

NAVIGATING THE ODYSSEY: EXPLORING PLACE AND CHARACTER IN
HOMERIC EPIC

By

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Classics and the Division of Graduate Studies of the
University of Oregon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts

June 2022

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Title: Navigating the Odyssey: Exploring Place and Character in Homeric Epic

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Degree awarded June 2022

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Master of Arts

Department of Classics

June 2022

Title: Navigating the *Odyssey*: Exploring Place and Character in Homeric Epic

Homer's *Odyssey* is a tale about many things: adventures, the importance of hospitality, returning home. However, it is ultimately a tale about place and all the ways in which it defines its inhabitants. Through the travels of Odysseus, we see how the entities Odysseus encounters and even himself are defined by their environments, resulting in each of their unique values, customs, and lifestyles. What we also see is how each of these lands and characters exist in contrast to the Greek world as exemplified by Ithaca, and in doing so, provide a map for the Greek imagination to explore its various fears and anxieties regarding the unknown beyond the Greek world. In this thesis, I shall endeavor to analyze how place creates identity, for Odysseus, as a Greek, as well as for the foreigner.

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Homeric literature

Women in antiquity

Epic poetry

Sexuality in antiquity

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Mary Jaeger and Dr. Christopher Eckerman for all their assistance and guidance during the writing of this thesis, and whose recommendations for resources provided me with valuable insight, knowledge, and even greater appreciation for the field of Classics than I had before. In addition, I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to my parents, Mark and Barbara Van De Laarschot, without whom I am not sure I would have been able to continue my education. Having them by my side throughout my cancer diagnosis and treatment in 2021, with their unceasing care and support, made it possible for me to continue my studies. Without them I would not be presenting this thesis in June of 2022 as I am now.

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I: INTRODUCTION

Homer's *Odyssey* is one of the most famous tales in Greek oral tradition, known for its great adventures and its clever protagonist, Odysseus. What is equally of note, however, are the many places which Odysseus visits throughout the course of his journey, all in the pursuit of returning home. Along his voyage, Odysseus travels to many strange and foreign lands, has dangerous encounters with the local inhabitants, and obtains heroic glory for himself before finally retaking his home from suitors in Ithaca. Yet the places found within the poem are more than just set pieces for Odysseus to display his cleverness and heroism. They are places purposely constructed by the poem to encapsulate the themes and characters of their inhabitants. When pushed further through close examination of the text and analysis of literary geography, however, place soon begins to shape the concepts which gave rise to fear and anxiety in the mind of the Greeks in the form of the entities which inhabit them.

I have chosen four specific locations to analyze in-depth. Firstly, I will discuss the point of departure and destination-point of Odysseus' travels, Ithaca, which provides a control to offset the tumultuous chaos of the external world and is a symbolic key to his personal identity. In this chapter, I will outline the ways in which Odysseus establishes his connection to Ithaca by his personal connection to the land, through his familial relationships. In this way, it will become evident that the landscape itself, particularly trees, physically and symbolically root Odysseus and his identity in the land of Ithaca. I will also be detailing how dogs, such as Argos, play a role both in recognizing and in communicating the character of their home and masters. Then, Ithaca as a whole will be juxtaposed against the world travelled by Odysseus, the latter of which is representative

of the unknown world, in order to truly show Ithaca's importance as the home realm and end to the story.

Then the itinerary takes us to the island of Circe's Aeaea, then on a direct route to Calypso's solitary Ogygia. Chapter 2 will explore the otherworldly paradisiacal lands which contain two powerful female figures within the *Odyssey*, as well as the implications of their authority in their respective lands. The wild, at times overgrown, and luxuriant islands upon which they live display the environment that the Greek imagination would have thought necessary to facilitate female power by virtue of its denial of the urban *polis*. This in tandem with the emphasis on the domestic sphere through the singing and weaving of Circe and Calypso illustrates scenes of what women in power would look like. What also becomes clear in Homer's portrayal of female authority on Aeaea and Ogygia is the fear that women in positions of authority over men will result in warped gender and sexual dynamics. My intent with this chapter is to show that what allows women such power in the *Odyssey* are two things: existing in a state of nature in opposition to the masculine public sphere of the city and complete and utter isolation bereft of the company of men.

Finally, our travels will take us to the dangerous and exciting unnamed land of the Cyclopes, who will be shown to embody every Greek stereotype of the barbarous foreigner. The first order of business upon arrival will be to examine Odysseus' characterization of the island by means of the key elements of civilized society that it lacks as well as the potential it possesses to become a city through its rich nature. I will also be examining how aspects of Polyphemus' rustic lifestyle, such as his living with his animals inside his cave and his dairy-based diet, contribute to his and the other Cyclopes' state of lawlessness and godlessness. Everything about the Cyclopes, from their absence

of agriculture, to their pastoral lifestyles and close relationships with their animals, and their diet which excludes meat and thus gives them no reason to perform divine sacrifices, culminates in the denial of hospitality to Odysseus and his men. The land of the Cyclopes provides the very basis for why they are completely and utterly the cultural opposite to the Greeks, and by portraying them as such, Homer defines everything the Greeks are by holding the Cyclopes as an example of everything they are not.

The *Odyssey* and its many characters are deeply enmeshed with place and geography. The lands in which they make their homes, or are simply born, define them not only on the individual level like Odysseus, whose many roots in Ithaca solidify his place socially and politically, but also on the widescale cultural level much like the Cyclopes. All are defined by what is or is not given to them by the circumstances of their environment, and often must make use of those circumstances to their advantage in terms of survival, garnering one's own position of power, or claiming their identity. Place is not just a setting but a backstory and active motivation for the characters to act as they do. Odysseus must be recognized by his family in order to settle himself back into the soil of his homeland because he is of Ithaca. He must practice the customs of hospitality, espouse the values of agriculture and civilization, and restore the balance of gender relations with Circe, because he is Greek, and the Greek world shapes his perspective. We often say that people are products of their environment, and nowhere is that clearer than in the travels and return of Odysseus.

The analysis for this paper will be approached in the following manner: through geography and literary analysis. For each chapter, I will present select passages which I feel represent key connections between the land and its inhabitants. These key aspects define each respective place and culture and focus on aspects of the landscape as a basis

for analysis. In chapter one, I will define the importance of Ithaca as a “Place” in relation to Odysseus using the work of geographer Yi-Fu Tuan. Place, in this instance, is not simply meant to convey a location but rather to represent space made culturally meaningful. Tuan defines place as follows: “an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present, place is permanent and hence reassuring to man, who sees frailty in himself and change and flux everywhere”.

In so doing, the importance of place with regard to Ithaca will be established, specifically through the following; trees as symbolic to his connection with the land and his family, dogs who recognize and reflect the state of the home he must set right, and how all this sets up Ithaca as representative of home to the Greeks. To examine the Greek fears surrounding the relationship between women and power, I will be limiting my analysis of women and geography to Circe and Calypso. This selection is due to the similar circumstances in which the two powerful women are found, alone and surrounded by nature and what they communicate about power, gender, and female sexuality. Finally, for the land of the Cyclopes, we have an example of a definition of the Greeks by displaying a clear antithesis to their culture in Polyphemus. As such, their section will be defined by comparison and contrast, especially in what can be considered the “pros and cons” of their island’s landscape. In addition to these comparisons, I will also be examining how even Polyphemus’ pastoral lifestyle, diet, and refusal of hospitality contribute to the state of godlessness and apathy present among the Cyclopes. Such is how the landscape and culture will come together to form a cohesive picture of the people and how the Greeks perceived foreign peoples in the poem of Homer’s *Odyssey*.

The decision to approach this topic of *Odyssey* and place stems from the subject of cultural geography and essays of the following authors. Denis Cosgrove’s essay on the

relationship between culture and symbolism in landscapes highlights a shift in perspective in studying geography, and the potential to better understand landscape via humanistic approaches (1989). The goal of geography is often a practical, utilitarian result of objectivity, yet when cultural elements are ignored, much of the meaning can be lost. When we see the locations of the *Odyssey* as merely strange places, only stages for the adventure, we fail to see all the meanings imbued within the landscape itself. When cultural elements of the Greeks are included in our analysis of place within the *Odyssey*, we can draw a much richer and detailed picture of the themes explored in the poem.

Tim Cresswell emphasizes that place is the transformation of space; made as much through construction as it is through what we as humans do to make it significant to either ourselves or others (2013). Space is abstract but when humans attach meaning to it, it becomes a place, something with identity and unique qualities that make it its own entity. In this way, a place itself can become a character acting in tandem with the actual characters that visit or inhabit it. In the case of the *Odyssey*, Ithaca bursts with meaning and importance because Odysseus assigns personal value to it. This value becomes evident in the memories which are revealed through his family and the tests of identity presented by them. The landscape, especially the trees, becomes meaningful because Odysseus has attached aspects of his life and identity to it. Therefore, the space of Ithaca transitions from the abstract to the concrete.

Yi-Fu Tuan focuses on the aspect of language's impact on creating a sense of place using an approach of narrative-descriptive, which plays into the *Odyssey* and the shaping of place through storytelling (1991). Whether through discussing building plans, filling a place with the conversation of friends, or leaving a bad review of a store, words have the power to create, maintain, and diminish a place in the abstract. Language

provides a human stamp on locations to make them places. In this way, the story as performed by the poet shapes the imaginative landscapes of the *Odyssey*, and it is through the words of the poem that places are given distinguishing features. These features then define the character of both the place and the people living in it, which then causes the audience to maintain these places through memory of the story in which they appear.

John Wylie addresses the contentions of landscape, described as a process of continuous interaction in which both nature and culture shape each other (2007). In much the same way, cultural geographers both influence and are influenced by other disciplines in studying place. Landscape and characters in the *Odyssey* function in a similar manner. However, in some cases, like the Cyclopes, one is left with an ambiguous situation of which was influenced first; the landscape or the people. Either way, the relationship between people and landscape is deeply intertwined. We see in the *Odyssey* that such interaction communicates a distinctive connection between where one lives with one's personality and identity. These four essays show that geography is as much about examining sociocultural impact as it is about studying a location itself, for they contribute to the presence and memory of place. In order to properly study place, we must also observe culture and its many layers. Such is how I will be using geography as a basis for my work on the *Odyssey*.

In addition to the works of geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, I will also be including the cultural geographical work of Anthony T. Edwards on the ethics of Homeric geography with respect to the importance of place and Homeric values (1996, 1997)(1993). In tandem with Gert van Wijngaarden, I will address how specifically these aspects of place and geography pertain to Ithaca and how they each play a part in defining Odysseus' identity (2012).

Throughout this thesis, I will also be utilizing the commentaries of Irene J.F. de Jong (2001), Alfred Heubeck and Arie Hoekstra (1989), and Suzanne Said (2011) for literary analysis of specific passages. The Greek passages seen in this thesis were obtained from Augustus T. Murray's translation of the *Odyssey* as found on the Perseus Digital Library (1919). Anne Bergren adds the layer of gender in relation to Penelope and the bed (1993). Meanwhile, Carol Dougherty's book *The Raft of Odysseus* will also be a valuable resource in its analysis of the *Odyssey* through the lens of colonialism, providing depth into the political implications of Odysseus' tests of identity (2001). William Beck's work on dogs provides a basis for analysis in their role of recognition and how they hold up a mirror to the master's estate. Tuan, then, presents the theory of hearths and home realms which drive home the importance of Ithaca as a place in relation to Odysseus' sense of self (1996). The home realm of Ithaca for Odysseus then becomes emblematic of the home realm of the Mediterranean for the Greeks as a whole.

Then for chapter two, I will primarily be utilizing the works of Sue Blundell and Mary Lefkowitz in examining how place, gender, and power are connected through Circe and Calypso. Blundell examines ancient Greek women as a whole within both culture and literature and defines the criteria necessary for women to possess power and independence (1995). Lefkowitz specifically looks at women within Greek myth, focusing on the implications of Greek thought surrounding women through the behavior of their mythological counterparts (1990). Lilah Grace Canevaro examines the agency of women expressed within Homeric epic, which plays a critical role in understanding the power granted to Circe and Calypso as female characters (2018). Joel Christensen provides insight into how Odysseus is affected psychologically by these women (2020). Christensen's characterization of Odysseus' misery as learned helplessness I take to be a

result of a perversion of gender and sexual dynamics as understood by the Greeks, and thus Odysseus.

Then, to examine the Cyclopes in chapter three, Egbert J. Bakker's research on meat in the context of the *Odyssey* provides a thorough observation of the various ways the lifestyle and diet of Polyphemus contribute to and determine his behavior in Book 9 (2013). Barbara Clayton adds to this conversation with her deductions on milk consumption in the Greek perspective (2011). Catherine Tracy also provides insight into Homeric hospitality and, using the example of Telemachus and Nestor, how it should operate in contrast to what is observed with Polyphemus (2014). Erwin F. Cook's book, *The Odyssey in Athens*, focuses on the polarity of force vs intelligence, a theme evident in Odysseus' dealings with Polyphemus (1995). This theme appears both in the wider conflict with Polyphemus and in the differences in lifestyle between the Greeks and the Cyclopes. Force, as argued by Cook, is evident as lack of civilization through absence of key component of Greek society.

II: ODYSSEUS, ITHACA, AND IDENTITY

Troy, as the poem says, operates as the point of departure, or at least a very important one, which must be acknowledged. In fact, it is when Odysseus is leaving Troy that his troubles begin and he is driven off-course (ὄς μάλα πολλὰπλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πολίεθρον ἔπερσεν) (1.1-2). However, it is Ithaca that is the final destination of the *Odyssey*, always existing as Odysseus' seemingly impossible goal even as all manner of forces seek to keep him from it. Yet the island of Ithaca is not just the home of Odysseus. Ithaca is a vital component of his identity, a signifier of his own geographical and cultural place in the world. In essence, Ithaca and Odysseus are deeply intertwined with each other, so much so that Odysseus' relationship to the land shapes his identity and place in the world. By extension, Odysseus also embodies the relationship Greeks of the time would have had with their own cities and lands, with their identities being defined by their social and physical ties to the land.

Odysseus and his connections to Ithaca as a place are critical to understanding the story. Odysseus' identity is firmly rooted within the land, people, and even animals of the island who wait to recognize their rightful king, master, son, and husband. The various tests posed by the members of his family, from his son to his dog, show Odysseus' connection to his appropriate place in society not only through his personal relationships but also through his knowledge of the land itself, specifically the trees, which are as firmly planted in the soil as he is himself. Ithaca as a place abundant in connections is set up as a hearth in contrast to the dangerous unknown sea on which Odysseus travels. The hearth, in this case, is not a tangible physical hearth, but rather is metaphorical in that it represents the sphere of the known and familiar that is one's own home. This "hearth" is not limited merely to one's own house but extends to one's land and even one's culture,

so long as it falls into what is known to the individual. While venturing into the unknown offers the opportunity to amass wealth and fame, and the chance to create new hearths, it is the familiarity and connections to his own identity contained within Ithaca that call Odysseus back home to his original hearth. His return to his island also marks a stabilization in the transition of power from Laertes to Odysseus and a return to order with the annihilation of the suitors and his reaffirmation of his marriage to Penelope, all of which solidify his position in his own home by reestablishing his rootedness in the island. From the dirt to the land, Ithaca is more than simply a destination or setting. It is a place rich in personal meaning for the story's main character, exemplifying the importance of one's home in the imagination of the ancient Greeks.

