NARRATIVE AND RHETORIC IN
ODYSSEUS' TALES TO THE PHAEACIANS

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Abstract. As Odysseus cautiously prepares to enter the straits plagued by Charybdis and Scylla, he encourages his crew by referring to his earlier success against the Cyclops (*Od.* 12.208–12). This article argues that the *Odyssey* constructs the Scylla adventure as a tale of heroic failure in contrast with the Cyclops episode. Special attention is paid to narrative paradigms that underlie the Scylla episode and emphasize Odysseus' inability to defeat the monster. I further show that the Cyclops/Scylla contrast serves both as an argument presented to Odysseus' internal Phaeacian audience and an interpretive key for the external audience.

IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, the scholarship on the wanderings of Odysseus—arguably the most famous and beloved section of the *Odyssey*—has undergone a remarkable shift. Ever since antiquity, an important exegetic tradition, ranging from Heraclitus the Allegorist to Charles Segal, has analyzed the *apologoi* as a moral or psychological journey, a return to humanity metaphorically shaped as an experience of death and rebirth.[1] By contrast, recent studies implicitly or explicitly influenced by theoretical developments in narratology, pragmatics, and performativity have highlighted the fact that the *apologoi* are a speech act uttered by the secondary narrator Odysseus to an audience of Phaeacians on whom he depends to escort him home. It is now well established that the *apologoi* stylistically differ from the main narrative (Goldhill 1991; de Jong 1992; 2001; Beck 2005) and that their emphasis on hospitality

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[1] Segal 1962. On Heraclitus the Allegorist, see the fine edition by Russell and Konstan 2005.

(*xenia*) thematically fits the context of Odysseus' interaction with the Phaeacians (Most 1989). Moving away from a view of Odysseus as an exemplary human being towards an interest in Odysseus as a paradigmatic speaker, contemporary critics have thus ironically returned to the ancient appreciation of him as ῥητορικώτατος (Philostratus *Heroicus* 34.1), though analyzing it with contemporary tools.[2]

Among other interesting features, the *apologoi* are remarkable for their thematic organization.[3] As Niles (1978) persuasively argued, the adventures fall under three main types—temptation, physical threat, and taboo—organized in a ring composition centered on the *nekyia*, with the Lotus-Eaters corresponding to the Sirens, Circe to Calypso, the Cyclops to Scylla, the Laestrygonians to Charybdis, and Aeolus to Thrinacia. However, little has been said about the significance of that striking structure. To this date, its fullest treatment was offered by Most, who showed that the ring composition emphasizes two extreme versions of bad hospitality: eating one's guest alive (Cyclops, Scylla, Laestrygonians, Charybdis) and detaining him longer than he wishes (Lotus-Eaters, Circe, Sirens, Calypso).[4] Consequently, Most concluded that Odysseus offers to the Phaeacians a negative definition of proper hospitality. Yet while his article brilliantly explains the pragmatic relevance of at least two of the three "rings" in the structure of the *apologoi*, it leaves aside the rationale for the pairing of the individual episodes. In other words, it concentrates on the general thematic relevance of the adventures but says little on the narrative specificity of each tale.

Focusing on the Cyclops/Scylla pair, this article argues that the two thematically related adventures differ crucially in their narrative presentation and indeed offer contrasting views of the character Odysseus.[5] My analysis, which combines tools from narratology and audience-response theory, methodologically depends on the distinction between a story (a combination of characters, events, and setting) and a narrative (the presentation of a story by a narrator).[6] I focus first on the plot of each

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[2] On the history of the idea of Odysseus as paradigmatic speaker, see Stanford 1954.

[3] On the symmetrical structure of the *apologoi*, see Woodhouse 1930, 43–44; Germain 1954, 333; Whitman 1958, 288; Niles 1978; Scully 1987; Most 1989, 21–24; Cook 1995, 65–92.

[4] Most 1989. See also Redfield 1983, 235–44.

[5] On Odysseus' combination of active and passive features in the *apologoi* and the whole poem, see Dimock 1956; Clay 1983, 54–68; Peradotto 1990; Cook 1999.

[6] For the distinction, see Genette 1972; Bal 1985. Bakker 2009 challenges the relevance of structural narratology to Homer and argues that oral performance blurs the hierarchical distinction between narrator and character. Although he is certainly right to stress the need for a historical narratology, his argument does not take into account such works as

tale in order to show that the Cyclops episode is generally organized as a narrative of desire fulfilled, and the Scylla episode as one of desire unfulfilled (section I).[7] I then concentrate on the understudied Scylla tale and argue that pervasive references to other stories or narrative sequences, including the Argo saga (section II), the typical scene of the martial combat (section III), and the cosmogonic fight between Zeus and Typhoeus (section IV), trigger high expectations from the audience and highlight, in contrast, Odysseus' inability to defeat the monster. In conclusion, I argue that the Cyclops/Scylla contrast fulfills at least two functions in the poem. As an argument presented to the internal Phaeacian audience, it underscores Odysseus' need to arouse both admiration and pity in order to win his return to Ithaca, and as an interpretive key offered to the external audience, it contributes to the indeterminacy of the poem by making it uncertain whether Odysseus will ultimately overcome the suitors (section V).

I. PARALLELISMS AND CONTRASTS

The parallelism between the Cyclops and Scylla is perhaps the most obvious among the thematic symmetries shaping the *apologoi*. Indeed, the correspondence is explicated in the poem. When Odysseus and his men prepare to enter the straits plagued by Charybdis and Scylla, Odysseus encourages his men by referring to their earlier success over the Cyclops: the forthcoming evil cannot be greater than the Cyclops; just as they escaped from the cave thanks to his valor, counsel, and intelligence (ἐμῇ ἀρετῇ βουλῇ τε νόῳ τε, 12.211), so will they escape from the straits (12.208–12). As Heubeck points out, the καί . . . καί coordination in lines 211–12 has a comparative sense and tightly connects the two episodes.[8]

In addition, several resemblances link the appearance, habitat, and actions of the two monsters. The term πέλωρ ("wonder") that Circe applies to Scylla at 12.87 also describes the Cyclops at 9.428. Both beings live in a cave (σπέος: 9.182, 237, 337, 402, 447, and 458 [Cyclops]; 12.80 and 84 [Scylla]) whose incommensurability is conveyed through comparable

Beck's study of the variations of narrative technique among Odyssean characters (2005). For a strong statement of the difference between bardic and non-bardic performances in Homer, see Scodel 1998.

    [7]The concepts of narrative of desire fulfilled and unfulfilled come from Brémond 1973, 131–32.

    [8]Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 130.

"descriptions by negation technique":[9] the huge stone that forms the door of the Cyclops' cave is so massive that "twenty-two stout four-wheeled wagons could not raise it from the ground" (9.240–43); similarly, no mortal could ascend Scylla's cave, "not even if he had twenty hands and feet" (12.77–78). Both the Cyclops and Scylla are closely associated with stones and use them as aggressive or defensive weapons: he throws stones at Odysseus' ship (ὑπὸ πέτρης, 9.484 and 541), while she hides in her rocky cave, indistinguishable from her surrounding (πετραίην, 12.231; πέτρην, 12.233). Lastly, both monsters devour six members of the crew, differing only in the distribution: he eats two crew members at a time on three separate occasions (9.289–91, 311, 344), while she snatches six of them at once (12.245–46, as announced by Circe at 12.110). Odysseus' reference to the Cyclops when his ship enters the straits of Charybdis and Scylla is thus justified not only by the intensity of the danger, but also by similarities between the appearance, habitat, and behavior of the two monsters.[10]

While Odysseus' narrative encourages the comparison between the Cyclops and Scylla, the spirit and tone of both tales could not be more different.[11] As many readers of the *Cyclopeia* have pointed out, it is of course possible to criticize Odysseus' actions against the Cyclops on ethical, heroic, or strategic grounds. As Odysseus and his companions enter Polyphemus' cave uninvited and help themselves to his cheeses (9.231–33), they violate the normal structure of Homeric hospitality scenes.[12] Odysseus' use of trickster strategies, above all his willingness to

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[9] I borrow the term from de Jong 2001, 299.

