and thereby "leaving room for a two-way current of mutual criticism between authors and between eras." Greene's category of "heuristic imitation" similarly imagines an aggressive relationship between text and predecessor; the imitating text channels much of its poetic energy through the act of asserting its distance from its predecessors even as it bridges the gulf between signifying worlds.[19] I draw heavily on this concept of the signifying world, or *mundus significans* in Greene's Latin phrase, of a text, the text-centered equivalent of a reader's horizon of expectations. Where Greene emphasizes

---

[17] R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Vergil's* Aeneid (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[18] Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[19] Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 39-45.

aggression and defiance, however, I concentrate on the conversations between texts and the constructive purposes to which Renaissance epics put the *Odyssey*. Useful for this effort is Alessandro Barchiesi's work on "la traccia del modello," simultaneously the traces that a model text leaves on an imitating text and the tracks that it invites a reader to follow—even into directions that appear to run against the grain of the text.[20] Barchiesi assimilates the insights of reader-response theory most fully into this discourse as he imagines the interactions between reader and allusion creating new readings of both the alluding text and the target text. From the earlier reader-response theory of Hans Robert Jauss, I borrow the term "horizon of expectations."[21] In order to understand the full impact of an allusion to an Odyssean moment for either the poet or his reader, the range of possible meanings for the target text must be recovered. But as Craig Kallendorf points out, Jauss's theory of reception aesthetics does not pay much attention to the physical form of the book, which is so important to the reader's experience. Studies in the history of the book have taught us that books are material objects whose physicality contributes in important ways to the reception of their contents; Kallendorf's study of Virgil in sixteenth-century Venice and Daniel Javitch's study of the "canonization" of the *Orlando furioso* both demonstrate the role that the presentation of a text played in directing its readers, and I draw on their insights in my exploration of both Renaissance editions of the *Odyssey* and editions of the Renaissance epics.[22] Seconding their approach, Gregory

---

[20] Alessandro Barchiesi, *La traccia del modello: effetti omerici nella narrazione virgiliana* (Pisa: Giardini, 1984).

[21] Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 20-37.

[22] Craig Kallendorf, *Virgil and the Myth of Venice: Books and Readers in the Italian Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 9; Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of* Orlando furioso (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). On the paratext, see Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature*

Machacek calls for the insights of new historicism to be brought to bear on Renaissance practices of allusion, for critics to see allusion as a synchronic as well as a diachronic process. In essence, Machacek calls on a new generation of critics to extend Jauss's and Greene's efforts to locate texts within their cultural matrices to the study of allusion in those texts.[23] Such studies, including this one, participate in current attempts to reassert a role for the author within a culture of reading practices and discourses.[24] Considering Renaissance poets as pivotal figures in translating contemporary interpretations of the *Odyssey* into literature *and* in reshaping the horizon of expectations for the next generation of Homer's readers, I find a balance between the influence of broader cultural forces and individual authorial and readerly responses.

III. The Traces of the *Odyssey*

Deep in the underground vaults of the British Library lies a large leather-bound folio of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, printed in Basel in 1558 by the renowned humanist press of Hieronymus Froben.[25] The volume advertises itself to its potential readers as a work of serious scholarship: the book gives its title first in Greek, then in Latin; its editor, Hadrianus Junius, or Adriaen de Jonghe, was a prominent Dutch humanist; and the preface that follows de Jonghe's brief letter to the reader was written by the Oxford

---

in the Second Degree, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

[23] Gregory Machacek, "Allusion," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 122 (2007): 522-36.

[24] Patrick Cheney, "Recent Studies in the English Renaissance," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 47 (2007): 199-202, analyzes this trend in recent criticism.

[25] Homer, *Copiae Cornv*, α1^{v}. The copy examined is BL 1348.l.4.

classicist and Marian exile Laurence Humphrey. These prefatory letters are the only Latin texts in the volume. The remainder of the book consists of a Greek text of Homer framed by copious selections from the vast commentary of the twelfth-century Byzantine archbishop Eustathius of Thessalonika, the most important and comprehensive commentary on Homer to that date. Its reader would have to be a serious student of Greek, capable not only of reading Homer's text without a facing Latin translation but of plowing through Eustathius's dense synthesis of sixteen centuries of Homeric scholarship. Such a reader would also have to be willing to pay for a large volume printed in a relatively rare type font; although Froben published this edition squarely in the middle of what Philip Ford has called "the golden age of Homer," Greek-language works remained a relatively small part of the exploding market for printed books.[26] There were simply not enough fluent readers of Greek to make such a book anything other than a luxury item.

The most intriguing feature of this particular book, however, is not its impressive scholarly credentials or its price. In truth, it was not the most comprehensive scholarly edition in print. An edition that included the complete commentary of Eustathius had appeared in Rome in four volumes between 1542 and 1550, and the famous Venetian humanist press of Aldus Manutius had printed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* together with their scholia, the ancient notes on the text by Alexandrian scholars, in 1521 and 1528. (The *Iliad* scholia had already appeared separately in Rome in 1517.) Its most intriguing

---

[26] For Ford's description of the period 1541-70 in these terms, see Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*; the phrase is the title of Ford's second chapter, 91-139. Ford's book appeared after I had completed the research for this dissertation, and I was unable to make use of its invaluable catalogue of editions of Homer to 1600 in planning my research. I have checked, corrected, and supplemented my own archival research with Ford's; although I have tried to indicate specific debts to his ideas in individual footnotes, I am indebted throughout to his catalogue.

feature is the set of annotations left by an anonymous reader of this particular copy. Someone has scribbled notes in the margins and underlined parts of the text of six books—but not the first six books of the *Iliad*, as a modern reader would be most likely to do if he sat down to read and annotate Homer but gave up after six books. Instead, this anonymous Renaissance reader has annotated the first three books of the *Iliad* and the first three books of the *Odyssey*. This choice reveals a very different reading project, and a very different concept of the relationship between the Homeric poems. Today we think of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as a text and its sequel; the relationship between them is primarily diachronic, the *Odyssey* a story of what happened after the *Iliad* to one of its characters. This reader imagined a synchronic relationship between the two, or at least a synchronic reading project: he (or she, but the majority of Greek students in the period were male) apparently planned to read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* against each other, page by page or book by book. Other Renaissance readers imagined similar reading projects. The British Library holds several copies of a 1519 edition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* published in Florence by Antonio Varchi; an anonymous reader has annotated the text through the middle of Book 3 of each poem.[27] The Aldine press published its second edition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in 1517; the British Library holds several copies, including an *Odyssey* whose companion *Iliad* volume is missing. Another anonymous reader has numbered every tenth line of the first four books of the *Odyssey* in faint red ink; it is tempting to imagine that the missing *Iliad* would have been numbered in the same way.[28]

---

[27] *Homeri Ilias* and *Homeri Odyssea* (Florence: Antonio Varchi, 1519). The copy examined is BL C.8.d.1-2.

[28] *Homeri Odyssea* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1517). The copy examined is BL C.4.c.5.

To a modern reader, such a reading project is just plain weird. Evidence from the Italian humanist schools that first reintroduced ancient Greek to the West, however, reveals that students were taught Greek in precisely this way. In 1493, Girolamo Amaseo, a young man who had moved from Padua to Florence to study Greek, wrote a letter to his brother describing his classes:

> This is how Varino sets out to instruct us. First he sets out the meaning of the passage briefly, clearly and elegantly. After the initial translation he works out the inflexion of the verbs and nouns, if it is difficult. He also deals with the etymology and the other figures. Then he goes through the reading again, and confirms and tests us all, so that we do not forget what he said before. And immediately after the lesson one of us explains the reading. We are made to give declensions, and we do not mind (for every study has its rude beginnings). He teaches the *Odyssey* in the morning, thirty verses; after lunch Aristophanes, only twenty verses; at the twenty-second hour the *Iliad*, forty verses.[29]

The "Varino" mentioned in the letter is Varino Favorino Camerte, a student of the great Florentine poet and scholar Angelo Poliziano. Poliziano had studied Greek with Andronicus Callistus, a Greek who had taught in Florence from 1471-76; the teaching method Amaseo describes presumably reflects those of the Byzantine scholars who came to Italy to teach Greek, essentially as star visiting professors. A manuscript of *Iliad* 1, annotated in a very similar way by one of Callistus's Florentine students during the early 1470s, confirms this impression.[30] Other annotated copies of the *Odyssey* demonstrate that such teaching methods persisted throughout the sixteenth century. An anonymous student used his student edition of the first book of the *Odyssey*, printed in Paris in 1558 (the same year as our annotated folio), in precisely this way. He filled the wide spaces between the printed lines with partial translations into Latin, much as a modern student

---

[29] Quoted in Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 115.

[30] Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 114, cite this manuscript as an example of these teaching methods. The mansucript they describe (and in part transcribe) is Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS 66, 31, fol. 7^{r}, reprinted in Ida Maïer, *Ange Politien: la formation d'un poète humaniste* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), 58.

jots down unfamiliar vocabulary words and translates difficult bits of syntax or idiomatic constructions, and he wrote notes interpreting and evaluating the text into the pages' wide margins.[31] A full century after Callistus taught Poliziano his Greek, in 1572, an entrance examination for St. John's College, Oxford required students to repeat this information on demand:

> Nowell began the examination by directing the lowest of that form to declare the sense and construction of a particular ode of Horace; "which, from one to another, he prosecuted throughe the whole nomber, untill the captayn, requiringe diversytie of phrases and varietie of wordes and fynally obmyttinge nothinge which might seme neadfull for the tryall of their lerninge in the Latyn tongue." After him Watts examined the same boys in Homer, as to their skill in Greek, which was his favourite language. And then Horne tried them in the Hebrew psalter.[32]

Our annotated copy of Homer, then, reflects a practice of reading and a way of thinking about the relationship between the two Homeric poems that, though alien today, was once common. The *Odyssey* did not supplement the *Iliad*; rather, the poems complemented each other. They could be considered individually or as two halves of a larger project, but the *Odyssey* did not depend on the *Iliad.* This practice arose in Italy in the early decades of teaching Greek and persisted through at least one century and three countries. It governed the early encounters with the Greek language and literature of three of the four poets whose work this dissertation explores: Tasso, Spenser, and Milton. (Ariosto had to abandon his education in order to support his family before he arrived at Greek.)

The margins of that copiously-annotated 1558 student edition have been cropped so that the annotations are difficult to read, but some notes can still be deciphered. Against πολύτροπον, the untranslatable epithet that identifies Odysseus in the first line of

---

[31] *Omerou Odysseias Biblion A. Homeri Odysseæ Liber Primvs* (Paris: Andrea Wechel, 1558). The copy examined is BL C.1.a.8. Unfortunately, the margins have since been cropped, rendering the annotations difficult to decipher.

[32] Quoted in H. B. Wilson, *The History of Merchant-Taylors' School, from Its Foundation to the Present Time* (London, 1812), 1:39.

the *Odyssey*, the student has written "multa expertu[m], versutu[m], callidu[m], ... solertia præditum, ... ingenii dote præditu[m], qui multoru[m] mores vidit ... multoru[m] vivendi modu[m] nouerit" [expert in many things, clever, ingenious, ... gifted with quickness of mind, ... gifted with the quality of intelligence, who saw the customs of many men ... he knew the ways of living of many men].[33] In doing so he echoes not only the Renaissance emphasis on rhetorical fluency taught through texts such as Erasmus's *Copia*, but the Renaissance dictionaries and reference works that gathered snippets of classical mythology, literature, and thought, magpie-style. One of these, Johannes Ravisius Textor's *Epitheta*, closely resembles this marginal note in its entry on Odysseus, which begins with a string of no less than forty-seven Latin epithets for Odysseus before giving basic biographical information drawn from a variety of mythological sources and having relatively little foundation in Homer:

> Vlysses. Proles Laërtia, callidus, durus, pellax, ithacus, dirus, sæuus, æolides, laërtiades, laboriosus, prouid[us], laërtius, disertus, fallax, experiens, dulichius, aptus, furius [sic], cautus, naricyus, sollers, facundus, peruagus, sisyphides, tardè remeans, tardus, immitis, subdolus, ithacensis, errans, prudens, vagus, pelasgus, infidus, penelopæus, phæax, cordatus, profugus, sapiens, astutus, comis, polytropus, varius, miser, vigil, acer, lentus. Vlysses filis fuit Laërtæ, matrem habuit Anicleam [sic], quæ priùs nupserat Sisypho Aeoli filio, quem prægnans reliquit, venitq; ad Laêrtem. Sunt qui dicant eum genitum ex Sisyphi concubitu. Fuit vir autem multa preditus facundia, nec minore rerum experientia, vafer consilio, egregius bello, laborum patientissimus. Vxorem habuit Penelopen, filios Telemachum, Telegonum, & Ausonem, nutricem Erycleam, Eumæum porcarium, canem Argum nomine. Domum reuersus procos vxoris suæ castitati insidiantes interfecit. Ad extremum interfectus est à Telegono filio, patrem non agnoscente.[34]
>
> [Odysseus. The child of Laertes, ingenious, hard, seductive, Ithacan, dread, cruel, descendant of Aeolus, descendant of Laertes, industrious, cautious, Laertean, well-spoken, deceitful, enterprising, Dulichian, adaptive, thieving, wary, Narycian, clever, eloquent, wandering, descendant of Sisyphus, returning late, tardy, fierce, sly, Ithacan, wandering, prudent, roaming, Pelasgian, treacherous, Penelopean, Phaiakian, sagacious, vagabond, wise, crafty, courteous, a man of many turns, varying, unfortunate, watchful, shrewd, tenacious. Odysseus was the son of Laertes; as a mother he had Anticlea, who

[33] *Omerou Odysseias Biblion A*, a2^{r}.

[34] Johannes Ravisius Textor, *Epithetorum Ioann. Rauisii Textoris epitome ex Hadr. Iunii Medici recognitione* (London, 1589), Bb2^{r}. The first edition of 1518 was followed by many further editions, often—as with this one—expanded or supplemented by additional materials of a similar kind.

> had previously been married to Sisyphus the son of Aeolus, who abandoned him while pregnant and came to Laertes. There are those who say that he was conceived from her union with Sisyphus. He was a man endowed with great eloquence and no less experience of things, subtle of counsel, distinguished in war, unyielding in adversity. He had a wife, Penelope; sons, Telemachos, Telegonus, and Ausones; a nurse, Euryclea; a swineherd, Eumaios; a dog by the name of Argos. Having returned home, he killed his wife's suitors, who were plotting against her chastity. At last he was killed by his son Telegonus, who did not recognize his father.]

Textor's was a popular Renaissance work that went through many editions; the edition quoted above was edited by none other than Adriaen de Jonghe, the Dutch humanist who edited the folio of Homer with which we began. It appears in a 1599 book list from Merchant Taylors' School, Edmund Spenser's grammar school, offering further evidence that this simple method of using Odysseus to epitomize a range of virtues and vices continued to be taught throughout the century. The boys of Merchant Taylors' clearly turned often to this and to its companion volume, Textor's *Officina*; the book list describes both texts as "all rent."[35] Textor's assemblages of information shaped the early encounters with Homer of generations of boys making their first acquaintance with Homer, and generations of readers who never read Homer at all.

Further down the page, our student takes notes on a single word, the unusual Greek verb ἐ πεκλώσαντο, glossed by W. B. Stanford as "marked upon his thread of destiny;" the word describes the action of the gods who determine that Odysseus should at last return home.[36] The notes are difficult to decipher, but the student notes the first principal part of the verb, ἐ πικλώθω, breaks it down into its prefix (ἐ πι, "out") and root (κλώθω, "to spin"), and notes that this is the verb used to describe the action of the Fates. On the next page, against Zeus's famous first speech lamenting the human tendency to

---

[35] R. T. D. Sayle, "Annals of Merchant Taylors' School Library," *The Library* 4th series 15 (1935): 459.

[36] Homer, *Odyssey*, ed. W. B. Stanford (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996), 1.17, 209n17. Quotations of the Greek text are taken from this edition; translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

blame the gods rather than themselves for the evil consequences of their behavior, he has jotted one clearly legible note: "asseru[n]t nos esse auctores et origines maloru[m]" [he claims that we are the authors and sources of evils].[37] These are beginners' notes, providing a series of Latin synonyms for a difficult Greek word, various translations of an iconic description of the poem's titular hero, and a thumbnail moral summary of a textual moment that could easily be applied to readers' lives. As students improved their Greek language skills and their desire to read more deeply in Homer, they could take advantage of an increasing range of interpretations and means of access to the text. These practices, however, remained the basis of encounters with the Homeric text. The great humanist scholar Isaac Casaubon took very similar notes in his copy of Homer—a copy published in the following year but intended for a very different market than our 1558 student edition. A three-volume folio, this edition contains the Greek texts of Homer's poems and of Eustathius's complete commentary. On the title page of the volume that contains the *Odyssey*, Casaubon has taken copious notes, including a vocabulary list of (presumably) unfamiliar words. The margins are full of comments of all kinds: further vocabulary notes, incipits (including the first two words of Zeus's first speech, just mentioned above), an intriguing note agains the opening lines of the poem quoting the second-century Latin translation of Livius Andronicus and puzzling over the appropriate translation of πολύτροπον: "Liuius Andronicus initio Odysseæ Inseque Musa mihi viru[m] versutu[m]. πολύτρ. vertit versutu[m]. Versutus ait Cic. qui habet ingen[iosus]" [Livius Andronicus, from the beginning of the *Odyssey*, 'Tell me, Muse, of the ingenious man.' πολύτροπον he translates as 'versutum.' 'Versutus' agrees with Cicero who has

[37] *Omerou Odysseias Biblion A*, a2^{v}.

'ingeniousus'].[38] Although Casaubon was a humanist scholar of great erudition, his Homer reveals concerns very similar to those of our beginning Greek student. Vocabulary, copiousness, and a sense that the poem can be read with attention to Christian theological concerns emerge as central interests for sixteenth-century readers.

The reading practices indicated by these marginalia will be explored in greater depth in the chapters to come. Chapter 1 focuses on Ariosto, who had no Greek himself; he inherited a classical critical tradition that presented Odysseus as an exemplar of single qualities (curiosity, eloquence) and a nascent practice of translation that treated the *Odyssey* as little more than a repository of fabulous adventure stories. Ariosto accordingly engages with the *Odyssey* primarily at the level of plot and through the ethos of exemplarity. Distributing Odyssean qualities across his would-be heroic characters, he questions through his characters' failures both the epic nature and the sufficiency of these virtues in a post-classical world. In Chapter 3, we will see that Zeus's theodicy eventually joins with similar interpretations of other passages to create an broader practice of reading the *Odyssey* for theological insight. Milton draws on these practices in *Paradise Lost* to construct a model of salvation that requires both divine grace and human free will. A careful consideration of *Paradise Lost* and Milton's prose in an Odyssean context therefore enables a recovery of Renaissance practices of reading the *Odyssey* exegetically even as they illuminate Milton's unique fusion of classical and Christian wisdom in his theology.

The belief that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* complement each other, that they are two parts of a larger whole, persists through the Homeric editions and the literature of the

---

[38] Homer, *Eustathiou Archiepiskopou Thessalonikês parekbolai* (Basel: Froben, 1559-60), $\alpha 2^{r}$. The copy examined is BL C.76.h.4.

sixteenth century. Perhaps as the poems become *poems*, become whole works of literature rather than a series of difficult language lessons, the impulse to treat them as a series of character sketches recedes and the ability to see them as sustained meditations in dialogue with each other emerges. Edmund Spenser draws on this belief in the "Letter to Ralegh" that lays out a version of his scheme for *The Faerie Queene*:

> I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time. In which I haue followed all the antique Poets historicall, first Homere, who in the Persons of Agamemnon and Vlysses hath ensampled a good gouernour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso disseuered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in Philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a priuate man, coloured in his Rinaldo: The other named Politice in his Godfredo.[39]

Agamemnon represents the good governor, Odysseus represents the virtuous man; the *Iliad* explores politics and the public realm, the *Odyssey* explores ethics and the private sphere. Spenser undoubtedly echoes Torquato Tasso's "Allegoria del poema," published as a defense of his epic of the First Crusade, *Gerusalemme liberata*:

> Or della vita dell'uomo contemplante è figura la Commedia di Dante, e l'Odissea quasi in ogni parte; ma la vita civile in tutta l'Iliade si vede adombrata; e nell'Eneide ancora, benchè in questa si scorga più tosto un mescolamento d'azione e di contemplazione: ma perchè l'uomo contemplativo è solitario, e l'attivo vive nella compagnia civile; quindi avviene, che Dante, e Ulisse nella sua partita da Calipso, si fingano non accompagnati da esercito, o da moltitudine di seguaci, ma soli si fingono; dove Agamemnone ed Achille ci sono descritti, l'uno Generale dell'esercito greco, l'altro Condottiere di molte schiere de' Mirmidoni. Ed Enea si vede accompagnato quando combatte, e quando fa l'altre civili operazioni; ma quando scende all'Inferno ed ai campi Elisi, lascia i compagni...[40]
>
> Now Dante's *Commedia* presents the life of the contemplative man, and the *Odyssey* in almost every part; but the civil life is represented in all the *Iliad*; and in the *Aeneid* too, although in this poem rather a mixture of action and contemplation is realized: but because the contemplative man is solitary, and the active man lives in civil society, so it happens that Dante, and Odysseus on his departure from Kalypso, are depicted unaccompanied by armies, or by a multitude of followers, but are depicted alone; while

---

[39] Edmund Spenser, "Letter to Ralegh," in *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2001), 715.

[40] Torquato Tasso, "Allegoria del poema," in *Opere di Torquato Tasso. Colle controversie sulla Gerusalemme*, ed. G. Rosini (Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1830), 24:vi.

> Agamemnon and Achilles are described, the one General of the Greek army, the other the leader of many squadrons of Myrmidons. And Aeneas is shown accompanied when he fights, and when he undertakes other civil tasks; but when he descends to the underworld and the Elysian fields, he leaves his companions...

Although Tasso places his reading of the *Odyssey* under the rubric of allegory, it could just as easily be placed under the rubric of ethics, as Spenser's response demonstrates. As we will see in Chapter 2, both Tasso and Spenser use the *Odyssey* to consider ethical problems—for Tasso, the relationship between public and private duty; for Spenser, the place of eros in human experience. Milton too turns to the *Odyssey* as he considers ethical quandaries. As Chapter 4 will demonstrate, *Paradise Lost* draws heavily on these readings as it imagines both Adam's decision to fall for Eve and the goods and qualities that make human existence bearable.

Gordon Teskey has suggested that Edmund Spenser gives *The Faerie Queene* a Homeric patina through his use of Greek names—often etymologically appropriate—and through minor characters who serve as allegorical personifications.[41] Looking at these annotated editions and uncovering the reading practices being taught to sixteenth-century students of Greek allows us to see why such techniques would give, not just a Homeric air, but a specifically sixteenth-century Homeric quality to *The Faerie Queene*. Chapter 2, on Spenser and the poet whose practice most closely resembles his, Torquato Tasso, considers the *Gerusalemme liberata* and *The Faerie Queene* in the context of editions accessible to Tasso's and to Spenser's readers. It touches lightly on these allegorical qualities, but it devotes more attention to a different use for the *Odyssey*, a consideration of two intertwined components of romance: eros and error.

Perhaps oddest of all, a reader has numbered the lines of four books of an elegant

---

[41] Gordon Teskey, "Homer," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 375.

Odyssey printed as part of a two-volume set by Wolf Köpfel in Strasbourg in 1525—but the books numbered are Books 9-12.[42] Somebody, it seems, wanted to read about the wanderings of Odysseus and nothing else. This reader indicates another common way of reading the *Odyssey*: for the plot, as a story of marvels and adventures. The rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the 1530s and the various literary controversies that ensued are beyond the scope of this study. What can be said briefly is that Renaissance doubts about Aristotle's choice of the *Odyssey* as a model for epic poetry gave rise to the theory of a new genre: the romance. I have already suggested that the *Odyssey* presents Odysseus with a paradigmatic moment of choice, the "choice of Odysseus," and that that choice has generic implications for the works that revisit it. As this suggestion constitutes both a new reading of the *Odyssey* and the foundation for much of this dissertation, a fuller exploration of this choice is in order.

Odysseus's journey really ends in *Odyssey* 7, on the utopian island of Scheria. There, the idealized king Alkinoös offers Odysseus the hand of his daughter Nausikaa and a dowry of substantial real property and treasure—but if Odysseus would prefer not to stay, he adds, the Phaiakian sailors will take him wherever he wishes to go. Odysseus immediately chooses to leave Scheria for Ithaka and Penelope, and the Phaiakian sailors deliver him safely home, his twenty years of war and wandering ended at last. The poem rewards Odysseus's fidelity to his original goals with a safe, swift, and uneventful passage home. Nausikaa's charms and Alkinoös's offer thus become the final obstacle that Odysseus must overcome during his long travels. If they create a choice akin to Achilles' choice between anonymity and glory, they also find an analogue in the second

[42] *Omerou Odysseia* (Strasbourg: Wolf Köpfel, 1525). The copy examined is BL 1067.f.8.

famous classical choice: that of Hercules at the crossroads, choosing between vice and virtue. The roads that cross at this point in the *Odyssey* are the narratives of epic and romance. The heroes of the two modes are distinguished from each other by the choices they make at this crossroads: either to press forward towards a chosen end, forging a path through the seemingly insuperable obstacles that present themselves along the way, or to be drawn into a cycle of repetition and reiteration of past adventures, a cycle that by turning away from the possibility of change and growth leads only to a static happiness.

Odysseus extols marriage when he initially supplicates Nausikaa for clothing and directions to the town of the Phaiakians:

> may the gods give you everything that your heart longs for;
> may they grant you a husband and a house and sweet agreement
> in all things, for nothing is better than this, more steadfast
> than when two people, a man and his wife, keep a harmonious
> household; a thing that brings much distress to the people who hate them
> and pleasure to their well-wishers, and for them the best reputation.[43]

His praise of poetry comes in response to the rhapsode Demodokos's tale of the Trojan Horse and the Sack of Troy, sung at a banquet in his honor at Alkinoös's palace:

> surely indeed it is a good thing to listen to a singer
> such as this one before us, who is like the gods in his singing;
> for I think there is no occasion accomplished that is more pleasant
> than when festivity holds sway among all the populace,
> and the feasters up and down the houses are sitting in order
> and listening to the singer, and beside them the tables are loaded
> with bread and meats, and from the mixing bowl the wine steward
> draws the wine and carries it about and fills the cups. This
> seems to my own mind to be the best of occasions.[44]

The good marriage he describes to Nausikaa, the marriage marked by ὁ μοφροσύνη or like-mindedness between husband and wife, is his own marriage. He need not seek it out;

---

[43] Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), 6.180-85. All English-language quotations are from this edition unless otherwise noted. For the sake of consistency with Lattimore, I adopt his transliterations of all Greek names found in the *Odyssey*, even when Lattimore's own transliterations are inconsistent (e.g. Καλυπσώ as "Kalypso" but Κίρκη as "Circe").

[44] *Od.* 9.3-11.

rather, he seeks to resume it. Odysseus need not reject poetry if he returns home, for the court at Ithaka includes a herald/rhapsode, and Odysseus himself proves to be an excellent singer of tales both on Scheria and as he recounts his adventures to Penelope following their reunion in Book 23. If he remains on Scheria and marries Nausikaa, however, he can have only poetry and a pale echo of the 'marriage of true minds' he already enjoys with Penelope. For when Alkinoös offers to make Odysseus his daughter's husband and a wealthy and politically well-connected landowner on Scheria, he unwittingly offers him the opportunity to relive his own past experience as the new husband of an intelligent and resourceful young wife and the new ruler of an island kingdom.[45] Scheria thus becomes a paradise that offers the repetition of romance, and Nausikaa another in the line of tempting women that includes Circe and Kalypso—a temptation more dangerous than any before precisely because she bears in some ways the strongest resemblance to Penelope. She is almost what he seeks, but not quite. Life with her would involve renouncing the experiences of the past twenty years and of his marriage to Penelope, would involve going back to the beginning of his own adulthood and retracing a path into maturity already taken rather than finding a way to assimilate the rupture of the past twenty years into a marriage and rule over Ithaka, transformed and matured by hardship and separation. The risk Nausikaa unknowingly poses is therefore not just of stasis but of regression. Marriage to Nausikaa would wrench Odysseus's life from a teleological progress to a repetitive cycle, threatening his ability to grow and to learn from the hardships endured and experiences encountered on his journey.

---

[45] Helene P. Foley, "'Reverse Similes' and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*," *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 20, notes in passing that "With Nausicaa [Odysseus] has the opportunity to relive a youthful marriage," but she does not press the point further.

In generic terms, marriage to Nausikaa would turn Odysseus's journey from an epic into a romance. The *Odyssey* has often been described as the original romance. The values that Odysseus chooses on Scheria, however, are those more often associated with epic.[46] Odysseus embraces the single-minded pursuit of a telos with both public and personal aspects: love of *patria* and a desire to take up the mantle of kingship once again, as well as longing for wife, father, and child.[47] Conversely, the extent to which Odysseus's potential life on Scheria unfolds itself as a replica of his life on Ithaca strongly evokes the cyclical nature of romance. Odysseus can either continue in the life he has already chosen, or he can begin a new iteration of that life. That he continues in his original path, choosing linearity over cyclicality, becomes both an embrace of the epic and a rejection of the romance. Odysseus's choice does not, however, involve a rejection of the eros so often associated with romance; rather, it embraces that eros. By giving marriage a central role in the epic telos it imagines for Odysseus, it suggests that romance eros can be detached from romance error. "Romance commonly pits the hero's familial or societal against his erotic allegiances," Patrick Cook argues, "but it does not assign one of these unqualified moral superiority."[48] Epic from Virgil onwards has done precisely this, condemning romance eros along with romance wandering and all but mandating a conflict between public duty and private desire for an epic hero. The *Odyssey* demonstrates both that eros can become telos and that, public duty done, the pursuit of

---

[46] See, e.g., Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 5-22; and Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), for further discussion of romance and its relationship to epic.

[47] See David Quint, "The Figure of Atlante: Ariosto and Boiardo's Poem," *Modern Language Notes* 94 (1979): 86-88, for a summary of Torquato Tasso's formulation: "The epic moves towards a single endpoint which it keeps constantly in view."

[48] Patrick J. Cook, "The Epic Chronotope from Ariosto to Spenser," *Annali d'italianistica* 12 (1994): 119.

(honorable, socially sanctioned and socially useful) private desire can become a heroic project in its own right.

From the mid-sixteenth century onward, a Renaissance reader would have understood these generic questions to be implicated in the *Odyssey*. The first theorists of romance, Giovambattista Pigna and Giovambattista Giraldi Cinzio, clearly distinguish their newly-identified genre from the epic by drawing a contrast between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Although Pigna rates Homer more highly than does Giraldi Cinzio (who prefers Virgil), both express similar views on the nature of the *Odyssey*: both consider the *Odyssey* an epic, but both see it as an epic different in kind from the *Iliad* and closer than its predecessor to the romance:

> Hora saper dobbiamo, che illustre può essere in due vie: ò totalmente alla reale, come l'Iliade, ò alquanto alla pastoritia, come l'Odissea. Alla Odissea più simile sarà il Romancio che alla Iliade. & sarà perciò di due generi, & non d'un solo. La favola è d'un sol genere, quando in essa più d'una sorte di persone non vi sia, ò sia di grandi, ò sia di picciole. È di due, quando l'una e l'altra sorte vi si trovi. ... & quando questi & quelli insieme si pongono, si fa una mista favola & può esser epica, come l'Odissea. ... Misto à questo modo sarà il Romancio.[49]
>
> [Now we should know, that [poems] can be illustrious in two ways: either totally regal, like the *Iliad*, or somewhat pastoral, like the *Odyssey*. The Romance will be more similar to the *Odyssey* than to the *Iliad*; and so it will be of two kinds, and not of one only. The story is of a single kind, when in it there is not more than one sort of person, whether great or small. It is of two kinds, when both sorts are found in it. And when these and those are placed together, they make a mixed story and this can be epic, like the *Odyssey*. The Romance will be mixed in this way.]
>
> Quantunque i romanzi vadano più presso all'*Odissea* ch'alla *Iliade*, si sono però partiti da Vergilio et hanno piutosto seguitato Omero nella *Iliade*, ponendovi i nomi proprii.[50]
>
> [Although romances may be closer to the *Odyssey* than to the *Iliad*, they have departed however from Virgil and followed Homer in the *Iliad*, using proper names.]

For both critics, the *Odyssey* falls into the category of epic rather than romance. The

---

[49] Giovambattista Pigna, *I romanzi* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1554), C3^{v}.

[50] Giovambattista Giraldi Cinzio, *Discorso dei Romanzi*, ed. Laura Benedetti, Giuseppe Monorchio, and Ernesto Musacchio (Bologna: Millenium, 1999), 81.

wanderings described in the *Odyssey*, however, set the pattern for romance. Both conceive of epic as a spectrum, an insight carried forward into modern theories of romance. Patricia Parker creates the possibility that a work may cross from one mode to the other in her definition of romance:

> "Romance" is characterized primarily as a form which simultaneously quests for and postpones a particular end, objective, or object....When the "end" is defined typologically, as a Promised Land or Apocalypse, "romance" is that mode or tendency which remains on the threshold before the promised end, still in the wilderness of wandering, "error," or "trial." [51]

Ithaca represents Odysseus's "Promised Land," an identification confirmed by Teiresias's prophecy that Odysseus will, after appeasing Poseidon through one final overland voyage, live out his life in quiet contentment there. Odysseus's words to Alkinoös thus become a decisive step over the threshold Parker delineates. Consequently, Nausikaa and life on Scheria join Circe, Kalypso, and the Sirens as equally 'romantic' dangers to be met with an equally cautious blend of flirtation and reservation. Odysseus may not need literally to lash himself to a mast to escape the seductions of Nausikaa and Phaiakia, but his perseverance in his pursuit of a return to Ithaca becomes the mental equivalent of his physically binding himself to accomplish his original goal, to retain his original identity. On Scheria, Odysseus for the last time escapes from or evades a cycle that threatens to entrap him. In these evasions, the emblem of Odysseus's crossroads of epic and romance becomes the twin dangers of Skylla and Charybdis. Offered the choice between being sucked into a fatal whirlpool, never to emerge, or sailing onwards with the loss of six men, Odysseus chooses Skylla every time. His choice as he navigates these perils literalizes the choice he makes at his crossroads: forward motion, at the price of real and

---

[51] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 4.

irreversible loss. The implications of this choice, both generic and ethical, become central to all four poets' revisions of this episode.

We might say that the *Odyssey* itself stands at an Odyssean crossroads in the Renaissance. The reading practices of the period repeatedly hesitate between following the example of Virgil and Dante (or the frustrated early humanists, or the neo-Aristotelian critics) and rejecting aspects of the poem, or the example of Horace and Cicero (or the translators and humanists who undertook the difficult task of reviving Homer, or the poets who found fertile poetic and ethical ground there) and embracing it. The chapters that follow will explore versions of this embrace.

1. Fractures and Failures: The Odysseys of *Orlando furioso*

In his sixth *Satira*, Ludovico Ariosto asks his friend Pietro Bembo to recommend a good tutor for his son Virginio:

> Ma per tornar là donde io mi son tolto,
> vorrei che a mio figliuolo un precettore
> trovassi meno in questi vizii involto,
>
> che ne la propria lingua de l'autore
> gli insegnasse d'intender ciò che Ulisse
> sofferse a Troia e poi nel lungo errore,
>
> ciò che Apollonio e Euripide già scrisse,
> Sofocle, e quel che da le morse fronde
> par che poeta in Ascra divenisse,
>
> e quel che Galatea chiamò da l'onde,
> Pindaro, e gli altri a cui le Muse argive
> donar sì dolci lingue e sì faconde.[1]
>
> [But to return to what we were saying, I'd like you to find a teacher less sunk in vices for my son, who could teach him to understand in the author's own language what Odysseus suffered at Troy and then on his long wanderings, what Apollonius and Euripides wrote, and Sophocles, and Hesiod, who became a poet from the bitten twigs of Ascra, and Theocritus, who called Galatea from the waves, and Pindar, and the others to whom the Argive Muses gave such sweet and eloquent words.]

Ariosto has already taught Virginio Latin himself, he explains, and then thinks back twenty years to his own schooldays:

> Fortuna molto mi fu allora amica
> che mi offerse Gregorio da Spoleti,
> che ragion vuol ch'io sempre benedica.
>
> Tenea d'ambe le lingue i bei secreti,
> e potea giudicar se meglior tuba
> ebbe il figliuol di Venere o di Teti.
>
> Ma allora non curai saper di Ecuba
> la rabbiosa ira, e come Ulisse a Reso
> la vita a un tempo e li cavalli ruba;
>
> ch'io volea intender prima in che avea offeso
> Enea Giunon, che 'l bel regno da lei
> gli dovesse d'Esperia esser conteso;

---

[1] Lodovico Ariosto, *Satira 6*, in *Satire di Ludovico Ariosto*, ed. Guido Davico Bonino (Milan: Rizzoli, 1990), 130-41.

> che 'l saper ne la lingua de li Achei
> non mi reputo onor, s'io non intendo
> prima il parlar de li latini miei.[2]
>
> [Fortune was very much my friend then, for she gave me Gregorio of Spoleto, whom reason dictates that I should always bless. He held the lovely secrets of both the tongues, and he could judge whether the son of Venus or the son of Thetis had the better epic. But then I didn't care to know the rabid anger of Hecuba, and how Odysseus stole Rhesus's life and his horses at the same time; for I wanted first to understand how Aeneas offended Juno, that he had to fight her for the beautiful kingdom of Hesperia; for I didn't think it fitting to know it in the language of the Achaians, if I didn't understand first the speech of my Latins.]

But before Ariosto could graduate from Latin to Greek, fate intervened. His father died, and Ariosto had to take his place as the family breadwinner:

> Mi more il padre, e da Maria il pensiero
> drieto a Marta bisogna ch'io rivolga,
> ch'io muti in squarci et in vacchette Omero.[3]
>
> [My father died, and I had to turn my thoughts from Mary straight to Martha, and to mute Homer in ledgers and logbooks.]

Satira 6 contains Ariosto's most extensive comments on education, the closest he ever came to a theory or a defense of humanist pedagogy. As Albert Ascoli has shown, Ariosto takes a curiously equivocal stance towards the humanist education he desires for his son and wishes he could have completed himself, detailing its shortcomings and suggesting that the initiation into a community of poets that it promises is a utopian impossibility, given the intrusions and limits of the world; Mary must inevitably give place to Martha.[4] Ascoli focuses his discussion of the limits and superhuman possibilities of this education through the mention of Odysseus in the second passage: "Ulysses is both the immediate object of Ariosto's desire for broader humanistic knowledge, while,

---

[2] *Satira 6*, 166-80.

[3] *Satira 6*, 199-201.

[4] Albert Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 109-20.

at the same time, the poet offers his refusal to exceed the boundaries of human obligation and affection as a direct counterpoint to Dante's Ulysses' boundless thirst for novel experience."[5] Ascoli goes on to suggest that this dynamic governs the longest episodes of education in the *Orlando furioso*: Ruggiero's encounter with the Circean sorceress Alcina and her half-sister Logistilla, who attempts to undo Alcina's education in sensory pleasures with her own lessons in reason, and Astolfo's journey to the moon to retrieve Orlando's lost wits, which leads to a lesson in reading from no less than St. John the Evangelist. "By recuperating certain aspects of Ulyssean humanism," Ascoli concludes, "he can criticize and parodically diminish the didactic project of the *Commedia*, while at the same time he redeploys some of Dante's judgments against Ulysses. In fact, the precise value of Ulysses in the *Furioso* is never certain."[6] As an illustration, Ascoli offers the attempts by three characters to educate Ruggiero in the dangers of Alcina's palace,

> each of which has a role in some way analogous to the text's and each of which falls under at least one aspect of the figure of Ulysses: Astolfo, who teaches by the example of his own failure (and whose teaching fails); Melissa, who teaches the ambiguous lesson of combatting fraud with fraud; and Logistilla, who teaches 'virtute' by way of 'canoscenza' of one's self. The rhetorical-poetic character of these educations is suggested from the first by the way in which the whole episode is placed under the complementary signs of Ulysses, the rhetor, and the hippogryph, with its obvious associations to the Pegasus, winged horse of poetry.[7]

Ariosto recuperates and deploys aspects of Odyssean humanism, then, by distributing them among various characters. To do so, he must break the character of Odysseus into its component attributes, both vices and virtues. Ascoli suggests that this episode is essential to Ariosto's role as an educator; if it is, the process it employs serves as a critique both of contemporary humanist methods of education and of the exemplary use

---

[5] Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, 145.

[6] Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, 154.

[7] Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, 157.

of classical texts and figures.[8] Exemplarity, central to Renaissance humanist education and to the project of humanism, invites a reader to apply the texts she reads to her own life, to use a text as the basis for action in the world.[9] But in practice, extracting manageable lessons from difficult and sprawling works almost inevitably involves oversimplifying those texts. These readings of classical texts, Ariosto suggests through his use of Odysseus in the *Furioso*, look at Odysseus through a prism and separate him into his component character traits. Ariosto imitates this practice in the *Furioso* by assigning single Odyssean attributes to various characters and placing those characters in situations that closely resemble scenarios from the *Odyssey*. Again and again the characters fail to emulate Odysseus, mocking the humanist confidence in exemplarity and suggesting that heroism in the real world requires more than the magpie-like collection of a virtue or two from here and there. The poem argues that the exemplarity based on this prismatic view of the *Odyssey* is doomed to failure. Heroic action, like the construction of a heroic self, requires a holistic view; if that is unavailable, the only thing to do is to be prudent and accept one's limits—accept the impossibility of emulating Odysseus.

At the center of Ariosto's poem lies a sequence of episodes that, taken together, rewrite the career of Odysseus as narrated by the classical tradition: Norandino and the Orc in Canto 17, Cloridano and Medoro's nighttime expedition to bury their fallen leader in Cantos 18-19, Medoro's rescue by and subsequent marriage to Angelica in Canto 19, Orlando's descent into madness at the loss of Angelica in Cantos 23-24. These episodes

---

[8] Ronald L. Martinez, "Two Odysseys: Rinaldo's Po Journey and the Poet's Homecoming in the *Orlando furioso*," in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 17-55, similarly argues that the poem's journey and the poet's are intertwined through their imitations of the *Odyssey*—in this case, of Odysseus's final journey home.

[9] Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 10.

are framed by four outlying Odyssean episodes: Ruggiero's encounter with Alcina in Cantos 6-8, Astolfo's descent to the underworld in Canto 34, Rinaldo's journey down the River Po in Canto 43, and Bradamante's test to win her hand—a test that she knows only Ruggiero can pass—in Canto 44. The framing episodes of Alcina and Astolfo deal primarily with explorations of Odyssean curiosity and reason, which Ascoli has studied at length, while the central episodes explore Odyssean cunning and eloquence. The last major Odyssean episodes of the poem, Rinaldo's journey and Bradamante's test to ensure her fidelity to Ruggiero, reintegrate these two major strands of Odysseus's character in order to pronounce, finally, on the utility of these Odyssean characteristics taken together. Crucially, however, each of these episodes produces a failed or limited imitation of Odysseus.[10] These episodes feature imitations of Odysseus's adventures that link them together; the fact that Ariosto rewrites them in order to make each revolve around a failure to emulate Odysseus fuses them into a single narrative.[11] At the level of allusion,

---

[10] Pio Rajna, *Le fonti dell'*Orlando furioso, 2nd ed. (Florence: Sansoni, 1975), the most comprehensive study of Ariosto's sources, notes the Odyssean origins of some of these episodes. While Rajna takes a positivistic approach to source-hunting and concludes that Ariosto's many debts to other writers reveal his lack of originality, I share the view of modern critics that Ariosto's originality lies in large part in his creative recombination of these elements. The literature on Ariosto's imitations is vast; among the works to which I am particularly indebted are Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, 28; Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 39-44; Daniel Javitch, "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 215-39; Barbara Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 147-86; Daniel Javitch, "The Grafting of Virgilian Imitation in *Orlando furioso*," in *Renaissance Transactions*, 56-76; Dennis Looney, *Compromising the Classics: Romance Epic Narrative in the Italian Renaissance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996). On the creativity involved in Renaissance imitation more generally, see Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), and the essays in David Quint and Margaret W. Ferguson, eds, *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992).

[11] This is a different type of failure from that proposed by Richard Lansing, "*Orlando furioso* and the Homeric Model," *Comparative Literature Studies* 24 (1987): 311-25, who claims that the forty-six cantos of the third and final edition of the *Furioso* represent "a double structure of 23 plus 23 cantos, a composite *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, each half falling one canto short of the Homeric perfection, in order to illustrate Ariosto's vision of reality that human desire and effort almost always fall short of complete realization" (315).

we need not connect these episodes any more tightly than we connect all the allusions to the *Aeneid* or the *Inferno*. But the fact that Ariosto takes these allusions and alters each in a similar way joins them into a narrative about the imitation of a single text. Much has been written about the nature and function of narrative interlace in the *Orlando furioso*.[12] The intertwined narratives of chivalric quests, amorous pursuits, and epic battles that constitute the *Furioso* double and redouble each other, commenting through their repetitions and variations on the values and projects of each narrative and of the poem as a whole. The series of imitations of the *Odyssey* in Ariosto's work constitues a second layer of interlace, which I suggest we call allusive interlace. They create a second level of plot, a narrative identified and unified not by its characters or the stories in which they ostensibly participate, but by the centrality of the Odyssean allusions in each episode and by the consistency with which those characters find themselves in situations that extensively rewrite the major episodes of Odysseus's career, forced to string (or attempt to string) the bow of Odysseus.[13]

Interlace, allusion and intertextuality, and exemplarity all run the risk of taking the prismatic view Ariosto attacks through his critique of the exemplar. But the

---

[12] The classic account of *entrelacement* in romance is Eugène Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971). For explorations of Ariosto's use of interlace in individual episodes of the *Furioso*, see Elissa Weaver, "Lettura dell'intreccio dell'*Orlando furioso*: Il caso delle tre pazzie d'amore," *Strumenti critici* 11 (1977): 384-406; Robert M. Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 140-76; and David Quint, "Narrative Interlace and Narrative Genres in *Don Quijote* and the *Orlando furioso*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 58 (1997): 241-68. See also Daniel Javitch, "*Cantus Interruptus* in the *Orlando furioso*," *Modern Language Notes* 95 (1980): 66-80, for a study of the most remarkable features of Ariosto's interlace: his refusal to make narrative closure coincide with the end of a canto and his cross-cutting between episodes at moments of great suspense.

[13] Eduardo Saccone, *Il "soggetto" del* Furioso *e altri saggi tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Naples: Liguori, 1974), 226, describes a different but related process, the "twinning" of characters at both the level of the plot and the level of the narrative.

reintegration of those components is a necessary part of Ariosto's practice as a poet.[14] Writing in the epic tradition, he must assimilate his poem to its predecessors while also criticizing, diminishing, and overgoing them. Timothy Hampton has argued that exemplarity is to the reader what imitation is to the poet: each process involves similar processes of extracting, assimilating, and transforming pre-existing material into a distinctive and unique self.[15] Ariosto engages precisely this problem in his rewritings of the *Odyssey*. Through his final Odyssean episodes and through his look backwards in *Satira 6*, he suggests that the way to avoid the failures of his would-be Odyssean characters is to put aside the prism and look the originals in the face: to make the return *ad fontes* in earnest, to set aside romance imitations of the *Odyssey* for the epic original, to fashion an integrated, reading self by analyzing the complexities of the fully-rounded Odysseus. Eduardo Saccone has argued that "il *Furioso* è un'epica che ha per protagonista la ragione umana (più esattamente, forse, la ragione borghese), e però i suoi limiti e le sue difficoltà: esso è dunque anche un discorso sulla possibilità del valore" [The *Furioso* is an epic that has as its protagonist human reason (more exactly, perhaps, bourgeois reason), and its limits and difficulties: it is, therefore, also a discourse on the possibility of valor].[16] Ariosto, by selecting various facets of Odysseus and reassembling them into an Odyssean narrative, stakes a claim—only partially ironic—to be a modern poet of Odysseus, a modern Homer. He forges an encounter between his readers and the

---

[14] Critics who have argued that the interlace teaches exemplary lessons include Saccone, *Il "soggetto" del* Furioso, 178, who sees exemplarity at work in the contrast between Norandino and Lucina's mutual fidelity and Orrigille's behavior towards Grifone, and Mario Santoro, *L'annello d'Angelica: Nuovi saggi ariosteschi* (Napoli: Federico & Ardia, 1983), 90, who sees the contrast between Orlando's respectful treatment of Olimpia and Ruggiero's attempted rape of Angelica as a lesson in exemplary heroic behavior.

[15] Hampton, *Writing from History*, 4, 29.

[16] Saccone, *Il "soggetto" del* Furioso, 171.

classical hero who epitomizes human reason in order to ask what possibilities there may be for valor in a modern world, and what kind of valor reading the *Odyssey* can teach.

I. Paradigms

It should come as little surprise that the allusions in this level of interlace are primarily allusions to plot devices or developments. As Ariosto laments in his *Satira 6*, he had no Greek himself; early *vite* of the author make much of his regret at this gap in his education.[17] His access to Homer thus came through two channels: translations and the cultural inheritance of a tradition shaped, however remotely, by Homer's original text. Three Latin translations of the *Odyssey* were printed before 1532, when the final edition of the *Furioso* appeared; only two of these were issued before the first edition of 1516.[18] The first was a prose translation published in Strasbourg in 1510 under the name of Gregorio Ubelin, but possibly indebted to the translation of Francesco Griffolini, which had previously circulated in manuscript.[19] The second, a composite version mostly

---

[17] Girolamo Girafolo, in a *vita* included in *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi, 1584), **4^{r}, states that although Ariosto "entrò in desiderio d'apprender la lingua Greca" [began to desire to learn the Greek language], the deaths in close succession of his teacher, Gregory of Spoleto, and his father forced Ariosto to break off his humanistic studies altogether. Consequently, he never began the study of Greek: "per poco fù ch'insieme col desiderio della lingua Greca non abbandonasse anco di novo gli studii Latini affatto" [together with the desire for Greek he nearly abandoned his Latin studies altogether].

[18] Philip Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque: Réception des épopées homériques à la Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 2007), is the most comprehensive study of Latin translations of the *Odyssey*. Older but still-useful sources include Agostino Pertusi, *Leonzio Petrarca fra Petrarca e Boccaccio* (Venice and Rome: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1964), and Noémi Hepp, "Homère en France au XVI^{e} Siècle," *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino II. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche* 96 (1961-62): 399-408, who surveys the publication history of Homer's text in greater detail than Pertusi but with less complete coverage of the earlier years of the sixteenth century (for example, Hepp makes no mention of either the Ubelin or the Griffolini translation, nor the fragmentary Filelfo translation with which the Venetian editors confused Griffolini's). Of the works in English on the fate of the classical literary canon in the Renaissance, the most useful for tracing Homeric reception is R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954). See also Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

[19] *Homeri poetarum clarissimum Odyssea de erroribus Vlyxes* (Strasbourg: Ioannis Schotti, 1510). The

in prose with some short sections in verse by Raffaele Maffei, also known as Raphael Volaterrano, was first published in 1510 in Rome and reprinted at least three times before 1532.[20] Griffolini's prose translation, mentioned above, first appeared in print in 1516 (misattributed to Francesco Filelfo) in an anthology of Homeric material that also included Latin translations of Plutarch's "Life of Homer" (by the great humanist educator Guarino Veronese), several orations on Homer, the first nine books of the *Iliad* (by Niccolò Valla), and the first book of the *Iliad* and the *Batrachomyomachia* (by Carlo Aretino), as well as the *Ilias Latina*.[21]

These prose translations are prosaic to say the least. Griffolini, the briefest of the three, offers little more than plot summary. While Maffei and Ubelin present Homer's narrative more amply, they omit much of the purely poetic content, from imagery and figurative descriptions to the epithets and formulae that are now regarded as a key component of Homer's poetic practice. These early translators noticed the presence of the characteristic building blocks of Homer's verse, but they did not understand their function—theories of oral composition were still four hundred years in the future—and they disliked the aesthetic effect. The epithets were so little understood as to be expendable. Maffei explains in his dedicatory epistle that he has decided not to translate

---

Beinecke record for this volume suggests an attribution of the translation to Griffolini, while Pertusi, *Leonzio Pilato*, 524n6, suggests that "sarebbe in parte derivata da quella di Fr. Griffolini; non mi è stato possibile vedere nessun esemplare" [it may be in part derived from that of Fr. Griffolini; it has not been possible for me to examine a copy].

[20] *Odissea Homeri* (Rome: Iacobus Mazochius, 1510). Maffei's translation was reprinted in Cologne in 1523, in Antwerp in 1528, again in Cologne in 1534, and in Lyon in 1541. Its five editions make it the most frequently-reprinted Latin translation of the *Odyssey* in the first half of the sixteenth century, just edging out the four editions of Andrea Divo's *ad verbum* translation between 1537-40 listed in Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*, 340-43, although it appears to have been superseded by the 1549 Latin hexameter translation of Simon Lemnius.

[21] *Homeri opera* (Venice: Bernardium Venetum de Vitalibus, 1516). Pertusi, *Leonzio Pilato*, 523n1, discusses this incorrect attribution.

the epithets, as he finds them repetitive and boring: "Breuior etiam sum illo, quòd epitheta penè innumerabilia, & apud eum sæpe repetita, & quasi perpetua, omiserim: quæ apposita ut ei decori sunt, sic fastidium nostris pariunt, & floccidam reddere uidentur orationem" [For I am more concise than he, because I have omitted the almost innumerable epithets, and with them often the almost continual repetitions: which epithets although they are decorous, yet they produce disgust in us, and seem to render the language feeble].[22] In Maffei's mind, producing a translation more concise than Lorenzo Valla's prose translation of the *Iliad* is a matter for self-congratulation; his practice reveals that the plot, not a first-hand encounter with the poetic qualities of Homer's verse, was his primary object. These translations do make available more detailed versions of the story of Odysseus' adventures than the second-hand tales previously available, but they convey little of the poetic or aesthetic qualities of the *Odyssey*.[23] Still less do they offer a precise rendering of Homer's language.[24] If Ariosto and his humanist readers could construct for themselves, through translations or imitations, a reasonably detailed picture of Homer's plot and narrative technique, they

---

[22] Raffaele Maffei, *Odisseae Homeri Libri XXIIII* (Lyon: Seb. Gryphium, 1541), aa2^{r}. I am grateful to Leah Whittington for drawing my attention to this passage.

[23] Denis Fachard, "L'immagine dell'eroe: Reminiscenze Omeriche nell'*Innamorato* e nel *Furioso*," *Ètudes de lettres* 1 (1989): 5-40, attempts to draw parallels between Ariosto's and Homer's uses of epic similes; he claims that both poets tend to concentrate their epic similes in battle scenes and to draw on the same topoi in generating those similes. But this in itself is not conclusive evidence that Ariosto knew and consciously referenced his Greek predecessor. Given Ariosto's lack of Greek, we have to assume some intermediary between Homer and Ariosto; Fachard himself indicates that Matteo Maria Boiardo (who did have Greek), author of the *Orlando innamorato*, the work which the *Furioso* continues, provides one intermediate source for this handling of similes. Without a study of Virgil, Ovid, Statius, and other major classical epic poets, we cannot say that this practice is specific to Homer rather than true of the classical tradition in general.

[24] Sixteenth-century commentators did attempt to establish direct links between Ariosto's and Homer's poetic language. Alberto Lavezuola, in his "Osservationi...sopra l'*Orlando furioso*," in *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi, 1584), cites numerous verbal parallels between an unidentified Latin verse translation of Homer and the text of the *Furioso*. However, Ariosto died in 1533, sixteen years before the publication of the first complete verse translation.

had no direct access to many of the characteristics of Homer's verse. Nor, as Maffei's preface reveals, did many of those readers who could tackle Homeric Greek understand what they encountered in Homer's language.

These early editions offer scant textual apparatus to guide the reader through Homer's poem. The Ubelin edition contains no paratexts at all; the Maffei translation includes marginal notes noting the names of major characters and episodes as they appeared ("Circe," "Laestrygones"), as well as short morals and maxims. The Griffolini translation prefaces each book with a Latin translation of the argument, or plot synopsis, found at the head of each book in many early Greek-language editions of the *Odyssey*. As this volume also includes the *vita* of Homer by pseudo-Plutarch, it comes closest to offering its reader the kind of critical context and interpretative guidance that would come to be standard in later sixteenth-century editions of classical epic. However, this volume provides such guidance only in embryonic form, and its text offers the least faithful rendition of the *Odyssey* itself. The combined evidence of these early Homeric translations, with their straightforward prose and their tendency to summarize Homer's plot rather than to render his verse, brings to mind Noémi Hepp's statement that for medieval readers "Homère n'a d'autre fonction que d'etre un raconteur d'histoires" [Homer had no other role than that of storyteller].[25] The attitude that Homer's poems represented little more than a source of fabulous stories with appropriate morals seems to have endured into the early sixteenth century and to have been held by early translators and printers in Italy, France, and the Low Countries alike. This attitude would change sharply by the middle of the sixteenth century, as more and better translations appeared,

[25] Hepp, "Homère en France au XVI^{e} Siècle," 398.

as classical critical works were published, and as editions in the original and in translation alike began to be accompanied with more copious paratexts: arguments and moralizing "allegories" appended to each book, extensive marginalia, indices to memorable moments and to useful sententia in each poem, commentaries printed as prefaces to the entire poem or accompanying each book. Soon, spurred by the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* and the debate over epic form that would sweep southern Europe, the *Odyssey* would be judged as an exemplary epic, examined for its generic qualities as well as its moral potential. But in 1516, as the first edition of *Orlando furioso* appeared in print, this revolution was still on the horizon. A reader fluent in Greek could have read the *editio princeps* of Heraclitus of Pontus's *Homeric Allegories* (Venice, 1505) or of Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* and *Cave of the Nymphs*, Neoplatonist allegories of the *Odyssey* as the journey of the soul (Rome, 1518); he could have made his way through the *Lives* of pseudo-Plutarch, pseudo-Herodotus, and Dio Chrysostom prefaced to the 1488 *editio princeps* of Homer, which included some of this allegorical material. Latin orations that drew on the classical allegories were delivered in universities and humanist schools, and they began to find their way into print: Poliziano's *Oratio in expositione Homeri*, delivered in his public lectures on Homer in 1486-87 in Florence and published in the *Opera omnia* of 1498, and its poetic prelude *Ambra*, published in the *Silvae* in 1485, offer access in Latin to the cosmic allegories of pseudo-Plutarch.[26] So does the *Sermone tertius* on Homer by Antonius Urceus, professor of grammar, rhetoric, and poetry at Bologna, published in Venice in 1506.[27] Urceus taught

---

[26] Angelo Poliziano, *Ambra*, in *Silvae*, ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 476-589, summarizes the claims for Homer that are made at greater length in the *Oratio*.

[27] Antonius Urceus, *Orationes* (Venice, 1506), $C4^{v}$-$C6^{r}$.

Nicholas Copernicus his Greek, but Ariosto seems to have remained unmoved by (or possibly ignorant of) the classical willingness to believe that the Homeric poems could serve as an encyclopedia of natural history, philosophy, and human knowledge of all descriptions. The *Furioso* and the *Satira* show him to be far more engaged with the problems of moral and heroic exemplarity.

In short, Ariosto had little more than the plot of the *Odyssey* with which to work as he attempted to weave Homer into his web of classical sources. He did, however, have a set of received ideas about Odysseus. Often unmoored from the events of the *Odyssey*—known as much through plot summaries and mythographies, philosophical texts and rhetorical treatises as through Latin translations and Greek editions—the figure of Odysseus enjoyed a definite cultural presence in Quattrocento and early Cinquecento Italy. The second-hand nature of most of these accounts, however, placed a wide range of interpretive filters between the Renaissance reader and the figure of Odysseus. If these portraits could adjoin or even overlap each other on a spectrum of readings of Odysseus, they could not all be assembled into a single coherent reading; some of these visions of Odysseus were incompatible with—even antithetical to—each other.

The most widely known portrait of Odysseus in Renaissance Italy was undoubtedly Virgil's damning account of the crafty and duplicitous Greek who brought about the fall of Troy through his cunning and his lies. In Aeneas' narration to Dido of the sack of Troy, Virgil attacks the character of Odysseus through both the justified suspicions of Laocoön and the fictitious but even more damaging account of Sinon. The priest Laocoön's famous warning to the Trojans to beware of Greeks bearing gifts (the gift in this case being, of course, the Trojan Horse) includes a specific accusation against

Ulysses—the only Greek so singled out—as an exemplary case in a general attack on Greek perfidy: "aut ulla putatis / dona carere dolis Danaum? sic notus Ulixes?" [Do you think that any gifts of the Greeks are free from treachery? Is Ulysses known thus?][28] In ten words, Virgil transforms Odysseus's reputation for craft and cleverness into a damning moral flaw. His wit takes on a malicious tinge; his ingenuity becomes purely and diabolically destructive. Sinon, the spy planted by the Greeks to trick the Trojans into taking the wooden horse inside the walls, attributes similarly negative qualities to Odysseus; he explains his apparent desertion from the departing Greek armies with a tale of the troubles he has already suffered through the treachery of Odysseus and the greater harm he fears. Although his story is pure fiction, the aspersions he casts on Odysseus are clearly intended to enhance the plausibility of his account and suggest that such a negative view of Odysseus was already current among his Trojan audience. The fact that Aeneas cites Sinon as an example of the Greek treachery Laocoön identifies with Odysseus suggests, perhaps, that Sinon's tale might be attributed to Odysseus; so too does the fact that Odysseus claims credit for the strategem of the Trojan Horse in *Odyssey* 8.493-94. Virgil's audience, already disposed to be more sympathetic to the Trojans than to the Greeks, might well have accepted Sinon's description of his father's death "invidia pellacis Ulixi" [through the malice of subtle Ulysses] and the epithets "scelerumque inventor" [the author of crime] and "dirus" [dread] as merely accurate, no matter the speaker.[29] At least some humanists drew this conclusion from Aeneas' tale.