In this chapter, I will explore and analyze the ways in which Ithaca defines the identity of Odysseus. In analyzing his connections to the land of Ithaca through familial connections and social ties, as evidenced by the multiple tests of identity following his return, we observe Odysseus going back to his roots. Each root, from his family line to his marriage to Penelope, is exemplified through the land itself, namely, through the trees Odysseus inherited from Laertes and the olive from which he crafted his marriage bed. In this manner, Odysseus is physically and metaphorically rooted in Ithaca, all the while passing through thresholds of recognition, at all levels, down to the dogs he encounters before finally entering the palace. These dogs act as both creatures of recognition and as a reflection upon their homes and masters, as will be shown by the Argos episode. Together all these roots form the core of Odysseus' identity as king, husband, and ultimately a Greek, as it becomes evident that Ithaca also operates as a microcosm for the Greek world set against the great unknown. Thus, in returning to Ithaca and establishing

his identity by means of his connection to the land, Odysseus represents the Greek traveler returning home from his journeys in the great unknown.

Branching off the Family Trees

Firstly, let us define the ways in which Ithaca as a place, a geographical location, and ultimate goal of the epic's hero, defines Odysseus and exists as the center of his own identity within the Greek world. Multiple times throughout the poem, such as when Odysseus sails away from the blinded Cyclops, he declares his patronymic and that he lives in Ithaca (υἰὸν Λαέρτης, Ἰθάκῃ ἐνὶ οἰκίᾳ ἔχοντα) (9.505). When stating that it is himself, Odysseus, that has achieved a heroic feat, he must also state whose son he is and where he is from, showing they are key components of how he self-identifies. Yet, even as Odysseus returns to his homeland in the last half of the *Odyssey*, his sorrows and labors are not yet over, even if his physical journey is. For in order to root out the suitors who have squatted in his home for the past several years, he must establish his identity, and in order to do so he must undergo various tests of reaffirming his identity. In this process, the various members of his house who yet remain faithful to him recognize him as their long-awaited king, father, son, and husband through displaying signs and presenting information about Odysseus that only his close relations would know. Seeds of his identity are scattered throughout Ithaca, often in the possession of his relations. Through his family on Ithaca, Odysseus is able to prove that he is in fact himself and that he has returned from his long journey. Thus, by means of his personal relationships and the secret knowledge cultivated within them, Odysseus is able to reclaim both his throne and his very identity. In this way, the *Odyssey* depicts the traveler undergoing a reassertion of his identity in relation to his homeland.

Just as Homer illustrates an identity for Ithaca using his storytelling, so does Ithaca define the identity of Odysseus in various ways. For one, it is the place of Odysseus' birth. He is native to the island, the son of another Ithacan-born man before him, Laertes. There is a generational familiarity to the land, which changes hands from father to son with each generation. From this familial connection, Odysseus is also granted his position within the social hierarchy as royalty, having become King of Ithaca even before the events of the *Iliad*. Lineage, or γένος, is a significant aspect of personal identity, attested to by the many instances of mythical kings tracing their bloodlines back to gods and heroes. The heroes of Homer are no different, “for in general Homer regards γένος as the very vehicle of the ethical and physical excellence of the ἄριστοι” (Edwards 1993, 43). The γένος of Odysseus ties him and his family to the throne of Ithaca, justifying his position as king and protecting his son Telemachus amidst the scheming of Penelope's suitors in his absence.

ἐκ τοσσῶνδ' ἀέκητι νέος πάις οἴχεται αὐτως 665
 νῆα ἐρυσσάμενος, κρίνας τ' ἀνὰ δῆμον ἀρίστους.
 ἄρξει καὶ προτέρω κακὸν ἔμμεναι· ἀλλὰ οἱ αὐτῷ
 Ζεὺς ὀλέσειε βίην, πρὶν ἥβης μέτρον ἰκέσθαι.
 ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι δότε νῆα θοὴν καὶ εἵκοσ' ἐταίρους,
 ὄφρα μιν αὐτὸν ἰόντα λοχῆσομαι ἠδὲ φυλάξω 670
 ἐν πορθμῷ Ἰθάκης τε Σάμοιό τε παιπαλοέσσης,
 ὡς ἂν ἐπισμυγερῶς ναυτίλλεται εἵνεκα πατρός .

Against our will the young lad, having taken a ship leaves as he pleases, having chosen the best men in the land. He will now also begin to be trouble in the future but may Zeus destroy his own might before he comes to the measure of adulthood. But come, give me a swift ship and twenty companions, so that I might watch in order to ambush him going into the strait between Ithaca and rugged Samos. So that he will sail to his misfortune on account of his father (tr. Van De Laarschot, 4.665-72).

In this passage, the audience becomes privy to the scheming of the suitors leeching off the luxury of Odysseus' home in his absence. Here they set out a plan on how to ensure that Odysseus' son Telemachus does not reach adulthood and, in doing so, claim the birthright of his γένος and use it to usher the suitors out of his home. To accomplish their goal, they decide to lie in ambush in order to intercept Telemachus in the strait between Ithaca and Samos (ἐν πορθμῶ Ἰθάκης τε Σάμοιό τε παιπαλοέσσης) on his return by sea to Ithaca (671). With the advice and intervention of Athena, however, Telemachus returns by another route and evades the suitors' ambush. In this capacity, the suitors attempt to take advantage of the landscape in order to put an end to Odysseus' γένος with a surprise attack, λοχήσομαι (671). However, they fail as Telemachus uses his own knowledge of the landscape to land in Ithaca elsewhere and avoid their attack in Book 15.495-500, perhaps hinting at Telemachus' own budding relationship to the land as Odysseus' son. Telemachus is also aided by the advice of Athena throughout his search for news of Odysseus, establishing yet another link between father and son in how both are now favored by the goddess of wisdom.

While Telemachus' γένος may not protect him entirely from the suitors' attempts upon his life, Telemachus' right to the throne through his father Odysseus and his right to rule as being the son of Laertes prevents them from doing so openly. They instead must attempt to scheme secretly lest they be caught murdering the heir to Ithaca's throne. Descent and lineage mark Odysseus and his family as the elites of Ithaca's social hierarchy, and as such Odysseus' social status within Ithaca becomes an integral part of his own identity, an indicator that he and his descendants are rightly entitled to the kingship.

Trees and Rootedness

Laertes, as the father of Odysseus and king of Ithaca, is not only the final member to whom Odysseus must prove his identity but also the first person to provide Odysseus with a connection to Ithaca through his birth. Due to his own position as king, he grants Odysseus the same identity later in his own life, a position within society Odysseus holds both prior to and during the *Odyssey* despite his twenty-year absence from Ithaca. The position of king within the social hierarchy of Ithaca is a political tether to the island which defines his place in larger Greek society. By virtue of the inherited position granted to him by his father (υἰὸν Λαέρτης), Odysseus represents Ithaca on the larger political stage of the Greek world. It is only in Ithaca where he has the privilege to rule by virtue of ancestral inheritance. It is also through identifying and taking account of the land included within his inheritance of the kingship that Odysseus proves his identity to his father, reasserting himself as Laertes' son and completing his re-inheriting of Ithaca's kingship.

When Odysseus finally goes to see his father after twenty years abroad in the final book of the *Odyssey*, he finds Laertes an old man, tending to his land alone and separate from the politics of the palace and the polis of Ithaca. An elderly king is far removed from the center of politics, and the center of tumult that has been the house of Odysseus, a retired monarch who has found himself in position of holding the kingship he had once already given away to his son. With the confirmation of the disguised Odysseus' identity, Laertes for a second time bequeaths his title and rights to the land of Ithaca to the island's rightful heir. Odysseus proves his identity by identifying and taking stock of all the different trees in the orchard, which Laertes planted for him when he was a child. These are included in the assets contained within the transfer of power.

εἰ δ' ἄγε τοι καὶ δένδρε' εὐκτιμένην κατ' ἄλωϊν
 εἶπω, ἃ μοί ποτ' ἔδωκας, ἐγὼ δ' ἤτεόν σε ἕκαστα
 παιδὸν ἐών, κατὰ κήπον ἐπισπόμενος· διὰ δ' αὐτῶν
 ἰκνεύμεσθα, σὺ δ' ὠνόμασας καὶ ἔειπες ἕκαστα.
 ὄγχνας μοι δῶκας τρισκαίδεκα καὶ δέκα μηλέας,
 συκέας τεσσαράκοντ'· ὄρχους δέ μοι ὦδ' ὀνόμηνας
 δώσειν πενήκοντα, διατρύγιος δὲ ἕκαστος
 ἦην—ἐνθα δ' ἀνὰ σταφυλαὶ παντοῖαι ἔασιν—
 ὁπότε δὴ Διὸς ὄραι ἐπιβρίσειαν ὑπερθεῖν.

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Come, I will tell you also the trees in the well-ordered garden, which you once gave to me, and when I was a child following you in that garden begging you for each and every thing, you gave me thirteen pear trees and ten apple trees, and forty fig trees. And you promised to give me the following fifty rows of vines, and each one bore grapes one after another--there were all sorts of clusters--whenever the seasons of Zeus would fall from above. (tr. Van De Laarschot, 24. 336-44).

Here, Odysseus recalls the childhood memory of how Laertes used to tell him of the trees and plants that he would one day receive. In hearkening back to childhood and recalling the father and son relationship, the audience is allowed into a scene of close familiarity. Part of the intimacy of Odysseus' knowledge of the orchard comes with his specific numbering of the trees and their variety, (ὄγχνας...τρискаίδεκα καὶ δέκα μηλέας, συκέας τεσσαράκοντ'), "thirteen pear trees and ten apple trees, forty fig trees". He then makes note of the fifty rows of vines "ὄρχους... πενήκοντα" (341-42). The specificity of these numbers in addition to them being detailed in the context of a childhood memory gives credence to Odysseus' account and confirms that he is indeed telling the truth. The use of ἤτεον (337), ὠνόμασας (339), and ἔειπες (339), words for giving information, intertwine with the giving of the trees, emphasizing the sharing of something secret and private.

The disclosure of this information serves multiple purposes. Primarily, it reveals that the stranger who has come to visit Laertes is in fact his own long-lost son. Odysseus' recollection of the orchard and its trees is a reminder of the history between father and son, an example of their familial relationship but also a reminder of the property that is included in his inheritance. Carol Dougherty writes, "Odysseus itemizes the family's holdings, emphasizing the peaceful nature of this transfer of power by his reiteration of the verb 'to give' (δῶκαζ; δῶσειν)" (2001, 170). Having passed this final test of identity, Odysseus officially completes the process of re-establishing himself as king: he has reclaimed his house, his queen, and now land and title officially from the previous king. He and his identity regain their place not just physically or emotionally but also politically.

In addition to Odysseus' recognition on Ithaca solidifying his place politically in the Greek world, the island also defines him through his personal social relationships at home. While separated from him for most of the poem, Odysseus' family provides a reason for him to return (in order to prevent Penelope from marrying another man and preserve his own son's γένος) and another root that binds him to Ithaca. In addition to their purpose within the narrative as a personal motivation for Odysseus, his family is also an emotional tie. This is best exemplified in the character of Penelope, whose cunning is equal to that of Odysseus and which she uses to verify his identity as her husband.

εἰ δ' ἔτεδον δῆ
ἔστ' Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ οἶκον ἰκάνεται, ἧ μάλα νῶι
γνωσόμεθ' ἀλλήλων καὶ λῶιον· ἔστι γὰρ ἡμῖν
σήμαθ', ἃ δῆ καὶ νῶι κεκρυμμένα ἴδμεν ἀπ' ἄλλων.

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But if he truly is Odysseus and he has come home we shall surely know each other very well and better. For there are signs for us, which only we know, hidden from others (tr. Van De Laarschot, 23.107-10).

In this exchange, Penelope hints at the secret signs, *σήματα*, known only to herself and Odysseus as husband and wife. The intimate nature of these signs is the result of their personal relationship. The foreshadowed marriage bed can be known only to those allowed access to the couple's chamber. Only its two occupants may know of its particular nature.

Even as Penelope tests Odysseus, he accepts her challenge with amusement, “recognizing in these words [that she is] to test his knowledge of the secret signs” (Bergren 1993, 17). The knowledge of these secret signs, the bed rooted in the earth like the grove of Laertes, is exclusive to Odysseus and trusted members of his household. These seeds of identity are guarded jealously by his family members, each one providing a root which secures Odysseus' identity within both the political and social sphere of Ithaca. Nowhere is this rootedness through the secret signs shared between family, particularly spouses, more evident than in the test Penelope uses to discern that the man who killed her monstrous suitors is in fact her husband.

“δαιμόνι’, οὐτ’ ἄρ τι μεγαλίζομαι οὐτ’ ἀθερίζω
οὔτε λίην ἄγαμαι, μάλα δ’ εὖ οἶδ’ οἶος ἔησθα
ἐξ Ἰθάκης ἐπὶ νηὸς ἰὼν δολιχηρέτμοιο.

ἀλλ’ ἄγε οἱ στόρεσον πυκινὸν λέχος, Εὐρύκλεια,
ἐκτὸς εὖσταθέος θαλάμου, τὸν ῥ’ αὐτὸς ἐποίηι
ἔνθα οἱ ἐκθεῖσαι πυκινὸν λέχος ἐμβάλετ’ εὐνήν,
κώεα καὶ χλαίνας καὶ ῥήγεα σιγαλόεντα.”

ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη πόσιος πειρωμένη·

“God-like man, I am neither proud in any way nor do I slight you, nor do I marvel in excess, and I know very well how you appeared departing from Ithaca upon a long-oared ship. But come spread the stout bed for him, Eurycleia, outside the well-built bridal-chamber, which he built himself. There set out the stout bed for him, throwing bedding upon it, fleeces and cloaks and shining blankets.” So she spoke, testing her husband. (tr. Van De Laarschot, 23.174-81).

What is notable about Penelope’s test is that it is delivered through the weaving of a lie. Instead of outright demanding that the man standing before her and claiming to be her husband prove he is indeed Odysseus, she teases out of him an instant emotional reaction. She bids Eurycleia to move the bed outside the bedroom, (ἀλλ’ ἄγε οἱ στόρεσον πυκινὸν λέχος) (177), a fact that only she, Odysseus, and one servant would know to be impossible, since the bed is literally rooted to the spot. The only way to move it is to cut it from the tree from which it is made.