[10] The parallelism was indeed picked up by ancient audiences. Scylla and the Cyclops are juxtaposed on an Etruscan ivory pyxis from the necropolis of the Pania near Chiusi, variously dated between 620 and 570 B.C.E., and decorated with a frieze that closely engages the *Odyssey* (Florence, Archaeological Museum 73846). Cristofani 1971 first proposed to identify as Scylla the octopus-like figure juxtaposed with the men escaping from the Cyclops. See Krauskopf 1974, 8–9, and figs. 2–3 for a different opinion.

[11] The difference was already sensed by Focke 1943, 197–98, who contrasted the "orientalizing" *pathos* of the Scylla episode to the "Greek" restraint of the Cyclops episode, which he consequently attributed to different poets ("O-Dichter" and "A-Dichter," respectively). Although Focke's analyst approach has been challenged by the work of Parry and Lord on the oral poetics of the Homeric epics, his sensitive reading of the differences between the Cyclops and the Scylla episodes remains valid. See Eisenberger 1973, 201, for a unitarian reading and a nuanced evaluation of Focke's remarks. In a similar vein, de Romilly 1999 contrasts the Cyclops and the Laestrygonians episodes and shows that the former emphasizes Odysseus' intelligence while the latter does not.

[12] Reece 1993, 16. On hospitality and guest-friendship in Homer, see, e.g., Belmont 1962; Kakridis 1963, 86–108; Stewart 1976, 77–78. On *xenia* as a social institution, see Herman 1987.

take on the name of "Nobody," runs against the traditional ideal of heroic self-assertion epitomized by an Achilles or an Ajax.[13] Yet Odysseus does not consistently act as a man of *metis* either, and in fact his interaction with Polyphemus is framed by two strategic mistakes. First, Odysseus sparks off the whole adventure by insisting on meeting the Cyclopes and testing their hospitality (9.172–76), a mistake that he compounds by waiting for Polyphemus instead of going back to the ship as his companions recommend (9.224–30). Furthermore, after the escape from the cave, his taunting and disclosure of his name lead to Polyphemus' curse, the wrath of Poseidon, and other adventures that eventually cause the loss of the whole crew (1.68–71; 11.103 = 13.343).[14] Odysseus' problematic role in the Cyclops adventure is in fact pointed out by his kinsman Eurylochus, who uses the Cyclops adventure as a negative paradigm and an instance of Odysseus' recklessness in an effort to dissuade the crew from joining their leader in Circe's palace (10.435–37).

Eurylochus' voice is one of those fascinating instances when peripheral characters challenge the leading, Odysseus-centered perspective of the poem.[15] It stresses the malleability of the Cyclops story which, depending on the narrator and his goals, can be turned into a narrative of desire fulfilled or its opposite, and it foreshadows the complexity of contemporary responses to the Cyclops in colonial and postcolonial writings.[16] Yet Eurylochus' perspective on the Cyclops is heard only once. Later on Ithaca, when Odysseus prepares to confront the suitors and witnesses the misbehavior of the maids, he again refers to the Cyclops episode as a high point of the adventures in a self-exhortation to endure and use his cunning (20.18–21). While the value system of the *Odyssey* makes it

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[13] On the significance of the Outis name, see especially Austin 1972. For a reading of the *Cyclopeia* as "a tale of the humiliation of the heroic self and its subsequent restoration," see Friedrich 1987; Cook 1999, 153–57.

[14] On the Cyclops' empowerment over Odysseus through his name, see Brown 1966; Austin 1972. Odysseus' uneven behavior in the *Cyclopeia* has been much discussed. Older critics like Stanford 1954, 77, and Kirk 1962, 365, attribute its discrepancies to traces of pre-Homeric heritage or multiple authorship. More recently, scholars have put forth psychological explanations. In the psychoanalytic reading of Austin 1983, Odysseus' personality is made of two distinct layers, a "tiny tot" inside Polyphemus' cave and an adult outside it. Friedrich 1987 and Cook 1999 argue that Odysseus combines features of two character types, the trickster and the Iliadic hero.

[15] On the dialogism of the *Odyssey* and the application of Bakhtinian concepts to the poem, see Peradotto 1990, 51–58.

[16] Hall 2007; 2008, 89–100.

possible for the audience to offer diverging evaluations of the *Cyclopeia*, Odysseus primarily remembers it as a personal success.[17]

As Odysseus narrates it to the Phaeacians, the Cyclops adventure is told in a jubilant tone, organized as a demonstration of *metis*.[18] The plot is simple enough. After Odysseus and his men are trapped in Polyphemus' cave, they face the double challenge of taming the ogre and leaving the cave, whose massive door-stone they cannot move. Odysseus meets the challenge in four successful steps: he inebriates the ogre, blinds him, leaves the cave with his men trussed up under the sheep, and sails away. At each stage, the narrative comments on Odysseus' judicious use of wit and cunning. Phrases pile up that refer to his excellent intuitions (9.211–15), wisdom (εἰδότα πολλά, 9.281), good judgment (βούλευσα, 9.299; βουλή, 9.318), cunning (μῆτις ἀμύμων, 9.414), and clever use of language (δολίοισ᾽ ἐπέεσσι, 9.282; ἔπεσσι . . . μειλιχίοισι, 9.363). Odysseus' intelligence is further set into relief by contrast with the Cyclops, who is too "stupid" (νήπιος, 9.442) to "understand" (οὐκ ἐνόησεν, 9.442). The structuring role of *metis* in the story is famously stressed by a word play on Odysseus' pseudonym Οὖτις ("Nobody"), the alternative negative phrase μή τις, and the intellectual concept μῆτις ("clever plan, counsel").[19] As the neighboring Cyclopes respond to Polyphemus' cries for help, the paronomasia μή τις / μῆτις, which functionally refers to the agent Odysseus, famously constructs him as *metis* personified (9.410; cf. 9.414). In the terminology developed by Brémond, the Cyclops story is constructed as a narrative of desire fulfilled.[20] Consequently, because the Cyclopes are ostensibly described as uncivilized beings (9.105–15, 125–41, 187–92), the tale has often been read as a dramatization of the conceptual polarity between nature and culture, and a representation of man's triumph over uncivilized forces.[21]

While emphasizing the role of intelligence in the story, however, the paronomasia simultaneously suggests that this emphasis is largely a linguistic construct. The attribution of Polyphemus' woes to μή τις / μῆτις is

[17] Odysseus' prejudice at *Od.* 20.18–21 may be seen as an indicator of the pro-Odyssean bias of the poem as a whole. For the possibility that the *Odyssey* simultaneously adopts and occasionally reveals its one-sided perspective, see Winkler 1990, 129–61.

[18] See for instance Clay 1983, who characterizes the hero of the *Cyclopeia* as the "quintessential man of *metis*" and Austin 1983 who—inspired by the work of Melanie Klein—reads the Cyclops narrative as a child's fantasy. My own analysis focuses on narrative rather than psychological structures, but reaches the same conclusions as Austin's.

[19] On the pun, see Stanford 1959 on *Od.* 9.408; Podlecki 1961; Austin 1972.

[20] Brémond 1973, 131–32.

[21] Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 35–62; Kirk 1970, 162–71; Burkert 1979, 33; Vidal-Naquet 1991, 39–68.

made possible by the grammatical rule that requires a conditional clause to be negated by μή. More broadly, the triumphant tone of the story as a whole largely depends on the careful organization and focalization of the narrative. The story is told *ex post facto* from a quasi-omniscient perspective. In particular, it integrates information that the character Odysseus could not possibly have had at the time of the encounter.[22] For instance, the elaborate descriptions of the Cyclopes (9.105–30) and of Polyphemus (9.187–92) that occur before Odysseus has even met the ogre are focalized from the perspective of the narrator rather than the character. Similarly, the characterization of the story as a narrative of desire fulfilled depends on both its organization and the moment when Odysseus' aim is articulated. Another less jubilant version of the story—akin to Eurylochus'—could have emphasized Odysseus' helplessness and incapacity to save the six companions successively devoured by the ogre. However, no such regrets are mentioned in Odysseus' version. Odysseus articulates his goal to save his companions and himself late in the narrative, after the six deaths have already happened, on the night before the men escape from the cave (9.420–23):

> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ βούλευον, ὅπως ὄχ᾽ ἄριστα γένοιτο,
> εἴ τιν᾽ ἑταίροισιν θανάτου λύσιν ἠδ᾽ ἐμοὶ αὐτῷ
> εὑροίμην· πάντας δὲ δόλους καὶ μῆτιν ὕφαινον,
> ὥς τε περὶ ψυχῆς· μέγα γὰρ κακὸν ἐγγύθεν ἦεν.

