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“ACTIVE” AND “PASSIVE” HEROICS IN THE *ODYSSEY*

The *Homeric Hymn to Herakles* describes its hero as someone who
across an unspeakable expanse of land and sea
used to be buffeted (πλαζόμενος) on missions for king Eurystheus.
He did many reckless things (ἀτάσθαλα), and endured (ἀνέτηλ) many.
But now in a beautiful home on snowy Olympos
he dwells happily with his wife Hebe of the pretty ankles.
(15.4–8)¹

Herakles is thus a man of extraordinary strength, or βίη, who causes and suffers extraordinary pain. Not only the pain that he suffers but also the pain that he causes is characterized as ἀτάσθαλα (15.6). Verse 6 thus continues the reference to Herakles' famous labors, which point to the ability of the hero to use his destructive powers to benefit the community. At the same time, ἀτάσθαλα is appropriate to other less praiseworthy exploits, such as the murder of his family at Thebes, and of a guest-friend at Tiryns (*Od.* 21.11–33), and the sack of an entire city, Oikhalia, for the sake of a single woman.²

I suggest that the hymn offers a succinct description, not only of Herakles, but of Greek heroism. The traditional hero thus emerges as a “Man of Pain,” in both an active and a passive sense.³ The

¹ The etymology of ἀτάσθαλος and its cognates remains unexplained. Its meaning is consequently derived from usage. *LSJ* renders with: “reckless,” “presumptuous,” and “wicked” (see also Nordheider, *Lexicon des frühgriechischen Epos*, ed. B. Snell and H. Erbse [Göttingen 1955–] s.vv.). In Homer, these terms are regularly applied to unethical and even criminal behavior; yet, Eurylokhos is able to accuse Odysseus of ἀτασθαλίαι in leading six crew members to their deaths in the *Kyklopeia* (*Od.* 10.437; see also *Il.* 20.104). His actions may be “reckless,” but they are hardly “wicked,” and the god Apollo, whom Delos describes as ἀτάσθαλος, is only “reckless” in the sense that as a god he is generally free to act without concern for possible repercussions (*h.Ap.* 296). On the other hand, humans commit ἀτάσθαλα on the assumption that like the gods they can do so with impunity, or are unconcerned with the consequences (*Il.* 22.418; *Od.* 1.32–43). The power of kings thus leaves them especially susceptible to ἀτασθαλίαι (*Od.* 4.693; Hesiod, *Th.* 996), although they often bring ruin on themselves and their λαός (*Il.* 22.104; *Od.* 7.60; Hesiod, *Op.* 241). Such passages suggest that a morally neutral term has become freighted by context: an individual characterized as ἀτάσθαλος is uninhibited by social or other constraints, and as such can be described as “reck-less.” This would explain its application to Herakles, Apollo, and even the noisy bowel movements of the infant Hermes (*h.Merc.* 296).

² The latter exploit is the subject of an archaic epic attributed to Kreophylos. See W. Burkert, “Die Leistung eines Kreophylos: Kreophyleer, Homeriden und die archaische Heraklesepic,” *MH* 29 (1972) 74–85.

³ G. Nagy, *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca 1990) 13–17, has assimilated the thematic pattern found in the Hymn to the typology of the “Indo-European” hero as constituted by comparative analysis of cognate languages. In what follows I use the word “hero” to refer to a traditional character type in Greek mythology to which the Homeric epics are responding. In a forthcoming book, I investigate the relationship between this character type and the hero as a figure of cult worship. On the polemical relationship of the epics to other narrative traditions and to one another, see especially Nagy, *Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979); P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polytropos* (Ithaca 1987); and E. Cook,

hero can be cast as warrior or dragon slayer, the pain that the hero inflicts can be viewed as harmful or beneficial, and it falls equally on the enemy and on his own people, or λαός. The judgment passed on Herakles' behavior with ἀτάσθαλα is ambivalent, or even wholly negative, despite his famous labors and despite his eventual deification.⁴ The very qualities that make the hero useful to the community leave him an inherently ambiguous figure, so that Herakles can serve as a vehicle for exploring the social consequences of an individual's physical preeminence.⁵

The model of heroism that I have derived from the hymn can be applied to the Iliadic Akhilleus, who suffered more terribly and caused more pain to the Greek and Trojan λαοί than any other fighter at Troy.⁶ Significantly, Priam describes the pain that Akhilleus has caused him and his family as ἀτάσθαλα (*Il.* 22.418), and the term is equally valid as a description of the pain that he caused his fellow Greeks. Gregory Nagy has plausibly derived the first element of Akhilleus' name from ἄχος, or "mental anguish," so that his name means one "whose *laós* [host of fighting men] has *ákhos* [grief]." The *Odyssey* clearly interprets his name in this way with a significant *paréchêsis* at 11.486: μή . . . ἀκαχίζευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ, meaning "do not grieve Akhilleus." Pain can thus be said to occupy the center of Akhilleus' thematic identity in both Homeric epics.⁸

The Odyssean proem would seem to conform to this model of heroism by introducing Odysseus as a man who was buffeted and

The Odyssey in Athens (Ithaca 1995). My wording throughout thus reflects my conviction that the *Iliad* no less than the *Odyssey* actively constructs its own unique model of heroism rather than simply reproduces a traditional type and that the *Odyssey* for its part is responding at least in part to this traditional type and not exclusively to the *Iliad*.

⁴ Deification was not linked to moral worth until a relatively late date. See Cook, "Ferryman of Elysium and the Homeric Phaeacians," *JIES* 20.3/4 (1992) 239–67.

⁵ Although this model of heroism would have had particular resonance in the context of Dark Age societies dominated by "Big Men," Near Eastern analogies, including Gilgamesh, Etana, and Melcart, demonstrate that the hero can play a similar role in a highly stratified society governed by a hereditary elite class.

⁶ On Akhilleus and Odysseus see Cook (above, n.3) chaps. 1 and 5; and on the similarities between Herakles and Odysseus, see now M. Finkelberg, "Odysseus and the Genus 'Hero,'" *GR* 42 (1995) 1–14. Finkelberg identifies the hero's labors as the defining feature of heroism.

⁷ Nagy (above, n.3 [1979]) 83–93. G. Holland, "The Name of Achilles: A Revised Etymology," *Glotta* 71 (1993) 17–27, offers a helpful review of previous scholarship on Akhilleus' name. For my purposes it is ultimately unimportant whether this is the actual or a folk etymology, since the distinction only affects how far back in time we can press its thematic significance. I use "thematic identity" of characters in oral epic to designate identity as constructed by themes, which I follow A. Lord, *Singer of Tales* (Cambridge 1960) 68, in defining as: "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic manner of traditional song."