Odysseus responds to this statement of Penelope with anger, asking her who has moved their bed and stating that it cannot be moved since it was built from the trunk of an olive tree. He then goes into great detail about the construction of the bed as well as the bedchamber which he shares with Penelope.

τὸ δ' ἐγὼ κάμον οὐδέ τις ἄλλος.

θάμνος ἔφν τανύφυλλος ἐλαίης ἔρκεος ἐντός, 190

ἀκμηνὸς θαλέθων· πάχετος δ' ἦν ἡύτε κίων.

τῷ δ' ἐγὼ ἀμφιβαλὼν θάλαμον δέμον, ὄφρ' ἐτέλεσσα,

πυκνηῖσιν λιθάδεσσι, καὶ εὔ καθύπερθεν ἔρεψα,

κολλητὰς δ' ἐπέθηκα θύρας, πυκινῶς ἀραρυίας.

καὶ τότε ἔπειτ' ἀπέκοψα κόμην τανυφύλλου ἐλαίης, 195

κορμὸν δ' ἐκ ρίζης προταμὼν ἀμφέξεσα χαλκῷ

εἶ καὶ ἐπισταμένως, καὶ ἐπὶ στάθμην ἴθυνα,
ἐρμῖν' ἀσκήσας, τέτρηνα δὲ πάντα τερέτρῳ.
ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ἀρχόμενος λέχος ἔξεον, ὄφρ' ἐτέλεσσα,
δαιδάλλων χρυσῷ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἠδ' ἐλέφαντι· 200
ἐκ δ' ἐτάνυσσα ἱμάντα βοὸς φοίνικι φαεινόν.
οὕτω τοι τόδε σῆμα πιφαύσκομαι·

I built the work and no one else. A long-leafed bush of olivewood grew from within the courtyard, full-grown and blooming. It was thick like a pillar. Around this I built the bridal-chamber, until I had finished it with closely set stones, and I roofed it over well, and I installed jointed doors, closely fitting. And thereafter, I cut off a leafy branch from the olive tree, having trimmed the branch from the root, I smoothed it well with a copper tool and cleverly, and I straightened it onto the line. Having fashioned the bedpost, I bored it all with an auger. Beginning from this I made smooth the bed, until I had finished, embellishing it with gold and silver and ivory, stretching alongside it a throng of ox-hide dyed purple. (tr. Van De Laarschot, 23.189-202).

Odysseus' description contains distinct details of the bed's construction, including each and every step of the process. He explains how he built the bedroom itself around the tree from which the bed was made, thus making it the center and focus of the construction of the bridal chamber. The passage also shows Odysseus' expertise as a craftsman, a trait he exhibits several times. He creates tools and weapons such as the spike which blinds the cyclops Polyphemus and the raft to leave the island of Calypso. In recalling how he built the bed and bridal chamber, he, in turn, outlines the manufacturing of his marriage to Penelope. Not only does his recollection of making the bed show his knowledge of the *σήματα* between him and his wife, but also the skill and technique required to create it. Odysseus' skill as a carpenter is unique and, as shown here, is yet another aspect of his identity.

In her momentary deception, Penelope is able to confirm that not only does he have the intimate knowledge that could only be possessed by her husband, but that he also displays the proper emotional attachment Odysseus should have to the memory. His reaction to Penelope's riddle bears the same emotional weight as that of his reunion with Laertes. When Laertes weeps to hear the supposed stranger's recount of his son, Odysseus leaps up and embraces him, assuring Laertes that he has in fact returned. Emotionality is intertwined with recognition and reunion and it brings closure to the long years of absence.

By providing his knowledge of how he constructed the marriage bed, Odysseus confirms his identity to his wife, as well as his position within Ithacan society, much as in his interaction with Laertes. Where Odysseus' recounting of the orchard symbolizes the reclaiming of his identity through proving his right to inheritance, the test of the bed shows the reclamation of identity through the validation of his marriage to Penelope (Bergren 1993, 17). Like the bed, Penelope's role in the *Odyssey* is stationary. While she may move up and down within the house, she never leaves it. Both she and the bed are permanent, fixed features of the home. In leaving the home, Penelope would ensure the destruction of the house as Odysseus' house, and instead leave it vulnerable to the suitors. They are both integral to it, given value on Ithaca by means of Odysseus' marriage; the bed was fashioned by him for its purpose. Through this "re-marriage" Odysseus returns to power, his kingship given credence through marriage to the queen. While killing the suitors has eliminated competition for the throne, marrying Penelope solidifies his hold on power in a more peaceful manner, since, according to Dougherty, "marriage to Penelope entails control of the land...a productive, and much less violent, vision of Odysseus' return to power, one that both complements and counters the wholesale

slaughter of the greedy suitors” (2001, 168). With his rivals dead and unable to continue challenging his return to power, and his official reunion with Penelope, awarded to him by passing her test, the kingship and order within Ithaca are hence restored. The later, peaceful transitions of power gained through Penelope’s marriage and Laertes’ inheritance are juxtaposed against more violent means to the same end. Penelope appears after the slaughter of the suitors, and Laertes right before he and his son are presumed to take up arms against the suitors’ families. Odysseus is shown to be capable of reclaiming power either through violence or legitimate means, but it is the latter that requires proof of his identity to validate his reclamation.

These tests of his identity and political standing in Ithacan society root Odysseus to Ithaca. However, they also tie Odysseus to the land physically. They plant his identity firmly within the safe and familiar home realm of the island. The tests of both Penelope and Laertes revolve around Odysseus’ knowledge of Ithaca’s trees and their purposes. The trees in the orchard of Laertes are included in Odysseus’ inheritance of the kingship which is returned to him once his identity is recognized. Meanwhile, the tree in Penelope’s test of the bed is representative of his right to rule through their marriage. Odysseus is the only man who knows of the unique features of the trees within each test, trees which are living entities physically rooted in the soil of Ithaca. Just as these trees are rooted and permanent in the land, so is Odysseus.

The Recognition and Reflection of Dogs

While the trees play a crucial role in communicating how Odysseus is tied to the land and nature of Ithaca, Homer’s use of dogs displays Odysseus’ identity. The episode of Odysseus reconnecting with his dog Argos in reciprocal recognition is well-known,

but beneath the scene lies a subtext of how the dog, and dogs in general throughout the *Odyssey*, mirror the state of both their homes and their masters. In so doing, the dogs of the *Odyssey*, especially Argos, reflect the identity of their masters and their connection to a place. They mark boundaries between the outside world and the home. In addition to this, we also see a test, which features an image of a dog in order to prove the identity of Odysseus.

When Odysseus comes upon Argos, the dog he raised from a pup before departing Ithaca for Troy, Argos is old and sitting in a dung heap, covered in parasites (κυνοραιοστέων), “dog-destroyers” (17.290). At this time, Odysseus is similarly older and appears in the pitiful state of a beggar in order to enter his home in disguise. When he questions the swineherd Eumaeus regarding the dog’s life in his absence, Eumaeus answers that in his prime Argos was a well-respected hunting dog. The swineherd also makes a point of stating the dog’s excellence, the result of Odysseus’ training, which has benefitted others as opposed to his own master in his absence (Beck 1991, 162). In this, the life of Argos mirrors that of Odysseus and his home in what William Beck describes as the dog-master-household equation in which the dog of a household is a culmination of both the personality and the afflictions suffered by both its house and its master (1991, 162). To support this equation, Beck analyzes not only the episode of Argus in Book 17 but also the canine companions of Alcinous and Circe shown earlier in the epic poem.

ἀργύρεον δ’ ἐφ’ ὑπερθύριον, χρυσέη δὲ κορώνη.
χρύσειοι δ’ ἐκάτερθε καὶ ἀργύρεοι κύνες ἦσαν,
οὓς Ἥφαιστος ἔτευξεν ἰδυίησι πραπίδεσσι
δῶμα φυλασσέμεναι μεγαλήτορος Ἀλκινόοιο,
ἀθανάτους ὄντας καὶ ἀγήρωσ ἦματα πάντα.

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The lintel of the door was silver, and the door handle was gold. On either side were gold and silver dogs, which Hephaestus had made with a skillful mind to watch over the home of great-hearted Alcinous, being deathless and ageless all their days (tr. Van De Laarschot, 7.90-4).

The palace of Alcinous evokes a holy and luxurious atmosphere, blessed by the gods themselves. The entire home is described in the poem as opulent. In describing the very entrance to the home of Alcinous, Homer makes a point of detailing the precious metals involved in its construction. The beam across the door is silver, ἀργύρεον, and its handle fashioned from gold, χρυσέη. These aspects of the door are precious metals as opposed to stone or wood that would have been more common. It is a hint of how abundant in resources, both economic and symbolic, the royal family of the Phaeacians is. The dogs on either side of the door also mirror the silver lintel and gold doorknob, having been fashioned from such precious metals themselves by the smith god Hephaestus. These dogs are not so much remarkable for displaying specific personalities that reflect the homeowners, but rather they represent the status of the home-owners and the favor of the gods.

Although the canines of Circe's island are not dogs but rather wolves, they still act in the same symbolic role as the dogs found within the *Odyssey*. Not only do they act like dogs, tame and excitedly wagging their tails like domesticated dogs due to Circe's drugs, but they also correspond to the wild nature of the island (10.212-16). Just as the gold and silver dogs are symbolic of Alcinous as a blessed king, so do the wolves of Circe reflect the nature of the island as well as foreshadow Circe's magical abilities which turn men into animals (Beck 1991, 161). These wolves, which should be predators in the wild, have been tamed through the intervention of magic and drugs. Like the land

around them, they should be wild and untamed and, like Circe, they are also dangerous but are reduced to the far less threatening behavior of dogs as a result of their mistress' capabilities. The dogs of Alcinous and Circe thus establish a pattern of dogs mirroring the state of affairs in their homes and aspects of their masters, whether it is showing how deeply the gods favor Alcinous or the extent of Circe's capabilities to tame the wilderness around her.

Yet another instance of dogs in their roles of recognition and reflection are the dogs of the swineherd Eumaeus.

ἔξαπίνης δ' Ὀδυσῆα ἴδον κύνες ὑλακόμωροι.
οἱ μὲν κεκλήγοντες ἐπέδραμον· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς 30
ἔζετο κερδοσύνη, σκῆπτρον δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε χειρός.
ἔνθα κεν ᾗ παρ σταθμῷ ἀεικέλιον πάθεν ἄλγος·
ἀλλὰ συβώτης ᾗκα ποσὶ κραιπνοῖσι μετασπῶν
ἔσσυτ' ἀνὰ πρόθυρον, σκῦτος δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε χειρός.
τοὺς μὲν ὁμοκλήσας σεῦεν κύνας ἄλλυδις ἄλλον 35
πυκνῆσιν λιθάδεσσιν· ὁ δὲ προσέειπεν ἄνακτα·

Suddenly the baying dogs saw Odysseus. They ran upon him barking. But Odysseus in his cunning, sat down and the staff fell from his hand. There in his own farmstead he would suffer pain. But the swineherd quickly following behind with swift feet pursued them through the door, and a hide fell from his hand. Calling to them he drove the dogs this way and that with heavy stones. (tr. Van De Laarschot, 14.29-36)

Prior to the pivotal scene of reunion with Argos, Odysseus encounters dogs who fail to recognize him. One explanation for this is that these dogs are simply too young to remember Odysseus as they have yet to reach the impressive age of Argos. However, since he has arrived in Ithaca in disguise and is yet to undergo his tests of identity, there

is no reason for them to recognize his face or authority. It may also be an indication that Odysseus' disguise is in fact a success, as both the dogs and Eumaeus, who does recall Odysseus, do not recognize him. In this instance, everything is going according to Odysseus' plan if even someone familiar like Eumaeus does not see through the disguise. The dogs also reflect the home of Eumaeus. In an earlier line, the four hounds are referred to as being "like wild beasts" (κύνες θήρεσσιν ἐοικότες τέσσαρες) (14.21-2). While rough and wild, the dogs still obey their master Eumaeus and diligently protect the place, when they rush upon Odysseus. In this capacity they are an extension of Eumaeus and his role as a swineherd, which Beck refers to as "rough and functional, both serve to guard the swine", and both are loyal to their master (1991, 161). While the dogs are loyal to and protect the herd for Eumaeus, Eumaeus is equally loyal to Odysseus and guards the herd of pigs for the sake of Odysseus.

This pattern culminates in the Argos episode in Book 17. Argos' recognition of Odysseus marks the return of Ithaca's rightful ruler stepping back into his home. Both master and dog meet each other in a similar state of shabbiness as old, neglected dog and as disguised beggar. Both have also spent the prime of their youth in service to others, with Odysseus having spent ten years fighting in the Trojan War. His cunning and cleverness have benefitted Agamemnon and Menelaus as opposed to his homeland, and Argos' excellence as a hunting dog has benefitted those his master has left behind in Ithaca. Like Argos, who is covered in vermin and ticks, the house of Odysseus is also full of parasites, in the form of Penelope's suitors. As the fleas and ticks feast upon the lifeblood of Argos, so do the suitors feast upon the resources of the house of Odysseus night and day and refuse to take their leave. Argos' life is parallel to that of Odysseus.

The image of a dog also later comes into play as a signifier of Odysseus' identity, when Penelope, fooled by Odysseus disguised as a beggar, listens to her new guest detail how he supposedly entertained Odysseus on the island of Crete. Afterward, Penelope decides to test the beggar by asking him what clothing he wore to prove that it was indeed her husband that he saw, to which he responds, describing in detail a pin worn by Odysseus.

αὐτάρ οἱ περόνη χρυσοῖο τέτυκτο
αὐλοῖσιν διδύμοισι· πάροιθε δὲ δαίδαλον ἦεν·
ἐν προτέροισι πόδεσσι κύων ἔχε ποικίλον ἐλλόν,
ἀσπαίροντα λάων·

But the brooch upon it had been fashioned of gold with double clasps. And on the front it was embellished, a dog held a dappled fawn in its front paws, gazing as it writhed (tr. Van De Laarschot, *Od.* 19.226-9).

The description of this brooch takes up the bulk of Odysseus' description of his clothing, thus placing emphasis on this specific article. The image carved upon it is that of a dog attacking its prey, not unlike a dog used for finding prey during a hunt. The mention of this brooch occurs shortly after the reunion with Argos in Book 17, recalling the image of the old dog. The brooch captures how the dog may have appeared in his prime, which Beck refers to as a "unification of the images of Odysseus and Argos in their prime, complementary to that of twenty years later provided by the Argos-episode" (1991, 163). It is notable that the image of Argos, the one who is able to recognize his master after twenty years upon first sight, becomes evidence for proving Odysseus' identity.

Dogs in the *Odyssey* act as representations of place and people, holding up a mirror to the state of affairs. They also guard boundaries, which Odysseus must pass. Whether it be through their presence as gifts of gods or belying the fact that something is amiss within the home, their appearance and behavior are used to foreshadow the place entered by Odysseus. Argos, as well as images of him, is particularly significant in this regard since the old dog marks the beginning of the tests of identity to follow and is himself used by Odysseus as a marker of his identity.