> But I was planning so that things would come out the best way,
> and trying to find some release from death, for my companions
> and myself too, combining all my resource and treacheries,
> as with life at stake, for the great evil was very close to us.[23]

With an emphatic ἐγώ, the lines stress Odysseus' autonomy, agency, and responsibility for the outcome of the adventure. All his resources are being deployed so that he and his companions may escape from the cave and a certain death. And indeed, Odysseus' aim—voiced right before Odysseus binds his companions to the sheep—will be reached, the six men already eaten by Polyphemus notwithstanding. The belated positioning of Odysseus' goal allows the narrative to be constructed as one of desire fulfilled. The *metis* mentioned in line 422 may refer explicitly to

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[22] For the distinction between character and narrator in first-person narratives, see Winkler 1985. On Odysseus' focalization in the *apologoi,* see de Jong 2001, 223–26.

[23] Here and throughout the article, I quote the *Odyssey* in the Teubner text of Peter von der Mühll and the translation of Richmond Lattimore.

the tricks played by Odysseus on Polyphemus, but it also aptly describes his skills as a narrator.[24]

The Scylla tale sharply contrasts with the jubilant mood of the earlier story. The plot falls into three parts: Odysseus and his crew sail through narrow straits plagued by Scylla on the one side and Charybdis on the other side; they avoid being engulfed by Charybdis; Scylla seizes six men and eats them up. Again, the story could lead to various forms of narratives, including a positive one that would emphasize Odysseus' success in avoiding Charybdis and losing only six men to Scylla.[25] As it is told by Odysseus to the Phaeacians, however, the Scylla episode is primarily constructed as a narrative of unfulfilled desire. As the ship moves away from the straits, Odysseus describes the outcome of the episode—the sight of six men devoured at the entrance of Scylla's cave—as the most pitiful spectacle of the wanderings (12.256–59):

> αὐτοῦ δ᾽ εἰνὶ θύρῃσι κατήσθιε κεκλήγοντας,
> χεῖρας ἐμοὶ ὀρέγοντας ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτῆτι.
> οἴκτιστον δὴ κεῖνο ἐμοῖσ᾽ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι
> πάντων, ὅσσ᾽ ἐμόγησα πόρους ἁλὸς ἐξερεείνων.

> Right in her doorway she ate them up. They were screaming
> And reaching out their hands to me in this horrid encounter.
> That was the most pitiful scene that these eyes have looked on
> In my sufferings as I explored the routes over the water.

The unambiguous sorrow and pity that grip Odysseus (12.258–59) contrast with the mixture of joy and pain he and his companions experience as they depart from the island of the Cyclopes, "glad to have escaped death but grieving still at heart for the loss of our dear companions" (9.565–66).

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[24]Winkler 1990, 144–45, reads the *metis* puns as an example of cleverness on the poet's part.

[25]The idea that Odysseus fares relatively well against Scylla and Charybdis in Homer's *Odyssey* has in fact been raised by Danek 1998 and 2002. Working from a neo-analytic perspective and from the premise that traditional versions of the *Odyssey* would have offered a simpler version of Odysseus' adventures, Danek reconstructs a version of *Odyssey* 12 in which Scylla snatches six men, Charybdis swallows the rest of the crew, and Odysseus saves only himself by hanging on a fig tree. Consequently, Danek concludes that the *Odyssey* version of the adventure highlights Odysseus' effort to save his men. I share Danek's premise that the *Odyssey* should be appreciated against the horizon of expectations of ancient audiences, and I find his reconstruction of a version whereby Charybdis swallowed the entire crew plausible, albeit speculative. Its implications are more difficult to draw. Since Odysseus himself describes the sight of Scylla eating up his men as a pitiful scene (12.256–59), it is difficult to argue that ancient audiences primarily perceived the episode as a heroic success.

While the Cyclops adventure supports the anthropocentric idea that culture rules over nature, the Scylla tale challenges it. As Scylla catches Odysseus' men and eats them, she is compared to an angler hauling up fish (12.251–57):

> ὡς δ᾽ ὅτ᾽ ἐπὶ προβόλῳ ἁλιεὺς περιμήκεϊ ῥάβδῳ
> ἰχθύσι τοῖς ὀλίγοισι δόλον κατὰ εἴδατα βάλλων
> ἐς πόντον προΐησι βοὸς κέρας ἀγραύλοιο,
> ἀσπαίροντα δ᾽ ἔπειτα λαβὼν ἔρριψε θύραζε,
> ὣς οἵ γ᾽ ἀσπαίροντες ἀείροντο προτὶ πέτρας.
> αὐτοῦ δ᾽ εἰνὶ θύρῃσι κατήσθιε κεκλήγοντας,
> χεῖρας ἐμοὶ ὀρέγοντας ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτῆτι.

> And as a fisherman with a very long rod, on a jutting
> Rock, will cast his treacherous bait for the little fishes,
> And sinks the horn of a field-ranging ox into the water,
> Then hauls them up and throws them on the dry land, gasping
> And struggling, so they gasped and struggled as they were hoisted
> Up the cliff. Right in her doorway she ate them up. They were screaming
> And reaching out their hands to me in this horrid encounter.

Through the lens of the fisherman metaphor, the angler simile revisits some of Scylla's characteristics mentioned by Circe. The "very long rod" (περιμήκεϊ ῥάβδῳ, 12.251) and "projecting rock" (προβόλῳ, 12.251) of the fisherman parallel Scylla's "very long necks" (δειραὶ περιμήκεες, 12.90) and look-out point (σκόπελος, 12.95) in Circe's prophecy. In addition, the simile provocatively encourages the audience to compare the monster to an angler and the men to fish. It therefore reverses the usual role distribution in the activity of fishing, i.e., one of the activities through which man asserts his domination over nature.[26] A creature of the deep that fishes for men, the Odyssean Scylla challenges the hierarchy of nature and culture asserted in the Cyclops episode and demonstrates that some forces of nature cannot be overcome.[27] In Bakhtinian terms, it may be described as the "centripetal" counterpart to the "centrifugal" Cyclops episode.[28]

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[26] In the so-called "Ode on Man" from Sophocles' *Antigone*, which demonstrably draws on earlier sophistic speculations about the origins of human culture (Goheen 1951; Segal 1981, 152), the ability to ensnare in nets "the tribes of birds, the clans of wild beast, and the brood of the deep" (*Ant.* 342–47) is listed among the achievements that single out man (ἀνθρώπου, 332) from the other wonders of the world.

[27] Cook 1995, 89.

[28] On the Odyssean juxtaposition of two visions, one ("Myth") that entails nature's recalcitrance to culture, and the other ("Märchen") that emphasizes the triumph of *metis*, see Peradotto 1990, 59–93.