---

[28] Virgil, *Aeneid*, in *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 2.43-44. All quotations of the Latin are from this edition; translations are my own.

[29] *Aen.* 2.90, 164, 261.

The earliest edition of Ambrosius Calepinus's *Dictionarium*, one of the humanist compendia of classical mythology and information of all kinds that went through many editions and additions over the course of the sixteenth century, focuses its entry on Odysseus almost entirely on Virgil's presentation of the character:

> Ulysses fuit filius Laertes regis Ithacae. Unde et Laertius cognominatur est & Ithacus ab Ithaca insula: in qua regnavit. Et Dulichius ab insula Dulichia: quae in illius regno habebatur. Similiter & Naritius a Naritio. Est & quandoque secunde declinationis sicut Achilles. Virgilius. Et terram altricem saevi exectamur [sic] Vlyssi.[30]
>
> [Ulysses was the son of Laertes the king of Ithaca. Thus he is surnamed Laertius and Ithacus from the island of Ithaca, over which he reigned. And Dulichius from the island of Dulichium, where he also ruled. Similarly Naritius from Naritio. And is sometimes of the second declension just like Achilles. Virgil: And we curse the land that nurtured cruel Ulysses.]

Grammar, epithets, and a Virgilian tag sum up Odysseus for Calepinus. These are, as we saw in the introduction, precisely the elements that humanist teachers emphasized in their lectures, and they reduce Odysseus even below the level of a cluster of detachable, extractable virtues or vices. In the *Dictionarium*, Virgil's Ulysses crowds Homer's Odysseus almost out of the text altogether. Calepinus reduces Odysseus to little more than an example of a second-declension noun and a geography lesson.

Also prominent in the consciousness of the Italian humanist, as Ascoli's reading of *Satira 6* demonstrates, would have been the insatiably curious Ulysses of *Inferno* 26, burning eternally in a tongue of fire in punishment for the frauds he perpetrated through his cleverly-chosen words. Although Dante does allude to two episodes of the Trojan War, the main deception he cites is not found in any classical source.[31] After leaving

---

[30] The Virgilian quotation is *Aen.* 3.273; "exectamur" should read "exsecramur." Ambrosius Calepinus, *Dictionarium* (Paris: Jose Bade Ascensius, 1514), Z8^{v}, quoted in Gérard Defaux, *Le curieux, le glorieux, et la sagesse du monde dans la première moitié du XVI siècle: l'exemple du Panurge (Ulysse, Démosthène, Empédocle)* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1982), 60; translations are my own.

[31] Curiously, the frauds Dante's Ulysses mentions are his discovery of Achilles (disguised as a girl by his mother in order to prevent him from joining the Greek forces at Troy) through a strategem, and his theft of

Circe's island, he claims, Ulysses persuades his men to venture beyond the traditional limits of human voyaging, the Pillars of Hercules that flank the Straits of Gibraltar at the opening of the Mediterranean Sea, in order to satisfy his overwhelming curiosity to venture into these unknown waters:

> Né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta
> del vecchio padre, né'l debito amore
> lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta,
> vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore
> ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
> e de li vizi umani e del valore.
>
> [Neither my fondness for my son nor my pity
> for my old father nor the love I owed
> Penelope, which would have gladdened her,
> was able to defeat in me the longing
> I had to gain experience of the world
> and of the vices and the worth of men.][32]

Ulysses then quotes a sample of the fraudulent counsel that condemned him to his particular circle of hell:

> Considerate la vostra semenza;
> fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
> ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza.
>
> [Consider well the seed that gave you birth:
> you were not made to live your lives as brutes,
> but to be followers of worth and knowledge.][33]

The desire for knowledge and experience, not the fradulent counsel for which Virgil claims Ulysses has been condemned, is emphasized in Ulysses' account. Ulysses admits

---

the Palladium, the votive image of Athene that protected Troy against the Greeks, in a disguise backed by plausible lies of the sort Odysseus tells throughout the *Odyssey*. The latter of these is narrated in *Aeneid* 2; the former was perhaps most familiar from Statius' unfinished *Achilleid.*

[32] Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, paperback ed. (New York: Bantam, 1982), 26.94-99. All subsequent quotations are from this edition. On Dante's Ulysses, see John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 136-51, and David Thompson, *Dante's Epic Journeys* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 49, who discusses Dante's knowledge of the Homeric narrative and argues that Dante constructs his ambitious and transgressive Ulysses "in direct opposition to a perfectly clear tradition."

[33] *Inf.* 26.118-20.

that his thirst for knowledge is excessive, that it outweighs the domestic and familial ties that should have exercised a stronger hold on him and that inform the values of Virgil's Aeneas. Although his love for his wife and his longing for his homeland are the qualities for which Odysseus is perhaps most famous in modern readings, in the mind of Dante's Ulysses they compete unsuccessfully with a second set of traits: the pursuit of virtue and knowledge. "Virtute e canoscenza" are hardly chosen at random by Dante. These are qualities the classical tradition ascribes to—almost identifies with—Odysseus. However, just as Virgil's portrait of Ulysses twists his cleverness into a morally repugnant trait, Dante's transforms his desire for experience and wisdom into excessive lusts, monstrous in their ability to overpower licit forms of love and devotion. This depiction places Dante at the end of a long classical tradition that struggles with the moral implications of the curiosity and desire for knowledge and experience Homer's Odysseus displays.[34] Together, the Odysseus figures of Virgil and Dante allowed Renaissance readers lacking Greek to construct a version of Odysseus more complex and therefore more plausible than the stock villain Odysseus had become for Sophocles and Euripides, but no less negative than his tragic counterpart.

Another set of classical texts, scarcely less popular among humanist readers, balanced this negative view of Odysseus by using him to illustrate more positive traits. Perhaps the most important and popular of these was Horace's *Epistle* 1.2, which paraphrases the opening lines of the *Odyssey*:

> Rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,

---

[34] Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, 144-52, offers a brilliant reading of the curiosity of Dante's Ulysses and its echoes and reworkings in Ariosto's Ruggiero-Alcina episode. Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the* Divine Comedy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), offers an extended study of the classical tradition that found in Odysseus the negative archetype of the rhetor.

> utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulixen,
> qui domitor Troiae multorum providus urbes,
> et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per aequor,
> dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
> pertulit, adversis rerum immersabilis undis.
> Sirenum voces et Circae pocula nosti;
> quae sicum sociis stultus cupidusque bibisset,
> sub domina meretrice fuisset turpis et excors
> vixisset canis immundus vel amica luto sus.[35]
>
> [On the contrary, of what virtue and what wisdom can do, Homer shows us a useful example: Ulysses, the prudent conqueror of Troy, who observed the cities and the manners of many men, and on the broad ocean for himself and for his companions seeks return, endured much hardship, never submerged by the waves of adversity. He knew the voices of the Sirens and the potions of Circe; which if he, stupid and greedy like his companions, had drunk, he would have been under a whorish mistress and would have lived deformed and senseless, as an unclean dog or a pig, the friend of mud.]

For Horace, Odysseus appears as an avatar of "virtus et...sapientia," virtue and wisdom. Odysseus's wanderings become both a supreme demonstration of the virtue of endurance and an opportunity to perfect that quality in himself. His adventures increase both his knowledge of mankind and his ability to weather the extremes of human experience, thus becoming both a proof and a development of his wisdom. He samples the potions of Circe without falling under her spell; if he is the opposite of stupid, he is also the opposite of greedy. Intriguingly, Raffaele Maffei mentions this epistle in the preface to his Latin translation of the *Odyssey*: "Ego uero ex eius rhapsodia Odysseam mihi uertenda[m] sumpsi, quòd ad mores animumq[ue] excolendum non minus quàm ad eloquendum facere uidereter, proposito nobis Vlysse patientiæ lege, ut ait Horatius ad M. Lollium" [I have taken it upon myself to translate the Odyssey from its poet, because it seemed to make the manners and the spirit to be perfected no less than to be spoken, Odysseus having been proposed to us as a rule of patience, as Horace says to M. Lollius].[36] Horace

---

[35] Horace, *Satires and Epistles*, ed. Edward P. Morris (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 17-26. W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954), 123, testifies to the popularity of this epistle.

[36] Maffei, *Odisseae Homeri Libri XXIIII*, aa2^{r}.

attributes a complex of virtues to Odysseus, but Maffei emphasizes just one: patience. He thus testifies to both the Renaissance attraction to this view and the Renaissance reduction of it. It is this reductive, prismatic approach that Ariosto rejects in the *Furioso*.

Cicero offers a similarly positive view of Odysseus's wisdom. In the *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero gives Odysseus the epithet *sapientia*, wise or knowing: "et iam heroicis aetatibus Ulixem et Nestorem accepimus et fuisse et habitos esse sapientes" [Back in the heroic age Ulysses and Nestor were, as history relates, wise men and accounted wise].[37] And in *De finibus*, he expands on this complex of qualities:

> Mihi quidem Homerus huius modi quiddam vidisse videtur in iis quae de Sirenum cantibus finxerit. Neque enim vocum suavitate videntur aut novitate quadam et varietate cantandi revocare eos solitae qui praetevehebantur, sed quia multa se scire profitebantur, ut homines ad earum saxa discendi cupiditate adhaerescerent....Vidit Homerus probari fabulam non posse, si cantiunculis tantus vir irretitus teneretur; scientiam pollicentur, quam non erat mirum sapientiae cupido patria cariorem esse. Atque omnia quidem scire, cuiuscumque modi sint, cupere curiosorum, duci vero maiorum rerum contemplatione ad cupiditatem scientiae summorum virorum est putandum.[38]
>
> It seems to me that Homer had in view something of this kind in the way in which he wrote of the Sirens. For neither by the sweetness of their voices nor the novelty and variety of their singing were they used to recalling those who sailed past, but because they claimed to know many things, and men cling to their rocks through their desire of learning...Homer saw that he could not make his tale credible, if with little songs such a man were ensnared; they promised knowledge, which it would not be surprising for a man desirous of wisdom to prefer to his country. And indeed, to know all things, of whatever kind they might be, is the desire of the curious, but to be led by contemplation of greater things to the desire for knowledge is the consideration of the greatest men.

As Defaux points out, Cicero's *discendi cupiditas* echoes Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "Omnes homines natura scire desiderant" [All men desire by nature to know]. Defaux reads the history of this statement as a brave but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to save Odysseus from the taint of curiosity, but the combination of Cicero and Aristotle offers

---

[37] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 5.3.7-8.

[38] Cicero, *De finibus*, 5.18.48-49. Quoted in Defaux, *Curieux*, 36-37.

powerful support for a positive reading of Odysseus's curiosity and quest for wisdom.[39] Such a reading might run against the grain of Dante, but it need not run against the grain of either Cicero or Aristotle, or more than lightly against the grain of Plato.

Earlier in the *Disputations*, Cicero had quoted Socrates' characterization of Odysseus in the *Apology*: "Temptarem etiam summi regis, qui maximas copias duxit at Troiam, et Ulixi Sisyphusque prudentiam, nec ob eam rem, cum haec exquirerem, sicut hic faciebam, capite damnarer" [I might test the wisdom of the supreme king who led the mighty host to Troy, and the wisdom of Ulysses and Sisyphus, without risk of a capital sentence for putting my questions to them as I used to do here].[40] *Prudentia*, rather than *sapientia*, is the quality Cicero emphasizes here—wisdom as good judgment or sense rather than knowledge. And Plutarch, in his essay *On curiosity*, similarly emphasizes Odysseus's self-control:

> The busybody...neglects the greater part of his own domestic errors through his own passionate interest in those abroad. [For] Odysseus refused to converse even with his mother until he had learned from the seer the matters by reason of which he had come to the House of Hades; and when he had his answer, he both turned to his mother and also made inquiries of the other women...But we, while treating our own affairs with considerable laxity and ignorance and neglect, pry into the pedigrees of the rest of the world.[41]

Plutarch's original Greek includes a feature worth noting. The word translated here as "busybody," πολυπράγμονος, generally serves as an antonym for ἀ πράγμονος, the word Plato uses to describe the unambitious life Odysseus seeks out in Book 10 of the *Republic*. Plutarch's opposition between the ordinary busybody and Odysseus both echoes and reinforces the contrast between the flaw Odysseus risks and the virtue he

---

[39] Defaux, *Curieux*, 73. Defaux also discusses this point on 33-36 and in ch. 4.

[40] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J.E. King (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 1.91.98. All quotations and translations are from this edition.

[41] Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. W.C. Helmbold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 6:516 A-B.

embodies in his desire for knowledge and experience. If Plato leaves open the possibility that Odysseus in his Homeric incarnation learned to prefer a private life through the experience of too much desire, Plutarch repudiates the implication that Odysseus's curiosity could be considered excessive. His portrait of a vigorous desire for knowledge ruthlessly subordinated to rational ends captures in miniature the picture of Odysseus the *Moralia* as a whole present: a rational, wise, and prudent man, desirous of knowledge yet fully in control of that desire.

For Seneca, Odysseus offers not just a potentially positive example of the virtues of wisdom and the desire for knowledge, but an exemplary didactic image of both philosophy and patriotism. Using the language of exemplarity, he presents Odysseus as the perfect passionless Stoic:

> Catonem autem certius exemplar sapientis viri nobis deos immortalis dedisse quam Ulixen et Herculem prioribus saeculis. Hos enim Stoici nostri sapientes pronuntiaverunt, invictos laboribus et contemptores voluptatis et victores omnium terrorum.[42]
>
> [In Cato the immortal gods had given to us a truer exemplar of the wise man than earlier ages had in Ulysses and Hercules. For we Stoics have declared that these were wise men, because they were unconquered by struggles, were despisers of pleasure, and victors over all terrors.]
>
> Tempestates nos animi cotidie iactant et nequitia in omnia Vlixis mala inpellit. Non deest forma, quae sollicitet oculos, non hostis; hinc monstra effera et humano cruore gaudentia, hinc insidiosa blandimenta aurium, hinc naufragia et tot varietates malorum. Hoc me doce, quomodo patriam amem, quomodo uxorem, quomodo patrem, quomodo ad haec tam honesta vel naufragus navigem.[43]
>
> [We ourselves encounter storms of the spirit, which toss us daily, and our depravity drives us into all the ills which troubled Ulysses. For us there is never lacking the beauty to tempt our eyes, or the enemy to assail us; on this side are savage monsters that delight in human blood, on that side the treacherous allurements of the ear, and yonder is shipwreck and all the varied category of misfortunes. Show me rather, by the example of Ulysses, how I am to love my country, my wife, my father, and how, even after suffering shipwreck, I am to sail toward these ends, honourable as they are.]

---

[42] Seneca, *Moral Essays*, tr. John W. Basore (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 2.2.1-2.

[43] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistuale Morales*, tr. Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), 88.7-8.

The qualities Odysseus exemplifies—wisdom, endurance, love of home and homeland—are familiar from earlier writers; more than his Latin predecessors, however, Seneca presents Odysseus as an example to be imitated in daily life. Seneca's Odysseus, in true Stoic fashion, enacts the pursuit of an honorable life through allegorized versions of the trials of human existence. This didactic quality echoes earlier readings of Odysseus as a figure for mankind in the larger Homeric allegories of the physical universe, allegories that originate in classical Stoic readings of the *Odyssey*. Such Stoic philosophers and scholars as Zeno, Apollodorus of Athens, and Crates of Mallus found in the *Odyssey* explanations of the workings of the cosmos and the natural world (in Stoic philosophy the source of both morality and human knowledge) conveyed through a combination of personification allegories and often-dubious etymological links. The otherwise-unknown allegorist and philosopher Heraclitus cites Apollodorus and Crates in his popular *Homeric Problems*, published in 1505 together with the *De natura deorum* of the Roman Stoic Cornutus, also a Homeric allegorist in this vein.[44] Later critics, including the late Platonists Porphyry and Proclus and numerous early Christians, would draw upon such readings in order to discover in Odysseus an Everyman, whether Platonic or Christian.[45]

---

[44] On Stoic allegory, see A. A. Long, "Stoic Readings of Homer," in Robert Lamberton and John J. Keaney, eds. *Homer's Ancient Readers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 41-66.

[45] Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme*, 125, notes that "two features [of Stoic admiration for Ulysses] remain constant: first the tendency to dwell on Ulysses' Odyssean career rather than on his exploits in the *Iliad* and the Cycle. This evaded awkward questions about his conduct towards Palamedes, Philoctetes, and the captive Trojans; but from the literary point of view it did great harm by dividing up the complex personality of the Homeric hero. The second feature, the elaborate use of allegorical interpretation, deserves further attention, for it greatly enriched the post-classical evolution of the Ulysses myth." For critical discussion of these Stoic allegorical readings, see D.C. Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970); Howard Clarke, *Homer's Readers: A Historical Introduction to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (Newark: Delaware University Press, 1981), ch. 2; Anthony Grafton, "Renaissance Readers of Homer's Ancient Readers" in Lamberton and Keaney, *Homer's Ancient Readers*. Daniel Javitch, "Rescuing Ovid from the Allegorizers," *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978): 98-107, discusses Ariosto's reaction to medieval allegorizations of classical texts. On Neoplatonic allegories of Homer, see Robert Lamberton, *Homer the*

Allegorical criticism of the *Odyssey* becomes the dominant trend in readings of Homer in the mid-sixteenth century. In the early Cinquecento, however, Homeric criticism emphasizes the fragmentation of Odysseus's personality.

Of Odysseus's many attributes, early Italian humanists appear to have focused on his reputation for eloquence. Given the early humanist interest in rhetoric, it should perhaps not be surprising that such references are often positive, in direct contrast to those of Virgil and Dante. Angelo Poliziano twice deploys the eloquence of Odysseus as a standard superlative measure in the *Silvae*:

> Nec fandi permansit honos: tu namque potenti
> protinus ore tonans, ardentis fulmine linguae
> cuncta quatis, Cicero; Pyliae non mella senectae
> nec iam Dulichias audet conferre procellas,
> sponte tibi virides transcribens Graecia palmas.[46]
>
> [Nor even did the honor of eloquence remain; for you, Cicero, thundering forth with powerful voice and with the lightening bolt of your blazing tongue, make all things tremble. Greece does not dare to compare the honeyed words of the old king of Pylos nor the stormy eloquence of Ulysses to you, conferring voluntarily upon you the green palm of victory.]
>
> ac torrens voce soluta
> Dulichias aequare nives et fulmina tendit
> quanta Pericleo lepor intorquebat ab ore.[47]
>
> [Rushing headlong in the medium of prose, [Lucan] tries to match the words of Ulysses, that fell like snow-flakes on a winter's day, and the lightning that charming persuasion hurled from the mouth of Pericles.]

Poliziano isolates Odysseus's "stormy eloquence" from any quality that might either produce or be furthered by it; eloquence becomes a virtue in itself, a means detached from its end. This is, of course, one of the problems of Renaissance rhetoric, but

---

Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). On early Christian allegories of Odysseus, see Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

[46] Angelo Poliziano, "Manto," in *Silvae*, 21-25.

[47] Angelo Poliziano, "Nutricia," in *Silvae*, 504-6.

Poliziano does not engage it through the figure of Odysseus. Unlike even Virgil and Dante, who see Odysseus's eloquence as dangerous precisely because it is the tool of a crafty liar, Poliziano extracts it from its context to turn it into an exemplary quality in its own right. If Poliziano treats Odysseus's eloquence as a ruler by which to measure even greater accomplishments, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini in his treatise *On the Education of Boys* presents Odysseus as a model of true eloquence, suitable for imitation:

> Nam qui sunt faciles, leves, futiles et importuni locutores, horum orationem bene aestimatum est in ore nasci, non in pectore. Ulixem contra Homerus sapienti facundia praeditum vocem mittere ait non ex ore, sed ex pectore.[48]
>
> [For it is reasonable to conclude that the speech of facile, shallow, vain, and importunate speakers is born in the mouth and not in the spirit. On the contrary, Homer said that Ulysses uttered words endowed with shrewd eloquence, not from his mouth but from his breast.]

Piccolomini claims that Odysseus's eloquence is backed by genuine feeling, but he does not imagine that eloquence allied to wisdom or love of his homeland or another Odyssean virtue. Like Poliziano, he sees no problem in treating Odysseus as an exemplar of eloquence, or eloquence as an exemplary quality.

Three quotations from Johannes Ravisius Textor's *Officina* demonstrate just how contradictory the Renaissance views of Odysseus could be, and how unexamined those contradictions. The *Officina*, like Calepinus's *Dictionarium*, is a compendium of Greek and Latin quotations and anecdotes, a source of classical tags and secondhand knowledge for readers lacking the time or erudition to tackle the classics themselves. Its print history closely parallels that of the *Furioso*; its first edition appeared in 1520, one year before the second edition of the *Furioso*, and its second in 1532, the date of the third and final *Furioso*. The *Officina* shares the early sixteenth-century fetish for copiousness, which

---

[48] Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *De liberorum educatione*, in *Humanist Educational Treatises*, ed. and trans. Craig W. Kallendorf (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 35.

combines with its lack of commentary or editorial consistency to create a portrait of Odysseus riddled with inconsistencies:

> De Charitate in patriam exempla: Ulysses apud Kalypso, patriam praetulit immortalitati. Auctor Cicero libro primo de Oratore...[49]
>
> [Examples of love of one's country: Ulysses, with Kalypso, preferred his country to immortality. The author Cicero in the first book of the *De oratore*...]
>
> Ulysses quum esset Graecorum prudentissimus, insania tamen simulauit, ne ad bellum Troianum proficisceretur.[50]
>
> [Ulysses, although he was the most prudent of the Greeks, nevertheless feigned insanity, in order not to go to the Trojan War.]
>
> Astuti et fraudulenti: Ulyssem & Sisyphum vafros admodum fuisse pro comperto est. Unde Homerus apud Erasmum, Sisyphus in terris, quo non astutior alter.[51]
>
> [The astute and fraudulent: that Ulysses and Sisyphus were quite crafty has been well-documented. Whence Homer in Erasmus: the other was not more cunning than Sisyphus on earth.]

In Textor's view, Odysseus becomes simultaneously a praiseworthy model of *amor patria* and a textbook example of fraud. His cleverness appears first in a positive light, as a supreme example of prudence, but is immediately diminished by what might seem to be an example of that prudence: his attempt to evade the Trojan War. Although Textor never explains why this attempt to feign insanity undermines (or is incompatible with) Odysseus's reputation for prudence, the qualifying adverb *tamen* does imply a contradiction or diminuition of that prudence. That qualification appears again and more strongly in the third quotation, which links Odysseus's astuteness or cunning not only to "vafer", a crafty quality with negative connotations, but to fraudulence and to the trickery of Sisyphus, whose cunning (unlike Odysseus's) is never directed towards anything but

---

[49] Johannes Ravisius Textor, *Ioan. Ravisii Textoris Nivernensis Officina* (Paris, 1532), 305. All quotations of the *Officina* are taken from Defaux, *Curieux*, 159 n.20; translations are my own.

[50] Textor, *Officina*, 47[2].

[51] Textor, *Officina*, 43[2].

personal gain. Textor draws indiscriminately from philosophical and mythological sources; he seems to be either unaware of or untroubled by the fact that in the *Tusculan Disputations* Cicero had twice cited Odysseus as an example of a wise man—once together with Sisyphus. Consistency is simply not a concern of Textor's. This becomes even clearer in his other compendium, the *Epitheta*, which (as we have seen above) begins its entry on Odysseus with a list of no fewer than forty-seven potential adjectives to describe him:

> Vlysses. Proles Laërtia, callidus, durus, pellax, ithacus, dirus, sæuus, æolides, laërtiades, laboriosus, prouid[us], laërtius, disertus, fallax, experiens, dulichius, aptus, furius, cautus, naricyus, sollers, facundus, peruagus, sisyphides, tardè remeans, tardus, immitis, subdolus, ithacensis, errans, prudens, vagus, pelasgus, infidus, penelopæus, phæax, cordatus, profugus, sapiens, astutus, comis, polytropus, varius, miser, vigil, acer, lentus.[52]
>
> [Odysseus. The child of Laertes, ingenious, hard, seductive, Ithacan, dread, cruel, descendant of Aeolus, descendant of Laertes, industrious, cautious, Laertean, well-spoken, deceitful, enterprising, Dulichian, adaptive, thieving, wary, Narycian, clever, eloquent, wandering, descendant of Sisyphus, returning late, tardy, fierce, sly, Ithacan, wandering, prudent, roaming, Pelasgian, treacherous, Penelopean, Phaiakian, sagacious, vagabond, wise, crafty, courteous, a man of many turns, varying, unfortunate, watchful, shrewd, tenacious.]

Textor makes no effort, as his classical sources did, to explain how these qualities might be blended into a single personality. He simply lists them off. This copiousness destroys the exemplary value of each individual citation or adjective; when the very next word on the page may contradict the previous one, copiousness subverts itself; exemplarity deconstructs itself. In the *Furioso*, Ariosto mocks this practice by stringing together a sequence of would-be heroes who each try to imitate an Odyssean quality. Each fails miserably, undermining both Renaissance readings of Odysseus (such as Textor's and Maffei's) and Renaissance interpretations of the classical readings of Odysseus.

---

[52] Johannes Ravisius Textor, *Epithetorum Ioann. Rauisii Textoris epitome ex Hadr. Iunii Medici recognitione* (London, 1589), Bb2^{r}. The first edition of 1518 was followed by many further editions, often—as with this one—expanded or supplemented by additional materials of a similar kind.

II. NORANDINO

In Canto 17, the hapless hero Norandino encounters the Orc, a Polyphemus-like monster who resembles his Homeric predecessor in almost every feature save his most notorious: where Homer's monster starts out with one eye, Ariosto's is already blind and has tusks in place of eyes. Otherwise, they resemble each other strongly. Both live in seaside caves on islands where their human opponents make landfall after sea voyages; both share the unpleasant habit of eating humans; both pen the men they capture, together with their animals, in a cave, to be eaten later.[53] Both Odysseus and Norandino, therefore,

---

[53] Sixteenth-century commentators consistently noted the Homeric antecedents of this episode while also acknowledging that elements of the tale had found their way into folk tales. Lodovico Dolce, *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Giolito, 1543), *6^{r}, states in his notes on the *Orlando furioso* that "La novella dell'Orco allude alla favola di Polyphemo descritta da Homero e toccà da Virgilio nel terzo della Eneida" [The story of the Orc alludes to the story of Polyphemus described by Homer and touched on by Virgil in *Aeneid* 3]. Girolamo Ruscelli , "Annotationi," in *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1572), M3^{r}, expands on Dolce in noting that "Questa novella dell'Orco è scritta da l'Ariosto ad imitatione del Polifemo d'Omero prima, & poi di Virgilio. Et si come à Virgilio mostra che non piacessero alcune cose di quello d'Omero nell'Odissea, & procurò di migliorarlo, così molto più ha fatto questo nostro giudiciosissimo scrittore di quello d'uno & dell'altro....Ora inquanto alla novella dell'Orco, dico, che l'Ariosto inquanta alla forma sua, l'ha qui posta, come ho già detto, a concorrenza del Polifemo di quei due poeti passati. Ma inquanto al nome, e alla sostanza principale, la novella dell'Orco è invecchiatissima per tutta Italia" [This story of the Orc was written by Ariosto in imitation of the Polyphemus first of Homer, and then of Virgil. And if it shows us that Virgil was not pleased by some things in Homer's Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*, and contrived to improve them, so much more has our most judicious author improved on those of the one and of the other....Now concerning the story of the Orc, I say that Ariosto, concerning its form, made it, as I have already said, along the lines of the Polyphemus of those two earlier poets. But concerning the name, and the principal substance, the story of the Orc has become very old throughout all Italy]. Alberto Lavezuola, in his "Osservationi...sopra il Furioso," d2^{r}, also notes that "Questa favola dell'orco è quella di Polifemo finta da Homero nel 9. dell'odissea. Ma l'Ariosto n'ha levate alcune parti, & aggiuntevi dell'altre con mirabili artificio" [This story of the Orc is that of Polyphemus invented by Homer in *Odyssey* 9. But Ariosto has taken out some parts, and added others with wonderful artifice]. He cites verbal parallels between Ariosto and an unidentified Latin verse translation of Homer before returning to the subject of narrative imitation: "L'Ariosto mostra atto più compassionevole, ponendo l'orco trangugiare i compagni del Re Norandino belli e vivi, quantunque Homero poi mova la compassione nel gettar i compagni d'Ulisse con impeto a terra, e scacciargli a guisa di cani, il che è taciuto dal nostro poeta, per non voler in tutto dire quel, c'haveva detto Homero" [Ariosto shows a more compassionate action, having the Orc gulp the companions of King Norandino alive and well, although Homer then excites compassion in throwing the companions of Odysseus hard to the ground, and chasing them like dogs, which is passed over in silence by our poet, through not wanting to say in everything that which Homer said]. Alone among the commentators, Lavezuola draws attention to Ariosto's divergences from Homer. However, he goes no further in exploring the effects of these differences—hardly a surprising omission, as the goal of his commentary (as with those of Dolce and Ruscelli) is to bolster the *Furioso*'s status as an epic poem.

find themselves in identical situations: they must mastermind an escape for themselves and their men from the cave/pen.

Ariosto repeatedly increases the difficulty of Norandino's task in comparison to that of his epic predecessor. The Orc has not one but two caves: one for his wife and the other women he keeps, another for his sheep. The Orc captures Norandino's men and wife and takes them to his cave; their imprisonment thus becomes a straightforward outcome of defeat rather than a consequence of excessive curiosity. The Orc takes Norandino's companions during the king's absence; if Odysseus's curiosity leads his men into danger, Norandino's absence suggests that he fails as a leader because he is too passive, not (as Odysseus does) because he is too active. The Orc's capture of the men during Norandino's absence also forces him to follow the Orc and insinuate himself into the cave, thus adding an extra task of deception to the list of Odyssean moves Norandino must imitate. The scheme Norandino executes involves a far more complex deception than that of Odysseus. Rather than simply clinging to the bellies of the sheep, he and his men smear themselves with goat fat and wrap themselves in pelts belonging to previously slaughtered goats—impersonating (so to speak) the animals rather than simply hiding underneath them. Ariosto exceeds Homer even in such tiny details as the number of men the Orc eats on his first encounter with the Syrians. Where the Cyclops contented himself with a snack of two men, the Orc has appetite enough for three. And Ariosto's Orc, unlike Polyphemus, swallows them whole.

Ariosto overgoes his epic model in still other ways. At the level of plot alone, his retelling of the Polyphemus episode offers two major reworkings of its Odyssean predecessor. Norandino ends up in the Orc's cave because his wife, the beautiful Lucina,

is among those carried off by the Orc. Norandino approaches the Orc's cave to rescue her; his lurking around the cave, his adoption of the strategem proposed by the Orc's wife, his furtive entry into the cave, and his adaptation of the Orc's wife's original scheme in order to free her (as well as his men, whose safety is only his secondary object) should all be compared not only to Odysseus's interactions with Polyphemus, but to his return to Ithaca and his plotting there in order to free Penelope from her suitors. In this strand of the plot, the Orc's wife takes the role of Eumaeus. Norandino's adventures, in short, collapse both halves of the *Odyssey* into a single project. A number of fantastic adventures befall Odysseus as he attempts to reach his wife. Once he reaches Ithaca, these adventures cease and are replaced in the poem by a new and more domestic project: the removal of the suitors and the regaining of Penelope. Norandino, on the other hand, undertakes his adventure in order to regain his wife. Their reunion should be the direct consequence of his fantastic voyage, not a sequel to it.

But Norandino fails, and he fails largely because of Lucina's failure to carry out her role in the plot:

> Lucina, o fosse perch'ella non volle
> ungersi come noi, che schivo n'ebbe;
> o ch'avesse l'andar più lento e molle,
> che l'imitata bestia non avrebbe;
> o quando l'Orco la groppa toccolle,
> gridasse per la tema che le accrebbe;
> o che se le sciogliessero le chiome;
> sentita fu, né ben so dirvi come.[54]
>
> [Lucina—whether it was because she did not want to anoint herself like us, being disgusted, or that she moved more slowly and softly than would the beast she imitated, or that when the Orc touched her rump she screamed in terror, or that her hair came undone—she was caught, I really don't know how to tell you why.]

Whatever the cause of Lucina's failure, it falls so far outside the bounds of rationality that

---

[54] Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, ed. Marcello Turchi (Milan: Garzanti, 1974), 17.55.1-8. All quotations are from this edition (hereafter *OF*); translations are my own.

the narrator cannot even identify its cause. Logic and reason, cause and effect play no role in her conduct. Lucina's devotion to her husband fails to carry her through a necessary deception to achieve their reunion; she is no Penelope, weaving by day and unraveling by night. Lucina cannot even take up a part in the schemes of others, let alone concoct her own schemes. She falls far short of the mark set by her ideal classical predecessor, failing to become an object worthy of the devotion of an Odysseus.

Not even once the Orc has removed her from the cave himself and chained her to a rock can Norandino take direct action to rescue her. All Norandino can do is to remain disguised as a goat, pining and hoping that somehow he may manage to rescue her from the Orc.[55] In the meantime, he remains concealed beneath his goat's pelt, re-enacting twice daily his futile strategem. As such, he remains trapped in a sub-human guise, an echo of Odysseus's companions transformed by Circe into pigs. Indeed, the comparison fits the hapless Norandino all too well; he remains disguised as an animal, passively herded and passively observing, instead of exercising his human reason to free his wife from her new form of bondage. It falls to Mandricardo and Gradasso, passing by in a typically Ariostan moment of apparently random interlace, to rescue Lucina by force. Norandino's adventure with the Orc represents a failure at virtually every opportunity that his fate offers him to imitate the *Odyssey*. He fails in both halves of the Odyssean tasks that Ariosto collapses into one: he neither effects a successful escape from the monster nor regains his wife. Neither his powers of persuasion nor his cunning are up to

---

[55] Mandricardo and Gradasso restore Lucina not to the hidden Norandino but to her father. Should this be read as an echo of Penelope's telling her suitors that Odysseus had told her to wait for his return only until Telemachus had grown up before marrying again? If so, then this allusion adds yet another layer of failure to Norandino's situation; unlike Odysseus, he fails to intervene in time to prevent his wife's departure, however temporary.

the tasks he faces: he can neither coach Lucina in a successful impression of an old goat nor contrive a plan of his own to free her. Nor can he take direct action when it is called for, unlike the more Iliadic heroes Mandricardo and Gradasso. Eloquence and cunning, Odysseus's trademarks, both fail Norandino, and then the direct action expected not just of Odysseus but of any epic hero fails him too. And yet it is not quite fair to say that these fail him; rather, he fails to exercise them successfully. He is simply not up to the tasks the Odyssean plot sets him.

The Orc episode also raises the issue of the interrelation of epic and romance within the *Odyssey* and in the *Furioso*'s use of Odyssean episodes. Norandino's narrative entwines the two halves of the *Odyssey* into a single plot, suggesting that adventuring and defending (or restoring) one's domestic happiness are inextricably linked, rather than external and internal affairs respectively. In doing so, does it draw the action of the *Odyssey* further into the world of romance? Its placement as the explanation for a typical chivalric tournament would suggest this, but two factors resist this interpretation. The tournament celebrates not just the restoration of Lucina but Norandino's return home after her escape from the Orc, and its timing (every four months) reflects the period of her captivity and his inert vigil. In other words, the tournament embeds Norandino's failures in both its raison d'être and its repetition, ensuring that these aspects will be recapitulated every time it is held. The very fact of its recurrence suggests an affinity with the cyclical world of romance, and thus it links romance to Norandino's failures rather than to the successes of his epic predecessor. And, of course, failure is inherent in the reiteration of his vigil by the Orc's cave; were he to free Lucina, that period of the daily repetition of helpless watching would come to an end. The Orc episode identifies the

recursive nature of romance with the failure of epic action, even as it draws the pursuit of domestic happiness further into the world of Odyssean epic.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it has already fallen to Mandricardo and Gradasso to rescue Lucina. Ariosto finds Lucina and the Orc in the *Orlando innamorato*, the romance by Matteo Maria Boiardo that provides the point of departure for the *Furioso*. Although Ariosto draws many of his characters and much of the background to his narratives from Boiardo, he radically transforms the tone of Boiardo's material—not least by infusing the chivalric material of Arthurian and Carolingian romance with far more classical epic material than Boiardo had used. The Norandino episode provides a good example of Ariosto's practice in this respect; while Boiardo furnishes the Cyclops-like Orc and the archetypal damsel in distress Lucina, he mentions Norandino only through Lucina's request that Mandricardo and Gradasso inform him of her death.[56] The Odyssean adventure of the cave is entirely Ariosto's invention, as is the character of Norandino in all respects save name and status. Ariosto's revision of Boiardo imports into Boiardo's chivalric world both Homeric narrative material and an epic ethos against which characters are to be measured, and Ariosto adds an Odyssean defeat to Mandricardo and Gradasso's victory over the Orc. To a reader acquainted with the *Innamorato*, the *Furioso*'s revision of its predecessor declares even more explicitly its interest in Odyssean failure.

III. Medoro

[56] The adventure of the Orc takes place in Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, ed. Riccardo Bruscagli (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), 3.3.22-60. The textual history of the *Innamorato* is complex; Bruscagli's is the modern edition of choice.

One canto later, Medoro enters the poem.[57] (To be precise, he has been briefly spotted, already wounded, by Angelica in 12.65, but neither named nor seen again until Canto 18; the events of 18 and the opening of 19 bring the reader up to the point at which she first glimpses Medoro.) Ariosto introduces him already grieving for Dardinello's death and plotting to slip back onto the battlefield that night in order to bury his dead king. This night foray has its origins in an episode in *Iliad* 10, the "Doloneia" or night raid: Odysseus and Diomedes set out to gather intelligence on a newly-arrived group of Trojan allies; they capture and kill a Trojan spy, Dolon, after extracting information from him, slaughter the king of the newly-arrived Trojan allies and several of his men, and return triumphant to the Greek camp with the slaughtered king's horses as trophies. When Virgil transforms this tale into the Nisus and Euryalus episode of *Aeneid* 9, he inverts important elements of the scene. Nisus and Euryalus, a pair of friends like Odysseus and Diomedes, are nevertheless humble footsoldiers like Dolon rather than important leaders; on a night-time mission to carry a message to Aeneas through enemy lines, they stumble on Latin allies of the Trojans' opponents and kill them and claim trophies from them, but they are caught and killed like Dolon. Nisus and Euryalus are a failed Odysseus and Diomedes. Statius rings further changes on this scene in *Thebaid* 10. His Hopleus and Dymas set out not to gather or carry information, but to bury their fallen king. Driven by pity and piety alone, they neither kill sleeping foes nor gather spoils as they venture onto the battlefield. Like Nisus and Euryalus, they are surrounded and killed; their deaths are more pitiful for being entirely unmerited. The development of the night raid in Latin epic thus marks a shift from the warrior ethos of the *Iliad* through the dutiful public service of

[57] Saccone, *Il "soggetto" del* Furioso, 178-79, sees other thematic parallels between the Norandino and Medoro episodes, but not their common concern with rewriting Odyssean episodes.

the *Aeneid* to the pitiful personal loyalty of the *Thebaid*, from pure epic aggression mixed with Odyssean guile to romance pity and concern for the fate of the defeated. Ariosto will thematize this shift from epic to romance as he turns Medoro and Cloridano's nighttime foray into a precursor to his choice of Odysseus.

As Daniel Javitch has demonstrated, Medoro's recruitment of his friend Cloridano as a companion, their foray onto the battlefield, and their encounter—fatal for Cloridano, nearly so for Medoro—owe far more to Virgil's and particularly to Statius's reworkings of the Doloneia than they do to Homer's original.[58] Still, some details remind us most of the Homeric version of the tale. Perhaps most notably, Zerbino's capture of Medoro recalls Odysseus and Diomedes' capture of Dolon, from which this sub-unit of the night raid takes its name: the Doloneia. Medoro's reaction to his capture by the enemy forces subtly echoes Dolon's far less heroic capitulation to Odysseus and Diomedes, even as it gestures towards the patriotic night raids in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Statius's *Thebaid.* Surrounded by the enemy, Virgil's Euryalus says nothing before dying, while his companion Nisus speaks only to claim the blame for killing two Rutulians and to demand that the death dealt in return should be his, not Euryalus's. Statius's Hopleus similarly says nothing before dying, while Dymas begs only that his captors complete the task he could not, giving burial to his dead king after his own death. Neither hero succeeds; their pleas fall on pitiless ears. Like Dolon alone among his epic predecessors, Medoro pleads for his life; unlike Dolon, however, he asks only enough time to bury Dardinello's body before submitting to death at the hands of his captors. Zerbino is moved by the eloquence and piety of the youth:

---

[58] See Daniel Javitch, "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 220-22, for a full study of the layers of allusion in this episode.

> Così dicea Medor con modi belli,
> e con parole atte a voltare un monte;
> e sì commosso già Zerbino avea,
> che d'amor tutto e di pietade ardea.[59]
>
> [So spoke Medoro with handsome manners, and with words apt to turn a mountain; and Zerbino felt such emotion that he burned with love and pity.]

In this scene, Ariosto divides Odyssean roles and qualities between two characters. Zerbino resembles the Odysseus of the Doloneia, successfully capturing the enemy soldier who pleads to be spared; Medoro gets the "parole atte," the well-turned phrases that get Odysseus out of trouble more than once. But Medoro's words successfully move Zerbino, causing him to fall away from the ruthlessness that Odysseus displays in *Iliad* 10 and that Textor, following Virgil, lists among Odysseus's attributes. Instead, Medoro's "parole atte," coupled with the fact that his words succeed in gaining him the protection and pity of his captor, nudge him from a hapless Dolon towards an eloquent Odysseus. Although the situation in which he finds himself places him in the role of Dolon, caught by an enemy on the no-man's-land between camps with his task unfinished, with his well-chosen words he lays claim to a different role. Like Odysseus in the courts of Alkinoös or Aiolos, Medoro gains a patron who expresses pity for his misfortunes and becomes his protector—and if Zerbino's protection turns out to be only momentarily effective, we should remember that only moments before, Zerbino himself occupied the role of Odysseus in a much more straightforward version of the Doloneia: the capture of an enemy youth on a secret night-time mission. Like Zerbino, Medoro accomplishes only a part of the Odyssean tasks the poem sets him: he successfully moves his chief listener to pity and succor him with well-chosen words, but he cannot move his entire audience. As a result, he suffers a near-mortal wound. "Parole atte," that most

---

[59] *OF* 19.12.5-8.

Odyssean of weapons, can take a potential hero only so far in the modern world of the *Furioso*.

This moment of partial Odyssean success only deepens Medoro's involvement in an Odyssean plot. Unconscious and bleeding to death, he lies in the forest where Zerbino left him until Angelica discovers him there. David Quint has demonstrated that behind Angelica's characterization in Canto 19 lies Nausikaa, the Phaiakian princess who rescues Odysseus at perhaps his lowest point.[60] Quint also draws attention to the fundamentally anti-heroic nature of the temptation Nausikaa offers Odysseus:

> a different and more realistic kind of temptation for Odysseus than the supernatural Kalypso and Circe: marriage for money with an heiress from the commercial class. This bourgeois scenario is nonetheless clothed with appropriate dignity in the idealized world of the epic: Nausikaa is a royal princess and Odysseus tactfully turns down the marriage proposal.[61]

Odysseus's rejection of a vulgar mercenary marriage, Quint implies, preserves his standing as an epic hero and reasserts the core values of epic. Indeed, in their final exchange Odysseus vows to revere Nausikaa as a goddess, bringing their relationship into conformity with the norms of epic by claiming to hold his life as a gift from her. But the terms of this temptation and the challenge it poses to the epic deserve a closer examination, not only for the light they shed on Angelica's character but for the demands they make on Medoro.

As discussed in the introduction to this study, Odysseus's journey comes to an end in *Odyssey* 7, when he chooses a return to Ithaka and Penelope over marriage to Nausikaa and life on Scheria. The poem rewards Odysseus's fidelity to his original goals

---

[60] David Quint, "The Genealogy of the Novel from the *Odyssey* to *Don Quijote*," *Comparative Literature* 59 (2007): 12.

[61] Quint, "Genealogy," 26.

with a safe, swift, and uneventful passage home. Nausikaa's charms and Alkinoös's offer thus become the final obstacle that Odysseus must overcome during his long travels. The offer creates the conditions for the "choice of Odysseus," the choice between the circular wanderings of romance and the telos of epic. This crossroads of epic and romance forms a crucial piece of the literary subtext of Angelica's encounter with Medoro. The princess discovers the shepherd in even greater distress than Nausikaa found Odysseus. Like Odysseus, he softens her heart and wins her aid with words:

> insolite pietade in mezzo al petto
> si sentì entrar per disusate porte,
> che le fe' il duro cor tenero e molle,
> e più, quando il suo caso egli narrolle.[62]
>
> [she felt unaccustomed pity enter into her breast through disused gates, which rendered her hard heart tender and soft, and more, when he told her of his plight.]

Once again, words save Medoro's life. Here, however, the Odyssean allusion is more direct, offering a closer parallel between Medoro's actions and those of Odysseus on Phaiakia. The parallels continue: Angelica's use of an herb to cure Medoro literally makes his life her gift, realizing in the plot the elegant phrase with which Odysseus rehabilitates his encounter with Nausikaa into epic terms. But Medoro then becomes a figure of pure romance. Rather than rejoining the army he has left, he lingers contentedly in an idyll with Angelica, an idyll which Ariosto explicitly links to the dangers of romance:

> nel mezzo giorno un antro li copriva,
> forse non men di quel commodo e grato,
> ch'ebber, fuggendo l'acque, Enea e Dido,
> de' lor secreto testimonio fido.[63]
>
> [at midday a cave sheltered them, perhaps no less comfortable and welcome than that which was

---

[62] *OF* 19.20.5-8.

[63] *OF* 19.35.5-8

the faithful witness to Aeneas and Dido's secret, when they fled the storm.]

If the Virgilian allusion seems to preclude reading this episode as Odyssean, we should remember that Aeneas's arrival at Carthage following a divinely-incited storm and shipwreck closely rewrites both Odysseus's arrival on Scheria and Apollodorus's marriage of Jason and Medea in a cave on Scheria in *Argonautica* 4, a scene heavily indebted to Homer's encounter between Odysseus and Nausikaa. The negative connotations of this Odyssean moment are mediated through an allusion to the most negative of the classical readings of Odysseus. As in Ariosto's version of the night raid, the Homeric base level of this multi-layered allusion is much in evidence. But Medoro's eventual fate more closely parallels the Phaiakian alternative Homer presents for Odysseus than it does Aeneas's future in Carthage. Angelica decides to return to Cathay with Medoro and crown him king of the realm: "fe' disegno / di fare in India del Catai ritorno, / e Medor coronar del suo bel regno" [She formed the design to return to Cathay through India, and crown Medoro king of her fine realm].[64] Medoro will thus succeed Angelica's father, the reigning king, by virtue of his marriage to the king's daughter; his is a path closer to that offered Odysseus in Phaiakia than to Aeneas's vaguely-defined role as Dido's consort in Carthage. He overgoes an Odyssean option, but this is an overgoing in the direction of romance, the direction that Odysseus rejects. In Odyssean terms, it is the wrong choice; it stamps Medoro as a figure of romance, not of epic, and it underscores the gulf between the humble footsoldier and the heroic king.

Medoro's passivity when confronted with this choice underscores his status as a figure of romance. No god interferes to urge a particular course on Medoro; his choice is

---

[64] *OF* 19.37.2-4.

not to obey or disobey a divine mandate, but to pursue one path or another. This too places Medoro back in the tradition of Odysseus's choice in Phaiakia. Like Odysseus, he has only his own desires to consider, only his will to drive him in one direction or another. But Ariosto empties Medoro's choice of any agency whatsoever. He dissolves the choice of Odysseus into a tide that takes Medoro at its flood. The last actions Medoro purposefully takes (the last in which he becomes the subject of active verbs) are the burials of Dardinello and Cloridano. Even here, he does not undertake these actions himself, but has others do them:

> Non però volse indi Medor partire
> prima ch'in terra il suo signor non fusse.
> E Cloridan col re fe' sepelire;
> e poi dove a lei piacque si ridusse.[65]
>
> [But Medoro did not want to leave before his master was in the ground. And he had Cloridano buried with the king; and then he retired where she pleased.

From this point forwards, Medoro and the language that describes him become completely passive. In every step of their budding relationship, Angelica takes the initiative and remains in control:

> e di quel colpo domandò mercede,
> che, forse non sapendo, esso le diede.[66]
>
> Angelica a Medor la prima rosa
> coglier lasciò, non ancor tocca inante:
> nè persona fu mai sì aventurosa,
> ch'in quel giardin potesse por le piante.[67]
>
> [and asked mercy for that blow which, perhaps unknowing, he gave her. Angelica let Medoro gather the first rose, not yet touched: no one had ever been fortunate enough to set foot in that garden.]

If Angelica's active seduction here brings to mind Nausikaa's increasingly thinly veiled

---

[65] *OF* 19.25.3-6.

[66] *OF* 19.30.7-8.

[67] *OF* 19.33.1-4.

hints to Odysseus that his attentions would be welcome, Medoro's lack of knowledge contrasts sharply with Odysseus' *sapientia* and *prudentia*, the wisdom and prudence displayed not only in his dealings with Nausikaa but so consistently as to make him an emblematic figure of these virtues. Faced with similar situations, Odysseus and Medoro respond in opposite ways: Odysseus consciously manipulates his effect on Nausikaa but chooses not to accept her advances, while Medoro accepts Angelica's attentions but remains unconscious of his own role in provoking them.

When Ariosto filters his Homeric imitation through a Virgilian lens, he replaces a pair of prospective lovers who are both active in their pursuit of their desires and thoroughly in control of themselves with a wholly passive man and a woman who in consequence comes to seem overly active. Although Ariosto leaves Angelica's actions in pursuit of Medoro vague, her behavior does not seem much more forward than Nausikaa's. Yet Medoro abandons all agency and fails to display any of the active qualities Odysseus displays on Scheria. The contrast between Medoro's passivity and Angelica's ability to articulate her desires makes her seem more similar to Kalypso, the goddess who assumes total control over the actions (though never the thoughts) of her captive and unwilling lover Odysseus—but this is entirely Medoro's fault. Nothing in their initial encounter suggests that Angelica expects to dominate the man she takes as her lover; instead, she is driven at length to ask Medoro for what any other knight in his place would long ago have taken, and what she might reasonably expect him to request. Ariosto redirects this choice down the path of romance rather than epic; he transforms the would-be equal lover and companionate wife into a sexually dominant mistress. The word "aventurosa" in stanza 33 might summon an image of Odysseus, the archetypal

adventurer. But the passive verbs and the agency assigned Angelica indicate a reading of "aventurosa" as fortunate in the sense of having good things happen to one. The passivity with which Medoro accepts Angelica's favors disqualifies him from being considered the hypothetical adventurer daring enough to explore this new garden; Medoro is simply lucky, a passive hero of romance rather than an epic hero who makes his own fortune. Once again, Ariosto evokes the specter of Odysseus only to emphasize the ironic contrast between him and Medoro.

Medoro's acceptance of the course Angelica offers him can be read against Odysseus's rejection of Nausikaa and Phaiakia. Where Odysseus clings to his epic purpose, treating every adventure that arises (possibly excepting his sojourn with Circe) as an obstacle to be overcome in the larger project of his return to crown and consort on Ithaca, Medoro easily abandons his role as a soldier in the Saracen host. The burial of his king takes the place of victory at Paris; he treats the accomplishment of a local goal as the fulfillment of his purpose when he lingers in the forest with Angelica rather than returning to his post. With his apparent acquiesence to Angelica's plan for him, he abdicates his independence and integrity; soon he disappears from the poem entirely. Ariosto depicts Medoro's fate as passive and as involving a generic shift: Medoro carves poems expressing his happiness and sense of good fortune on trees, but he does nothing for the poet to celebrate. He changes from a figure who negotiates the boundaries between epic and romance into a figure of the lyric poet/lover embedded in a romance narrative. By arming a humble footsoldier with an Odyssean weapon and then placing him in an Odyssean situation, Ariosto seems to create an opportunity for a lowly

character to move into a heroic role.[68] But the poem shuts down this suggestion that heroism might emerge from the ranks. Pity—an emotion whose compatibility with the heroic ethos has been deeply problematized by the *Aeneid*—can lead Medoro to imitate a series of lesser characters whose pity leads them to patriotism. Unlike those characters, Medoro survives, but his patriotism does not. Instead, it casts him into the path of the most beautiful woman in the world, who just happens to be a powerful princess, and who carries him out of Europe and out of the poem to become the king of Cathay. While Medoro's Virgilian and Statian predecessors are impelled by pity and patriotism to selfless deaths and feats immortalized in epic song, pity propels Medoro into a romance world in which he lives happily ever after—but which gives him no further place in the poem. In Ariosto's ironic vision, the price of happiness is agency. Medoro's good fortune far exceeds that of any of the heroes of the poem, but it leads him to accept a fate directed by others and an identity shaped by women, twin tropes of romance. This stasis may remind us of the danger that Patricia Parker has suggested lyric poses to the active mode of epic; in its endless present, it certainly opposes the time-bound nature of epic.[69]

Elsewhere, Parker argues that "epic and romance elements in the *Furioso* seem to act as foils for one another." By emphasizing the similarities between Medoro and Angelica's romance and the path Odysseus chooses *not* to take in the *Odyssey*, Ariosto identifies "epic and romance elements" in the *Odyssey* itself and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of their interaction. Medoro and Angelica personify "the

---

[68] Riccardo Bruscagli, *Studi cavalereschi* (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2003), 76-77, similarly emphasizes Medoro's humble origins and rank.

[69] On the interaction of lyric and epic modes, see Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), 54-66.

aberrance of romance," but they do so in the context of an Odyssean allusion that offers them an explicit epic alternative.[70] Ariosto's episode thus demonstrates and exploits the ways in which the epic and romance elements of the *Odyssey* act as foils to each other: he reveals the implications of Alkinoös's offer to Odysseus and the nature of the temptation that Nausikaa presents him. At the same time, he establishes his own difference from Homer by having his hero make the choice Odysseus does not, thus creating the opportunity to explore at length the alternative not explored in the *Odyssey*. In doing so, he illustrates the dangers of romance, the ways in which it vitiates human (and epic) purpose and thus represents a falling-off from the highest levels of human heroism and accomplishment. Odysseus earns his happy ending by fighting repeatedly for it; Medoro's simply falls into his lap. The endless present that Medoro embraces recalls the hopelessly static, repetitive cycle of Norandino's vigil near the cave of the Orc. It also contrasts strongly with Odysseus's repeated escapes from or evasions of cycles that threaten to entrap him. Faced with the literal choice of Skylla and Charybdis or the metaphorical choices they represent, Odysseus chooses Skylla every time. Forward progress, even at the cost of great loss, marks Odysseus's epic journey. Medoro and Norandino, failed Odyssei both, fall into whirlpools.

Up to this point, we have seen failures of the Odyssean virtues of craft and eloquence. Medoro's turn away from the battlefield of epic to the groves and glades of romance represents a more fundamental failure, the failure of Odyssean epic itself. When Medoro comes to his own crossroads of epic and romance, he simply abdicates the agency to choose for himself, letting himself be swept away on a journey beyond the

---

[70] Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 43-44.

limits of even the *Furioso*'s fabulous world. His passivity at what, given the Odyssean template for the crossroads at which he finds himself, should be an active choice suggests a further falling-short of the epic heroism of the *Odyssey*. Recalling Eduardo Saccone's claim that the *Furioso* is an epic of bourgeois human reason, we might be tempted to argue that Medoro's fate reveals the limitations of class mobility in the *Furioso*; humble footsoldiers may become fairytale princes, but they cannot become epic heroes. Without Odysseus's *amor patria* or his single-minded focus on an epic telos, he is easily swept away into a romance. Medoro may be an exemplar of eloquence, but that by itself is not enough to make him an Odysseus.

IV. Orlando

After a further Odyssean detour in Canto 20, Ariosto's revision of the *Odyssey* picks up again with Orlando's madness in Canto 23. Orlando stumbles upon the trees and cave inscribed with Medoro and Angelica's names and love poetry; the shepherd's account of Medoro and Angelica's marriage confirms beyond doubt that Medoro has won the contest for Angelica's love (or virginity, the true prize in the grand struggle for her hand). Orlando promptly goes mad in a fashion that recalls the madness of Sophocles' Ajax. He attacks a group of shepherds, three of whom he immediately kills:

> Gli altri sgombraro subito il paese,
> ch'ebbono il piede e il buono aviso presto.
> Non saria stato il pazzo al seguir lento,
> se non ch'era già volto al loro armento.
>
> Gli agricultori, accorti agli altru'esempli,
> lascian nei campi aratri e marre e falci:
> chi monta su le case e chi sui templi
> (poi che non son sicuri olmi né salci),
> onde l'orrenda furia si contempli,
> ch'a pugni, ad urti, a morsi, a graffi, a calci,
> cavalli e buoi rompe, fraccassa e strugge;

> e ben è corridor chi da lui fugge.[71]
>
> [The others, who had their feet and their good wits ready, quickly fled the area. The madman would not have been slow to follow had he not already turned on their herds. The farmers, quick to follow the others' example, left in the fields their plows and hoes and sickles: some climb atop houses and some churches (since neither elms nor willows are safe), from where they contemplate the horrible fury that breaks, shatters, destroys horses and oxen with punches, shoves, bites, scratches, and kicks; and good indeed is the runner who flees from him.]

Orlando turns his fury on the oxen and horses, distracted by their presence from the pursuit of continued violence against the shepherds. This distraction strongly recalls the tactics Athena uses to protect the Greek captains from Ajax's murderous anger at having, in their judgment, lost the contest for Achilles' armor to Odysseus:

> *I* checked him; I threw before his eyes
> Obsessive notions, thoughts of insane joy,
> To fall on the mingled droves of captured livestock,
> The undistributed loot which the herdsmen had in charge.
> He hit them,
> Hewed out a weltering shambles of horned beasts,
> Cleaving them down in a circle all around him.[72]

The herdsmen have not escaped, as Odysseus's earlier speech informs us:

> ...we found not long ago
> Our flocks and herds of captured beasts all ruined
> And struck with havoc by some butchering hand.
> Their guards were slaughtered with them.[73]

Shepherds and beasts fall by the hand of each madman; furthermore, the slaughter of the animals becomes a symbol of the extremity of madness each hero suffers. Ariosto follows Sophocles here precisely in order to underline the extent of Orlando's madness; he has gone so crazy that only a reference to the grimmest, bloodiest version of Ajax's story can

---

[71] *OF* 24.6.4-7.8.

[72] Sophocles, *Ajax*, trans. John Moore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 51-57.

[73] *Ajax* 25-28.

sufficiently capture his furor.[74] Indeed, the motif of a defeated, maddened hero taking furious revenge upon dumb beasts is unique to this version of the myth of Ajax; the allusion casts Orlando as a modern Ajax.

This reference imagines the struggle to win Angelica as a re-enactment of the contest for Achilles' armor following his death at Troy, a contest alluded to in *Odyssey* 11. In this context, the victorious Medoro occupies the role of the victorious Odysseus—a curious resemblance, given Medoro's earlier fleeting resemblance to a successful Odysseus and his later failures in that role. Medoro literally does nothing to win Angelica; the object of contention awards itself to its chosen recipient. Even when Ariosto must imply a successful Odysseus in order to present a failed one, then, he undercuts the claim of the ostensibly successful character to reproduce Odysseus's feats. He focuses not on the passively victorious Medoro, but on the defeated Orlando, recounting Orlando's grief and jealousy and his consequent descent into madness at considerable length. This emphasis foregrounds Orlando's loss and his status as the loser of this struggle, and it is underscored by the consequent loss of his wits. Orlando's loss of this contest represents the most complete failure of any character in the poem to inhabit Odysseus's role; this failure is all the more striking, given that, as Ronald Martinez has argued, Odysseus is the classical hero that Boiardo's Orlando most closely resembles.[75] If Medoro wins Angelica's pity and aid, the first steps towards winning her love, through Odysseus's traditional weapon of words, the words Medoro carves on tree and cave as memorials of his triumph lead Orlando directly to his downfall. His madness enacts the

---

[74] Moore, *Ajax*, 3, observes that an alternative version of Ajax's madness following his loss, preserved in Pindar, makes no mention of any attack on the Greek livestock.

[75] Martinez, "Two Odysseys," 22.

loss of reason and speech alike, the two Odyssean qualities most emphasized by the poem to date and two of the most prominent in the exemplary tradition. The center of the poem thus becomes perhaps the most complete failure of Odyssean values in the entire work.