Ithaca as Home Realm vs the Cosmos

All these aspects of Odysseus' identity serve to give him a "rootedness" in Ithaca, planting his identity firmly within the safe and familiar home realm of the island. The Greeks, like many other human groups, regarded their homeland, Delphi particularly, as the center of the world, and by extension each person's city became the center of their personal world. Heroes of myth became synonymous with their cities of origin or those they founded in their adventures, becoming a point of pride for those inhabiting them. For example, Herakles is associated with Thebes, Theseus with Athens, and Odysseus with Ithaca. They became rooted in the psyche of the polis, and people claimed to share a γένος with them, as many in what is now known as Ithaki claim to be descended from Odysseus in the modern day (Wijngaarden 2012, 140). Ithaca as a place, in the mind of Odysseus, may represent, as Tuan says, "an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present, place is permanent and hence reassuring to man, who sees frailty in himself and change and flux everywhere" (Tuan 1997, 154). Odysseus' memories of Ithaca are of his family, his birthright to his political place within society, his marriage bed built from a tree rooted in the soil of Ithaca itself, and of stable

permanence and familiarity. Ithaca is a static memory amidst a life continuously in flux and chaos at sea, while Odysseus constantly faces yet another new danger.

It is no stretch of the imagination to see a similarity between the epic hero and real sailors at the time, envisioning the unchanging comfort of home whilst surrounded by the constant potential of danger at sea. Ithaca, as a home realm representative of Odysseus' rootedness in the world, presents a stark contrast to the external world, a juxtaposition that serves to emphasize how truly uprooted from his center of the world Odysseus is. To be uprooted from Ithaca is to be uprooted from his sense of self. Yet while Odysseus's own departure from the island is unwilling, his journey throughout the world at sea is not dissimilar to that of any sailor or explorer having left home of his own volition. At the time at which the works of Homer are regularly said to be dated, the 8th century BCE, the Greek world was beginning to truly expand and explore the rest of the world at large, or at least the rest of the Mediterranean (Wijngaarden 2012, 139). With exploration comes seeking opportunity and following curiosity to see what is "out there". For the Greeks and Homeric heroes, the opportunity offered by "out there" was that of *kleos*, reputation, and the possibility of being heralded as a hero upon returning home. Odysseus, despite his longing for home, is not immune to this desire himself, as seen when he and his men flee the now-blinded cyclops Polyphemus. Instead of merely sailing off without a word, having escaped danger, he announces his name and where he lives.

φάσθαι Ὀδυσσεῖα πολυπόρθιον ἐξαλαῶσαι,

υἱὸν Λαέρτεω, Ἰθάκῃ ἐνὶ οἰκίᾳ ἔχοντα.

505

Say that Odysseus, sacker of cities blinded [you],

son of Laertes, having a home in Ithaca (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.504-5).

Odysseus declares this having reached his ship with what remains of his crew after blinding and escaping the Cyclops. As he speaks, Odysseus is sailing away and shouting back at the now blinded one-eyed monster who ate his men, reiterating what he has just done to Polyphemus and stating his true identity. In doing so, he not only gives Polyphemus his actual name, but also that of the island he calls home, Ithaca. In giving his name and the place with which it is associated by means of familial ties and location, *υἷὸν Λαέρτεω, Ἰθάκῃ ἐνὶ οἰκίᾳ ἔχοντα*, he is reasserting his identity in the world (505). It is also a way to stamp his name, his identity, onto the heroic act he has just accomplished. While this act may be an instance of Odysseus giving into the temptation of glory, an example of weakness, it does show the importance of attaching one's name to great deeds. Even if revealing himself may make his journey home more difficult, doing so adds greatness to the *kleos* of Odysseus and Ithaca.

In proclaiming his name and that of his home, Odysseus achieves the glory that many seek when they venture from home. Also, by associating himself with the deed of blinding Polyphemus, he accrues reputation not only for himself but also for Ithaca, since it produced the man who accomplished the heroic feat. In going out into the outer world away from the familiarity of one's hearth and home, men are able to hopefully one day return with a set of accomplishments which can then be tied to the homeland by association and enhance its reputation.

Odysseus' journey by sea also contributes to the home vs world, or hearth vs cosmos, dichotomy. Ithaca's importance in the narrative lies in the fact that it is both the final intended destination of the poem's hero and serves as a juxtaposition set against the rest of the world explored by Odysseus; the warm and familiar land in contrast to the cold, watery unknown. Yi-Fu Tuan describes the formation of a hearth, a concept which

represents the associations one develops with the place they consider home, as follows: “more often it has occurred through ongoing, peaceful processes of interchange and communication, voluntary imitation and assimilation” (1996, 133). These peaceful processes can be the formation of relationships and their repeated processes, such as marriages or the relationships of generations of parents and children. Those relationships thus give way to a broader sense of community, between individuals and between groups, coming together to create a broader society that evokes a network of mutual support and sympathy (Tuan 1996, 145). To be away from the hearth, the home, is to be away from the bonds and sense of community that forge one’s identity. It is to cut off one’s own branch, as it were, however briefly, from the grove of connections planted in their place of origin.

As Ithaca stands as Odysseus’ hearth amidst the narrative of the *Odyssey*, each and every stop on his journey marks a location within the wider cosmos of the world as the ancient Greeks understood it. To leave the harbor of one’s homeland was to cross the threshold between land and sea. Leaving one’s hearth was to venture into the cosmos, something ancient and enigmatic. Natural philosophers in the ancient world such as Thales in the 6th century BCE argued that the element of water was the “permanent entity”, and that everything derives from water due to the fact that everything depends upon its existence, making water the first principle and key to creation (Tuan 1996, 160). The waters of the sea are then similar to the waters associated with birth, and to go to the sea is to re-enter the currents of creation.

The primal nature bestowed upon water by ancient Greek thinkers turns the sea into a vast and ancient cosmos, unknown and full of strange sights and creatures. The sea is representative of the waters of creation, pregnant with the possibility for fame,

knowledge, and the potential establishment of new hearths. Odysseus, in his adventures at sea and search for home, is the imagined colonist journeying in search of land ripe for Greek settlement (Dougherty 2001, 175). While the journey of Odysseus ends in the same location where he began twenty years earlier, the journey of the colonist which he represents settles elsewhere out in the watery cosmos of the Greek world in the hopes of founding a new hearth. In doing so, the glory the colonist achieves will one day drift out to other hearths stationed in the cosmos, connecting his initial homeland to his deeds.

Conclusions

Ithaca defines Odysseus as the place of his origin, which contains all that defines him. By birth and lineage, he is the king of Ithaca and head of the social hierarchy, a position that is doubly secured by means of inheritance and marriage. The legitimacy of his claim to both must be won through tests that assert his identity and his connection to the island, his rootedness to the land as shown through his knowledge of specific trees planted in Ithaca's soil. In this manner, his connection to the land and community is reaffirmed, and his return initiates a restoration to law and order. As defenders of boundaries, dogs also act as a reflection of the relationship between master and place, displaying both the personality of their owner and the state of the home, which is shown most prominently in the Argos episode. In this matter, Argos provides a composite parallel of Odysseus in his state as an old beggar and in relation to his home being infested with voracious suitors leeching upon his family's resources. As the place where Odysseus' identity and community are rooted, Ithaca stands as a familiar home realm amidst the cosmos, as represented by the sea in which his adventures take place. During his journey home, in the wide "out there" of the unknown world, he seizes upon the opportunity presented to make a name for himself and for Ithaca by association. In this he

represents the ancient Greek explorer at sea, seeking fame and fortune even as he seeks to forge a new home realm out in the watery cosmos or to return to the familiar hearth of his origin. Part of his making a name for himself is getting to know new peoples and places, as the opening lines say.

III: SOLITUDE, WILD LANDS, AND DANGEROUS DAMES AND DAMSELS

Over the course of his journey, Odysseus encounters several female figures, ranging from the monstrous sirens and Scylla, the alluring but sinister Circe, goddesses such as Athena and Calypso, to the young princess Nausicaa. All are figures with whom Odysseus interacts in his pursuit to return home, to yet another female character, Penelope, who as discussed in the previous chapter, represents the stability of marriage and a peaceful re-transition to power. Penelope and her association to Ithaca and Odysseus are meant to convey a return to normalcy and domestic familiarity. Her union with Odysseus is symbolized by the marriage bed being literally planted in the soil of the island. Much like Ithaca acts as a stand-in for the Greek world, for home, Penelope acts as an example for the woman who properly adheres to Greek gender roles. Figures like Circe and Calypso, on the other hand, convey a stark contrast to the Greek wife as idealized by Penelope. Unlike Penelope, they exist on their own without men and are sexually in control as exhibited by their interactions with Odysseus. The longer Odysseus remains away from home, the greater the number of female entities he encounters that challenge and at times even reverse Homeric gender norms. Such a situation perhaps becomes an exploration of what could possibly occur in lands without male influence to enforce patriarchal society.

While there is no shortage of female characters to analyze for this topic, I will be restricting this chapter to a selected few for the purpose of focusing on the reverse similes of power and sexual politics found within the *Odyssey*. As such, the more “human” examples of Circe and Calypso will be the main priorities of this chapter. Specifically, I will be analyzing the ways in which Homer’s settings in which Odysseus encounters these women foreshadow and set the tone for the scenes’ depictions of gender relations and how a Greek man finds himself under the seemingly inconceivable authority of powerful women. For it becomes evident that on the isolated isles of Circe and Calypso, inhabited only by goddesses and their handmaidens, the lack of male power leaves the land open to the possibility of women ruling over hapless men who happen to stumble upon their shores. Whether through drugs or divine powers, each of these women represents fears and temptations for a Greek man away from home.

Setup, Silence, and Solitude

The phrase “it’s quiet, too quiet” is one commonly uttered to communicate how the state of silence breeds a sense of disturbance. It is a sense that something, despite the relative air of calm, could in fact be quite wrong. This is the tone set by Homer as Odysseus and his men approach Aeaea, the island of Circe.

ἔνθα δ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς νηὶ κατηγαγόμεσθα σιωπῇ	140
ναύλοχον ἐς λιμένα, καὶ τις θεὸς ἡγεμόνευεν.	
ἔνθα τότε ἐκβάντες δύο τ’ ἡμάτα καὶ δύο νύκτας	
κεῖμεθ’ ὁμοῦ καμάτῳ τε καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἔδοντες.	
ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ τρίτον ἦμαρ εὐπλόκαμος τέλεσ’ Ἡώς,	
καὶ τότε ἔγων ἐμὸν ἔγχος ἐλὼν καὶ φάσγανον ὄξυ	145
καρπαλίμως παρὰ νηὸς ἀνήιον ἐς περιωπὴν,	
εἶ πως ἔργα ἴδοιμι βροτῶν ἐνοπὴν τε πυθοίμην	

ἔστην δὲ σκοπιῆν ἐς παιπαλόεσσιν ἀνελθὼν,
καὶ μοι εἰείσατο καπνὸς ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης,
Κίρκης ἐν μεγάροισι, διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην.

150

There we put in with the ship towards the headland in silence, affording safe anchorage in the harbor, and some god led the way. There, putting ashore then two days and two nights we rested together eating the heart out in toil and pain. But when fair-haired dawn brought the third day to an end, then I myself seizing my spear and sharp sword, swiftly from the ship I went up into a place with a wide view so that I could see the works of mortal men in any way and I might hear a crying. And I stood having gone up onto a rugged lookout place, and to me smoke rose up from the earth of broad roads in the halls of Circe, through the thick thicket and woodland (tr. Van De Laarschot, 10.140-50).

As Odysseus and his men first come upon Aeaea, fresh and weary from their deadly encounter with the Laestrygonians, silence (σιωπή) enters the scene almost as swiftly as the men discover the island (140). After such a harrowing experience with giants, the seeming peace and quiet of the location offers safety, enough that they rest for a couple of days until they have recuperated and are able to investigate the island. It is not clear whether the silence is that of the island itself or that of the men trying to be quiet so as not to alert any natives. Still, the silence speaks. It warns of the conflict that is to pass during their stay on the island. While any danger has yet to be described, Odysseus still sets out with weapons. Upon finding a vantage point, he makes a point to seek out any signs of mortal life, ἔργα βροτῶν (147), the works of men, or a sound, ἐνοπήν (147). While Odysseus does witness a lone plume of smoke from the home of Circe, not a single sound is mentioned. The lack of utterance of a sound compounds the silence. Save for the halls of Circe, there is no evidence of mortal men inhabiting the area, and yet the words χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης (149), “earth of broad roads”, implies the presence of pathways. Roads and pathways seem a characteristic better suited to a place full of villages or

communities, enough so that organized, and intentionally constructed roads would be required for ease of transportation. Yet the only evidence of habitation is the plume of smoke (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989, 53). Finally, there are the last words of line 150, διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην, which describes the smoke rising through the dense forest landscape, emphasizing the wild and uncultivated nature of the land in which Circe dwells.

What Homer outlines is a scene of eerie tranquility, made even more disconcerting by means of the smoke indicating only the presence of a single home on the island. Its owner, whom Odysseus only knows in the retrospect of retelling the story, is Circe, and her name is not even uttered in dialogue until Hermes arrives on the scene (de Jong, 2001, 256). Odysseus and his men are in a strange land with what appears to be only one indication of civilized life on this silent, solitary island.

Such is the foreshadowing of the initial description of Circe's island. The culmination of this discomfort is soon to follow. Let us now examine the scene in which Circe, having been discovered by Odysseus' men, invites them into her home and provides them with food and drink, only to transform them into pigs through the use of magical drugs.

ὥς ἄρ' ἐφώνησεν, τοὶ δὲ φθέγγοντο καλεῦντες.
ἦ δ' αἴψ' ἐξελθοῦσα θύρας ὤϊξε φαεινὰς 230
καὶ κάλει· οἱ δ' ἅμα πάντες αἰδρεΐησιν ἔποντο·
Εὐρύλοχος δ' ὑπέμεινεν, οἰσάμενος δόλον εἶναι.
εἶσεν δ' εἰσαγαγοῦσα κατὰ κλισμούς τε θρόνους τε,
ἐν δέ σφιν τυρόν τε καὶ ἄλφιτα καὶ μέλι χλωρόν
οἴνω Πραμνεΐω ἐκύκα· ἀνέμισγε δὲ σίτω 235

φάρμακα λύγρ', ἵνα πάγχυ λαθοῖατο πατρίδος αἴης.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δῶκέν τε καὶ ἔκπιον, αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα
 ῥάβδῳ πεπληγυῖα κατὰ συφροῖσιν ἐέργνυ.
 οἱ δὲ συῶν μὲν ἔχον κεφαλὰς φωνήν τε τρίχας τε
 καὶ δέμας, αὐτὰρ νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος, ὡς τὸ πάρος περ. 240
 ὧς οἱ μὲν κλαίοντες ἐέρχατο, τοῖσι δὲ Κίρκη
 πὰρ ῥ' ἄκυλον βάλανόν τε βάλεν καρπὸν τε κρानεΐης
 ἔδμεναι, οἷα σύες χαμαιευνάδες αἰὲν ἔδουσιν.