II. CROSSING JASON'S PATH

While the angler simile and Odysseus' final editorial comment construct the Scylla episode as a low point in the adventures, the whole tale gradually works toward that effect. Most remarkably, the narrative makes extensive use of embedded paradigms that shape the audience's expectations and set into relief Odysseus' inability to defeat the monster.[29]

In the next three sections, I argue that the Scylla episode inverts the plot of the Argonauts' successful passage through the Planctae, the typical scene of the war duel, and the plot of cosmogonic combats. While my argument relies on parallels between the diction of *Odyssey* 12 and other oral-derived poems, I am not suggesting that the *Odyssey* alludes to specific lines from the *Iliad* or the *Theogony*. Rather, I list those parallels in an attempt to recover the broad set of connotations conveyed by oral-traditional phraseology. Methodologically, I draw on the notion of "traditional referentiality" developed by Foley to describe how meaning is generated in oral-derived poems. As his comparative work has shown, traditional units of meaning at the level of phrase, scene, or plot metonymically trigger fields of reference encompassing the connotations inherited from their other occurrences.[30] Foley's model for the discussion of parallels sidesteps the question of authorial intentionality and emphasizes instead the role of the audience, understood to be intimately familiar with the dictional system within which the poems developed.[31] Furthermore, since the model operates at the level of oral-traditional units rather than textual allusions, it eschews the question of the relative chronology of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Theogony*'s transition from orality to writing.

[29] I use the phrase "narrative paradigm" in a broad sense to refer to stories or narrative sequences that do not belong to the Scylla plot but are embedded in the narrative and shape the audience's experience. My definition therefore encompasses not only explicit references to exemplary stories (often called *paradeigmata* or "para-narratives") but also implicit references to typical scenes. What all these devices have in common is that they trigger expectations that shape the audience's experience of the poem. Since my argument does not depend on the circulation of these narrative sequences in a specific literary form, I prefer the term "narrative paradigm" to the more problematic concept of "intertextuality." Earlier critics recognized that the Scylla episode engages the Argo story, uses Iliadic vocabulary, and distills a Hesiodic flavor, but they thought of these phenomena primarily in terms of authorial allusions. By contrast, my emphasis on the audience's role in the construction of meaning leads me to analyze them as narrative triggers. For a theoretical justification of the importance of audience's expectations, see Jauss 1982; Fish 1980.

[30] Foley 1991; 1997.

[31] The historical conditions of performance of Homeric poetry are notoriously difficult to reconstruct. On Homeric performances at festivals, see Taplin 1992, 39–41, and Stehle 1997, 170–212; on Homeric performances at the Panathenaia, see Nagy 2002.

Like the other adventures of Book 12, the Scylla story told by Odysseus to the Phaeacians includes the voices of two additional narrators (or tertiary embedded narrators, in Genette's terminology). The encounter is first proleptically evoked by Circe, whose prophecy includes a systematic description of the monster's habitat and appearance, as well as the advice that Odysseus should not try to confront Scylla (12.73–126). In addition, the narrator Odysseus also quotes in direct speech the protreptic words that he (as a character) addressed to his crew (12.208–21) before launching into an *ex post facto* report of the actual encounter (12.222–59). The Scylla episode is thus evoked from the three perspectives of Circe, the character Odysseus, and the narrator Odysseus. The inclusion of distinct voices offers complementary and at times divergent perspectives on the encounter.

As Circe prepares to describe the adventure awaiting Odysseus after the Sirens, she explains that Odysseus will reach a crossroad. Of the two courses, one goes through the Planctae, rocks that not even doves and certainly not ships can traverse. The one exception, she states, was the ship Argo (12.69–72):

> οἴη δὴ κείνη γε παρέπλω ποντοπόρος νηῦς
> Ἀργὼ πᾶσι μέλουσα, παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα·
> καί νύ κε τὴν ἔνθ' ὦκα βάλεν μεγάλας ποτὶ πέτρας,
> ἀλλ' Ἥρη παρέπεμψεν, ἐπεὶ φίλος ἦεν Ἰήσων.

> That way the only seagoing ship to get through was Argo,
> Who is in all men's minds, on her way home from Aietes;
> And even she would have been driven on the great rocks that time,
> But Hera saw her through, out of her great love for Jason.

This passage is the most important piece of evidence for the circulation of an Argo epos in archaic song culture.[32] Narratologically, it refers to a story that notionally took place before the journey of Odysseus and does not affect its outcome. It is therefore both an analepsis and a "para-narrative," to borrow from the terminology that Alden developed for the *Iliad* (Alden 2000).

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[32] The idea that the *Odyssey* closely engages an epic tradition about Jason and the Argonauts was first raised by Meuli 1921 and recently discussed by Dräger 1993 and West 2005. According to West 1985, 138, early heroic Greek poetry comprises four cycles, one of which is the cycle of Iolcus that includes Jason, Argo's voyage, and the deeds of Achilles. West suggests that the Iolcus tradition was more *märchenhaft* than the other cycles. Evidence for the importance of this tradition in early Greek epic include *Th.* 992–1002 and 1011–16, the *Corinthiaca* of Eumelus (*FGrH* 451 = *PEG* 108–12), and the anonymous *Naupactia.*

The absence of a written version of the archaic Argo epos makes it impossible to assess how Circe's words compare to the Argo tradition. Yet within the *Odyssey*, Circe's prophecy clearly constructs the Planctae and the straits of Charybdis and Scylla as parallel dangers. Both involve a narrow path located between cliffs made of smooth stone (πέτραι, 12.59; λὶς πέτρη, 12.64 [Planctae]; πέτρη γὰρ λίς, 12.79 [Scylla]). Amphitrite, who otherwise appears only twice in the *Odyssey* (3.91 and 5.422), is mentioned in relation to both the Planctae (12.60) and Scylla (12.97). Finally, as de Jong (2001, 299) has pointed out, a similar "description by negation technique" is used to describe both hazards. Just as no dove would be able to fly through the Planctae (12.62–64), not even a great archer could reach Scylla's cave with his arrows (12.83–84). In Circe's speech, therefore, the Planctae navigated by Jason are structurally and thematically comparable to the straits of Scylla and Charybdis.

In addition, much as in all likelihood Achilles adapts Niobe's story to make it more similar to Priam's situation in *Iliad* 24, Circe's prophecy may adapt the standard version of the Argo journey to tighten its correspondence with Odysseus' journey.[33] In most versions, the Argonauts cross the Planctae on their way to Colchis (West 2005). By contrast, in Circe's version Jason goes through the Planctae on his return from the land of Aietes (παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα, 12.70), just as Odysseus goes through the straits of Charybdis and Scylla on his return from the island of Aietes' sister (10.137), "the lady of Aiaia" (Αἰαίη, 9.32, 12.268, and 12.273), i.e., Circe herself. With Odysseus shown to be walking in Jason's footsteps, the para-narrative becomes a *paradeigma* inviting the audience to compare heroes and plots.

While the Argo micro-narrative invites the audience to compare Jason and Odysseus, its terms already foreshadow the latter's inability to measure up to the former. The emphasis on the terrible hazard raised by the Clashing Rocks only enhances the fact that the ship Argo crossed them unscathed. The ship's name is modified by the adjective ποντοπόρος, "sea-cleaving" (12.69), an epithet of appreciation otherwise used for the ships of the Phaeacians (13.95 and 161), those of the Phoenicians and Thesprotians in Odysseus' Cretan tales (14.295 and 339), and that of Telemachus (15.284), but never of Odysseus' own fleet. Furthermore, Circe's emphasis on the help that Jason received from Hera sharply

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[33] For the idea that *paradeigmata* may be twisted to accommodate specific contexts, see Willcock 1964. For the idea that the *paradeigmata* and the larger narrative of the *Iliad* reciprocally influenced one another through successive re-creations in performance, see Lang 1983. For a caveat that the relevance of *paradeigmata* does not imply that they are poetic inventions, see Nagy 1996, 113–46.

contrasts with the absence of Odysseus' divine protector Athena in this part of the poem and augurs ominously of his journey.[34] The embedded micro-narrative thus sets up a yardstick for Odysseus' deeds while already implying that he will not meet the standard set by Jason.