⁸ I note in this context that whereas Akhilleus' suffering in the *Iliad* is in fact chiefly emotional, Odysseus also suffers physical abuse from two of his adversaries, Poseidon and the suitors.

who suffered greatly after sacking Troy (1.1–2). The proem ignores the slaughter of the suitors (*Mnēsterophonia*), however, and describes Odysseus after his departure from Troy solely in terms of the hero’s passive aspect. It continues, moreover, with a highly significant “correction” of the heroic model, for while the hero’s men do perish, they are punished by Helios for *their own* “reckless acts” (1.7–9). By displacing the ἀτάσθαλα that define heroic behavior from Odysseus onto his λαός, the proem offers a moralizing definition of heroism that prepares for the theodicy announced in the divine assembly, and for Odysseus’ own self-presentation in books 6–12. This displacement returns in the *Revenge* narrative of books 13–24, when Odysseus attempts to prevent the “good suitor” Amphinomos from suffering for his ἀτάσθαλα (18.124–50), just as he had sought to prevent the crew from suffering for theirs. In that he does actively kill members of his own λαός on Ithake, Odysseus corresponds to Herakles—and it may be in part for this very reason that the prologue suppresses any direct mention of the suitors—but he differs from both Herakles and Akhilleus in that his actions constitute punishment for crime.

These observations allow us to reevaluate the claim that Odysseus’ behavior in books 6–12 is often “unheroic,” or even “anti-heroic.” Nor may it be said of Odysseus’ adventures, as Karl Reinhardt once said of his encounter with Skylle, that “the hero falls sacrifice to the contrast between two worlds; there are terrors that can only be endured.”⁹ Rather, the image of a hapless wanderer who suffers while attempting to protect his men epitomizes the passive side of the Odyssean hero at the expense of his Iliadic counterpart. As a model for evaluating Odysseus’ experiences, in the enchanted realm of books 6–12 and on Ithake, a distinction between “active” and “passive” heroism is more useful than a distinction between “heroic” and “unheroic” action. Whereas Akhilleus causes the death of countless members of the Greek λαός through inaction, and actively kills the enemy λαός on the battlefield, Odysseus actively kills members of his own λαός on Ithake, but relies on “passive” strategies to survive in the enchanted realm.

In the *Odyssey*, an emotional corollary to “pain” is “hatred.” The opening scene of the poem connects Odysseus’ name to the verb ὀδύσσεισθαι, meaning “to hate,” when Athene asks Zeus, “Why do you find him so odious?” (ὀδύσσαι, 1.62).¹⁰ Although the verb itself is

⁹ K. Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist: Gesammelte Essays zur Dichtung* (Göttingen 1960) 60; my translation.

¹⁰ On anger, hatred, and heroism, see K. Galinsky, “The Anger of Aeneas,” *AJP* 109 (1988) 321–48. On the force of Odysseus’ name, see L. Rank, *Etymologiseerung en verwante verschijnselen bij Homerus* (Assen 1951) 51–63; and S. West, *A Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey*, 3 vols., ed. A. Heubeck *et al.* (Oxford 1988–92) vol. 1.83 *ad loc.* Other views are recorded by J. Russo in Heubeck *et al.*, 3.97 *ad Od.* 19.407. See also G. Dimock, “The Name of Odysseus,” *Hudson Review* 9 (1956) 52–70; J. S. Clay, *The Wrath of Athena: Gods and Men in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1983) 27–29 and 54–68; J. Peradotto, *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1990) 120–70; and S. Goldhill, *The Poet’s Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1991) 24–36.

used in an active sense, the passive object of that hatred is Odysseus himself, so that Athene's etymologizing introduces the same distinction between the active and passive components of his identity as "Man of Hatred" as we have discovered in the traditional hero as "Man of Pain." Zeus, moreover, replies that not he but Poseidon "keeps buffeting" Odysseus away from his homeland, because he blinded Polyphemos (1.68–75). His reply establishes a causal link between active and passive heroism, between the hero's suffering as an object of divine wrath and the suffering he had once inflicted.¹¹ At the same time, it makes hatred coextensive with pain as a definition of heroism that occupies the center of Odysseus' own thematic identity, just as Akhilleus is a man defined by ἄχος and whose hatred is the subject of his epic.

An emblem and record of physical pain is the οὐλή, or scar. Odysseus acquired a scar on his thigh while hunting a wild boar on Mount Parnassos; and it is even possible to find in Odysseus' οὐλή a reference to his non-Homeric name Oulixes/Ulysses (19.386–466).¹² Scholars have long recognized that the story of the boar reflects the typical features of an adolescent rite of passage, while traditions such as the Calydonian boar hunt show Odysseus to be engaged in a heroic enterprise.¹³ Thus, in typically heroic fashion Odysseus both suffers and inflicts pain as he kills the boar after first being gored by its tusk. The adult status that Odysseus achieves on Mount Parnassos is that of generic hero, and he bears the physical record of the pain that defines him throughout his life. When Odysseus shows his scar to Eumaios, Philoitios, Laertes, and—accidentally—Eurykleia, pain serves to verify his identity, and in each case identification is followed by an appeal to help him inflict pain on the suitors or their parents. Eurykleia likewise mentions the scar in order to prove to Penelope that the stranger who has just killed over one hundred men in their prime is indeed Odysseus, but Penelope requires instead that he identify himself with the story of their marriage bed (23.173–206). The hero, whose identity can be verified by a lasting token of life-threatening pain, has been responsible for twenty years of her own mental anguish: she wants the return of her husband, not the Man of Pain.¹⁴

The *Odyssey* introduces the scar with another defining moment from Odysseus' life. When Eurykleia asks his maternal grandfather to name the infant, Autolykos selects "Odysseus," on the grounds that he is himself hated (ὄδυσσάμενος) by men and women throughout the

¹¹ In the *Kyklopeia* itself, the link runs in the opposite direction: Odysseus becomes an active Man of Hatred and an agent of pain on account of the ἄχος that he suffers (see the discussion which follows).

¹² Peradotto (above, n.10) 146.

¹³ E.g., N. Felson-Rubin and W. Sale, "Meleager and Odysseus: A Structural and Cultural Study of the Greek Hunting-Maturation Myth," *Arethusa* 16 (1983) 137–71.

¹⁴ M. Nagler, "Ethical Anxiety and Artistic Inconsistency: The Case of Oral Epic," *Cabinet of the Muses*, ed. M. Griffith and D. Mastrorade (Atlanta 1990) 225–39.

earth (19.407). As his own name suggests, and other traditions affirm, Autolykos, or "Werewolf," is an object of hatred because he is a trickster.¹⁵ "Trickster" and "hero" are distinct but not exclusive categories in Greek mythology. Both are morally ambiguous Men of Pain, and in the passive side of their character, hero and trickster are essentially indistinguishable.¹⁶ Hero and trickster are distinct in Homer in that the active hero is defined by βίη, the trickster by his use of μῆτις to practice deception (δόλοι). Iliadic tradition asserts the superiority of its hero to that of the *Odyssey* by privileging force over the cunning intelligence that characterizes Odysseus.¹⁷ Odyssean tradition responds to Iliadic heroism by aligning μῆτις with the trickster's δόλοι and the active exercise of βίη with the persona of the Iliadic warrior. Odysseus is not so much a new type of hero as he is a reformulation of the traditional elements of heroism in response to the *Iliad*.