So he [Polites] spoke, and they calling, spoke to her. And immediately she went out and opened the radiant doors, and she called. They all together followed in ignorance. But Eurylochus stayed behind, thinking it was a trick. Having led them in, she seated them on couches and chairs, and she stirred in cheese and barley and yellow honey with Pramnian wine. But she mixed into the food baneful drugs, so that she would cause them to forget all about their fatherland. But when she gave and they drank, then at once having struck them with a wand, she shut them into a hog-sty. And they had the heads and voice and hair and bodies of pigs, but the mind was constant, as it was before. So they weeping had been confined and Circe threw before them acorn and nuts and fruit of cornelian cherry to eat, such as swine lying on the ground always eat (tr. Van De Laarschot, 10.229-243).

Here, in the house of Circe, we see a violation of *xenia* played out by the host, causing harm to her guests after providing them with food and drink. The narrative mentions nothing of anything Odysseus' men have done to provoke their drugging by Circe. Indeed, as far as the story retold by Odysseus to the Phaeacians is concerned, they are no more than hapless victims merely practicing *xenia* as expected within Greek culture. Not to mention that, unlike a prior disaster of hospitality relations gone wrong with the cyclops in Book 9, Circe, for all intents and purposes, does not appear in any way to be a monster. In fact, she opens the doors of her home to them, (ἢ δ' αἴψ' ἐξελθοῦσα θύρας ὤϊξε φαεινὰς), even having done so immediately, αἴψα (230). Like a gracious host, she welcomes them into her home, calling them inside, κάλει (231). To the

men, she is a beautiful woman, something human and familiar, something safe, and so in their ignorance, they venture inside, (οἱ δ' ἅμα πάντες ἀιδρείησιν ἔποντο) (231).

However, we, as the audience, having been primed with the disquieting silence and solitude mentioned earlier, know something sinister is about to occur.

The unwavering and seemingly practiced ease with which Circe changes Odysseus' men into pigs is noteworthy because it heightens the air of danger. There is no monologue or utterance of her intent. She merely invites them in and seamlessly puts her plan into motion. As soon as she has situated the men, she gives them wine and food mixed with baneful drugs, with the very purpose of using them to forget their quest for home (ἀνέμισγε δὲ σίτω φάρμακα λύγρ', ἵνα πάγχυ λαθοῖατο πατρίδος αἴης) (235-36). The use of drugs to cause forgetfulness is a recurring theme in the *Odyssey*, given the previous instance with the Lotus Eaters and Helen mixing drugs into wine during Telemachus' visit to Sparta (Hoebeck & Hoekstra 1989, 57). The specific use of the verb ἀνέμισγε is also notable in that while it means "to mix", it also bears a sexual connotation: it can be used to mean the act of having intercourse (LSJ, s.v. "μίγνυμι"). The implication is a foreshadowing of the union of Circe and Odysseus to follow, which will later award the men their freedom, but also it denotes the sexual and deceptive nature of Circe and all that she offers under the guise of hospitality. After the men have drunk the concoction, Circe does not hesitate to strike them with a wand, which transforms the men into pigs; but they maintain their memories of having been men even if they no longer recall their journey or their specific identities (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989, 57). Circe then further warps the rituals of hospitality in feeding her now transformed guests again, this time with the feed of pigs, ἄκυλον βάλανόν τε καρπὸν τε κρανεΐης, to suit their new forms, as if a mockery of her earlier hospitality towards them (de Jong, 2001,

259). In addition to this, acorns are a symbol of “wild” life, as Borgeaud explains, “the acorn stands to Demeter’s grain as an unrefined life stands to a civilized existence” (1998, 15). Her immediate and decisive actions read as one used to luring men into a trap, and notably, she calls to the men, or rather commands them (κάλει) (231). Her actions are commonplace and premeditated. This is how Homer communicates her initially sinister nature.

At first glance, Circe’s home appears a luxurious sanctuary amidst the untamed wilderness of her island. For one, it is only from her house that there rises a plume of smoke, indicating the possession of a hearth, which is central to the home, a marker of human civilization. She also seats the men upon couches and chairs, κλισμούς τε θρόνους τε, furniture that would normally be crafted and manufactured, elements of a wealthy home. Perhaps Circe makes them magic, however, such is never explicitly stated. Later in the text, it is stated that she has four handmaidens, ἀμφίπολοι τέσσαρες. In keeping with the theme of the island’s wild nature, they are born from its springs, groves, and rivers which lead into the sea, γίγνονται δ’ ἄρα ταί γ’ ἔκ τε κρηνέων ἀπό τ’ ἀλσέων ἔκ θ’ ἱερῶν ποταμῶν (10.348-49). To be served by nymphs also keeps in line with Circe’s divine position as a goddess (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989, 62). Following Odysseus’ pacification of Circe, they bring out various finery such as beautiful purple rugs, ῥήγεα καλὰπορφύρεα, and silver tables, τραπέζας ἀργυρέας (10.352-355). Thus, all by herself and in the midst of Aeaea’s vast, dense woodland, Circe exists in a lavish house that seems better suited to life in a palace than the uncultivated countryside surrounded by wild animals. In this way, her presence could remind the men of home, even as they are surrounded by her wilderness and the wild animals of the island. She is thus welcoming the men with a well-furnished cage, as it were, only to then trap them in a pig-sty.

Circe, a goddess whose lavish home is enclosed by nature and silence, is introduced to Odysseus, his men, and the audience, as a predator. Indeed, she is a predator so capable as to reduce other predators, wolves and lions, into little more than domesticated cats and dogs by means of “evil drugs” (de Jong 2001, 258). Her entire island is bereft of human life save her own, shrouded in eerie silence yet with roads made only for her use. She puts on the veneer of a gracious host, only to promptly entrap the men without provocation and turn them into pigs. Only when Odysseus, with the aid of the gift of moly from Hermes, overcomes her is Circe drained of her venom, and shifts from a murderous monster into a pacified woman. Upon Hermes’ instruction, Odysseus solidifies this transition by making Circe swear not to harm him should he accept her invitation into her bed.

‘ὦ Κίρκη, πῶς γάρ με κέλει σοὶ ἠπιον εἶναι,
ἦ μοι σῶς μὲν ἔθηκας ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐταίρους,
αὐτὸν δ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἔχουσα δολοφρονέουσα κελεύεις
ἐς θάλαμόν τ’ ἰέναι καὶ σῆς ἐπιβήμεναι εὐνῆς, 340
ὄφρα με γυμνωθέντα κακὸν καὶ ἀνήνορα θήης.
οὐδ’ ἂν ἐγὼ γ’ ἐθέλοιμι τεῆς ἐπιβήμεναι εὐνῆς,
εἰ μή μοι τλαίης γε, θεά, μέγαν ὄρκον ὀμόσσαι
μῆ τί μοι αὐτῷ πῆμα κακὸν βουλευσέμεν ἄλλο.

O Circe, for how do you urge me to be gentle to you, who turned my friends to swine in your halls and have me here, you being crafty urge me to go into your room and to go up into your bed in order to strip me and render me bad and unmanly. Unless you submit to me, goddess, to swear a great oath so that you will not plot some other evil to my own misery (tr. Van De Laarschot, 10.337-344).

The very fact that Circe is the one who propositions Odysseus for sex differentiates her behavior from standard female behavior among the Greeks. Where it is not uncommon for men or male gods to have multiple lovers and sexual experiences, such is not the case for women. (For goddesses such as Aphrodite there are exceptions (Lefkowitz 1990, 59)). Circe is more akin to the category of goddess, yet the liaisons had by most goddesses rarely contain the threat of danger to their partner posed by Circe. The implication of Odysseus' words is that the risk of sleeping with Circe is to be unmanned, (γυμνωθέντα κακὸν καὶ ἀνήνορα) (342), perhaps to be castrated given that ἀνήνορα means being "without manhood" (LSJ, s.v. ἀνήνορ). The only way to avoid this fate is to appeal to her and hope she agrees to give her word not to harm Odysseus. Only after the consummation of their relationship are the men released, as per Hermes' word (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989, 62). In this way, Circe plays into fears of female sexuality, all of which have been foreshadowed by her environment.

Even with the discomfoting silence and odd behavior of the island's wildlife, the woodland of Aeaea is wild and uncultivated, virtually untouched. The only traces of human civilization or any kind of centralized culture are contained within Circe's home. There is not even any kind of agriculture to be seen, something which is critical to the formation of the *polis*, the realm of men (Edwards 1993, 44). While Circe's home is furnished with the trappings of the *polis*, the land around her is entirely separated from society, and thus also separated from men and their authority. On her own, away from male-dominated Greek society or male family members to direct her, Circe is able to have what so few women in myth end epic do not: authority. Mary R. Lefkowitz notes that "women take political action only under certain closely defined conditions" (1990,

80). Surely, there is no better certain closely defined condition for women's political, and therefore also sexual, authority than the absence of men.

The practices of men and the *polis*, agriculture and artisanship, are replaced by those of women, causing skills such as wool-working and music to establish predominance and emphasize the domestic values of the islands inhabited solely by women (Blundell 1995, 52). How very fitting it is that when Odysseus' men first stumble upon Circe they find her singing before her loom (10.228). This also speaks to the ability of Circe (and later Calypso) to entice and entrap men with their beautiful designs, weaving their will both before their loom and upon the land they rule (Blundell 1995, 52). The fact that both women are found singing compounds the breadth of their influence as, according to Lilah Grace Canevaro, their singing hints at their power over events due to their proximity to the poet, who himself is weaving the words of the poem into a song (2018, 60). Just as the poet breathes the story, and the very land of Circe into being, so too does Circe herself enact her will upon the men by turning them into pigs.

The theme of beasts and animals also plays into the inherent sexuality of Circe's presence in the *Odyssey*. Sue Blundell states the following: the reduction of the men to animals--animals who are disturbingly submissive and fawning--suggests the mindless bestiality which is seen as the consequence of sexual domination by a woman (1995, 52). In tandem with the threat of potentially being unmanned, this helps to paint the image of a rare sexually dominant woman who poses a threat to male masculinity. It is only when Odysseus re-establishes the sexual norm through deed and word, at the same time demanding Circe promise not to harm him, that he can have sex with her without consequence (Blundell 1995, 53). However, even as Odysseus is a participant in sex, at no point in the adventure on Aea does Odysseus ever express eagerness to sleep with

Circe. He does so without question, because it is what he is advised to do by Hermes, not because he expresses interest (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989, 62). Circe is the one to instigate a sexual encounter, plotting violence until Odysseus precautions to defend against it. Odysseus finds himself in a situation where he is no longer the sexually dominant person in the room as a man, but must navigate around the political and sexual authority of a woman who sees him as potential prey with no other men to help him. On his own, he must restore the sexual order of the *polis* in a wild untamed land so as to turn Circe from an enemy to an ally.

Calypso and Consent

Circe is certainly not the last powerful woman encountered by Odysseus in his travels. Nor is she even the only woman to flip the script with regards to political and sexual dynamics between men and women. At what is easily the lowest point of his journey, all his men dead and his ship destroyed, Odysseus washes upon the shore of Calypso. Initially, this encounter appears the inverse of his interactions with Circe. Where Circe began an adversary only to end as a female helper, instructing Odysseus to seek Tiresias in the Underworld, Calypso starts out as a helper. She saves Odysseus, cares for him, and clothes him in the products of her own weaving. However, she becomes an obstacle when she falls in love with Odysseus and keeps him prisoner upon her island of Ogygia for seven years. Only the intervention of the gods is able to remove him from her clutches, and as before in the poem, it is Hermes, the messenger god, who comes to his aid. His arrival on the island provides an in-depth description of Calypso's home.

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὴν νῆσον ἀφίκετο τηλόθ' ἐοῦσαν, 55
 ἐνθ' ἐκ πόντου βὰς ἰοειδέος ἠπειρόνδε
 ἦιεν, ὄφρα μέγα σπέος ἴκετο, τῷ ἔνι νύμφη
 ναῖεν ἐυπλόκαμος· τὴν δ' ἔνδοθι τέτμεν ἐοῦσαν.
 πῦρ μὲν ἐπ' ἐσχαρόφιν μέγα καίετο, τηλόσε δ' ὀδμή
 κέδρου τ' εὐκαέτοιο θύου τ' ἀνὰ νῆσον ὀδώδει 60
 δαιομένων· ἡ δ' ἔνδον ἀοιδιάουσ' ὀπι καλῆ
 ἰστὸν ἐποιχομένη χρυσεῖη κερκίδ' ὕφαινε.
 ὕλη δὲ σπέος ἀμφὶ πεφύκει τηλεθώωσα,
 κλήθρη τ' αἴγειρός τε καὶ εὐώδης κυπάρισσος.
 ἔνθα δέ τ' ὄρνιθες τανυσίπτεροι εὐνάζοντο, 65
 σκῶπές τ' ἴρηκές τε τανύγλωσσοί τε κορῶναι
 εἰνάλιαι, τῆσιν τε θαλάσσια ἔργα μέμηλεν.
 ἡ δ' αὐτοῦ τετάνυστο περὶ σπείους γλαφυροῖο
 ἡμερὶς ἠβώωσα, τεθήλει δὲ σταφυλῆσι.
 κρήναι δ' ἐξείης πίσυρες ῥέον ὕδατι λευκῷ, 70
 πλησίαι ἀλλήλων τετραμμέναι ἄλλυδις ἄλλη.
 ἀμφὶ δὲ λειμῶνες μαλακοὶ ἴου ἠδὲ σελίνου
 θήλεον. ἔνθα κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἀθάνατός περ ἐπελθὼν
 θήσαιοτο ἰδὼν καὶ τερφθεῖη φρεσὶν ἦσιν.
 ἔνθα στὰς θηεῖτο διάκτορος Ἀργεῖφόντης 75

But when he arrived at the island which was far-off, there he went, having walked from the purple sea to the mainland until he came to a great cavern, in which dwelled a fair-haired nymph and he found she was within. A great fire was kindled in the hearth and far-off the smell of split cedar and citronwood while burning had fragrancd the island and within she sang in a beautiful voice, pacing before the loom she wove with a golden shuttle. Around the cavern a luxurious wood grew, alder and black poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. In which long-winged birds lay, owls and hawks and chattering sea birds with curved beaks, to whom works on the sea had been a care. A cultivated vine in its prime stretched around her hollow cavern. It had sprouted with clusters of grapes. Four springs in a row flowed with bright water, near one another, one turned in one direction, another elsewhere. And around soft meadows of violet and celery flourished there; so then even an immortal through having come would have gazed upon it,

seeing and would be delighted in his heart. There the guide Argeiphontes, having stood, marveled (tr. Van De Laarschot, 5. 55-75).