III. A PARODIC DUEL

The undermining effect of the Argo micro-narrative is reinforced by a second paradigm that comes across particularly strongly in the conversation between Odysseus and Circe. As they talk about Odysseus' forthcoming adventure, a discussion arises about the best way to deal with Scylla. While Circe advises that nothing can be done against an immortal evil, Odysseus refuses to accept losing six men to the monster. The strategic debate involves the use of terms that are rare in the *Odyssey* but are frequent in the kind of martial poetry exemplified by the *Iliad*.[35] For instance, Odysseus expresses his hope to "fight off" Scylla with the verb ἀμύνω ("ward off" or "protect," 12.114). Together with its compounds (ἀπαμύνω, προσαμύνω, and ἐπαμύνω), ἀμύνω belongs to the vocabulary of fighting and occurs much more often in the *Iliad* (98 times) than in the *Odyssey* (19 times).[36] Its use here stresses Odysseus' intention to face the monster as if it were an adversary on the battlefield.

The Iliadic diction is picked up by Circe. Already in her description of Scylla, the phrase αἰζήϊος ἀνήρ, by which she indicates that not even "a man of great strength" would be able to reach Scylla's cave with his arrows (12.83–84), sounds more Iliadic than Odyssean. The adjective αἰζήϊος and its doublet αἰζηός occur only twice in the *Odyssey* (12.83 and 440), but they occur eighteen times in the *Iliad*, including thrice as epithet of ἀνήρ and ten times absolutely in the sense of "young men."[37] Later in

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[34] On Athena's absence from the *apologoi* and the possibility that she may be angry at Odysseus, see Clay 1983.

[35] The Iliadic coloration of the Scylla episode has been duly noted by commentators including Reinhardt 1948, 70; Eisenberger 1973, 200; Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 131; Lossau 1993. Most of them interpret the Iliadic diction in psychological terms (Odysseus cannot help behaving as if he were on the battlefield) or as an indication of the difference between the world of the *Iliad* and that of the *Odyssey*. None of them pushes the observation to the logical conclusion that the Scylla encounter is cast as a failed duel. For methodological considerations about the analysis of Iliadic vocabulary in the *Odyssey*, see Pucci 1979 and 1987.

[36] *LfrgE* (*Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*) s.v. ἀμύνω (J. Latacz).

[37] αἰζήϊος or αἰζηός as epithet of ἀνήρ: *Il.* 16.716, 17.520, 23.432; absolutely in the sense of "young men:" *Il.* 2.660, 4.280, 5.92, 8.298, 10.259, 14.4, 15.66, 20.167, 21.146, 301.

the discussion with Odysseus, the phrase πολεμήϊα ἔργα (12.116) is a *hapax legomenon* in the *Odyssey* but occurs six times in the *Iliad*.[38] Finally, the participle κορυσσόμενος (12.121) comes from the verb κορύσσομαι, which in the *Iliad* functions as the matrix of arming scenes.[39] In *Iliad* 19, Achilles' donning of his armor, the most elaborate of such scenes, opens and ends with the verb κορύσσομαι (19.364 and 397).

Remarkably, however, all three Iliadic phrases spoken by Circe are used in a displaced manner. The phrase αἰζήϊος ἀνήρ is inscribed in a negative sentence (οὐδέ . . . αἰζήϊος ἀνήρ, 12.83) and thus denies agency to a paradigmatic actor of the *Iliad*, the young warrior in his prime. The phrase πολεμήϊα ἔργα, which occurs in final position in all six Iliadic instances, occurs here between the penthemimeral caesura and the caesura after the trochee of the fifth foot, thus sounding slightly "off" and suggesting the thematic inappropriateness of the strategy. Last but not least, Circe combines the participle κορυσσόμενος with the verb δηθύνω ("delay" or "tarry"), a provocative juxtaposition that draws attention to the usage of an Iliadic word in an Odyssean context and gives it a parodic significance—what was a typical scene in the *Iliad* is a waste of time against Scylla.

Although the Iliadic diction does not involve a proper name or specific story, it still calls to mind the narrative sequence of the combat scene against which the audience was encouraged to compare Odysseus' encounter with Scylla. The phenomenon comes across especially clearly in the narrative of the encounter itself, which triggers, displaces, and finally inverts the Iliadic sequence of the arming scene and the consequent achievement of *aristeia*. In line with his earlier intentions, Odysseus does attempt to face Scylla as if she were an opponent on the battlefield (12.226–33):

> καὶ τότε δὴ Κίρκης μὲν ἐφημοσύνης ἀλεγεινῆς
> λανθανόμην, ἐπεὶ οὔ τί μ᾽ ἀνώγει θωρήσσεσθαι·
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ <u>καταδὺς κλυτὰ τεύχεα</u> καὶ δύο δοῦρε
> μάκρ᾽ ἐν χερσὶν ἑλὼν εἰς ἴκρια νηὸς ἔβαινον
> πρῴρης· ἔνθεν γάρ μιν ἐδέγμην πρῶτα φανεῖσθαι
> Σκύλλην πετραίην, ἥ μοι φέρε πῆμ᾽ ἑτάροισιν.
> οὐδέ πη ἀθρῆσαι δυνάμην· ἔκαμον δέ μοι ὄσσε
> πάντη παπταίνοντι πρὸς ἠεροειδέα πέτρην.

[38] *Il.* 2.338, 5.428, 7.236, 11.719, 13.727, 730.
[39] The idea that the Homeric poems largely draw on "typical scenes" that can be expanded or compressed was first developed by Arend 1933. For a synthesis of the research on that topic, see Edwards 1992.

> For my part,
> I let go from my mind the difficult instruction that Circe
> had given me, for she told me not to be armed for combat;
> but I put on my glorious armor and, taking up two long
> spears in my hands, I stood bestriding the vessel's foredeck
> at the prow, for I expected Scylla of the rocks to appear first
> from that direction, she who brought pain to my companions.
> I could not make her out anywhere, and my eyes grew weary
> from looking everywhere on the misty face of the sea rock.

Several phrases give the passage a distinctively Iliadic ring. The verb θωρήσσω (12.227) occurs forty-two times in the *Iliad* but only three times in the *Odyssey*. The phrase κλυτὰ τεύχεα (12.228) and its variant τεύχεα καλά occur twenty-seven times in the *Iliad*, but only five times in the *Odyssey*. The phrase κλυτὰ τεύχεα is constructed four times with the verb καταδύω or δύω in the *Iliad* (5.435, 6.504, 16.64, and 18.192), but only once in the *Odyssey*. More specifically, the passage offers a compressed version of a fundamental component of the *Iliad*: the arming scene whereby a hero dons his armor before going to fight. The verb θωρήσσω and the noun τεύχεα occur in collocation when Menelaus arms himself to defy Hector (*Il.* 7.101–3, a passage that also includes the verb καταδύω), and when Achilles arrays the Myrmidons to follow Patroclus (16.155–56). Thus, Odysseus dons his armor in the same manner as Greek chieftains do at Troy.

The arming-scene structure of the passage carries important consequences for its experience by the audience. In the *Iliad*, an arming scene is normally followed by a combat scene and sometimes an *aristeia*, as in the case of Diomedes, Achilles, Patroclus, and Agamemnon.[40] The sequence is familiar enough that even relatively unsophisticated audience members would have responded to the narrative trigger. As they heard about Odysseus donning his armor, ancient auditors awaited to hear a combat tale between the hero Odysseus and the sea monster Scylla. Against these expectations, the absence of fighting and the fact that Odysseus cannot even see Scylla in spite of his careful scrutiny of the rock (12.232–33) become even more striking.[41]

The end of the episode not only deviates from but actually reverses the Iliadic combat sequence. I noted above that the angler simile that

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[40] On the sequence of arming scene and *aristeia*, see Mueller 2009, 92–93. On arming and battle scenes, see Edwards 1992, with bibliography.