Odysseus' most famous exploits, the Trojan Horse and the *Kyklopeia*, confirm his Autolykan legacy as a trickster; yet as we have just seen, the naming of Odysseus, which aligns him with his trickster grandfather, is rhetorically subordinated to a story that identifies him as a heroic warrior. The narrative sequence thereby calls attention to a larger pattern in the *Odyssey* in which trickster and hero are united, but never fully assimilated, and in which heroic identity is ultimately and invariably privileged over that of trickster. Thus, for hermeneutic convenience, I will follow Homer's own construction and refer to "hero" and "trickster" as separate aspects of Odysseus' thematic identity, with the added wrinkle that "hero" is largely equivalent to "Iliadic warrior." This incomplete union of identities in the person of Odysseus permits a sophisticated interplay among the elements of a matrix in which mind and body, represented as δόλος and βίη, organize a series of subordinate polarities between the active and passive components of his identity: inflicting pain and suffering it, hating and being hated, impetuosity and self-restraint, fame and concealment, death and survival, eating and fasting, wild and domestic.

The process of assimilation is taken furthest in the *Kyklopeia*, which also serves as a microcosm of the interplay between active and passive heroism throughout the poem. When Odysseus first meets Polyphemos, he identifies himself as a heroic Man of Pain:

We are Akhaioi, buffeted from (ἀποπλαγχθέντες) Troy
by divers winds across the vast gullet of the sea;

¹⁵ On Autolykos as trickster, see in particular *Il.* 10.260–71. I use the term "trickster" to describe a character type to which Odysseus corresponds, although it is the transcultural construct of nineteenth-century anthropology. That a traditional figure corresponding to the trickster was known to Greek folklore is supported by genealogical traditions linking Odysseus to Autolykos, Hermes, and Sisyphos, thus implying a recognized typological affinity.

¹⁶ K. Kerényi, in his response to Paul Radin's classic study of the trickster in Winnebago Indian mythology, showed that Herakles, the archetypal hero of βίη, can be usefully analyzed along these lines; see "The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology," in Radin, *The Trickster* (London 1956) 173–91.

¹⁷ See, e.g., *Il.* 9.312–13 with the comments of Nagy (above, n.3 [1979]) chap. 3.

though yearning for home, we have come by a different road,
 different paths. Doubtless Zeus wished to contrive it so.
 We boast that we are the λαοί of Agamemnon, Atreus' son
 whose fame (κλέος) now at least is greatest under heaven;
 for he sacked a very great city, and destroyed many λαοί.
 (9.259–66)

When Odysseus presently realizes that heroic exploits and values are meaningless to the Kyklops, he adopts an antithetical and paradoxical identity as Οὔτις, or “Mr. Nobody” (9.364–67).¹⁸ Odysseus' strategy of anonymity not only contrasts with the Iliadic quest for personal fame—and as such constitutes a suppression of his heroic identity—but the very act of identifying himself as “Not Hero,” also identifies him as “Trickster.” The paradox of nonexistence as identity thus constructs “hero” and “trickster” as separate categories, while Odysseus *qua* trickster bears a false identity, one that he will presently discard. The “real” Odysseus is an Iliadic warrior capable of disguising his true nature in order to survive and return from a world indifferent or hostile to it. Had he failed to return from this world, in which κλέος is nothing, Odysseus would have lost his κλέος and remained nobody.

Thus, as the hero finds himself reduced to the status of a passive Man of Pain, who must endure the mental anguish of watching Polyphemos devour six members of his λαός, the active Trickster emerges to punish the Kyklops. But even as Odysseus becomes a passive Man of Pain, he also becomes an active Man of Hatred. When Odysseus deliberates killing the sleeping Polyphemos with his sword, the intellectual faculties that had just now become aligned with tricksterism are assimilated into the sphere of emotion, so that his decision-making process is represented as the repression of one mental impulse by another:

I deliberated in my proud spirit (θυμός) to approach him,
 and having drawn my sharp sword from along my thigh,
 to wound him on the chest, where the midriff holds the liver,
 after feeling for it with my hand; but another θυμός checked me.
 For we would have all died a terrible death there,
 since we could not have pushed from the lofty doorway
 with our hands the huge stone which he had set against it.
 (9.299–305)

Failure to restrain his anger would have meant death, a scenario for which Akhilleus offers a telling parallel. To the extent that such failure typifies the psyche of the Iliadic warrior, Odysseus' impulses can be said to represent competing identities, and he survives precisely because the trickster's μήτις is able to restrain the hero's βίη from using his sword to punish the Kyklops. The life-and-death struggle between the trickster and the ogre is thus played out in the internal landscape of the protagonist, and it prefigures his eventual success.

¹⁸ R. Friedrich, “The Hybris of Odysseus,” *JHS* 111 (1991) 22.

The suffering that Odysseus must endure while trapped in the cave thus bridges the identity of hero and trickster in their passive aspects. The active trickster and hero then converge as Odysseus blinds the *Kyklops*: his vengeance is the plan of the trickster, and in order to put his plan into effect, Odysseus also tricks Polyphemos into drinking to excess. But the instrument of blinding is a shepherd's staff that Odysseus has transformed into a fire-hardened spear, and Odysseus describes the actual scene of blinding as a warrior's *aristeia*.¹⁹ Once Odysseus has achieved his revenge, however, a famous pun identifies “Mr. Nobody” as “Mr. Cunning-Intelligence.” When Polyphemos cries out in pain, the other *Kyklopes* gather outside his cave and ask: “Surely nobody (μή τις) is driving away your flocks with you unwilling? / Surely nobody (μή τις) is killing you yourself with a δόλος or with βίη?” (9.405–6). Once again, a pun not only marks Odysseus' false identity as the strategy of a trickster, of Μῆτις, but the trickster himself as nonexistent, as μή τις. Polyphemos, however, unwittingly insists that a trickster and not a hero blinded him when he shouts to the other *Kyklopes*: “Οὗτις is killing me with a δόλος, but not with βίη” (9.408).

After he escapes from the cave, Odysseus drives nineteen—obligingly silent—rams to his ship, thus transforming the adventure into a heroic cattle raid. Once on board his ship, Odysseus does not at first disclose his name to Polyphemos, but “identifies” the story itself as a tale of divine punishment for ὕβρις (9.475–79). Odysseus' assumed posture of moral agent corresponds to the themes of the divine assembly, and by extension to the proem's own “correction” of traditional heroism. When Odysseus is further provoked by the *Kyklops*, however, he becomes enraged, and at the moment that his hatred surfaces and asserts itself at the expense of his μήτις, he identifies himself as Mr. Hatred and an Iliadic warrior with a boast that in itself typifies Iliadic behavior: “*Kyklops*, if some mortal man / asks you about the shameful loss of your eye, / tell him that Odysseus the city-sacker, blinded you” (9.502–4).²⁰ Reclaiming his true name and heroic status are not simply coincident, but equivalent, acts.

Odysseus first acquires his own unique identity as a hero in this episode: when he identifies himself as Odysseus, Polyphemos is able to curse him to Poseidon, with the result that he nearly loses his homecoming, just as Akhilleus did lose his. Thus, the very act of asserting his true identity earns the hero a divine antagonist.²¹ The

¹⁹ On the staff as fire-hardened spear, see W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berlin 1972) 151. For the typical elements of an *aristeia* in the *Kyklopeia*, see R. Schröter, *Die Aristie als Grundform homerischer Dichtung* (Ph.D. diss., Marburg, 1950) 94–109; see also H. Eisenberber, *Studien zur Odyssee*, *Palingenesia* 7 (1973) 140–41, and Heubeck, in Heubeck *et al.* (above, n.10) 233, on *Od.* 9.375–94.