V. RINALDO

Orlando's wits are retrieved from the moon through the Odyssean journey of the archetypally curious Astolfo, whose own resemblance to Odysseus is a subject for a separate study. Curiosity is too equivocal a subject to be handled comfortably by the discourse of exemplarity, as the *Inferno* suggests. With Orlando's madness cured, the poem returns to the problem of the exemplary Odyssean virtues celebrated by the humanists. As Ronald Martinez has shown, Rinaldo's final journey down the River Po re-enacts Odysseus's arrival on Ithaca.[76] Crucially, Rinaldo undertakes this journey after refusing an offer, at the end of the previous canto, to put his wife's fidelity to the test of an enchanted chalice:

> Ciascun marito, a mio giudizio, deve
> sempre spiar se la sua donna l'ama;
> saper s'onore o biasmo ne riceve,
> se per lei bestia, o se pur uom si chiama.[77]
>
> [Each husband, in my opinion, should always keep watch to see if his wife loves him, to know whether he receives honor or blame from her, whether he is called a beast or a man on her account.]

The emphasis on continual testing recalls Odysseus's careful testing of Penelope, first through his conversations with Eumaios and Telemachos and then through his own observations. Rinaldo, however, chooses differently. He takes the cup in his hands, but

---

[76] Martinez, "Two Odysseys," 17-55.

[77] *OF* 42.100.1-4.

then he reconsiders:

> Non so s'in questo io mi sia saggio o stolto;
> ma non vo' più saper, che mi convegna.[78]
>
> [I don't know whether in this I am wise or stupid; but I do not wish to know more than I should.]

Martinez shows that Rinaldo's refusal of illicit knowledge, together with his denial of desire for that knowledge, correct Dante's Ulysses and his willingness to transgress all human limits in his search for "virtute e canoscenza," virtue and knowledge.[79] Rinaldo prefers continued faith in his wife to a piece of knowledge that, once acquired, may preclude forever not only trust but happiness. Gratifying his curiosity, Rinaldo argues, will not leave him any better off than he already is and may leave him much worse. His decision to believe in his wife, to value a happy home, enables the journey that is depicted by the poem as a homecoming. It also rejects the host's discourse of exemplarity: "each husband should." Rinaldo rejects the offer to take Odysseus (or at least Ulysses) as a model for imitation; instead, he behaves with a prudence that might also be seen as Odyssean. Choosing the right Odyssean virtue—*prudentia*, not *sapientia*—Rinaldo aligns himself with the prudent Odysseus of Cicero. But prudence is possibly the virtue least suscepitble to being taught through the humanist discourse of exemplarity, as it consists of a reaction to circumstances rather than a set of precepts to be followed at every turn. Rinaldo's choice of virtue, then, reveals the limits of humanist exemplarity. The poem rewards his choice with a homecoming in a boat very much like that of the Phaiakians, that will take Rinaldo home while he sleeps. The boat and its safe

---

[78] *OF* 43.7.3-4.

[79] Martinez, "Two Odysseys," 23-26. Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*, 112, 144-45, also sees Ariosto problematizing both inquiry beyond human limits and the too-easy acceptance of those limits throughout the *Furioso* and *Satira 6*.

delivery of Rinaldo "home" to Ferrara suggest that Rinaldo has just faced a version of the choice of Odysseus, a choice in this case between epic faith and romance testing, and has passed the test.

In doing so, it also rescues Odysseus from the twenty-sixth canto of the *Inferno*, where Dante had placed him as a symbol of the danger and the sinfulness of unchecked human curiosity. Dante's Ulysses meets his death attempting to pass through the Pillars of Hercules, the limit of the known world and symbolically of licit human knowledge. Neither the duty he owes his homeland nor the love he owes Penelope can check his passionate desire for experience, his super-human aspirations for knowledge. Rinaldo, by enacting an odyssey of his own that stems from the choice to believe in the fidelity of his wife and the happiness of his marriage, offers a figure of Odysseus who, at the crucial moment, makes the "right" choice—not the choice invented by Dante for Odysseus, but the original choice made by Homer's Odysseus on Scheria, the choice to remain faithful to the twin ideals of homeland and his wife. Guided by the most important knowledge of all, self-knowledge, he recognizes that his happiness in a state of faith will outweigh his satisfaction in a state of certain knowledge.[80] By inverting the priorities of Dante's Ulysses, Ariosto's Rinaldo restores those of Homer's Odysseus. His reason triumphs over his curiosity; he exhibits the best qualities of Odysseus in their proper measure. As a result, the poem permits him a happy ending, not perhaps unlike the quiet and peaceful

---

[80] His choice recalls a passage from Cicero, *On Duties [De officiis]*, ed. and trans. M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1.113: "How many things Ulysses suffered during his lengthy wanderings! He both was a slave to women (if Circe and Kalypso ought to be called women) and was willing to be accommodating and pleasant to everyone in everything that he said. Indeed, even when home he endured the insults of slaves and maidservants in order at last to attain what he desired. On the other hand Ajax's spirit was such, we are told, that he would have preferred to seek death a thousand times than to endure such things. Reflecting on such matters, everyone ought to weigh the characteristics that are his own, and to regulate them, not wanting to see how someone else's might become him; for what is most seemly for a man is the thing that is most his own."

end Tiresias promises Odysseus.

Yet in placing prudence before knowledge, even Rinaldo declines one Odyssean challenge. Odysseus does in fact test Penelope, both directly and indirectly, as do Rinaldo's Mantuan host and Judge Anselmo in the host's tale; the accounts that frame the host's offer of the testing cup to Rinaldo. By refusing to follow Odysseus's precedent in this one event, taking his wife's fidelity wholly on trust rather than making any sort of test at all, Rinaldo marks a certain distance between himself and his epic predecessor. Odysseus is clever enough to satisfy his curiosity while remaining prudent; indeed, the *Odyssey*'s repeated allusions to Agamemnon's murder by Klytaimnestra argue that in some situations, curiosity *is* prudence. For Rinaldo, the prudent choice is to eschew curiosity even when no physical harm may come of doing so. Through Rinaldo's partial imitation of Odysseus, Ariosto makes a statement on education and imitation. Imitation is valuable, he seems to suggest, only when carried out under the guidance of one's own reason, using discretion and judgment.[81] Such a judgment may not conform to the modern reader's experience of the *Odyssey*, but it echoes precisely the sentiments of Plutarch and Seneca quoted above. Rinaldo's decision to deviate from Odysseus's path in this suggests that he has in fact learned his Odyssean lessons in the exercise of reason and curiosity.

The *Orlando furioso*, then, suggests that, within limits, curiosity and domesticity, eloquence and wisdom can be seen as epic values. Carefully and precisely, it reclaims these for the epic. At the same time, however, its string of failed Odyssean episodes and

---

[81] A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 65, reflects on Ariosto's universe in similar terms, noting that "Ariosto believes that to be collected or self-contained is the result of one's being flexible and adaptable."

the circumscribed success it finally allows Rinaldo suggests the limits within which these epic values can operate in the modern, fallen world of romance. The *Orlando furioso* may present a world in which the narrator can remark, albeit with some irony, on the "gran bontà de' antichi cavalieri" [the great goodness of the olden knights],[82] but this great goodness, ironized or not, collides and co-exists with modern gunpowder, treason, and religious discord. In this belated world, only a late, feeble version of these epic values—a version that recognizes and refuses to test its limits—can safely operate. The *Orlando furioso* thus marks a new stage in the reception of Odysseus and his story. If the *Odyssey* and its classical reception largely valorizes his exploits, elevating his wit and eloquence to the level of epic heroism and turning adventurousness and curiosity into the very stuff of epic, the *Inferno* castigates the notion that these qualities should be employed to press beyond the limits traditionally assigned to man. Within boundaries, the *Orlando furioso* redeems these qualities of craft and eloquence, curiosity and audacity for the modern world. If men can no longer indulge them without restraint, within limits they can yet produce self-knowledge and safe passage through dangerous straits.

VI. Bradamante

But the poem is not done yet. The 1532 edition of the *Orlando furioso* adds one final Odyssean episode: the contest Bradamante proposes for her hand. Though Bradamante and Ruggiero have exchanged vows, and though her brother Rinaldo has promised her hand to Ruggiero with the approval of Orlando and Oliver, her parents wish her to marry another suitor: Leone, the son of the Byzantine Emperor. Beset by her parents' pleas and threats and desperate to remain faithful to Ruggiero, Bradamante

[82] *OF* 1.22.1.

persuades Charlemagne to announce a challenge: Bradamante will marry the man who can defeat her in combat. Leone, knowing himself unequal to Bradamante, persuades Ruggiero—whom he knows only as the knight of the unicorn—to duel Bradamante in his place; to Bradamante's despair, she cannot defeat Ruggiero (disguised as Leone) before sunset, and Charlemagne decrees that she should marry Leone. This is the moment when Ruggiero should shed his disguise and proclaim his identity, but he does not:

> Ruggier, senza pigliar quivi riposo,
> senz'elmo trarsi o alleggierirsi maglia,
> sopra un picciol ronzin torna in gran fretta
> ai padiglioni ove Leon l'aspetta.[83]
>
> [Ruggiero, without taking any rest, without taking off his helmet or his chain mail, returned in a great hurry on a small nag to the pavilion where Leon awaited him.]

Ruggiero misses his cue. The test Bradamante has set should not only allow her to keep her pledge to him, it should enable him to prove his identity; the point of the challenge is that Bradamante believes that only Ruggiero will be able to defeat her.[84] The situation is finally set right, after much despair on both sides, by Leone, who boasts his own Odyssean qualities. Leone's eloquence causes much of the trouble by persuading Ruggiero to fight for him: "L'eloquenza del Greco assai potea" [The Greek's eloquence could do much].[85] But the same quality resolves the situation when Leone explains his deception to Charlemagne and persuades her parents to accept Ruggiero as her husband: "Leone, il qual sapea molto ben dire" [Leone, who knew how to speak very well] brings about the poem's happy ending.[86] The emphasis on eloquence and on Leone's nationality both recall Odysseus; so too does his name. Lions are the standard comparison for heroes

---

[83] *OF* 45.82.5-8.

[84] *OF* 45.99.

[85] *OF* 45.56.1.

[86] *OF* 46.61.1.

in Homeric similes; in an Odyssean context, Leone's name implies a link to the hero who is so frequently lion-like. And yet the poem needs Leone and Ruggiero together to make up one Odysseus to match Bradamante's Penelope: if Ruggiero has the unique strength of Odysseus and has been through an Odyssean education (albeit an unsuccessful one, as Ascoli argues) still he cannot claim his wife without Leone's eloquence and persuasive story-telling. Unlike Rinaldo's prudence, these individual Odyssean qualities are heroic qualities, qualities that surpass the ordinary limits of humankind, and—not surprisingly, given the poem's suspicion of Odyssean heroism—they fail. Even Bradamante's cleverness is shown to have a flaw, although it is hardly fair to blame her for it: she has not anticipated the possibility that Ruggiero, having won her, might be too stupid to claim her. Ruggiero, unlike Bradamante, recognizes a claim on his loyalties even stronger than that of his fiancée; unlike Ruggiero, Bradamante is constant above all else. In this, she refutes the skepticism of Penelope's chastity that the poem voices elsewhere. St. John can tell Astolfo on his lunar journey that

> E se tu vuoi che 'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
> tutta al contrario l'istoria converti:
> che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
> e che Penelopea fu meretrice.[87]
>
> [If you wish that the truth not be hidden from you, change all the story to its opposite: the Greeks were broken, Troy was victorious, and Penelope was a whore.]

And Guido tells Marfisa that the "donne omicidie," the homicidal women of Canto 20, descend from the illegitimate children of the Greek heroes' wives, *all* of whom were unfaithful to their husbands during the Trojan War.[88] Against this rejection of Penelope's most famous exemplary virtue, the poem pits Bradamante's exemplary constancy,

---

[87] *OF* 35.27.5-8.

[88] *OF* 20.10-11.

together with that of the other faithful heroines, Fiordiligi and Isabella. Yet even Bradamante's exemplary display of constancy is not enough; it must combine with cleverness and foresight beyond Bradamante's, and equal cleverness in her partner, to have its Odyssean effect. The poem's final Odyssean revision leaves us with a sneaking suspicion that Ruggiero does not deserve Bradamante. If there are Penelopes in the world still, there are not husbands worthy of them. The final two Odyssean episodes combine to suggest that ὁ μοφροσύνη, the like-mindedness that leads to happy marriages, is not to be found. Happy marriages come from trust and a willingness to be deceived, from prudence rather than heroic deeds.

By exposing the shortcomings of the prismatic approach to exemplarity, Ariosto interrogates the claims made for Odysseus as an epic hero and for Penelope as a female exemplar. He questions the wisdom of pursuing only one exemplary quality at a time; at the same time, he suggests through Rinaldo and Bradamante that some heroic qualities are incompatible with others under modern conditions. Ariosto displays his skepticism, not only that classical levels of heroism can be reached in a post-classical world, but that modern imitators of Odysseus can achieve anything worthy of the name of heroism. At the same time, he presents himself as engaged with Homer on a far deeper and more creative level than the discourse of exemplarity he critiques. Ariosto strings together the many narratives that are implied in the character of Odysseus, writing an *Odyssey* whose romance possibilities are more fully explored and whose heroes and anti-heroes realize individually the potential traits that to some extent hold each other in check in Odysseus. His allusive interlace allows him to narrate his own *Odyssey*, to show us what virtue and wisdom can do—as well as what they cannot.

2. Romance Error and Romance Eros in *Gerusalemme liberata* and *The Faerie Queene*

When Ariosto published the third and final edition of the *Orlando furioso* in 1532, Homeric scholarship was still at a relatively early stage in the West. By the time Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* appeared in 1581, followed nine years later by the first three books of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the landscape had changed enormously. Aristotle's *Poetics* had been rediscovered, translated into Latin, and made the subject of intense study and debate, as his descriptions of the best kinds of tragedy and epic were converted into prescriptions still familiar today. Furious literary quarrels broke out over the conformity of Ariosto's poem to Aristotle's poetics, and over the relative merits of Aristotle's theory and Ariosto's practice in places where the two were seen to diverge. Because Aristotle offered the *Odyssey* as his pattern epic, Homer's poem lay very much at the center of these theoretical debates. Perhaps as a result of these literary arguments, certainly as a result of the spread in the teaching of Greek, new and better editions and translations of the *Odyssey* multiplied rapidly. Publishers and scholars brought out editions of classical and Byzantine Homeric scholarship and produced new interpretations of their own. Imitations of Homer in Latin poetry became more widely studied; Macrobius's comments on Virgil's reworkings of Homer had long been available, but now readers could compare the texts for themselves. Poets began to imitate, allude to, and rewrite the text of the *Odyssey* in previously impossible ways. This expansion of Homeric studies created a proliferating—even a bewildering—array of possibilities, both creative and interpretive, for poets and readers. These possibilities left their marks on the *Liberata* and *The Faerie Queene*. Each poem draws on a wider range

of readings of the *Odyssey* than the *Orlando furioso* does; each author seems content to let these readings coexist rather than attempting to weave them into a single coherent reading of the *Odyssey*—or perhaps the sheer variety of interpretative possibilities at this moment defeats any attempt to restrict Homer's poem to a single signifying project.

Despite the explosion of possible readings of the *Odyssey*, the multiple nature of the Homeric echoes in Tasso and Spenser has received less attention than it deserves. Critical attention has focused on the two poets' uses of the extremely popular allegorical readings of Odysseus's adventures in the Odyssean journeys they create for their characters. Although the tradition of reading Homer allegorically dates back to the classical Stoics, Renaissance readings were most heavily influenced by the mythographies of Natale Conti and his successors, among them the Italian Vincenzo Cartari and the Englishmen Stephen Batman, Abraham Fraunce, and later Alexander Ross.[1] Armida and Acrasia are commonly known to be descendants of Circe;[2] Guyon's

---

[1] Natalis Comes [Natale Conti], *Mythologiae* (Venice, 1567); Vincenzo Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi* (Venice, 1571; New York: Garland, 1976); Stephen Batman, *The Golden Booke of the Leaden Gods* (London, 1577; New York: Garland, 1976); Abraham Fraunce, *The Third Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch* (London, 1592; New York: Garland, 1976); Alexander Ross, *Mystagogus Poeticus* (London: Thomas Whitaker, 1648; New York: Garland, 1976). Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970), remains the standard study of these allegorical readings; see also DeWitt T. Starnes and Ernest William Talbert, *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries: A Study of Renaissance Dictionaries in Their Relation to the Classical Learning of Contemporary English Writers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), and H. David Brumble, *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998). On the classical allegories of Homer, see Félix Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1956); Howard Clarke, *Homer's Readers: A Historical Introduction to the Iliad and the Odyssey* (London: Associated University Presses, 1981), 60-106; Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); and Robert Lamberton and John J. Keaney, eds., *Homer's Ancient Readers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[2] Armida's relationship to Circe has been much noted but little discussed; see, e.g., C. P. Brand, *Torquato Tasso: A Study of the Poet and of His Contribution to English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 105-7; A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (New York: Norton, 1966), 185; Thomas P. Roche, Jr., "Tasso's Enchanted Woods," in *Literary Uses of Typology*, ed. Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 55; Melinda Gough, "Tasso's

voyage through an Odyssean landscape in Book 12 of *The Faerie Queene* has been thoroughly explored for its allegorical possibilities.[3] These readings are so well known that I will touch on them only lightly in the discussion that follows. In their place, I will work with readings that draw on modern theories of allusion and intertextuality in their returns to the Homeric sources of scenes, characters, and tropes in each poet's work.[4]

Enchantress, Tasso's Captive Woman," *Renaissance Quarterly* (2001): 524. More recently, Jo Ann Cavallo, "Tasso's Armida and the Victory of Romance," in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 77-91, has explored the differences between Armida and the Circean enchantresses of Italian romance who mediate her relationship to Circe. Acrasia's descent from Circe has been more thoroughly explored; readers such as Merritt Y. Hughes, "Spenser's Acrasia and the Circe of the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4 (1943): 381-99; A. C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in* The Faerie Queene (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 120-23; James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of* The Faerie Queene (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 370-71, 508-10; and Gareth Roberts, "Circe," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 165-67, place Acrasia in the context of Renaissance allegorizations of Circe. More recently, feminist critics have challenged the traditional acceptance of these allegories as straightforward glosses on Acrasia; Mary Ellen Lamb, "Gloriana, Acrasia, and the House of Busirane: Gendered Fictions in *The Faerie Queene* as Fairy Tale," in *Worldmaking Spenser*, ed. Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 93-99, argues that Acrasia blurs the boundaries between a feminine sphere of storytelling and the male preserve of the classical tradition, while Harry Berger, "Wring Out the Old: Squeezing the Text, 1951-2001," *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003): 81-121, complicates the apparent opposition of the Palmer and Acrasia in the terms these allegories would suggest. Even the mention of Grylle, the man metamorphosed into a pig who resents being changed back by the Palmer, has been the subject of several critical studies; see Nohrnberg, *Analogy of* The Faerie Queene, 500-502; Raphael Lyne, "Grille's Moral Dialogue: Spenser and Plutarch," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 159-76; Joseph Loewenstein, "Grylle's Hoggish Mind," *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007): 243-56.

[3] B. Nellish, "The Allegory of Guyon's Voyage: An Interpretation," *English Literary History* 30 (1963): 89-106; Henry Gibbons Lotspeich, *Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser* (New York: Octagon, 1965), 20-23; Harry Berger, *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's* Faerie Queene (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1967); Nohrnberg, *Analogy of* The Faerie Queene, 291-2, and, most comprehensively, Jessica Wolfe, "Spenser, Homer, and the Mythography of Strife," *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005): 1220-88. Theresa Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 101, sees Guyon's voyage as more deeply indebted to moralized readings of the *Aeneid.*

[4] Walter Stephens, "Reading Tasso Reading Vergil Reading Homer: An Archaeology of Andromache," *Comparative Literature Studies* 32 (1995): 296-319; David Quint, "The Anatomy of Epic in Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*," *The Spenser Review* 34 (2003): 28-45. The study of Latin epic echoes in each poet's work is far more popular; see among others Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights*; Barbara Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Marilyn Migiel, *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso's* Gerusalemme liberata (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1993), 113-34, on Armida's epic ancestry; John Watkins, *The Specter of Dido: Spenser and Virgilian Epic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Tobias Gregory, *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), on the representation of divinity in classical epic and in Tasso. Two older studies provide important precedents for this work: Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven:* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963) and Merritt Y. Hughes, *Virgil and Spenser* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929).

Walter Stephens has argued that Tasso reworks Homer's sympathy in the *Iliad* for Andromache via the mediating influence of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and that this use of layered sources allows Tasso to use Homer to criticize Virgil, an insight I will extend to other areas in which Tasso imitates both poems. Less a "further voice" in R. O. A. M. Lyne's formulation than a component of the poem's epic ideology, the Homeric voice of Tasso's poem does not undermine the official voice of Tasso's poem as much as it enables the construction of an epic ethos more inclusive and more forgiving than Virgil's. My reading thus complements rather than contradicts Sergio Zatti's influential argument that Tasso associates secular humanist individuality with the crusaders' enemies and secretly sympathizes with them even as he condemns them. Tasso's Homeric voice suggests that the heroic humanity of the *Odyssey* is already present in the orthodox epic tradition and therefore available to be recuperated into his Christian epic ethos, not wholly and irretrievably associated with the "umanesimo laico, materialista e pluralista" [lay, materialist, and plural humanism] of the pagan camp or the "affermazione degli ideali eroici di virtù e di onore" [affirmation of the heroic ideals of virtue and honor] that Zatti claims the Muslim camp represents in the *Liberata*.[5] Looking at the interactions of allusions to Homer and to other poets illuminates two areas explored through Tasso's and Spenser's treatments of the *Odyssey*: poetics and ethics. Allusions to and rewritings of the *Odyssey* become discussions of both the poetics of genre—a subject fraught with ethical implications for the world beyond the poem—and the ethics of a postwar society. While Tasso assigns a positive function to the *Odyssey* in the *Liberata*, Spenser sees Odysseus's adventures as more perilous, both ethically and theologically speaking. Where Tasso

[5] Sergio Zatti, *L'uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagano: Saggio sulla* Gerusalemme liberata (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1983), 12.

imagines the rescue of romance eros from romance error and the incorporation of eros into an epic ethos, Spenser separates eros from error only with great difficulty. This separation is temporary and tenuous; the specter of Odyssean failure imagined by Ariosto often clouds Spenser's moments of Odyssean heroism.

Two remarkable documents allow us to begin to reconstruct the climates in which Tasso and Spenser worked with Homer. An early edition of the *Odyssey*, heavily annotated by a critic who corresponded with Tasso and participated in the controversy over the *Gerusalemme liberata*'s conformity to epic norms, survives in the British Library; its notes shed considerable light on the reading practices of an educated sixteenth-century Italian interested in questions of epic theory and poetics—and one known to be a careful and sympathetic reader of the *Liberata*. Library records from Merchant Taylors' School, the grammar school Spenser attended for six years, provide a sample of the editions of Homer and other classics, critical works, and mythographies to which an educated Englishman of Spenser's era might turn. Combined with the evidence of early translations, paratexts, and Renaissance literary criticism, these works allow us to press beyond the familiar allegorical readings to uncover the other ways in which late-sixteenth-century readers read their Homer, the ways in which Tasso and Spenser draw on these less familiar reading practices as they rewrite the *Odyssey*.

I. Tasso

A copy of a 1549 Latin translation of the *Odyssey* gives a sense of the variety and the tenor of readings available to and created by late-sixteenth-century readers. The first complete Latin verse translation of the *Odyssey*, this edition was translated into

hexameters by the Swiss humanist Simon Lemnius and printed in Basel by Johannes Oporin.[6] Oporin provides only a moderate amount of paratextual material, all of it (somewhat unusually) original to his edition: a dedicatory epistle and two further letters to patrons, all in verse; some printed marginalia marking similes and noteworthy events in the text; a Latin hexameter translation of the *Batrachomyomachia*, the pseudo-Homeric mock-epic on a battle between frogs and mice, at the end of the volume. The edition is not a scholarly one; not only does it not include the Greek text of the *Odyssey* and of the hypotheses and synopses summarizing the action of each book, it also lacks much of the paratextual material that made up the scholarly apparatus of previous editions: the lives of Homer by Dio Chrysostom, pseudo-Plutarch, and pseudo-Herodotus (the last of which had been translated into Latin by Conrad Heresbach for a 1534 edition of the Homeric poems).[7] By this time, too, the massive Greek commentary of the twelfth-century Byzantine scholar-archbishop Eustathius and the *Odyssey* scholia attributed to Didymus were also in print; the former appeared in Rome in four volumes from 1542-1550, while the latter were first printed in Venice in 1528.[8] The scholar or enthusiast with a command of Greek and a desire to know what the ancient world had said of Homer would have looked elsewhere. This edition was designed for a different reader: one with little or no Greek, reading the *Odyssey* for pleasure as a literary work (since the translation is into

---

[6] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, ed. Simon Lemnius (Basel: Ioannis Oporini, 1549). The copy examined is BL C66.b.2; translations are my own. See Philip Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque: Réception des épopées homériques à la Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 2007), 126-28, 351, for a full description and brief discussion of this edition.

[7] Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*, 335-36.

[8] Homer, *Eustathiou Archiepiskopou Thessalonikês Parekbolai eis tên Omêrou Iliada* (Rome, 1542-50); Homer, *Didimou tou Palaiotatou eis tên Odusseian Eksêgêsis. Didymi Antiquissimi Auctoris interpretatio in Odysseam* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1528). I have been able to examine the former (which, despite its title page, contains the full text of and commentary on both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) but not the latter. For descriptions of each edition, see Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*, 347, 332 respectively.

hexameter rather than *ad verbum*), interested in encountering Homer in modern dress. The edition heralds the rise of a new trend in Homeric publication: the production of editions with Renaissance rather than ancient critical materials, explanatory prefaces and notes by contemporary scholars rather than classical lives and essays on Homer.

The edition also advertises its religious allegiance with its dedication to Henri II of France and its prefatory poem addressed to Anne de Montmorency. The partisan nature of these dedications becomes clearer to a modern audience from the evidence of the second edition. Lemnius's translation was successful enough to be reprinted in Paris in 1581, the year that the *Liberata* first appeared in print. Curiously, twenty-two years after the death of Henri II and fourteen years after the death of Anne de Montmorency, the 1581 edition reprinted the prefatory materials of the 1549 edition with the original dedications intact. Their republication suggests that they continued to be seen as valuable interpretative aids; perhaps the dedications to the deceased anti-Huguenot Henri II and the Catholic de Montmorency, who in the intervening years had joined with the Duc de Guise and the Maréchal de Saint-André in the so-called Triumvirate at the head of the virulently anti-Protestant Catholic League, were also intended to emphasize the Swiss-Catholic Lemnius's credentials as a suitable translator of Homer for a Catholic readership. Presumably the ownership of a classical text that declared its Catholic allegiance so strongly would have posed no problems in post-Tridentine Italy.

That this copy belonged to such a reader—Catholic, Italian, humanist—is clear from his inscriptions in the book. He identifies himself twice, once in a note as "Horatius Lo[m]bardellius" and once on a blank page at the end of the volume as "Horatii

Lo[m]bardelli Senensis."[9] The reader, then, is Orazio Lombardelli, the Sienese academician who corresponded with Tasso on matters of poetics. Lombardelli's correspondence with Tasso, together with his letter to Maurizio Cataneo praising the *Liberata*, were published by Tasso himself in 1585, together with his *Apologia del Sig. Torquato Tasso in difesa della sua Gierusalemme Liberata*.[10] In 1586, Lombardelli wrote a treatise on poetics, the *Discorso intorno ai contrasti che si fanno sopra la Gerusalemme liberata de Torquato Tasso*, that seeks both to summarize the debate over Tasso's poem and to justify Tasso's poetics. Lombardelli defends Tasso's poem against critics who accuse it of lacking marvels and of being drily historical; in his definition of the marvelous and its proper uses he aligns himself with Tasso and with Aristotle, while in his discussion of the classical epics he defends some of the more fabulous episodes in the *Odyssey* as having some moral value and as being not entirely improbable.[11] His annotations to his copy of Homer, therefore, provide invaluable insight into the climate of reading in which Tasso constructed his revisions of Homer. A closer look at these annotations, beginning with those to a single book of the *Odyssey*, reveals that a range of different reading practices could coexist in close proximity in a single reader's encounters with the *Odyssey*, that the poem could be used for many different purposes.

In Book 19, the first conversation in twenty years between the disguised

---

[9] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, KK2^{r}, [n.p.] That the latter inscription is in the genitive case presumably indicates that this is an ownership inscription, meaning "This book belongs to..."

[10] Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 2:983-85, 1014.

[11] Despite Lombardelli's partisanship, when Tasso sought to shift the terms of the debate later that year, he did so in the form of a reply to Lombardelli, the *Risposta al Discorso del Sig. Oratio Lombardelli*. For a discussion of Lombardelli's *Discorso*, see Weinberg, *History of Literary Criticism*, 2:1025-31; Baxter Hathaway, *Marvels and Commonplaces* (New York: Random House, 1968), 123-27. For Tasso's *Risposta*, see Weinberg, *History of Literary Criticism*, 1:628-32, 2:1030-31.

Odysseus and the apparently-unsuspecting Penelope, Odysseus claims to have met Odysseus on his way to Troy. He supports this claim with a detailed description of a brooch that he says Odysseus wore when they met, a brooch that Penelope had given Odysseus when he left for Troy. Lombardelli has underlined this description and added a handwritten note in the margin: "Hic locus facit ad tractatione[m] Insignium, Emblematu[m], Hierogliphycoru[m], symbolorum, Iconum, & siquid est aliud eius generis" [This passage makes for the treatment of insignia, emblems, hieroglyphs, symbols, icons, and anything else there may be of this kind].[12] The note captures one standard late-sixteenth-century response to the *Odyssey*: a source of static images of moral commonplaces. This impulse to extract isolated moments runs deep in the period; the same impulse produced Andrea Alciati's and Geffrey Whitney's emblems of Circe and the endless tables of *sententiae* or nuggets of moral wisdom found in many late-sixteenth-century editions of Homer.[13] Lombardelli seems also to suggest that this passage provides a model for the construction of such emblems, granting both primacy and exemplary status to the *Odyssey* in yet another arena. But his reading of the *Odyssey* deepens as we move through Book 19. A few pages later, Penelope orders her maids to make up a bed for Odysseus before reflecting on the importance of hospitality to her reputation—on the need to earn her domestic brand of *kleos* by entertaining travelers properly—and on the hardships men suffer in their short lifetimes. Lombardelli has underlined many passages in this speech (some with double lines, fairly unusual in these annotations) and drawn a beautiful pointing hand, one of only four in all his annotations

---

[12] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, LL4^{v}.

[13] For emblems of Circe, see Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata cum Commentariis* (Padua, 1621; New York: Garland, 1976), 336-37; Geffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (London: 1586), 82.

to the poem, against the final lines:

> At qui non ullo degit culpabilis æuo,
> Et mitis nulla unquam immitia facta peregit,
> Huius nempe decus latas spargetur in oras
> Hospitibus claris, & læta gloria fama
> Inter mortales uiuet, laudabilis ipse
> Et uirtutis amans semper narrabitur altæ.[14]

> [Who lives a lifetime not worthy of blame, and mild, has never performed barbarous acts, his virtue surely will be spread through the wide regions by his distinguished guests, and his fame will live among mortals by means of his pleasing glory; he will always be reported to be praiseworthy and a lover of high virtue.]

For purposes of comparison, Richmond Lattimore translates the Greek as follows:

> But when a man is blameless himself, and his thoughts are blameless,
> the friends he has entertained carry his fame widely
> to all mankind, and many are they who call him excellent.[15]

Lemnius expands on Homer's moral reflections in this passage, and he shifts the emphasis of the passage from the breadth of the host's fame to its lasting nature. He recognizes the passage's potential as a *sententia* and amplifies that aspect in his translation, but he does not allegorize it. Lombardelli's attention was clearly captured by Lemnius's version; the other three passages marked with pointing hands are similarly concerned with earthly and divine justice and the relationship between that justice and the reputation one earns, for good or ill.[16] In this passage, and in the broader reading of the poem signaled by the passages connected with pointing hands, translator and reader collaborate to produce a reading of the *Odyssey* concerned with a particular moral

---

[14] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, LL7^{v}.

[15] Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), 19.332-34. All English-language quotations are from this edition unless otherwise noted. For the sake of consistency with Lattimore, I adopt his transliterations of all Greek names found in the *Odyssey*, even when Lattimore's own transliterations are inconsistent (e.g. Καλυπσώ as "Kalypso" but Κίρκη as "Circe").

[16] They are Odysseus's statement that Zeus punishes all men who transgress his laws at *Od.* 13.213-14, Eumaios's claim that the gods assist him in the hard work he does at *Od.* 15.371-73, and Agamemnon's bitter remark that Klytaimnestra's treachery will give all women a bad reputation at *Od.* 24.199-202. The nature of the collaboration between the gods and human beings that emerges from Lombardelli's reading will be explored further in chapter 3.

problem; they read Homer ethically, looking for insight into the problem of whether or not men and women get what they deserve. Although Lombardelli elsewhere displays a concern with passages considering the interplay of human and divine justice, here he concentrates on earthly justice alone—on ethics, not theology. This passage does not display any interest in reading the *Odyssey*'s morals through a Christian lens or as a Christian allegory; it takes a secular, humanist view of justice.

A fifth hand drawn by Lombardelli points to a couplet in one of the prefaces to the translation. Signed by Lemnius, this poem in Latin elegiacs summarizes the plot of the *Odyssey* and provides brief allegorical explanations for each event. The pointing hand picks out the passage that allegorizes the Sirens, a passage that has also been underlined: "Non prorsus uitanda, sed est arcenda uoluptas: / Quam nisi tu frenes, tristia damna dabit" [Pleasure is not absolutely to be avoided, but to be kept at a distance: unless you restrain it, it will inflict sad injuries].[17] As a reading of Odysseus's successful journey past the Sirens, this seems dubious to a modern reader; it is entirely in keeping with late-sixteenth-century reading practices, however, and it represents the kind—and perhaps the content as well—of allegorical reading with which Tasso was familiar and to which he cautiously alludes in the *Liberata*. In fact, Lemnius takes a fairly liberal view of the Sirens when compared to Conti's highly influential *Mythologiae*, which asks "Cur inter suauissimos Sirenum cantus, vel aures obturari, vel ad malum alligari conuenit? quia aduersus illegitimarum vuluptatum illecebras vel surdos esse, vel rationi firmissime alligatum obtemperare omnino opus est" [Why is it suitable among the sweetest songs of the Sirens, either for the ears to be stopped, or to be bound to the mast? Because against

[17] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, γ3[r].

the attractions of illicit pleasures it is most necessary either to be deaf, or to obey reason bound most steadfastly].[18] Lemnius and Lombardelli offer more scope to the pleasures of the Sirens than do some of their contemporaries, but they too see their allegorical potential. This passage thus provides evidence of a second, more explicitly allegorical mode of reading that coexists comfortably alongside the ethical reading traced above—so comfortably, in fact, that Lombardelli uses the same symbol to identify passages in each mode. Tasso himself balances these two ways of reading as he weaves Odyssean elements into Armida's character and relationship with Rinaldo. Although he identifies Armida as "la tentazione che tende insidie alla potenza che appetisce" [the temptation that assails the appetitive faculty] in the later "Allegoria del poema" and allows his more overtly moralizing characters to treat her as such an allegorical temptation in the poem itself, he also uses her to explore and to illustrate a particular set of ethical positions: the necessity of romance (as both genre and eros) and the heroism of the transition to postwar life.[19]

As Rinaldo rides towards Damascus, having left the Crusaders' camp in a huff, he stumbles into a snare laid for him by the sorceress Armida: a little boat, lacking a crew and so small that it can only hold one passenger.

> Qual cauta cacciatrice, Armida aspetta
> Rinaldo al varco. Ei su l'Oronte giunge,
> ove un rio si dirama e, un'isoletta
> formando, tosto a lui si ricongiunge;
> e 'n su la riva una colonna eretta
> vede, e un picciol battello indi non lunge.
> Fisa egli tosto gil occhi al bel lavoro
> del bianco marmo e legge in lettre d'oro:
> "O chiunque tu sia, che voglia o caso
> peregrinando adduce a queste sponde,

[18] Conti, *Mythologiae*, 964.

[19] Torquato Tasso, "Allegoria del poema," in *Opere di Torquato Tasso. Colle controversie sulla Gerusalemme*, ed. G. Rosini (Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1830), 24:ix.

> meraviglie maggior l'orto o l'occaso
> non ha di ciò che l'isoletta asconde.
> Passa, se vuoi vederla." È persuaso
> tosto l'incauto a girne oltra quell'onde;
> e perché mal capace era la barca,
> gli scudieri abbandona ed ei sol varca.[20]
>
> [That cautious huntress, Armida, awaits Rinaldo at the pass. He arrives at the Oronte, where a river divides itself into two streams and, forming an islet, soon rejoins itself; and on the bank he sees an erect column, and a little boat not far from it. He soon fixes his eyes on the pretty work in white marble and reads in golden letters: "O whoever you may be, whether desire or chance brings you wandering to these shores, neither the east nor the west has greater marvels than those which the islet hides. Cross, if you wish to see it." The incautious one is quickly persuaded to journey across that water; and because the boat was too small, he abandons his squires and he alone makes the crossing.]

This boat belongs to a type that David Quint has identified as the "boat of romance," a boat that takes its occupant wherever it will, a boat whose occupant's lack of control epitomizes the aimless wanderings of romance. Quint identifies the original boat of romance with Odysseus's ship, in which he is driven at the mercy of the winds into the archetypal narrative of romance wanderings.[21] But there is a second set of self-steering ships in the *Odyssey*, the ships of the Phaiakians under the rule of Alkinoös:

> there are no steersmen among the Phaiakians, neither
> are there any steering oars for them, such as other ships have,
> but the ships themselves understand men's thoughts and purposes,
> and they know all the cities of men and all their fertile
> fields, and with greatest speed they cross the gulf of the salt sea,
> huddled under a mist and cloud, nor is there ever
> any fear that they may suffer damage or come to destruction.[22]

Unlike the ship Odysseus fails to steer safely home to Ithaka but like the boat of romance, the Phaiakian ships are under human control; magically endowed with the ability to

---

[20] Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), 14.57-58. All quotations are from this edition, hereafter abbreviated *GL*; translations are my own.

[21] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 249.

[22] *Od.* 8.557-63. Elsewhere, the Phaiakians are depicted as rowing their ships, which has caused some critics to dismiss Alkinoös' claim here as an exaggeration; see Homer, *Odyssey*, ed. W. B. Stanford (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996), 1:346n556. The description of Odysseus's return home to Ithaka in a Phaiakian ship at 13.76-92 shows the Phaiakians rowing their ship but not steering it.

interpret human thought, they infallibly deliver their crews to the correct destination. Such a Phaiakian ship carries Odysseus home to Ithaka at last, and the descendant of such a ship carries Rinaldo to Armida's island. Given the intervening tradition of boats steered from afar by magicians and enchantresses, we should be cautious in claiming that Armida's boat owes more to the *Odyssey* than it does to the Italian romance tradition that includes the *Orlando innamorato* and the *Orlando furioso*. Bearing this Odyssean origin in mind, however, leads to the realization that the boat launches Rinaldo on a surprising revision of Odysseus's travels.

The rudderless boat carries Rinaldo to Armida, a sorceress who combines attributes of Circe with echoes of Dido and the enchantresses of Italian romance.[23] The love she provokes in Rinaldo effectively unmans him; she transforms him into a figure much like the young Achilles of Statius' *Achilleid*, disguised by his mother as a young woman and sent to the court of Lycomedes, king of Scyros, to prevent his fated death at Troy. The self-steering boat that Odysseus takes, which carries him away from Nausikaa and home to Penelope, resembles more closely the boat of Fortune that carries Rinaldo back to Jerusalem later in the poem. The appearance of a self-steering boat at the outset of Rinaldo's romance with Armida seems to invert its role in the *Odyssey*, given that Armida will distract Rinaldo from his destined heroic activities in the battle for Jerusalem before she eventually reunites with him at the poem's end. If the boat initially carries Rinaldo away from his ethical "home" in the crusaders' camp, however, it also carries him toward the woman who will eventually become his consort; no reunion with Armida would be possible without the initial meeting enabled by the boat. The Odyssean narrative that begins with Rinaldo's journey in Armida's boat thus collapses two

[23] For Armida's romance genealogy, see Cavallo, "Tasso's Armida," 77-89.

Odyssean journeys: the journey by raft, plank, and (finally) Leukothea's veil to Scheria and the voyage home to Penelope in the Phaiakian ship. The origins of Armida's boat in the magical ships of the Phaiakians join with a second trope whose origins lie on Scheria. Armida's pity and unexpected love for the sleeping Rinaldo when he arrives on the islet derive primarily from Angelica's equally unexpected passion for the wounded Medoro in *Orlando furioso* 19, but behind Angelica's rescue of Medoro lies Nausikaa's assistance to the shipwrecked Odysseus when he stumbles out of the brush to supplicate her in *Odyssey* 6. Armida is also linked to Nausikaa through the narrator's breathless introduction on her first appearance in the poem: "Argo non mai, non vide Cipro o Delo / d'abito o di beltà forme sí care" [Argos never saw, nor Cyprus nor Delos, shapes so precious in dress or beauty].[24] The mention of Delos recalls Odysseus's first speech to Nausikaa: "Wonder takes me as I look on you. / Yet in Delos once I saw such a thing, by Apollo's altar. / I saw the stalk of a young palm shooting up."[25] The narrator colludes in Armida's effort to locate herself within the epic tradition of innocent lovely young things, suggesting that there may be some truth to this apparently unlikely assimilation. Armida thus evokes Nausikaa, the most innocent of the women who attempt to detain Odysseus, while the fact that the original Phaiakian boat carries Odysseus to Penelope hints at the eventual union between Rinaldo and Armida. If we think of Armida first as Nausikaa, then as Penelope, we realize that Tasso too identifies Nausikaa as the last in the long line of doubles to Penelope who pose a threat to Odysseus's homecoming with their inviting sexuality and their willingness to host him—in Kalypso's case, against his will—for as long as he can be enticed to remain in their beds. We also realize that Tasso, as Milton

---

[24] *GL* 4.29.1-2.

[25] *Od.* 6.161-63.

will do eighty years later, understands that a figure read at one moment as Nausikaa can be read under the pressure of different circumstances as Penelope—that a woman who poses a threat to an epic purpose at one moment can at another moment be redefined as that epic purpose itself. Tasso also anticipates modern criticism in realizing that Nausikaa is not in herself a danger in the way that Kalypso or Circe is. She does not pose an existential threat to Odysseus's humanity; although she is the wrong woman for him—partly because he already has the right woman waiting for him at home—she is fully human.[26] The danger she poses, as we have already seen, lies not in her alien nature but in how close she comes to duplicating Penelope. In the right place at the right time, however, and with the right religious convictions, a character who had previously seemed to align with Nausikaa can shift into the role of Penelope. Armida, through her encounter with Rinaldo, will develop from a teenager at the age of sexual awakening—an adolescent much like Nausikaa—into a mature character capable of a mutual and fulfilling relationship; so too, through his sojourn on Armida's island, will Rinaldo.[27] These shifts in character allow Tasso to bridge the gulf that Ariosto opens (as we saw in the previous chapter) between epic and romance, using Odysseus's choice between Nausikaa and Penelope on Scheria as a pivot between modes. By transforming Armida from a figure of Nausikaa and Circe into a figure of Penelope, by emphasizing the transition from adolescent narcissism to mature love, Tasso suggests that romance can be transformed into epic.

---

[26] Charles Segal, "The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return," *Arion* 1:4 (1962): 33.

[27] David Quint, "Francesco Bracciolini as a Reader of Ariosto and Tasso in *La croce raquistata*," in *L'arme e gli amori: Ariosto, Tasso, and Guarini in Late Renaissance Florence*, ed. Massimiliano Rossi and Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi (Florence: Olschki, 2004), 65-66, argues that the poem hinges on this psychological development.

The romance between Rinaldo and Armida takes as its major predecessor the *Aeneid*'s affair between Dido and Aeneas. This is a natural choice, given the general preference for Virgil over Homer in the sixteenth-century debate over epic form; as Sergio Zatti points out, a preference for Homer over Virgil as a primary epic model would be "heterodox."[28] Odyssean elements are most heavily concentrated in the voyage that the crusading knights Carlo and Ubaldo make to Armida's island to retrieve Rinaldo and bring him back to the Christian siege of Jerusalem. These elements are also heavily mediated through other texts; the allegorical figure of Fortune who pilots the magical boat that carries Carlo and Ubaldo to Armida's island claims that they follow in the wake of the final journey past the Pillars of Hercules that Dante invents for Odysseus in *Inferno* 26, while Ubaldo's role in reawakening Rinaldo's martial fervor owes much to Statius' portrait of Odysseus fetching Achilles from Scyros in *Achilleid* 1.[29] Yet Odyssean touches creep into the main narrative too. When Ubaldo, having found Rinaldo and Armida sharing a pleasant moment of adolescent narcissism in Armida's paradisal garden, advises Rinaldo to hear out Armida's protests against his departure and then abandon her, his counsel mixes courtesy with a discourse of exemplarity, using Odysseus as his exemplar:

> Dissegli Ubaldo allor: — Già non conviene
> che d'aspettar costei, signior, ricusi;
> di beltà armata e de'suoi preghi or viene,

---

[28] Sergio Zatti, *L'ombra del Tasso: Epica e romanzo nel Cinquecento* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 1996), 94n55. Zatti refers to Giangiorgio Trissino's preference for a Homeric plan for his 1547 epic, *Italia liberata dai goti*.

[29] Quint, *Epic and Empire* 262, 408n29, discusses the layers of allusion to Dante and Statius in Ubaldo's character. Beatrice Corrigan, "The Opposing Mirrors," *Italica* 33 (1956): 165-79, discusses Tasso's use of the *Achilleid*, though with a primary focus on Rinaldo's reawakening rather than Carlo and Ubaldo's journey. On the comparison of Carlo and Ubaldo's journey to the final journey of Dante's Ulysses, *GL* 15.24-26, see David Quint, "Fear of Falling: Icarus, Phaethon, and Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 57 (2004):853-56.

> dolcemente nel pianto amaro infusi.
> Qual piú forte di te, se le sirene
> vedendo ed ascoltando a vincer t'usi?
> cosí ragion pacifica reina
> de' sensi fassi, e se medesma affina. —[30]
>
> [Ubaldo said to him then: "Now it will not do to refuse to wait for her, sir; now she comes armed with beauty and with her prayers, sweetly infused in bitter tears. What will be stronger than you, if you accustom yourself to conquering the sirens while seeing and listening to them? Thus reason peacefully makes herself the queen of the senses, and refines herself."]

The reference to the sirens associates Rinaldo with Odysseus, even as it banishes Armida to the company of the predatory women who tempt passing adventurers with the promise of unparalleled sensory pleasures. The use to which Ubaldo puts this Odyssean exemplar owes less to the *Odyssey* than it does to the popular allegorical explanations of the Sirens, and it produces a more doggedly allegorical reading of Armida as a Siren while taking a less positive view of the Sirens than either Lemnius or Lombardelli allows. Lemnius does seem to understand the point of Circe's instructions to Odysseus: she tells him how to enjoy safely the otherwise irresistible pleasure of the Sirens' song. But in Ubaldo's reading as in Conti's, the Sirens represent not pleasures to be enjoyed only sparingly, but temptations to which one must become inured—or else to be avoided entirely. While Circe counsels Odysseus to lash himself to the mast of his ship so that he may safely enjoy the pleasure of hearing the Sirens' otherwise irresistible song, Ubaldo imagines the Sirens as a temptation of the senses that can be conquered by the exercise of reason—"exercise" in two senses, as Ubaldo advises Rinaldo to subject himself repeatedly to

---

[30] *GL* 16.41. This stanza does not appear in the second Bonnà edition of the poem, in whose publication Tasso was involved. He may have intended to cancel it. On the other hand, this reference is perhaps the moment in the poem that corresponds most closely with the "Allegoria del poema's" reading of Armida, quoted above, as a temptation of the appetites. The Mago d'Ascalona's two further references to Armida as a siren, at *GL* 17.60-61, continue this reading through Rinaldo's re-education and reintegration into the crusaders' army. If Tasso intended to delete the stanza, he nonetheless preserved Ubaldo's reading in both the poem and its allegory.

temptation in order to learn to overcome it more easily. Rinaldo himself accepts the invitation to behave in this allegorized Odyssean fashion as he responds to Armida's first, pitiful plea to accompany him back to the crusader camp as a war trophy. His claim to feel a continuing debt to Armida mingles elements of the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey*:

> Fra le care memorie ed onorate
> mi sarai ne le gioie e ne gli affanni,
> sarò tuo cavalier quanto concede
> la guerra d'Asia e con l'onor la fede.[31]
>
> [Among my dear and honored memories you shall be in joys and in sorrows; I will be your cavalier as much as the Asian war and faith allow with honor.]

The major pattern for this passage is Aeneas's assurance to Dido that "nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae, / dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus" [never will it grieve me to remember Dido, while remembering itself is left to me, while my spirit rules this body].[32] But in its offer of continuing service and indebtedness, Rinaldo's words echo Odysseus's graceful farewell to Nausikaa as he leaves Scheria for Ithaka and Penelope: "So even when I am there I will pray to you, as to a goddess, / all the days of my life. For, maiden, my life was your gift."[33] The continuing obligation, not just of memory, but of active service is shared by Odysseus and Rinaldo but omitted by Aeneas.

Armida picks up the Odyssean gloss to this predominantly Virgilian matter in her next speech, as she furiously hurls Rinaldo's bland courtesies back in his face. Basing her accusations on Dido's, she begins with a slur on Rinaldo's parentage, "Né te Sofia produsse" [Sophia did not bear you], that she models on Dido's cry, "nec tibi diva

---

[31] *GL* 16.54.5-8.

[32] Virgil, *Aeneid*, in *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 4.335-36. All quotations of the Latin are from this edition; translations are my own.

[33] *Od.* 467-68.

parens" [no goddess was your mother].[34] Rinaldo's mother, Sophia of Zaerengin, has been mentioned only once before in the poem, in the young warrior's introduction at *GL* 1.59.[35] That the well-informed Armida names her here, in place of the abstract state of divinity that Dido invokes, invokes as well the abstract quality that Sophia's name in fact signifies, wisdom—and the fact that the pun is on a Greek noun summons the presence of the Greek hero most prominently identified with wisdom, Odysseus. Armida denies Rinaldo's claim to be affiliated with his Greek rather than his Trojan predecessor, even as she strengthens that fleeting association.

Thus far, the Odyssean echoes have served primarily to reinforce the message conveyed by the allusions to the *Aeneid*; if the allusions to Dido and Aeneas suggest that Rinaldo's dalliance with Armida is both morally culpable in its own right and a dangerous diversion from his epic purpose, the allusions to the Sirens and Nausikaa confirm the latter impression.[36] The dual allusion in Rinaldo's departure, however, invites us to compare Rinaldo to both Aeneas and Odysseus—to see the operation of what Jonathan Goldberg has in a different context called "differential characterization," the delineation of a character through his differences from other characters of the same

---

[34] *GL* 16.57.1; *Aen.* 4.365. The dominant allusions in Armida's speech are to Latin verse; the stanza continues with an imitation of Dido's furious accusations against Aeneas, themselves an imitation of Ariadne's lament in Catullus 64.

[35] For Sophia's birthplace, see the notes to Caretti's edition, 31n59. Caretti treats her as if she were a historical personage; Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 91, discusses an accusation that Rinaldo was a fiction and Tasso's rather weak response to it as if he agreed with the charge against Tasso—in which case the choice of Rinaldo's mother's name would be Tasso's invention rather than a historical fact imposed on him, and its potential for wordplay therefore more significant.

[36] The dangers of this dalliance have been elaborated by many critics. On the episode's function as a second, negative pole in the poem's ethics, see A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (New York: Norton, 1966), 183-210, and James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 21; on the negative morality of romance digression in Tasso, see Zatti, *L'ombra del Tasso*, 13-14, 18-20.

type.[37] Rinaldo acquits himself with more honor than Aeneas in his departure from Dido (which is not saying much), but not as well as Odysseus in his farewell to Nausikaa. The Odyssean echoes thus perform a second and less expected role: they set a standard against which both Rinaldo and Aeneas can be judged. That judgment contains an implicit critique of Aeneas and his pitiless departure from Dido and thus, as Walter Stephens has detected in another set of layers of Virgilian and Homeric echoes, a critique of the epic ethos of the *Aeneid*.[38] In doing so, they suggest that the *Odyssey* provides a paradigm for the successful containment of romance in an epic. But they also suggest that the *Odyssey* provides a model for a successful pivot from romance to epic; they present an exemplary Odyssean poetics as well as an exemplary Odyssean ethics. If the *Aeneid* enacts the rejection of romance altogether, Tasso's use of Odyssean elements as the standard of comparison for Rinaldo's farewell to Armida as well as in their affair suggests that he sees in the *Odyssey* a demonstration of the successful subordination of romance to epic. If Ubaldo cites Odysseus in order to provide Rinaldo with an exemplar of moral steadfastness in the face of temptation, Tasso invokes Odysseus as an example of how to step out of the romance path without abandoning eros altogether, how to

---

[37] Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 7-8, argues that until the Red Crosse Knight marries Una and merges into unity, "the knight's identity—his singleness—is only the product of his relationship with, and differentiation from, others. Hence, throughout book I, the Red Crosse knight is set against the images of himself that populate the poem; images that he is at times mistaken for, just as he himself, from the start of his adventure, mistakes images, or just as Una comes clear only against the various forms of Duessa. Narration in book I is negotiated within these margins of difference, between deferred unity and seeming to be one...how he seems, what he is like, not who or what he is, are, from the first, how the Red Crosse knight is identified." Tasso's practice of creating characters through clusters of multiple allusions—a practice very much in evidence in Armida's lament in Canto 16—presents a diachronic version of this differential characterization.

[38] Walter Stephens, "Reading Tasso," 303, argues that in rewriting both Hector's plea that Achilles accept a ransom for his body and Turnus's submission to Aeneas, "Tasso indeed repudiates the end of the *Iliad* but he nonetheless chooses a Homeric ethos through which he subverts the more overt Vergilian ethos of his poem."

subordinate romance means to epic ends. The choice of Odysseus as an exemplar of the transition from romance to epic—a choice that allows for a more sophisticated incorporation of romance into epic than Ubaldo would allow—demonstrates that private pleasures can be kept in mind even as public duties are pursued.[39] Both this paradigm and its utility develop more fully in the poem's denouement, where its connection to the narrative of growth from adolescent narcissism to mature sexuality becomes evident.

As Rinaldo prepares to abandon Armida in Canto 16, she faints; when she wakes, Rinaldo has already fled. Incensed, she vows revenge and, like Medea, flies to the Muslim camp in her winged chariot. There, she offers herself as the prize for the knight who succeeds in killing Rinaldo. Although the narrative returns to her plots several times in Cantos 17-19, she and Rinaldo do not meet again until the poem's final canto, when Rinaldo rides past her chariot, which is surrounded by the contenders for her hand: "nobil guardia avea da ciascun lato / de' baroni seguaci e de gli amanti" [she had a noble guard of attendant barons and lovers on every side].[40] Although Rinaldo rides on, Armida does not let him pass. She shoots an arrow at him, which strikes him but fails to penetrate his armor; her suitors then attack, only for Armida to realize that they cannot compete with the Christian hero:

> Misera! e nulla aver degg'io speranza
> ne' cavalieri miei, ché veder parmi,
> anzi pur veggio, a la costui possanza
> tutte le forze frali e tutte l'armi.[41]

---

[39] Hampton, *Writing from History*, 101, demonstrates that Tasso repeatedly "thematize[s] the relationship between exemplarity and public action." The dual use of Odysseus as an exemplary figure for Rinaldo allows him to function at once as an image of how to return to public duty and an example of how to incorporate private desires into public imperatives.

[40] *GL* 20.61.3-4.

[41] *GL* 20.67.3-6.

> [Miserable one! and I should have no hope in my cavaliers, for I seem to see, or rather I do see, that all their strengths and all their arms are weak against his might.]

Rinaldo effortlessly slays Armida's suitors, knights who aspire to her hand but who are patently unworthy to be his military rivals. In doing so, he once again acquires a fleeting resemblance to Odysseus. Rinaldo acts out the part of Odysseus killing Penelope's suitors almost accidentally; the immediate context is an attack by a group of Muslim knights on a Christian enemy, and although Rinaldo has learned at 19.124-26 that Armida has offered herself as the reward for his death, he does not acknowledge the erotic implications of the combat against Armida's champions.[42] Indeed, he would have ridden by, declining to engage his rivals altogether, had Armida not opened hostilities. In this moment Tasso subordinates the erotic to the martial, the narcissistic to the communal; Armida is not a military target, and so Rinaldo (the Rinaldo who has returned from Armida's island chastened by his fall into narcissistic sexuality and rededicated to the crusaders' ethos of holy war and abnegation of earthly pleasures) declines to engage her champions until called upon to defend himself. But this brief engagement also demonstrates that martial and erotic goals can be conflated, that the erotic can be subsumed in the martial without being abandoned or wholly destroyed. Rinaldo does, purely incidentally, establish himself as Armida's rightful champion—the title he had already claimed for himself in canto 16—and vanquish the men who had temporarily supplanted him in that role, all while defending himself and accomplishing the worthwhile military objective of killing a number of formidable enemy knights. This turn of events suggests something that the Odyssean undertones of Armida's island have previously hinted: that the erotic discoveries of the idyll on Armida's island, though

[42] If Armida's challenge recalls the test of the bow that Penelope sets the suitors, the contest turns out very differently from the way she expects it to...or does it?

inappropriate as an exclusive focus during wartime, can be incorporated into a life dominated by public and military concerns. If Armida poses an ethical problem as Circe or as Nausikaa, she presents no such difficulty as Penelope. If the public good must come first during a time of public need, still private concerns need not be wholly divorced from those public objectives. Nor need the romance tradition, the marvels and digressions and love stories that decorate but do not advance the main plot of an epic, be entirely rejected. The *Odyssey* provides a model on which romance concerns can be incorporated into the epic narrative and romance wanderings given a happy ending through fusion with the epic plot.

In contriving a way to incorporate his romance plot into his epic and to finish its divagations by identifying their ending with that of the epic, Tasso intervenes in the endless sixteenth-century debates over the relationship of epic and romance and the relative merits of Aristotelian and Ariostan epic. Initially he pursues a more obvious but less satisfying strategy; he identifies romance digression with spiritual error and thus condemns the private indulgences of eros and the narrative indulgences of romance while still carving out a useful space for them in his poem. By putting romance to admonitory uses, Tasso can indulge in the pleasures of romance before banishing them from his work.[43] But the end of the poem reveals a second and more constructive strategy to integrate romance into the overall project of the epic.[44] Without rejecting the unity of plot demanded by neo-Aristotelian critics, he creates a positive role for romance in both the

---

[43] As many critics have noted, this appears most clearly when Rinaldo must slay the phantom Armida in the enchanted wood (*GL* 18.30-38). See Nohrnberg, *Analogy of the Faerie Queene*, 160; Roche, "Tasso's Enchanted Wood," 60-66;

[44] Tasso's transformation of the "boat of romance" into the boat of Fortune that enables Carlo and Ubaldo to fetch Rinaldo from Armida's island and return him to his epic duties has been read in a similar fashion, as a conversion of romance tropes to epic purposes. See Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 249-53; Zatti, *L'ombra del Tasso*, 21-22.

plot and the ethical project of his epic. Rinaldo's slaughter of Armida's suitors and his final reconciliation with her suggest that a part of warfare is preparing for what comes after war, for the forming of truces and new alliances and the return to private life in a peacetime civil society. In effect, Tasso fuses both the concerns and the action of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into a single poem, and he does so on a Homeric rather than a Virgilian plan. If Rinaldo fills Achilles' invincible-warrior role through most of the *Liberata*, he—unlike Achilles—survives the fighting in Jerusalem. If his initial transformation into an Odyssean figure caught in Armida's snares is unsanctioned and problematic within the poem's martial ethos, his return to Odyssean concerns and action as the poem projects a transition to postwar life is both appropriate and sanctioned by Homeric precedent. Canto 20 addresses the problems of the return to peacetime and civil society that Homer takes an entire epic to resolve; the disproportionate brevity of this Odyssean piece of the *Liberata* may account for the rushed quality of the reconciliation between Armida and Rinaldo that some critics have detected, but the movement from the Iliadic to the Odyssean sphere makes Rinaldo's renewal of his Odyssean pledge of continuing love with honor entirely appropriate. The integration of Odyssean elements into Rinaldo's farewell to Armida thus becomes important for the poem's resolution; unlike Aeneas's, Rinaldo's destiny is not solely public and does not involve renouncing eros altogether. The subtle critique of the Virgilian epic ethos in Canto 16 prepares the transition to the Odyssean landscape that takes place in Canto 20.