The defining characteristics of the original description of Circe's Aeaea are silence and solitude; those of Calypso's Ogygia are fragrance and lush, verdant growth. As on Aeaea, solitude is a key factor in the creation of Calypso's independence on Ogygia. In another parallel to Circe, Hermes comes upon Calypso singing and weaving. The poem then uses the same imagery to establish visually the feminine sphere of Ogygia. As silence, σιωπῆ, and rising smoke, εἴσατο καπνὸς (140, 149), set the scene of solitude, the repetition of τηλόσε (55, 59), both to describe the geographical position of the island and the wide-reaching range of the perfume created by her garden, emphasizes how thoroughly Calypso is cut off from the rest of the world, from the *poleis* of men. The importance of this distance from the rest of world is well encapsulated by Joel Christensen:

“The isolated island of Ogygia itself is important symbolically in several ways. First, the physical aspect likely resonated with ancient audiences, virtually all of whom lived near the sea and were intimate with the dangers of sea travel. Second, the path along the sea Odysseus has traveled and must traverse again is metaphorically a type of *katabasis*, a journey to and from the land of the dead. So the Odysseus we encounter in the fifth book of the *Odyssey* is one who is separated from other human beings and spiritually from the realm of the living by his placement on Calypso's island. As a ‘paradise’, this island exists outside of the world of experience.” (2020, 73-4)

The far-flung nature of Ogygia is emphasized by the repeated uses of τηλόσε; it is so far away from civilization that its solitude may as well exist in another reality, imprisoning Odysseus within the same isolation that grants Calypso authority. On this island with only Calypso for company, he may as well be dead. In fact, for the majority of

the *Odyssey*, all the Greek world believes this to be the case. He is separated from the familiarity of other people and under the rule of a goddess, whose control over the island is most vividly outlined by the fragrance of the cedar and citronwood spreading all across it (τηλόσε δ' ὀδμή κέδρου τ' εὐκεάτοιο θύου τ' ἀνὰ νῆσον ὀδώδει δαιομένων) (59-61). In the description of Ogygia, however, the lovely smells of the island are meant to enhance the all-around paradisiacal flavor of the imagery.

Homer devotes much attention to the natural landscape of Calypso's island, listing all the trees which produce the rich perfume enveloping Ogygia, the vegetation so rich that it is present even in the cavern that is her home. Amidst the mixed forest growing around her cave: (κλήθρη τ' αἴγειρός τε καὶ εὐώδης κυπάρισσος) alder and black poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. There are various birds such as owls (σκῶπές), hawks (ἴρηκές), and a third kind of bird that, although it does not receive a name, is granted significant illustration, τανύγλωσσοί τε κορῶναι εἰνάλιναι. The species of this bird has been disputed, with Walter Merry and James Liddell suggesting that they are cormorants or sea-crows (1886). Upon reading the passage, I myself was strongly reminded of seagulls. Regardless of speculation, Homer does not name the bird's specific species. Both Circe and Calypso exist in the company of animals, but where Circe is surrounded by tamed predators, Calypso's animals are all birds who make their home outside her cave. Yet the major difference between Circe and Calypso is that Calypso is even closer to nature than Circe and even more isolated. Circe at least has handmaidens as well as a constructed home filled with furniture, whereas Calypso lives in a cavern surrounded by its own forest, μέγα σπέος. The picture Homer paints is that of an untouched, almost uninhabited paradise so beautiful that a god cannot help but stare. The underlying purpose of this lush imagery, however, is

to compound the contrast which is to follow in the depiction of Odysseus' sorrow in paradise (de Jong 2001, 129).

ἀλλ' ἦ τοι νύκτας μὲν ἰαύεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ· 155
ἦματα δ' ἄμ πέτρῃσι καὶ ἠϊόνεσσι καθίζων
δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

But indeed, he would pass the night with her and by force in the hollow caves, he unwilling beside her willing, but by day, sitting on the rocks and shores rending his heart with tears and groans and griefs. He looked upon the unresting sea, pouring tears (tr. Van De Laarschot, 5.154-8).

In an idyllic land filled with nature and pleasant scents and in the presence of a goddess, Odysseus, instead of enjoying the pleasures of Ogygia, spends all his days weeping on the rocks. He looks, not at the wood admired only moments ago by Hermes, but at the sea which caused him to wash ashore there in the first place, consumed by grief and homesickness (δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων) (157). Also present in the very first line of the passage is the word ἀνάγκη, “force” in the dative case, implying that Odysseus' passing of the night in Calypso's bed is not consensual, but rather by means of force. Whether that force is by obligation or by something else is unclear, but, regardless, Odysseus is now portrayed as an unwilling participant to sex with Calypso. While the word ἰαύεσκεν means to pass the night instead of explicitly meaning sexual activity (LSJ, s.v. ἰαύω), the sexual implication is palpable, especially given Calypso's fervent intent to keep him with her for eternity. This force is compounded in the following line, since it starkly juxtaposes Odysseus' unwillingness with Calypso's willingness by placing the words right next to each other, παρ' οὐκ

ἐθέλων ἐθελούση. Odysseus as the unwilling participant is prioritized in the word order, οὐκ ἐθέλων coming right after the preposition παρά. Yet instead of placing Odysseus and Calypso on either side of the preposition, they are physically placed next to each other in the word order. Odysseus is forced to lie beside her both in action and in the words which tell the story. Alone with a goddess on her vast island, he lacks the bodily autonomy to refuse her and her will.

Homer's depiction of Odysseus as miserable in paradise, not consenting but forced to endure the amorous attentions of Calypso, is intentional. Homer purposefully portrays Odysseus' residence with Calypso as an enforced one (Blundell 1995, 51). This is made evident by the continuous mentions of his unwilling participation in her bed and his daily weeping. All Odysseus wishes to do is return home, and Calypso, in being both a goddess and the sole possessor of power on Ogygia can and does have the power to keep him there. At various points in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is at the mercy of powerful women who exercise a great deal of agency, even more than he has himself, an uncommon occurrence in Greek myth and a stark contrast to their Iliadic counterparts (Canevaro 2018, 55). Canevaro argues that this greater degree of agency is due to the poem's setting during peacetime post-Trojan War. The narrative is allowed to focus on matters of the home as opposed to those of war, a setting where all women are diminished into objects, seized and traded amongst men. But in the *Odyssey*, the story constantly shifts between the state of Odysseus' own home in his absence, and his entering into the home of others, the domestic sphere. The fact that some of these domestic spheres house only powerful women is part of the danger of venturing into new unfamiliar realms. For it is only in strange, utterly magical countries, like those inhabited only by women such as Circe and Calypso, that it is possible for women to be in

complete control, and as such free to act as they please both politically and sexually (Blundell 1995, 55). Calypso even attempts to take advantage of the power she has as a goddess and sole arbiter of authority on Ogygia in her final attempt to make Odysseus stay with her.

ἐνθάδε κ' αὖθι μένων σὺν ἐμοὶ τόδε δῶμα φυλάσσοις
ἀθάνατός τ' εἴης, ἰμειρόμενός περ ἰδέσθαι σὴν ἄλοχον,
τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐέλδεται ἥματα πάντα. 210
οὐ μὲν θὴν κείνης γε χερείων εὐχομαι εἶναι,
οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, ἐπεὶ οὐ πως οὐδὲ ἔοικεν
θνητὰς ἀθανάτησι δέμας καὶ εἶδος ἐρίζειν.

There and staying here with me you would thus keep watch over this house, and you would be deathless, for all the longing to see your wife and of whom you ever long for all day. I surely do not pray to be inferior to that woman, not with respect to bodily frame nor stature, since in no way does it befit mortal women to contend with immortals with respect to form or shape (tr. Van De Laarschot, 5.208-13).

Ordered by the gods to let Odysseus return home, Calypso, who has kept Odysseus there and made him sleep with her by virtue of her power over him, makes a last-ditch attempt to convince him to remain on Ogygia. As a goddess, Calypso is able to grant Odysseus immortality, something she hopes will convince him to remain with her, trying to entice him with the promise that he will watch over the cavern she now refers to as a house, δῶμα (208). Yet it is evident that Odysseus sees her home for what it is, hollow caves, σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι (155), in which he has been obligated to satisfy her pleasures. Calypso even goes so far as to compare herself to Odysseus' wife Penelope, not even deigning to utter her name but rather referring to her as "that woman", κείνης (211). She claims to be superior to Penelope and indeed all mortal women, since she is

immortal and thus more beautiful, ἐπεὶ οὐ πῶς οὐδὲ ἔοικεν θνητῶς ἀθανάτησι δέμας καὶ εἶδος ἐρίζειν (212-13). In order to prop herself up as the superior option, she must denigrate her romantic rival on the grounds of the limits of beauty that come with mortality. Penelope is also being the faithful Greek wife who adheres to the expectations of her gender, only maintaining authority in Ithaca until she can return to deferring to her husband. This fact likely also makes her inferior in Calypso's eyes. For how is a mere mortal woman obligated to act in the interest of her husband comparable to the beauty and power of a goddess who rules over an entire island?

Odysseus could feasibly have what would be a tempting offer to any man, to be deathless and to be wed to a beautiful goddess. However, such a life does not appeal to Odysseus, for while Calypso can offer him a superhuman existence, it would ultimately be a paralyzing one (Blundell 1995, 51). In her isolation, surrounded by nothing but nature and birds, Calypso is in her element, in an environment far-removed from the world of the living. It is this solitude that grants her absolute authority. Yet for Odysseus, unable to turn the tables as he did with Circe to restore Greek gender dynamics, disconnected from the society that suits him as a Greek man, Ogygia holds nothing for him. Christensen compares Odysseus' state of paralysis to the psychology of learned helplessness, "he does not or cannot act; he derives little enjoyment from pleasure-seeking activities, even though he still engages in them by necessity (or compulsion: ἀνάγκη); and his sense of self--his sweet life--is draining away in the process" (2020, 73). Calypso has held him on Ogygia for several years, compelling him to be her partner for his entire imprisonment. During this time, she may have broken down his will, and as a result renders him incapable of thinking his way out of the situation as is characteristic of Odysseus. It is thus no surprise that when presented with the opportunity to leave as a

result of divine intervention, he declines Calypso's offer, albeit respectfully, and chooses to return to both the land of the living and familiar, male-dominated society.

Place, Gender, and Power

The association of female power with nature and the wild is one that cannot be ignored in analyzing gender relations in the *Odyssey*. Both Circe and Calypso's islands are overrun with wilderness with only the barest reminders of regular society, such as Circe's house and the hearths found in both women's homes. Their islands, their spaces, are untouched by men, in contrast to the *polis* which is the place most thoroughly transformed for human ends, specifically to house and protect many people (Edwards 1993, 28). The *polis* is the sphere of aristocratic men, responsible for matters both in and out of the household, and as such men also occupy a social space of sexual dominance over women. Where men are allowed to exist as entities unto themselves and take part in public life, women and their value in life are relegated to their role within the family, the domestic sphere (Lefkowitz 1990, 50). Circe and Calypso notably fall outside these roles, being neither wives nor mothers, and while they may have fathers, they are recognized as their own powerful entities. They are surrounded by the wilderness of their islands and occupy roles of central authority instead, away from city walls and even further away from men. In this manner, the opposition between city and wilderness also encapsulates opposition between male and female power (Edwards 1993, 33). Away from the male-dominated city-state, these women choose to establish for themselves not their own cities but rather carve out places for themselves amidst nature. They do not tame the nature of the land itself or transform the land with agriculture, but rather within and alongside it.

It is only on their own, in the solitude of the wilderness, that Circe and Calypso are able to secure for themselves the specific closely defined conditions which grant them power. Separated from the society of men, they imbue their lands with the domestic values of weaving and song that define women's work among the Greeks. In so doing, they also visually communicate their abilities to weave their will, even through deception, as is the case with Circe (Canevaro 2018, 24). What they want, whether it is turning men into pigs or desiring sex from a man, they make happen. However, despite their remarkably powerful and vigorous personalities, their power is often portrayed in a negative light (Blundell 1995, 51). While they may largely keep to themselves, they become dangerous should men stumble upon their abodes. Without given reason, Circe transforms men into beasts and unmans the men she invites into her bed. She only ceases when Odysseus pacifies her and restores the safety provided to him by the gendered sexual dynamics of Greek culture. Unable to do the same with Calypso, he becomes victim to her obsession and is rendered paralyzed until rescued by the will of the gods.

Conclusions

The danger presented by Circe and Calypso is that of role reversal, specifically of a sexual nature. Stepping out of the familiar male realm of the city, travelers such as Odysseus enter the uncultivated wilderness of worlds inhabited only by women. With no men to enforce typical gender roles, these women are allowed the rare privilege of power, and in that power possess an uncommon agency over their bodies. They may choose their sexual partners and are even the instigators of sexual encounters. But this is not a portrayal of empowerment. Rather, it is a warping of established sexual dynamics between men and women, where women hold political authority and thus also sexual dominion over men. Odysseus finds himself in a position similar to women in their own society. Regardless of

whether or not he wishes to have sex with Circe and Calypso, it is imperative that he does, either because it is on the instruction of a god or simply because he is not in a position to say no. The beauty and natural landscape of Aeaea and Ogygia serve to juxtapose against the danger and misery encountered there by Odysseus. While seeming to be paradises, they act as deceptive traps, meant to conceal the danger of becoming a male victim of sexual assault or coercion. The very places they inhabit display how disconnected from the world and reality they truly are, making the wild and natural their realm, a stark polar opposite to the transformed space of cities. Circe, Calypso, and their islands represent the fear of being unable to tame the wilderness as well as the fear of women in power. They represent a fear for the Greek man of what might be possible should women be left to their own devices with no men to enforce the gender dynamics of their own society.

VI: THE CYCLOPES, CASE STUDY FOR THE “FOREIGNER”

One of Odysseus’ many adventures on his voyage is his encounter with Polyphemus on the island of the Cyclopes, where he outwits the monster with his own shrewd cunning. On the surface, the ordeal is merely one of many dangers Odysseus faces on his journey home; however, the section is in fact rife with layers of cultural meaning. A tale of outwitting a monster becomes a mythological mirror for imagined foreign relations in the minds of the Greeks as well as an illustration of Greek culture by a portrayal of its exact opposite in the Cyclopes. Here too place is important.