[41] On the significance of omissions in traditional oral poetry, see Slatkin 1991 and the caveat of Andersen 1998.

describes Scylla catching Odysseus' men challenges the anthropocentric perspective dominating the Cyclops episode. In addition, I now suggest that at least some audience members may have incorporated the simile into the combat sequence. When Patroclus kills Thestor, son of Enops, in *Iliad* 16, he is compared to a man sitting on a jutting rock and dragging with a line and gleaming bronze a sacred fish out of the sea (*Il.* 16.406–8). The Odyssean passage closely resembles the diction of the simile from Patroclus' *aristeia*.[42] ἐπὶ προβόλῳ at *Odyssey* 12.251 parallels πέτρῃ ἔπι προβλῆτι at *Iliad* 16.407. The phrase θύραζε at *Odyssey* 12.254 has a counterpart at *Iliad* 16.408. Although our version of the *Iliad* does not offer another instance of the angler simile in relation to an *aristeia*, it is possible—given the highly traditional content of the *Iliad*—that it was one of the ways in which bards and audiences visualized a warrior dragging the corpse of a victim with his spear. If this is correct, the angler simile in *Odyssey* 12 belongs with and brings to a climax the martial paradigm underlying the passage. Not only does Odysseus fail to fight with Scylla, but the simile constructs her rather than him as a warrior performing his *aristeia*. In other words, Odysseus' eagerness to fight culminates in a parodic duel where the monster, rather than the hero, occupies the triumphant position.

IV. A FAILED COSMOGONIC COMBAT

As if references to the Argo story and the martial combat scene were not enough, the Scylla narrative further highlights Odysseus' helplessness by drawing on a third narrative model, the encounter between hero and monster exemplified in the cosmogonic poetry of the *Theogony*.[43] Monsters and other fantastic elements are rare in Homer, which already makes the Scylla tale stand out and gives it an unusual flavor.[44] In contrast with the rest of the *Odyssey*, as West and others have pointed out, Scylla has much more in common with the monsters of the *Theogony*.[45] First, the structure and diction of Circe's description of Scylla's cave resemble the Hesiodic description of Tartarus, the place where supreme gods rel-

[42] Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989 on *Od.* 12.251–55.

[43] On the mythical motif of the combat tale and its circulation between the Near East and Greece, see esp. Burkert 1979 about Heracles and Geryon, and Mondi 1990.

[44] On the scarcity of fantastic elements in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see Allen 1908 and Griffin 1977.

[45] West 1966 on *Th.* 270–336.

egate their defeated opponents. Circe's description progressively zooms
in from Scylla's rock (σκόπελος, *Od.* 12.73–79), through her cave (σπέος,
12.80–84), and finally to Scylla herself (12.85–100). The transition between
the dwelling and its inhabitant is provided by the adverb ἔνθα ("there")
and the verb ναίω ("to live") through which Scylla is introduced (12.85):

> ἔνθα δ᾽ ἐνὶ Σκύλλη ναίει δεινὸν λελακυῖα.

> In that cavern Scylla lives, whose howling is terror.

While the combination of ἔνθα and ναίω is not attested elsewhere in the
Odyssey, this narrative technique resembles, albeit on a smaller scale,
the elaborate description of Tartarus and its inhabitants in the *Theogony*
(720–819). The catalog of creatures living in Tartarus is punctuated by
phrases combining ἔνθα and a stative verb:

> ἔνθα θεοὶ Τιτῆνες ὑπὸ ζόφῳ ἠερόεντι
> κεκρύφαται

> There the Titan gods are hidden under misty gloom.   (729–30)

> ἔνθα Γύγης Κόττος τε καὶ Ὀβριάρεως μεγάθυμος
> ναίουσιν

> There Gyges and Kottos and great-hearted Obriareos live.   (734–35)

> ἔνθα δὲ Νυκτὸς παῖδες ἐρεμνῆς οἰκί᾽ ἔχουσιν

> And there the children of dark Night have their dwelling.   (758)

> ἔνθα δὲ ναιετάει στυγερὴ θεὸς ἀθανάτοισι

> And there lives the goddess loathed by the immortal gods.   (775)

In terms of narrative technique, the zooming-in from Scylla's dwelling
to Scylla herself parallels the zooming-in from Tartarus to its inhabitants
in the *Theogony*.

In addition, Scylla's cave is endowed with several features reminis-
cent of infernal places in the *Theogony*. Her rock reaches toward both
heaven and Erebus (*Od.* 12.73–74 and 81), just as the silver columns of
Styx's dwelling in Tartarus reach to the sky (*Th.* 778–79 and 789). The
"dark cloud" that enshrouds the top of Scylla's cliff (νεφέλη . . . κυανέη,
Od. 12.74–76) resembles the "dark clouds" that cover the dwelling of

Nyx (νεφέλης . . . κυανέῃσι, *Th.* 745).[46] Finally, the creatures with twenty hands and feet (*Od.* 12.77–78) that Circe imagines in conjunction with the inaccessibility of Scylla's rock call to mind Hesiodic figures like the Hundred-Handers Gyges, Cottus, and Obriareus (*Th.* 147–53).[47] With its doubly vertical orientation, looming clouds, and inaccessibility, Scylla's dwelling belongs with the cosmogonic tradition of infernal places.

The Hesiodic character of Scylla's dwelling foreshadows her own resemblance to cosmogonic monsters. Her hybridity, location in a cave, rapacity, and immortality (ἀθάνατον κακόν, *Od.* 12.118) tie her, for instance, with Echidna, a half-snake, half maiden monster that lives in a cave (σπέος, *Th.* 301), eats raw flesh (ὠμηστήν, 311), and is immortal (ἀθάνατος, 305).[48] Above all, however, the clearest Hesiodic parallel for Scylla is in fact Typhoeus, the ultimate monster and Zeus' most dangerous adversary in the *Theogony*. Both the Hesiodic Typhoeus and the Homeric Scylla are what we may call "monsters by excess," boasting a number of limbs greater than normal. In addition, their descriptions focus on the same body parts. Typhoeus' description in the *Theogony* mentions his hands (823), feet (824), hundred snake heads (825–26), fire-flashing eyes (827–28), and multiple voices (829–35). Similarly, Circe's description of Scylla in the *Odyssey* stresses her voice (*Od.* 12.85–86), twelve feet (12.89), six necks and six heads (12.90–91), each with three rows of teeth (12.91–92). Finally, and most remarkably, one of the many voices emitted by Typhoeus is akin to that of puppies (σκυλάκεσσιν ἐοικότα, *Th.* 834), closely paralleling Circe's characterization of Scylla's voice in similar terms (ὅση σκύλακος νεογιλλῆς, *Od.* 12.86).

Indeed, ancient audiences did pick up on the resemblance between the Homeric Scylla and the Hesiodic Typhoeus. Scylla is Typhon's daughter in the genealogy offered by the second century C.E. Roman mythographer Hyginus (*Fabulae* 125.14). In addition, the V scholium to *Odyssey* 12.85 (whose oldest extant manuscript dates to the end of the tenth century C.E.) endows Scylla with "fiery eyes" (ὀφθαλμοὶ πυροειδεῖς), a detail not mentioned in our extant version of the *Odyssey* but resembling Typhoeus' sparkling eyes in the *Theogony* (ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε . . . πῦρ ἀμάρυσσεν, 826–27). Since the scholium otherwise closely paraphrases the Homeric text, it is possible that "fiery eyes" were mentioned in an *Odyssey* variant now

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[46] West 1966 on *Th.* 744–45.

[47] Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989 on *Od.* 12.85–100.

[48] The resemblance between Echidna and Scylla is further emphasized in later traditions that make Scylla, like Echidna, a half-human hybrid and a daughter of Phorcys (Acus. *FGrH* 2 F42 = sch. on A.R. 4.828).

lost to us but available to the scholiast. Or it could be that the medieval commentator noted the resemblance between Scylla and Typhoeus and added the eye detail to strengthen the parallel. In either case, the detail suggests that an early practitioner of the *Odyssey* approached Scylla's description with the *Theogony* in mind.[49]

While Scylla's Hesiodic coloration adds to her fierceness, her resemblance to primordial monsters in general and to Typhoeus in particular connects her to actors in cosmogonic combats. In Greek myth as well as in most cosmogonic traditions, monsters usually exist to be confronted and defeated by heroes. Marduk defeats Tiamat and her progeny in the Babylonian *Enûma Eliš*. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the catalogue of Phorcys and Ceto's monstrous progeny simultaneously mentions their birth and their defeat—Medusa's defeat by Perseus (280), the Chimaera by Bellerophon (319–25), and Geryon, the Hydra, and the Nemean Lion by Heracles (289–94, 311–18, and 326–32). Typhoeus' generation by the Earth is immediately followed by his battle with and defeat by Zeus (820–68). Similarly, the one reference to Typhoeus in the *Iliad* sets him up as the object of Zeus' wrath and lashing (2.780–85), while the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* presents him as the instrument of Hera's retaliation against Zeus for the birth of Athena (305–55). In archaic epic, Typhoeus is first and foremost the protagonist in a battle against Zeus. Consequently, Scylla's resemblance to him may have encouraged some audience members to approach the episode in *Odyssey* 12 with the Typhonomachy in mind.