Rinaldo's final encounter with Armida enacts these strategies. As Rinaldo kills Armida's defenders, the Muslim leader Altamoro abandons his troops and rushes to save her at *GL* 20.69. His departure leaves his troops vulnerable to the attack that Rinaldo and

Goffredo mount, and the fighting that ensues proves to be the last battle of both the poem and the war. In its course, Rinaldo kills the last of Armida's defenders, and in doing so he appears to settle his obligations to the Christian forces and free himself to think of his personal interests once again:

> Allor si ferma a rimirar Rinaldo
> ove drizzi gli assalti, ove gli aiuti,
> e de' pagan non vede ordine saldo,
> ma gli stendardi lor tutti caduti.
> Qui pon fine a le morti, e in lui quel caldo
> disdegno marzial par che s'attuti.
> Placido è fatto, e gli si reca a mente
> la donna che fuggia sola e dolente.
> Ben rimirò la fuga; or da lui chiede
> pietà che n'abbia cura e cortesia,
> e gli sovien che si promise in fede
> suo cavalier quando da lei partia.
> Si drizza ov'ella fugge, ov'egli vede
> il piè del palafren segnar la via.
> Giunge ella intanto in chiusa opaca chiostra
> ch'a solitaria morte atta si mostra.[45]
>
> [Now Rinaldo stops to look where he should direct his assaults and his aid, and he does not see the pagan troops in good order, but all their standards fallen. Here he puts an end to killing, and that hot martial disdain seems to ebb in him. He becomes calm, and the lady who flees alone and sorrowing returns to his mind. He remembers her flight well; now pity asks him to care for her and to show her courtesy, and he remembers that he promised faithfully to be her cavalier when he left her island. He turns to where she fled, where he sees the hoofprints of her palfrey point the way. She arrives at the same moment in a dark, enclosed place, which appears suitable for a solitary death.]

The contrast between Rinaldo's and Altamoro's behavior is instructive: where circumstances allow Rinaldo to combine both private and public needs, Altamoro places illicit private desire (he is married) above public duty, leading to the destruction of his followers. Altamoro's timing and his marital status make his impulse to rescue Armida a culpable one, but his reaction resembles Rinaldo's more closely than we might expect. Once the battle has been fought—and for Rinaldo, that battle has largely consisted of, and has culminated in, the slaughter of Armida's suitors—Rinaldo's thoughts return immediately to Armida and to the service he owes her. Pockets of resistance persist on

---

[45] *GL* 20.121-22.

the battlefield; indeed, Goffredo must still defeat Altamoro. But Rinaldo's unique contribution to the war, his extraordinary heroism, is no longer required, and so it is appropriate that he should now look to peacetime obligations and pleasures. The slaughter of a number of enemy pretenders to a beloved woman's hand, followed immediately by a reconciliation with that woman, has only one epic precedent: the final books of the *Odyssey*. Tasso's use of the post-battle scenes of that post-war epic suggests that the encounter to come will be a crucial moment in the final resolution of his poem, a crucial element in the post-war return to peace and civil society.

Her suitors dead and her arms useless against Rinaldo, Armida has fled to the woods outside Jerusalem to commit suicide. Again Armida resembles Dido, and again Tasso uses Odyssean undertones to revise a Virgilian scene. Rinaldo discovers her just in time to prevent her; she faints, and he gathers her into his arms,

> e 'l bel volto e 'l bel seno a la meschina
> bagnò d'alcuna lagrima pietosa.
> Qual a pioggia d'argento e matutina
> si rabbellisce scolorita rosa,
> tal ella rivenendo alzò la china
> faccia, del non suo pianto or lagrimosa.[46]
>
> [and he bathed the lovely face and breast of the unhappy woman with pitiful tears. As at the silvery morning dew the faded rose refreshes itself, so she, reviving, lifted her face, damp with tears that were not hers.]

Tasso grants Rinaldo's tears an unexpected agency; the famous "Song of the Rose" in Canto 16 had warned listeners that "si rinfiora ella mai, né si rinverde" [the rose never flowers again, nor does it renew itself].[47] Rinaldo's tears have the power to reverse, or perhaps to transcend, the inevitable decay of youth into loss and sorrow that creates the *carpe diem* imperative of the Bower. Theses interlocked dynamics of renewal and

---

[46] *GL* 20.129.1-6.

[47] *GL* 16.15.4.

transcendence become more pronounced as the scene progresses. Armida fears that he has come to impose on her the servitude she once sought, but Rinaldo instead reiterates his offers of service:

> Per me stessa, crudel, spero sottrarmi
> a la tua feritade in alcun modo.
> E, s'a l'incatenata il tòsco e l'armi
> pur mancheranno e i precipizi e 'l nodo,
> veggio secure vie che tu vietarmi
> il morir non potresti, e 'l Ciel ne lodo.
> Cessa omai da' tuoi vezzi. Ah! par ch'ei finga:
> deh, come le speranze egre lusinga! —
> Cosí doleasi, e con le flebil onde,
> ch'amor e sdegno da' begli occhi stilla,
> l'affettuoso pianto egli confonde
> in cui pudica la pietà sfavilla;
> e con modi dolcissimi risponde:
> — Armida, il cor turbato omai tranquilla:
> non a gli scherni, al regno io ti riservo;
> nemico no, ma tuo campione e servo.
> Mira ne gli occhi miei, s'al dir non vuoi
> fede prestar, de la mia fede il zelo.
> Nel soglio, ove regnàr gli avoli tuoi,
> riporti giuro; ed oh piacesse al Cielo
> ch'a la tua mente alcun de' raggi suoi
> del paganesmo dissolvesse il velo,
> com'io farei che 'n Oriente alcuna
> non t'agguagliasse di regal fortuna. —
> Sí parla e prega, e i preghi bagna e scalda
> or di lagrime rare, or di sospiri;
> onde sí come suol nevosa falda
> dov'arda il sole o tepid'aura spiri,
> cosí l'ira che 'n lei parea sí salda
> solvesi e restan sol gli altri desiri.
> —Ecco l'ancilla tua; d'essa a tuo senno
> dispon, — gli disse — e le fia legge il cenno. —[48]

> ["Through my own actions, cruel one, I hope to remove myself from your cruelty in some way. And, even if a chained prisoner should lack poison and arms and precipices and the noose, I see certain ways to death that you cannot deny me, and that heaven will praise. Cease to practice your wiles. Ah! it seems that he pretends: oh, how hope flatters sorrows!" So she lamented, and with the languid waves that love and disdain let fall from her beautiful eyes, he melts in sympathetic tears in which chaste pity glows; and very softly he replies: "Armida, calm your troubled heart now: not to scorn, but to reign I preserve you; I am not your enemy, but your champion and servant. See in my eyes, if you do not wish to trust my speech, the sincere fervor of my faith. On the throne where your ancestors reigned I swear to place you once again; and oh! if it pleased heaven that some of its rays would dissolve the veil of paganism from your mind, how I would ensure that in the East no woman would equal you in regal fortune." So he speaks and prays, and

[48] *GL* 20.133-36.

> he bathes and warms his prayers now with a few tears, now with sighs; and thus, as the layer of snow on the ground melts where the sun shines or the warm breezes blow, so the anger that seemed in her so firm dissolves, and only her other desires remain. "Behold your handmaid; dispose of her at your will," she said, "and let your word be her law."]

Rinaldo and Armida's reunion, centered on and facilitated by the tears they inspire in each other, draws on elements of Odysseus and Penelope's reunion in *Odyssey* 23, the only real epic model for such a reunion. A potential Virgilian model does exist, but Tasso in this case relegates it to a secondary role behind the predominant Odyssean subtext. When Aeneas encounters the shade of Dido in the underworld in *Aeneid* 6, he finally sheds the tears he could not show her as he abandoned her for Italy in a confrontation that provides a major model for Rinaldo's departure from Armida's island in canto 16. But these tears come far too late for Dido, and far too late for Aeneas too. No reunion is possible between the living Aeneas and the dead Dido. Nor are reconciliation or forgiveness enabled by these tears, precisely because, in R. O. A. M. Lyne's perceptive analysis, Aeneas sheds them too late—too late to prevent Dido's suicide, too late to free himself from the Stoic sacrifice of personal feeling for the public good that he has willingly adopted.[49]

When Rinaldo weeps for Armida at *GL* 16.61, Armida has already fainted and cannot see his tears. Given a second chance, Rinaldo does not make Aeneas's mistake. His emotional reconciliation with Armida instead recalls the tears to which Odysseus and Penelope finally give way once Odysseus has established his identity:

> So he spoke, and her knees and the heart within her went slack
> as she recognized the clear proofs that Odysseus had given;
> but then she burst into tears and ran straight to him, throwing
> her arms around the neck of Odysseus, and kissed his head...
> She spoke, and still more roused in him the passion for weeping.
> He wept as he held his lovely wife, whose thoughts were virtuous.
> And as when the land appears welcome to men who are swimming,

[49] R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 171-79.

> after Poseidon has smashed their strong-built ship on the open
> seas, and only a few escape the gray water landward
> by swimming, with a thick scurf of salt coated upon them,
> and gladly they set foot on the shore, escaping the evil;
> so welcome was her husband to her as she looked upon him,
> and she could not let him go from the embrace of her white arms.[50]

Odysseus and Penelope seal the resumption of their marriage in their tears, their emotional response not only to Odysseus's homecoming after twenty years but to their mutual recognition of the success of Penelope's ruse to establish Odysseus's identity. Her cleverness in forcing from Odysseus a description of their marriage bed—and thus an irrefutable proof of his identity, delivered unawares—confirms her as the true partner of her clever husband, establishing the ὁ μοφροσύνη or "like-mindedness" that Odysseus himself identifies as the hallmark of the best marriages.[51] Thomas Greene has argued that these tears are themselves the epic telos of the *Odyssey* and of epic more generally, and that they fill the same function in the *Liberata*.[52] Rinaldo's tears revive Armida and catalyze a reconciliation between them; what is most important about these tears, as the difficult syntax of *GL* 20.134.1-4 suggests, is the fact that they participate in a positive feedback loop. Rinaldo's tears arise from Armida's tears because he is able to empathize with her; because they arise from shared emotion rather than from the narcissism of Canto 16, they become the sign of his sincerity ("Mira ne gli occhi miei, s'al dir non vuoi / fede prestar, de la mia fede il zelo" [See in my eyes, if you do not wish to trust my speech, the sincere fervor of my faith].)[53] Rinaldo's tears literally wash away Armida's

---

[50] *Od.* 23.205-8, 231-40.

[51] *Od.* 6.181.

[52] Thomas M. Greene, "The Natural Tears of Epic," in *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: The Poetics of Community*, ed. Margaret Beissinger, Jane Tylus, and Susanne Wofford (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 190-93, 201-2.

[53] David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven:

tears, and with them the doubts and anger she still harbors, leaving only the love and compassion that Rinaldo also feels for her. Because Armida feels and sees Rinaldo weeping, because her tears provoke answering tears of sympathy in him, she is able to trust his professions of devotion. It is precisely this reciprocal quality in their weeping that Tasso draws from Homer, and that reciprocity has deeper consequences for the relationship that it defines. Odysseus and Penelope's weeping is described by one of the famous "reverse similes" of the *Odyssey*, the similes that invert gender roles in comparing a particular woman's circumstances to a generally male experience or vice versa. The simile suggests that Penelope and Odysseus have suffered hardships of a similar degree and nature, and that their reunion represents a safe landfall for them both.[54] The tears that Rinaldo and Armida are able to shed for each other's sufferings suggest a similar parity in the pain of their duty-enforced separation and their participation in the final battle for Jerusalem. And by using Rinaldo and Armida's tears themselves as the sign equivalent to Odysseus and Penelope's bed, Tasso suggests that Rinaldo and Armida's love becomes its own pledge, complete in itself and needing no external sign or guarantee. Tasso leaves Armida and Rinaldo's status at the poem's end ambiguous, and the nature of their reunion has stirred much critical debate: does Rinaldo offer marriage? a resumption of their affair? chivalrous service? Does Armida convert to Christianity?[55]

Yale University Press, 1983), 115, describes these as "genuine tears and the sign of a new mutuality in their love."

[54] On the importance of the reverse similes, see Helene P. Foley, "'Reverse Similes' and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*," *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 7-26.

[55] Many critics have found the ending unsatisfactory or contrived: Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 208-10; Giovanni Getto, *Interpretazione del Tasso* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1967), 343; Del Giudice, "Armida: *Virgo Fingens*," 48; Others, including Gough, "Tasso's Enchantress," 548; Ramachandran, "Tasso's Petrarch;" Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 114-16; and Roche, "Tasso's Enchanted Wood," 72, argue from various premises that Tasso carefully prepares this ending. Walter Stephens, "Saint Paul among

The Odyssean echo creates the possibility that this is not to be a temporary reunion to be broken off in some future reprise of Canto 16, but a union of souls as well as bodies: a true marriage. This possibility reveals itself most clearly through the narrative of Rinaldo and Armida's emotional entanglement.

The foundation for their future relationship is the breakthrough in their emotional connection, their ability to grow into a mature and genuinely reciprocal relationship from their earlier adolescent narcissism. Their earlier encounters have been marked by narcissistic play with mirrors and reflections. Armida's *innamormento* includes a simile comparing her to Narcissus:

> Ma quando in lui fissò lo sguardo e vide
> come placido in vista egli respira,
> e ne' begli occhi un dolce atto che ride,
> benché sian chiusi (or che fia s'ei li gira?),
> pria s'arresta sospesa, e gli s'asside
> poscia vicina, e placar sente ogn'ira
> mentre il risguarda; e 'n su la vaga fronte
> pende omai sí che par Narciso al fonte.[56]
>
> [But when she fixed her gaze on him and saw how calm his face was as he breathes, and how a soft smile dances in his handsome eyes, although they were closed (what would happen if he opened them now?), first she stops herself, undecided, and she seats herself near him, and she feels all her anger calm itself as she looks at him; and now over his charming face she hangs as if she were Narcissus at the pool.]

The simile implies, of course, that this is not a true but a narcissistic love, though this narcissism does mark an advance from her previous inability to love at all; as later events will show, it is a necessary prelude to the extroverted love she will conceive for Rinaldo by the poem's end. When Carlo and Ubaldo stumble onto the young lovers in Armida's garden, however, their affair has reached the stage of full-blown narcissism on both sides:

---

the Amazons," in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989), 194-99, has it both ways, arguing that Armida's conversion and marriage to Rinaldo is meant to shock, but that that shock is carefully prepared by a set of "too obvious allusions" running throughout the poem.

[56] *GL* 14.66.

Dal fianco de l'amante (estranio arnese)
un cristallo pendea ludico e netto.
Sorse, e quel fra le mani a lui sospese
a i misteri d'Amor ministro eletto.
Con luci ella ridenti, ei con accese,
mirano in vari oggetti un solo oggetto:
ella del vetro a sé fa specchio, ed egli
gli occhi di lei sereni a sé fa spegli.
L'uno di servitú, l'altra d'impero
si gloria, ella in se stessa ed egli in lei.
— Volgi, — dicea — deh volgi — il cavaliero
— a me quegli occhi onde beata bèi,
ché son, se tu no 'l sai, ritratto vero
de le bellezze tue gli incendi miei;
la forma lor, la meraviglia a pieno
piú che il cristallo tuo mostra il mio seno.
Deh! poi che sdegni me, com'egli è vago
mirar tu almen potessi il proprio volto;
ché il guardo tuo, ch'altrove non è pago,
gioirebbe felice in sé rivolto.
Non può specchio ritrar sí dolce imago,
né in picciol vetro è un paradiso accolto:
specchio t'è degno il cielo, e ne le stelle
puoi riguardar le tue sembianze belle. —[57]

[From the lover's side (strange armor) hung a shining, spotless crystal. She rose, and he held it in his hands, chosen minister to the mysteries of Love. She with laughing eyes, and he with burning, saw in various objects a single object: she made a mirror of the glass for herself, and he made a mirror of her clear eyes. He glories in servitude, she in rule; she in herself and he in her. "Turn," he said, "oh turn," said the cavalier, "to me, blessed one, those eyes with which you bless, for my burning desires, if you do not know it, are the faithful portrait of your beauty; my heart shows that marvelous beauty more fully than your crystal does. Oh! since you scorn me, at least you could see how beautiful your own face is; for your gaze, which is repaid nowhere else, would rejoice in happiness when turned on itself. A mirror cannot reflect such a sweet image, nor is a paradise gathered in a little glass: the heavens are a worthy mirror for you, and in the stars you can gaze on your beautiful features."]

The narcissism of this scene, with Armida enraptured by her own reflection in a mirror and Rinaldo gazing at his reflection in her eyes, has often been noted.[58] Paradoxically, the object that will end both this narcissism and the idyll is another mirror: Ubaldo's adamantine shield, which shows Rinaldo the effete reflection that shames him into

[57] *GL* 16.20-22.

[58] See e.g. Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 202-6; Maggie Günsberg, "The Mirror Episode in Canto XVI of the *Gerusalemme liberata*," *The Italianist* 3 (1983): 30-46, who performs a Lacanian reading of the canto and its resolution in Canto 20; Luisa del Giudice, "Armida: *Virgo Fingens* (The Broken Mirror)," in *Western Gerusalem: University of California Studies on Tasso*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice (New York: Out of London, 1984), 44, who argues that "Armida's love is not reciprocated."

leaving Armida and returning to the Christian camp. Lynn Enterline describes this as an "enabling mirror," presumably in contrast to Armida's crystal mirror and her eyes;[59] where these objects of love, of the idyllic stasis of the garden, disable both Rinaldo's military valor and his extroverted instincts, the shield enables him to recover both his identity as a warrior and his sense of himself as part of a community. But the emasculated reflection that Rinaldo sees there will only inspire him not to see that sight again, to cut a better figure in future. Ubaldo does not cure Rinaldo's narcissism; rather, he uses it. Recently, Ayesha Ramachandran has suggested that Rinaldo's plea for Armida to see her beauty figuratively reflected in his eyes—that is, in her effect upon him—introduces a second, contradictory dynamic to this scene: a plea for reciprocity, for a genuinely mutual love that transcends the narcissism so apparent on the surface.[60] Not until Rinaldo and Armida reunite, however, will they successfully transform their relationship from the infatuation of adolescent narcissism to the reciprocity of mature love. The fact that they will do so together, in an encounter that resembles in important ways this scene in Canto 16, suggests that the romance idyll in Armida's garden has its uses. Given time, the reciprocity that Armida seems to have felt in her first encounter with Rinaldo and for which Rinaldo pleads even as he enjoys his present narcissism might well come to pass. She might grow from Nausikaan adolescence to Penelopean maturity.

If Armida's first sight of Rinaldo teaches her to love, their final reunion is a mutual exchange of gazes that transcends the narcissistic reflection of self for a

---

[59] Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 126, also notes that Armida's love for and loss of Rinaldo transforms her into "a Narcissus who must lose her reflection."

[60] Ayesha Ramachandran, "Tasso's Petrarch: The Lyric Means to Epic Ends," *Modern Language Notes* 122 (2007): 201-2.

extroverted emotional exchange of sympathy. Comparing the descriptions of Rinaldo and Armida's narcissistic embrace in Canto 16 and their final embrace in Canto 20 reveals both strong similarities and crucial differences. The "sdegno" [disdain] that Rinaldo accepts from Armida in Canto 16 reappears in Armida's tears in Canto 20, where it seems to be encompassed in the anger that Rinaldo's gentle words succeed in melting. Gazing into a lover's eyes, the step that Rinaldo asks Armida to take in Canto 16 in order to understand his love for her, finally succeeds in Canto 20, when that gaze—and the tears it produces in both lovers—becomes the proof of Rinaldo's love and honorable intentions. Those tears, as we have seen, possess an unexpected power to revive and refresh, suggesting that the sterile narcissistic gaze, lacking in any real contact or communication, has transformed into the tangible, nourishing means of mutual understanding. The reflexive verbs and constructions of Canto 16 disappear from Canto 20 together with Armida's anger, whose evaporation the only two reflexive verbs of the later passage depict. And the heavens play a very different role in each passage: in the former Rinaldo imagines them as the "specchio...degno," the worthy mirror, for Armida's beauty, while in the latter he imagines a Christian, active, transformative agent that will reveal to her a higher religious truth. The careful reworking of the language and conceits of the first passage in the second suggests that a genuine transformation takes place in Canto 20. A new and truer union is negotiated, one worthy of the Homeric couple on whose reunion it draws. In that negotiation, Armida—like Penelope—gets the last word; her consent simultaneously reestablishes their lapsed relationship and begins a new union.[61] Rinaldo

[61] Armida paraphrases Luke 1:38, rendered in the Vulgate as "Ecce ancilla Domini." Stephens, "Saint Paul among the Amazons," 194, argues that "Armida's words allusively declare her the 'body' of Rinaldo," accepting his offer of marriage; Cavallo, "Tasso's Armida," 97, notes that Armida more closely quotes Trissino's *Italia liberata dai goti*, in which Elpidia grants Belisardo the power to choose a husband for her

and Armida become at once the young couple that Odysseus and Penelope once were, the young couple that Nausikaa recalls, and the older Odysseus and Penelope, whose relationship will, as James Nohrnberg puts it, "develop in the aftermath of the *Iliad*."[62] Despite the submissive attitude Armida adopts in accepting Rinaldo's offer, their shared tears bode well for the future development of a true and loving partnership.

Rinaldo and Armida's final reunion is the only reconciliation between members of the Christian and Muslim camps that the poem envisions. Not even the combat between Tancredi and Clorinda, unacknowledged lovers from the Christian and Muslim armies respectively who fight each other to the death while unaware of each other's identity, achieves a similar reconciliation, for Clorinda turns out to have been born to a Christian mother and so never really to have been a member of the Muslim world at all. In any case, she dies immediately after the horrified Tancredi has baptized her; they achieve only a moment's recognition before death separates them. Goffredo magnanimously releases the Muslim leader Altamoro in a moment that invokes Turnus's final capitulation to Aeneas only to reject Aeneas's vengeful killing of his defeated enemy, but the poem does not depict a truce between the two leaders, nor a pact of alliance or friendship. Not only does Rinaldo renew his offers of service to Armida, she appears, with her quotation of Mary's words to the archangel Gabriel in Luke's account of the Annunciation, to accept conversion to Christianity as well. Rinaldo and Armida's narrative breaks off abruptly here, and the poem returns to Goffredo's final triumph over the Muslim leader Altamoro and the crusaders' entry into Jerusalem to worship at

---

with the words "Ecco la vostra ancella." Armida, Cavallo argues, revises Elpidia by choosing a husband for herself.

[62] Nohrnberg, *Analogy of* The Faerie Queene, 7.

Christ's empty tomb. Their story clearly suggests a future together for them, however, a peacetime future that has already begun to be realized. Reconciliation between religions (figured, in Tasso's Counter-Reformation poem, by the triumph of Christianity in Armida's apparent conversion) and between enemy fighters are both included in Rinaldo and Armida's union. So too are the more private, more personal reunions that must take place between any fighter separated from his home and his family, and the civic reintegration that must occur when men return from war: Rinaldo speaks, it would seem, of establishing Armida as his consort. Most simply and most importantly, this re-establishment of a fulfilling sexual and romantic partnership, a refounding that involves a deeper and more mutual emotional bond between partners, establishes an Odyssean telos for the poem's vision of life after war. The Odyssean heroic ending, envisioned in Odyssean terms, becomes the foundation for a post-war ethos.

II. Spenser: Odyssean Anxieties

When Spenser crafts Guyon's voyage to the Bower of Bliss as a mini-*Odyssey* in Book 2, canto 12, he does so using a somewhat oddly assorted collection of materials. Guyon and the Palmer's voyage owes much to Carlo and Ubaldo's journey to Armida's island in *Gerusalemme liberata* 15, and more to the allegories of Homer that were so popular in the Renaissance but that Lemnius in his translation and Lombardelli in his reading dip into only sparingly. Lemnius's edition of the *Odyssey* carefully segregates the allegorical material from the text of the poem, giving it pride of place at the head of the volume but not interweaving it with the text itself. Whether or not Tasso knew this volume, in the *Liberata* he reads the *Odyssey* in a similar fashion; he allows Ubaldo to

voice an exemplary allegorical reading of Armida and incorporates it into his *Allegoria del poema*, but the poem also calls into question the utility of that mode of reading and ultimately rejects it for a more complex intertextual relationship between his poem and Homer's. Spenser shows no such hesitation in adopting allegorical modes of reading the *Odyssey*. Nor does he share Tasso's confidence that the *Odyssey* offers a model for the aftermath of the heroic, martial quests of his knights. There are no marriages in the 1596 edition of the *Faerie Queene*, which erases the ecstatic union of Scudamour and Amoret that closes the 1590 edition. Redcrosse and Una are betrothed at the end of Book 1 but must defer the consummation of their marriage for six years; Guyon seems to have no matrimonial prospects; Britomart has not yet met Artegall in person at the close of Book 3 and will still not be married to him by the time she and Artegall leave the poem at the end of Book 5. The Odyssean moment to which *The Faerie Queene* returns repeatedly is the escape from Circe's enchantments: a moment of romantic disillusionment, of release from the twin bonds of eros and magic. The poem focuses again and again on that terrifying moment in which degradation is simultaneously escaped and realized; this recurring nightmare suggests a wholly negative, fearful view of the *Odyssey* as a locus of romance error—both poetic and ethical—and stasis. The destruction of Circean sites of romance enchantment and stasis by Guyon, the knight of Temperance, and Britomart, the knight of Chastity, make it difficult to see either knight as a figure of Odysseus, no matter how exemplary or allegorical. Odysseus's prudence allows him to enjoy safely the pleasures that Circe has to offer. Guyon responds to the Bower by destroying it in a violent outburst that many critics have struggled to encompass within the rubric of temperance; Britomart must first flee the Castle Joyeous, wounded, and then destroy the

enchantments of Busirane's palace as she rescues Amoret. In the climactic scene of each book, Spenser divides the roles of Odysseus between a victim of the enchantments of love and a knight who destroys those enchantments while remaining impervious to them. The pleasures of Odyssean eros cannot be temporarily abandoned for martial purposes and then resumed, as they can in Tasso's imagination, nor can they be integrated into the structure of Spenserian epic romance. Odyssean romance, for Spenser, is not a potential stepping stone but an obstacle. It has no place in the moralized epic of Book 2; the *Odyssey* can be recovered into Book 3 only when shorn of its errors and much of its eros.

Spenser was certainly capable of encountering Odysseus in Homer's original Greek. Educated at Merchant Taylors' from 1561-69 and at Cambridge from 1569-76, he would have followed throughout his educational career a curriculum that included Greek grammar and literature, as well as Greek philosophy, science, rhetoric, and history. Merchant Taylors' required Greek grammar from the fifth form onwards from its foundation in 1561. In this it was not unusual; the second half of the sixteenth century saw a surge in the provision for Greek teaching in English grammar schools.[63] Records of the curriculum during Spenser's time at the school do not survive, but other documents suggest that Homer was specifically included in the prescribed program for the Merchant Taylors' boys. William Haynes, headmaster from 1599-1624, included the first four books of the *Iliad* among the "construes" of classical authors he prepared for the use of

---

[63] The headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School was expected to be "learned, in good & cleane Latin l[ite]rature, &, also, in Greeke, yf such may be gotten"; statute quoted in H. B. Wilson, *The History of Merchant-Taylors' School, from Its Foundation to the Present Time* (London, 1812), 1:11. In this Merchant Taylors' emulated St Paul's School, which expected its headmaster to be proficient in Greek, "if such may be found," from its foundation in 1509; see M. L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 17. Other grammar schools explicitly mandating Greek as a part of their teaching included the cathedral schools of the new foundation (1541), Witton (1558), Rivington (1566), St Bees (1583), Hawkshead (1588), Harrow (1590), Durham (1593) and Heath (Halifax) (1600); see Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 25.

his pupils; as Haynes studied at Merchant Taylors' from 1564-71, his practice may reflect his own experience as a pupil.[64] Later still, the statutes of 1652 list the first two or more books of the *Iliad* among the works read in the sixth form.[65] We should, of course, be wary of trusting the grammar school curricula implicitly to provide an accurate picture of the education actually offered in those schools. As scholars of early modern education have pointed out, these curricula often reflect theory rather than practice, and the inclusion of Homer's name on a school list probably indicates only that students read a few books of the *Iliad*—and that perhaps with the help of a "construe" like Haynes' or one of the many facing-page Greek-Latin translations in circulation, or even (after 1598) with the help of Chapman's English translation.[66] However, one piece of evidence demonstrates that some Homer was in fact studied at Merchant Taylors' School during Spenser's time there. An account of the examinations set Merchant Taylors' boys for exhibitions at St. John's College, Oxford, on 10 June 1572, preserved in the guild's archives, records that

> Nowell began the examination by directing the lowest of that form to declare the sense and construction of a particular ode of Horace; "which, from one to another, he prosecuted throughe the whole nomber, untill the captayn, requiringe diversytie of phrases and varietie of wordes and fynally obmyttinge nothinge which might seme neadfull for the tryall of their lerninge in the Latyn tongue." After him Watts examined the same boys in Homer, as to their skill in Greek, which was his favourite language. And then Horne tried them in the Hebrew psalter.[67]

---

[64] William Haine [Haynes], *Certaine Epistles of Tvlly Verbally Translated* (London: 1611), G7^{v}. For Haynes' career at Merchant Taylors' School, see T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1944), 1:400-401.

[65] Clarke, *Classical Education*, 18, lists Norwich, Rivington, Bangor, and Shrewsbury as other grammar schools prescribing Homer for the curriculum—a wide range in both geography and pedagogical tradition.

[66] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), assemble much evidence for humanist educational practice in Italy to demonstrate the gulf between theory and practice and the dangers of assuming that ambitious curricula were realized in the classroom.

[67] Quoted in Wilson, *History of Merchant-Taylors' School*, 1:39.

The account demonstrates two things: three years after Spenser left the school, Merchant Taylors' boys were capable of passing examinations that required them to construe and translate Homeric Greek, and St. John's expected its entering scholars to be competent to do so. Spenser almost certainly studied Homer in school, and that Homer was quite likely to have been the beginning of the *Iliad.*

Although historians of early modern education suggest that the universities had relatively little to add to the foundation in Greek acquired in the grammar schools, Cambridge required all candidates for the M.A. degree to complete three years of lectures in Greek literature and learning. The Edwardian statutes that named Homer, Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Euripides as authors on whom the university professor of Greek should lecture remained in force throughout Elizabeth's reign and thus governed Spenser's time there.[68] In addition, the Royal Injunction of 1535, which mandated that each college should offer daily lectures in Latin and Greek, appears to have shaped the design of college curricula through at least the 1560s.[69] Pembroke Hall, Spenser's college, is singled out by Arthur Tilley as one of the colleges in which "Greek studies obtained a footing."[70] Tilley's comment applies to an earlier era, and Gordon Teskey claims that "Greek studies in Cambridge were at their lowest while Spenser was there," but Spenser's close friend Gabriel Harvey's presence as a fellow of Pembroke Hall

---

[68] Clarke, *Classical Education*, 31. The statutes did allow the professor to lecture on another author if he so chose, but the existence of a short list of stipulated authors suggests that these authors' works formed the core of the Greek canon for the sixteenth century.

[69] Clarke, *Classical Education*, 32-33. This does not mean that all students had to attend those lectures, merely that they had to be available.

[70] Arthur Tilley, "Greek Studies in Cambridge in Early Sixteenth-Century England II," *English Historical Studies* 53 (1938): 443.

probably helped Spenser to acquire the facility in Greek for which he was later noted.[71] Spenser almost certainly read some Homer in Greek at some point in his education, and Tania Demetriou has recently demonstrated that at least one simile in the *Faerie Queene* indicates Spenser's familiarity with the original Greek text of the *Odyssey*.[72] Early records from Spenser's grammar school offer insight into the nature of that text and the paratexts likely to have surrounded it, both for Spenser and for his readers.

In 1599, thirty years after the young Spenser left Merchant Taylors' School for Pembroke College, Cambridge, an inventory of the schoolhouse contents was taken. Among the items listed was a catalogue of books given by a Mr. Henley and by his executor, and among the books in that catalogue were three of particular interest to a reader of Homer: Natale Conti's *Mythologiae* and two reference works compiled by Johannes Ravisius Textor, the *Epitheta* and the *Officina*. Both of Textor's works went through many editions in the sixteenth century, and both were repeatedly revised and added to over the course of the century. Their popularity among the boys of Merchant Taylors' apparently matched their popularity among the general reading public; the catalogue describes each as "all rent."[73] T. W. Baldwin states that the *Mythologiae* was probably added to the library after 1590, and there is no firm evidence that Merchant Taylors' library owned any of these books while Spenser was a student at the school; the 1599 inventory is the earliest evidence for the library's contents that exists, and it records

---

[71] Gordon Teskey, "Homer," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 375.

[72] Tania Demetriou, "'Essentially Circe': Spenser, Homer, and the Homeric Tradition," *Translation and Literature* 15 (2006): 151-76.

[73] R. T. D. Sayle, "Annals of Merchant Taylors' School Library," *The Library* 4th series vol. 15 (1935): 459.

only the gifts of one donor, not the library's holdings.[74] The earliest complete library catalogue to survive dates from 1662, one hundred and one years after the school's foundation. Of the 125 books it records, forty-two were published before 1600. These include four sixteenth-century editions of Homer, three of which were printed before Spenser left Merchant Taylors': an edition prepared by the English scholar and reformer Laurence Humphrey and printed by the Froben press (Basel, 1558), a Froben edition containing the complete commentary of Eustathius (Basel, 1560), Henri Estienne [Stephanus]'s anthology of heroic Greek poetry including the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Paris, 1566), and an edition printed by Eusebius Bischoff with copious commentary by the French Huguenot Jean de Sponde (Basel, 1583).[75] The catalogue does not prove that Spenser read his Homer in any or all of these editions, nor is it easy to imagine the beginning Greek students poring over the extremely copious Greek-language commentary of Eustathius. Nevertheless, the library catalogue does provide evidence of the editions sought out by schools, universities, and educated men. Even if Merchant Taylors' acquired them well after their publication, they would have had to have been bought from somewhere, most likely from an English source. The two book lists provide evidence, if not for Spenser's personal reading, for the reading habits of his audience.

Of this collection of texts, the two that correspond most closely to Spenser's practice in his treatment of the *Odyssey* are Conti's *Mythologiae* and Humphrey's edition of Homer. Spenser's use of Conti and other allegorical readings is well known, but Humphrey's edition has not been examined with Spenser in mind. Published in Basel in 1558, the volume contains the complete Greek text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* together

---

[74] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, 1:422.

[75] Sayle, "Annals of Merchant Taylors' School Library," 464-67.

with selections from the commentary of the twelfth-century Byzantine archbishop Eustathius of Thessalonika. The only Latin-language text in the volume is the preface by Laurence Humphrey, an English classicist and sometime fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. When Mary ascended the throne, he fled first to Zurich and then to Basel, where he supported himself by working for Hieronymus Froben and Froben's fellow printer of classical texts, Johann Oporin. Humphrey returned to England and to Magdalen College shortly after Elizabeth's accession, where he quickly became a prominent figure as both a classical scholar and a reformer. As President of Magdalen College and (from 1571-76) vice-chancellor of Oxford, he turned Magdalen into a center for both classical studies and advanced Protestant thought; as a prominent nonconformist preacher, he played a leading role in the controversy over clerical vestments, one of the first major battles in the efforts to advance reform in the Elizabethan church. Eventually, and without wholly abandoning his radical stance, he was accepted into the ecclesiastical establishment, becoming dean first of Gloucester and then of Winchester cathedrals.[76] Either or both of his classical erudition and his religious radicalism may have recommended his text to Spenser and his fellow Protestant readers. Its epistle, addressed to the scholars of Magdalen College, suggests that this edition was intended at least in part for the English market; its presence in Merchant Taylors' library indicates that it had an English audience—although quite an erudite one, given that both text and commentary are in Greek only. Indeed, Humphrey's Latin prefatory epistle would have been the most easily accessible part of the volume. That epistle concludes with an exhortation to his readership to approach the text in a certain way:

---

[76] Thomas S. Freeman, "Humphrey, Laurence," in *Dictionary of National Biography*, 2nd ed.

> Hic nectar Deoru[m], hic domus Alcinoi pulcherrima Vulcani arte extructa. hic horti Alcinoi in quo pirus piro succedit, pomaq[ue] pomis, oleæq[ue] uire[n]t, quaru[m] fructus nu[m]q[eu] perit, nec hyeme deficit nec æstate. Hic Moly flore lacteo, radice nigra, Hic Nepe[n]the, maloru[m] leuamentu[m] & uitioru[m] expultrix. C[a]eteru[m] ut ad Homeri[m] uoco, ita ad exe[m]plar Vlyssis extimulo, ne sint hic nimiu[m] lwtofa/goi. Intelliga[n]t Christu[m] ut legis, ita studioru[m] omniu[m] fine[m]. cauea[n]t scopulos Sireneos, caueant Scilla[m] & Charybdim, cauea[n]t ne Circeis poculis ex Christianis in prophanos uertant[ur]. Quod sit, du[m] nimiu[m] ibi hære[n]t & habita[n]t, ubi circu[m]equitare tantu[m] cu[m] Vlysse & perlustrare ac peregrinari oportuit: polla\ paqo/ntej h=i? polla\ maqo/ntej, meminerit esse domu[m] cu[m] Vlysse redeundu[m], ut ibi cu[m] Laerte sene Vlyssis patre, socia[n]t, agru[m]q[ue] Domini cola[n]t.[77]
>
> [Here is the nectar of the gods, here the most beautiful house of Alkinoös constructed by the art of Hephaistos. Here are the gardens of Alkinoös in which pear tree follows pear tree, fruit follows fruit, and olive trees flourish, whose fruit never withers, lacking neither in winter nor in summer. Here is Moly with its milky flower and black root; here Nepenthe, consolation of evils and expeller of vices. For the rest, while I call on Homer, nevertheless I urge to the exemplar of Odysseus, that they may not be lotus-eaters beyond measure here. Let them understand Christ, the end both of the law and of all studies. Let them beware the promontories of the Sirens, let them beware Skylla and Charybdis, let them beware lest they be changed with the potions of Circe from Christians into pagans. That should be, so long as they do not linger and remain too much there, where to ride around so much with Odysseus it was necessary to traverse completely and to travel: *we are suffering much to what end? we are learning much*, he will have remembered to be returned home with Odysseus, that there they may join Laertes, the old father of Odysseus, and cultivate the field of God.]

Humphrey approaches the *Odyssey* through the techniques of allegory. In this he is somewhat unusual for a Protestant reader. Jean de Sponde, whose 1583 edition with commentary also appears in the Merchant Taylors' library catalogue, allows his Huguenot background to shape his reading of Homer but resists the temptation to allegorize; Henri Estienne similarly excludes allegorical interpretation in his collection of Greek poetry, another volume among the library's holdings.[78] Humphrey assumes that his allegorical reading is so familiar to his audience that he does not need to supply referents; his reader will know what perils lurk under the names of the Sirens and of Skylla and

---

[77] Homer, *Copiae Cornv sive Oceanvs enarrationvm Homericarvm, ex Evstathii in eundem commentarijs concinnatarum, Hadriano Iunio autore* (Basel: Froben, 1558), α1^{v}.

[78] Ford, *De Troie à Ithaque*, 116, notes that Humphrey's preference for allegorical readings distinguishes him from some of his Protestant colleagues. Sponde, raised a Protestant and educated in a Huguenot college, converted to Catholicism some time after he composed his extensive commentary on Homer; as he is best known for his Catholic devotional sonnets, his inclusion among Protestant readers in this context may be surprising but is correct.

Charybdis. His mention of Circe likewise draws on Protestant polemics that condemned the chalice of the Catholic mass as Circe's cup.[79] Spenser, like Humphrey, sees in the possibility of dalliance with Circe a fall from grace, a turn away from the true church that once made cannot be undone without the help of an external agent.

This reading also finds its way into Geffrey Whitney's emblem "Homines voluptatibus transformantur" [Men are transformed by pleasure] in his 1586 emblem book, *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devises*. Whitney exhorts his readers to learn a lesson from Circe's victims:

> See here Vlisses men, transformed straunge to heare:
> Some had the shape of Goates, and Hogges, some Apes, and Asses weare.
> Who, when they might haue had their former shape againe,
> They did refuse, and rather wish'd, still brutishe to remaine.
> Which showes those foolishe sorte, whome wicked loue dothe thrall,
> Like brutishe beastes do passe theire time, and haue no sence at all.
> And thoughe that wisedome woulde, they shoulde againe retire,
> Yet, they had rather Circes serue, and burne in theire desire.
> Then, loue the onelie crosse, that clogges the worlde with care,
> Oh stoppe your eares, and shutte your eies, of Circes cuppes beware.[80]

Whitney too sees in Circe a threat to religious faith and an explicitly religious remedy for that threat. To clog, in Whitney's usage, is to fetter, encumber, or hamper. The sacrificial love of Christ and the divine grace extended to humanity through him, figured in Whitney's "onelie crosse," block worldly temptations with "care"—perhaps intended to suggest an anglicization of the *caritas* or loving charity associated with Christ and meant for humans to emulate. Whitney, like the Protestant polemicists mentioned above, emphasizes faith in divine grace—not the sacraments or good works—as the correct protection against the snares of the world. And Whitney, like Tasso's Ubaldo, conflates the temptations of Circe and the Sirens: although the image that accompanies this verse is

---

[79] See Nohrnberg, *Analogy of* The Faerie Queene, 711-12, 244-45n372.

[80] Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes*, 82.

of Circe tapping animals with her wand and the verse describes those transformations, the final line warns its readers not only to beware Circe's cups but to stop their ears and to shut their eyes—useless against Circe's magic, but the correct defense against the songs of the Sirens. Whitney rolls all the temptations of the appetites figured severally by Circe and the Sirens into one, against which he proposes one remedy: the love of God. Like Humphrey and Whitney, Spenser applies a radically Protestant sensibility to his reading of the conjunction of epic and romance. The religious implications of his reading control his revision of Tasso in his handling of these Odyssean events; Spenser's Protestantism produces a very different understanding of the *Odyssey* from Tasso's Catholicism.

As Guyon journeys towards the Bower of Bliss, his journey retraces those of both Carlo and Ubaldo and, in heavily allegorized form, Odysseus himself. When Guyon arrives on Acrasia's island, he encounters Verdant asleep in Acrasia's lap in a tableau that strongly recalls Rinaldo in Armida's lap in *Gerusalemme liberata* 16. But while the Odyssean echoes of Rinaldo's original voyage to Armida's side, his departure, and his final reunion with Armida all allow us to see both Rinaldo and Ubaldo as figures of Odysseus, Spenser never presents us with more than one figure of Odysseus. Guyon remains in the role of Odysseus, mediated through Ubaldo, and Spenser never allows Verdant to resemble Odysseus in any way. Indeed, Spenser never gives Verdant a voice or focalizes the narrative through him, ensuring that he will remain a faceless victim of Acrasia's intemperate excesses. Spenser limits Guyon's Odyssean role to that of the rescuer of his transformed men and does not imagine for him a dalliance with Acrasia; he thus insulates Guyon from any hint of Odyssean sensuality, excess, or delay. This choice aligns Guyon more closely with the intensely boring Odysseus that emerges from the

allegorical readings—an Odysseus who effortlessly resists every temptation he encounters in such a way as to demonstrate the perfection of human reason—and it renders impossible the integration of romance into *The Faerie Queene*'s book of epic. Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Bliss replaces Armida's destruction of her own palace and her flight to join the final battle for Jerusalem on the Muslim side. Guyon therefore strips *his* Circean temptress not only of her agency, but of the possibility of reintegration into the narrative. There will be, and there can be, no redemption for Acrasia. Spenser rejects Tasso's solution to the potential difficulty of reintegrating romance and epic. In doing so, he aligns Book 2 specifically with what Theresa Krier has called "moralized epic," the fusion into a single work of a classical epic and its moralizing, allegorizing commentary.[81]

Both this rejection and its stakes become most clear in a moment in which Spenser literally rewrites Tasso: his close translation of the famous "Song of the Rose," sung by a parrot in Armida's garden on her enchanted island. The parrot's two-stanza song concludes with a call to love:

> Cosí trapassa al trapassar d'un giorno
> de la vita mortale il fiore e 'l verde
> né perché faccia indietro april ritorno,
> si rinfiora ella mai, né si rinverde.
> Cogliam la rosa in su 'l mattino adorno
> di questo dí, che tosto il seren perde;
> cogliam d'amor la rosa: amiamo or quando
> esser si puote riamato amando.—[82]
>
> ["So passes in the passing of a day of mortal life the flower and the green; nor because April returns will she ever flower again, or renew herself. Let us gather the rose in the radiant morning of this day, which soon fades to evening; let us gather the rose of love: let us love now, when we can, loving, be loved in return."]

---

[81] Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights*, 68-70, emphasizes the inseparability of the "moral-allegorical interpretative tradition" from the texts of Homer and Virgil themselves in Book 2's use of the epic tradition.

[82] *GL* 16.14-15.

The image of the ephemeral beauty of the rose traditionally carries a *carpe diem* message, but in the last lines of the "Song of the Rose" this topos recedes to the background. Tasso emphasizes instead the mutuality of love, the miraculous discovery that one's love is reciprocated; and if the first fourteen lines suggest that the rose's (or damsel's, or knight's) fragile beauty contributes much to her desirability, the last couplet shifts the focus of the song. No longer an invitation to profit from her youth, the lines become a plea not to reject love offered freely. "Riamato amando"—literally "reloved loving"—closes both the stanza and the song; the words double and redouble the idea of offering love, while they and their placement in the verse emphasize the reciprocity of love as the key element of relationships on Armida's island. As Ayesha Ramachandran has demonstrated, Rinaldo's discovery of this reciprocity plays a crucial role in his development into an epic hero. Through his romance interlude with Armida, Rinaldo learns to locate his desires outside himself. Though the spaces of romance must be left behind for this epic destiny to be fulfilled, their lessons remain.[83] Tasso's moral system not only excuses transgressions against its cardinal virtues and epic telos, it endows these lapses with an important and even necessary didactic function. Maturation into the embodiment of epic and communal values demands a descent into their opposite. This didactic process offers a third strategy for the rehabilitation of the role of romance within epic. Although the recovery of romance happens primarily through the Odyssean narrative that Rinaldo and Armida follow, the "Song of the Rose" epitomizes that process of recovery.

Spenser also uses his "Song of the Rose" as a microcosm of his poem's space of

[83] Ramachandran, "Tasso's Petrarch," 548.

romance, but in doing so he sharply distinguishes that space from Tasso's. Spenser's translation closely follows Tasso's original for the first sixteen of its eighteen lines, but it concludes with a striking revision of Tasso:

> So passeth, in the passing of a day,
> Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre,
> Ne more doth florish after first decay,
> That earst was sought to deck both bed and bowre,
> Of many a Lady', and many a Paramowre:
> Gather therefore the Rose, whilest yet is prime,
> For soone comes age, that will her pride deflowre:
> Gather the Rose of loue, whilest yet is time,
> Whilest louing thou mayst loued be with equall crime.[84]

Spenser replaces Tasso's final couplet with two lines that heavily revise Tasso's. The notion of mutual love is subsumed into the notion of mutual guilt; love is a crime, and equality of love leads only to equality of sin. This note of transgression is entirely absent from Tasso's song, as it should be; since love on Armida's island teaches the notions of reciprocity and common purpose, which can then be turned to epic ends, a wholesale condemnation of love would undo not only the island's own ethos but its *raison d'être* within both the poem's plot and its moral and poetic project. Spenser offers precisely the condemnation that Tasso cannot afford to make. In doing so, he offers a correction to Tasso's vision of romance. If Tasso suggests that romance can be a didactic, positive force within an epic poem, Spenser rejects this suggestion. His rejection stems from the religious implications of education through romance: education through a fall, through what Spenser reads as a conscious turn away from a given virtue into its opposing vice. For the Catholic Tasso, the acknowledgement of guilt and repentance are a necessary part of spiritual growth; for the Protestant Spenser, error has no spiritual value. The doctrinal allegiances of the Homeric editions with the strongest connections to the two poets thus

---

[84] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2001), 2.12.74-75. All quotations are from this edition, hereafter abbreviated *FQ*.

bleed into their readings of the *Odyssey*; whether or not either poet knew the editions, the convergences suggest that religion played a key role in choosing interpretations of the *Odyssey*. Spenser demands that his knights keep their moral goals always in view; though he distinguishes between ignorant error and conscious crime, a fault committed with *mens rea* is irreparable. Knights do err in the *Faerie Queene* due to incomplete possession of the virtue they represent, but no knight consciously rejects the virtue he or she champions in order to experiment with its complementary vice, let alone in order to refine that virtue.[85] Guyon could no more acquire temperance by running amok in the Cave of Mammon than Britomart could perfect her chastity by joining the party at the Castle Joyeous.

The poem projects no didactic or positive end to which the Bower of Bliss can be turned, no future for Acrasia in the arms of a rehabilitated Verdant. On the contrary, the notion of "equall crime" implies that the knight who consciously turns away from his epic quest is every bit as guilty as she who lures him from it. This equation carries devastating moral implications, implications that are made explicit through Spenser's drastic revision of Armida's fate in Acrasia. Tasso grants Armida a lament in which she turns herself into an object of sympathy and moral stature, and he finally integrates Armida into his victorious Christian social order. Spenser, on the other hand, denies Acrasia not only a lament and a future but any speech at all. She is merely an object, a

---

[85] Lewis H. Miller, "Phaedria, Mammon, and Sir Guyon's Education by Error," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 63 (1964), 38, argues that holiness is achieved through divine grace, while temperance is acquired through constant practice; Red Crosse can therefore fall and repent completely and be forgiven, while Guyon must minimize his errors. Peter D. Stambler, "The Development of Guyon's Christian Temperance," *English Literary Renaissance* 7 (1977): 64-65, argues that Guyon's encounter with Phaedria represents a serious failure on his part because an attempt to find a median path between sin and virtue is always in error; as evidence he quotes Matthew 6.24 on the impossibility of serving both God and Mammon.

figure of vice and temptation, and her only function in the poem is a negative one: to lure knights into error. She represents a dead end, a choice from which nothing at all is to be gained. But if hers is guilt of the purest kind, Spenser cautions through his insistence on "equall crime," Verdant's decision to enter the Bower of Bliss and sample its temptations is no less culpable and no more reparable. If any good comes of the "counsell sage" the Palmer offers Verdant, the poem does not include it. The beasts continue to "unmanly looke" even after their restoration to human form, and the book closes on the image of Grylle, clinging stubbornly and irretrievably to his "hoggish minde."[86] Plutarch's Grylle may be an exception; Spenser's Grylle sums up the book's unsatisfactory attempt to eradicate the pleasures of romance. The Bower may be destroyed, but the taste for romance pleasures remains. Neither the mode of romance nor the men who embrace its values is redeemed within the scope of Book 2.

This negative vision of romance expresses itself most explicitly in the "Song of the Rose" through the different implications of the lyric and romance modes themselves. If the motion of romance is recursive, a series of aimless wanderings that cover the same basic ground, lyric presents no motion at all. It is suspended, static, incapable of any self-generated impulse. Spenser's "Song of the Rose" condenses romance and lyric topoi into a single unit, expressed in lyric guise. In doing so, it rejects Tasso's argument that the circularity of romance can be converted into the teleological motion of an epic purpose, as it is by Odysseus and by Rinaldo. Instead, it identifies the garden whose motto it becomes with the lyric stasis of Petrarch and his followers—a stasis which can only be escaped through total rejection and rupture, not only of the obsessions of the lyric world,

---

[86] *FQ* 2.12.82.9, 86.3, 87.8.

but of the object of love that creates the lyric impulse.[87] Spenser's alignment of the romance mode with lyric values, as much as Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Bliss, signals his condemnation of the romance idyll. He rejects it utterly as incompatible with the values of epic: the epic teleology of Book 2 *is* the destruction of the Bower of Bliss, of the space carved out in the poem for the pleasures and temptations of romance and lyric. From this rejection stems Spenser's silencing of Acrasia, his refusal to grant her a lament similar to Armida's; there can be no sympathy for the obstacles to the knight's quest, no regret for the alternatives left behind by the epic teleology. In Spenser's moralized epic, neither the error nor the eros of romance has any place.

If Guyon arrives at the Bower of Bliss after a voyage located in the allegorical tradition of an Odyssean voyage of temperate knowledge and wisdom, his destruction of the Bower resonates with another strand of these readings of the voyages of Odysseus. In the passage quoted above, Humphrey assumes that Circe presents a black-and-white moral problem with no shades of grey: drink the potion and fall, or resist and conquer. In this—as well as in the religious tint he lends the problem—his reading resembles that of Conti, who interprets Hermes' appearance as a sign of the need for divine grace in a fallen world:

> At vero non sufficere vires humanas ad superanda pericula, vel titillationes voluptatum, ad quas obstupescit humanum ingenium, facile monere potest Mercurii munus, quod datum est Vlyssi aduersus omnia veneficia. Cur inter suauissimos Sirenum cantus, vel aures obturari, vel ad malum alligari conuenit? quia aduersus illegitimarum vuluptatum illecebras vel surdos esse, vel rationi firmissime alligatum obtemperare omnino opus est.[88]
>
> [Truly human forces do not suffice to overcome dangers, or the temptations of pleasure, before which human nature is paralyzed; the gift of Hermes that is given to Odysseus, the

[87] On lyric in the Bower of Bliss, see Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987), 54-66.

[88] Conti, *Mythologiae*, 964.

> antidote to every poison, can easily teach. Why is it suitable among the sweetest songs of the Sirens, either for the ears to be stopped, or to be bound to the mast? Because against the attractions of illicit pleasures it is most necessary either to be deaf, or to obey reason bound most steadfastly.]

Conti's allegory emphasizes the need to avoid the temptations of illicit pleasures entirely; reason cannot be temporarily set aside and recovered later. In this he contradicts an earlier passage in Humphrey's preface, which praises Odysseus's ability to have his cake and eat it too; Odysseus enjoys pleasures more when they have passed than when they present themselves to him, and he never loses sight of his central goal of a return to Ithaka.[89] The tension surrounding Odysseus's willing year-long stay on Circe's island is clear; allegorizing or not, the sixteenth-century readings whose traces appear in *The Faerie Queene* do not know what to make of Homer's willingness to let his hero take such a long vacation from his journey home. Kalypso, who by the time Homer actually brings her into the poem is clearly detaining Odysseus against his will, is easier to handle. Aiaia becomes a locus of greater danger precisely because Odysseus is not eager to leave. The difficulties of fitting this space into a moral scheme for the *Odyssey* may be one reason why Spenser has Guyon destroy it entirely.[90] It is dangerous enough to be the climax of his most epic adventure, but too slippery of interpretation to leave it to exercise its power over the poem. The allegorical readings of the *Odyssey* struggle to contain the challenges this episode poses to their image of a wholly moralized and wholly virtuous Odysseus; *The Faerie Queene* cuts this Gordian knot.

---

[89] Homer, *Copiae cornv*, *2[r].

[90] Armida destroys her garden, but she does so as she travels to Jerusalem to pursue her revenge against Rinaldo; this journey brings about her reunion with Rinaldo. Armida's destruction of her garden erases the space in which her narcissistic love for Rinaldo unfolds and symbolizes the end of the narcissistic phase of her love for Rinaldo. Spenser envisions no such growth for either Acrasia, Verdant, or Guyon, and he depicts the destruction of the Bower as the climax of his moralized epic.

However, this reading contains the seeds of its own de(con)struction. The nature and degree of the temperance Guyon represents or acquires by the book's end have long been a matter of critical debate, and the destruction of the Bower a key exhibit for any case made.[91] Many of these critics have argued that the poem creates an opposition between classical and Christian values and asserts the superiority of Christian temperance over the course of the book; most have detected some manner of assault on classical temperance, or classical epic, or both. Lauren Silberman has persuasively argued that Spenser uses Guyon's destruction of the Bower to undermine classical temperance as a virtue by revealing it to be a purely defensive response to the world and its temptations. Temperance, according to Silberman, fails because it is too mechanical an operation to account for the complexities of the world and of human experience.[92] Given that the invocation to the *Odyssey* famously focuses on the experience Odysseus gains on his travels, Silberman's insight produces an attractive alternative reading of Guyon's destruction of the Bower. Following Silberman, Ellen Lamb, and Harry Berger, we might attempt to salvage something of the classical epic ethos for *The Faerie Queene* by

---

[91] See Berger, *The Allegorical Temper*; Stambler, "Development of Guyon's Christian Temperance," 51-89, who argues that Guyon progresses from Aristotelian temperance to Christian virtue, which is necessarily intolerant of and therefore intemperate toward error; Lynnette Black, "Prudence in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*," *Spenser Studies* 13 (1999): 65-88, who identifies Guyon's temperance with classical ideas of prudence and reason but does not connect them to the classical figure most closely aligned with prudence, Odysseus; Helen Cooney, "Guyon and His Palmer: Spenser's Emblem of Temperance," *The Review of English Studies* N.S. 51 (2000): 169-92, who similarly conflates prudence with temperance and with the reading of *The Faerie Queene*; Paul Suttie, "Moral Ambivalence in the Legend of Temperance," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 125-33, who argues that the book pits Christian restraint against a chivalric ethos of martial valor and explores the difficulties of charting a middle way between them; and Christine Coch, "The Trials of Art: Testing Temperance in the Bower of Bliss and Diana's Grove at Nonsuch," *Spenser Studies* 20 (2005): 49-76, who sees Guyon as a flawed practicioner of temperance, an example of how *not* to enjoy sensuous art.

[92] Lauren Silberman, "*The Faerie Queene*, Book II and the Limitations of Temperance," *Modern Language Studies* 17 (1987): 9-22. See also Madelon S. Gohlke, "Embattled Allegory: Book II of *The Faerie Queene*," *English Literary Renaissance* 8 (1978): 124, who argues that "Guyon's moral vision is blatantly inadequate to his experience, yet it is that experience which provides the energy of the book."

arguing that the poem reads against its own grain—that it creates an Ariostan figure of a failed Odysseus in Guyon not in order to undermine the utility of an Odyssean integration of romance into epic, but in order to undermine the surface rejection of Odysseus and romance.[93] The Bower, in this reading, carries in its Odyssean origins the possibility of rehabilitation; Guyon's total destruction of the Bower stems from his flawed understanding of temperance, which fails to accommodate sensual pleasure in its vision of human experience. Indeed, Guyon is so thoroughly asexual that when he confronts his own choice of Odysseus—Mammon's offer of marriage to his daughter Philotime and worldly advancement and riches, an offer that would negate the possibility of leaving the Cave of Mammon, in *FQ* 2.7.49—he declines on the grounds that he is unworthy of a supernatural spouse, and in any case his troth is plighted to another woman:

> But I, that am frail flesh and earthly wight,
> Vnworthy match for such immortall mate
> My selfe well wote, and mine vnequall fate;
> And were I not, yet is my trouth yplight
> And loue auowd to other Lady late,
> That to remoue the same I haue no might.[94]

The woman in question, A. C. Hamilton suggests in his notes to this passage, is the Queene of Faerie, Guyon's sovereign and his object of courtly love; he will later refer to her as "my liefe, my liege, my Soueraigne, my deare."[95] Guyon claims not a prior sexual

---

[93] Lamb, "Gloriana, Acrasia, and the House of Busirane," 93-94, and Berger, "Wring Out the Old," 84-93, both argue on feminist principles that *The Faerie Queene* employs misogynistic tropes in order to expose their misogyny and to challenge or complicate the cultural assumptions that create them. Lamb argues that Spenser shows us the bower through Guyon's eyes in order to expose masculine anxieties about spaces of female power and female-controlled narrative, while Berger concludes from his own reading and a survey of similar studies that the poem exposes the roles of the poetic tradition and the male reader in constructing a negative understanding of Acrasia in order to critique those processes. Among the important predecessors whom Berger credits with helping him to understand this dynamic are Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights*, and Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of* The Faerie Queene (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[94] *FQ* 2.7.50.3-8.

[95] *FQ* 2.9.4.5.

and romantic engagement with another woman, but a commitment to a different paradigm of the interrelationship of love and power. He chooses courtly love and feudal service over the crass bargain of marrying for money, but he also chooses a paradigm of human relations whose sterility is part of its premise over a generative marriage. This chaste adoration and chivalric service replaces Odysseus and Penelope's fruitful and mutually fulfilling marriage as the other term of Guyon's choice. Book 2 excludes this generative marriage as an option for its temperate hero, and with it a role for healthy sexuality. This is unsurprising; Odysseus and Penelope's marriage has little more of a presence in the allegorical readings of the *Odyssey* most popular in the Renaissance than does Nausikaa. Book 2 displays the failings of moralized epic and the allegorical readings of Odysseus; the price of Guyon's virtue is not only the textual pleasures of the *Odyssey* but the flexibility of character necessary to integrate those pleasures into an epic text and an epic quest. With the failure of moralized epic to achieve a successful integration of eros and epic, the path is cleared for romance to take over as the narrative and ethical mode of the next book.