²⁰ Friedrich (above, n.18) 23. On Odysseus' Iliadic identity in the episode, see also D. Collins, *Immortal Armor: The Concept of Alkê in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Lanham, Md., 1998) 118–19.

²¹ For ritual antagonism, see Nagy (above, n.3 [1979]) 142–53 and Cook (above, n.3) 150–52.

force of Odysseus' name thus passes from a generic designation of heroism to the specific acts of hatred and of pain that define him as an individual. His hatred and his pain are, moreover, directed at an ἀθέμιστος, one who violates the ethical norms (θέμιστες) that govern Greek social life.²² Odysseus thus acquires an identity that prepares for his return to Ithake to punish the suitors for their ἀτάσθαλα. Yet the same event that individuates Odysseus as a hero also deprives him of the active component of that identity, for until he returns to Ithake his continued survival depends on repeated and exclusive identification with suffering and endurance.

His actions in the *Kyklopeia* are as close as Odysseus gets to ἀτάσθαλα in the enchanted realm,²³ and his own kinsman Eurylokhos makes just this claim when he attempts to dissuade his fellow crew members from following Odysseus to the home of Kirke (10.431–37). Scholars who recognize the programmatic force of the first divine assembly have searched for various crimes with which to charge Odysseus, ranging from infractions against hospitality, to the ὕβρις of moral superiority.²⁴ In the light of the foregoing analysis, however, we see that Eurylokhos effectively charges Odysseus with unreconstructed heroism.

A goal of this strategy of generic interplay in the *Kyklopeia* is thus not simply a joining of identities, but a partial assimilation of the trickster into the paradigm of the Iliadic warrior. To this extent, it is possible to speak of the Odyssean hero as a trickster-warrior, a figure who can no longer be characterized by ἀτάσθαλα, although he may still occasionally commit them. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that Odysseus survives his encounter with the Kyklops because the trickster's μῆτις is able to control the hero's βίη, the hero always emerges in the end and at the trickster's expense. Thus, in the *Kyklopeia*, hero is displaced by trickster only to converge with him during the *aristeia* and then to replace him in an act of angry self-disclosure as "Odysseus the city-sacker" or "Mr. Hatred, Man of Pain."²⁵ On the two occasions in which Odysseus emerges as an active hero, the *Kyklopeia* and

²² For the centrality of θέμις in this episode, see Cook (above, n.3) chap. 2.

²³ Not just in identifying himself to Polyphemos: his companions also attempt to discourage him from meeting the Kyklops once it becomes apparent that he is likely a monstrous savage.

²⁴ E.g., N. Austin, "Odysseus and the Cyclops: Who Is Who," in *Approaches to Homer*, ed. C. Rubino and C. Shelmerdine (Austin 1983) 1–37, and Reinhardt (above, n.9) 68–69. Friedrich (above, n.18) accuses Odysseus of simple hybris. See also by the same author "Heroic Man and *Polymetis*: Odysseus in the *Cyclopeia*," *GRBS* 28 (1987) 121–33. Friedrich makes a number of points that support or are compatible with my argument, although I distance myself from his overall reading of the *Kyklopeia* for reasons I outline in my book (above, n.3) chaps. 3 and 4, and in what follows. Note that Odysseus nowhere denies Poseidon's *ability* to heal Polyphemos, only that the god will in fact do so. Galinsky's discussion of the hero's anger (above, n.10) is also pertinent here.

²⁵ We observed a similar pattern in the prologue and in the narrator's account of the Parnassan boar hunt in book 19.

Revenge, he suffers while employing the strategies of a trickster, and in the latter case suffering abuse even forms part of the strategy. In other cases, such as the Skylle episode, Odysseus suffers while vainly attempting to assert his heroic status. Suffering is thus associated with tricksterism in the two situations in which Odysseus is able to inflict pain, whereas it is associated with heroism whenever Odysseus unsuccessfully asserts his identity as such or when heroic action is simply impossible.

The *Phaiakis* can be seen as a prospective commentary on Odysseus' experiences in the enchanted realm. From the moment Odysseus lands on Skherie, his strategy is to disguise his heroic stature, or more precisely to represent himself solely as a passive Man of Pain. This strategy is not entirely successful, however, for when he is provoked on the playing field by the youths Euryalos and Laodamas, his *μητις* once more gives way to anger, at which point a characteristic demonstration of heroic *βίη* follows (8.132–200). Thus, the larger narrative of the *Phaiakis* observes the now familiar trajectory of Odysseus' self-identification as a suffering wanderer and initial repression of his heroic identity followed by its triumphant reassertion at the end of the story.

On the afternoon of his first day on Skherie, Odysseus is awakened by the sound of Nausikaa and her maidservants at play. As Odysseus first emerges from the thicket in which he has been sleeping, he is compared to a ravening lion, driven by hunger to approach a farmstead and attack its flocks (6.130–34). Although the comparison well captures the impact of Odysseus' appearance on the maidservants and his expected effect on Nausikaa, this simile is at first glance wildly inappropriate at the typological level, since lion similes are a ubiquitous feature of Iliadic battle narrative, where they describe marauding Greek warriors; although Odysseus is physically stronger than Nausikaa, and thus in a position to do her violence, circumstances demand that he act in a manner precisely opposite to that of a hungry lion or an Iliadic warrior. The effect of such a comparison in this context is humorous, and the humor continues in the next scene when Odysseus deliberates supplicating Nausikaa or addressing her from a distance as he covers his genitals with an olive branch; supplication, of course, requires both hands. Even his choice of branches displays characteristic wit, for Odysseus demonstrates his social propriety by literally covering himself with a cultural symbol and the tree of a virgin goddess, Athene.²⁶ Yet the typological incongruity of the lion simile points to a further factual incongruity, since it is actually Nausikaa who poses a threat to Odysseus: if, despite his savage appearance, Odysseus gives offense or even fails to win her over, his return and his life are in jeopardy.

The danger Odysseus faces in this scene informs the narrator's own comparison of Nausikaa to the goddess Artemis hunting goats

²⁶ For the olive tree as cultural symbol, see M. Detienne, “L'olivier, un mythe politico-religieux,” *Rev. Hist. Rel.* 178.3 (1970) 5–23, and Cook (above, n.3) 131–34.

or deer in the verses immediately preceding (6.102). Both in her capacity as a huntress, and more generally as a mistress of animals, the life of this warrior-lion is in Nausikaa's hands, and Odysseus has just made the potentially fatal mistake of disturbing this princess-goddess at her bath. The narrative thus threatens to assimilate the hero into the paradigm of the hapless Aktaion, a hunter who becomes a hunted animal. Yet, Odysseus himself furthers the comparison to Artemis (6.151), because he sees it as the secret to his salvation; as it happens, Nausikaa poses the additional threat of being nubile.²⁷ Odysseus thus faces the challenge of not simply winning Nausikaa's favor, but of keeping her at arm's length. That Odysseus correctly "reads" the narrative in which he finds himself can be seen from his initial decision not to "lay down his olive branch," but to maintain his literal and figurative distance. In drawing the comparison to Artemis, Odysseus acknowledges that Nausikaa has the power of life and death over him, and he wins her favor in a manner that separates them with an insurmountable sexual barrier. The lion simile thus belongs to a larger narrative strategy that locates Odysseus in a variety of possible scenarios, each of which threatens his return. Odysseus is described with language appropriate to a warrior in the midst of battle precisely in order to point to the incongruity of an Iliadic persona in this setting; and Odysseus himself is seen to abet a narrative strategy that establishes, only to alienate him from, his identity as an Iliadic warrior. Thus, in our story, it is the wild animal who takes a bath, and is then transformed by the goddess into a handsome Aktaion.