I have both discussed Ithaca and how it defines Odysseus and how the islands of Aeaea and Ogygia define the powerful characters of Circe and Calypso, as well as communicate their relationship to power and sexuality. In this chapter, my aim is to analyze the episode of the island of the Cyclopes, as detailed within Book 9, through the lens of place, geography, and culture. While Homer does not name the island of the Cyclopes, Odysseus as a storyteller identifies the land as something of utmost importance to an ancient traveler, one of potentiality and opportunity for human men. In characterizing the island both by what it possesses and what it lacks, Odysseus also characterizes the people who inhabit it, the Cyclopes who are isolationist and individualistic. His sentiments regarding the people of the island are not only confirmed but also compounded by the case study that is Polyphemus, who, in trapping Odysseus and his crew within his cave, makes them unwilling observers of the lifestyle of a Cyclops. In this manner, Homer defines and emphasizes the divide between the pastoral lifestyle of the Cyclopes and the sophisticated civilized lifestyle of Greek aristocrats such as Odysseus. By means of Odysseus’ observations of the land, how the Cyclops lives his day-to-day life, what and the way in which he eats, and the contrast of Greek customs

against those of Polyphemus, Homer portrays the imagined scenario of Greeks interacting with a foreign people and its potential for disastrous consequences.

A Land of Lack, a Land of Potential

Odysseus reaches the island of the Cyclopes early into his journey home, shortly after having left Troy and even more recently having encountered the land of the Lotus-Eaters. Here Odysseus and his crew encounter their first truly fantastical antagonist on the way to Ithaca, having come upon a land inhabited by giant monsters. However, Odysseus' interest as a storyteller is not in describing the physical appearance of the people, but rather in describing the land in which they dwell as well as their customs. Immediately upon arrival at the unnamed island of the Cyclopes, he begins to characterize their homeland for what it possesses as well as for what it lacks. In Odysseus' list of haves and have nots, he forms the distinct differentiations between his own culture and that of the Cyclopes.

“ἔνθεν δὲ προτέρω πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ· 105
Κυκλώπων δ' ἐς γαῖαν ὑπερφιάλων ἀθεμίστων
ικόμεθ', οἳ ῥα θεοῖσι πεποιθότες ἀθανάτοισιν
οὔτε φυτεύουσιν χερσὶν φυτὸν οὔτ' ἀρώσιν,
ἀλλὰ τὰ γ' ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα πάντα φύονται,
πυροὶ καὶ κριθαὶ ἠδ' ἄμπελοι, αἳ τε φέρουσιν 110
οἶνον ἐριστάφυλον, καὶ σφιν Διὸς ὄμβρος ἀέξει.
τοῖσιν δ' οὔτ' ἀγοραὶ βουληφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες,
ἀλλ' οἳ γ' ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων ναίουσι κάρηνα
ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι, θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος
παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων, οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν. 115
“νήσος ἔπειτα λάχεια παρὲκ λιμένος τετάνυσται,

γαίης Κυκλώπων οὔτε σχεδὸν οὔτ' ἀποτηλοῦ,
 ὑλήεσσ'· ἐν δ' αἴγες ἀπειρέσiai γεγάασιν
 ἄγριαi· οὐ μὲν γὰρ πάτος ἀνθρώπων ἀπερύκει,
 οὐδέ μιν εἰσοιχνεῦσι κυνηγέται, οἳ τε καθ' ὕλην 120
 ἄλγεα πάσχουσιν κορυφὰς ὀρέων ἐφέποντες,
 οὔτ' ἄρα ποίμνησιν καταἴσχεται οὔτ' ἀρότοισιν,
 ἀλλ' ἢ γ' ἄσπαρτος καὶ ἀνήροτος ἤματα πάντα
 ἀνδρῶν χηρεύει, βόσκει δέ τε μηκάδας αἴγας.
 οὐ γὰρ Κυκλώπεσσι νέες πάρα μιλοπάρηoi, 125
 οὐδ' ἄνδρες νηῶν ἐνι τέκτονες, οἳ κε κάμοιεν
 νῆας ἐυσσέλμους, αἳ κεν τελείοιεν ἕκαστα
 ἄστε' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων ἰκνεύμεναι, οἷά τε πολλὰ
 ἄνδρες ἐπ' ἀλλήλους νηυσὶν περόωσι θάλασσαν·
 οἳ κέ σφιν καὶ νῆσον ἐυκτιμένην ἐκάμοντο. 130
 οὐ μὲν γὰρ τι κακὴ γε, φέροι δέ κεν ὄρια πάντα·
 ἐν μὲν γὰρ λειμῶνες ἀλὸς πολιοῖο παρ' ὄχθας
 ὑδρηλοὶ μαλακοί· μάλα κ' ἄφθιτοὶ ἄμπελοι εἶεν.
 ἐν δ' ἄροσις λείη· μάλα κεν βαθὺ λήιον αἰεὶ
 εἰς ὄρας ἀμῶεν, ἐπεὶ μάλα πῖαρ ὑπ' οὔδας. 135
 ἐν δὲ λιμῆν εὐορμος, ἴν' οὐ χρεὼ πείσματός ἐστιν,
 οὔτ' εὐνάς βαλέειν οὔτε πρυμνήσι' ἀνάψαι,
 ἀλλ' ἐπικέλσαντας μεῖναι χρόνον εἰς ὃ κε ναυτέων
 θυμὸς ἐποτρύνη καὶ ἐπιπνεύσωσιν ἀῆται.

Thence we sailed further grieved in heart. And into the land of the
 arrogant and unlawful Cyclopes we came, trusting in the immortal gods,
 they neither plant crops with hands nor plow. But all these things, untilled
 and unplowed grow. Wheat, barley, and vines which bear fine grapes for
 wine, and the rain of Zeus makes it grow for them. Neither assemblies to
 take counsel nor laws exist for them, but they dwell mainly on the lofty
 peaks in hollow caves and each one governs over his children and spouse.
 They care nothing for each other. Now a fertile island has stretched
 outside the harbor, being neither near nor far away from the land of the
 Cyclopes, well-wooded. On it, boundless goats are wild, for no trodding of
 men keeps them away, nor do hunters enter it, who suffer sorrows in the

wood, chasing over the peaks of the mountains, occupied neither by flocks nor fields. But unsown and untilled all days it lacks men, but feeds bleating goats. For there are no red-prowed ships for the Cyclopes, nor are there men of ships among the craftsmen, who would build well-benched ships, which could accomplish every want passing upon the towns of men, just as men often cross the sea to each other's lands on ships. They also worked a well-built island for them, for it is not at all bad, but would bear everything in season. For on it are soft and well-watered meadows by the shores of the gray sea. Vines in particular would not be liable to perish in smooth plow land. They would always reap in season a very deep harvest, since it is so rich under the ground and in it is safe harbor, so that there was no need of rope nor to throw anchor stones or to hold fast to the stern. But they brought the ship in to remain for a time until the heart of the sailors stirred and fresh winds blew (tr. Van De Laarschot, 5.105-139).

While Odysseus quickly states that the Cyclopes are arrogant and unlawful in line 106 (Κυκλώπων...ὑπερφιάλων ἀθεμίστων), the reasoning for this characterization does not become apparent until later in the episode. Much like the identification of the house on Aeaea belonging to Circe, the collective personality of the Cyclopes is knowledge only available to Odysseus in hindsight. Prior to meeting Polyphemus, who is not given any name other than “the Cyclops” until the end of Book 9, the only other piece of information offered on the temperament of the Cyclopes is that they are exceedingly individualistic, to the point that they do not hold public assemblies and are described as not having laws, οὔτε θέμιστες (112). In this passage, Odysseus plants the thematic seed of Greek civilization vs foreign barbarity, as lines 112-115 highlight a key feature of civilization that the Cyclopes lack, which is a society regulated by established laws (Said 2011, 166). They lack a public for meeting as well, with no common area upon the island designated for social interaction. The connection between the Cyclopes' lack of assemblies and laws to barbarism and lack of community is then compounded by Odysseus' mentioning that each man is responsible only for his own family, and that the island's people care not for each other at all, θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος παίδων ἢ δ' ἀλόχων,

οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν (114-155). This behavior is emblematic of what Egbert J. Bakker refers to as “pre-civilization lack of societal constraints” (2013, 56). For without councils or assemblies, there is nothing to hold the behavior of individuals in check. As such, Polyphemus’ later actions are in opposition to no laws of his own people because they do not exist in the first place. Yet this statement also acts as a foreshadowing of the Cyclopes’ reaction to the cries of Polyphemus, further emphasizing their existence as an antithesis to the organized society of the Greeks (Said 2011, 166). Their carelessness and inability to be concerned with anyone of their own people outside of their immediate family thus becomes synonymous with their lawlessness.

Yet in this initial description of the island, it is not only the Cyclopes who are defined by what they lack, but also the land itself. This particular technique used by Odysseus is “description by negation”, utilized for the purpose of highlighting the coarse uncivilized nature of the Cyclopes (de Jong 2001, 233). They lack both instances in which they gather for assemblies and agriculture, for they do not plant crops themselves nor do they plow the land in order to grow them, οὔτε φυτεύουσιν χερσὶν φυτὸν οὔτ' ἀρόωσιν (108). The reason for this lack of agriculture, that all crops grow naturally on their own, is then stated in the following line (ἀλλὰ τά γ' ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα πάντα φύονται) (109). However, the reiteration of the land’s state as being untilled and unplowed emphasizes the lack of agriculture through closely placed repetition. The absence of agriculture is worthy of note in the characterization of the Cyclopes in that it is yet another “lack” that paints them as primitive, as agriculture forms the basis of civilization and organized society (Edwards 1993, 29). Agriculture and the organized production of crops are so critical to society formation because they can provide food on a scale that can feed a community.

Yet another major component seen as necessary by Odysseus for a functioning society, which the Cyclopes lack, is ships. Lines 125-129 are devoted to Odysseus' musings on this particular absence, detailing that there are neither ships nor shipbuilders among the Cyclopians, οὐδ' ἄνδρες νηῶν ἐνὶ τέκτονες, οἳ κε κάμοιεν νῆας ἐυσσέλμους (126-7). Thus, they lack both ships and the knowledge to build them, rendering them utterly isolated from the rest of the world and, "thus the commerce and colonization which it makes possible" (Said 2011, 166). For a society as dependent upon navigation as was that of the Greeks, the technology of ships and shipbuilding would have been perceived as critical to the formation of a complex society.

Furthermore, the nearby island upon which Odysseus leaves the bulk of his fleet during his encounter with Polyphemus is also rendered as uncivilized by means of its lack of hunters (οὐ μὲν γὰρ πάτος ἀνθρώπων ἀπερύκει, οὐδέ μιν εἰσοιχνεῦσι κυνηγέται) (119-20). As a result of there being no one to hunt the goats, they are numerous and wild, unlike the goats which exist in flocks both in the Greek world and even under the Cyclopes (ἐν δ' αἴγες ἀπειρέσιαι γεγάασιν ἄγριαι (118-9). However, Polyphemus does keep his flocks in order within his cave, sorting them by birth (χωρὶς μὲν πρόγονοι, χωρὶς δὲ μέτασσαι, χωρὶς δ' αὖθ' ἔρσαι (9.221-2). Outside his home, however, at least upon the neighboring island, they are allowed to roam, owned by no shepherd. Whether it is the mainland or the surrounding islands, the land of the Cyclopes is quickly categorized for what it does not have, which are the main components for constructing complex society as conceived by Odysseus, and by extension the Greeks.

Yet the land of the Cyclopes is also a land of potentiality. The first thing Odysseus notices upon reaching the nearby island is not the presence of any people, but goats and the pastoral landscape laid out before them untouched by Greek civilization.

While this is not the island of the Cyclopes itself, its proximity to their homeland marks it as existing at least in relative to the island of the Cyclopes. Therefore, I believe it is fair to include within the broader designation of “land of the Cyclopes”. Immediately, Odysseus begins to see the “potential” of the land as it would benefit men, claiming that it is not a bad land and could produce all manner of produce (οὐ μὲν γάρ τι κακὴ γε, φέροι δὲ κεν ὄρια πάντα) (131). There is land for grazing as evidenced by the boundless goats of the nearby island (118-9) and farmland ripe to be plowed in line 133 (μάλα κ’ ἄφθιτοι ἄμπελοι εἶεν. ἐν δ’ ἄροσις λείη). It is a place to construct a city complete with a spring and harbor, the latter of which provides safety for the ships of Odysseus and his companions (ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὐόρμος, ἴν’ οὐ χρεὼ πείσματός ἐστιν, οὔτ’ εὐνάς βαλέειν οὔτε πρυμνήσι’ ἀνάψαι (136-7). For all its lack, the land of the Cyclopes, in the mind of Odysseus, is ideal in its capacity for all the things it could be. The Greek Odysseus gazes upon the untamed lands of the Cyclopes and sees raw material to be changed and accommodated from its natural state. In this, he takes up the mindset of a colonizer appraising new land for what it could be as opposed to what it is, a “mental ordering of this landscape in terms of the degree to which the land is shaped by human intervention expresses...an implicit hierarchy favoring the πόλις, the protected center, the space most thoroughly transformed for human ends” (Edwards 1993, 28). This urbanized perspective of the island’s landscape views it not as something to be appreciated in its current state, but rather for what it could offer should it be made suitable for urbanized human life. It is perhaps this initial mix of detriment and appraisal of the island and its rendering as an uninhabited place ripe to be taken and colonized that sets the tone for the rest of the travelers’ stay on the island.

Like Calypso on her solitary island, the Cyclopes are also said to reside in caves throughout the mountainous peaks (οἱ γ' ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων ναίουσι κάρηνα ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι) (113-4). Not much later, Odysseus gives the following description when he and his companions come upon the home of Polyphemus.

ἔνθα δ' ἐπ' ἐσχατιῇ σπέος εἶδομεν ἄγχι θαλάσσης,
ὑψηλόν, δάφνησι κατηρεφές. ἔνθα δὲ πολλὰ
μῆλ', οἷές τε καὶ αἴγες, ἰαύεσκον· περὶ δ' αὐλή
ὑψηλὴ δέδμητο κατωρυχέεσσι λίθοισι 185
μακρῆσιν τε πίτυσιν ἰδὲ δρυσὶν ὑψικόμοισιν.
ἔνθα δ' ἀνὴρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος, ὅς ῥα τὰ μῆλα
οἷος ποιμαίνεσκεν ἀπόπροθεν· οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους
πωλεῖτ', ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ἦδη.
καὶ γὰρ θαῦμ' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, οὐδὲ ἐώκει 190
ἀνδρὶ γε σιτοφάγῳ, ἀλλὰ ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι
ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὃ τε φαίνεται οἷον ἀπ' ἄλλων.

There on a cliff near the sea we saw a cave, lofty, covered with laurels. There, many flocks, sheep and goats, passed the night. Around it was built a high courtyard with quarried stone and with tall pines and towering oaks. There a monstrous man slept, who shepherded his flock alone and afar. He mingled with no others but lived apart knowing lawless things. For he was created a monstrous marvel, not at all like a man who eats bread, but like a wooded peak of lofty mountains, which appears alone, apart from the rest (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.182-92).