This turn to romance allows the poem to reconsider some aspects of romance that are problematic for the moralized epic of Book 2. Theresa Krier argues that Acrasia must be destroyed, to Spenser's regret, because

> the particular structure of pleasure she represents...threatens not only the ethos of Guyon's moral-allegorical epic but also the emergent form of the Spenserian romance-epic, in which the demonic enchantresses of the Italian *romanzi* and of this book give way to numinous nymphs, goddesses, and human women bearing a divine glory to their observers.[96]

Krier argues that Ariostan romance disappears from the poem together with the moralized

---

[96] Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights*, 111.

readings of classical epic. In her reading, Spenserian romance excludes enchantresses and allegory alike, chaining them and leading them away under the guise of Acrasia. Italian romance and its classical precedents are not so easily banished, however. The enchantress of the Bower is replaced in the very next canto by another figure of Circe, the appropriately-named Malecasta, and in the parallel final canto of the next book by a third figure of Circe—this one male. The Bower's role as a locus of marvelous human artifice is taken up by the Castle Joyeous, with its elaborate tapestries, and by the palace of Busirane, with its doors carved with scenes from epic and myth (themselves an epic trope) and its bizarre classical masque. Britomart's defeat of Busirane and his forced reversal of his magical charms at sword point, as Gareth Roberts has noted, evokes Odysseus's defeat of Circe and identifies Britomart as a figure of Odysseus.[97] The ethos of the moralized epic is by no means destroyed with the Bower, nor does the figure of the Circean enchantress yield her place without a struggle. Spenserian romance must continue to struggle with the problems of sexuality, and it continues to do so on Odyssean ground.

The reading outlined above aligns poorly with the sixteenth-century readings of Odysseus's encounters with Circe and with the Sirens. In its terms, however, this presents no problem, because a critique of those allegorized readings becomes the point. The Bower is smashed up because there is nowhere else for the moralized text to go. A more serious objection stems from the text of *The Faerie Queene* itself. The episodes in which Spenser returns to the defeat of Circe—Britomart's arrival at the Castle Joyeous and her

---

[97] Gareth Roberts, "Women and Magic in English Renaissance Love Poetry," in *Representing Women in Renaissance England*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 73.

destruction of Busirane's palace—frame Book 3; they are the first and final adventures Britomart undertakes, granting the events on which they are patterned an unusual importance for understanding the book as a whole.[98] The very fact that these episodes occur in a book whose titular virtue is chastity renders highly problematic the idea of erring (in both senses of the word) in pursuit of eros. The structure of the episodes, too, allows them to examine and reject the various components of the Circe episode. Spenser separates the encounter with Circe into the sexual pleasures of the Castle Joyeous and the magical dangers of Busirane's palace. The rejection of each component severally suggests not that the Bower of Bliss errs in presenting a bad or badly allegorized mixture of magic and sensual appetite, but that any version of eros outside of marriage is necessarily and fundamentally flawed.

Eros outside of marriage is not the same as eros, however, and eros within marriage is a topic that Renaissance epics use the *Odyssey* to explore. Many critics have argued that Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Bliss represents the rejection of an extreme form of sexuality, not of eros altogether. The terms of romance eros/error and epic telos are implied even by Stephen Greenblatt's description of that destruction:

> The distinction upon which self-definition rests at the close of book 2—between temperate pleasure and inordinate pleasure—can only be understood in terms of a further distinction between a pleasure that serves some useful purpose, some virtuous end, and a pleasure that does not. Thus the denizens of the Bower acknowledge time solely as an inducement to the eager satisfaction of desire here and now, before the body's decay, and not as the agency of purposeful direction. That direction—expressed in *The Faerie Queene* as a whole by the idea of the *quest*—is for sexuality found in the power of love to inspire virtuous love and ultimately, with the sanctification of marriage, in the generation of offspring. Generation restores the sense of linear progression to an experience that threatens to turn in upon itself, reveling in its own exquisite beauty. A pleasure that

[98] Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of* The Faerie Queene (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 112-13, famously argues that "the books of *The Faerie Queene* have no structures." Structure, Alpers claims, requires that "the ordering and evaluating of the realities the poem presents is done by one or several specifiable phenomena within it." I argue instead that the repeated return of the Circean repressed does provide instructions for the evaluation of the episodes it orders.

> serves as its own end, that claims to be self-justifying rather than instrumental, purposeless rather than generative, is immoderate and must be destroyed.[99]

Greenblatt could be writing about genre in Renaissance epic. His distinction between pleasure that serves as its own end—cyclical, self-referemtial—and generative pleasure that extends the history of a family into the future—linear, teleological—is one of the fundamental distinctions between romance and epic. Greenblatt too imagines pleasure being recovered for an ethical life by being turned toward a teleological end; although he imagines that recovery in terms of the power dynamic that he sees at play in the process of self-fashioning in the poem, looking beyond the end of Book 2 allows us to see that such a recovery also takes place through the revision of the Bower of Bliss at the conclusion of Book 3. The opposition between married and unmarried eros—to all intents and purposes the same thing as the opposition between generative and sterile eros in a genre that provides little space to illegitimate children—is borne out by the contrasting quests the two figures of Odysseus accomplish. Although Guyon is a strangely asexual figure, he fights to avenge the wrong done a marriage and prevent future outrages; the object of Britomart's quest is her marriage to Artegall.[100] The crime that begins the events of Book 2 is Acrasia's extramarital seduction of Mortdant, while Britomart rescues Amoret from Busirane in order to reunite her with her husband Scudamour. Odyssean quests undertaken in the defense of marriage may succeed, even if those quests must be stripped of the enjoyment of Odyssean romance pleasures. Boiling the *Odyssey*

---

[99] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 176. Other critics have also argued that the immoderate quantity or the intemperate quality of pleasure available in the Bower of Bliss requires its destruction; see Evans, *Anatomy of Spenser's Heroism*, 142-47.

[100] Gohlke, "Embattled Allegory," 136-38, draws attention to Guyon's repressed sexuality and its release in the destruction of the Bower of Bliss, arguing that his inability to see anything acceptable in the attraction the Bower holds for him leads him to destroy it.

down to an epic quest whose telos is marriage and whose heroism consists largely in not being sidetracked by the pleasures of romance agrees surprisingly well with Spenser's "Letter to Ralegh." Its reading of epic history has often been thought problematic:

> I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time. In which I haue followed all the antique Poets historicall, first Homere, who in the Persons of Agamemnon and Vlysses hath ensampled a good gouernour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso disseuered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in Philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a priuate man, coloured in his Rinaldo: The other named Politice in his Godfredo.[101]

Spenser's epitome of Odysseus as "a vertuous man" agrees with both the allegorical and the exemplary readings of the *Odyssey* explored above. Tracing the descent of that figure into *The Faerie Queene* through Rinaldo, however, is more surprising. Spenser may reject the role romance error and romance eros play in fashioning Tasso's "private man," but he too identifies Rinaldo as a figure whose ethics are essentially Odyssean. Rinaldo's willingness to leave the private pleasures of Armida's island for the public duties of the war in Jerusalem no doubt features prominently in this concept of Rinaldo; so too must his willingness to agree with Ubaldo that his dalliance with Armida constitutes (even temporarily) an error. But however Spenser read Armida's final words to Rinaldo, he would have noted that Tasso ends his poem with a reunion between his Odyssean hero and the woman he has loved; Tasso's ethics privilege healthy, licit erotic relationships. Spenser may reject the means by which Tasso leads his Odyssean hero to that Odyssean end, but he reasserts the importance of the end itself. By rejecting the temptations that might divert a lesser knight from that desired end, Spenser not only conforms to contemporary notions of what makes Odysseus virtuous, he defends marriage as an epic

---

[101] Edmund Spenser, "Letter to Ralegh," in *FQ*, 715.

telos. In this respect, he does produce a fundamentally Odyssean text.

That defense finds its way into the text of *The Faerie Queene* itself. In the 1590 edition of the first three books, Britomart and Amoret emerge from the palace of Busirane to find Scudamour waiting patiently for them:

> Straight he vpstarted from the loathed layes,
> And to her ran with hasty egernesse,
> Like as a Deare, that greedily embayes
> In the coole soile, after long thirstinesse,
> Which he in chace endured hath, now nigh breathlesse.
>
> Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,
> And streightly did embrace her body bright,
> Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
> Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight:
> But she faire Lady ouercommen quight
> Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
> And in sweete rauishment pourd out her spright:
> No word they spake, nor earthly thing they felt,
> But like two senceles stocks in long embracement dwelt.[102]

Spenser compares Scudamour to a deer after a long chase—an image commonly used in Petrarchan poetry, as he himself will use it in *Amoretti* 67, for the poet's beloved woman. The "gentle deare" who represents the beloved and whom the speaker of the *Amoretti* is astonished to see returning to him after a "weary chace" ought to be Amoret, but *The Faerie Queene* instead compares the deer to Scudamour.[103] Scudamour is thus compared to a typical Spenserian (and romance) woman, and his experience of anguished wandering in quest of Amoret and waiting outside Busirane's palace is compared to Amoret's role as the object of his pursuit. This is a reverse simile, of the sort unique to the *Odyssey*. The imagery and the poetics of their reunion closely duplicate those of Penelope and Odysseus and of Armida and Rinaldo. The reverse simile, with its gender inversions, links the reunited Scudamour and Amoret to Britomart, herself both a living

---

[102] *FQ* 3.12.44*.5-45*.9.

[103] Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti* 67, in *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

gender reversal and the poem's least problematic figure of Odysseus. Although Britomart's union with Artegall lies outside the poem, the Odyssean elements of Scudamour and Amoret's reunion also apply to Britomart. The poem's ending anticipates her marriage, its major unfinished business at the end of its first installment. This odyssey of eros and error has ended in a safe harbor at last, and so too will Spenser's poem in the installments to come.

Those who believe in a decree of reprobation do, in fact, accuse God, however strongly they may deny it. Even a heathen like Homer emphatically reproves such people in *Odyssey*, I.7...and again, through the mouth of Jupiter, I.32.
—John Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*

3. MILTON'S ODYSSEAN ETHICS: HOMERIC ALLUSIONS AND ARMINIAN THOUGHT IN *PARADISE LOST*

One of Milton's earliest references to Odysseus occurs in the commonplace book he kept as a young man. Under the heading "De Mendacio" ("On Lying"), Milton poses a question of ethics: is it ever acceptable to lie? He quotes Clement of Alexandria, in the original Greek:

> semper veritatem dicere solet vir bonus, inquit Clemens,
> πλὴ ν εἰ μή ποτε ἐ ν θεραπείας μέρει καθάπερ ἰ ατρὸ ς πρὸ ς νοσοῦ ντας ἐ πι σωτηρίᾳ τῶν καμνόντων ψεύσεται ἢ ψεῦ δος ἐ ρεῖ . &c. Strom: l. 7 p. 730.
>
> [A good man is always accustomed to speak the truth, says Clement, 'except in the way of service, as a physician for the safety of those who are ill will lie to the sufferers or utter a falsehood.' *Stromata* 1.7.]

Milton's thoughts turn immediately to epic, and then to Odysseus:

> Salutis publicæ causâ. hinc illud Torquati ubi Sophroniam introducit surepti Idoli noxam in se transferentem quamvis id verum non esset, ut tamen populum Christianum ab internecione liberaret, Magnanima menzogna, or quando è il vero si bello che si possa a te preporre? il Goffredo Cant. 2. stanz. 22.
>
> Similiter Bernia Hetruscus, poeta nobilis in Orlando inamorato l. 2. canto. 20. stanz: 2.
>
> La verità e bella ne per tema
> Si debbe mai tacer, ne per vergogna.
> Quando la forza e l'importanzia prema
> Tal volta avien che dirla non bisogna,
> Per fittion non cresce il ver ne scema,
> Ne sempre occulto è di chiamar menzogna,
> Anzi valente molte volte viene
> Et savio detto quel che occulto il tiene.
> D'ambe due queste parti di prudentia
> Il figliuol di Laerte esempio danne &c.
>
> [For the sake of the public safety. This is the explanation of the story of Torquato Tasso, in which he makes Sophronia take upon herself the guilt of stealing the Idol although this was not true, that nevertheless she might save a Christian people from massacre. 'O glorious lie, where is the truth so fair as to be preferred to thee?' (*Gerusalemme liberata* 2.22.3-4)
> Likewise the noble Florentine poet Bernia:—
>
> Truth is beautiful, nor through fear or shame must it remain unspoken.

> Under pressure of force or circumstance
> It may so happen that it must not be told;
> Truth is not increased or diminished by dissimulation,
> Nor is it always hidden by being called a lie.
> Indeed, often courageous and wise is called
> He who keeps it hidden.
> Of both these aspects of prudence
> The son of Laertes gave proof. (*Orlando innamorato* 2.20.2.1-3.2)][1]

The "figliuol di Laerte" is of course Odysseus, identified here by his patronymic just as he will be in *Paradise Lost* 9: "old Laertes' son." The most famous liar in literary history, he enters here in a surprising guise: an exemplary figure of prudent wisdom who can help a Christian reader think through a difficult ethical problem.[2]

Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* or miscellany, Torquato Tasso's Counter-Reformation epic *Gerusalemme liberata*, and Homer's Odysseus (as seen through Francesco Berni's rewriting of Matteo Maria Boiardo's Italian chivalric romance) may seem an oddly assorted group of authorities to draw upon, even for a genre as eclectic as the commonplace book and a reader as voracious as the young John Milton. Nor does the tradition of reading Odysseus as the archetypal Christian everyman that stretched from the Church Fathers into the Renaissance explain Milton's choice of Odysseus as an

---

[1] Text and translation quoted from John Milton, *Commonplace Book*, fol. 71, in *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank Allen Patterson et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-38), 18:141-43. *Il Goffredo* is the alternative title under which Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* was sometimes published. "Bernia Hetruscus" is Francesco Berni, the Florentine poet who rewrote Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (the poem to which Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is the far more famous sequel) in the Tuscan dialect. The passage Milton quotes is in fact one of the moralizing introductions that Berni added to the beginning of each canto; the material simply does not appear in Boiardo's original, nor in modern editions of the *Innamorato*, which are based on Boiardo rather than Berni. Milton would have been extremely unlikely to have known this, however, as the only version in print during his lifetime was Berni's, first published in 1541; between 1544 and 1830 no editions of Boiardo's original were printed. For the extremely complex textual history of Boiardo's poem, see Riccardo Bruscagli's concise explanation in his introduction to his edition of the *Orlando innamorato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), v-viii.

[2] Renaissance and ancient commentators alike were divided in their opinion of Odysseus, presenting him as an exemplar either of extremely good or of extremely bad qualities. Odysseus is mentioned relatively infrequently in Milton's prose, yet he consistently appears as a positive exemplary figure. See, for example, the reference at the end of *Of Education* to the "sinews almost equall to those which Homer gave Ulysses," the physical and mental strength, necessary to put Milton's educational plan into practice. I quote from *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), 2:415. All quotations of Milton's prose are from this edition, cited as *YP*.

exemplary figure to help him resolve an ethical dilemma with strong Christian religious undertones; little else in Milton's writings suggests that he accepted this allegorical mode of reading the classics.[3] Instead, the entry in the *Commonplace Book* offers a surprising glimpse of classical and theological writings meeting as equals to resolve a difficult ethical issue.

Paradise Lost appears to deny the possibility of any such collaboration between classical and Christian thought. Early in the poem, as if to get his troublesome pagan predecessors out of the way, Milton's narrator acknowledges the Homeric origins of Mulciber's fall (based on Hephastus's fall to earth at Zeus's hands in *Iliad* 1.591-95). He then apparently rejects the classical epic tradition:

> Nor was his name unheard or unadored
> In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
> Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
> From heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
> Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
> On Lemnos the Ægæan isle: thus they relate,
> Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
> Fell long before.[4]

The stern corrective that ends this passage has been taken to be the epitome of Milton's attitude towards classical epic: beautiful poetry, but utterly wrong in both narrative and morals.[5] And the allusions to Odysseus and other classical heroes which congregate around Satan have left the impression that Milton demonizes classical heroism and

---

[3] Milton does cite one of the most familiar allegorical readings of the *Odyssey*, the interpretation of the golden chain, in *Prolusion* 2 (*YP* 1.236).

[4] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1998), 1.738-48. All quotations of *Paradise Lost* (hereafter *PL*) are from this edition.

[5] Equally, of course, it might be said to epitomize the process by which Milton educates his reader that Stanley Fish theorizes in *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in* Paradise Lost, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1997).

classical epic by association with the archfiend. In this reading, which we might call a "destructive" reading, Milton's project involves a repudiation of the values of classical heroism and their replacement with their superior Christian successors in a zero-sum game.[6] More recent critics have demonstrated instead that Satan parodies classical heroism rather than representing it straightforwardly. In their view, Milton uses classical literature in a more complex and constructive manner; he recognizes and draws upon classical analogues for his human characters. But this model too finally imposes a separation of classical and Christian heroic values, concluding that classical heroism must ultimately be surpassed by a new heroic model whose major debt is to Christian truth rather than classical literature.[7]

---

[6] For this view, see C.M. Bowra, *From Virgil to Milton* (London: Macmillan, 1945); and above all two books by John Steadman: *Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959); *Milton and the Renaissance Hero* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967). See also Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), who echoes this link between the rejection of classicism and the elevation of Christian values on p. 299: "Milton had good reason for rejecting the seventeenth century's high estimate of Ulysses' moral character and the lessons to be learned from his allegorical adventures. The Hebrews had more impressive heroes." See also Stella P. Revard, *The War in Heaven:* Paradise Lost *and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), who lays out the classical background to Books 1-2 and 5-6 and who argues that the Son's new form of heroism contrasts with the fundamentally selfish Homeric hero's fight for personal glory; and David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), who explores the antiheroic qualities of Satan the classical hero. Many other important studies of Milton and his classical predecessors are cited below; two not cited elsewhere in this chapter, which have nevertheless influenced my thinking on this topic, are Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), and William M. Porter, *Reading the Classics and* Paradise Lost (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

[7] The most important of these revisionary readings can be found in Francis Blessington, Paradise Lost *and the Classical Epic* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); and Barbara Lewalski, Paradise Lost *and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 51-56 and 270-71. Lewalski's argument, with its emphasis on the didactic function of Milton's classical allusions, anticipates recent work on Milton's relationship to his readers; see especially Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Blessington is the first critic to develop the argument that Milton parodies classical values in the character of Satan. He argues further that throughout *Paradise Lost* Milton corrects, recovers, and extends classical values with superior Christian truths, such that Adam can be seen as a "perfected" Odysseus. An important predecessor for Blessington is Davis P. Harding, who argues in *The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Classical Background of* Paradise Lost (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 71 that Milton challenges the reader "to test Adam and what he stands for against the acknowledged exemplars of human excellence, Aeneas and Odysseus." As Harding assumes that Milton's readers will eventually judge Adam superior to his classical predecessors,

This opposition between classical and Christian values, I argue, is as artificial here as it would be if applied to the commonplace-book extract above. Milton no more excludes classical ethics from his concept of Christian salvation than he excludes classical literature from his youthful ethical reflections. On the contrary, he deliberately frames the poem's story of human fall and redemption in a narrative built on Odyssean allusions. The divine council of *Paradise Lost* 3, the framing device that tells us not only what is to happen in the rest of the poem and far beyond its confines but also how to interpret the ethical consequences of that action in postlapsarian history, is modeled closely on the divine council of *Odyssey* 1, which performs a similar function. And the divine council of *Paradise Lost* 3 takes up again the problem of the interaction of divine grace and human free will set forth in the earlier council; an Odyssean allusion returns us to Adam and Eve, mediating the transition from the divine to the human sphere. The *Odyssey* therefore serves twice as the hinge between Milton's story of cosmic scope and cosmic struggle and his story of human proportions and human ethical problems. These Odyssean allusions supply the structure for the frame of the human, redemptive plot of *Paradise Lost*—the debates in heaven that introduces the critical ethical issues in the story of human fall and redemption to come—and their primacy privileges the *Odyssey* as an interpretive tool for understanding the process of redemption in *Paradise Lost.* Homer's poem becomes the subtext for Milton's initial and most explicit articulations of his theodicy and his vision of the relationship between the divine presence and fallen

---

his model of imitation falls into the category Thomas Greene describes as "heuristic"—both explicitly acknowledging the source of an allusion and insisting upon its distance from that source. See Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 40-42. Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), takes a different tack by exploring the development of what he calls "Homeric sympathy" in Milton; however, he too ultimately sees this Homeric current at a regressive force that can be transformed only by the power of the Christian Father and Son.

humanity.

The *Odyssey* provides the material for Milton to consider the intersection of grace and free will. More precisely, allusions to the *Odyssey* inform his poem's argument that human free will acts together with divine grace to effect human salvation. Through these allusions, Milton explores the balance of human struggle and prevenient grace in the repentance of sin and moral growth. By thinking in Odyssean terms, he argues not just for the operation, but for the necessity of human moral effort in salvation. The *Odyssey* thus lends its authority to a model of Christian salvation that lay at the heart of one of the great Protestant doctrinal controversies of the seventeenth century: the conflict between orthodox Calvinists and Arminians. The latter, also known as Remonstrants, followed the Dutch minister Jacobus Arminius in rejecting several core Calvinist doctrines—doctrines that became central to Calvinist teaching precisely because they were codified at the Synod of Dort in 1619, convened to address Arminian objections to Calvinist thought. Milton engages two of these doctrines through his allusions to the *Odyssey*: double predestination and salvation through irresistible grace. Double predestination is the belief that God had before the birth of the first fallen man (if not before the creation) already decided which souls would be saved and which damned.[8] Crucially, both election and reprobation depend on God's will alone. No one can influence either his salvation or his damnation, for the grace that redeems the elect is far too powerful to be either accepted or rejected by feeble fallen humanity—in Calvinist parlance, it is irresistible. Rejecting this

[8] The belief that predestination occurred before the creation is known as *supralapsarianism* and was developed most fully by Theodore Beza, Calvin's disciple and successor at Geneva. The belief that predestination occurred after the Fall but before the birth of the rest of mankind is known as *infralapsarianism* or *sublapsarianism* and was considered a more moderate position in seventeenth-century theological controversies. See Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1971), 67-70.

utter helplessness of human virtue against a preordained fate, the Arminians instead developed the doctrine of conditional election: God selects for salvation all those who persevere in their Christian faith and, to make faith possible, extends his grace to all humankind. Some choose to accept that grace and are thereby saved, others reject it and are damned. Faith, not predestination, becomes in the Arminian view the criterion for salvation; divine grace becomes resistible, its acceptance a matter of human choice rather than divine gift.[9] Milton explores this Arminian view of the interaction of human free will and divine grace as he imitates and revises the opening of the *Odyssey* in *Paradise Lost* 3 and 11.

Why should Milton have turned to the *Odyssey* for this material? Not because it had provided the stuff of classical allegories of the cosmos or Neoplatonic and Christian allegories of the soul for nearly two millennia, although such readings of Homer and of the specific Odyssean episodes to which Milton alludes were still current in his lifetime.[10]

---

[9] See Dennis Danielson, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 70-82, for an overview of core Arminian beliefs and points of divergence from Calvinist orthodoxy. For a more detailed study of Arminius' thought and that of his followers, see Bangs, *Arminius*. For an introduction to the spread of Arminian thought in Stuart England, see two essays in Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (London: Macmillan, 1993): Nicholas Tyacke, "Archbishop Laud", 51-70; and Peter White, "The *via media* in the early Stuart Church," 211-30. Tyacke and White have been prominent voices in the debate over the extent and nature of the English embrace of Arminian beliefs, a debate first stirred by Tyacke, "Puritanism, Arminianism, and Counter-Revolution" in Conrad Russell, ed., *The Origins of the English Civil War* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 119-143, and Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987). See Fincham's "Introduction" to *The Early Stuart Church*, 4-17, for an overview of the controversy caused by Tyacke's arguments. Maurice Kelley, *This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's "De Doctrina Christiana" as a Gloss upon "Paradise Lost"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941) remains the standard book-length study of Arminian thought in *De Doctrina Christiana*; see also Kelley, "The Theological Dogma of *Paradise Lost*, III, 173-202," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 52 (1937): 75-79. On Milton's Arminianism, see also William B. Hunter, "The Theological Context of Milton's *Christian Doctrine*" in Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross, eds, *Achievements of the Left Hand* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), 269-87; and William B. Hunter, "John Milton: Autobiographer," *Milton Quarterly* 8 (1974): 100-104.

[10] On allegorical readings of Homer in the Renaissance, see Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*; Anthony Grafton, "Renaissance Readers of Homer's Ancient Readers," in Robert Lamberton and John J. Keaney, eds, *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes* (Princeton: Princeton

Rather, precisely because the *Odyssey* has relatively little divine machinery (as Pope would call it), especially in its first half, it is a poem very much focused on humanity and on what an individual can and must do to accomplish his deepest desires and to save himself. At the same time, it presents from both the divine and the human perspectives the progress of a relationship between human and deity; it implicitly explores the ethical terms on which such a partnership may be constructed. The gods of the Odyssean cosmos watch, judge, and when necessary assist humankind, but they rely on each human to merit that intervention by using his or her own powers to the utmost; their remote but nevertheless engaged presence allows the maximum scope possible for human endeavor and achievement in a world still ruled by active deities. This situation closely resembles the Arminian position that each human must supplement divine grace with his or her own efforts, that while divine grace is fully efficacious in human salvation, humanity nonetheless cannot enjoy it without making some active effort to accept it.

This argument departs from the mainstream not only of the critical literature on Milton's use of classical sources, but of much scholarship on Milton's engagement with biblical exegesis in his epics. Here too critics have generally argued for a dialectic that ultimately elevates Christian truth and heroism over their classical counterparts—a dialectic whose final synthesis is the triumph of one of its terms. Patricia Parker, considering the implications of a Protestant typological hermeneutic on Milton's poetics, has argued that

> early Christian writers extended the dynamic of *figura*—its simultaneous continuity and discontinuity—to the "foreshadowings" of pagan myth, at once approximations of the

---

University Press, 1992), 149-72; Howard W. Clarke, *Homer's Readers: A Historical Introduction to the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey (London: Associated University Presses, 1981). On early Christian readings of Homer, see Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). On Neoplatonic allegories of Homer, especially those of Plotinus and Porphyry, see Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

> Truth and deviations from it....The concern at once to join and to separate that which is joined is repeated, only more anxiously, by the Puritan mythographers of Milton's day for whom the analysis of myth must move quickly from analogy to difference, to the radical gap between Christian truth and any of its "types."
>
> This central dynamic of *figura*, approximation and difference, becomes, in *Paradise Lost*, the fundamental dialectic of a Christian poetics.[11]

Parker's work, like much Milton scholarship, concentrates on one current in the dynamic of "approximation and difference" *Paradise Lost* establishes with its pagan predecessors: the marking of difference from those predecessors.[12] The emphasis on difference is not the only strand of the conversation between the two poems, however. Nor do pagan myth and Christian truth come into contact with each other only to bounce off in opposite directions, unaffected by their encounter. On the contrary, Milton reads the *Odyssey* for the psychological and ethical insights it has to offer and allows that reading to stand, with little allegorical apology, beside his own imaginative recreation of the events preceding and beginning the book of Genesis. Milton's willingness to treat Homer as a legitimate co-interlocutor of major ethical questions, on a par with Genesis itself, strikes a modern reader accustomed to presume a gulf between classical and Christian values as an audacious display of humanism. As we shall see, however, this use of Homer is not unique to Milton. As Milton transforms Homer's pagan epic into the stuff of divine revelation, he draws upon the full range of registers in which his contemporaries allowed the *Odyssey* to speak—a range that, as the extract from the commonplace book hints, is wider than we often realize.

---

[11] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 125-26. See also Christopher, *Science of the Saints*, 75, who argues that from the Father's first speech, "the distance between God and Zeus opens up, inviting a variety of invidious doctrinal comparisons."

[12] This is also true of criticism not explicitly concerned with Milton's religious engagements, such as Thomas M. Greene's use of *Paradise Lost* in *The Light in Troy* (New Haven: Yale, 1982), 40, to exemplify "heuristic" imitation: "Heuristic imitations come to us advertising their derivation from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to *distance themselves* from the subtexts and force us to recognize the poetic distance traversed."

I. Openings: *Odyssey* 1 and *Paradise Lost* 3

There are many divine councils in classical and Christian epic, but none that has quite the same shape as those that open the first book of the *Odyssey* and the third book of *Paradise Lost*. Like *Paradise Lost* 3, *Odyssey* 1 opens with an invocation followed by an abrupt transition to a description of a divine council and then to the dialogue of that council. A careful comparison of the councils reveals that the dialogue between the Father and the Son is patterned very closely on the dialogue between Zeus and his daughter Athene. The extent of that patterning has not previously been noticed, although critics have for many years recognized that the Father's first speech rewrites Zeus's first speech in the *Odyssey* and that Milton had earlier quoted Zeus in *De Doctrina Christiana*. In that first speech, Zeus complains that humans blame the gods for the evils that befall them, rather than their own failings:

> Oh for shame, how the mortals put the blame upon us
> gods, for they say evils come from us, but it is they, rather,
> who by their own recklessness win sorrow beyond what is given.[13]

The Father similarly complains that humanity blames him, rather than itself, for the Fall:

> whose fault?
> Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me
> All he could have; I made him just and right,
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.[14]

---

[13] Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), 1.32-34. All English-language quotations are from this edition unless otherwise noted. For the sake of consistency with Lattimore, I adopt his transliterations of all Greek names found in the *Odyssey*, even when Lattimore's own transliterations are inconsistent (e.g. Καλυπσώ as "Kalypso" but Κίρκη as "Circe").

[14] *PL* 3.96-99. Critics from Northrop Frye, *The Return of Eden* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 99 onward have noted the parallel between the first speeches of Zeus and Milton's Father. Calling the *Odyssey* passage "the key passage that influenced Milton's conception of his God" and "the *locus classicus* of classical theodicy in epic poetry," Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 47-48, cites it as "a classical precedent" for the Father's "defensiveness." "In his reading of the classical epics," Blessington argues, "Milton emphasizes that these epics are all partially theodicies; latent in the epic tradition is a defense of God's ways to man." The centrality of the *Odyssey* for Milton, in Blessington's view, derives from the

Both these acts of self-theodicy reflect the same complaint: humans hold the divine responsible for the presence of evil in the cosmos, when the true responsibility for the evils men do and suffer lies with humankind itself. Both speeches are striking and provocative, and they draw swift and parallel responses. Each father's complaint elicits a counter-argument from his favorite child: Athene in the *Odyssey* and the Son in *Paradise Lost* each speak up to put in a good word for a pet cause. "You, Olympian," Athene complains,

> the heart in you is heedless of him. Did not Odysseus
> do you grace by the ships of the Argives, making sacrifice
> in wide Troy? Why, Zeus, are you now so harsh with him?[15]

Athene responds to her father's complaint against humanity by drawing attention to a counter-example: a pious man who deserves better but who languishes outside the favor

---

Odyssey's nature as

> an epic of trial and fall: the suitors, the crew of Odysseus, Melanthios, and the twelve maidservants are all tested, judged guilty, and destroyed; on the other hand, Penelope, Telemachos, Laertes, Eumaeus, and Phemios are tested, judged innocent, and saved. The action of the poem proves the justice claimed by Zeus in the opening speech, just as the action of *Paradise Lost* makes good the Father's claim for the free will of His creatures. Homer, Milton implies, had valid theological insights; he had a caught a glimpse of God. He noticed God's concern for man, which Athene, like the Son brings up in response to the speech of the godhead, though her concern is only with Odysseus, while the Son is concerned with the whole human race. (Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 48.)

Leaving aside the questionable implication that the Son as judge of man finds his classical precedent in Odysseus, we see that Blessington draws on the parallels between the *Odyssey* and *Paradise Lost* only in order to establish that Homer provided a classical precedent for Milton's exploration of theodicy through epic poetry. Georgia Christopher, *Milton and the Science of the Saints* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 75, argues instead that following Calvin's *Institutes*, Milton alludes to the *Odyssey* merely to show that in neither poetic universe does God cause evil. Barbara Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, 115, also notes the broad thematic similarities between the first speeches in this *concilia deorum* and the similar council in the *Odyssey*: "The Father's self-justification is intended to remind us of the Council of the Gods in the *Odyssey*, in which Zeus and Athene discuss Zeus' ways toward Odysseus, and Zeus defends himself by pointing to humankind's own responsibility for the evils they suffer... Milton's God offers a more elaborate theological defense, but in much the same aggrieved tones and terms." Gordon Teskey, *Delirious Milton: The Fate of the Poet in Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 6, notes the similarities between Athene's and the Son's language. See below for a discussion of Milton's own treatment of the Odyssean passage in *De Doctrina Christiana*.

[15] *Od.* 1.60-62.

of the gods.[16] Like Athene, the Son responds to the Father's complaint against humanity by countering his wholly negative portrait of human crimes and ingratitude. The Son's grounds for counter-argument must be different, however; Adam and Eve's transgression against divine law is both certain and deliberate, while Odysseus's guilt remains ambiguous. Where Athene points to one good man who deserves to be exempted from otherwise just criticism, the Son points to a flaw in the justice of his Father's criticism of humanity:

> Should man
> Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son
> Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
> With his own folly? That be from thee far,
> That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
> Of all things made, and judgest only right.[17]

The Son too defends his protégé's claim on divine attention and the value for the Father of choosing to rescue him. And like Athene, the Son undermines his Father's self-justification by finding fault with the Father's administration of justice. The Son cannot defend humankind's merit as fully as Athene can defend Odysseus', but he does manage to make the point that humanity does not wholly deserve the unhappy fate that threatens

---

[16] Athene conveniently neglects to mention not only that Odysseus has offended Poseidon, who has just cause for his anger in the blinding of Polyphemos, but that his hard homecoming may be at least in part due to her own anger. Nestor tells Telemachos that

> then Zeus in his mind devised a sorry homecoming
> for the Argives, since not all were considerate nor righteous;
> therefore many of them found a bad way home, because of
> the ruinous anger of the Gray-eyed One, whose father is mighty.

Od. 3.132-35. Nestor's accuracy is difficult to assess, though classicists have generally accepted that he speaks truly. (See, for example, Richmond Lattimore's "Introduction" to his translation of the *Odyssey*, 5-11.) The *Nostoi*, the post-Homeric poem in the Greek epic cycle that narrates the homecomings of other Greek heroes from the Trojan War, does attribute to Athene's wrath the difficulties several heroes face in achieving their returns. But Nestor's claim could equally be an example of the human tendency Zeus laments in his first speech, the speech that opens the *Odyssey* and should perhaps on this account be given extra weight when assessing the statements mortals make about the gods in Homer's poem. Certainly we never see Athene act against Odysseus or his homecoming, any more than we see the Son act against Adam or Eve.

[17] *PL* 3.150-55.

to overtake it, that the Fall is due in part to the fraud of Satan. By making this claim in the context of an appeal to the Father's ability to judge "right"—which seems to be an adverb here, our modern "rightly" or the more archaic "aright," and not a noun—the Son implies that the proximate cause and the circumstances of the Fall are components of the crime that must be taken into account in judging guilt, not solely admitted as mitigating factors in determining degrees of punishment or mercy.[18] Insisting that the Father who judges all things rightly cannot wholly condemn humanity under these circumstances, the Son seems to recall the Father to the perfect and holistic standards of justice and judgment that his divinity must entail. This is a paradoxical and puzzling thought by theological standards, but in the context of Milton's drama it becomes an exciting and charged moment: the Son holding the Father to his own principles, despite his displeasure with humankind. In their dramatic movement and in the theological problems they confront, the scenes run closely parallel to each other.

The next speech in each text sees each god propose a bargain to ensure the desired redemption or homecoming. Zeus assures Athene that he loves Odysseus and has always intended that Odysseus return to Ithaka:

> How could I forget Odysseus the godlike, he who
> is beyond all other men in mind, and who beyond others
> has given sacrifice to the gods, who hold wide heaven?[19]

He invites the other gods to help him ensure Odysseus's safe return: "But come, let all of us who are here work out his homecoming / And see to it that he returns."[20] In a similar

---

[18] Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, 116, argues instead that the Son's appeal to the Father's mercy rather than to his justice contrasts sharply with Athene's tactics and that this distinction "underscores the profound difference between the two epics in the relation of God and man."

[19] *Od.* 1.65-67.

[20] *Od.* 1.76-77.

vein, the Father assures the Son that he has always meant to save at least some of mankind: "Some have I chosen of peculiar grace / Elect above the rest."[21] He too promises a safe homecoming for the chosen few: "Light after light well used they shall attain, / And to the end persisting, safe arrive."[22] "To the end persisting" might well remind us of one of Odysseus's epithets: πολύτλας, "much-enduring," which Lattimore translates as "long-suffering."[23] Even the qualities needed to attain Christian salvation resemble those Odysseus needs to get home safely. The Father's metaphor of the journey through life towards salvation as a voyage is also suggestively Odyssean: humans will "arrive," a surprisingly active verb—though perhaps less so than it might be in other authors, given the Arminian slant of Milton's view of salvation.[24] Like Odysseus, who will reach Ithaka safely if he endures the hardships that will inevitably cross the path the gods create for him to leave Kalypso's island, humankind by persisting in faith and clinging to belief in salvation will indeed be saved. The gods, or Milton's Father and Son, help those who help themselves.

Milton's Father, with the benefits of omniscience and omnipotence, already possesses a well-developed plan; he simply needs a volunteer to carry it out, and he knows who that volunteer will be. Zeus, on the other hand, appears genuinely to want the

---

[21] *PL* 3.183-84. In Arminian fashion, Milton identifies election with belief; the Father simply states that those who believe in him will be saved. This is a common reading of this passage; see e.g. Stephen M. Fallon, "'Elect above the Rest': Theology as Self-Representation in Milton," in Stephen Dobranski and John P. Rumrich, eds, *Milton and Heresy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 96.

[22] *PL* 3.196-97.

[23] For Lattimore's translation of this Odyssean epithet, see *Od.* 5.171, 6.1, 7.1, 8.446, etc. Πολύτλας is always paired with δῖ ος, "godlike," to make a half-line, πολύτλας δῖ ος Οδυσσεύς. The twinning of the epithets suggests the heroism of enduring hardship, both physical and spiritual, in the Homeric universe.

[24] For a contrary argument, see Christopher, *Science of the Saints*, 75-76, who notes that Athena's "tender concern" for Odysseus "parallels that of the Son" but points instead to "the great disparity between the geographical home that Athena seeks for Odysseus and the spiritual return projected for Adam."

other gods to put their heads together with his. But if the Father already knows that his Son will aid him and even suggest some improvements to the plan he has just outlined, Zeus's daughter turns out to be equally helpful. Athene immediately proposes that Zeus send Hermes, the messenger god, to the island where Odysseus languishes in the captivity of the nymph Kalypso; Hermes can tell Kalypso that the gods wish Odysseus to return home. Her plan is well-developed enough and delivered promptly enough to make us suspect that, like the Father, she had this in mind all along. In similar fashion, the Son begins his offer to sacrifice himself for man by holding his Father to his word:

> Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace;
> And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,
> The speediest of thy wingèd messengers
> To visit all thy creatures.[25]

The image of divine grace as the speediest of winged messengers, an apparent comparison to the Father's angels, also recalls Hermes, Zeus's principal messenger in the *Odyssey*, who travels the Greek world using a pair of magical winged sandals.[26] Like Athene, the Son recommends the use of a divine messenger, traveling on wings, to begin the redemptive action under discussion. Even the Incarnation, imagined here as the Son's decision to expiate human original sin by becoming human and dying a mortal's death, aligns itself with a Homeric precursor. Athene announces that she will begin to play her own part in Odysseus's homecoming by descending to Earth; there she will adopt the form of the family friend Mentes to help Odysseus's son, Telemachos, set in motion the human side of Odysseus's homecoming. Athene's decision to descend to Earth in the

---

[25] *PL* 3.227-30.

[26] This does seem to be a reference to the world of the *Odyssey* specifically. The principal divine messenger of the *Iliad* is Iris, who unlike Hermes does not need wings to travel. Elsewhere in Greek and Roman mythology, messages from the gods are perhaps most often conveyed by dreams taking the form of familiar mortals. Even Mercury, the Roman equivalent of the Greek Hermes, delivers his message to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4 in the shape of the ghost of Hector, not in his own person as a god clad in winged sandals.

form of a mortal is, of course, a relatively common plot device in Greek myth and epic. It should not be confused with the Incarnation; Athene merely takes on human shape for a few minutes, without altering her divine nature in the slightest. Nevertheless, it is astonishing to find this pagan precursor of the Incarnation here, at such an opportune moment for Milton's development of the Father and Son's redemptive project. Milton aligns his scene even more closely with his Homeric predecessor by emphasizing that his Son chooses to become mortal, even as his freely-willed descent to earth and mortality transforms Athene's classical descent from heaven to rescue one man into a Christian vision of redemption for all humanity.[27]

One further parallel deserves attention. When Zeus first speaks, he is identified as πατὴ ρ ἀ νδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, "the father of gods and men." Athene begins each of her speeches to Zeus by addressing him as πάτερ ἡ μέτερε, "our father"; he in turn addresses her as τέκνον ἐ μόν, "my child." The patriarchal role of Zeus—with regard to both the other inhabitants of Olympus and mortals—and the parent-child relationship between Zeus and Athene are strongly stressed by Homer's text. In the same manner, Milton's text first introduces God the Father to us as "the almighty Father," and each speech in this dialogue begins "Father" or "O Father," "Son" or "Only begotten Son." Milton's poem borrows the architecture of its Homeric model right down to the emphasis on the

---

[27] Blessington argues that

> when the Son offers his life for man, we find no epic similes and no direct allusions to classical epic; yet the scene remains classical as well as biblical. The classical parallels begun earlier in the poem do not stop but shift to a higher plane: the classical pattern is there but further in the background, because the Son rises so far above his epic predecessors....We can see the general background behind Milton's heavenly council (*contaminatio*). In each classical epic, someone successfully intercedes for man with the godhead.

Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 37. But Blessington does not press this observation to uncover the more extensive structural and thematic parallels between the divine councils in the *Odyssey* and *Paradise Lost* specifically, which exceed his general rubric of *contaminatio* to point to a deliberate patterning of *Paradise Lost* 3 on *Odyssey* 1.

relationship between the speakers. Lest these parallels seem to be inherent in the subject matter rather than a unique product of Milton's poetic imagination, we should remember that Milton invents this piece of the action. Neither his biblical subject matter nor any theological precedent requires him to imagine a conversation between the Father and the Son at all, let alone one that closely follows any earlier literary work. *Paradise Lost* begins the narrative that intermingles human and divine concerns by deliberately patterning the interaction of the human and the divine on that of the *Odyssey*. The Odyssean frame establishes triangular relationships between the Father, the Son, and Adam that are congruent to those of the *Odyssey*: the Son enjoys a filial relationship to the Father similar to Athene's relationship with Zeus, and he acts as a protector and advocate for humanity, in the person of Adam, much as Athene does for Odysseus. The Father places paternal confidence in the Son much as Zeus does in Athene, adopting Zeus's stern and disciplinarian attitude, tempered with benevolence, towards humanity. Adam is weighed in the Father's balance and benefits from the intercession of the Son, both in the Son's conversations with the Father in Heaven and in the mercy and instruction the Son mixes with his judgment of Adam and Eve. Similarly, Odysseus is judged by Zeus and helped by Athene's aid, both on Olympus and on Scheria and Ithaka.

In preserving these Homeric divisions of labor and love, the triangular relationship between the Father, the Son, and Adam rewrites and corrects the parody of these relationships found in the narrative Sin delivers to Satan. It thus illustrates Milton's practice of juxtaposing corrective readings of classical literature with critiques of flawed readings of that tradition. As many critics have noted, Sin springs fully armed from Satan's head like Zeus from Athene's, but where Athene is conceived with a partner, Sin

seems truly to be spontaneously and wholly generated from Satan's sterile self-love. Sin enjoys an incestuous relationship with Satan that perversely rewrites the affectionate father-daughter bond Zeus and Athene share. Furthermore, Sin encounters Satan and reminds him of his own Zeus-like past as one who aspired to overthrow his divine father and rule in heaven as Satan embarks on his voyage from Hell through Chaos—a voyage that will later be called even more difficult than Odysseus's voyage through Skylla and Charybdis. Helping Satan on his way as he approaches the court of Chaos and Night, Sin adopts another of Athene's functions in the *Odyssey*; she offers help at a crucial moment, much as Athene counsels Odysseus when he lands on Scheria and must supplicate Alkinoös and Arete. Satan thus conflates both Zeus and Odysseus into a single persona while striving to emulate them both; Sin perverts Athene's Homeric role as Zeus's favorite (and virgin) child and Odysseus's patron into a sexual relationship with her father and client. The Satan-Sin relationship conflates and distorts the various functions of loving protection, guidance, and moral judgment distributed among Zeus, Athene, and Odysseus. The tangled, incestuous web that results from the collapse of these relationships resembles much Greek mythology—but not the surprisingly normal world of the *Odyssey*. Satan and Sin corrupt the essentially benign ties between benevolent gods and striving mortals that the *Odyssey* presents; their corruption of a positive model of classical epic reflects and signals their own moral decay.

The return to this triangular relationship in the Father and Son's conversation emphasizes the moral distance between the Father and Son and Satan and Sin, and between each pair's plans for humanity; setting each against the same classical model throws their differences into even sharper relief. More importantly, Milton's return to this

triangle of relationships in a constructive manner in Book 3 defends the value of classical epic for Christian ethical thought. Returning to this Odyssean model, and following it closely to construct the most important triangle of relationships in the Miltonic cosmos, reminds the reader that Satan and Sin's perversion of the values behind these relationships are just that: perversions. The values themselves are sound. The parallels between these two triangles of relationships invite us to seek out parallels in the ethical principles that govern those relationships.

Barbara Lewalski has argued that the similarity between Zeus's and the Father's first speeches "intimates that the problem of God's justice is perennial and the particular solutions always partial," without, however, suggesting any relationship between the particular solutions Homer and Milton offer.[28] Francis Blessington, adopting a traditional viewpoint found from the earliest Christian responses to Homer onward, concludes that Milton believed Homer "had valid theological insights; he had a caught a glimpse of God."[29] Patricia Parker's argument for a Protestant poetics of "approximation and difference" could be used to develop these arguments into a straightforward explanation of the Odyssean structure of the divine council. In such a reading, Milton draws on the Odyssean council of the gods in order to establish a precedent (both literary and theological) for his own divine council; he creates ties with past epics in order to locate himself securely within a continuous epic tradition and to claim the literary and cultural authority of that classical heritage. At the same time, he highlights the "radical gap" between his revealed truth and the partial one available to his pagan predecessor through

---

[28] Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, 116. Lewalski does not speculate on the nature of the particular solutions offered by Homer and Milton.

[29] Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 48. For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reworkings of the traditional Christian defenses of classical literature, see Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 98-105.

the simple but brazen decision to assign the roles of the Homeric gods to his Father and Son. The incongruity of casting the Father and Son in a reprise of a scene originally played on Mount Olympus emphasizes their moral distance from their pagan counterparts; setting the Incarnation against Athene's descent from heaven underscores the profound difference between pagan myth and Christian truth. In the greater awe and wonder the Christian features of Milton's poem inspire in its readers, Milton asserts his claim to moral and literary superiority over his classical predecessors.

This reading is certainly the closest to theological and critical orthodoxy. But it accounts for only one current in the dynamic of "approximation and difference" *Paradise Lost* establishes with its predecessor: the marking of difference from that predecessor. The emphasis on difference is not the only strand of the conversation between the two poems. Milton himself makes this clear when he cites Zeus's first speech in *De Doctrina Christiana*, in an attack on the concept of reprobation that forms half of the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination:

> difficulty mostly arises when no distinction is made between a decree of reprobation and that punishment which involves the hardening of a sinner's heart. Prov. xix. 3 has an apt comment: *man's foolishness leads him astray, and his spirit is roused in indignation against Jehovah.* For those who believe in a decree of reprobation do, in fact, accuse God, however strongly they may deny it. Even a heathen like Homer emphatically reproves such people in *Odyssey*, I.7:
>
> They perisht by their owne impieties.
>
> —and again, through the mouth of Jupiter, I.32:
>
> O how falsly men
> Accuse us Gods as authors of their ill,
> When by the bane their owne bad lives instill
> They suffer all the miseries of their states—
> Past our inflictions and beyond their fates.[30]

Even non-Christians ("Even a heathen like Homer") can understand the injustice of blaming divine powers for human misfortunes; such injustice should therefore strike true

[30] *YP* 6.202. Milton quotes the Homeric Greek and a Latin translation; the English translation of the *YP* substitutes George Chapman's translation of Homer.

Christian believers all the more forcefully. Milton does not grant Homer any particular insight; on the contrary, he becomes simply a representative pagan. Nevertheless, the passage finds Milton putting the *Odyssey* to work in the service of Christian doctrinal argument as a legitimate source of illustration and court of appeal for his own interpretation of the Bible. Reprobation is half of the Calvinist concept of double predestination. When Milton refutes the doctrine of reprobation by referring in the same paragraph to a scriptural *locus* and to a Homeric quotation, therefore, he uses the *Odyssey* to press an Arminian point against Calvinist orthodoxy. The apparently inferior status of the *Odyssey* as a poetic, classical work serves not to undermine but to enhance the theological point he makes; Homer's very status as a pagan author strengthens Milton's point by demonstrating just how self-evident it is. The *Odyssey* functions as an example for Milton's readers of how to think about the relationship between man and God, an example all the more powerful precisely because it does not require sectarian sanction to validate its authority or utility. By acknowledging the *Odyssey*'s religious difference even as he insists on its importance for Christian theology, Milton avoids the traditional Christian defense of classical literature: the argument that the great pagan epic poets had been granted limited glimpses of Christian revelation.[31] Instead, he turns the focus of the argument squarely back onto each individual's responsibility for his or her own behavior and thoughts; he redefines the issue as a universal ethical problem rather than a sectarian controversy.[32] The *Odyssey* becomes a key text for Milton to articulate and think through

---

[31] For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reworkings of the traditional Christian defenses of classical literature, see Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 98-105. For a modern echo of this argument, see Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 48.

[32] For a contrary argument, see Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 49: Milton's elevation of the Father through comparisons to Homer's Zeus "has...turned the epic around. In the classical epic, man is so much the measure of all things that when Odysseus was offered immortality by Calypso, he refused it...Milton

problems of human free will and the power of men and women to affect their fate for good or ill.

Although the date of *De Doctrina Christiana* remains a matter for debate, the *Odyssey* had served this purpose in Milton's writings since at least 1644, when he published the second edition of the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. There, in a long discussion of God's responsibility for human sin, he notes that although Plato and Chrysippus, together with their schools, the Academics and the Stoics respectively,

> taught of virtue and vice to be both the gift of *divine destiny*, they could yet find reasons not invalid, to justifie the counsels of God and Fate from the insulsity of mortal tongues: That mans own freewill self corrupted is the adequat and sufficient cause of his disobedience *besides Fate;* as *Homer* also wanted not to expresse both in his *Iliad* and *Odyssei*.[33]

In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* as in *De Doctrina Christiana*, readers are referred to Homer for a correct understanding of the nature and capacity of human free will. If the role envisioned for the operation of human free will at this early stage is primarily a negative one—sinful human nature is perfectly capable of corrupting the will enough to cause a fall into temptation and rebellion against God—the decisive capability of the human will takes on a more positive function in *De Doctrina Christiana*, in which it is pressed into service in an Arminian attack on Calvinist soteriology. Although the Homeric text foregrounds the destructive power of human free will, the use of this passage in an attack on the doctrine of reprobation implicates free will in the action of salvation too. For reprobation is the negative component of predestination, the reverse of election, in Calvinist theology; the "decree of reprobation" against which Milton argues is the divine decision to damn certain souls, irrevocably and independently of their

---

reverses this tradition and has put God back in the center of the epic world."

[33] *YP* 2.293-94.

actions or beliefs. Using Homer's belief in human free will to argue the Arminian position against reprobation suggests that Homer's free will also has the power to save that Arminian thought attributes to it.

At least one early reader of Homer, on the evidence of a volume now in the British Library, took a similar approach to Homer's text. A copy of a Latin translation of the *Odyssey*, edited by Simon Lemnius and printed at Basel in 1549, has been annotated and underlined throughout by the Italian humanist and critic Orazio Lombardelli. Zeus's first speech is among the most heavily annotated, with two marginal notes in one hand: "Deus non est causa malorum" [God is not the cause of evils] and "Quisquis mali sui faber" [Each man is the maker of his own evil]. The most relevant phrases in the first and fourth lines of Zeus's speech have also been underlined, possibly by the same hand.[34] Clearly Milton was not the only seventeenth-century reader of Homer struck by the applicability of this speech to the problems of divine justice and theodicy in the Christian world.

These uses of classical epic in Christian theological debate may seem striking, even strange, to a modern reader. To a seventeenth-century reader, however, they would have been less unexpected—and, perhaps, the more learned that reader in biblical exegesis, the more natural they would have seemed. Biblical scholarship not infrequently made use of classical literature to illuminate puzzling scriptural passages, as the example of Matthew Pole's *Synopsis criticorum* demonstrates. An extensive synthesis of English

---

[34] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, ed. Simon Lemnius (Basel: Ioannis Oporini, 1549), aa2^{r}. The copy examined is BL C.66.b.2. The annotations include single and double underlining of individual lines, elaborate lines and brackets down the margins of longer passages, marginal notes, and five beautifully-drawn pointing hands. The underlining appears to have been done by the hand that made the annotations described here, but this is not certain. I am grateful to Dr. Robyn Adams for her help in examining and dating the annotations.

and Continental biblical commentaries, Pole's four-volume work was published just two years after *Paradise Lost*. Pole moves methodically through the text of the Bible, piling up various authorities' explanations of grammatical and exegetic difficulties in virtually every biblical passage. When he arrives at the mention in Genesis 2:9 of the "arbor scientiae boni et mali," the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the authorities he quotes in order to clarify the tree's nature include such established commentators as Hugo Grotius, Nicholas of Lyra, the Jesuits Jacques Bonfrère and Menochius of Pavia and Tirinius of Antwerp, and the reformers Paul Fagius and Henry Ainsworth, as well as editions by Sebastian Munster (in Hebrew and Latin), the Dominican scholar Pagnini (Latin), and the Calvinist Johannes Piscator (German). But mixed in among this impressively ecumenical group of authorities are quotations from the *Odyssey*, Euripides, Zeno, and Plutarch.[35] Clearly the divisions between classical and Christian thought and between literary and theological explorations of difficult ethical problems were less absolute than modern readers of Milton sometimes imagine. Pole's example, together with those of Milton's prose treatises, thus argues against the assumption that in *Paradise Lost* Milton must be using Homer to stand for Classicism-with-a-capital-C, and using that Classical Epic as one term in a dialectic with the material he draws from Genesis—with Christian Truth, again in capitals. Instead, we should see Milton at work in a world that habitually yokes classical and Christian learning in tandem. Christian truth surpasses classical religion, but the great achievements of the classical imagination can be used to

[35] Matthew Pole, *Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque S. Scripturae Interpretum* (London, 1669), 1:B6r. Pole supplies Telemachos' statement at *Od.* 18.228-29 that "καὶ οἶ δα ἔ κασται, / ἐ σθλά τε καὶ τὰ χέρεια· πάρος δ' ἔ τι νήπιος ἦ α" [And I know each thing, the good and the worse: formerly I was still an infant], as confirmation of his own gloss on the tree as one that leads men to distinguish good from evil. The Homeric quotation invites the reader to interpret the effect of eating from the tree as a process of growth or maturation towards the ability to discern good from evil—a reading in sympathy with Milton's own position in *Areopagitica*.

illuminate and elucidate as well as to support and supplement that truth. These are not examples of Christian writers admitting that classical learning approximates Christian truth before demonstrating that Christian revelation accelerates sharply beyond the best that pagan myth can hope to achieve. Rather, they are demonstrations of convergence and dialogue between two sources of truth: one sacred and revealed by God, the other human and reached by the greatest endeavors of the artistic imagination. They create a dynamic not of approximation and difference, but of appropriation and reference.

In similar fashion, as *Paradise Lost* distinguishes itself from the *Odyssey* by emphasizing its Christian religious content, its framing narrative draws Milton's poem closer to its predecessor by emphasizing the fundamental similarities between the ethical problems that the two theodicies and the two sets of divinities confront. Both poems adopt at the outset similar positions regarding the relationship of divine and human beings and the knowledge and understanding humans may have of the gods—and *Paradise Lost* does so in the terms established by the *Odyssey*. *Paradise Lost* 3 thus suggests that though the religious contexts in which human beings experience divine providence may vary wildly in content and veracity, something fundamental in human experience does not change. The council scene renews a lesson of the *Odyssey*: each individual must still struggle to embrace responsibility for his own actions and judgment in a world in which divine presence and justice seem at times inaccessible. Milton's scene emphasizes the similarities in the two poems between the disturbingly partial knowledge that postlapsarian mankind may have of divine motives and plans, the expectations and burdens placed on man in his relationship with the divinity of his cosmos, and the imperative to be actively good rather than to abstain passively from evil.

The *Odyssey* becomes a text that offers Milton's readers "equipment for living," in Kenneth Burke's phrase—material for useful ethical, theological, and practical reflection.[36]

The Arminian thrust of these ethical reflections becomes most apparent in the striking description of divine grace as "the speediest of thy winged messengers," whose structural role in the parallel divine councils was briefly discussed earlier. The subtle likening of divine grace to Hermes—and specifically to his single appearance as a winged messenger in *Odyssey* 5—illustrates the essentially Arminian view of free will presented in *Paradise Lost*. In that episode, Hermes' descent to earth forces Kalypso to accept the gods' decision that Odysseus must be allowed to leave Ogygia. However, Odysseus must still do everything from felling trees for a raft to sailing across the open ocean himself. These may seem simple tasks for a hero as clever as Odysseus, but when he leaves Ogygia, he does not know either where he is or where he is going. He simply sets forth on the open ocean, trusting to his wits and his seamanship to capitalize on the opportunity that (unbeknownst to him) the gods have created for him. Hermes' intervention in Odysseus's homecoming is certainly necessary, but it does not instantaneously resolve the problem of that homecoming. Instead, through Hermes, Zeus creates an opportunity for Odysseus to use his own powers to take his next step homewards.

Milton's allusion to this episode occurs in the Son's description of divine grace, a

---

[36] Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 293-304. Burke argues that a work of literature "is the strategic naming of a situation. It singles out a pattern of experience that is sufficiently representative of our social structure, that recurs sufficiently often *mutandis mutatis*, for people to 'need a word for it' and to adopt an attitude towards it. Each work of art is the addition of a word to an informal dictionary" (300). The situation I take *Paradise Lost* to explore through the *Odyssey* is nothing less than the pattern of fallen human experience itself.

crucial moment for Milton's theory of grace. Set in its context in the Father and Son's discussion of grace, this apparently glancing allusion to the Odyssean scene in fact helps to shape the reader's concept of divine grace. The Father first broaches the topic of grace and free will:

> Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,
> Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
> Freely vouchsafed; once more I will renew
> His lapsèd powers, though forfeit and enthralled
> By sin to foul exorbitant desires.[37]

The Father goes on to invite a volunteer to die for man, but the Son begins his reply by returning to the question of grace in lines that, as we have seen above, are closely modelled on a speech by Athene:

> Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace;
> And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,
> The speediest of thy wingèd messengers
> To visit all thy creatures, and to all
> Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought,
> Happy for man, so coming; he her aid
> Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost.[38]

In this context, the comparison of divine grace to Hermes acquires significance beyond the creation of a parallel with the *Odyssey*. Dennis Danielson claims that the first three lines of the Father's speech set forth "both the decisive character of the will and the instrumentality of grace—central points of Arminian teaching."[39] In other words, both Calvinist and Arminian thought insisted upon the sufficiency of grace alone for salvation. Calvinism, however, taught that divine grace was irresistible, while Arminianism held that grace could be resisted. Human free will therefore becomes the decisive factor in the Arminian model of salvation: each individual must choose to accept the prevenient grace

---

[37] *PL* 3.173-77.

[38] *PL* 3.227-33.

[39] Danielson, *Milton's Good God*, 82. See also Kelley, "Theological Dogma," 75-79.

freely and fully offered him by God through Christ in order to benefit from it. This Arminian formula explains the Father's puzzling statement that man will be saved "who will, / Yet not of will in him, but grace in me." Each individual must will his or her salvation in order to achieve it, but equally the agent of that salvation must be not his will but prevenient, sufficient, yet resistible grace.[40]

Why should Milton turn to a Homeric allusion to illustrate the workings of this grace? Not because he reads the events of the *Odyssey* themselves as an allegory or a parable, but because Hermes' descent from heaven is a moment in a critically important and authoritative predecessor text that considers a similar problem from a similar ethical viewpoint. Framing the postlapsarian ethical problems of *Paradise Lost* in Odyssean terms indicates that the solutions or remedies for these problems will also be similar, that the *Odyssey* offers useful models for the readers of *Paradise Lost* as they cope with these problems in their own experience. The allusion to a dramatic Odyssean passage provides an accessible illustration of the roles that divine grace and human free will play in salvation—not just of the absolute insufficiency of human free will on its own, but of the critical work free will must nevertheless do.[41] Without allegorizing Homer, Milton adopts Odysseus's homecoming as a metaphor for the spiritual homecoming that awaits the Christian faithful. (A long tradition of reading this homecoming allegorically did exist,

---

[40] Or, as Kelley puts it, "The possibility of election results from the grace of God, but the enjoyment of this possibility requires the volition of man." Kelley, "Theological Dogma", 75.