Later that same evening, after his miraculous appearance in the *megaron*, Alkinoos hints that Odysseus may be a god in disguise (7.199–203). This Odysseus denies with the counterclaim that he is a mere mortal, one whose hardships in fact surpass anything in Alkinoos' experience. In making this claim, Odysseus uses eight different expressions that are applied to his physical and mental suffering elsewhere in the poem, and he concludes with a request to see his house, slaves, and possessions that evokes his yearning to return (7.211–25). He follows with the story of his desire to leave Ogygie despite Kalypso's offer of immortality—effectively indicating to Alkinoos that he could have been a god, but chose not to—and of his shipwreck at Poseidon's hands. Odysseus thus does identify himself to his

²⁷ Lion similes, and arguably this lion simile, resurface in erotic poetry, where as here the lion captures his prey but "does not drink blood" (Theognis 949–54). If, as I consider likely, the image has already been appropriated by erotic poetry by the time the *Phaiakis* achieved its present form, then the narrative effect is quite complex. In that the *Odyssey* belongs to the epic genre, and its protagonist is an Iliadic warrior, it would be reductive to argue that the scene merely echoes an erotic topos. Rather it simultaneously locates Odysseus in multiple narrative environments, including those of epic warrior and erotic seducer. In so doing, the scene occupies the fault line created with the appropriation of the lion simile by erotic poetry. On erotic elements in this scene, see now J. Glenn, "Odysseus Confronts Nausikaa: The Lion Simile of *Odyssey* 6.130–36," *CW* 92 (1998) 107–16, who provides a useful survey of previous scholarship.

hosts, but he replaces his given name with his generic identity as a passive Man of Pain.

Alkinoos seems to appreciate the force of Odysseus' response, although he sees in Odysseus only a long-suffering wanderer. After his victory in the discus toss, and his triumphant challenge to the Phaiakian youths to compete with bow and spear—the two weapons he will soon use to kill the suitors—Odysseus engineers the scene of his own identification by requesting the story of the Trojan Horse.²⁸ The act of remembering the pain he once caused, and which earned him the title of “city-sacker,” causes Odysseus such pain that he weeps like one of the women his stratagem had widowed. This public expression of pain prompts Alkinoos to ask Odysseus about his name, “since nobody is entirely nameless,” what lands he had seen before he was “buffeted” to Skherie, and whether he had lost an in-law or companion at Troy (8.536–86). Odysseus thus supplies his name in context of identifying himself as the Iliadic warrior who had destroyed Troy by trickery. He then picks up where Demodokos left off with a 2,295-verse account of his adventures since the fall of Troy that begins with him in full possession of his heroic identity, but in which he is gradually reduced to the status of a passive “Man of Suffering.”²⁹ His account includes the *Kyklopeia*, an event that forever altered his identity and the meaning of his name, and in which the secret of his survival was a temporary renunciation of heroism. Odysseus' *Apologoi* to Alkinoos can thus be viewed not simply as a retrospective commentary on, but as a justification of, his behavior throughout the episode, and as an invitation for the Phaiakes to recognize and appreciate the strategy that he had just employed on them. It also affirms Alkinoos' own remark that “nobody is entirely nameless.” Odysseus says in effect: “yes, and that's why I had to return from the enchanted realm.”

In the Kikonian episode, Odysseus is seen to act very much in the mold of the Odyssean hero, who inflicts great pain on an enemy λαός, but who attempts to prevent his own λαός from suffering on account of their ἀτάσθαλα. After suffering seventy-two casualties

²⁸ As in the *Mnēsterophonia*, Odysseus can be seen to mitigate his victory by diplomatically ceding the foot race to the Phaiakes.

²⁹ This observation is relevant to G. Nagy's argument, in *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge 1996) chap. 3, that the Homeric epics display awareness of the principle of rhapsodic succession. In *Od.* 8, Demodokos narrates a quarrel between Akhilleus and Odysseus that most likely belonged to the *Kypria* tradition (on which, see W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias*, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 14 [Wiesbaden 1960] 100). This is followed by Odysseus' participation in athletic games with the Phaiakian youths and his pointed refusal to compete in the foot race, an event that he won in the games of *Il.* 23. Demodokos then sings the story of the Trojan Horse, known from the *Iliou Persis*, and the narrator continues with a simile that dramatizes the immediate aftermath of that story. Odysseus himself continues the narrative with his *Apologoi*, thus bridging the *Iliou Persis* and the *Nostoi*. It is, moreover, Odysseus himself who requested the Trojan Horse story, so that he is responsible for the fact that these stories are related in their proper sequence.

from the Kikones, Odysseus and his men are then "buffeted" at sea, but in their next adventure, among the Lotophagoi, they discover that the storm has driven them beyond the confines of the Greek world, and with it their identity as Iliadic warriors. Of the many things that distinguish the enchanted realm in which they now find themselves from the world of Troy, perhaps the most important thematically is that from this point forward the Greeks are not afforded a single opportunity to fight their adversaries. Nevertheless, heroism remains, even in its denial, the frame of reference by which Odysseus' actions are viewed after its disastrous reassertion in the final scene of the *Kyklopeia*. It is also worth noting in this context that Athene's direct assistance is confined to Troy and Ithake, so that the dyads of divine patroness and antagonist, and of Greece and the enchanted realm, are fully aligned with the active warrior and the passive wanderer components of Odysseus' heroic identity.³⁰ Odysseus the trickster, by contrast, is unbounded by temporal or topographical context.

After his encounter with Polyphemos, Odysseus' continued survival in the enchanted realm and eventual return to Ithake are made to depend on suppression of active heroism, and on endurance of mental and physical anguish. Thus, when the crew opens the bag of winds in the Aiolian episode, Odysseus must choose between suicide and suffering continued hardship, between doing violence to himself and being "buffeted" from Ithake back to Aiolie (10.46–55). The story of Aias' death in the *Little Iliad* portrays suicide as a heroic response to unendurable mental anguish, and in the *Iliad*, Akhilleus prefers an untimely death to a homecoming without vengeance. Odysseus, then, does not simply choose between death and suffering, but between the active and passive sides of heroism, in which "active" is once again aligned with his Iliadic warrior persona.