The comparison is all the more relevant as Odysseus and Zeus share the same quality of *metis*. Just as *metis* is the distinctive quality of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, it singles out and defines divine rulers in the *Theogony*. It is through *metis* that "crooked-counseled" Cronos (ἀγκυλομήτης, *Th.* 137) castrates his father Ouranos, that Rhea and Zeus overcome Cronos with the "trick" of the stone (μῆτιν, 471), and that Zeus triumphs over Prometheus, albeit somewhat ambiguously, in the "duel of wits" that opposes them at Mecone (613–16).[50] At the end of the *Theogony*, Zeus' swallowing of his first spouse Metis, who is intelligence personified, simultaneously signifies his appropriation of *metis* and his control over the world and puts an end to the cycle of divine struggles. The Zeus of the *Theogony* is characterized by the same intelligence that distinguishes Odysseus in the *Odyssey* and thus offers a suitable point of comparison for the hero.

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[49] For a fifth-century example where Typhoeus serves as paradigm in the description of another monster, see the evocation of Cleon-Cerberus at Ar. *Wasps* 1031–37, with Sommerstein's note.

[50] Detienne and Vernant 1974, 61–124.

As it is described in the *Theogony*, the duel of Zeus and Typhoeus is a variation on the model of the martial dual discussed in the previous section. Zeus' sharp mind (ὀξὺ νόησε, 838) allows him to react quickly enough to prevent Typhoeus from taking over the world. The description of the fighting that follows incorporates the diction and structure typical of epic combat scenes. Zeus "rushes forward" (ὀρνυμένοιο ἄνακτος, 843) as Diomedes does at *Iliad* 4.420–21 and seizes his "weapons" (ὅπλα, *Th.* 853) of thunder, lightning, and thunderbolt. Like the duels in the *Iliad*, the battle involves an exchange of matching blows until the decisive one puts an end to the fighting. Zeus' thunder, lighting, and thunderbolt are met by Typhoeus' fire and wind until Zeus leaps from Olympus and scorches all of Typhoeus' prodigious heads (853–56), thereby confirming his rule over gods and men. By offering a description of Scylla reminiscent of the Hesiodic Typhoeus, Odysseus' narrative constructs the encounter with Scylla as a failed cosmogonic fight and the monster itself as an indestructible version of the Hesiodic monsters.

The use of embedded narratives (or *exempla*) is a well-known feature of Iliadic speakers.[51] Nestor, Phoenix, and Achilles famously tell stories about the Lapiths and Centaurs (*Il.* 1.259–73), Meleager (9.524–99), and Niobe (24.602–17) in order to convince their respective addressees to heed their advice, accept the offer of Agamemnon's embassy, or resume eating. Odysseus uses a related technique in the Scylla narrative of *Odyssey* 12 but deploys it in a manner that is both remarkably subtle and efficient. All three embedded paradigms work toward the same effect: by calling to mind stories of victorious heroic trials, they arouse high expectations among the audience and set into relief Odysseus' inability to defeat the monster. Yet Odysseus introduces them in complex and diverse modes that naturalize his speech and avoid any impression of repetition. He explicitly refers to the Argo story through the voice of the tertiary narrator Circe, implicitly alludes to the type-scene of martial combat through the use of Iliadic diction, and possibly adumbrates the combat between Zeus and Typhon by modeling Scylla on Hesiodic monsters. While the responses of individual audience members would of course have varied, the fact that it is *possible* to analyze many features of *Odyssey* 12 in relation to other epic traditions suggests that those connotations represent a distinctive pattern. By combining various modes of reference to several epic traditions, Odysseus accommodates the diverse backgrounds and levels

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[51] The phenomenon was first discussed by Kakridis 1949. See Alden 2000 for a convenient summary of the research on that topic.

of sophistication of both his internal and external audiences in order to build a fail-safe narrative.[52]

V. A NARRATIVE VICTORY

My suggestion that Odysseus shapes the Scylla tale as a failed trial challenges popular conceptions of heroism. In addition, it runs against a long tradition of hermeneutic and symbolic interpretation that views the *apologoi* as a teleological narrative of progressive enlightenment.[53] Yet it makes perfect sense in light of the stakes set by Odysseus' interaction with the Phaeacians.[54] Like the "Cretan tales" told to Eumaeus and Penelope, the *apologoi* fulfill a pragmatic purpose. After his release by Calypso and shipwreck by Poseidon (5.282–98), Odysseus finds himself alone on the island of Scheria. His return entirely depends on the Phaeacians' willingness to convoy him home (7.151–52 and 222–25, etc.).[55] In addition, since all the booty he brought back from Troy has been lost at sea, he would gladly receive gifts to secure his popularity on Ithaca (11.354–61).

While Odysseus' request for an escort and hope for gifts fall within the normal practice of Homeric hospitality (Reece 1993, 5–46), the question of whether the Phaeacians will comply is fraught with uncertainty (Rose 1969; Reece 1993, 101–21). As he did for the Cyclopes and will do again on Ithaca, Odysseus wonders whether they are "violent and savage, and without justice, or hospitable to strangers" (6.119–21; cf. 9.175–76 and

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[52]The notion of "fail-safe narrative" and the stress on the diversity of Homeric audiences come from Scodel 1997. Odysseus' combination of various traditions and levels of explicitness in mythological references addresses the objection raised by Andersen 1998 that Homeric audiences were probably not as versed in mythological traditions as modern scholars.

[53]Niles 1978 and Scully 1987, among others, have argued that Odysseus' travels read as a spiritual journey in which the hero accesses increasing levels of knowledge and consciousness, in contrast with the static and eventually worsening spiritual state of his companions. Such a reading carries strong reminiscences of ancient allegorical interpretations that viewed the *Odyssey* as a moral journey and, among contemporary writings, of the psychological and teleological reading of the *Odyssey* exemplified by Cavafy's "Ithaca." For a different view, which contrasts Odysseus' active heroism in the *Cyclopeia* to his passivity in the other adventures, see Cook 1999, 162.

[54]On the "argument" function of embedded narratives, i.e., their significance for the internal audience, see Willcock 1964; Austin 1978; Andersen 1987; de Jong 2001, xii. For a discussion of the concept of *ainos* defined as "an allusive speech containing an ulterior purpose," see Nagy 1999, 222–42.

[55]On the centrality of the escort (πομπή) theme in the Phaeacian episode, see Kilb 1973, 34, and Most 1989, 28–29.

13.200–202). Nausicaa and Athena repeatedly warn him that at least some Phaeacians are insolent (ὑπερφίαλοι, 6.274), do not like strangers (7.32), and that the hope to achieve his homecoming depends on his ability to secure Arete's benevolence (6.313–15 and 7.75–77).[56] During his two days of interaction with the Phaeacians, Odysseus needs to convince Alcinous and his people that they should escort him home. His interaction with them is an extensive testing (ἐπειρήσαντ᾽, 8.23) of the guest by his hosts.

The intervention of Athena—who pours grace on Odysseus' shoulder, and makes him taller and thicker, 8.18–23—shows that convincing the Phaeacians partly involves securing their admiration, a process that has been extensively discussed by Rose. Yet establishing his merit is only one side of the coin. As Odysseus sits in Athena's grove waiting for Nausicaa to reach the palace, he prays the goddess to "grant that [he] come, as one loved and pitied, among the Phaeacians" (δός μ᾽ ἐς Φαίηκας φίλον ἐλθεῖν ἠδ᾽ ἐλεεινόν, 6.327). The importance for Odysseus to arouse both admiration and pity is further confirmed by Arete's intervention in the so-called intermezzo of Book 11. As the queen urges the Phaeacians to escort her guest and shower him with presents, she highlights not only his beauty (εἶδος), stature (μέγεθος), and wits (φρένας) but also his need (χρηΐζοντι, 11.336–41).