[41] The argument for universal grace might seem to contradict Athene's earlier emphasis on the goodness of Odysseus in contrast to the general wickedness of mankind; surely, one might think, a scene that begins with what looks like an illustration of election or predestination cannot furnish an illustration of the crucial role of human free will in effecting salvation through universal, resistible grace. An Arminian could simply reply that Odysseus is of the elect precisely because he has already chosen to be good and pious, but election is not really the point under debate; the universality of grace is accepted implicitly by both the Father and the Son. The passage instead turns on the question of the respective roles grace and free will, god and man, play in human salvation.

btu Milton never implies that Homer himself intended any such commentary or that Homeric characters can be straightforwardly identified with theological concepts.[42]) He uses it to explore and to illustrate the relationship between divine grace and human free will, and to underscore their mutual interdependence in the process of human salvation. And by turning to the *Odyssey* for its model of the interaction of divine grace with the freely willed faith and moral struggle of humanity, *Paradise Lost* reinterprets the active fortitude of Odysseus and his active struggle to forge an alliance with the gods as heroic virtues for a Christian readership. This interpretation of the scene is congruent with the one Milton himself supplies in *De Doctrina Christiana*, in which he complains of the injustice of his fellow seventeenth-century Protestants and then conflates them with the original audience of the *Odyssey* by noting that Homer "emphatically reproves such people." The ingrates of Homer's cosmos are still very much alive in Milton's; they still have a lesson to learn from Homer as well as from Milton.

In its look forward to postlapsarian human existence, to the beginning of history, the presence of the *Odyssey* in the frame of *Paradise Lost* may even offer a form of Christian consolation to Milton's readers. Seth Schein has noted that while the *Iliad* imagines a world in which the divine and the human mingle readily, the divinities of the *Odyssey* have largely withdrawn from the earth.[43] If the Olympians of the *Iliad* fight for or through their chosen human champions, the Olympians of the *Odyssey* choose rather to observe from afar and to intervene only at critical moments, often in disguise and often (at least initially) without the knowledge of the human beings they aid. The divine

---

[42] For this tradition of Christian allegorical readings of the *Odyssey*, see Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), ch. 7.

[43] Seth L. Schein, introduction to Seth L. Schein, ed., *Reading the* Odyssey*: Selected Interpretative Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 14.

council of *Odyssey* 1 reveals the preparation of just such an intervention, without Odysseus's knowledge. Just so, the divine council of *Paradise Lost* 3 looks forward to a time when God and angels will no longer walk alongside humans in recognizable form—when men and women, like Odysseus, will journey alone over rough seas without a palpable divine presence to guide them. Nonetheless, even before that time has arrived, a crucial intervention is already being prepared to bring them to a safe harbor. As the Father looks ahead to the Odyssean phase of Adam's, and humanity's, experience, he prepares Odyssean protections for humankind.

II. Homecomings: *Odyssey* 5 and *Paradise Lost* 11

By foregrounding the Father's complaints about ungrateful postlapsarian humans and by setting out to effect a homecoming for fallen humanity, long before the Fall has taken place, the poem projects its attention forward to the aftermath of the catastrophe of the Fall. The proper means of coping with its effects and of working out a fallen relationship between humans and God are shown early in *Paradise Lost* to be critical ethical problems of the action to come. The divine council and its Odyssean substructure alert the reader to look for ethical instruction—for the exemplarity that is the avowed function of epic poetry—past the Fall, to Adam and Eve's attempts to cope with the new moral uncertainties of their fallen state and the radically revised terms of their relationship with the Father. Indeed, another Odyssean allusion mediates a transition from the next major discussion of grace and free will in heaven to its realization in Eden: a transition not just from the divine to the human level of narrative, but from abstract ethical debate to action, from theory to practice.

Book 11 opens with a renewal of the discussion on grace and free will begun in Book 3—a discussion that has become urgent, because Adam and Eve have fallen and require grace in order to repair their damaged relationship with the Father and restart their journey towards salvation. The narrator then returns us to earth by describing the dawn of the first day following the Fall and Adam and Eve's subsequent reconciliation:

> Meanwhile
> To resalute the world with sacred light
> Leucothea waked, and with fresh dews embalmed
> The earth, when Adam and first matron Eve
> Had ended now their orisons, and found,
> Strength added from above, new hope to spring
> Out of despair, joy, but with fear linked.[44]

Patrick Hume, in his 1695 edition of *Paradise Lost*, identifies Leucothea first as the goddess of the dawn found in Cicero and Lucretius; he then adds that "*Homer* makes her a sea-nymph, and a Friend to Saylors. Day-break, is a Darling no less at Sea, than on Shore."[45] More recently, Alastair Fowler has also recognized this as an allusion to the *Odyssey*, noting that Leucothea is appropriately invoked here because she saves Odysseus.[46] But naming her here does more than simply imply a saving presence already at work in the lives of Adam and Eve. Homer's Leukothea rescues Odysseus from the storm sent by Poseidon to torment Odysseus as he sails away from Kalypso's island at last:

> The daughter of Kadmos, sweet-stepping Ino called Leukothea,
> saw him. She had once been one who spoke as a mortal,
> but now in the gulfs of the sea she holds degree as a goddess.
> She took pity on Odysseus as he drifted and suffered hardship,
> and likening herself to a winged gannet she came up
> out of the water and perched on the raft and spoke a word to him:
> 'Poor man, why is Poseidon the shaker of earth so bitterly

---

[44] *PL* 11.133-39.

[45] Patrick Hume, "Annotations on Milton's *Paradise Lost*," in *The Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton* (London, 1695), 294.

[46] See Fowler's notes on this passage in his edition of *Paradise Lost*, cited above.

> cankered against you, to give you such a harvest of evils?
> And yet he will not do away with you, for all his anger.
> But do as I say, since you seem to me not lacking in good sense.
> Take off these clothes, and leave the raft to drift at the winds' will,
> and then strike out and swim with your hands and make for a landfall
> on the Phaiakian country, where your escape is destined.
> And here, take this veil, it is immortal, and fasten it under
> your chest; and there is no need for you to die, nor to suffer.
> But when with both your hands you have taken hold of the mainland,
> untie the veil and throw it out in the wine-blue water
> far from the land, and turn your face away as you do so.'[47]

Leukothea offers the protection of her immortal veil to save Odysseus as he drifts, literally rudderless, on the stormy sea; and that storm is sent by Poseidon to punish further Odysseus's attack on the Cyclops Polyphemos. Adam and Eve, spiritually adrift after the emotional storm following the Fall that marks their departure from the state of innocence, find comfort in the dawning of a new day. That comfort, which coincides with Leucothea's appearance, reflects the arrival on earth of the "prevenient grace descending" announced by the narrator at the beginning of Book 11 and the signs, both spiritual and physical, of divine forgiveness. On the surface, these parallels are not exact. Agency in the salvation of the shipwrecked lies in Homer with Leukothea, but in Milton with the Father through the Son. Milton's Leucothea appears in the text at the moment when, having finished their first postlapsarian prayers of contrition and repentance, Adam and Eve receive new strength, hope, and joy in return; she seems to be a comforting manifestation of divine grace rather than an agent of salvation herself. While Homer's Leukothea actually mitigates the suffering and penance directed at Odysseus by an angry god, Milton's Leucothea seems merely to bring a sign that the Father has tempered his own sense of outraged justice with mercy. But this apparent difference points to a deeper similarity between the two passages. Although Adam and Eve, like Odysseus, enjoy

---

[47] *Od.* 5.333-50.

divine protection, they too must swim for it. Odysseus can only win his safe landing on Scheria by struggling to keep afloat for two days and two nights. He floats with the help of Leukothea's veil, but the veil does not substitute for the efforts he must make to come ashore. In a similar vein, Adam and Eve gain the Son's ear and his eventual intercession with the Father on their behalf through their spontaneous, unsought offerings of prayers and contrition. Although divine grace and mercy sufficient to effect their redemption are already available to them—as the pluperfect "prevenient grace descending *had* removed / The stony from their hearts" demonstrates[48]—they must still show actively, through prayer and contrition, their desire to accept it. Human salvation, in *Paradise Lost* as in the *Odyssey*, depends on a certain amount of human effort, joined to the infinitely more efficacious workings of grace. The Homeric figure whose presence signals a divine partnership with humankind also reminds the reader of the hard work each individual must do to supplement the saving grace that he needs but that will not substitute for his own agency in his salvation. The Odyssean allusion thus encodes, again in the guise of classical epic rather than Christian theology, a crucial tenet of Milton's Arminianism: his emphasis on the power of humanly-willed and consciously-chosen faith to effect salvation. The fact that the encoding allusion is to a classical epic whose cultural and literary authority are as orthodox as they can be draws once again upon that authority to buttress its own claims, using the Odyssean subtext to confer an extra dash of legitimacy on this Arminian (and therefore heterodox, from the standpoint of orthodox Calvinist theology) belief.

Milton was not alone in using Leukothea to think about the interaction of divine grace and free will. The sea goddess's brief appearance is not generally considered one of

---

[48] *PL* 11.3-4.

the poem's (or even the book's) most memorable episodes, but various seventeenth-century translators draw attention to her role in their arguments to Book 5.[49] Milton's allusion in *Paradise Lost* 11 is therefore not to an obscure goddess in an unimportant moment of the *Odyssey*, but to a noteworthy event, at least in seventeenth-century English readings. Translations of the text itself and paratextual commentaries provide fuller evidence for readings of Leukothea. Perhaps the two most telling sources are George Chapman's 1616 translation of Homer and Jean de Sponde's extensively annotated parallel-column Greek-Latin edition of Homer's works, published in Basel in 1583.[50] Sponde's edition provided the most copious Latin commentary on Homer in the late Renaissance; the work of a Calvinist-educated Huguenot who later converted to Catholicism, it shares some doctrinal sympathies with Milton's own writings. Sponde's

---

[49] Although these references are short, they appear in such concise summaries of the book's plot that their mere presence implies greater prominence for Leukothea in seventeenth-century readings of the *Odyssey* than modern readers might assume. Hermes' descent from Olympus and his conversation with Kalypso, Odysseus' building of his raft and his farewell to Kalypso, Poseidon's anger and the storm he sends, and Odysseus' landing on Scheria each fill a larger portion of Book 5 than does Leukothea's brief appearance; yet she receives equal attention in Ogilby's and Hobbes's arguments. John Ogilby's statement is one of just six lines in his verse argument to Book 5:

> *Hermes*, *Calypso* bids *Ulysses* free:
> Who makes himself a Bark, then puts to Sea.
> A Storm by *Neptune* rais'd his Vessel splits:
> To Land he by a Sea *Nymph's* favour gets:
> Naked and tir'd he to a Covert creeps,
> And hid in Leaves all Night securely sleeps.

Homer, *Homer His Odysseys Translated, Adorn'd with Sculpture, and Illustrated with Annotations*, tr. John Ogilby (London: Thomas Rycroft, 1659), K2^{r}. Ogilby also includes a long marginal note on Leukothea's parentage and other literary appearances, with quotations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and from an epigram by Lucian; Ogilby, *Odyssey*, L2^{v}. Thomas Hobbes' prose argument is equally succinct: "The Gods in Council command *Calypso* (by *Mercury*) to send away *Ulysses*, on a Raft of Trees; and Neptune returning from *Æthiopia*, and seeing him on the Coast of *Phœacia*, scattered his Raft; and how by the help of *Ino* he swam ashore, and slept in a heap of dry leaves till the next day." Homer, *Odysseys*, trans. Thomas Hobbes (London: W. Crook, 1675), O11^{v}. George Chapman's much longer argument to his Book 5 grants Leukothea even greater prominence; sixteen of the argument's twenty-six lines are devoted to her encounter with Odysseus. Homer, *The Whole Works of Homer*, trans. George Chapman (London: Nathaniel Butter, 1616), G6^{r}.

[50] Homer, *Whole Works of Homer*; Homer, *Homeri quae extant omnia* (Basel: Eusebii Episcopii Opera, 1583). For Chapman's use of Sponde, see Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 96-97, and Millar MacLure, *George Chapman: A Critical Study* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 171.

was also the principal edition Chapman used to produce his translation.[51] These two works thus offer a sense of the range of readings available to at least some of Milton's readers. Chapman translates Leukothea's speech to Odysseus as follows:

> Why is *Neptune* thus
> In thy pursuite extremely furious,
> Oppressing thee with such a world of ill,
> Euen to thy death? He must not serue his will,
> Though tis his studie. Let me then aduise,
> As my thoughts serue; thou shalt not be vnwise
> To leaue thy weeds and ship, to the commands
> Of these rude winds; and worke out with thy hands,
> Passe to *Phœcia*; where thy austere *Fate*,
> Is to pursue thee with no more such hate.
> Take here this Tablet, with this riband strung,
> And see it still about thy bosome hung;
> By whose eternall vertue, neuer feare
> To suffer thus againe, nor perish here.
> But when thou touchest with thy hand the shore,
> Then take it from thy necke, nor weare it more;
> But cast it farre off from the Continent,
> And then thy person farre ashore present.[52]

The most obvious change Chapman makes in the sense of Homer's original is in Leukothea's description of Poseidon's intent. While Homer has Poseidon angry with Odysseus but explicitly not planning (or perhaps unable) to kill him—οὐ μὲν δή σε καταφθίσει, he will not destroy you[53]—Chapman sees Poseidon pursuing Odysseus "even to thy death:" "tis his studie." Chapman's Poseidon sounds much more like Milton's Satan, plotting the death and destruction of a hated divine favorite; death, not discomfort, is the risk Chapman's Odysseus runs at his hands. This marks a significant shift in the

---

[51] Milton was once thought to have owned a copy of Sponde's edition; see e.g. Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 295. However, as an exchange of letters between John B. Dillon and Gordon Teskey entitled "Milton's Homer," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 101 (1986): 857-58 makes clear, this belief was founded on the attribution to Milton of the manuscript marginalia in the Harvard Pindar. As this attribution has now been discredited, there is no incontrovertible evidence that Milton owned or knew Sponde's edition. The similarities in Milton's and Sponde's readings of Leukothea, however, reopen the possibility that perhaps Milton did know, or at least know of, Sponde's work.

[52] Homer, *Whole Works of Homer*, H4^{v}-H5^{r}.

[53] Homer, *Odyssey*, ed. W. B. Stanford (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996), 5.341. All Greek-language quotations are from this edition; translations are my own.

context of the scene from its Homeric original. And the help Leukothea offers Odysseus changes accordingly. Homer's Leukothea offers Odysseus her κρήδεμνον, a head-covering for a woman or female goddess—Lattimore's "veil" is an accurate translation. Chapman's Leukothea, by contrast, offers a "tablet." His innovation wrenches the text away from the original, substituting a small, hard, flat object—which Chapman himself glosses in the argument to the book first as a "jewel" and then as an "amulet"—for Homer's soft cloth. But a tablet is most commonly either for writing upon or already inscribed; it implies words.[54] Leukothea's gift to Odysseus thus acquires a hint of the gift of the Word itself. Chapman's translation of χείρεσσι νέων ἐ πιμαίεο νόστου, "swimming with your hands strive for the shore," as "worke out with thy hands" also emphasizes the work Odysseus must do to save himself.[55] And the language Chapman gives Leukothea—"eternal virtue," "perish"—has the ring of seventeenth-century writing about salvation. So too does the rephrasing of the reassurance she offers Odysseus; the simple factual statement οὐ δέ τί τοι παθέειν δέος οὐ δ' ἀ πολέσθαι, "there is no cause for you to fear to suffer or to die," becomes in Chapman's translation an imperative: "never fear."[56] Taken together, the cluster of phrases suggests a change of register from heroic narrative to religious exhortation. The switch from factual to emotional reassurance, from logic to faith, suggests that Chapman sees this scene not as a simple sea rescue but as a divine

[54] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "tablet," 1.a-c, all carry connotations or explicit denotations to this effect. Definition 1b, "A slab or panel, usually of wood, for a picture or inscription," goes on to mention a "votive tablet: an inscribed panel anciently hung in a temple in fulfillment of a vow, e.g. after deliverance from shipwreck or dangerous illness." Classical votive tablets offered to a protective god by survivors of shipwreck would have been familiar from Horace, *Odes* 1.5.12-15, in which the speaker compares his situation after the end of a tempestuous love affair to the survivor of a shipwreck offering his sea-drenched clothes as a "tabula votiva," a votive tablet, in the temple of Poseidon.

[55] *Od.* 5.344.

[56] *Od.* 5.347.

intervention in that most allegorical of scenes, a virtuous everyman adrift on the tempestuous sea of life. Not every seventeenth-century reader or translator shared Chapman's bent for allegorizing Homer, but his treatment of this episode reveals that it could be understood as an emblem of the relationship between an individual and God in human salvation. As in Milton, that relationship involves mutual effort: the deity provides the means of salvation, but each individual must contribute his share of labor in order to benefit from it.

The relevance of this relationship to Leukothea's intervention becomes more explicit in de Sponde's commentary on *Odyssey* 5, which may well lie behind Chapman's presentation of Leukothea. Commenting on Zeus's declaration that Odysseus

> shall come back
> by the convoy neither of the gods nor of mortal people,
> but he shall sail on a jointed raft and, suffering hardships,
> on the twentieth day make his landfall on fertile Scheria
> at the country of the Phaiakians who are near the gods in origin,
> and they will honor him in their hearts as a god, and send him
> back, by ship, to the beloved land of his fathers...[57]

de Sponde writes,

> Hoc ex falsa illa ueterum doctrina pendet, posse aliquid homines sine Deorum auxilio: quod id circo Vlyssi non adesse uult Iupiter, nimirum in ipso nauigationis principio, ut submonet Eustathius. Nam nullus aut Deorum aut hominum dicitur Vlyssem a Calypsus insula ad Phæacas transmisisse. *Alioqui in media nauigatione Leucothea Vlyssi affuit,* & a Phæacibus ad Ithacam homines eum deduxerunt [italics added].[58]
>
> [This hangs on that false doctrine of the ancients, that men can do anything without the help of the gods: that for that reason Jupiter wishes not to help Ulysses, doubtless, at the beginning of his voyage, as Eustathius hints. For no-one either of the gods or of man is said to have conveyed Ulysses from Kalypso's island to the Phaiakians. *On the contrary, in mid-voyage Leukothea assisted Ulysses*, and men brought him from the Phaiakians to Ithaka.]

De Sponde reads this episode as engaged with the problem of the coexistence of human

---

[57] *Od.* 5.31-37.

[58] *Homeri quae extant omnia*, ff3^{v}.

agency and divine grace. He presents Leukothea as an example of divine assistance to man, and he clearly sees her assistance as necessary for Odysseus to land safely on Scheria. Indeed, in his argument to Book 5 he makes a stronger claim for Leukothea than any of the other writers we have surveyed, writing that "Ino uero ei dat uitã" [Truly Ino gives him life].[59] Her appearance thus becomes an important moment in the poem's engagement with the broader issue of human agency. De Sponde approaches that question from an opposite perspective to Milton's: his concern is not whether there is space for free will in a divinely-ordered universe, but whether a worldview that draws on anthropocentric classical beliefs gives sufficient credit to divine power. He therefore places greater weight on the other side of the balance, stressing the fallacy of the belief that humankind can achieve a safe homecoming wholly unaided by divine power. Yet he does not tilt that balance all the way towards the divine; in the commentary he claims not that Leukothea saves Odysseus, as he does in his argument to the book, but that she assists him—and that is the most active of the possible translations of *adsum*, the Latin verb de Sponde uses.[60] Odysseus still has to do some, if not most, of the work of saving himself. De Sponde's reading of this passage not only locates it in the same theological debate that Milton's allusion does, it adopts an essentially similar position in that debate. It thus demonstrates that this passage of Homer was read to illuminate the relationship between divine and human will; Milton's allusion to Homer's Leukothea may thus be read as a reflection on, or even an intervention in, this debate. In such a reading,

---

[59] *Homeri quae extant omnia*, ff3^{r}. Sponde's argument to *Odyssey* 5 is considerably longer than either Ogilby's or Hobbes's, and so Leukothea's brief appearance in it does not necessarily suggest a similar prominence in the book's action. Sponde borrows the phrase from the arguments Henri Estienne, or Henricus Stephanus, prefaced to his edition of the *Odyssey*. Stephanus' Greek text, Latin translation, and apparatus were perhaps the most frequently reprinted throughout Northern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Sponde modifies Stephanus' view considerably in his own influential commentary.

[60] *Adsum* most frequently signifies "to be present," as opposed to *sum*, "to be."

Leucothea's unexpected arrival at this crucial juncture emphasizes both the activity of divine grace in human affairs and the necessity for human belief in that grace and willingness to accept it. She recalls the partnership of human will and divine intervention that the *Odyssey* depicts. A similar partnership, the active human acceptance of divine gifts, informs the model for Adam and Eve's relationship with the Father and Son in their fallen state.

Additional support for this reading of Leukothea comes from further afield: Lodovico Dolce's *L'Ulisse*, an influential 1573 translation of the *Odyssey* into the Italian *ottava rima* of epic romance. Dolce prefaces each canto, as he calls the books of the *Odyssey*, with allegories similar to those he crafted for mid-century editions of the *Orlando furioso*. Of Leukothea, he writes,

> In Levcotea, che da il modo à Vlisse di salvarsi, si nota, che Dio non abbandona mai chi uuol far bene: e se bene gli auuengon molti accidenti e trauagli causati da gli auuersarij della salute nostra, non gli mancono ancora de'mezi da poterne uscire, & andar al lito notando, cioè saluarsi con la fatica, & essercitio delle buone operationi.[61]
>
> [In Leucothea, who gives Odysseus the means of saving himself, we see that God never abandons one who wishes to do well: and even if many hardships and travails caused by the adversaries of our welfare arrive, he will not lack the means of emerging from them, and coming to shore by swimming, that is by saving himself with effort, and the exercise of good works.]

Dolce reads the *Odyssey* more allegorically even than Chapman, and his emphasis on good works reveals an explicitly Catholic, anti-Protestant theological stance. Yet he too sees in this episode a space to debate the coexistence of human free will and divine grace. Moreover, he presents Leukothea's role in terms fundamentally similar to those of de Sponde and Milton: Leukothea's encounter with Odysseus illustrates the joint divine and human endeavor necessary to accomplish human salvation. God provides the tools for

---

[61] Lodovico Dolce, *L'Ulisse* (Venice: Giolito, 1573), C7^{v}. Dolce's influence is evident in, among other works, the great Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi's 1640 opera on the *Odyssey*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*.

salvation, but each individual must work with those tools, expending his or her own effort to arrive safely at the shore. Clearly this reading enjoyed broad currency across confessional lines; Homer provided congenial material for a wide range of theological speculation. This agreement across a spectrum of critical approaches to Homer also suggests that the boundaries between the explicitly allegorical and the not-allegorical in Homeric interpretation were more permeable than we might suppose. Milton's use of Leukothea in *Paradise Lost* reflects this flexibility. Although Milton does not present his Leucothea as a personification of divine grace, he is not above drawing on a tradition of Homeric interpretation that includes such allegorical readings. His Leucothea is not an allegory, but the work she does in the text benefits from the existence of an allegorical tradition of reading Homer.

This allusion also illustrates another aspect of Milton's complex interweaving of Homeric and theological material. Milton's Leucothea arrives to cover the earth "with fresh dew." Dew is a common image for divine grace in seventeenth-century devotional writing and religious poetry. Henry Hawkins, in *Partheneia Sacra*, emphasizes the origins of manna in dew and figures that dew simultaneously as a symbol and an instance of divine grace.[62] John Donne, rejecting the serpent's claim on fallen humanity, insists that because he repents his sins, "I am made up of the water of Baptism, of the water of Repentance, of the water that accompanies the blood of Christ Jesus... I am a drop of that *dew*, that *dew* that lay upon the *head* of Christ...not Dust."[63] Donne presents dew as both

---

[62] For this and other traditional interpretations of dew in Christian literature, see Nigel Smith's notes to "On a Drop of Dew" and "Ros" in Andrew Marvell, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. Nigel Smith, rev. ed. (London: Longman, 2007), 39-44.

[63] John Donne, "An Anniversary Sermon preached at St. Dunstans, upon the commemoration of a Parishioner, a Benefactor to that Parish," in John Donne, *Sermons*, ed. Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 10:187.

the instrument of regeneration and the gift of grace. His image of fallen humanity arriving at that gift through repentance and an approach to the divine through faith in Christ closely parallels Adam and Eve's early postlapsarian experience in *Paradise Lost*: they fight, repent, reconcile, remember the promise of eventual salvation through Christ, and reconcile themselves to God...and Leucothea arrives to scatter the morning dew. She becomes the bearer of divine grace—not a personification of grace, but an allusion who reminds us of the terms on which that grace is granted. Her role here thus recalls the similar role she plays in *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, where she is included among the mythological figures whom the Attendant Spirit invokes as he summons Sabrina.[64] Sabrina herself has been read as either a representation of divine grace or a conduit for its transmission to the Lady; like both Homer's Leukothea and the Leucothea of *Paradise Lost*, she appears in response to human solicitation of the divine and intervenes in order to enable characters to free themselves from the snares of sin and desire. Invoking Leukothea to call divine grace down to earth, Milton imagines her once again as a figure who can provide divine grace to humans willing to seek and actively accept it.

Recognizing this allusion, and reading it as a gloss on the respective roles the human and the divine take in salvation, smooths a difficult passage that has troubled many readers. Thomas Greene has objected to the Father's description of Adam and Eve's repentant prayers in Book 11, immediately before Leucothea's appearance in the text:

> It is a little anticlimactic for the reader, after following tremulously the fallen couple's gropings toward redemption in Book Ten, to hear from the Father's lips that he has

[64] John Milton, *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, in *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (New York: Longman, 1971), 874.

> decreed it—that all of this tenderly human scene, this triumph of conjugal affection and tentative moral searching, occurred only by divine fiat. One might have been tempted to alter his ideas of heroism to include Adam's contrition, did he not encounter God's own curt dismissal of it:
>
> > He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
> > My motions in him, longer than they move,
> > His heart I know, how variable and vain
> > Self-left.[65]

Splitting hairs, one might sympathize with Greene but attempt to reclaim some ground for human agency by arguing that the Father takes the credit only for Adam and Eve's penitence, not for the reconciliation they manage to achieve after their devastating exchange of recriminations. But this evades the core of the problem Greene exposes. Having watched Adam and Eve come through their first great postlapsarian trial, we are now told that one major aspect of their triumph is due entirely to the Father's agency: Adam and Eve reach an understanding of their fallen relationship to the Father only through his "motions." Denying Adam and Eve the credit for this accomplishment undermines the other part of their achievement: their realization that they have failed each other and require each other's help in their newly-fallen state. It is this discovery of the depth of their need for each other that reminds them of the Son's promise of redemption, which in turn leads them to recognize and draw strength from their near-total dependence on divine help and mercy.[66] Questioning their agency in the latter recognition

---

[65] Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 407. Greene quotes *PL* 11.90-93. Danielson, *Milton's Good God*, 61, quotes this passage from Greene as he sets out to resolve Greene's objections to the Father's denial of human heroism through an Arminian reading of the scene. On pp. 88-90, he attempts to counter Greene's argument by reading an Arminian approach to grace and free will into the end of Book 10 and beginning of Book 11. But Danielson avoids the passage that so troubles Greene, which is harder to explain away through an Arminian reading.

[66] Jun Harada, "The Mechanism of Human Reconciliation in *Paradise Lost*," *Philological Quarterly* 50 (1971): 545, 551, credits Eve with leading Adam to self-knowledge by unwittingly causing him to learn to control himself even as he seeks to correct her. See also Mary Ann Radzinowicz, "Eve and Dalila: Renovation and the Hardening of the Heart," in Joseph Mazzeo, ed., *Reason and Imagination: Studies in the History of Ideas 1600-1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 171-72; Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 32, 210-12; and Barbara Lewalski, "Milton on Women—Yet Once More," *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 3-20, all of whom grant Eve a crucial role

undermines our belief that they are responsible for the former discovery.

As the text returns to the human sphere, Leukothea enters the poem. And with her enter the associations of human agency in salvation. The allusion to Leukothea thus qualifies the Father's claims by restoring the necessity of human free will to the text. It supplies a missing term in the Father's description of Adam and Eve's repentance, reminding us that although they need divine grace (the Father's "motions"), they also need to accept those motions. From the Father's point of view, human free will, although genuinely free and genuinely willed, is still feeble and fickle, unable to do much without the assistance of divine grace; from the earthly point of view, human free will, although feeble and fickle, is still genuinely free and genuinely willed, dependent on divine grace for effect but necessary nonetheless. Each position is implied in, and consistent with, an Arminian interpretation of grace.

The two Odyssean allusions explore both the vital role of human free will in human salvation and the utter insufficiency of that will alone, without the help of divine grace. They thus offer a different perspective on humanity's relationship to the divine from that of Michael's lessons in the poem's final books. The reappearance of Odyssean material in the transition from the divine council of Book 11 back to the human sphere invites us to return to the divine council of Book 3, to read the two councils against each other. Doing so softens further the Father's harsh judgment on Adam and Eve. The Father's own description of Adam and Eve's behavior in Book 11—"He sorrows now, repents and prays contrite"—chimes with his earlier description of what will happen after the Fall:

> I will clear their senses dark,

---

in the process of bringing about human reconciliation with the Father.

> What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
> To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
> ...
> And I will place within them as a guide
> My umpire conscience, whom if they will hear,
> Light after light well used they shall attain,
> And to the end persisting, safe arrive.[67]

Following the cue of the Odyssean allusions to place these two councils in dialogue with each other, it becomes clear that the Father's problematic speech in Book 11 develops a darker view of the theory of Book 3, as it is put into practice. The "motions" the Father locates in Adam and Eve can be identified with the gift of conscience. An explanation of the events of *Paradise Lost* 10-11 thus falls into place, one consistent with both Arminian theology and the human dignity—even heroism—Greene seeks in the epic. Adam and Eve receive the gift of prevenient grace, which first enables their spiritual growth. Through their moral struggles during their argument and reconciliation, they begin that growth; through their own efforts, they finally arrive through repentance at the ability to accept that grace. They are far from having completed this growth, as Adam's difficulties with Michael's lessons indicate. Nevertheless, they have begun to forge a partnership with God that will see them safely home. Their repentance secures to them the psychological and spiritual benefits of a continued, though altered, relationship with the divine. Both the terms of that relationship and the process by which it is forged are characterized by reference to Leukothea.

Up to this point, the interaction of grace and free will in human salvation have been discussed on the divine level only, in councils between the Father and the Son. Now Adam and Eve too become able to discourse on their redemption; and the moment that mediates that shift is the only moment in Odysseus's journey when he has a direct

---

[67] *PL* 3.188-97.

encounter with a divine being who comes to his aid and spells out the terms on which she will aid him.[68] Leukothea appears in the text at the moment when Adam grasps the need to take responsibility for his own salvation, to understand the actions that will be required of him and to seek to perform them. At this moment, Adam and Eve have entered into a sphere in which they can and must develop ethically in order to keep up their pact with the Father. And, even more importantly, they realize this fact.

These Odyssean allusions, played out in the text, guide Adam and Eve to understand their new relationship with the divine presence in their lives; but they also prompt the reader to explore the *Odyssey* for illustrations of and reflections on his own salvation. Milton constructs his model of human salvation through an allusive relationship with a text that presents human free will and an active partnership with the divine as heroic qualities, harnessed for heroic endeavors. His Odyssean model of salvation therefore enables us to see as heroic our human efforts to understand and participate in the divine project for humanity. The struggle not just to endure hardship but to strive actively towards salvation thus becomes an active form of Christian heroism, a complement to martyrdom for the reader who finds herself in a world where the moment to lay down one's life for a principle has passed and the challenge is not to die gloriously but to live well.

III. Closing Thoughts

This chapter began with the suggestion that one of the passages that has served as a touchstone for Milton's rejection of classical epic is in fact no such thing. Milton's

---

[68] His conversations with Athene take place on Ithaka; although Hermes intervenes on his behalf with Kalypso, Odysseus does not see or speak with him.

dismissal of the plot of the *Iliad*—in fact, of a Latinized retelling of an episode from the *Iliad*—does not mean that he dismisses all classical epic or all classical ethics. The emphasis on reconciliation in the Odyssean allusions of Books 3 and 10 likewise sheds new light on another of these key passages, the far more comprehensive rejection of classical epic in Book 9. In the last of the poem's four proems, the narrator introduces the coming crisis of the Fall by explicitly distancing his tale from the epic tradition:

> No more of talk where God or angel guest
> With man, as with his friend, familiar used
> To sit indulgent, and with him partake
> Rural repast, permitting him the while
> Venial discourse unblamed: I now must change
> Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
> Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
> And disobedience: on the part of heaven
> Now alienated, distance and distaste,
> Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,
> That brought into this world a world of woe,
> Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
> Death's harbinger: sad task, yet argument
> Not less but more heroic than the wrath
> Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
> Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
> Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused,
> Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long
> Perplexed the Greek and Cytherea's son.[69]

At first glance, this reads as yet another rejection of classical epic: the biblical subject of Milton's epic exceeds Homer's and Virgil's poems in heroism just as it excels them in moral virtue and religious truth. To read *Paradise Lost* as an Odyssean poem would be to confuse the petty ire of one of many pagan gods with the fearsome wrath of the Christian God, justly proportionate to the unparalleled trespass of fallen humanity. Yet a careful reader might pause over the narrator's description of his predecessors. The first is logical enough: "the wrath of Achilles" has been the epitome of the *Iliad* for centuries, and μῆνιν, wrath, is both the first word of the poem and the subject on which the poet invokes

[69] *PL* 9.1-19.

the muse. But the rage of Turnus is not the subject of the *Aeneid*, nor is Turnus its hero. Nor are the two divine vendettas, Poseidon's against Odysseus and Juno's against Aeneas, the subjects of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. Poseidon in particular plays a relatively minor role in the narrative of the *Odyssey*. He does not appear in the opening invocation; although his anger is mentioned in the first divine council, the gods gather there to circumvent Poseidon's annoyance—which seems to be out of proportion if not wholly unwarranted—and bring Odysseus safely home despite him.[70]

Juno's antagonism towards Aeneas plays a more prominent role in both the plot and the ethics of the *Aeneid*. It is in response to her unrelenting opposition that Virgil's narrator, in the opening invocation of the poem, raises the *Aeneid*'s great ethical problem: *Tantaene animis caelestibus irae*, "Can such anger in heavenly spirits exist?"[71] Elsewhere in *Paradise Lost* this question is asked three times; each time either the questioner or the heavenly spirit in question is Satan.[72] This association implies that Satan fundamentally misapprehends the benevolent nature of Milton's truly celestial beings. If Juno's transformation into Satan suggests once again a destructive reading of the function of classical epic in Milton's poem, the adoption of the *Aeneid*'s formula to explore the

---

[70] Tobias Gregory, *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 38-40, argues that the chief cause of the long delay in Odysseus' return is Poseidon's anger. However, more than two-thirds of Odysseus' ten years' absence is spent with Kalypso on her island, and some portion of that stay is against Odysseus' will; we are never told when Odysseus began to wish to leave Ogygia, but the poem implies that Odysseus has yearned to return home for a long time. Poseidon's anger is given relatively little space in the poem despite its important role in the causal logic of the story. It also receives surprisingly little attention in Renaissance arguments, summaries, and allegories of the poem, which tend to focus more on the character and deeds of Odysseus. In this, they follow Virgil and Horace, who emphasize Odysseus' actions and character traits rather than his interactions with the gods.

[71] Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 1.11. All quotations of the Latin are from this edition; translations are my own.

[72] Richard DuRocher, "'Tears Such as Angels Weep': Passion and Allusion in *Paradise Lost*," The 2007 Conference on John Milton, Murfreesboro, TN, 26 October 2007.

Christian metaphysical problem of the existence of evil in a universe created and governed by a benevolent God suggests a more serious, constructive engagement with the *Aeneid*'s method of interrogating the relationship between the human and the divine. In the proem to Book 9, though, Juno's deeply problematic anger is reduced to little more than a footnote; it trails behind not only Poseidon's far less consequential anger against Odysseus but various examples of human rage and resentment. Wrath and grudges of men and gods alike, the narrator claims, are the stuff of epic—that is, of the epic he rejects. Neither *andra*, the man who opens the text of the *Odyssey*, nor *arma virumque*, the arms and the man sung by Virgil, feature in his description. Nor do the deeds of the gods constitute heroic matter; as Tobias Gregory puts it, "Epic tells of *mortal* deeds in a supernaturally inflected world."[73]

The Book 9 proem skews its view of ancient epic in general and the *Odyssey* in particular to suggest that they focus not just on the wrath, but on the *justified* wrath of humans against each other and especially of divinities against mortals. The narrator argues Turnus's case more forcefully than Virgil does; as Dennis Burden has remarked, "disespoused" is a strong term for Lavinia, sought in marriage by Turnus but never promised to him.[74] The epithet strengthens Turnus's claim that Aeneas has unjustly wronged him and grants Turnus the moral high ground in their quarrel. The context of the references presents Poseidon's anger at Odysseus and Juno's at Aeneas as similarly justified: the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience is said to be more heroic than, but comparable to, two extreme examples of human anger—Achilles' and Turnus's—and

---

[73] Gregory, *From Many Gods to One*, 1 (my italics).

[74] Dennis Burden, *The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of* Paradise Lost (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 12.

two of divine anger—Poseidon's and Juno's. Epic, in this view (a view accepted by Burden), treats of human and divine wrath for human transgressions. Crucially, none of these classical examples of wrathful heroic argument are resolved, with the possible exception of Achilles's. Turnus is defeated, as in a sense are Poseidon and Juno; that is, the humans they oppose succeed in spite of their opposition. But Turnus is not reconciled, even temporarily, with Aeneas before his death; the *Aeneid* creates no space for the fleeting moment of identification and sympathy between enemies shared by Achilles and Priam, no catharsis like that achieved at the end of the *Iliad.* Although Odysseus and Aeneas successfully complete their journeys, neither Poseidon nor Juno is appeased. Odysseus may be instructed by Teiresias to burn hekatombs to the angry god of the sea on his next overland voyage, but this sacrifice will ensure only that Odysseus will be able to live out the rest of his life in peace on Ithaka; it will bring about a truce, not a reconciliation. Nor is there any suggestion that at the end of the *Aeneid,* having hated the Trojans throughout the ten years' war and its aftermath and still resenting the preordained sack of Carthage, Juno is prepared to forget the slight offered her by Paris or the future injury to one of her favored cities, let alone forgive the survivors of the war for not having died alongside their kindred or the Romans for their victories in the Punic Wars. *Fata viam invenient*—the fates will find a way[75]—but the gods of the classical world, though they may have to live with the outcomes of a fate that overrules their wills, do not have to like it.

The distinction between these epic arguments and the argument of *Paradise Lost* lies not in the degree of transgression or wrath, but in its outcome. The "more heroic"

---

[75] *Aen.* 10.113.

subject of *Paradise Lost* encompasses reconciliation as well as wrath, not only between mankind and divinity but between Adam and Eve, and this fuller compass constitutes the greater heroism of Milton's poem.[76] Because this reconciliation must be performed by each individual, it opens a space for heroic endeavor in each life. The suffering of "patience and heroic martyrdom" must be borne in some fashion or another by each human; this harmonizes with Milton's Arminianism, which makes election contingent on persevering in faith.[77] *Paradise Lost* thus accomplishes both the overgoing of its predecessors and the exemplarity that are central elements of the epic tradition in its emphasis on reconciliation after wrath, both in its plot and in the ethical journey it imagines for its readers. We have seen one side of this reconciliation—the reconciliation between mankind and deity—in the Father and Son's determination to enable fallen mankind to work together with the divine purpose towards a safe homecoming and in Adam's discovery that, even fallen, communication and a sense of shared purpose with the divine presence are still possible through prayer. We see another through the threat to and re-establishment of Adam and Eve's marriage. The reinvention of their marriage leads directly to their reconciliation with God. Their marriage also enables them to face and overcome fallen experience, providing them with the tools to survive in a fallen world. In its emphasis on marriage and survivorship as epic matter, *Paradise Lost* adapts core Odyssean values for its vision of heroic human existence. In doing so *Paradise Lost*

---

[76] Burden, *The Logical Epic*, 10-13 argues that the distinction between classical and Miltonic epic lies in the quality of divine anger; the Father's anger is a matter of justice rather than resentment, and therefore it allows for the reconciliation that he ultimately intends. Where Burden focuses on the distinction between the causes of divine anger (justice vs. resentment), I focus instead on the outcome of that anger (reconciliation vs. grudging truce).

[77] See Milton's insistence in his own voice, in *De Doctrina Christiana*, that "God has revealed the way of eternal salvation only to the individual faith of each man, and demands of us that any man who wishes to be saved should work out his beliefs for himself" (*YP* 6.118).

becomes, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, an Odyssean text.

4. Further Voices, Fragmented Voices: Paradise Lost as Odyssean Text

In my last chapter, I demonstrated that one subset of Milton's allusions to the *Odyssey* draws on Renaissance patterns of reading the *Odyssey* for theological enlightenment and reflection. *Paradise Lost*, through these allusions, engages not just the theological debates conducted around and through these Homeric passages, but certain habits of reading Homer current in Milton's age. In this chapter, I will turn instead to the habits of reading poems against each other through allusive and intertextual relationships. Individually, the Odyssean allusions we have just considered function as local allusions: each refers to a specific target passage, and the content and context (including contemporary interpretations) of that target passage inform, enrich, or complicate our understanding of the Miltonic passage in which the allusion takes place. Due to the specificity of these allusions, this allusive process is subject to a high degree of authorial control. The reader is asked to perform a certain amount of interpretive work at the moment where the allusion occurs, and the repeated use of Homeric allusions in a single strand of the poem—in this case, the divine councils that establish the theory and set in motion the practice of human salvation—invite the reader to connect the allusions, to read later allusions in a given context against earlier allusions to the same poem in the same context. These connections, however, follow paths established by the text; if an Odyssean allusion in a passage in Book 10 draws us back to an earlier Odyssean allusion in a related passage in Book 3, it does not necessarily invite a direct comparison to an Odyssean allusion in a totally unrelated passage. The texts into which the allusions are set help to determine the first choices for connecting allusions to each other. These textual

and contextual connections transform the allusions in Books 3 and 10 from a series of local and glossatorial allusions into a systematic allusion, in Stephen Hinds's term. That is, they license us to read the framing narrative of *Paradise Lost* against the framing narrative of the *Odyssey*, to see the two texts in dialogue with each other. Tracking these dialogues with precision presents difficulties, however. Hinds criticizes most systematic studies for being "non-dialogic"—in his terms,

> *either* the alluding text *or* the model text is accorded the privilege of a systematic reading—but not both at the same time. Either the *incorporating* text is read systematically, with the incorporated text fragmented into discrete events 'alluded to', or the *incorporated* text is read systematically, with the incorporating text fragmented into discrete acts of allusive gesturing.[1]

As Hinds admits, a truly dialogic reading may be an unattainable ideal; it may be impossible to hold both alluding and model text in mind with equal prominence at all times. Nonetheless, the very concept of a dialogic reading offers us a useful tool with which to think. We can rephrase the claim that *Paradise Lost* can be seen as an Odyssean text, made at the close of the previous chapter, in Hinds's terms: how might *Paradise Lost* read the *Odyssey* systematically, while also retaining its integrity as a systematic text itself?

We have seen one answer to this question already: *Paradise Lost* constructs its framing narrative on the model of the *Odyssey*'s framing narrative precisely because the Homeric frame addresses ethical questions Milton wishes to address, from a viewpoint similar to Milton's. Given its role in creating the narrative and ethical frame of *Paradise Lost*, the *Odyssey* as a whole takes on special importance for *Paradise Lost* as a whole. But constructing the frame of *Paradise Lost* upon the frame of the *Odyssey* invites us to

---

[1] Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 101.

carry the identification of the two texts one step further: to map the human story of *Paradise Lost*, the framed narrative, onto the human story of the *Odyssey*. The relationship between Milton's and Homer's text becomes more intertextual than allusive, the interpretation of that relationship and the scope of the issues it illuminates in the text controlled as much by the reader and by Homer's original, or by what Alessandro Barchiesi has called "la traccia del modello," the traces or tracks of the predecessor text, as by Milton. These traces invite us to track the *Odyssey* through *Paradise Lost* in directions potentially determined by the logic of Homer's text or by our own readerly reactions rather than by Milton's continuous use of concrete allusions.[2] The use of an Odyssean frame invites us to draw connections between Odyssean allusions or echoes as we read the rest of *Paradise Lost*, to think about how apparently local allusions might in fact coalesce into a coherent and pervasive Odyssean system. These systems, at once invited by Milton's poetry and produced by the reader's interpretive activity, may sustain Milton's theology, as we saw in the previous chapter, but they may also destabilize the official voice of Milton's poem. In this chapter, we shall see how one possible way of following the Homeric traces in *Paradise Lost* complicates our reading of the Fall.

Milton's distortion of the *Odyssey* in the proem to Book 9, as we have seen in the conclusion of the preceding chapter, catches the reader's attention and forces him to interrogate not only Milton's claims for the greater heroism of his poem, but other appearances of the *Odyssey* in *Paradise Lost*. The friction between the view of the *Odyssey* presented in that proem and more familiar readings of the *Odyssey* draw the Odyssean patterns of *Paradise Lost* (and especially the patterns in the rest of Book 9)

---

[2] Alessandro Barchiesi, *La traccia del modello: effetti omerici nella narrazione virgiliana* (Pisa: Giardini, 1984). See also Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 101, for his thoughtful appraisal of Barchiesi's work.

closer to the surface of the text; patterns of allusion and revision that might have remained submerged instead become visible precisely because the dissonant reading in the proem heightens our alertness to them. Paradoxically, these patterns underpin the resolution that the proem claims as more heroic, and they do so by focusing that resolution through two key Odyssean topics: marriage and experience. In R. O. A. M. Lyne's terms, they create a "further voice", a counter-current to the "epic voice" that claims to unfold objectively the narrative of the poem and to supply its correct interpretation. The epic voice of *Paradise Lost*—the narrator's voice, the voice of the implied author—laments the Fall as an unmitigated evil for humanity and dismisses the accuracy and the heroism of classical epic. The further voice, a reading against the grain embedded in the text itself, simultaneously allows a different interpretation of events into the poem and undermines the epic voice's privileged, foregrounded perspective.[3] In Lyne's words,

> Further voices add to, comment upon, question, and occasionally subvert the implications of the epic voice. A further voice is characterized by *discretion*: a reader inclined to hearken to the epic voice is not irritatingly diverted; and yet also by *persistence*: such voices are irremovably there.[4]

This chapter explores the ramifications of an Odyssean further voice in *Paradise Lost* that, though at times puzzling or even paradoxical, is nonetheless there. It then steps back

---

[3] For the theory of "further voices," see R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Virgil's* Aeneid (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987). See also Lyne's direct predecessor, Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*," *Arion* 2 (1963): 66-80. Geoffrey Hartman's classic article on the similes of *Paradise Lost*, "Milton's Counterplot," in *Beyond Formalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 113-23, describes a similar but distinct kind of contrapuntal voice. Hartman terms the "counterplot" an insistence, in the similes that ostensibly describe Satan's power, on divine confidence in the ultimate endurance of creation, woven contrapuntally into the texture of the similes. His counterplot thus differs from Lyne's further voice in its intent; where the counterplot offers stability and reassurance to the reader, projecting the declared purpose of the poem into the moments that seem most strongly to challenge that message, the further voice undermines the official voice of the poem, exposing its authority and its ethics alike to questioning and qualification.

[4] Lyne, *Further Voices*, 2.

to ask how these allusions to the *Odyssey* combine with the allusions traced in the previous chapter to invite a reading of *Paradise Lost* as an Odyssean poem.

This further voice emerges through allusions to a specific Odyssean moment, scattered throughout *Paradise Lost* and often made only obliquely. That moment is the choice Odysseus faces on Scheria, the utopian island of the Phaiakian people that is his last stop before his return to Ithaka. Milton weaves repeated allusions to this "choice of Odysseus" into the world of Eden and the narrative of the Fall. These allusions establish both Satan and Adam as versions of Odysseus, representatives of two traditions of reading the *Odyssey*. By juxtaposing these two diametrically opposed characters through their Odyssean traits and echoes, *Paradise Lost* explores the various readings of the *Odyssey* that it inherits from the epic tradition and the critical tradition alike. By making value judgments on these readings, Milton intervenes in traditional practices of reading Homer and offers his own view of what the *Odyssey* is "about," and what it can offer his own readers. These readings continue the development of the Odyssean ethics explored in the previous chapter. Through comparisons of Eden to Scheria, the poem suggests flaws in Eden and locates in the fallen world opportunities that are not present in Eden. It sets Adam's decision to fall with Eve in a context that permits us to see that decision as heroic, and it explores the benefits of experience for marriage and for a fallen relationship with the divine: the compensations that human experience provides for the loss of paradise.

In exploring the epic quality and results of Adam and Eve's fall and reconciliation, I follow E. M. W. Tillyard, who argued that Milton was "revolutionary" in

his decision "to domesticate his crisis."[5] Tillyard identifies the crisis of the epic with Adam and Eve's fall, argument, and reunion: "this purely human scene of man and wife forgetting their quarrels, coming together again, and confessing their sin to God," later praised as a "noble self-extrication from the slough of inertia and despair...more heroic than the traditional epic deeds of martial prowess."[6] Tillyard cites the *Odyssey* as a precedent for Milton's choice of a domestic epic crux, but not a model. Much more recently, Thomas Luxon has also identified marriage as epic matter in Milton. Luxon, however, feels that this is ultimately an area in which the epic fails, due to Milton's refusal to theorize marriage as a relationship between equal partners. As a result, "marriage in Milton's poems remains an epic obstacle rather than a locus of epic return and recovery."[7] Departing from Tillyard, I argue that placing Adam and Eve's marriage at the crux of both the plot and the ethical crises does make *Paradise Lost* a fundamentally Odyssean text; departing from Luxon, I argue that Adam and Eve achieve their "epic return and recovery" not as an individual but as a joint project, precisely through their efforts to cling to and renovate their marriage. The *Odyssey* is *the* epic of recovery and return, the epic that ends with its hero at his wife's side in his original home, valuing that wife and home all the more for his experiences. As Tillyard realized, the *Odyssey* is the epic of marriage, the epic that shows us how interpersonal relationships and human love and longing for home and spouse can become the stuff of heroism.

---

[5] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The English Epic and Its Background* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1954), 435.

[6] Tillyard, *English Epic*, 437.

[7] Thomas Luxon, *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage, and Friendship* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 2.

I. Recuperative Rewriting: Satan and Adam as Odysseus in Eden

The dialogue between *Paradise Lost* and the *Odyssey* begins by embedding a debate between two readings of Homer's text into the structure of *Paradise Lost*. By using the same pattern of character relationships to construct the relationships between Satan and Sin and those between the Father, the Son, and Adam—and by using them in a manner more faithful to the Homeric source text—the divine council reasserts a benign vision of this Odyssean episode. The presence of two versions of this material in Milton's text invites us to read them against each other as well as against the source text; it suggests that we must do so in order to understand fully the function of the Odyssean source text in *Paradise Lost*. Milton's practice recalls the medieval allegorizers of classical texts (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* above all) who frequently offer two competing allegories of a single episode, one an essentially positive interpretation of its moral and one essentially negative: readings *in bono* and *in malo*. Although Milton's subtle allusive practices are far more sophisticated than the commentators' simple insertion of allegorical commentaries into the margins of classical texts, the competing versions of classical allusions he offers frequently carry opposite moral valences. The tangle of incestuous relationships between Satan and Sin perverts the charitable, pastoral, and filial relationships of *Odyssey* 1; the proper distribution of these relationships in *Paradise Lost* 3 both corrects the errors of *Paradise Lost* 2 and forces the reader to interrogate the relationship between benign Miltonic revision and Homeric source more closely.

Other critics have shown that Milton uses other myths and epic references in similarly doubled fashion, as figures for Satan and, later, for the poet-narrator, Adam, or

the Son. Frequently Milton weaves both straightforward retellings and freer revisions of a given myth into *Paradise Lost.* While Satan resembles both Icarus and Phaethon in his journey through Chaos, for instance, the Son (during the war in heaven) and the narrator (in his ascent out of darkness in the invocation to Book 3) each enact versions of these myths that end happily, with their journeys successfully completed.[8] These recuperative rewritings allow Milton not only to contest the pagan religious and philosophical uses of classical myth and to assert the superiority of Christian revelation, as other critics have argued; they also allow Milton to turn apparently negative and cautionary tales to positive exemplary effect.[9] The Son's triumph in the War in Heaven allows Milton to recover the virtues Phaethon has the opportunity to prove but fails to display and to present their success as compatible with—even necessary for—Christian virtue.

We can read in a similar way the two figures of Odysseus that Milton weaves into his narrative of the Fall. Satan has already been established in Book 2 as worse than the worst imaginings of Odysseus to date, worse than Dante's damnable Ulysses (a portrait heavily indebted to the "scelerum inventor" of Virgil, whose mediation is signaled when the character of Virgil serves as interpreter for the Greekless Dante in his conversation with Ulysses). And Adam has already been established as the Odysseus particularly beloved of the gods through the mention of his "hyacinthine locks" in Book 4. Book 9 no

---

[8] Francis Blessington, Paradise Lost *and the Classical Epic* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 51, suggests that "if Satan represented a degenerate Odysseus, Adam represents a perfected one and an antithesis to Satan's Odyssean phase, as the Son was the antithesis to his Achillean phase." See also Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 296-97, who argues that Milton uses positive as well as negative allegorical readings of Odysseus, although he sees both views of Odysseus concentrated in Satan; and David Quint, "Fear of Falling: Icarus, Phaethon, and Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 57 (2004): 847-81, who argues that the Son's triumph over Satan in the War in Heaven rewrites both the myth of Phaethon and Satan's straightforward reenactment of that myth.

[9] For Milton's use of what Quint calls "inversion" to combat Lucretius, see Quint, "Fear of Falling," 869-71.

sooner repeats the identification of Eden with Scheria than it provides the test of each Odysseus's behavior at that crucial moment of choice. What would a wicked Ulysses do? He would shamelessly seduce Nausikaa, much as Satan proceeds to seduce Eve.[10] What would an estimable Odysseus do? He would make the choice the Odysseus of the *Odyssey* does in fact make: to return to Penelope at the cost of declining a life of leisure in Scheria as Nausikaa's consort. Adam rejects ease and comfort for the endurance of hardship and the cultivation of temperance, for a lifetime of training in what we might call Odyssean virtues. And he places the continuation of his marriage at the center of his experience. The re-introduction of Odysseus in the character of Adam provides an example of the fashioning of a good postlapsarian man that readers were taught to seek in the *Odyssey*: a man completed and to some extent defined by a strong companionate marriage. Adam's Odysseus *in bono* follows and supersedes Satan's Odysseus *in malo*, and thus he goes some way towards recovering Odysseus as a heroic figure for Milton's readers.

In my first chapter, I argued that Medoro's departure from the battlegrounds of France for the pleasures of Cathay and marriage to Angelica represents a choice of romance stasis over epic teleology, and that in doing so, it rewrites the original version of that choice: Odysseus's decision to quit Scheria and decline a marriage to Nausikaa in order to return to Ithaka and resume his marriage to Penelope.[11] I suggested that this

---

[10] Manoocher Aryanpur, "*Paradise Lost* and the *Odyssey*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 9 (1969): 151-166, demonstrates that Satan's dialogue with Eve in the garden echoes Odysseus' encounter with Nausikaa in *Od.* 6-7.

[11] Jean-Pierre Vernant, "The Refusal of Odysseus," in Seth L. Schein, ed., *Reading the* Odyssey*: Selected Interpretive Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 185-89, makes a distinct but similar argument. In Vernant's reading, Odysseus' refusal to remain on Ogygia and accept Kalypso's offer of immortality in *Odyssey* 5 represents a refusal to give up his identity as an epic hero. This identity requires not only continued accomplishments on the map of the known world, but also the hero's death in order that

moment of choice provides the Odyssean answer to the "choice of Achilles," the *Iliad*'s revelation that Achilles has been given a choice between undying glory following an early death at Troy and a long life at home with no lasting reputation after his death. The "choice of Odysseus" marks a crucial turning point in the action of the *Odyssey* and, in later epic, becomes an emblem of the difference between epic and romance. The heroes of the two modes are distinguished from each other by the choices they make at this crossroads: either to press forward towards a chosen end, forging a path through the seemingly insuperable obstacles that present themselves along the way, or to be drawn into a cycle of repetition and reiteration of past adventures, a cycle that by turning away from the possibility of change and growth leads only to a static happiness. Such a crossroads presents itself to Adam in *Paradise Lost* at the moment of his temptation by Eve, explicitly keyed to its Odyssean precursor through several allusions. Adam's "hyacinthine locks" identify him not just with Odysseus but specifically with Odysseus on Scheria. Odysseus's hair is not usually said to resemble hyacinth petals; Homer reserves the description for two moments in which Athene has enhanced Odysseus's appearance. The first and most famous of these moments comes on Scheria, as Odysseus emerges transformed from his river-bath to amaze Nausikaa:

> then Athene, daughter of Zeus, made him seem taller
> for the eye to behold, and thicker, and on his head she arranged
> the curling locks that hung down like hyacinthine petals.
> And as when a master craftsman overlays gold on silver,
> and he is one who was taught by Hephaistos and Pallas Athene
> in art complete, and grace is on every work he finishes,
> so Athene gilded with grace his head and his shoulders.[12]

---

he may be posthumously celebrated in song. Vernant does not consider Odysseus' refusal in terms of epic and romance, but he too emphasizes the necessity of a telos for an epic hero to be considered either epic or heroic.

[12] Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), 6.229-35. All English-language quotations are from this edition unless otherwise noted. For the sake of consistency with Lattimore, I adopt his transliterations of all Greek names found in the *Odyssey*, even when Lattimore's own

Adam is similarly described on his first appearance: "hyacinthine locks / Round from his parted forelock manly hung / Clustering."[13] And this Odyssean Adam similarly amazes Satan, who "still in gaze, as first he stood, / Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad."[14] The allusion resonates with the context of its Odyssean source: the Odyssean passage both tells us that Athene crafted Odysseus's physical appearance and likens him to a masterwork by a craftsman who enjoys divine favor. The allusion in *Paradise Lost* thus underlines Adam's status as both a creation and an image of the Father. It identifies Adam specifically with Odysseus on Scheria from his first appearance in Book 4, thus preparing the parallels to be drawn later between Eden and Scheria and identifying Odysseus as a touchstone for Adam's character.

These include two allusions that explicitly compare Eden to Scheria. The first comes in Book 5, relatively early in our acquaintance with Eden, the second as the crucial moment of decision approaches in Book 9:

> from each tender stalk
> Whatever earth all-bearing mother yields
> In India east or west, or middle shore
> In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
> Alcinous reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
> Rough, or smooth rined, or bearded husk, or shell
> She gathers, tribute large...[15]

---

transliterations are inconsistent (e.g. Καλυπσώ as "Kalypso" but Κίρκη as "Circe"). The lines are repeated, with only a small variation in the first line, at *Od.* 23.156-162, as Athene prepares Odysseus for his reunion with Penelope. The implications of the suggestion that *both* Nausikaa and Penelope stand behind Eve will become clear as this chapter progresses.

[13] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1998), 4.301-3. All quotations of *Paradise Lost* (hereafter *PL*) are from this edition. Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 51, also notes this allusion, as does Davis P. Harding, *The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Classical Background of* Paradise Lost (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 71.

[14] *PL* 4.356-57.

[15] *PL* 5.337-43.

> Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
> Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
> Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son,
> Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
> Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.[16]

An appropriate frame of reference for Eden, the allusions make clear, is the paradisal garden in the palace of the ideal ruler Alkinoös on the utopian island of Scheria, described in *Odyssey* 7.112-32. It might seem odd that Eden is compared to a specific classical earthly paradise rather than simply placed in the tradition of earthly paradises—that Eden is characterized by means of an allusion rather than a trope—but, then again, Scheria is one of the few earthly paradises in the epic tradition that does not turn out to be an actively menacing false paradise. Unlike Circe's or Kalypso's islands, Armida's garden, or Acrasia's bower, Scheria is presented as ostensibly neutral, a place where Odysseus must not linger but where he may safely rest for a short time. Scheria's neutrality makes it an ideal location for a genuine choice with two equally possible and ethically contrasting outcomes. The comparison to Scheria thus locates Eden at the head of the earthly-paradise tradition, capable of evolving into either the false paradise of epic and romance or the true, Golden Age paradise of pastoral and georgic. Later events in the poem will align Eden retrospectively with one trope or the other, but in this prelapsarian moment Eden can evolve in either direction. The double mention of Scheria locates us at the place and moment of Odysseus's epic choice; it casts the island's shadow over the

---

[16] *PL* 9.439-43. A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 34, 35-36, cites the garden of Alkinoös as "the outstanding image of the garden in antiquity" and notes that although "the standard Golden Age characteristics of social harmony or personal reward for merit" are lacking in the passages that describe the garden itself, "this garden in the *Odyssey* does bring many descriptive elements together in a model which was to influence literary gardens for centuries to come." The evidence of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of Homer confirms Giamatti's reading; many of these editions include a brief printed marginal comment such as "Horti Alcinoi" to mark the description of the garden. The brevity of the note, combined with the fact of its existence, suggests that this was already a well-known *locus* that the reader would want to find but whose significance he would not need explained.

events to come in Eden.