Denial of the heroic gesture borders on the comical in the Laistrygonian episode. Odysseus begins heroically enough by taking up a "wing position" at the mouth of the Laistrygonian harbor analogous to the positions of Akhilleus and Aias at Troy. Danger, however, comes from above rather than without, when the Laistrygones appear on the cliff tops surrounding the harbor to attack the flotilla with rocks. Although Odysseus responds by drawing his sword, any attempt at opposition would have meant his own certain death, just as circumstances had earlier prevented him from using his sword to kill Polyphemos. Odysseus consequently uses his sword to cut through the mooring cable to the ship so as to beat a hasty retreat (10.126–27).³¹ After thus being activated, the sword image returns in the

³⁰ Athene does provide anonymous assistance in the border realm of Skherie, which prefigures her open support on Ithake. See M. Lang, "Homer and Oral Techniques," *Hesperia* 38 (1969) 159–68.

³¹ Heubeck, in Heubeck *et al.* (above, n.10) 2.50, *Od.* 10.125–32. Note that the actions of drawing the sword and of using it to cut the mooring cable are described in separate lines. The effect of the contrast becomes even stronger if, as K. Meuli has argued, in *Odyssee und Argonautica* (Ph.D. diss., Basel, 1921)

very next episode, on Aiaia. Kirke lures half the remaining crew into her house, and tricks them into drinking a potion that makes them forget their homeland. Odysseus is not tricked, however, because he is forewarned by the master trickster Hermes, who provides an antidote that allows Odysseus to “endure” her drugs (10.327). Thus, when Kirke strikes him with her wand, he draws his sword and threatens to kill her. Kirke responds by inviting Odysseus to assert his dominance sexually rather than militarily, as agent and object of pleasure rather than of pain. Odysseus thus becomes a “Man of Pleasure,” an identity that poses no less a threat to return than that of Iliadic hero: he remains on Aiaie as Kirke’s consort for an entire year, at which point his own crew must remind him of home. Kirke and Polyphemos thus form a complementary pair, who turn Odysseus’ own defining qualities of δόλοι and βίη against him; and they fail because each relies on one of these qualities without recourse to the other. This same pairing recurs on Ithake in the persons of Antinoos and Eurymakhos, or “Anti-Mind” and “Broad Fighter,” so that Odysseus’ human adversaries are likewise seen to fail even when using δόλοι and βίη in concert.

Katabasis, or the journey to the underworld, is the heroic quest par excellence in that it represents the triumph of the vital principle over the forces of death as a successful descent into and return from the underworld. As such, *Katabasis* can be understood as prefiguring the hero’s eventual deification. In the Herakles Saga, this triumph becomes the story of heroic βίη overpowering the hell-hound Kerberos and personified Death himself in the case of Alkestis. The *Odyssey*, by contrast, adapts *Katabasis* to the theme of the hero’s mortality. Odysseus overpowers no one, although he does use his sword to fend off the “powerless heads” of the dead, including his own mother, after first using it to dig a trench (11.24–89). More importantly, Odysseus retrieves from Hades not a denizen of the underworld, but insight into the forces governing his existence and into his ultimate destiny. As I have argued elsewhere, “his *Katabasis* transforms the heroic conquest of death into a quest for knowledge, and that knowledge affirms the mortality of the hero.”³² Thus, when Odysseus returns to Aiaie, Kirke greets him and his men as διθανέες or “twice dead” rather than as men who have conquered death (12.22). Odysseus’ triumph consists solely of the fact that he has won immortal κλέος.

After Odysseus returns to Aiaie, Kirke informs him that in order to reach Ithake he must run a “heroic gantlet” in which he must repeatedly deny his identity as such: he must not relive the *Iliad* among the Seirens, must not fight Skylle, and must forgo the heroic cattle raid on Thrinakie that he had earlier performed in the *Kyklopeia*.³³

90–91, the scene derives from the Argonaut Saga, in which Herakles destroys a band of giants when they hurl boulders at the Argo from nearby cliff tops.

³² Cook (above, n.3) 85, n.108.

³³ On Skylle, see Collins (above, n.20) 120, n.55; on the Seirens, see P. Pucci, “The Song of the Sirens,” *Arethusa* 12 (1979) 121–32; and on Thrinakie,

In each case, his success is partial at best. When Odysseus responds to the suggestion that he simply suffer the loss of six men to Skyllé by asking if there was some means of opposing her, Kirke replies: "Are you then, even now, set on deeds of war and labor? She is a deathless evil, with which one may not fight. Flight is your only choice" (12.116–19). Despite Kirke's warnings, however, Odysseus arms himself to fight Skyllé; and in his armor he stands helplessly by as Skyllé devours six of his men, "the most pitiable thing . . . / of all those I labored under" (12.258–59). The Sirens attempt to make him an auditor of the *Iliad*, and Odysseus does so momentarily by having himself bound to the mast of his ship. We are thus presented with an image of the hero reduced to a condition of complete physical passivity as he suffers acute mental anguish while yearning to relive his Iliadic past. The price of such memory is paradoxically forgetting, and though the passivity of the auditor is pleasurable, the shore is lined with the rotting corpses of those who listened and failed to return. Finally, in the Thrinakian episode, Odysseus fails to prevent the crew from a cattle raid, characterized as ἀτασθαλίαι (1.7 and 12.300), that results in their death. Thus, after his display of active heroism in the *Kyklopeia*, and as a result of it, Odysseus is essentially reduced to the status of half-a-hero, a Man of Suffering rather than a Man of Pain, until he returns to Ithake.

As a consequence of narrating the *Apologoi* himself, however, Odysseus does manage to reunite active with passive heroism before his return to Ithake. Homeric performance is essentially mimetic, so that Odysseus takes on his own former identity and that of his adversaries, including Polyphemos, as he "performs" his adventures.³⁴ In so doing, he reclaims an identity denied him for almost ten years in the context of narrating a struggle between mortal adversaries. The retrospective and alternating reunion that Odysseus achieves as narrator thus prefigures the story of his revenge on the suitors in which a complete synthesis is achieved and in which he once again assumes his role as champion of θεῆμις. It also corresponds to the ultimate union of the hero with his ritual antagonist, in this case Polyphemos' own father, Poseidon.³⁵ Mimetic reconstitution of Odysseus' full heroic identity before his return to Ithake can be seen as a motivating factor in having him "perform" the *Apologoi*.

Thus, as Odysseus sets out for home, there begins a string of references to Odysseus' heroic identity in a programmatic passage marking his transition between the wanderings and the *Revenge* (13.89–92). The passage is followed by a divine council scene in which Poseidon complains that he had meant for Odysseus to reach Ithake after suffering hardships, but now the Phaiakes have taken him home asleep and laden with more goods than he could have ever brought back

see G. Crane, *Calypso: Backgrounds and Conventions of the Odyssey*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 191 (1988) 147.

³⁴ Nagy (above, n.29) chap. 3.

³⁵ Cook (above, n.3) chap. 2.

from Troy (13.131–35). Poseidon thus claims, in effect, that the Phaiakes have prevented Odysseus from fulfilling his heroic destiny. His words also call attention to the fact that Odysseus arrives on Ithake without a single artifact of his Iliadic past, or even an emblem of heroic identity except, as it happens, for a sword presented to him by Euryalos, the youth who provoked him into revealing his heroic stature on Skherie. Odysseus returns home with gifts representing his status as a guest-friend, or ξείνος, rather than as a hero.