The contrasting tone of the Cyclops/Scylla pair thus fulfills the delicate balance required of Odysseus' self-presentation to the Phaeacians. While his success against the Cyclops supports his claim to the Pheaecians' attention, his inability to overcome Scylla demonstrates his need for help. Like the other episodes of Book 12, the Scylla tale validates Tiresias' prophecy that Odysseus "will not escape the Shaker of the Earth, who holds a grudge against [him] in his heart" (11.101–3) and thus justifies Odysseus' need of assistance and request to be convoyed to Ithaca.[57]

The Phaeacians are described as perfectly capable to pick on the traditional referentiality of Odysseus' narrative, experience the Cyclops and Scylla as two contrasting tales, and understand the rhetorical implications of Odysseus' storytelling. Alcinous lists feasts, the lyre, and dances among the favorite activities of his people (8.248–49), thus suggesting that they are seasoned auditors of epic poetry. Their resident bard Demodocus performs two songs from the Trojan War cycle, the first of which—the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles (8.73–82)—closely engages the plot of the *Iliad* and thus presupposes familiarity with the larger epic tradition.

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[56] On Euryalus' abuse of and subsequently apology to Odysseus, see Hohendahl-Zoetelief 1980, 3–8.

[57] Bergren 1983.

In addition, the interaction of Odysseus and the Phaeacians offers several examples of embedded stories potentially relevant to their context of performance. Demodocus' song of Ares and Aphrodite, in which the lame but clever Hephaestus gets the better of the good-looking villain Ares, may be heard as a compliment to Odysseus, the weather-beaten hero who has just proved superior to the handsome Euryalus. In addition, the restitution made by Ares to Hephaestus (8.343–58) anticipates Euryalus' apology and gift to Odysseus (8.400–411).[58] The catalogue of heroines in *Odyssey* 11 can be interpreted as a tacit compliment to queen Arete, as is in fact confirmed by the queen's positive reaction in the intermezzo (11.335–41).[59] The Cyclops and Scylla tales thus belong to a larger context where narratives play an important role in the shaping of relationships between speakers and addressees.

In addition to fulfilling an argumentative function in Odysseus' interaction with the Phaeacians, the contrast between the Cyclops and the Scylla episodes may be significant for the external audience's interpretation of the main story as well.[60] As critics have noted, the *apologoi* can be understood as a proleptic commentary on Odysseus' actions on Ithaca. Austin has described the societies encountered by Odysseus in the course of his travels as "paradigms for the restitution of order on Ithaca," while Nagler has called the *apologoi* a "mantic or symbolic reflection" on the here-and-now of Ithaca.[61] Especially convincing is Nagler's idea that the *Odyssey* constructs a parallel between the crew and the suitors, thereby extending the former's responsibility for their death to the latter and thus at least partly exonerating Odysseus from the charge of killing his own people. In that sense, the Scylla episode confirms the proem's point that Odysseus could not save his companions, hard as he tried (12.112–14; cf. 1.6).

Yet character correspondences between the fantastic realm of Odysseus' travels and the world of Ithaca are not univocal. If the suitors share in the crew's recklessness (ἀτασθαλίαι, 1.7 and 34), they also resemble the cannibal monsters of the wanderings. Unchecked and excessive eating is a prime characteristic of the young men competing for Penelope's hand. Staying uninvited in the palace, they gorge on Odysseus' wine, bread, and cattle which they slaughter themselves (1.108). Their constant eating is

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[58] Braswell 1982; Olson 1989; Doherty 1992, 165.

[59] Doherty 1995, 65–86.

[60] On the "key" function of embedded narratives, i.e., their significance for the external audience, see, e.g., sch. on *Il.* 1.366; Dällenbach 1989; Létoublon 1983; de Jong 1985.

[61] Austin 1975, 162; Nagler 1990.

even aligned with a form of cannibalism. The image of the suitors "eating up the substance of a man whose white bones lie out in the rain" (1.160–61) creates a continuity between their banquets and the imagined decomposition of Odysseus' corpse. Elsewhere, Telemachus juxtaposes a reference to the destruction of the household with an image of his own prospective dismemberment (1.251). The suitors not only swallow up Odysseus' wealth but also metaphorically devour the man and his son.

Accordingly, the *Odyssey* draws a parallel between the *Cyclopeia* and Odysseus' revenge upon the suitors. In both cases, Odysseus faces an adversary individually or collectively stronger than him and needs to use guile to defeat them. In both cases, he disguises himself as a "nobody," tests whether the other party honors standard practices of hospitality, suffers repeated outrage, and employs a sneak attack which devolves into a warrior's *aristeia*.[62] In fact, the paradigmatic status of the Cyclops adventure is explicitly mentioned in Book 20: as Odysseus hears the treacherous maids leaving to spend the night with the suitors, he remembers his confrontation against the Cyclops in a self-exhortation to endure and resist the temptation to scold the women (20.18–21). In addition, the mention of *metis* at *Odyssey* 20.20 echoes the punning sequence upon which the escape was built in Book 9.[63] The *Odyssey* thus constructs the *Cyclopeia* as what narratologists call a "seed" for the revenge: an earlier piece of information which makes a later event more natural, logical, or plausible.[64] Conversely, the contrasting Scylla episode may have raised, if only for a moment, the possibility of an un-traditional outcome for the poem—that Odysseus' cunning be not enough to triumph over the suitors, and that the hero be defeated by an enemy collectively stronger than he.[65] For external audiences familiar with the plot of Odysseus' return, the Scylla episode thus constitutes an instance of what Morson has called "sideshadowing": the evocation of a potential that will not be actualized

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[62] Schröter 1950, 121–36; Müller 1966, 136–44; Cook 1999, 165.

[63] Russo, Fernandez-Galliano et al. 1992 on *Od.* 20.20. It is worth noting that as the revenge proceeds in Books 21 and 22, the character correspondences between the *Cyclopeia* and the main story start shifting. As Odysseus traps the suitors inside the great hall of the palace, positions himself on the threshold (22.2), offers death as a guest-gift (22.285–91; cf. 9.369–70), and indiscriminately kills the suitors without listening to Leodes' supplication (22.310–19), he increasingly takes on Cyclops-like features. The Cyclops paradigm makes the revenge more plausible but also underscores its moral ambiguity.

[64] Genette 1972, 112–15; Bal 1985, 65; de Jong 2001, xvii–xviii.

[65] For a similar idea that the House of Atreus story does not simply work as a foil for the *Odyssey* plot but rather highlights the uncertainty of its conclusion, see Katz 1991, 3–19.

but allows listeners to glimpse at the haze of narrative possibilities and resist the determination fostered by foreshadowing techniques.[66]

In Book 19, Penelope's distinction between true and deceptive dreams questions the possibility of taking her night vision of an eagle killing off geese as a portent, i.e., of using a bird story to make sense of forthcoming events (19.560–67). The Scylla tale of Book 12 epitomizes the complex hermeneutic process whereby internal and external audiences experience and interpret stories through the lens of other stories. Within the episode, Odysseus' failure to defeat the monster is underscored through explicit or implicit contrasts with the Argo saga, the Iliadic dual type scene, the plot of cosmogonic combats, and Odysseus' own success over the Cyclops. In the larger context of the *Odyssey* as a whole, the Scylla tale fulfills both an argumentative and an interpretive function: while stressing to the Phaeacian audience that Odysseus needs their help, it offers a counterpoint to the audience's pre-existing knowledge that Odysseus will overcome the suitors. The *Odyssey*'s manipulation of narrative paradigms makes its reception as rich, complex, and many-sided as its versatile hero.[67]

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[66] Morson 1994.

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