Eden resembles Scheria in other ways as well. Life in Eden combines the two goods Odysseus claims to prize above all things in his stay on Scheria: marriage and poetry. Adam's life in Eden likewise combines both these goods. Eve is there, created to be his consort, and Adam and Eve tell each other stories: memories of their first meeting, tales about the stars, versions of Raphael's narratives and cosmologies. Raphael comes to Eden precisely to tell exemplary and admonitory stories, and over a generous meal provided by Eve he spends two books of the poem narrating to Adam a tale of warfare and epic heroism and a third book recounting the creation. Both these topics, of course, were popular subjects for epic from Homer to Milton, and the echoes of classical epic and the hexaemeral tradition in Raphael's narratives have been thoroughly studied.[17] The central features of Adam's life in Eden, and Eve's too, are those singled out by Odysseus as the greatest goods for mankind and combined in the two praiseworthy societies of the poem, Scheria and Ithaka. The terms in which Eden is defined as a paradise are Odyssean.

This is not to say, however, that Scheria is a completely innocent location, or that the definition of Eden in Scherian terms is unproblematic. Scheria's benign quality is conditional on Odysseus choosing to leave it; it is less dangerous than Kalypso's island of Ogygia only because Odysseus is free to leave at any time. He may also choose to stay, and that choice would turn Scheria into a location akin to Ogygia or Circe's island of Aiaia, or even to the land of the Lotos-Eaters. At least one early English editor of the

---

[17] See especially Blessington, *Classical Epic*; Stella P. Revard, *The War in Heaven:* Paradise Lost *and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); and Barbara Lewalski, Paradise Lost *and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), as well as the other works on *Paradise Lost* and the epic tradition cited in the previous chapter, notes 6 and 7.

Odyssey recognized this negative potential. In his preface to a 1558 edition of Homer's works, Laurence Humphrey lists Scheria and the offer of marriage to Nausikaa among the temptations Odysseus faces and conquers,

> quæ omnia uoluptatem quidem summam, sed obliuionem Ithacæ affere non potuerunt. Quid enim Atlantis filia blandius? quid eius mollissimis sermonibus ad persuadendum efficacius?...Quid ipsa etiam uictoria ac spolijs dulcius? Circeis poculis suauius? Pheacum Alcinoique delicijs summisque beneficijs optatius? Sirenum cantu iucundius? Quid amicitijs Principum clarissimorum hospitijsque charius aut antiquius, qui amplissimis conditionibus ultro delatis & ciuem & generum Vlyssem expetiuerunt?[18]

> which were all indeed the highest of pleasures, but they could not bring him to forget Ithaka. For who is more flattering than the daughter of Atlas? what more effective at persuading than her softest words? ... What indeed is sweeter than victory itself and spoils? more delightful than Circe's potions? more desirable than the highest delights and favors of Phaiakia and Alkinoös? more delightful than the Sirens' singing? What is dearer and more illustrious than the friendship and hospitality of the eminent princes who, having voluntarily offered a great marriage, sought Odysseus as both a citizen and a son-in-law?

Humphrey classes the pleasures of Phaiakia and the offer of marriage to Nausikaa, both in herself and in her political role as the king's daughter, together with Kalypso's blandishments, Circe's potions, and the Sirens' songs. Nausikaa takes her place as a hindrance alongside these dangerous women; the danger she poses is the possibility that she may make Odysseus forget Ithaka and (implicitly) the woman who waits for him there. And the Phaiakians, who seek Odysseus as a *cives* or citizen (a resident with full participatory rights in the island's public affairs and government) as well as the husband of their princess, offer a partial replacement for Ithaka in its political capacity as Odysseus's kingdom. The temptation that Humphrey identifies in Ithaka is a dual one,

---

[18] Homer, *Copiae Cornv sive Oceanvs enarrationvm Homericarvm, ex Evstathii in eundem commentarijs concinnatarum, Hadriano Iunio autore* (Basel: Froben, 1558), *2[r]. Humphrey, a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, published this dedicatory epistle while living in Basel as a Marian exile, where he supported himself in part as a corrector and translator for the printers Hieronymus Froben and Johannes Oporinius (both publishers of Homer). Under Elizabeth he returned to England, became President of Magdalen College and (from 1571-76) vice-chancellor of Oxford, a prominent nonconformist preacher and leading voice against clerical vestments, and successively dean of Gloucester and Winchester cathedrals. His epistle, addressed to the scholars of Magdalen College, suggests that this edition was intended at least in part for the English market and may have had an English audience—although quite an erudite one, as the text is in Greek alone and is printed together with a selection from the authoritative Greek-language commentary by the twelfth-century Byzantine cleric Eustathius.

encompassing marital and political forgetfulness alike.

In the educational treatise *The Scholemaster*, Roger Ascham makes both an argument and a slip of the pen every bit as suggestive as Humphrey's preface. Criticizing a treatise on imitation by Bartolommeo Ricci of Lugo, written for his patron Alfonso d'Este in 1545, Ascham complains that Ricci should have done more to explore actual instances of creative imitation:

> If he had declared where and how, how oft and how many wayes, *Virgil* doth folow *Homer*, as for example the comming of *Vlysses* to *Alcynous* and *Calypso*, with the comming of *Æneas* to *Cartage* and *Dido*...he had not onely bene well liked for his diligence in teaching, but also iustlie commended for his right iudgement in right choice of examples for the best *Imitation*.[19]

Ascham equates Odysseus's stay on Scheria with Aeneas's dalliance with Dido—a potentially disastrous diversion from his epic purpose that must be corrected at all costs. Even more revealing is his substitution of Kalypso for Nausikaa, which suggests that he sees the two as interchangeable, and interchangeable specifically in the context of the threat they pose to Odysseus's homecoming.[20] The slip, rather like Milton's famous reference in *Areopagitica* to Guyon braving the Cave of Mammon with the Palmer at his side, illuminates Ascham's reading of Homer. In his mind, Kalypso and Nausikaa are obstacles similar enough to be mistaken for each other.

These examples predate *Paradise Lost* by a hundred years; they cannot automatically be accepted as reflecting the state of Homeric criticism in Milton's lifetime. Both Humphrey and Ascham were prominent humanist educators, however;

---

[19] Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, in G. Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, reprint ed. (London: Lowe and Brydone, 1934), 1:14-15.

[20] Writing in 1570, Ascham must have known that he was in error here; not only would such a prominent humanist educator have read at least one of the numerous Greek and Latin editions of Homer in circulation by that point, but a few pages later he discusses in some detail the 1550-56 Spanish translation of the *Odyssey* by Gonçalo Perez; Ascham praises Perez for avoiding rhyme but faults him for not having found a Spanish equivalent for Homer's quantitative meter.

their readings remained current long after their publication. Several editions of the *Odyssey* confirm that this passage continued to be read as critically important in England and beyond. The important editor and printer Henri Estienne's editions of Homer's works from the mid-sixteenth century onwards include two marginal notes describing this episode: "Alcinous optat Vlyssem sibi generum" [Alkinoös wishes for Odysseus as his son-in-law] and "Alcinous promittit Vlyssi auxilium" [Alkinoös promises aid to Odysseus]. [21] These phrases, along with many others (but by no means all) taken from the printed marginalia, also appear in the index of important passages printed at the back of the volume.[22] Two very similar annotations, "Alcinous optat Ulyssem filiæ maritum" [Alkinoös wishes for Odysseus as the husband of his daughter] and "Alcinous promittit Ulyssi auxilium" [Alkinoös promises aid to Odysseus] appear in a Greek-Latin edition of the *Odyssey* by the Cambridge printer John Field.[23]As late as 1664, just three years before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, then, texts of the *Odyssey* still drew their readers' attention to this passage. Handwritten marginalia also reveal that individual readers of the *Odyssey* responded strongly to this episode. The Italian humanist Orazio Lombardelli, who was active in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and whose copy of the *Odyssey* is now in the British Library, marked Alkinoös's offer to Odysseus by drawing a squiggly line against it in the margin. The edition, printed by Simon Lemnius at Basel in 1549, also contains a printed marginal note: "Alcinous Nausicaam Vlyssi sponsam offert" [Alkinoös offers Nausikaa as a wife to Odysseus].[24] Although these

---

[21] *Poetæ Græci veteres carminis heroici scriptores* (n.p.: Sumptibus Caldorianæ Societatis, 1606), S5^{v}.

[22] *Poetæ Græci*, Rrr2^{r}.

[23] Homer, *Homeri Odyssea* (Cambridge: John Field, 1664), K8^{v}.

[24] Homer, *Odysseæ libri XXIIII*, ed. Simon Lemnius (Basel: Ioannis Oporini, 1549), nn2^{r}. The copy

readers and editors have left us little evidence of precisely how they read this passage, their notes do reveal that this remained a prominent passage throughout the seventeenth century. Whether its importance was transmitted through classroom teaching, the reprinting of older paratexts, or some other method, it retained its status as a decisive moment long after it had first been stressed in print. The danger implicit in Alkinoös's offer provides Milton with material to develop in two very different directions as he embeds two contrasting revisions of this "choice of Odysseus" into his narrative of the Fall.

Taken individually, the allusions to Odysseus on Scheria do little more than establish Adam's resemblance to Odysseus and Eden's likeness to Scheria. But taken together, the repeated allusions to Scheria and to Odysseus's presence there coalesce into a systematic allusion; the use of an Odyssean character and location to define characters and locations of *Paradise Lost* invites the reader to interpret narrative and context in Odyssean terms as well, to relate the textual matrix of *Paradise Lost* to that of the *Odyssey*. These allusions establish Eden's resemblance not only to a specific classical earthly paradise, but to a temptation Odysseus must reject and a temporary resting place from which he must progress in order to attain full heroic status and to achieve the telos of his life. And they locate an Odysseus-figure in that paradise, strengthening the impression that a variation on the choice of Odysseus is about to arrive. Arrive it duly does, through the intervention of a second Odysseus-figure: Satan. The *in malo* counterpart to the unfallen Adam's Odysseus *in bono*, Satan enters into Eden and tempts Eve in a sequence of events and through a series of rhetorical flourishes that recall Odysseus in the most negative of lights. Satan's successful temptation of Eve not only

---

examined is BL C.66.b.2.

offers an alternative version of the events that take place on Scheria, it creates the Odyssean crossroads that Adam confronts when he must choose either to fall with Eve or to remain in Eden, either alone or with a new wife. The Odyssean further voice introduced into the narrative of the Fall creates parallels between Adam's fall and Odysseus's heroic choice to return home. Casting the Fall in Odyssean terms, it simultaneously explores the benefits of falling and enables a reading of the reconciliation that follows as the first example of human heroism. Without overturning the powerful sense that the Fall is a tragedy for humankind, the Odyssean further voice quietly suggests that certain positive experiences are possible to a greater degree in the fallen world than in unfallen Eden.

The allusion in Book 2 likening Satan's flight through Chaos to Odysseus's journey past Skylla and Charybdis has been widely noted, and in fact that allusion makes Satan out to be even more Odyssean than Odysseus: Satan flies

> harder beset
> And more endangered, than when Argo passed
> Through Bosporus betwixt the jostling rocks:
> Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
> Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered.[25]

Satan's feats may be even more virtuosic than those of Odysseus, but, as is always the case with Satan's imitations of Odyssean characters, the ethics and motives underlying those feats are wholly different. Satan imitates Odysseus in action, but not in thought—and thinking is what is most characteristic of Odysseus. Here as elsewhere, Satan produces only a flawed because unreflective imitation of Odysseus. But without ever again explicitly comparing Satan to Odysseus, Milton weaves some suggestive

---

[25] *PL* 2.1016-20.

resemblances to the action of *Odyssey* 6 into Satan's encounter with Eve in *Paradise Lost* 9. These resemblances function, like the Odyssean stratum beneath the divine council of *Paradise Lost* 3, as an armature on which Milton can model his poem's action; they invite us to read that action as a rewriting not just of the events of *Odyssey* 6, but of its ethics.

When Odysseus, after swimming for two days and two nights, finally arrives at Scheria, he cannot immediately reach the land; the coast is too rocky and the waves too rough. He circles the island until he comes to the mouth of a river, where he swims upstream until he can safely come ashore on the riverbank. There, exhausted, he hides himself in a pile of leaves under a thicket of bushes and falls asleep. Satan, attempting to enter Eden without alerting the watching angels, circles Eden seven times before finding an entrance "on the coast averse"[26]: through the river Tigris, where

> Into a gulf shot underground, till part
> Rose up a fountain by the tree of life;
> In with the river sunk, and with it rose
> Satan involved in rising mist, then sought
> Where to lie hid.

As Alastair Fowler notes, each geographical feature named in the description of Satan's travels around the earth that immediately follows this passage is a river or sea.[27] Although Satan is presumably flying, not swimming, around the earth, the exclusive focus on his travels over water makes his journey sound like a sea voyage. And he too enters Paradise through a river channel, after finding it inaccessible via any other means.[28] After a long lament, Satan sets out to look for the serpent, which he has already

---

[26] *PL* 9.67.

[27] *PL* 9.71-75. See Fowler's note on *PL* 9.76-82 for the emphasis on the aquatic features Satan passes.

[28] Aryanpur, "*Paradise Lost* and the *Odyssey*," 153, also remarks on the similarity between Odysseus'

chosen as the instrument of his deception of Adam and Eve:

> So saying, through each thicket dank or dry,
> Like a black mist low creeping, he held on
> His midnight search, where soonest he might find
> The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
> In labyrinth of many a round self-roled,
> His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
> Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
> Not nocent yet, but on the grassy herb
> Fearless unfeared he slept: in at his mouth
> The devil entered, and his brutal sense,
> In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
> With act intelligential; but his sleep
> Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.[29]

Like Odysseus, Satan searches through the thickets of low brush to find a place to shelter himself; here the shelter sought is not a pile of warm leaves to protect him from the twin dangers of the night air and wild beasts, but a beast itself. And like Odysseus, once Satan has found a hiding place, he settles in to wait out the night before resuming his pursuit of his ultimate goal. Of course there are differences here as well as similarities, but Satan is a parody of Odysseus, not an imitation; his actions mimic those of Odysseus in some respects, but the intention behind them is wholly different.[30] Odysseus comes to seek help

---

arrival on Scheria and Satan's entry into Eden. But the parallels between the two entries are, I believe, closer than Aryanpur represents them to be, and certainly constructed with greater intent and to greater purpose for a reading of *Paradise Lost* than Aryanpur suggests. He characterizes the similarities as "echoes:"

> To say that in writing *Paradise Lost* Milton was mindful of the *Odyssey* is not to say that he borrowed from the *Odyssey* in the sense that he borrowed from the book of Genesis or the *Divine Weeks* of Du Bartas....Milton was describing the struggle of Satan against God in a strictly Christian framework. But in doing so, he confronted certain archetypal situations that, eclectic as he was and well versed in Homer as he was, reminded him of the *Odyssey*, and he echoed...the words of the blind poet for whom he had much admiration. The echoes are faded, but they are there as in a palimpsest, giving *Paradise Lost* a depth and wealth of associations which only a great masterpiece can possess.

By this point we have seen not only that Milton's "framework" blends classical and Christian thought, but that the Odyssean subtext of *Paradise Lost* is in fact an integral part of both its structure and its ethics. It is by excavating the Odyssean skeleton of sections of *Paradise Lost* that we sharpen our sense of certain questions the poem asks and provide ourselves with threads to lead ourselves to possible answers.

[29] *PL* 9.179-91.

[30] See Blessington, *Classical Epic*, ch. 1, for a reading of the classical echoes in the infernal sector of the poem and the character of Satan as parodic rather than straightforward imitations.

in returning home, while Satan comes to destroy mankind through deceit—to tear Adam and Eve from their home and, in bringing about their death and their damnation, to draw them to something very like the hell that is *his* home, which way he flies. In this, Satan's parody of Odysseus very much resembles the Latinate distortions of Odysseus that, following Virgil, elect Odysseus as the chief cause of all the Trojans' woe. The "subtle wiles" stored up in the serpent's head may even recall one of Odysseus's distinguishing traits—but if they do, it is important to note that they in themselves are "not nocent yet." The infusion of Satan's malevolence, not the Odyssean aspects of serpent or journey, threaten harm to Adam and Eve.

The action of the *Odyssey* then switches to the palace of the Phaiakians, where Nausikaa, inspired by a dream sent to her by Athene, asks her father Alkinoös to let her go to the river to do the laundry. Once arrived at the river, she and her handmaidens wake Odysseus, who supplicates Nausikaa for clean clothing and an escort to the palace; his fair words not only win her assistance, they also inspire her with liking for the handsome stranger. She hints at her desire for him; later her father offers Odysseus her hand in marriage. And it is this offer, as we have seen, that forms one half of the "choice of Odysseus": the circular, romance half. Nausikaa becomes an innocent version of Circe or Kalypso, combining their offers of a life of pleasure in an earthly paradise with the unique temptation she poses: a marriage that closely recapitulates his early life with Penelope.

In the next movement of *Paradise Lost* 9, Eve secures her separation from an unwilling Adam. Critics have seen echoes of Nausikaa in Eve elsewhere in the scene, and Eve's eagerness for a brief separation from Adam in order to work more efficiently may

echo Nausikaa's desire to be a good daughter and sister by leaving her father's palace to do the royal family's laundry.[31] But no sooner does Satan arrive on the scene than Eden is once again compared explicitly to Scheria; the garden tended by Eve becomes the

> Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
> Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
> Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son,
> Or that not mystic, where the sapient king
> Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.[32]

The allusion links Eden to the palace gardens on Scheria at the moment that Odysseus is a guest there—in other words, to the episode that might be said to begin with Odysseus's supplication of Nausikaa. And what follows is a seduction, initially disguised as a supplication, of Eve. We might also note that the other gardens to which Eden is compared are gardens of seduction, identified by and almost reduced to the excessively sensual and ethically vitiated affairs conducted there. This is strange company for Scheria, and its inclusion in this list seems to suggest that something inappropriately distracting does take place there.

---

[31] The resemblances between Eve and Nausikaa are most fully explored in Aryanpur, "*Paradise Lost* and the *Odyssey*," 153-55 and 156-58. In the former passage he draws parallels between Nausikaa's and Eve's innocence and beauty; between the dreams that visit each at some point (sent by Athene to Nausikaa explicitly to draw her into Odysseus' path in *Od.* 6, by Satan to Eve to begin the process of her corruption in *PL* 5); and between the similes comparing Nausikaa to Artemis in *Od.* 6.102-9 and Eve to a wood-nymph and to Delia [=Artemis] in *PL* 9.386-92. In the latter passage he compares Nausikaa and Eve as seen through the eyes of Odysseus and Satan respectively, noting the amazement Satan feels and Odysseus professes to feel at the sight of such beauty; the praise of that beauty each offers as he begins to speak to her. He then notes resemblances between each woman's response to her interlocutor: Nausikaa reassures her companions that Odysseus is harmless, while Eve protests to Adam both before and after her fall that the serpent appeared harmless; Nausikaa is impressed by the beauty Athene lends Odysseus, while Eve marvels at the serpent's ability to speak. Barbara Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and Epic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 53, argues that Nausikaa's attention to housekeeping reflects her entirely appropriate desire to gain honor in her proper (domestic) sphere; on p. 194 she draws attention to the concern for efficiency that Eve gives as her reason for wishing to work separately from Adam. See also Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 229-31, who notes Adam's praise of Eve's desire for efficiency at *PL* 9.232-34 but argues that "in Eve's desire for more efficient, literal labor lies the threat to a sacred vocation" (231), a threat parallel to seventeenth-century developments in the English economy.

[32] *PL* 9.439-43.

There is a tinge of sensuality in the interactions between Nausikaa and Odysseus; and if Nausikaa's slightly forward hints about how she would quite like to have a husband perhaps explain why Scheria features in a list of gardens presided over by seductresses, Milton's identification of Scheria through an emphasis on Odysseus keeps him uppermost in our minds as we make that identification. But the threat of seduction here also picks up a textual detail in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus emerges naked and salt-covered from the brush to supplicate Nausikaa for aid, he breaks off a branch to cover his μήδεα φωτός, his male genitals.[33] The text uncovers his sexual organs for us even as it describes Odysseus covering them; the language is unnecessarily descriptive, emphasizing as it does the gender of those genitals, and thus it draws attention to the sexual implications of Odysseus' nudity. When he has concealed his genitalia, Odysseus emerges from the shelter of the bushes where he has hidden, ready to μίξεσθαι with Nausikaa and her maids.[34] Μίσγω means to meet or to mix with; in the passive voice, as it is used here, it is also the Homeric expression for "to have sexual intercourse." The text creates the possibility—perhaps even the expectation—of a seduction, if not a rape. Homer does not pursue that possibility, but Milton works it into the malign version of Odysseus on Scheria that underpins his Fall narrative.

If Eden is like Scheria, there ought to be someone in it comparable to Odysseus. Adam, already identified with Odysseus through his hyacinthine locks, represents a benign Odysseus in the Book 5 allusion to Scheria, but he is absent from this scene in Book 9. The subtly disturbing tinge Scheria acquires in this allusion reflects the presence

---

[33] *Od.* 6.129. Quotations of the Greek text are taken from Homer, *Odyssey*, ed. W. B. Stanford (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996).

[34] *Od.* 6.136.

of Satan, a flawed and malign Odysseus-figure, just as the serpent "not nocent yet" in Satan's earlier exploration of Eden becomes dangerous only through Satan's corruption; and the tainted image of Scheria prepares us for the tainted version of Odysseus's encounter with Nausikaa to come. In the earlier comparison of Eden to Scheria in Book 5, the narrator appears to accept Scheria as a real place; he classes it with India, the East and West Indies, and the coasts of the Black Sea and north Africa shore as an exotic but extant locale. In Book 9, on the other hand, he describes it as "feigned" and contrasts it with the "not mystic" garden of Solomon, whose biblical provenance gives it an ontological status that distinguishes it from the mythical gardens of Adonis and Alkinoös. This reflects a shift in perspective, not in essentials: a shift in reading. The earlier passage describes Eve preparing a meal for Adam and Raphael. The garden at this moment is wholly innocent; Satan is absent, while an archangel sent as a messenger of divine truth is present. In this atmosphere of complete transparency, where Adam's instinctive naming of the animals suggests that there is no gap between signifier and signified, questions of the fictionality of sources seem all but irrelevant. On the other hand, not only does the second passage come just before the temptation of Eve, but it describes the sights the Satan-possessed serpent sees as he makes his way through Eden to find her: "Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies, / Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood."[35] The passage does not fully project us into Satan's mind, nor does it simply see through Satan's eyes; a few lines later, the narrator distinguishes his viewpoint from Satan's as he describes the serpent's movement: "Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed."[36] But it

---

[35] *PL* 9.424-25.

[36] *PL* 9.434.

does show us what Satan sees as he stalks Eve. The poem's focus in this moment is circumscribed by the horizon of Satan's sight, and the shift towards Satan's perspective is heightened by the unusual shift into the historical present and the immediacy it lends Satan's perceptions.[37] The poem's imagination seems to be colored by Satan's thoughts; the biblical exemplar it cites is a disreputable moment in Solomon's career, and the poem has already turned twice to Solomon as proof that sexual pleasure can pervert human desire from a praiseworthy expression of love for partner and God towards idolatry and even apostasy.[38] Both of these previous instances have occurred in Hell; their appearance in Eden together with Satan suggests that he imports this fallen view into Eden. Even the language suggests the fallen and culpable sensuality that leads to idolatry rather than Adam and Eve's innocent sexuality. "Dalliance" is the word Milton uses to describe Adam and Eve's first act of fallen intercourse: "In lust they burn: / Till Adam thus gan Eve to dalliance move."[39] Its use in Eden before the fall, and its application to an antitype of Adam tempted by Eve, suggest that Satan's fallen thoughts infect the description of what he sees, that we do see partly through his eyes. Satan's perspective picks up the

---

[37] Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and English Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 177, describes a similar scene, our first glimpse of Adam and Eve in Book 4, in similar terms: "We readers first behold our first parents if not exactly through the devil's eyes then over his shoulder. It is the poet who writes these lines but the eye of Satan that testifies to their truth."

[38] *PL* 1.399-403, 1.442-46.

[39] *PL* 9.1015-16. "Dalliance" is also used of Adam and Eve at 4.337-39:

> Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
> Wanted, nor youthful dalliance as beseems
> Fair couple, linked in happy nuptial league.

But the qualifying adjective ("youthful" can hardly apply to the aged Solomon) and the text's anxiety to exculpate the unfallen Adam and Eve's "dalliance" (its insistence that this youthful behavior "beseems" them) suggest that acts of dalliance are culpable unless proven innocent. Stripped of such excuses, the basic meaning of the word for Milton seems closer to its bald, unqualified use as a word for fallen, lustful sex in Book 9.

sexual possibilities of the Homeric language in the scene on Scheria and infuses that sexual corruption into his view of Eden. In A. Bartlett Giamatti's words, "Satan makes the earthly paradise into an enchanted garden, while it remains a true paradise from the perspective of Heaven until man, choosing between them, makes the wrong choice and all is lost."[40] Two readings of the garden are simultaneously present to Adam and Eve and to Milton's reader alike. Those two readings are channeled through two competing allusions to a single Odyssean episode; they represent two competing readings of the *Odyssey*. As these two readings converge on the pivotal moment of the Fall, the juxtaposition highlights the differences between them. Milton uses the negative version of Odysseus on Scheria to bring out the negative possibilities in Scheria, which then bleed into or contaminate our image of Eden; but that negative vision of Eden, we shall see, contributes in surprising ways to a more positive version of Odysseus on Scheria. The plot and interpretation of *Paradise Lost* become dependent on both readings, the *Odyssey in malo* and the *Odyssey in bono*, and the force of the reading *in bono* depends in part on the reading *in malo*. By weaving multiple readings of one extended Odyssean episode into an extended episode in *Paradise Lost*, Milton creates an authentic dialogue between his text and Homer's.

Once Satan settles into the serpent to wait out the night, the structural similarities between the *Odyssey* and *Paradise Lost* evaporate. Yet the description of Satan as he seduces Eve remains tinged with these Odyssean colors. As Satan approaches Eve, the narrator compares his movement to that of "a ship by skilful steersman wrought"; the skillful steersman might well recall the superb seafarer, "old Laertes' son," mentioned

---

[40] Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 332.

less than a hundred lines previously.[41] Victoria Kahn cleverly argues that the snake is a Trojan horse—that this simile recalls Virgil's description of the Trojan horse, with its falling (*lapsus*) wheels that allow it to slip or glide into the city (*inlabitur urbi*)—*inlabor* being a verb used to describe the movement of snakes, and recalling both the departure of the snakes that kill Laocoon and his two sons as he warns against admitting the horse to the city and the departure of the Greek ships from Tenedos.[42] Although Kahn does not name Odysseus as the architect of the Trojan horse, the echo of Virgil's horse in this Odyssean context carries with it the ghost of the man Virgil blames repeatedly for its creation. Then, too, Satan describes Eve in his first speech as "a goddess among gods;" this is a standard form of flattery in any classical poem in which goddesses and nymphs walk the earth, but the trope originates in Odysseus's initial inquiry of Nausikaa as to whether she is mortal or a goddess. When used by a male traveler to win the sympathy and aid of an innocent young woman, it comes close to being an allusion rather than an instance of a trope; when used by a male traveler whose travels have just been carefully patterned on those of Odysseus in a location that has been explicitly compared to Scheria, it crosses the line into Odyssean allusion.[43] The language used to describe Satan as he tempts Eve recalls the most negative descriptions of Odysseus: Satan is "guileful," "sly," "wily," and "dire," likened to "some orator renowned / In Athens or free Rome, where

---

[41] *PL* 9.513, 941.

[42] Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 232.

[43] *PL* 9.547. Aryanpur, "*Paradise Lost* and the *Odyssey*," 153-55, 156-58, and Blessington, *Classical Epic*, 59, note this allusion. Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation*, 194-195, traces the roots of a second simile, *PL* 9.386-92, comparing Eve to Diana, back to this Homeric passage via Aeneas' encounters with Venus and Dido in *Aeneid* 1.

eloquence / Flourished," his words "replete with guile."[44] All these qualities were attributed to Odysseus by writers who were no friends of his or of the Achaians; the unusual use of "dire" in particular seems to recall Virgil's epithet "dirus," hard or dreadful, for his Ulysses at *Aeneid* 2.762.[45] Taken together, these allusions and wisps of Odyssean qualities—qualities characteristic of a particular tradition of reading Odysseus, one centered on the Virgilian passage to which Milton seems to allude—coalesce into an image of Odysseus that shadows Satan as he moves through this Scheria-like Eden. This image derives from the most popular tradition of reading an Odysseus *in malo*, one that descends through the epic tradition from Virgil to Dante.

As Satan opens his mouth to speak to Eve for the first time, "with serpent tongue / Organic, or impulse of vocal air, / His fraudulent temptation thus began."[46] The combination of "fraudulent" and "serpent tongue" here may recall Dante's Ulysses, condemned to the circle of the *Inferno* reserved for fraudulent counselors, those who "diede 'l consiglio frodolente" [gave fraudulent counsel].[47] The punishment for such deceivers is to be burned endlessly in a ribbon of flame; uniquely, Ulysses and Diomedes,

---

[44] *PL* 9.567, 613, 625, 643, 670-72, 733. Satan also replies to Eve "guilefully" at 9.655. Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation*, 201-2, suggests that Satan's "insidious rhetoric" as he tempts Eve recalls Odysseus on Scheria, in order that Milton may criticize and distance himself from previous epic poets' depictions of love.

[45] The first citation of "dire" in its primary sense in the *OED*, "horrible...etc," predates the first edition of *Paradise Lost* by exactly a hundred years, so Milton's use of the word cannot be said to be innovative. Its use to describe a tempter bent on seeking the ruin of an entire people, in an epic that owes much to the *Aeneid*, however, need not be seen as merely a coincidence.

[46] *PL* 9.529-31.

[47] Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam, 1982), 26.116. All quotations and translations are from this edition (hereafter *Inf*). The possibility of an allusion here should be qualified by the fact that Dante does not use this phrase to describe Ulysses himself; rather, another figure in the same bit of hell, the eighth *bolgia* or pocket of the eighth circle, names this as his crime, and it has since lent its name to his fellow sinners. On the other hand, the *Commedia* does not appear to have been translated into English before Milton's death; Milton must have known Dante in Italian, and would thus have known the Italian phrase I suggest may be echoed here.

his partner in two deceptions of the Trojans, burn together in a double flame—a forked tongue, like the tongue of a snake.[48] The half of the flame that holds Ulysses is explicitly compared to a tongue as he begins to tell his tale: "come fosse la lingua che parlasse" [as if it were a tongue that tried to speak].[49] Milton's serpent thus flickers with echoes of Dante's Ulysses as well as Homer's and Virgil's, but the Dantean and Virgilian echoes, unlike the Homeric, are decidedly negative.[50]

The echoes of Virgil's and Dante's Ulysses that form a part of the background texture of Satan as he infiltrates Eden and corrupts Eve invoke a long tradition of reading Odysseus. At the same time, the act of concentrating these traits in Satan insulates other parts of the poem from their malign influence. Without falling into the circular logic that has led earlier critics to claim that Milton condemns classical epic by associating it with Satan even as he demonizes Satan by associating Satan with corrupt classical values, I would suggest that Milton locates this tradition in Satan, and that by doing so he also localizes it. As we have seen, other Odyssean allusions in *Paradise Lost* remain wholly free of any malign ethical or moral taint; indeed, in places they carry the ethical and theological arguments of the poem. Identifying Satan with this traditional reading of Odysseus *in malo* confines this reading within a single character. In this way Milton creates space in his poem for an Odysseus *in bono*, for a character who may concentrate

---

[48] In *Inf.* 26.52-53, Odysseus and Diomedes burn within "quel foco che vien sì diviso / di sopra," "the flame that comes so twinned above." Odysseus and Diomedes together undertake the night raid on the camp of the Trojan allies in *Iliad* 10 that is usually known as the Doloneia, after the hapless Trojan spy, Dolon, whom Odysseus and Diomedes capture and kill in the course of their raid. But Dante cites instead the stories of the discovery of Achilles and the theft of the Palladium; these would have been more familiar to a Greekless audience, as they were narrated in *Achilleid* 1 and *Aeneid* 2 respectively.

[49] *Inf.* 26.89.

[50] Although Milton does not explicitly allude to Dante's Ulysses, we might also hear an echo of Ulysses' exhortation to his men to pursue "virtute e canoscenza," virtue and knowledge, in Satan's temptation of Eve to knowledge.

within himself other aspects of Odysseus or represent another tradition of interpreting Odysseus. The fragmentation of Odysseus and the various critical traditions surrounding him into two discreet halves allows the contrasts between those two readings of Odysseus, between Odysseus *in bono* and Odysseus *in malo*, to stand out more clearly.

This is not to say that malign or suspect elements of the poem are confined to Satan or hell alone. If Satan's presence in Eden suggests that a vein of corruption has entered the garden—though not yet into the humans who live there—the presence of that vein has also been suggested in previous descriptions of Eden, descriptions that emphasize its latent potential for stasis and narcissism. The allusions thus resonate with a strain in the description of Eden that suggests a view of the garden as an imperfect paradise.

II. Imaginary Gardens, Real Toads: Narcissism and Stasis in Eden

Gardens in both epic and romance, whether genuine earthly paradises or enchanted pleasure spots, are essentially static locations. Eden too partakes of this stasis, and not in a wholly positive way; as A. Bartlett Giamatti has argued, the stillness of Eden can become vaguely oppressive.[51] The "eternal spring" of Paradise is mentioned at 4.268,

---

[51] Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 303, who refers to *PL* 4.237-40. Hartman, "Adam on the Grass with Balsamum," 129, criticizes Eden in similar terms, feeling that because Adam and Eve initially know God's goodness only through his gifts, they live in a "consumer's paradise," resulting in a "troubled conscience...they are neither creative (like God) nor productive (like workers); even procreativeness is, for the time being, withheld." Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, 339n11, attributes the enervated quality of the description to its being seen from Satan's perspective rather than to any inherent property of the garden itself, but the long description of Eden is bracketed by phrases that seem explicitly to rule out the idea that we are still seeing over Satan's shoulder. The passage begins with an account of the Father's creation of the garden; we are taken outside of Satan's perspective to an impersonal narrative of the garden's past history. And the transition from the description of Eden to that of Adam and Eve recalls us to Satan's perspective with a jolt: "the fiend / Saw undelighted all delight" (*PL* 4.285-86). Satan's reaction is exactly the opposite of what it should be, based on the narrator's statement of fact: once again the poem alerts us to an ontological distinction between what the garden is shown to be and what Satan sees.

and this should trouble us: if spring is the season of new growth, it is not the season of ripening. To be caught in an eternal spring is never to reach maturity.[52] But a more troubling note has crept, seven lines earlier, into a feature of the Edenic landscape:

> a lake,
> That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned,
> Her crystal mirror holds.[53]

Mirrors, as any reader of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* knows, quite literally reflect trouble in paradise. The presence of a mirror embedded in the landscape of Eden, though possibly innocent here, becomes retrospectively charged with the potential for narcissism by later events in Book 4.

A lake (the same lake that we have just seen described as a mirror?) will actually function as a mirror in Eve's narrative of her first awakening, in a scene whose debt to the Narcissus episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has often been noted.[54] The earlier

---

[52] Indeed, the classical earthly paradise is not an eternal springtime but contains fruits and flowers at various degrees of ripeness simultaneously and continuously, as in the description of the garden of Alkinoös at *Od.* 7.117-19:

> Never is the fruit spoiled on these, never does it give out,
> neither in winter time nor summer, but always the West Wind
> blowing on the fruits brings some to ripeness while he starts others.

See Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 32-33, on this trope.

[53] *PL* 4.261-63.

[54] *PL* 4.456-68. The echoes of Ovid's Narcissus in this passage have been discussed at length by numerous critics, as have their implications for Eve's character or stage of psychological development. See, e.g., Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 314-16; Cleanth Brooks, "Eve's Awakening," in *Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1955), 281-98; Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 114-16; Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 74-85; William Kerrigan, *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of* Paradise Lost (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 70-71; Richard DuRocher, *Milton and Ovid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 85-92, Marshall Grossman, *"Authors to Themselves": Milton and the Revelation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 83-90. For Lacanian interpretations of this scene, see Gregerson, *Reformation of the Subject*, 148-76; 153n6 cites numerous feminist readings of this episode, while 157n12 cites the Lacanian literature on Milton. Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), offers a thorough discussion of Freudian and Lacanian concepts of narcissism and their applicability to early modern texts, although she does not discuss Milton.

description of the lake's mirror-like quality becomes tainted by the negative connotations of the Ovidian myth invoked here—and by the divine voice that explicitly condemns Eve's use of the lake as a mirror.[55] But that earlier description of the lake as a mirror suggests that the adolescent narcissism implicit in Eve's awakening is present both *before* we are introduced to Eve (in the narration of the story of *Paradise Lost*) and *after* her desires have been redirected towards Adam, maternal care of the garden, and procreation (in the story itself).[56] Narcissism exists in Eden independently of Eve. It is embedded in the landscape, at once caused by and symbolic of the stillness of the place. It becomes the mental equivalent of the repetition of previous experience that threatens epic heroes in moments of romance: Odysseus on Scheria, offered the chance to reproduce the life he enjoyed on Ithaka before the Trojan War, or Tasso's Rinaldo in Armida's garden, turning his back on the triumphal teleology of military conquest to repeat endlessly the unchanging rituals of love and self-love. Indeed, narcissism, engendering self-reflexive patterns of thought and even physical paralysis, may be seen as the psychological equivalent of the stasis to which romance circularity leads. These narcissistic and static possibilities are inherent in Eden; Adam and Eve may choose not to indulge in them, but they cannot eradicate them.

The poem creates the impression that Adam and Eve will eventually leave behind this equivocal garden with its dangerous potential for repetition and stasis. If Eden

---

[55] McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 78-79, also identifies the mirror/lake of the earlier passage with the mirror/lake of the later passage. She sees both mirrors as innocent, writing that "in Paradise, since erotic love is not yet blind and the very quality of selfhood is yet to be investigated, the mirror is innocently held up to the sky as a potential instrument of growth." But the point of the divine voice's admonition is that Eve must turn away from the lake/mirror and its watery image of herself, toward the image of God that is Adam, in order both to expand her self-knowledge and to discover the mutual erotic love that the poem celebrates. The mirror, as Eve uses it, offers neither spiritual nor intellectual growth.

[56] Tasso's Armida and Rinaldo are teenagers; their self-absorption is quite literally adolescent narcissism.

includes the danger of falling into narcissism, Adam and Eve nevertheless have all that is necessary and sufficient for human happiness, plus the possibility of future happiness beyond human imagination. Early in his visit to Eden, Raphael explains the reward for continued obedience to divine commandments. His terms both offer Adam and Eve a new experience and suggest that abstinence from disobedience will be sufficient to attain it:

> time may come when men
> With angels may participate, and find
> No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare:
> And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
> Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
> Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend
> Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
> Here or in heavenly paradises dwell;
> If you be found obedient, and retain
> Unalterably firm his love entire
> Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
> Your fill what happiness this happy state
> Can comprehend, incapable of more.[57]

The emphasis on choice in the proposed reward seems at first to elevate mankind above the level of the angels; confined to neither heaven nor earth, virtuous humans will be able to move at will between the two spheres. Both language and vision recall Renaissance ideas of the mixed nature and the vast potential of human reason so familiar to modern readers from Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. But the repeated use of the conditional and the subjunctive modes suggests that in Milton's Eden, this ascent is far from certain. *If* Adam and Eve "be found obedient" (the subjunctive adds an extra touch of doubt and contingency to the divine verdict), "perhaps" their bodies "may" turn to spirit and ascend to heaven, "may" choose between earth and heaven.[58] Change may be

---

[57] *PL* 5.493-505.

[58] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 284, notes the uncomfortably provisional nature of this "if" clause and relates it to the less-than-reassuring discussion of assurance of salvation, conducted in similarly provisional terms, in *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.25.

possible, but the connotations of chance in "perhaps" suggest that this change depends on luck or chance as much as on logical or scientific or contractual cause and effect. Adam and Eve already know that they can retain their current state through continued obedience; Raphael raises the possibility of a better future but makes no promises. Nor does he explain exactly what Adam and Eve must do to merit this transfiguration into spirit; their reward depends on divine judgment and divine love, not on their own agency. Although the poem emphasizes the active nature of Adam and Eve's obedience in its discussions of their gardening, this passage—the key discussion of the additional benefits that obedience may bring—casts Adam and Eve in a weirdly passive role.[59] They exercise less control over their final telos than we might think; like Odysseus on Scheria, they must cultivate the good will of another being in order to progress further. And if they do not leave Eden, their active obedience through gardening risks becoming a repetitive activity—not pure stasis, but of limited potential for human change and growth. One might argue that the comparison of Eden to Scheria reinforces the poem's official pronouncement that Eden, like Scheria, is not an actively dangerous place, but a stop on the way to an end point elsewhere, a respite in a journey. That end point might well be the heavenly existence Raphael describes to Adam. But the static and narcissistic qualities located in Eden belong to a place that has been explicitly likened to Scheria by the official narrative voice of the poem. The association, which recalls Humphrey's and

---

[59] Raphael describes active obedience at *PL* 5.520-40; Adam and Eve discuss the command to keep the garden in order at *PL* 9.205-47. On Adam and Eve's gardening as a spiritual apprenticeship that promotes their moral growth, see McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 111; J. Martin Evans, Paradise Lost *and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 245-49; Barbara Lewalski, "Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden," in Thomas Kranidas, ed., *New Essays on* Paradise Lost (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 91-92; Dennis Danielson, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 182-83. On the active nature of obedience, see Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in* Paradise Lost, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1997), 196-207; John Shawcross, *With Mortal Voice: The Creation of* Paradise Lost (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 41.

Ascham's readings, emphasizes the peril Scheria presents to Odysseus and suggests a similar danger to Adam and Eve.

As the events of Book 9 build inexorably towards the Fall, an allusion to a second Odyssean garden paradise enters the landscape of Eden. Where Satan casts Eve as an unwitting Nausikaa, an innocent ripe for seduction by any passing serpent both wily and unscrupulous, the narrator instead evokes the knowing Circe:

> she busied heard the sound
> Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
> To such disport before her through the field,
> From every beast, more duteous at her call,
> Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
> He bolder now, uncalled before her stood.[60]

Renaissance allegories often read Circe as presenting the temptation of man's bestial appetites; this comparison of Eve to Circe has consequently worried readers who see this as a provocation or premature condemnation of Eve.[61] Others, most notably Diane McColley, have argued instead that the comparison emphasizes differences, not similarities: the unfallen beasts of Eden obey Eve voluntarily, out of a natural desire to please their natural guardian; they are more perfect in their obedience than are Circe's beasts; they are real beasts, blessed by God, not men degraded into beasts. Circe's beasts obey her only after they fall into pure sensuality; Eve's obey her only before the Fall, when animal sensuality is, like its human counterpart, naturally benign and moderate. If

---

[60] *PL* 9.518-23.

[61] Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 87, 92, 226-7, 191, adduces examples ranging from Plotinus' *Enneads* and Heraclitus' *Allegories*, both late antique works popular in the Renaissance, to Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae* and George Sandys' English translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Milton himself mentions these allegorical interpretations in *Elegia sesta*, and *Comus* relies on them for much of its imagery. Alexander Ross, whose work Milton praised in an epigram, reads Odysseus as proof that "Governors and Magistrates must not be overtaken with the *Circe* of drink and fleshly pleasure, howsoever others are; but they must use *Moli*, that is Temperance in themselves, and use the sword against this *Circe* in others." Alexander Ross, *Mystagogus Poeticus* (London, 1648; New York: Garland, 1976), 76; for Milton's epigram, see Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 296.

the comparison prefigures the Fall, it also enables us to distinguish fallen from unfallen sensuality.[62] But the comparison, which comes just eighty lines after the second comparison of Eden to Scheria, also suggests a second perspective on Eve. Circe, alone of the women Odysseus encounters on his travels, both hinders and helps his return. Most readers, like the ancient and Renaissance allegorizers, focus on the threat she poses; turning men into pigs is, after all, more dramatic than giving good directions. But once subdued, with the help of Hermes' mysterious moly, Circe becomes a model hostess. Odysseus remains with her quite happily for a year, and when his men finally urge him to continue towards Ithaka, Circe graciously provides advice and provisions. Unlike Kalypso and Nausikaa, she never offers herself as a wife to Odysseus, nor does she attempt to detain him against his will. In her double role, she of all the women in the *Odyssey* most fully embodies both the clever co-conspirator that Penelope is and the Klytaimnestra-like threat (a threat imagined in both cases in sexual terms) she could prove to be.

Moreover, whether Circe turns out to be a help or a hindrance depends on Odysseus's response to her. Armed with moly, Odysseus is impervious to her potions; confident in his ability to assert his god-given superiority, he enjoys her charms during a year-long interlude that poses no serious threat to his humanity or his homecoming. Adam should be similarly proof against any temptation Eve might present, especially after his conversation with Raphael. The previous book of the poem ends with the archangel's admonition to Adam to trust his superior wisdom and rational capacity; the appeal to reason by a heavenly figure descending from heaven to a garden paradise, directed at a hero who resembles Odysseus (shortly before his temptation by a figure

[62] McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 70.

whom the poem explicitly compares to Circe), recalls Hermes' gift of moly to Odysseus in order to protect him against Circe's potions—an episode frequently allegorized in antiquity and the Renaissance alike as the triumph of reason over appetite.[63] Surely Adam should not have forgotten his lesson in a week. In fact he has not; he chooses consciously to accept the apple from Eve. In doing so, he focuses not on her potential as a figure of romance stasis and delay, but on her potential as a figure of epic experience and telos. He sees, not the face of Circe that looks towards the Nausikaa/Kalypso end of the spectrum of female possibility in the *Odyssey*, but the face that looks towards Penelope. Adam chooses to read Eve as Penelope, the wife he loves. But he can make that choice—and we can perceive it as such—in part because Eve has already shifted from Nausikaa to Circe, from a naive version of Penelope to the character who embodies Penelope's dual potential to help or hinder. The poem thus rejects the identification of Eve with Nausikaa that Satan proposes in favor of Adam's identification of Eve with Penelope, the wife who remains the telos of his life. It does so in a virtuoso display of indirection; the only explicit allusion is the reference to Circe, the pivot around which the other Odyssean echoes revolve.

At the moment of the Fall, this combination of hints of Edenic stasis and Odyssean allusions creates a further voice that reflects unexpected light on Adam's choice. Once Eve falls, Adam must decide to fall or not to fall himself; Eve's fall and her

---

[63] Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 374, locates Raphael's visit to Eden in the tradition stemming from Hermes' descent from Olympus to Kalypso's island, but not those of Hermes' later descent to Circe's island. Interestingly, Greene links the iconography of Hermes' gift to Odysseus of moly to Raphael's gift to Tobias of an antidote against the devil, a comparison also made by Jean de Sponde in his edition *Homeri quae extant omnia* (Basel: Eusebii Episcopii Opera, 1583), mm2^{v}. For a famous example of Renaissance allegorizations of this episode, see Natalis Comes, *Mythologiae* (Venice, 1567; New York: Garland, 1976), 267^{b}. Judith Yarnall, *Transformations of Circe: The History of an Enchantress* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 71-74, discusses classical allegories of Circe.

temptation of Adam transform the circular and static qualities latent in Eden from facts of life into an option to be consciously chosen. The Odyssean context confirms their identification with romance, as against the epic potential of the choice to fall. The Odyssean allusions thus surprisingly identify the choice to stay with the choice of romance circularity, the less desirable of the two Odyssean alternatives. Adam's choice becomes directly analogous to the archetypal choice of Odysseus, the choice of romance repetition or epic experience. Indeed, Adam frames his reaction to Eve's fall in precisely these terms, the terms of a choice between cycle and telos:

> with thee
> Certain my resolution is to die:
> How can I live without thee, how forgo
> Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
> To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
> Should God create another Eve, and I
> Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
> Would never from my heart; no no, I feel
> The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
> Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.[64]

Adam can conceive of only two alternatives: to live alone or to die with Eve.[65] He may remain in Eden and "live again...forlorn," with or without the eventual addition of "another Eve" created from "another rib." This alternative precisely replicates his life up to this point, as the diction of repetition and duplication emphasizes. The other alternative, to fall with Eve, rejects a reiteration of life in Eden—where circularity and repetition are, as we have seen, inherent in the garden itself—for a fallen and variable

---

[64] *PL* 9.906-16.

[65] Some critics have faulted Adam for not conceiving of third alternatives. Among others, Burden, *The Logical Epic*, 168-77, and Luxon, *Single Imperfection*, 180, counsel divorce as Adam's logical recourse; Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, 226-27, suggests that Adam should have prayed for divine forgiveness for Eve or offered to die for her, while Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation*, 210-11, argues that Adam should have attempted to mediate between Eve and God.

state, which may encompass "bliss or woe" but leads inescapably to a single end: "to die." To see Adam choosing between romance repetition and epic experience devalues the option of staying in Eden. For although romance had its defenders, it was generally perceived as a genre inferior to, or at least less heroic than, epic.[66] These terms provoke us into reading with Adam, agreeing that his choice to fall is the more heroic, if not the more desirable, of his options. If we think like Adam, we are, according to the official voice of the poem, wrong, for he has already made the choice to fall and his is therefore a fallen opinion; but our realization that Adam shares our generic distinctions inclines us to read this traditional genre hierarchy into Adam's choice.

Northrop Frye's distinction between two versions of romance can help to sharpen our appreciation of Adam's view here. Frye distinguishes between the benign romance of a prelapsarian Golden Age and the threatening romance of endlessly proliferating adventure—in Frye's terms, romances of the "idyllic world" and the "night world":

> two worlds, one above the level of ordinary experience, the other below it. There is, first, a world associated with happiness, security, and peace; the emphasis is often thrown on childhood or on an "innocent" or pre-genital period of youth, and the images are those of spring and summer, flowers and sunshine...the idyllic world. The other is a world of exciting adventures, but adventures which involve separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and the threat of more pain...the demonic or night world.[67]

With the loss of Eve, Adam sees his life in Eden, to this point almost the definition of Frye's idyllic world, becoming a night world. Repetition of peaceful gardening is to be replaced by repetition of the pain of loss and separation; idyllic but active obedience, which might someday lead to something better even if it does run the risk of circularity,

---

[66] For the Renaissance debate over the relative merits of epic and romance, see Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Eugene Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971); Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, ch. 1. Quint, *Epic and Empire*, establishes for the contemporary reader the generic supremacy of epic as the "winner's genre" over romance, the genre of the defeated and the exiled.

[67] Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 53.

is transformed into the endless reiteration of grief and anguish. Raphael's offer of a possible reward for continued active obedience to divine commands, couched in the subjunctive and hedged with conditions, loses its force against the certain loss of Eve. The only way out of this cycle that Adam can conceive is to rewrite this story of adventures and pain as an epic—to direct these experiences towards an end, to impose on them a telos and therefore a purpose and a set of criteria under which they can be deemed a success. This he does, declaring that his primary goal will be to remain by Eve's side, come what may. He falls "not deceived," unlike Eve, but in order to persevere in a marriage he decides to prize above all other goods.

Of course, the choice facing Adam at the moment of his fall is not as simple as the choice that faces Odysseus on Scheria. Despite the hints of stasis, of restrictions on human growth and moral development, even of immaturity and narcissism, Eden is still a paradise. But once Eve falls, once she divorces herself from Eden, Adam believes he can no longer have Eve and live. He believes himself to be forced to choose between death with the wife he loves, the wife with whose mind he has always been in accord up to that morning, and the life of peaceful ease and pleasant labor, interlaced with storytelling and containing the potential for a second Eve, that resembles the Phaiakian lifestyle Odysseus admires. And Adam chooses as Odysseus does; he chooses to continue his original marriage. Where Satan imagines Eve as Nausikaa and then proceeds to seduce her, Adam gives the "other Eve" up. He chooses Eve once she no longer resembles Nausikaa; he rejects the potential of a second Eve just as Odysseus rejects in Nausikaa the potential of a second Penelope.

The Odyssean resonances of Adam's choice even work subversively to present

Adam's choice as the more heroic, the more courageous, the right choice from an emotional or human perspective. Odysseus's decision to leave Nausikaa and return to Ithaka and Penelope is unquestionably correct, and the *Odyssey* never allows us to think otherwise. The allusions to the *Odyssey* embedded throughout the narrative of the Fall lead us to read that narrative through an Odyssean lens; if that lens is not superimposed on the narrative of the Fall throughout, it is always near at hand. That Odyssean lens counters the biblical and theological content of the Fall narrative. Ronald Levao argues that we admire Adam because he makes his choice out of human love rather than holy fear; we realize we might lack the courage to brave the wrath of God for love, to fall with Eve and risk the consequences implicit in Raphael's tale of the war in heaven.[68] The Odyssean fabric of this scene—indeed, of the entire Fall—suggests that, whether or not it is the correct choice from a normative religious or moral perspective, it is the most fully human of the choices open to Adam. In its endorsement of continuity and growth rather than repetition and starting over, it offers an escape from the perpetual adolescence and narcissism that lurk in the shadows of Eden. Choosing to fall, we come to see once Adam and Eve are cast out from the garden in Book 10, exiles Adam from the joys of Eden and condemns him to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow as surely as choosing Penelope returns Odysseus from the riches of Scheria to the poverty of Ithaka; but choosing to fall also involves choosing a life centered around a marriage that grows and deepens, a marriage that is truly a life partnership. The further voice Milton crafts by alluding to Odysseus's choice reveals that the Fall enables a new emotional maturity.

That further voice, constructed not out of a handful of local allusions but out of the entire narrative from which those allusions are taken, and woven through several

[68] Ronald Levao, "Among Unequals What Society?", *Modern Language Quarterly* 61 (2000): 102.

books of *Paradise Lost*, also provides another example of Stephen Hinds's systematic allusion, a model of allusion that brings one whole text into conversation with another. Milton's own practice of allusive revision in *Paradise Lost* provides a further refinement of this model. By setting the poem in dialogue with two versions of the *Odyssey*, a reading *in bono* and a reading *in malo*, Milton demands that we engage not just with our readings of Odysseus at a single moment or even our concepts of Odysseus from other texts, but with ideas of Odysseus derived from our reading of the entire poem and its legacy in the European literary tradition. These conversations with the *Odyssey* license us to ask—demand that we ask—how the postlapsarian third of *Paradise Lost* might also be an Odyssean text, how it continues or reacts to the Odyssean qualities of the narrative of the Fall.

III. Knowing Good through Evil

Thus far, I have argued for an Odyssean reading of Adam's choice that valorizes both Adam and Odysseus: Adam's fidelity to his marriage recovers a key Odyssean virtue from Satan's seductive Odysseus *in malo*, while the Odyssean origins of Adam's choice enable us to see that choice as heroic. The moment that Adam completes his fall by eating the fruit, however, recalls the failures to emulate Odysseus repeatedly experienced by Ariosto's errant knights:

> She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
> With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat
> Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
> But fondly overcome with female charm.[69]

Although Adam's reason is not so impaired that he cannot see his fault—he remains "not

[69] *PL* 9.996-99.

deceived"—he allows Eve's charms to overpower his reason. In doing so, he forgets Raphael's injunction at the end of Book 8 not to value Eve's grace of person and manner above his own intellectual powers. As I have suggested above, this warning recalls the disguised Hermes' gift of moly to Odysseus on Circe's island; moly was traditionally allegorized as human reason, and Odysseus's consequent immunity to Circe's potions as the ability of reason to conquer lower appetites—sometimes lust specifically, sometimes sensual pleasures more generally. Like Odysseus, Adam retains the use of his reason when faced with an enticing woman; unlike Odysseus, Adam allows himself to be seduced by Circean magic. If Adam's initial response to Eve casts her as Penelope and confers a halo of Odyssean heroism upon him, the later response that completes his fall displays a certain amount of backsliding in both his reading of Eve and his ability to emulate Odysseus. Perhaps this shift in response reflects Adam's increasing commitment to fall, his increasing mental and spiritual distance from his unfallen state even as he remains innocent in fact; if he first resolves to die in order not to lose Eve, he later tells Eve that he will eat the forbidden fruit both to remain with her and "to attain / Proportional ascent, which cannot be / But to be gods, or angels demigods."[70] Only after he broadens the scope of his trespass beyond the preservation of his marriage does he regress towards a view of Eve as Circe. Both these responses will have to be redeemed in his newly-fallen state.

When Adam chooses to fall with Eve, he knows only that he is choosing death with her rather than life in Eden without her. But in choosing to fall with Eve, Adam sets out on a path that will eventually lead him to assimilate the terrible rupture of the Fall

---

[70] *PL* 9.935-37. Adam chooses the (illusory) certainty of the uncertain possibility Raphael had described in Book 5.

into his relationship with Eve, to seek to heal the gulf between them and to forge a relationship that will include that breach as part of its history while also subsuming it into the overarching narrative of their relationship. Their marriage will include, but will not be defined by, that rupture. This is an essentially Odyssean choice: not Achilles' choice of early death and glory over long life and obscurity, nor a *translatio* like the *Aeneid*'s construction of a new Roman empire out of the Trojan defeat and diaspora, nor yet the celebration of endless mutability that characterizes the *Metamorphoses*, but the determination to construct as the core of one's life a relationship flexible enough to adapt to any changes that may come yet solid enough to serve as a strong foundation for life itself. Marriage will provide the strength and motivation to survive whatever may come in a fallen world. In this, the poem's outlook is fundamentally Odyssean.

If we begin to read in Adam's fall a choice of epic telos over romance circularity, we see that the values of Odyssean epic inform the postlapsarian journey Adam and Eve must make. Not only do the benefits of this journey result from the choice of experience over stasis—a choice whose Odyssean resonances have become clear—but they center on the core Odyssean topic of marriage. As we saw in the previous chapter, Adam and Eve's fallen efforts to re-establish their marriage enable them to grasp key principles of mutual self-sacrifice and support and to begin a new and heroic struggle towards a deferred but certain "paradise within...happier far." Unusually for the epic tradition, a female character plays a leading role in these exemplary displays of heroism and heroic endeavor. Eve takes the initiative in renewing her marriage and displays heroic qualities of humility and self-sacrifice, conferring on her an equal role in the epic project previously granted only to Penelope. In the role it assigns the faithful and active wife, *Paradise Lost* endorses not

only the value of marriage as epic material but an Odyssean view of marriage as a partnership of complimentary and equal contributors.

Adam's anguished reaction to Eve's fall reveals that, unfallen, he remains intellectually and emotionally trapped in a narcissistic stasis that impairs his marriage.[71] Repeating "flesh of flesh, / Bone of my bone," the biblical formula that becomes the basis of Christian marriage vows, as he rebels against the loss of Eve, he suggests that his view of his marriage is inextricably bound to his sense that his fall is necessary. He casts her as an extension of himself, a reified reflection. Although Adam conceives of Eve as the best part of himself, he emphasizes her origins in his own body, tying his love for her to her perceived status as his double.[72]

Mary Nyquist has argued that Eve's re-enactment of the Narcissus myth in *Paradise Lost* 4 shows her

> experiencing a desire equivalent or complementary to the lonely Adam's desire for an 'other self.' It is not hard to see that Adam's own desire for an other self has a strong 'narcissistic' component. Yet Adam's retrospective narrative shows this narcissism being sparked, sanctioned, and then satisfied by his creator. By contrast, though in Book IV Eve recalls experiencing a desire for an other self, this desire is clearly and unambiguously constituted by illusion, both in the sense of specular illusion and in the sense of error.[73]

---

[71] As Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation*, 208, notes, "His first assertion that he will share Eve's fate is egocentric; he betrays a concern with how Eve's disobedience will affect himself. ...[Adam] says nothing about the woman's plight but speaks only of his own."

[72] The previous invocation of this biblical formula for marriage (cf. Gen. 2:23, Matt. 19:4-6, Mark 10:6-8), *PL* 8.494-96, Adam's response to Eve's creation, makes this point even more explicitly:

> I now see
> Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, *myself*
> Before me...

(italics mine). Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 282, notes that "myself" is Milton's addition to the standard phrasing of the Bible and the Solemnization of Marriage in the Book of Common Prayer. John Shawcross, *With Mortal Voice*, 13, compares this formula to the narcissism displayed by Satan in his attraction to Sin and argues that this narcissism leads to Satan's fall. McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 89, describes Adam and Eve's gazes in terms that recall Tasso's image of Rinaldo and Armida. But her belief that Adam and Eve rapidly outgrow this narcissistic stage in Eden is contradicted by Adam's invocation of the "flesh of my flesh" formula just before he falls.

[73] Mary Nyquist, "The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity in the Divorce Tracts and in *Paradise Lost*," in *Re-membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*, ed. Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson (New York: Methuen, 1987), 120-21.

Nyquist sees in Adam an "embodiment of the reality principle itself" for Eve. But if Adam embodies reality for Eve, who or what embodies reality for Adam? Eve learns almost immediately upon her creation to redirect her desires outward. Adam, the text suggests through his narcissistic focus on himself in Eve, does not learn to redirect his desires towards a genuine other until after he falls. He learns this lesson through Eve's example.

The Fall creates for the first time the possibility that humankind may emulate the Son's supreme example of self-sacrifice and compassionate love. Initially that possibility goes unrealized. While being judged by the Son at the beginning of Book 10, Adam considers the option of shielding Eve by remaining silent about her guilt: "[Eve's] failing, while her faith to me remains, / I should conceal, and not expose to blame / By my complaint."[74] He rejects this option, first "Lest on my head both sin and punishment, / However insupportable, be all / Devolved," and second because the Son would see through any such pretense.[75] Despite his professed concern for Eve, he does not consider accepting Eve's punishment as well as his own; on the contrary, he sees this as an option to be avoided at all costs, and he effectively rules out the possibility by speaking these lines aloud in the presence of both the Son and Eve. Following the Son's departure, he launches into a tirade of angry and misogynistic recrimination, in which he heaps all the blame for the Fall on Eve. Although she initially replies in kind, she soon begins an effort to repair their relationship. In doing so, she seems instinctively to make this ethical leap, presenting herself as responsible not only for her own choices but for creating the

---

[74] *PL* 10.129-31.