When, however, Odysseus meets a disguised Athene on the shores of Ithake, he attempts to transform these same gifts into Trojan plunder, plunder over which he had killed a son of Idomeneus in an ambush (λόχος). Athene responds appreciatively:

It would be a cunning and deceptive man who got past you
in any manner of δόλοι, even if a god met with you.
Wretched man, of intricate devices (ποικιλομήτις), insatiate of δόλοι
will you never, not even in your own land, stop all this,
and those deceptive speeches, which you so love?

(13.291–95)

Underlying this praise of Odysseus is a latent contrast between heroic self-disclosure and the trickster's suppression of identity, although it should be noted that the trickster here insists that he is an Iliadic warrior, and as such capable of protecting himself and his possessions.³⁶ Athene then furthers Odysseus' strategy of concealment by disguising him as a beggar, thus neatly reversing the status to which Odysseus will shortly lay claim as head of his household and ruler of Ithake. Odysseus constructs meaning for the disguise with a fictional autobiography in which he is once again an Iliadic warrior, but had been reduced by his sufferings to the status of a beggar. The contrast between appearance and reality thus becomes a statement on heroic versus nonheroic, in which the reality of human experience is fully inverted: in the poetic world of the *Odyssey*, appearance constitutes the image of a man broken by years of suffering, and it masks the reality of the warrior beneath the rags who is not. At the same time, Odysseus' rags and disfigurement are not simply the ruse of a trickster, but visible signs of his generic identity, both as a trickster and as a Man of Suffering. Missing from the heroic matrix is only the active Iliadic warrior, which the trickster's rags are meant to conceal. On this level, the distinction between appearance and reality to which the *Odyssey* calls repeated attention dissolves only to be reconstituted as it affirms the reality of Odysseus' heroic identity at the expense of the trickster who is seen to be the illusion he creates.

The distinction between trickster and Iliadic hero is also central to the games that Odysseus plays in his encounter with Eumaios. As Odysseus approaches the swineherd's hut, he is attacked by Eumaios' guard dogs. Rather than reveal his true stature by cudgeling the dogs,

³⁶ H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee* (Berlin 1972) 154–55, and Clay (above, n.10) 196–97.

Odysseus “cunningly” throws his staff to the ground, thereby compelling Eumaios to adopt the role of his protector (14.29–32).³⁷ Later that evening, Odysseus declares that he once led a military expedition to Egypt shortly after returning from Troy. When he found himself imperiled by the reckless behavior of his men, he survived by tossing aside his spear, helmet, and shield, and accepting the Pharaoh’s protection (14.244–84). Odysseus’ story invites Eumaios to “see through” the analogous strategy that he had just employed on him. The analogy, moreover, relates the ruse of a trickster, his throwing away the staff, to a denial of heroic identity, the story of the ῥίψασπις. Yet the story itself is false, so that the “falsehood” of denying heroic identity invites exposure of the trickster’s deception. Still later, the beggar-Odysseus requests a cloak by telling a story in which his close friend Odysseus had once “tricked” a fellow comrade out of his cloak at Troy (14.462–506). The story points to the duality of the beggar’s own character, for it relates him both to the suffering hero who in his want of μήτις needed the coat and to the trickster who secured it, who is none other than Odysseus himself. Eumaios appreciates the overt message of the story, but not its implicit declaration: “I am *really* Odysseus beneath these rags.”³⁸

But why does Odysseus next proceed to the palace and test the suitors? It would have been far less dangerous to slip into the palace while the suitors were in their cups and kill them to a man. It is also unnecessary: Eurykleia offers to identify the unfaithful maidservants to Odysseus, who presumably are also known to Telemakhos and Penelope, and Telemakhos successfully recommends against a more comprehensive program of testing all the manservants. Athene herself, who suggests this strategy of testing, incites the suitors to further acts of outrage, “so that even greater ἄχος would enter him” (18.346–48; 20.285–86). On one level, the test serves to justify the *Mnēsterophonia* on moral grounds, for Odysseus kills the suitors after suffering repeated physical and verbal abuses, characterized variously as ἀτάσθαλα (22.317, 416; 24.458), and as acts of βίη (11.118; 17.540) and ὕβρις (18.139–40). At the level of generic identity, Athene’s strategy allows Odysseus to fulfill the passive side of the heroic paradigm as a Man of Suffering before the active hero is allowed to emerge, first as a Man of Hatred, then as a Man of Pain.³⁹ The tensions introduced by the deaths of the “good suitors” Leiodes and Amphinomos extend beyond simple aesthetic advantage to reflect the fundamental ambiguities that typify the

³⁷ B. Hainsworth, “Odysseus and the Dogs,” *GR* 8 (1961) 122–25, by contrast, argues that Odysseus attempts to placate the dogs with a “wolf smile.” If so, it was one of Odysseus’ less successful strategies as the dogs would have mauled him without Eumaios’ intervention.

³⁸ Nagy (above, n.3 [1979]) 234–37, and *Pindar’s Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore 1990) 236–37, integrates the story of the cloak into the tradition of the *ainos* and discusses at length how this medium regularly employs a code and a message.

³⁹ Collins (above, n.20) 120–21 argues that Athene continues testing Odysseus during the *Mnēsterophonia* by refusing to allow him a quick victory over the suitors.

heroic persona.⁴⁰ The poem may displace the hero's ἀτάσθαλα onto his λαός so as to justify the pain that he inflicts upon them, but the fact that Odysseus returns to Ithake in full possession of his warrior identity is seen to be inherently problematic.

In his own home, Odysseus' ability to endure suffering allows him to inflict it, so that the *Odyssey* concludes by once again reuniting passive with active heroism. The identity that had been denied Odysseus ever since his encounter with Polyphemos now receives explicit divine sanction as he kills members of his λαός for their ἀτασθαλίαι. The *Revenge* accordingly follows the same narrative trajectory as the *Kyklopeia*: Odysseus hides his true identity, suffers repeated outrage, and employs a sneak attack (λόχος) against his adversaries which devolves into a warrior's *aristeia* complete with double simile.⁴¹ As in the *Kyklopeia* and the *Phaiakis*, suppression of active heroism becomes a strategic choice that helps ensure his success. Again, as in the *Kyklopeia*, this suppression is accompanied by the emergence of the trickster in the context of suffering. Unlike the *Kyklopeia*, however, Odysseus' revenge on the suitors begins with a demonstration of heroic βίη, as the beggar strings the bow and shoots an arrow through the ax heads, after which he sheds his rags, shoots the suitor Antinoos, and identifies himself as Odysseus.⁴² In the *Kyklopeia*, heroic βίη is seen to be no match for that of Polyphemos, and as a consequence, Odysseus lays claim to his “true” identity only after he is on board his ship. In the *Mnēsterophonia*, by contrast, Odysseus discards his identity as a trickster together with his disguise, so that he punishes the suitors as an Iliadic warrior. Thus, Odysseus uses first his bow, and then his spears, to kill the remaining suitors; and both the *Mnēsterophonia* and the attempted retaliation by the suitors' parents are called a battle (πόλεμος) by Odysseus and by the narrator speaking *voce propria*. The first place in which Odysseus achieves complete identification as a hero after the *Kyklopeia* is in his own home.