[75] *PL* 10.133-35.

conditions under which Adam made his decision to fall. She transcends his self-centered focus on his own suffering and recriminations through her professed desire to take the entire guilt and punishment of the Fall upon herself. Reversing her earlier jealous and selfish objection to the possibility of leaving Adam alive in Eden with another Eve, she now offers to die for him:

> both have sinned, but thou
> Against God only, I against God and thee,
> And to the place of judgment will return,
> There with my cries importune heaven, that all
> The sentence from they head removed may light
> On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
> Me me only just object of his ire.[76]

Eve spontaneously grasps the possibilities of self-sacrifice and of the expiation of sins through the acceptance of responsibility. Ronald Levao has argued that Eve's offer, while "only indirectly an *imitatio Christi*," responds to Adam's decision to die with Eve, which draws from her the cry, "example high! / Ingaging me to emulate."[77] Levao characterizes this, movingly, as "the only example of self-sacrifice Eve has ever known...what she now emulates, redeeming the insecure rivalry intimated at her fall as an ethical impulse."[78]

---

[76] *PL* 10.930-36. Eve echoes Adam's earlier lament at *PL* 10.832-33 that "On me, me only, as the source and spring / Of all corruption, all the blame lights due." But Adam's comment is made in internal monologue, accepting his culpability after a failed attempt to lay some of the blame with God, while Eve speaks to Adam. Furthermore, Adam comes to this realization at the end of an attempt to evade the imagined reproaches of future generations; he has no intention of protecting anyone by accepting his due portion of guilt, and he accepts no more than he must; he still divides guilt for the Fall with Eve, imagining his guilt as "That burden heavier than the earth to bear... though divided / With that bad woman." In sharp contrast, Eve actually offers to assume guilt that is not hers in order to absolve Adam. It is therefore curious that Alastair Fowler sees *both* speeches as echoes of Virgil's self-sacrificing Nisus, attempting in *Aen.* 9.427 to save his friend Euryalus from a band of Trojans with the cry "me, me, adsum, qui feci, in me convertite ferrum" ("Me, me, here I am, I did it, turn your swords on me"). We might rather see Adam's speech as a failure of heroism and Eve's as a successful attempt.

[77] *PL* 9.962-63.

[78] Levao, "Among Unequals What Society?", 104. See Jun Harada, "The Mechanism of Human Reconciliation in *Paradise Lost*," *Philological Quarterly* 50 (1971): 543n5, for bibliography of the mid-century view of Eve as redeemer. Harada proposes a corrective reading of Eve's speech as self-pitying and wholly derivative of Adam's; he fails to notice the distinction between Adam's self-inculpation and Eve's self-sacrifice. Christopher, *Milton and the Science of the Saints*, 164-64, and McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 210,

But Eve deserves even more credit than this reading grants her. Adam never claims to sacrifice anything for Eve before he eats the forbidden fruit; he freely chooses Eve's fate in preference to an unfallen existence separate from hers. Eve intuitively creates a purer vision of selfless love from Adam's flawed ideas of shared culpability and his rejection of sacrifice. It is she who develops an ethic of conscious self-sacrifice for a fellow being. Her willingness to accept Adam's guilt in addition to her own is a nobler approach to the problem of shared responsibility than Adam has been able to muster.[79] By making this offer to Adam, she teaches him a new ethical approach to shared guilt and mutual misfortune: the desire not to share out the blame according to strict standards of justice, but to be moved by love and compassion to lighten her partner's misfortune. Eve places reconciliation above recrimination; her wish that Adam be shown mercy outweighs her wish that he receive justice. In this she does, as Levao suggests, make amends for her earlier hesitation to share the benefits (as she then thinks) of the fruit with Adam.

In his reply to Eve, Adam for the first time adopts this approach:

> If prayers
> Could alter high decrees, I to that place
> Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
> That on my head all might be visited,

---

see the pivotal moment in human redemption as Adam's hearing Eve's echo of the protoevangelium, not Eve's utterance of it. More recently, critics have focused on the echoes of the Son's offer of self-sacrifice in Book 3; Jeffrey Shoulson, *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 126-27, argues that Eve "powerfully combines subjectivity's freedom and objectivity's responsibility," and that this passage not only instructs Adam in the ethics of dialogue but provides a critical lesson in the poem's theodicy; Eve also provides the human counterpart to the Son's willingness to assume guilt and thus gain access to redemption. Shoulson draws on predecessors including Joseph Summers, *The Muse's Method: An Introduction to* Paradise Lost (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), 183-84, and Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, 275, who argue that the stance Eve arrives at with respect to divine judgment is the realization that enables reconciliation and redemption.

[79] This point was made during a meeting of the Yale Medieval/Renaissance Colloquium in April 2006, in a lively discussion following a talk by Gregory Chaplin. In print, critics have curiously neglected to appreciate Eve's willingness to accept Adam's share of the blame as well as her own. See, for example, Fowler's equation of Eve's offer with Adam's earlier—and very different—realization that he cannot shift any blame to anyone other than Eve.

> Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
> To me committed and by me exposed.
> But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
> Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
> In offices of love, how we may light'n
> Each other's burden in our share of woe.[80]

We might notice that where Eve says "I will," Adam says, "I...would;" where Eve actually makes the offer to sacrifice herself for Adam, Adam allows only that he would sacrifice himself if he thought it would do any good. We might ask how Adam can be so certain that his offer would be in vain; fallen, he simply cannot know. But even hedged about with conditions, Adam's speech reveals a shift towards Eve's ethos. He learns from her to abandon his solipsism, to place mercy above justice, and to submerge self-justification in concern for another. Her example enables him to return to the position he took at the moment of his fall, to cling to his marriage regardless of the misfortunes he might encounter in the process. He proposes marriage, not as an epic obstacle, but as the vehicle for epic recovery. Marriage will help Adam and Eve to endure the experiences to come and provide them with a definite goal ("to light'n / Each other's burden") and the agency (the "offices of love") to do so. Marriage becomes not just a reason, but a means to survive.[81] In their emotional development as in their marriage, making the choice Odysseus made turns out to have unexpected benefits similar to those Odysseus locates in his homecoming. The loss of Eden as a romance paradise enables Adam and Eve to develop beyond the narcissism inherent in Eden and the stasis so characteristic of romance.

---

[80] *PL* 10.952-61.

[81] Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation*, 214-15, argues that Eve's regeneration of her marriage leads Adam and Eve to gain their "paradise within" and renew their relationship with God; Eve "both aids Adam in attaining a higher, truly heroic status and herself has the same positive potential." Pavlock sees Milton's engagement with the epic tradition as an assertion of the superiority of his vision, however, not as a constructive attempt to build his vision of marriage as heroic on a classical foundation.

Eve's offer to sacrifice herself for a beloved partner, with its distinctive cry of "Me, me only," makes use of an epic topos that locates her in a particular epic tradition. Her words echo the offer of self-sacrifice found in Virgil's episode of Nisus and Euryalus and later reworked in the Hopleus and Dymas episode of Statius's *Thebaid* and the Medoro and Cloridano episode of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Although each of these episodes offers a somewhat ambivalent treatment of heroism, in each case the offer by one character to die for the other is presented as sympathetic and heroic. Eve too appears sympathetic and heroic in her offer, and she even manages to overgo her predecessors in one respect: unlike Nisus, Dymas, and Cloridano, Eve succeeds in her attempt to save her partner (though not in the way she offers to save him). In both her ability to display the self-sacrifice perfected in the Son and her ability to enable greater heroism in Adam, Eve recalls the Penelope that Helene Foley has described in her influential study of the *Odyssey*'s reverse similes. Arguing that the comparisons of Penelope to an Odyssean figure confer masculine heroism on Penelope and emphasize her decisive role in Odysseus's safe homecoming and heroic return, Foley concludes that the similes establish the interdependence of Odysseus and Penelope.[82] *Paradise Lost* 10 depicts a similar relationship between Adam and Eve. Eve's full participation in the classical heroism of the *Aeneid* and its successors, and her pivotal role in assimilating that classical example to a Christian ethos, grant her a crucially important role in the heroic project of human homecoming that parallels Penelope's role in the *Odyssey*. In its insistence on the role of women in the heroic project, *Paradise Lost* absorbs distinctively Odyssean values

[82] Foley, "'Reverse Similes'," 20-21. The similes to which Foley refers are *Od.* 19.108-14 and 23.233-40. In the former, the disguised Odysseus compares Penelope to a good king whose people prosper under his rule; in the latter, the narrator compares Penelope's relief at Odysseus's return to that of a shipwrecked swimmer finally reaching land. On Adam and Eve's interdependence, see Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation*, 214-15.

into its paradigm of postlapsarian heroism.

The Odyssean resonances of the Fall engage the doctrine of the Fortunate Fall in different ways from those generally understood to feature in the poem.[83] A.D. Nuttall, in both *Openings* and the more recent *The Alternative Trinity*, has argued strenuously for the presence in *Paradise Lost* of what he calls "the naturalist *felix culpa*," a version of the Fortunate Fall that locates the Fall's goodness in the expansion of Adam and Eve's moral sphere. Nuttall believes that this expansion occurs instantaneously upon the consumption of the fruit: "the Fall does not *lead*, through a long sequence, to ultimate good; rather, it is good immediately. Adam and Eve as they fall are instantly promoted, by authentic moral knowledge, to an arena of strenuous virtue."[84] Once we set aside our assumption that postlapsarian virtue must by definition be inferior to its prelapsarian version, Nuttall claims, we can appreciate the superiority of the "dramatic, darkened field of moral heroism which this world affords" to what he evocatively calls "the centrally heated world of Eden," where no moral heroism is possible because no moral difficulty exists.

While he points to Michael's description of a fallen but virtuous moral life as "a paradise happier far," Nuttall concedes that it is difficult for us to view Adam and Eve as psychologically happier than they were in Eden. He insists on the justice of Michael's terms, however: "morally and psychologically they have grown up. Their moral life has

---

[83] The presence of the doctrine of the Fortunate Fall in *Paradise Lost*, and the precise nature of the good fortune the Fall entails if the doctrine is present, are vexed topics in Milton criticism. For the presence of the orthodox view of the Fortunate Fall, see A. O. Lovejoy, "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall," *English Literary History* 4 (1937): 161-79. For arguments against the claim that Milton incorporated the doctrine of the Fortunate Fall into *Paradise Lost*, see Burden, *The Logical Epic*, 37 and 199; Virginia R. Mollenkott, "Milton's Rejection of the Fortunate Fall," *Milton Quarterly* 6 (1972): 1-5; Danielson, *Milton's Good God,* 202-27.

[84] A. D. Nuttall, *The Alternative Trinity: Gnostic Heresy in Marlowe, Milton, and Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 121. See also Nuttall's earlier and much shorter proposal of the "naturalist *felix culpa*" in A. D. Nuttall, *Openings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 92-93.

become real and this—at once—is a great good."[85] But Nuttall, in his enthusiasm for the superiority of the state of knowledge over innocence, pushes his description of postlapsarian human happiness too far. Assuming, as he does, that mankind instantly develops moral maturity upon the Fall ignores the evidence of the last three-plus books of *Paradise Lost*. Those books chart not the intrepid exploration of a new field of moral heroism, but Adam and Eve's first faltering steps toward a new sense of mutual interdependence and their first instruction in ethical thought and interpretation. The last quarter of *Paradise Lost* is, as the overwhelming majority of critical readers have perceived it to be, tragic. But it does offer the consolation that new possibilities have opened even as others have been definitively closed off, and these new possibilities can be realized through the slow and often painful struggle towards moral growth. A straightforward if potentially static existence in one kind of happiness has disappeared, but a more difficult path towards a more exalted happiness has appeared in its stead. And the arena for this growth, the locus of experience that will enable mankind to endure and overcome the trials ahead, is marriage. The Fall is fortunate not because it instantly confers moral virtue and intellectual acuity on fallen mankind, the Odyssean further voice of the poem suggests, but because it creates the conditions in which moral virtue and intellectual acuity can develop.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that *Paradise Lost* considers experience through Odyssean references. I have argued earlier that the *Odyssey* is the great epic of belatedness, of survivorship, of the aftermath of a cataclysmic event and the picking-up-the-pieces of a shattered social fabric. The Fall is, in sacred history, the first such catastrophic event; as numerous critics have noted, Milton's narrative of its precursor—

[85] Nuttall, *Alternative Trinity*, 124.

the War in Heaven culminating in Satan's Fall—draws heavily on Iliadic motifs, characters, and actions.[86] It must have seemed natural to Milton, as it should seem natural to us, to turn to the *Iliad*'s sequel as he considered the sequel to the even greater catastrophe of his own poem.[87] One final echo of the *Odyssey* should make clear just how great a debt *Paradise Lost* owes its predecessor as it imagines fallen man's final homecoming. As Adam laments his discovery of death in *Paradise Lost* 11, Michael assures him that death comes to man in gentler guises as well:

> if thou well observe
> The rule of not too much, by temperance taught
> In what thou eatst and drinkst, seeking from thence
> Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
> Till many years over thy head return:
> So mayst thou live, till like ripe fruit thou drop
> Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease
> Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature:
> This is old age; but then thou must outlive
> Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty...[88]

Michael's promise to Adam of a peaceful old age and a quiet death recalls Teiresias's prophecy in *Odyssey* 11:

> Death will come to you from the sea, in some altogether unwarlike way, and it will end you in the ebbing time of a sleek old age. Your people about you will be prosperous.[89]

Although Teiresias's vision of old age is more benign than Michael's, both imagine a peaceful and quiet death following a period of decline treated relatively gently.

---

[86] See especially Revard, *War in Heaven*; see also John Steadman, *Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959); Blessington, *Classical Epic*; and Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*.

[87] Lewalski's characterization of Michael's narrative in *PL* 11-12 as a "prototypical *Seconde Semaine*" and a "true counterpoint to Raphael's Homeric brief epic" suggests a similar view of the relationship between the events before the Creation and those after the Fall. Lewalski, *Rhetoric of Literary Forms*, 54.

[88] *PL* 11.530-39.

[89] *Od.* 134-37.

Temperance is, of course, a quality Odysseus had been held to epitomize since antiquity; Milton's self-proclaimed "original" Spenser subtitled the Odyssean Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene* the Book of Temperance.[90] Although no allusions mark the peaceful homecoming in death of *Paradise Lost* as specifically Odyssean, the mention of temperance and the Odyssean frame of the poem invite us to think of Odysseus here, and to imagine death as a final—and finally Odyssean—homecoming.

[90] John Dryden, *Fables Ancient and Modern*; quoted in Barbara Lewalski, *John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 508.

VALEDICTION

If Tasso, Spenser, and Milton use the *Odyssey* to express optimism for the prospects of their heroic couples beyond the confines of *Gerusalemme liberata*, *The Faerie Queene*, and *Paradise Lost*, that optimism evaporates in their later works. As Tasso revises the *Liberata* into the *Gerusalemme conquistata*, he erases the Odyssean reunion of Rinaldo and Armida. Instead, Carlo and Ubaldo chain her and destroy her palace at the end of Canto 16, much as Guyon and the Palmer chain Acrasia and destroy the Bower of Bliss. Armida—and the romance possibilities she represents—disappear from the poem, vanquished by the overwhelming pressure to comply with doctrines both Catholic and Aristotelian. Spenser erases the ecstatic reunion of Amoret and Scudamour, with its reverse simile and its confident suggestion that the same fate awaits Britomart and Artegall, from the 1596 *Faerie Queene*; in Scudamour's place Britomart and Amoret find only the beginning of another cycle of pursuit, romance iteration instead of epic end. In *Paradise Regained*, Milton's Christ rejects the riches of classical culture in a gesture that has often been taken as Milton's own renunciation of the heroic poetry he had striven to surpass as a younger man:

> Or if I would delight my private hours
> With music or with poem, where so soon
> As in our native language can I find
> That solace? All our Law and story strewed
> With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscribed,
> Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,
> That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
> That rather Greece from us these arts derived;
> Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
> The vices of their deities, and their own
> In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
> Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
> Remove their swelling epithets thick-laid
> As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
> Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,

> Will far be found unworthy to compare
> With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
> Where God is praised aright, and godlike men,
> The Holiest of Holies, and his saints.[1]

The Son deprives Homer of his claim to primacy, the one claim to poetic greatness and literary importance that even the most ardent of Virgil's admirers could not deny Homer. By tracing the origins of Greek heroic poetry to the psalms of the Hebrew bible, the Son makes Homer into a derivative and degenerate artist, one who fails to understand the premonitions of Christian revelation contained in the Old Testament and perverts Jewish artistic resources to praise a particularly shameful set of pagan gods. This portrait inverts one of the standard defenses of Homer and other classical poets: that they had been granted limited access to Christian truth through divine favor. This inversion is particularly striking because Milton had once defended the utility of Homeric vision for a Christian audience without recourse to that trope; in *De Doctrina Christiana*, Homer's pagan status had become an integral part of his exemplarity. Now that pagan belief debases both his moral and his artistic stature; even the epithets, throughout the Renaissance the most characteristically Greek and the most difficult to interpret of Homer's poetic techniques, become an object of derision. The form of the Homeric poems is as profligate and as morally culpable as is their content.

Published in 1671, *Paradise Regained* offers the Renaissance's last word on the *Odyssey*. In the same year, the *Oxford English Dictionary* claims, the verb "to romance"—"to exaggerate or invent after the fashion of romances"—was coined. Romance, as Anthony Welch has demonstrated, was fast becoming an umbrella term for all genres of imaginative fiction, in opposition to the literal truth of scripture. Works of

---

[1] John Milton, *Paradise Regained*, in *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (London: Longman, 1971), 4.331-49.

the imagination, no matter their content, were susceptible to association with the marvelous and the pagan supernatural; when John Dryden remade *Paradise Lost* as *The State of Innocence*, an opera in rhyming couplets, he transformed Eve into a Circean temptress and Adam into a Gryllus who seriously entertains the idea that existence as an animal may be preferable to the exercise of human reason.[2] As the spirit of the Renaissance (however one chooses to define it) peters out, Spenser's judgment on the *Odyssey* as an unredeemable text with a fall into illicit sexuality and romance error at its core comes to sum up the poem. By the time Thomas Hobbes publishes his translation of the *Odyssey* in 1675 together with "a large Preface concerning the Vertues of an Heroick Poem," his view of those virtues excludes almost entirely the subject matter and the ethical impact of heroic poetry. He praises Homer for such literary qualities as amplitude, contrivance, images, and variety, but his only comment on the purpose of the poems is an aside in the defense of straightforward diction: "For the work of an Heroique Poem is to raise admiration (principally) for three Vertues, Valour, Beauty, and Love, to the reading whereof Women no less than Men have a just pretence, though their skill in Language be not so universal."[3] Hobbes reduces the *Odyssey* to something akin to a novel, a work of imaginative fiction whose merits lie in the literary skill of its author and its ability to present pretty images of virtue suitable for a lady's eyes. The *Odyssey* has become a rococo piece; it has lost its heroic grandeur, its sublimity, its ability to fire its readers with the desire to emulate its hero's almost-superhuman exploits.

This pessimistic turn appears in miniature in the career or the major work of each

---

[2] Anthony Welch, "Spenser, Scripture, and Romance in the 1670s," The Bangor Conference on the Restoration, University of Bangor, 25 July 2007.

[3] Thomas Hobbes, "Concerning the Vertues of an Heroique Poem," in *Homer's Odysses*, trans. Thomas Hobbes (London, 1675), B2^{r}.

poet surveyed in this dissertation. Ariosto follows the apparent partial recovery of Odyssean virtues in Rinaldo's homecoming with a final Odyssean failure in Ruggiero's inability to follow through on Bradamante's equivalent of the test of the bow. Tasso expels Odyssean romance as a positive force from the epic ethos and the Christian community of the *Conquistata*. Spenser condemns most forms of Odyssean eros and Odyssean ethics when Guyon destroys the Bower of Bliss, and he writes Scudamour and Amoret's reunion out of the 1596 version of *The Faerie Queene*. Milton, the fiercest defender of the *Odyssey*'s high valuation of human experience and married love, rejects the *Odyssey* itself in his final published work. If the initial impression of Odysseus in each poet's canon, and the initial function too, "is of a more exemplary life begun, / Tomorrow, truer, harder to get right," to quote James Merrill, the final verdict seems to be that it is so hard as not to be worth trying, and more likely to be exemplary in a cautionary sense than in a positive.[4] But this very pessimism confirms the *Odyssey* as *the* text above all others for the exploration of optimism, of balance, of recovery. In happier moments, it provides such stuff as dreams of human happiness and heroism are made on, a study in what virtue and wisdom can do.

[4] James Merrill, "To the Reader," *A Scattering of Salts* (New York: Knopf, 1995) 32.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

Alciati, Andrea. *Emblemata cum Commentariis*. Padua, 1621; New York: Garland, 1976.

Alighieri, Dante. *Inferno*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam, 1982.

Ariosto, Ludovico. *Cinque Canti/Five Cantos*. Trans. Alexander Sheers and David Quint. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

_____. *Orlando furioso*. Venice: Giolito, 1543.

_____. *Orlando furioso*. Venice: Valgrisi, 1572.

_____. *Orlando furioso*. Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi, 1584.

_____. *Orlando furioso*. Trans. Guido Waldman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.

_____. Ed. Marcello Turchi. 2 vols. Milan: Garzanti, 1974.

_____. *Satire di Ludovico Ariosto*. Ed. Guido Davico Bonino. Milan: Rizzoli, 1990.

Batman, Stephen. *The Golden Booke of the Leaden Gods*. London, 1577; New York: Garland, 1976.

Beni, Paolo. *Comparatione di Homero, Virgilio, e Torquato*. Padua, 1607.

Boiardo, Matteo Maria. *Orlando innamorato*. 2 vols. Ed. Riccardo Bruscagli. Turin: Einaudi, 1995.

Cartari, Vincenzo. *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi*. Venice, 1571; New York: Garland, 1976.

Casaubon, Meric. *De nupera Homeri editione Lugduno-atavica, Hackiana: cum Latina Versione, & Didymi Scholiis: Sed & Eustathio, & locis aliquot insigniotibus ad* Odysseam *pertinentibus. Item, Super loco Homerico, Dubiæ apud antiquos interpretationis, quo DEI in hominum tam mentes, quam fortunas Impetium afferitur: Binæ Dissertationes*. London, 1659.

Cicero. *Tusculan Disputations*. Trans. J. E. King. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945.

_____. *On Duties*. Ed. and trans. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Comes, Natalis [Natale Conti]. *Mythologiae*. Venice, 1567; New York: Garland, 1976.

_____. *Mythologiae*. Trans. Jean de Montlyard. Rev. trans. Jean Baudouin. 2 vols. Paris: Pierre Chevalier and Samuel Thiboust, 1627; New York: Garland, 1976.

Davies, John, trans.. *Observations on the Poems of Homer and Virgil*. London, n.d.

Davies, John. *The Poems of Sir John Davies*. Ed. Robert Krueger. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.

Donne, John. *The Sermons of John Donne*. Ed. Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter. 10 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962.

Fraunce, Abraham. *The Third Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch*. London, 1592; New York: Garland, 1976.

Frazer, R. M., ed. and trans. *The Trojan War: The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966.

Gelli, Giovanni Battista. *Circe*. Ed. Robert Adams. Trans. Thomas Brown. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963.

Giraldi Cinzio, Giovambattista. *Discorso dei romanzi.* Venice: Giolito, 1554.

_____. *Discorso dei Romanzi*. Ed. Laura Benedetti, Giuseppe Monorchio, and Ernesto Musacchio. Bologna: Millenium, 1999.

Haine [Haynes], William. *Certaine Epistles of Tvlly Verbally Translated*. London, 1611.

Heraclitus. *Allégories d'Homère*. Ed. and trans. Félix Buffière. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1962.

Hobbes, Thomas. "Concerning the Vertues of an Heroique Poem." In *Homer's Odysses*. Trans. Thomas Hobbes. London: W. Crook, 1675.

Homer. *Hê tou Homerou poiêsis hapasa*. Florence: Bernardo and Nerio Nerli, 1488.

_____. *Homeri Ilias. Homeri Odyssea*. Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1504.

_____. *Homeri poetarum clarissimum Odyssea de erroribus Vlyxes*. Strasbourg: Ioannis Schotti, 1510.

_____. *Odissea Homeri*. Rome: Iacobus Mazochius, 1510.

_____. *Homeri opera.* Venice: Bernardium Venetum de Vitalibus, 1516.

_____. *Homeri Ilias. Homeri Odyssea.* Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1517.

_____. *Homeri Ilias. Homeri Odyssea.* Florence: Antonio Varchi, 1519.

_____. *Homerou Odusseias Bibloi A kai B. Homeri Ulysseae Lib. I. & II. Angeli Politiani in Homerum Præfatio.* Basel, 1520.

_____. *Homeri Odyssea, Metaphraste Raphaele Volaterrano.* Cologne: Eucharius Hirtzhorn, 1523.

_____. *Homeri Ilias. Homeri Odyssea.* Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1524.

_____. *Homeri Ilias. Homeri Odusseia.* Strasbourg: Wolf Köpfel, 1525.

_____. *Odisseae Homeri Libri XXIIII.* Trans. Raffaele Maffei. Lyon: Seb. Gryphium, 1541.

_____. *Eustathiou Archiepiskopou Thessalonikês Parekbolai.* Rome, 1542-50.

_____. *Odysseæ libri XXIIII.* Trans. Simon Lemnius. Basel: Ioannis Oporini, 1549.

_____. *Copiae Cornv sive Oceanvs enarrationvm Homericarvm, ex Evstathii in eundem commentarijs concinnatarum, Hadriano Iunio autore.* Basel: Froben, 1558.

_____. *Homerou Odysseias Biblion A. Homeri Odysseæ Liber Primvs.* Paris: Andrea Wechel, 1558.

_____. *Eustathiou Archiepiskopou Thessalonikês parekbolai.* Basel: Froben, 1559-60.

_____. *L'Ulisse.* Trans. Lodovico Dolce. Venice: Giolito, 1573.

_____. *L'Odissea d'Omero.* Trans. Girolamo Baccelli. Florence: Sermartelli, 1582.

_____. *Homeri quae extant omnia.* Ed. Jean de Sponde. Basel: Eusebii Episcopii Opera, 1583.

_____. *The Whole Works of Homer.* Trans. George Chapman. London: Nathaniel Butter, 1616.

_____. *Homer His Odysseys Translated, Adorn'd with Sculpture, and Illustrated with Annotations.* Trans. John Ogilby. London: Thomas Rycroft, 1659.

_____. *Homeri Odyssea.* Cambridge: John Field, 1664.

_____. *Odysseys*. Trans. Thomas Hobbes. London: W. Crook, 1675.

_____. *Odyssey*. Trans. Richmond Lattimore. New York: Harper Colophon, 1975.

_____. *Odyssey*. Ed. W. B. Stanford. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996.

Horace. *Satires and Epistles*. Ed. Edward P. Morris. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974.

Jonson, Ben. *Works*. Ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson. 11 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1947.

Marvell, Andrew. *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*. Ed. Nigel Smith. Rev. ed. London: Longman, 2007.

Menechini, Andrea. *Delle lodi della poesia d'Omero, et di Virgilio*. Venice, 1572.

Merrill, James. *A Scattering of Salts*. New York: Knopf, 1995.

Milton, John. *The Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton*. London, 1695.

_____. *The Works of John Milton*. Ed. Frank Allen Patterson et al. 18 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-38.

_____. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1957.

_____. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe. 8 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82.

_____. *Complete Shorter Poems*. Ed. John Carey. New York: Longman, 1971.

_____. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Alastair Fowler. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 1998.

Moralis Interpretatio Errorum Vlyssis Homerici. Commentatio Porphyrii Philosophi de Nympharum antro in XIII libro Odysseæ Homericæ, multiplici cognitio ne rerum uariarum instructissima. Ex Commentariis Procli Lycii, Philosophi Platonici in libros Platonis de Repub. apologiæ quædam pro Homero, & fabularum aliquot enarrationes. Zurich, 1542.

Pigna, Giovambattista. *I romanzi*. Venice, 1554.

Plato. *Republic*. Ed. G. R. F. Ferrari. Trans. Tom Griffith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Plutarch. *Moralia*. Trans. W.C. Helmbold. 14 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.

[Plutarch]. *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*. Ed. J. J. Keaney and Robert Lamberton. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

Poetæ Græci veteres carminis heroici scriptores. n.p.: Sumptibus Caldorianæ Societatis,1606.

Poliziano, Angelo. *Silvae*. Ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Polus [Pole], Matthew. *Synopsis Criticorum aliorumque S. Scripturae Interpretum*. 4 vols. London, 1669.

Puttenham, George. *The Arte of English Poesie*. Ed. R. C. Alston. Menston: Scolar Press, 1968.

Richardson, Jonathan, Sr, and Jonathan Richardson, Jr. *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's* Paradise Lost. *With the Life of the Author, and a Discourse on the Poem*. London, 1734.

Ross, Alexander. *Mystagogus Poeticus*. London, 1648; New York: Garland, 1976.

Seneca. *Ad Lucilium Epistuale Morales*. Trans. Richard M. Gummere. 3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917.

_____. *Moral Essays*. Trans. John W. Basore. 3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928.

Sidney, Sir Philip. *An Apology for Poetry*. Ed. Geoffrey Shepherd. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973.

Smith, G. Gregory, ed. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904.

Sophocles. *Ajax*. Trans. John Moore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. London: Longman, 1977.

_____. *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. William A. Oram et al. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Statius. *Thebaid. Achilleid.* Trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey. 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Tasso, Torquato. *Opere di Torquato Tasso. Colle controversie sulla Gerusalemme*. Ed. G. Rosini. 33 vols. Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1821-32.

_____. *Jerusalem Delivered*. Trans. Edward Fairfax. New York: Capricorn, 1963.

_____. *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*. Ed. Luigi Poma. Bari: Laterza, 1964.

_____. *Gerusalemme liberata*. Ed. Lanfranco Caretti. Turin: Einaudi, 1971.

_____. *Jerusalem Delivered*. Ed. and trans. Anthony Esolen. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Textor, Johannes Ravisius. *Epithetorum Ioann. Rauisii Textoris epitome ex Hadr. Iunii Medici recognitione*. London, 1589.

Urceus, Antonius. *Orationes*. Venice, 1506.

Virgil. *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid*. Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. Rev. G.P. Gould. 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Whately, William. *Prototypes, or, The Primary Precedent Presidents out of the Booke of Genesis*, 1647.

Whitney, Geffrey. *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devises*. London, 1586.

Wilkins, John. *Ecclesiastes, or, A Discourse Concerning the Craft of Preaching*. London, 1647.

Willet, Andrew. *Hexapla in Genesin, that is, A Sixfold Commentary upon Genesis*. London, 1608.

Wisdoms Conquest, or, An explanation and Grammatical Translation of the thirteenth Book of Ovids Metamorphoses, *containing that curious and Rhetoricall contest between* Ajax *and* Ulysses, *for the armour of* Achilles*; where is set forth to the life the power of Valour, and the prevalence of Eloquence*. London, 1651.

II. Secondary Sources

Achinstein, Sharon. *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Allen, Don Cameron. *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970.

Alpers, Paul. *The Poetry of* The Faerie Queene. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.

_____. "Narration in *The Faerie Queene*." *English Literary History* 44 (1977): 19-39.

Aryanpur, Manoocher. "*Paradise Lost* and *The Odyssey*." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 9 (1969): 151-166.

Ascoli, Albert. *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

_____. "Liberating the Tomb: Difference and Death in *Gerusalemme liberata*." *Annali d'italianistica* 12 (1994): 159-80.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis*. Trans. Willard Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Babbi, Anna Maria, and Francesca Zardini, eds. *Ulisse da Omero a Pascal Quignard*. Verona: Fiorini, 2000.

Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Baldwin, T. W. *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greek*. 2 vols. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944.

Bangs, Carl. *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1971.

Barchiesi, Alessandro. *La traccia del modello: effetti omerici nella narrazione virgiliana*. Pisa: Giardini, 1984.

Barry, Jonathan, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts, eds. *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Beer, Marina. *Romanzi di cavalleria: il* Furioso *e il romanzo italiano del primo Cinquecento*. Rome: Bulzoni, 1987.

Beissinger, Margaret, Jane Tylus, and Susanne Wofford, eds. *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: The Poetics of Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Bellamy, Elizabeth Jane. *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

_____. "Alcina's Revenge: Reassessing Irony and Allegory in the *Orlando furioso*." *Annali d'italianistica* 12 (1994): 61-74.

Benet, Diana Treviño, and Michael Lieb, eds. *Literary Milton: Text, Pretext, Context*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994.

Bennet, Josephine Waters. *The Evolution of* The Faerie Queene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942.

Berger, Harry. *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's* Faerie Queene. Hamden, Conn: Archon, 1967.

_____. *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

_____. "Wring Out the Old: Squeezing the Text, 1951-2001," *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003): 81-121.

Berry, Boyd. *Process of Speech: Puritan Religious Writing and* Paradise Lost. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Biow, Douglas. *"Mirabile Dictu": Representation of the Marvelous in Medieval and Renaissance Epic*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

Black, Lynette. "Prudence in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*." *Spenser Studies* 13 (1999): 65-88.

Blackburn, Thomas. " 'Uncloister'd Virtue': Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise." *Milton Studies* 3 (1971): 119-38.

Blair, Ann. "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 11-28.

Blessington, Francis C. Paradise Lost *and the Classical Epic*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

_____. *Paradise Lost: Ideal and Tragic Epic*. Boston: Twayne, 1988.

Bloom, Harold. *A Map of Misreading*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Boitani, Piero. *L'ombra di Ulisse: Figure d'un mito.* Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992.

_____. *Sulle orme di Ulisse*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998.

Boitani, Piero, and Richard Ambrosini, eds. *Ulisse: archeologia dell'uomo moderno*.

Rome: Bulzoni, 1998.

Bolgar, R. R. *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.

_____, ed. *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500-1700: Proceedings of an International Conference Held at King's College, Cambridge, April 1974*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. 141-154.

Borris, Kenneth. *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

_____. "Allegory in *Paradise Lost*: Satan's Cosmic Journey." *Milton Studies* 26 (1990): 101-133.

Boswell, Jackson Powell. *Milton's Library: A Catalogue of The Remains of John Milton's Library and An Annotated Reconstruction of Milton's Library and Ancillary Readings*. New York: Garland, 1975.

Bowra, C. M. *From Virgil to Milton*. London: Macmillan, 1945.

Brand, C. P. *Torquato Tasso: A Study of the Poet and of His Contribution to English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.

Brodwin, Leonora Leet. "Milton and the Renaissance Circe." *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 21-83.

Brownlee, Marina Scordilis, and Kevin Brownlee. *Romance: Generic Transformations from Chrétien de Troyes to Cervantes*. Hanover: University Press of New Hampshire, 1985.

Brownlee, Kevin, and Walter Stephens, eds. *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Hanover: Dartmouth University Press, 1989.

Bruce, Donald. "Edmund Spenser: The Boyhood of a Poet." *Contemporary Review* 264: 70-79.

Brumble, H. David. *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings*. London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998.

Bruscagli, Riccardo. *Stagioni della civiltà estense*. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1983.

_____. *Studi Cavallereschi*. Florence: Società editrice fiorentina, 2003.

_____. "L'errore di Goffredo." *Studi tassiani* 40-41 (1992-93): 207-32.

Bruscagli, Riccardo, and Amedeo Quondam, eds. *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra quattro e cinquecento*. Modena: F. C. Panini, 1992.

Buffière, Félix. *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1956.

Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.

Burden, Dennis. *The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of* Paradise Lost. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Burrow, Colin. *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Caretti, Lanfranco. *Ariosto e Tasso*. Turin: Einaudi, 1967.

Carne-Ross, D.S. "The One and the Many: A Reading of *Orlando furioso*, Cantos 1 and 8." *Arion* O.S. 5 (1966): 195-234.

_____. "The One and the Many: A Reading of the *Orlando furioso*." *Arion* N.S. 3 (1976): 146-219.

Casadei, Alberto. *La strategia delle varianti: le correzioni storiche del terzo* Furioso. Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 1988.

_____. *Il percorso del* Furioso*: Ricerche intorno alle redazioni del 1516 e del 1521*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993.

_____. "La narrazione etica: esempi dal romanzo italiano." *Annali d'Italianistica* 19 (2001): 103-18.

Cheney, Patrick. "Recent Studies in the English Renaissance." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 47 (2007): 199-267.

Cheney, Patrick, and Lauren Silberman, eds. *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.

Chiappelli, Fredi. *Studi sul linguaggio del Tasso epico*. Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1957.

Christopher, Georgia. *Milton and the Science of the Saints*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Clarke, Howard. *Homer's Readers: A Historical Introduction to the* Iliad *and the*

Odyssey. London: Associated University Presses, 1981.

Clarke, M. L. *Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

Coch, Christine. "The Trials of Art: Testing Temperance in the Bower of Bliss and Diana's Grove at Nonsuch." *Spenser Studies* 20 (2005): 49-76.

Cohen, Beth, ed. *The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer's* Odyssey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Cooney, Helen. "Guyon and His Palmer: Spenser's Emblem of Temperance." *The Review of English Studies* N. S. 51 (2000): 169-92.

Cook, Patrick J. "The Epic Chronotope from Ariosto to Spenser." *Annali d'italianistica* 12 (1994): 115-41.

Corns, Thomas, ed. *A Companion to Milton*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

Corrigan, Beatrice. "The Opposing Mirrors." *Italica* 33 (1956): 165-79.

Croce, Benedetto. *Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille*. Bari: Laterza, 1968.

Cullen, Patrick. "Guyon Michrochristus: The Cave of Mammon Re-examined." *English Literary History* 37 (1970): 153-74.

Curtius, Ernst Robert. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Trans. Willard Trask. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Dalla Palma, Giuseppe. *Le strutture narrative dell'* Orlando furioso. Florence: Olschki, 1984.

Danielson, Dennis. *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Defaux, Gérard. *Le curieux, le glorieux, et la sagesse du monde dans la première moitié du XVI^e Siècle: l'exemple du Panurge (Ulysse, Démosthène, Empédocle)*. Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1982.

Del Giudice, Luisa, ed. *Western Gerusalem: University of California Studies on Tasso*. New York: Out of London, 1984.

Della Terza, Dante. "History and the Epic Discourse: Remarks on the Narrative Structure of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*." *Quaderni d'italianistica* 1 (1980): 30-45.

Demetriou, Tania. "'Essentially Circe': Spenser, Homer, and the Homeric Tradition."

Translation and Literature 15 (2006): 151-176.

Dillon, John B., and Gordon Teskey. "Milton's Homer." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 101 (1986): 857-58.

Dobranski, Stephen. *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Dobranski, Stephen, and John P. Rumrich, eds. *Milton and Heresy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Doherty, Lillian Eileen. *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the* Odyssey. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995.

DuRocher, Richard. *Milton and Ovid.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

_____. "'Tears Such as Angels Weep': Passion and Allusion in *Paradise Lost.*" The 2007 Conference on John Milton, Murfreesboro, TN, 26 October 2007.

Durling, Robert. *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1955.

Enterline, Lynn. *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Esolen, Anthony. "Spenser's 'Alma Venus': Energy and Economics in the Bower of Bliss." *English Literary Renaissance* 23 (1993): 267-86.

Evans, J. Martin. *Milton's Imperial Epic:* Paradise Lost *and the Discourse of Colonialism.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Evans, Maurice. *Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism: A Commentary on* The Faerie Queene. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

_____. "The Fall of Guyon." *English Literary History* 28 (1961): 215-24.

Fachard, Denis. "L'immagine dell'eroe: Reminiscenze Omeriche nell'*Innamorato* e nel *Furioso.*" *Études de lettres* 1 (1989): 5-40.

Fallon, Stephen. "Satan's Return to Hell: Milton's Concealed Dialogue with Virgil and Homer." *Milton Quarterly* 18 (1984): 78-81.

_____. "Milton's Sin and Death: The Ontology of Allegory in *Paradise Lost.*"

English Literary Renaissance 17 (1987): 329-50.

_____. "Milton's Arminianism and the Authorship of *De Doctrina Christiana*." *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 41 (1999): 103-27.

Feinstein, Wiley. "Bradamante in Love: Some Postfeminist Considerations on Ariosto." *Forum Italicum* 22 (1988): 48-59.

Fichter, Andrew. *Poets Historical: Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Fincham, Kenneth, ed. *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*. London: Macmillan, 1993.

Finucci, Valeria, ed. *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.

Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in* Paradise Lost. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1997.

Fletcher, Angus. *Allegory: Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964.

_____. *The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Foley, Helene P. "'Reverse Similes' and Sex Roles in the *Odyssey*." *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 3-21.

Ford, Philip. *De Troie a Ithaque: Réception des épopées homériques à la Renaissance*. Geneva: Droz, 2007.

_____. "Jean Dorat and the Reception of Homer in Renaissance France." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995): 265-74.

_____. "Homer in the French Renaissance." *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006): 1-29.

Ford, Philip, and Paul White, eds. *Masculinities in Sixteenth-Century France: Proceedings of the Eighth Cambridge French Renaissance Colloquium, 5-7 July 2003*. Cambridge: Cambridge French Colloquia, 2006.

Forsyth, Neil. *The Satanic Epic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Fowler, Robert, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Fraenkel, Eduard. "The *Culex*." *Journal of Roman Studies* 42 (1952): 1-9.

Freccero, John. *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. Ed. Rachel Jacoff. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

_____. *The Return of Eden*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.

_____. *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Fumaroli, Marc. "Sur Homère en France au XVII[e] Siècle." *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 73 (1973): 643-656.

Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Getto, Giovanni. *Interpretazione del Tasso*. Naples: Edizione scientifiche italiane, 1967.

_____. *Nel mondo della* Gerusalemme. Rev. ed. Rome: Bonacci, 1977.

Giamatti, A. Bartlett. *The Earthly Paradise and Renaissance Epic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

_____. *Play of Double Senses: Spenser's Faerie Queene*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1975.

_____. *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Giglio, Raffaele. *Il volo di Ulisse e di Dante: Altri studi sulla* Commedia. Naples: Loffredo, 1997.

Gohlke, Madelon S. "Embattled Allegory: Book II of *The Faerie Queene*." *English Literary Renaissance* 8 (1978): 123-40.

Goldberg, Jonathan. *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

Gough, Melinda. "'Her filthy feature open showne' in Ariosto, Spenser, and *Much Ado about Nothing*." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 39 (1999): 41-67.

_____. "Tasso's Enchantress, Tasso's Captive Woman." *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 523-52.

Grafton, Anthony. *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance*

Readers. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

_____. "Renaissance Readers and Ancient Texts: Comments on Some Commentaries." *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 615-49.

_____. "Guillaume Budé and His Books." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 91 (1997): 139-157.

Grafton, Anthony, and Lisa Jardine. *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe*. London: Duckworth, 1986.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Greene, Thomas. *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.

_____. *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Greenlaw, Edwin A. *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932.

Gregorson, Linda. *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Gregory, Tobias. *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Grossman, Marshall. *"Authors to Themselves": Milton and the Revelation of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Guillory, John. *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Günsberg, Maggie. "The Mirror Episode in Canto XVI of the *Gerusalemme liberata*." *The Italianist* 3 (1983): 30-46.

Hadfield, Andrew. *Literature, Politics, and National Identity: Reformation to Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

_____, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Hamilton, A. C. *The Structure of Allegory in* The Faerie Queene. Oxford: Clarendon,

1961.

_____, ed. *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Hampton, Timothy. *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Harada, Jun. "The Mechanism of Human Reconciliation in *Paradise Lost*." *Philological Quarterly* 50 (1971): 543-52.

Harding, Davis P. *The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Classical Background of* Paradise Lost. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962.

Hartman, Geoffrey. *Beyond Formalism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

Hathaway, Baxter. *The Age of Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962.

_____. *Marvels and Commonplaces: Renaissance Literary Criticism*. New York: Random House, 1968.

Helgerson, Richard. *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Johnson, Milton, and the Literary System*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

_____. "Tasso on Spenser: The Politics of Chivalric Romance." *Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 153-67.

Hepp, Noémi. *Homère en France au XVII^e Siècle*. Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1968.

_____. "Homère en France au XVI^e Siècle." *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino II. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche* 96 (1961-62): 389-508.

Highet, Gilbert. *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Hinds, Stephen. *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Houseman, A. E. "Remarks on the *Culex*." *Classical Review* 16 (1902): 339-46.

_____. "The Apparatus Criticus of the *Culex*." *Transactions of the Cambridge Philological Society* 6 (1908): 3-22.

Hoxby, Blair. *Mammon's Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Hughes, Merritt Y. *Virgil and Spenser*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929.

_____. "Spenser's Acrasia and the Circe of the Renaissance." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4 (1943): 381-99.

Hulse, Clark. *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Jackson, H. J. *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

James, Heather. *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Jameson, Frederic. "Magical Narrative: Romance as Genre." *New Literary History* 7 (1975): 135-63.

Jardine, Lisa, and Anthony Grafton. "Studied for Action: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy." *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 30-78.

Jauss, Hans Robert. *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Javitch, Daniel. *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of* Orlando furioso. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

_____. "Rescuing Ovid from the Allegorizers." *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978): 97-107.

_____. "Cantus Interruptus in the *Orlando furioso*." *Modern Language Notes* 95 (1980): 66-80.

_____. "The *Orlando furioso* and Ovid's Revision of the *Aeneid*." *Modern Language Notes* 99 (1984): 1023-36.

_____. "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 215-39.

_____. "Sixteenth-Century Commentaries on Imitation in the *Orlando furioso*." *Harvard Library Bulletin* 34 (1986): 221-50.

_____. "Narrative Discontinuity in the *Orlando furioso* and Its Sixteenth-Century Critics." *Modern Language Notes* 103 (1988): 50-74.

Jewell, Helen M. *Education in Early Modern England*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Jordan, Constance. *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Kahn, Victoria. *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

_____. *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Kallendorf, Craig. *Virgil and the Myth of Venice: Books and Readers in the Italian Renaissance*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1999.

_____, ed. and trans. *Humanist Educational Treatises*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Kates, Judith A. *Tasso and Milton: The Problem of Christian Epic*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1983.

Kelley, Maurice. *This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's "De Doctrina Christiana" as a Gloss upon* Paradise Lost. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941.

_____. "The Theological Dogma of *Paradise Lost*, III, 173-202," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 52 (1937): 75-79.

Kermode, Frank, ed. *The Living Milton: Essays by Various Hands*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.

_____. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. New ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Kerrigan, William. *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of* Paradise Lost. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Kinney, Arthur. *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric, and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century England*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986.

Kranidas, Thomas, ed. *New Essays on* Paradise Lost. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Krier, Theresa M. *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Krier, Theresa M., and Elizabeth D. Harvey, eds. *Luce Irigaray and Premodern Culture: Thresholds of History*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Kurth, Burton O. *Milton and Christian Heroism: Biblical Epic Themes and Forms in Seventeenth-Century England.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959.

Lamberton, Robert. *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

Lamberton, Robert, and John J. Keaney, eds. *Homer's Ancient Readers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Lansing, Richard H. "*Orlando furioso* and the Homeric Model." *Comparative Literature* 24 (1987): 311-25.

Levao, Ronald. "'Among Unequals What Society': *Paradise Lost* and the Forms of Intimacy." *Modern Language Quarterly* 61 (2000): 79-107.

Lewalski, Barbara. *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

_____. Paradise Lost *and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

_____. *John Milton: A Critical Biography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

_____. "Milton on Women—Yet Once More." *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 3-20.

_____. "*Paradise Lost* and Milton's Politics." *Milton Studies* 38 (2000): 141-168.

Leonard, John. "'Thus They Relate, Erring': Milton's Inaccurate Allusions." *Milton Studies* 38 (2000): 96-121.

Lewis, C. S. *A Preface to* Paradise Lost. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Lieb, Michael. *The Sinews of Ulysses: Form and Convention in Milton's Works.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1989.

Lieb, Michael, and John T. Shawcross, eds. *Achievements of the Left Hand.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974.

Loewenstein, David. *Milton and the Drama of History: Historical Vision, Iconoclasm, and the Literary Imagination.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Loewenstein, David, and James Grantham Turner, eds. *Politics, Poetics and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Loewenstein, Joseph. "Grylle's Hoggish Mind." *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007): 243-56.

Lord, George de Forest. *Homeric Renaissance: The* Odyssey *of George Chapman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956.

Looney, Dennis. *Compromising the Classics: Romance Epic Narrative in the Italian Renaissance*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996.

Lotspeich, Henry Gibbons. *Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser*. New York: Octagon, 1965.

Lovejoy, A. O. "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall." *English Literary History* 4 (1937): 161-79.

Luxon, Thomas. *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005.

Lyne, R. O. A. M. *Further Voices in Vergil's* Aeneid. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Lyne, Raphael. *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English* Metamorphoses *1567-1632*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

_____. "Grille's Moral Dialogue: Spenser and Plutarch." *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 159-76.

Lyons, John D., and Stephen D. Nichols, Jr., eds. *Mimesis: Mirror to Method*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982.

Machacek, Gregory. "Allusion." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 122 (2007): 522-36.

MacLachlan, Hugh. "The Death of Guyon and the *Elizabethan Book of Homilies*." *Spenser Studies* 4 (1983): 93-114.

MacLure, Millar. *George Chapman: A Critical Study*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.

Madsen, William G. *From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Maïer, Ida. *Ange Politien: la formation d'un poète humaniste*. Geneva: Droz, 1966.

Martindale, Charles. *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic*. London: Croom Helm, 1986.

Mazzeo, Joseph, ed. *Reason and Imagination: Studies in the History of Ideas, 1600-1800*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.

Mazzotta, Giuseppe. *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the* Divine Comedy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

McCaffrey, Isabel. Paradise Lost *as "Myth."* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.

_____. *Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

McColley, Diane Kelsey. *Milton's Eve.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Messineo, Daniela. *Il viaggio di Ulisse da Dante a Levi: Il fascino immutato del mitico Odisseo.* Florence: Firenze Atheneum, 1995.

Migiel, Marilyn. *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso's* Gerusalemme liberata. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1993.

Miller, David Lee. *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590* Faerie Queene. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Miller, Lewis H. "Phaedria, Mammon, and Sir Guyon's Education by Error." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 63 (1964): 33-44.

Miner, Earl, ed. *Literary Uses of Typology.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Mollenkott, Virginia R. "Milton's Rejection of the Fortunate Fall." *Milton Quarterly* 6 (1972): 1-5.

Mulryan, John. *"Through a Glass Darkly": Milton's Reinvention of the Mythological Tradition.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1996.

Murrin, Michael. *The Allegorical Epic.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

_____. *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Murtagh, Kristen Olson. "Erminia Delivered: Notes on Tasso and Romance." *Quaderni d'italianistica* 3 (1982): 12-25.

Nagy, Gregory. *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Nellish, B. "The Allegory of Guyon's Voyage: An Interpretation." *English Literary History* 30 (1963): 89-106.

Nohrnberg, James. *The Analogy of* The Faerie Queene. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Norbrook, David G. *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

Nuttall, A. D. *Openings*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.

_____. *The Alternative Trinity: Gnostic Heresy in Marlowe, Milton, and Blake*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Nyquist, Mary, and Margaret W. Ferguson, eds. *Re-membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*. New York: Methuen, 1987.

Parker, Patricia. *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

_____. *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*. London: Methuen, 1987.

Parker, Patricia, and David Quint, eds. *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Parry, Adam. "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*." *Arion* 2 (1963): 66-80.

Parry, Joseph D. "Phaedria and Guyon: Traveling Alone in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II." *Spenser Studies* 15 (2001): 53-77.

Patterson, Annabel. "Tasso and Neoplatonism: The Growth of His Epic Theory." *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971): 105-33.

Pavlock, Barbara. *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

_____. "Horace's Influence on Renaissance Epic." *Classical World* 87 (1994): 427-41.

Pertusi, Agostino. *Leonzio Pilato fra Petrarca e Boccaccio: Le sue versioni omeriche negli autografi di Venezia e la cultura greca del primo Umanesimo*. Venice and Rome: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1964.

Pittorru, Fabio. *Torquato Tasso: l'uomo, il poeta, il cortegiano*. Milan: Bompiani, 1982.

Porter, William M. *Reading the Classics and* Paradise Lost. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Prescott, Anne Lake. *French Poets and the English Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1978.

Proctor, Robert. *The Printing of Greek in the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Bibliographical Society, 1900.

Pucci, Pietro. *Odysseus Polutropos: Intertextual Readings in the* Odyssey *and the* Iliad. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Quilligan, Maureen. *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979.

_____. *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Quint, David. *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

_____. *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

_____. "The Figure of Atlante: Ariosto and Boiardo's Poem." *Modern Language Notes* 94 (1979): 77-91.

_____. "Political Allegory in the *Gerusalemme liberata*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 1-29.

_____. "The Death of Brandimarte and the Ending of the *Orlando furioso*." *Annali d'Italianistica* 12 (1994): 75-85.

_____. "Narrative Interlace and Narrative Genres in *Don Quijote* and the *Orlando furioso*." *Modern Language Quarterly* 58 (1997): 241-68.

_____. "The Anatomy of Epic in Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*." *The Spenser Review* 34 (2003): 28-45.

_____. "Fear of Falling: Icarus, Phaethon, and Lucretius in *Paradise Lost*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 57 (2004): 847-81.

_____. "The Genealogy of the Novel from the *Odyssey* to *Don Quijote*." *Comparative Literature* 59 (2007): 23-32.

Quint, David, and Margaret W. Ferguson, eds. *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992.

Rahner, Hugo. *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*. Trans. Brian Battershaw. New York:

Harper & Row, 1963.

Rajan, Balachandra, ed. *Paradise Lost: A Tercentenary Celebration*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969.

Rajna, Pio. *Le fonti dell'* Orlando furioso. 2nd ed. Florence: Sansoni, 1975.

Ramachandran, Ayesha. "Tasso's Petrarch: The Lyric Means to Epic Ends." *Modern Language Notes* 122 (2007): 186-208.

Residori, Matteo. *L'idea del poema: Studio sulla* Gerusalemme conquistata *di Torquato Tasso*. Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 2004.

_____. "Il mago d'Ascalona e gli spazi del romanzo nella *Liberata*." *Italianistica* 24 (1995): 453-72.

Revard, Stella Purce. *The War in Heaven:* Paradise Lost *and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.

_____. "Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in *Paradise Lost*." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 99 (1973): 69-78.

_____. "Milton and the Progress of the Epic Proemium." *Milton Studies* 38 (2000): 122-140.

Reynolds, L. D., and N. G. Wilson. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.

Rhu, Lawrence. *The Genesis of Tasso's Narrative Theory: English Translations of the Early Poetics and a Comparative Study of Their Significance*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993.

_____. "Ariosto moralisé: Political Decorum in Spenser's Imitations of *Orlando furioso*." *Annali d'italianistica* 12 (1994): 143-57.

Roche, Thomas P. *The Kindly Flame*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Rossi, Massimiliano, and Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi, eds. *L'arme e gli amori: Ariosto, Tasso, and Guarini in Late Renaissance Florence*. Florence: Olschki, 2004.

Rumrich, John. *Matter of Glory: A New Preface to* Paradise Lost. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987.

_____. *Milton Unbound: Controversy and Reinterpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Russell, Conrad, ed. *The Origins of the English Civil War*. London: Macmillan, 1973.

Saccone, Eduardo. *Il "soggetto" del* Furioso *e altri saggi tra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Naples: Liguori, 1974.

Samuel, Irene. *Dante and Milton: The* Commedia *and* Paradise Lost. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966.

Sandys, John Edwin. *A History of Classical Scholarship from the Sixth Century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages*. 3rd ed. 3 vols. New York: Hafner, 1967.

Santoro, Mario. *L'Anello di Angelica: Nuovi saggi ariosteschi*. Napoli, 1983.

Sayle, R. T. D. "Annals of Merchant Taylors' School Library." *The Library* 4th series 15 (1935): 457-80.

Schaar, Claes. *The Full Voic'd Quire Below: Vertical Context Systems in* Paradise Lost. Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982.

Schein, Seth L., ed. *Reading the* Odyssey*: Selected Interpretative Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Seem, Lauren Scancarelli. "The Limits of Chivalry: Tasso and the End of the *Aeneid*." *Comparative Literature* 42 (1990): 116-25.

Segal, Charles. "The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return." *Arion* 1:4 (1962): 17-64.

Segre, Cesare. *Esperienze ariostesche*. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1966.

Shawcross, John. *With Mortal Voice: The Creation of* Paradise Lost. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982.

_____. *Intentionality and the New Traditionalism: Some Liminal Means to Literary Revisionism*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.

_____. *Rethinking Milton Studies: Time Present and Time Past*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006.

Shephard, Alan, and Stephen D. Powell, eds. *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004.

Sherman, William H. *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Shoulson, Jeffrey S. *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism, and Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Silberman, Lauren. *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of* The Faerie Queene. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

_____. *The Faerie Queene*, Book II and the Limitations of Temperance." *Modern Language Studies* 17 (1987): 9-22.

Simonsuuri, Kirsti. *Homer's Original Genius: Eighteenth-Century Notions of the Early Greek Epic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Sitterson, Joseph. "Allusive and Elusive Meanings: Reading Ariosto's Vergilian Ending." *Renaissance Quarterly* 45 (1992): 1-19.

Sowerby, Robin. "Early Humanist Failure with Homer." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 4 (1997): 37-63, 165-94.

Spingarn, J. E. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1899.

Stambler, Peter D. "The Development of Guyon's Christian Temperance." *English Literary Renaissance* 7 (1977): 51-89.

Stanford, W. B. *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1954.

Stanford, W. B., and J. V. Luce. *The Quest for Ulysses*. New York: Praeger, 1974.

Starnes, DeWitt T. and Ernest William Talbert. *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries: A Study of Renaissance Dictionaries in Their Relation to the Classical Learning of Contemporary English Writers*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955.

Steadman, John. *Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959.

_____. *Milton and the Renaissance Hero*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.

Stephens, Walter. "Reading Tasso Reading Virgil Reading Homer: An Archaeology of Andromache." *Comparative Literature Studies* 32 (1995): 296-319.

Strier, Richard. "Milton's Fetters, or, Why Eden Is Better than Heaven." *Milton Studies* 38 (2000): 169-197.

Summers, Claude J., and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds. *Representing Women in Renaissance*

England. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997.

Summers, Joseph. *The Muse's Method: An Introduction to* Paradise Lost. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.

Suttie, Paul. "Moral Ambivalence in the Legend of Temperance." *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 125-33.

Suzuki, Mihoko. *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Swearingen, Roger G. "Guyon's Faint." *Studies in Philology* 74 (1977): 165-85.

Tesky, Gordon. *Allegory and Violence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

_____. *Delirious Milton: The Fate of the Poet in Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Thompson, David. *Dante's Epic Journeys*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

Tilley, Arthur. "Greek Studies in Cambridge in Early Sixteenth-Century England." *English Historical Studies* 53 (1938): 221-39, 438-56.

Tillyard, E. M. W. *The English Epic and Its Background*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1954.

Turner, James Grantham. *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.

Tyacke, Nicholas. *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987.

Vinaver, Eugene. *The Rise of Romance*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971.

Walker, Julia M. "The Poetics of Antitext and the Politics of Milton's Allusions." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 37 (1997): 151-71.

Watkins, John. *The Specter of Dido: Spenser and Virgilian Epic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Weaver, Elissa. "Lettura dell'intreccio dell'*Orlando furioso*: Il caso delle tre pazzie d'amore." *Strumenti critici* 11 (1977): 384-406.

Webber, Joan Mallory. *Milton and His Epic Tradition*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979.

Weinberg, Bernard. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Welch, Anthony. "Spenser, Scripture, and Romance in the 1670s." The Bangor Conference on the Restoration, University of Bangor, 25 July 2007.

Williams, Arnold. *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948.

Williams, Norman Powell. *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*. London: Longman, Greene, 1927.

Winkler, John J. *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Wilson, Emily. *Mocked with Death: Tragic Overliving from Sophocles to Milton*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Wilson, H. B. *The History of Merchant-Taylors' School, from Its Foundation to the Present Time*. 2 vols. London, 1812.

Wofford, Suzanne L. *The Choice of Achilles: The Ideology of Figure in the Epic*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Wolfe, Jessica. "Spenser, Homer, and the Mythography of Strife." *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005): 1220-88.

Wright, Lloyd A. "Guyon's Heroism in the Bower of Bliss." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 15 (1974): 597-603.

Yarnall, Judith. *Transformations of Circe: The History of an Enchantress*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Young, Philip H. *The Printed Homer: A 3000 Year Publishing and Translation History of the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2003.

Zatti, Sergio. *L'uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagano: Saggio sulla* Gerusalemme liberata. Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1983.

_____. *Il* Furioso *tra epos e romanzo*. Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 1990.

_____. *L'Ombra del Tasso: Epica e romanzo nel Cinquecento*. Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 1996.

Zeitlin, Froma. *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.