The scene before the palace, in which Odysseus meets his dog Argos, prefigures this reunion of active and passive heroism (17.290–327). Argos, who as a hunting dog bridges the domestic and natural orders, points to Odysseus' former role as “domestic predator,” and is the first member of the household after his own son to identify Odysseus as belonging to it. The ambiguous status of the Homeric dog, which can be portrayed as a hunter and protector of livestock, or as a housedog whom the wealthy keep solely for show (17.307–10), thus mirrors the ambiguity of Odysseus' own character.⁴³ Odysseus becomes a hunting dog himself when the beggar Odysseus “identifies” the Trojan warrior Odysseus to Penelope by a brooch in which a

⁴⁰ On Homer's problematization of the theodicy announced in the divine assembly, see Cook (above, n.3), especially chap. 5.

⁴¹ Schröter (above, n.19) 121–36 and M. Müller, *Athene als göttliche Helferin in der Odyssee* (Heidelberg 1966) 136–44.

⁴² For the bow as symbol of the ruler's legitimacy, see Burkert, “Von Amenophis II zur Bogenprobe des Odysseus,” *Gräzer Beiträge* 1 (1973) 69–78.

⁴³ S. Goldhill, “Reading Differences: Juxtaposition and the *Odyssey*,” *Ramus* 17 (1988) 1–31.

dog is seen pinning a dappled fawn between his forepaws (19.228–31). In that the suitors have twice been compared to deer (4.335–40 and 17.126–31; see 22.401–6 below), the brooch serves to foreshadow the *Mnēsterophonia*.⁴⁴ As the narrative progresses, a series of images relate Odysseus to various other predatory animals which the *Iliad* uses to describe a warrior's battle-rage. Assimilation into the natural order thus serves to identify Odysseus as a hero.

At the close of her interview with the beggar Odysseus, Penelope narrates a dream in which an eagle kills, but does not eat, a flock of twenty domestic geese as they feed at the trough. The eagle then identifies himself to Penelope as Odysseus and the geese as the suitors (19.535–50; see also 24.538).⁴⁵ At this point, Odysseus becomes fully aligned with the natural order, while the suitors are represented by domestic livestock. Both the hunter and the hunted pass into the natural order as the corpses of the suitors are compared to fishes caught in a net and dying in the heat of the sun (22.383–88). In the *Apologoi*, Odysseus himself appropriately compares the crew to fish as they are hauled away to be eaten by the Laistrygones and by Skylle (10.124 and 12.251–55). Application of the image to the suitors is striking since they are neither alive, nor at sea, nor even in the sunlight. In so far as it serves to relate the suitors to the crew—both being λαοί of Odysseus who perish on account of their ἀτασθαλίαι—the simile also relates Odysseus to the cannibalistic Laistrygones and to the omophagic Skylle. Omophagic cannibalism returns as an explicit element of the second half of the double simile:

[Eurykleia] found Odysseus then among the corpses
of the slain, spattered with blood and gore like a lion,
who comes from having eaten a field-dwelling cow.
And his entire chest and jaws are covered in blood,
and his face is dread to look upon.
Thus was Odysseus spattered from hand to foot.

(22.401–06; see 23.48)

The wet and hungry lion that greeted Nausikaa on the beach of Skherie has now made its kill.

Already in book 4, Menelaos compares Odysseus in his role as avenger to a lion that eats a doe and her fawns (4.335–40; Telemakhos repeats the simile to Penelope at 17.126–31). In this case, both animals belong to the natural order and the lion is not driven by hunger; rather he eats the doe because of her own foolishness when she leaves her young in the lion's lair as she herself goes out to eat. After the *Mnēsterophonia*, it is significantly the lion who is the transgressor and who has in fact done precisely what the suitors have just been pun-

⁴⁴ The dog image returns later that night when Odysseus commands his "barking heart" to endure the behavior of the unfaithful maidservants one last night on the grounds that he had "endured things more doglike" in the cave of Polyphemos (20.13–21).

⁴⁵ See also the omen in which an eagle flies above the suitors with a rock dove in his claws (20.241–43), whereupon Amphinomos declares that they should abandon their plans of murdering Telemakhos and return to eating.

ished for doing, while omophagic cannibalism is the crime for which Odysseus had once punished Polyphemos, who is also compared to a lion as he eats his first pair of victims (9.292).⁴⁶ The double simile, moreover, follows a scene of unrestrained vengeance in which Odysseus kills Leiodes, “the only [suitor] to whom ἀτασθαλίαι / were hateful” (21.146–47). This scene is balanced by two others, in which Odysseus spares Phemios and restrains Eurykleia from exalting over the massacre, yet the poem itself concludes with Odysseus beginning a further slaughter, of the parents of the suitors, to which Zeus himself must call a halt.

In the end we see that Odysseus has not renounced heroism—far from it—nor has Odyssean cosmology fully sanitized the hero, although he has clearly been shaped by the themes of the first divine council. After the *Mnēsterophonia*, Odysseus’ self-presentation as a Man of Suffering gives way to a description that echoes the sentiment if not the actual language of the Homeric Hymn, as he tells his wife of “the many pains (κῆδεα) he had caused / other men and the many under which he had labored in his suffering (οὐζύσας ἐμόγησε)” (23.306–7). In fact, throughout the poem, Odysseus consistently seeks to maintain his heroic identity, although he is repeatedly presented with situations in which doing so would cause him to complete the Iliadic scenario of an early death, but without the compensating κλέος. If his experiences in the enchanted realm and the explicit advice of Teiresias and Kirke teach a lesson of wholesale renunciation, then Odysseus has failed to learn it. In short, despite the fact that in this poem, failure belongs exclusively to the heroic side of his character, and although his willingness and ability to suppress his heroic identity ensures his success against overwhelming odds, Odysseus lays claim to that identity the moment he is able. Heroism has been reformulated, but the hero is not “reformed”: even as moral agent, the Odysseus that returns from the enchanted world remains ambiguous, at once necessary and dangerous to his λαός.⁴⁷

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⁴⁶ It is instructive to note that three Iliadic characters, Zeus, Akhilleus, and Hekabe, use omophagy to represent the dehumanizing effects of unrestrained hatred, an emotion that we have seen to be a, or even the, defining aspect of the hero’s psychic economy. See D. Wilson, “Figuring the Female: Omophagy and the Construction of Heroic Identity in the *Iliad*,” *Abstracts of the One Hundred Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association* (1996) 334.

⁴⁷ The foregoing constitutes a nucleus of a forthcoming book. I have read drafts of it at a seminar sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage (March 7, 1998), Bryn Mawr College (October 3, 1997), and the annual meeting of the American Philological Association (December 1996), in addition to the Baylor conference. I would like to thank the audiences, in particular Marcel Detienne, Ann Kuttner, Joseph Russo, and Jonathan Shay for their questions and observations. I would also like to thank Greg Nagy for a series of helpful e-mail exchanges on various issues raised in this paper, and to my colleagues at the University of Texas, Derek Collins, Michael Gagarin, and Andrew Riggsby, for their written comments on the final draft.