The passage illustrates what greets Odysseus and his men as they approach the cave of Polyphemus, located near the sea and placed high upon the land. Again, like the hollow cave which Calypso calls home, Polyphemus' home is surrounded by greenery and foliage in the form of the laurels which cover it (δάφνησι κατηρεφές) (183), as well as the tall pines and high-crested oaks (μακρῆσιν τε πίτυσιν ἰδὲ δρυσὶν ὑψικόμοισιν)

(186). The Cyclopes' dwelling in caves is yet another indicator of their uncivilized nature. For the Greeks, houses, such as those inhabited by Odysseus and the men back on Ithaca, were associated with the birth of civilization. Suzanne Said notes that in *Prometheus Bound*, the birth of civilization is marked by transitioning from “deep sunless caverns” to “brick houses warmed by the sun” (2011, 166). This also seems a stark contrast to Odysseus, who has a tree within his house, making it more open and akin to civilization. Thus, the living arrangements of the Cyclopes, even as they are closer to nature, represent a state of existence once inhabited by humans but abandoned after societal development which allowed them to live in houses. In this manner, the Cyclopes as a whole are further othered and deemed less cultured due to their lack of constructed houses.

However, there does appear to be evidence of some degree of refinement, given the presence of a courtyard built with quarried stone (περι δ' ἀυλὴ ὑψηλὴ δέδμητο κατωρυχέεσσι λίθοισι) (184-5). Firstly, the inclusion of a courtyard implies a semblance of grandeur, a feature likely to be found in a wealthy Greek home as opposed to a cave. Secondly, the adjective κατωρυχέεσσι used to describe the stone used to build the courtyard is defined as meaning “quarried” or “having been dug out” (LSJ, s.v. κατῶρυξ). The implication then is that there has been intentional and purposeful effort on the part of Polyphemus in constructing his home, even if it is not meant to augment a house. There is also the ordered penning of the animals, which suggests methodical arrangement of the Cyclopes' living space (221-22). Therefore, while Polyphemus is indeed associated with the savagery of his fellow Cyclopes by virtue of living in a cave, the ways in which he augments it denotes a degree of sophistication.

This description serves the dual purpose of detailing both the Cyclops' home and his character in order that the two may be seen as an appropriate fit for each other. Just as the cave in which he lives is “high” and surrounded by woods, so is Polyphemus, in his monstrous height and form like a wooded peak of lofty mountains (καὶ γὰρ θαῦμ' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, οὐδὲ ἐώκει... ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὃ τε φαίνεται οἷον ἀπ' ἄλλων) (190-93) (de Jong 2001, 236). Much like his home, he is shown as existing separate from all the other Cyclopes, both repeatedly mentioned as being separate and far off, even among the individualistic Cyclopes. In the same breath in which Odysseus calls Polyphemus monstrous (πελώριος, 187), he also states that the Cyclops lives alone (οἶος) and afar (ἀπόπροθεν) (188). This point is then emphasized by the fact that he interacts with none of the others but lives apart knowing “lawless things” in lines 198-99 (οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους πωλεῖτ', ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ἤδη) and yet again in the last line devoted to illustrating Polyphemus as a character in line 192 (ὃ τε φαίνεται οἷον ἀπ' ἄλλων). Unlike Calypso and Circe, the Cyclops lives on a land occupied by people of his own kind, and unlike Circe and Calypso, he is also not beautiful. He is a tall, physically powerful, and imposing monster whose monstrosity must be constantly reiterated to communicate his savage nature. But also like the goddesses who exert power over Odysseus, Polyphemus is isolated and alone, even among his own peers. He is close to being part of the very landscape by virtue of his physically imposing presence which is compared to a mountain.

Shortly after arriving at the island, Odysseus is able to draw up a swift yet detailed character sketch of the land and its inhabitants, with hindsight giving him the knowledge to foreshadow what is to come. In so doing, he casts the Cyclopes and their land as reminiscent of a time before the development of “proper” civilization. He

achieves this with a detailed yet simplistic list of what they have and have not, what they are and are not.

Customs and Food: Evidence of Cultural Divide

These contrasts between what the land lacks and what it possesses act as a parallel to the stark differences between Greeks and foreigners, and it is perhaps not the conflict with a monster that is the crux of the story, but rather the culture clash which creates it. The Cyclopes are framed as savage, rustic, and lawless, while Odysseus represents the sophisticated cosmopolitan aristocrat. Moreover, when Odysseus and his men enter the cave of the Cyclops, we begin to see the more intimate ways in which they differ in their customs and diet.

Upon entering Polyphemus' home, Odysseus begins to narrate what they find within.

ἐλθόντες δ' εἰς ἄντρον ἐθηέμεσθα ἕκαστα.
ταρσοὶ μὲν τυρῶν βρῖθον, στείνοντο δὲ σηκοὶ
ἀρνῶν ἠδ' ἐρίφων· διακεκριμέναι δὲ ἕκασται 220
ἔρχατο, χωρὶς μὲν πρόγονοι, χωρὶς δὲ μέτασσαι,
χωρὶς δ' αὖθ' ἔρσαι. ναῖον δ' ὀρῶ ἄγγεα πάντα,
γαυλοὶ τε σκαφίδες τε, τετυγμένα, τοῖς ἐνάμελγεν.

Entering the cave, we gazed at each thing. The crates were heavy with cheeses, and pens were full of lambs and kids. Each kind had been confined separately, in one place the first-born, the recently born ones in another, and the newly born in another. And all the vessels were swimming with whey, the milk pails and bowls, made ready, into which he milked (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.218-23).

The layout and items Odysseus and his men find within the Cyclops' cave affirm the rustic, pastoral lifestyle of the Cyclopes. Despite the unsophisticated nature implied

by the illustration of the setting outside, inside the intimate sphere of Polyphemos' home, there is orderliness, particularly in the arrangement of the lambs and kids (220-222). They are organized in their separate pens by age, which denotes a sense of purpose as well as concerted care for the animals on the part of Polyphemos, a point that will be stressed throughout the rest of the episode (de Jong 2001, 238). However, the description also shows that he lives with his animals in the home, something which no one of Odysseus' aristocratic rank would ever do. This detail encapsulates the lifestyle of Polyphemos as that of a rustic shepherd, existing in opposition to the city-dweller of the *polis* that is Odysseus (Bakker 2013, 59). From the parents of these lambs and kids (the goats and sheep which at the moment are out to pasture with Polyphemos) are produced the cheeses found in the cave (ταρσοὶ μὲν τυρῶν βριθόν) (219). In the Greek world, the regular consumption of dairy products, such as cheese and particularly milk, which the Cyclops receives by daily milking his flock and consumes with his meals of human flesh, is foreign. It is especially so, given that it is implied that he does not eat any of his animals and instead relies on a diet that is dairy-based and vegetarian (Bakker 2013, 57). Or rather, regular drinking of milk is foreign when consumed by adults, "for milk is sustenance for a nursing child, not a grown man", and in this capacity Polyphemos' diet of dairy is yet another indicator of his primal, animalistic nature (Clayton 2011, 257). In contrasting Polyphemos' lifestyle to that of the *polis*-dwelling man through his diet and the pastoral layout of his home, Homer portrays him not just as the antithesis to the civilized man, but also removes him from the state of adulthood.

In the time spent waiting for their host to return, Odysseus and his men sacrifice some of the animals and eat some of the cheeses. They do this fully intent on taking advantage of the tradition of ξενία, as Odysseus believes to be their right as guests. Then,

with the audience already primed to witness the arrogant nature of the Cyclopes by Odysseus' initial description, Homer crystallizes the framing of their nature as primitive by means of the first interaction between Odysseus and Polyphemus. After he has done his chores of milking his flock and curdling and storing the milk, Polyphemus notices their presence and addresses them.

“ὦ ξεῖνοι, τίνες ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθ' ὑγρὰ κέλευθα;
ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἦ μασιδίως ἀλάλησθε,
οἷά τε ληιστῆρες, ὑπεῖρ ἄλλα, τοί τ' ἀλόωνται
ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι κακὸν ἄλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες;” 255

“O strangers, who are you? Whence do you sail over the watery ways? Is it on some business or do you wander at random, like pirates, over the sea, who roam risking their lives and bearing evil to other peoples?” (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.252-5)

To which, despite being struck with fear at the sound of his monstrous voice (φθόγγον πέλωρον, 257), Odysseus responds:

‘ἡμεῖς τοι Τροίηθεν ἀποπλαγχθέντες Ἀχαιοὶ
παντοίοις ἀνέμοισιν ὑπὲρ μέγα λαῖτμα θαλάσσης, 260
οἶκαδε ἰέμενοι, ἄλλην ὁδὸν ἄλλα κέλευθα
ἦλθομεν· οὕτω που Ζεὺς ἤθελε μητίσασθαι.
λαοὶ δ' Ἀτρεΐδew Ἀγαμέμνονος εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι,
τοῦ δὴ νῦν γε μέγιστον ὑπουράνιον κλέος ἐστί·
τόσσην γὰρ διέπερσε πόλιν καὶ ἀπώλεσε λαοὺς 265
πολλοὺς. ἡμεῖς δ' αὖτε κιχανόμενοι τὰ σὰ γοῦνα
ἰκόμεθ', εἴ τι πόροις ξεινήιον ἠὲ καὶ ἄλλως
δοίης δωτίνην, ἣ τε ξείνων θέμις ἐστίν.

ἀλλ' αἰδεῖο, φέριστε, θεούς· ἰκέται δέ τοί εἰμεν,
 Ζεὺς δ' ἐπιτιμήτωρ ἰκετάων τε ξείνων τε, 270
 ξείνιος, ὃς ξείνοισιν ἅμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ.'

'We Achaeans having been led away from Troy by all winds over the great expanse of the sea, going home, we have come another way, by another path. Whatever Zeus wished to devise. We declare that we are the people of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, whose fame is now greatest under heaven. For he sacked such a city and destroyed many peoples. But we having arrived approach your knees, if you would offer some hospitality or ever some other gift of strangers you would give, as it is the law of strangers. But have respect, master, for the gods. We are your suppliants. Zeus is the avenger of suppliants and guests, of hospitality, who follows revered strangers.' (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.259-71)

Polyphemus' response, however, as we can see, is rather "un-Greek" as he refuses to grant Odysseus' request for hospitality.

‘νήπιός εἰς, ὃ ξεῖν’, ἧ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,
 ὅς με θεοὺς κέλεαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι·
 οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν 275
 οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν·
 οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος πεφιδοίμην
 οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ' ἐτάρων, εἰ μὴ θυμὸς με κελεύοι.

You are a fool, o stranger, having come from afar who calls me to either fear or avoid the gods. For the Cyclopes care not for aegis-bearing Zeus, nor the blessed gods, since we are greater masters by far. Nor would I avoid the wrath of Zeus sparing either you or your friends unless my own heart bid me (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.273-78).

He then proceeds to eat the crew two at a time.

ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἀναΐξας ἐτάροις ἐπὶ χειρᾶς ἴαλλε,

σὺν δὲ δύω μάρψας ὥς τε σκύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ
κόπτ'· ἐκ δ' ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέε, δεῦε δὲ γαῖαν. 290
τοὺς δὲ διὰ μελεῖστί ταμῶν ὠπλίσσατο δόρπον·
ἦσθιε δ' ὥς τε λέων ὄρεσίτροφος, οὐδ' ἀπέλειπεν

But having sprung up he laid hands upon my companions, having taken hold of two together he dashes them upon the earth like puppies and brains flowed onto the ground, and it drenched the earth. And having cut them limb from limb he prepared dinner and ate them like a mountain-bred lion, and he left nothing. (tr. Van De Laarschot, 9.288-92).

The inhabitants of the island, or at least Polyphemos it seems, do not practice *ξενία*. The Cyclopan host gives Odysseus and his crew nothing, which is understandable given that they have already taken food from him. However, Polyphemos takes his displeasure a step further. He imprisons the men and then harms them, dashing their heads upon the ground to kill them as one would a puppy (ὥς τε σκύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ κόπτ'), breaking all tenants of Greek hospitality (289). Prior to that injustice, Polyphemos also inquires as to Odysseus' identity, a request that to a modern audience does not seem out of place, but in Homeric tradition is rather a blatant social faux-pas. As Catherine Tracy states, "in *Odyssey* 3, Nestor explicitly says that it is more appropriate (κάλλιον) to wait to ask about a stranger's identity until after he has eaten...his comment suggests a general principle of hospitality" (2014, 4). In contrast, Polyphemos does not even ask if they have eaten anything while he was away. Instead, he interrogates them, demanding to know who they are and why they are in his home. He inquires whether they have come all this way on some sort of business (πρῆξιν) or if they merely wander at random (μαυιδίως ἀλάλησθε). Already, instead of welcoming Odysseus, he demands answers and even probes into his newfound guests' motivations. His line of questioning then immediately turns to an accusation, insinuating that Odysseus and his men are pirates

(ληιστῆρες), which he characterizes as “bearing evil to other peoples” (κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες) (292). So early into first contact, the hospitality ritual, which is so universal to the Greek world, is warped by the suspicions of Polyphemus (de Jong 2001, 236). Tension fills the air in an instant as the Greek men sense the true expanse of the cultural divide between them and the Cyclopes.

Yet still, Odysseus attempts to initiate the proper rites of ξενία by giving a speech that not only characterizes himself and his men as suppliants at Polyphemus’ mercy but also provides the basic instructions of ξενία. While incapable of acting out the actual gesture of supplication of clasp one’s knees, given Polyphemus’ size and stature, Odysseus does invoke the supplication ritual, “ἡμεῖς δ’ αὖτε κιχάνομενοι τὰ σὰ γούνα ἰκόμεθ’” (DeJong 2001, 240). In this way, Odysseus casts himself and his men as being at the Cyclops’ mercy and compassion as a host and attempts to impress upon Polyphemus the importance of his role as host. Thus, according to Odysseus, they are well within their rights as suppliants to request guest-gifts from their host Polyphemus as is the custom of ξενία (de Jong 2001, 240). He even invokes the very basis of ξενία as if explaining to a child who does not understand: it is the custom of strangers and therefore expected (ἢ τε ξείνων θέμις ἐστίν) (268). With the word θέμις, Odysseus attempts to invoke law in a land defined by lawlessness, as evidenced by the many times the word ἄθεμις is used to identify the Cyclopes. In addition to this, Odysseus proceeds to weave a warning into his entreaty of the consequences of denying hospitality, stressing specifically the role of Zeus as the guardian and avenger of guests (Ζεὺς δ’ ἐπιτιμῆτωρ ἰκετᾶων τε ξείνων τε, ξείνιος, ὃς ξείνοισιν ἄμ’ αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ.) (270-1). If Odysseus cannot convince the Cyclopes to grant him hospitality on the basis of ξείνων θέμις, then he will attempt to do also by appealing to either reverence for or fear of the gods.

It is pertinent that Odysseus' audience is the Phaeacians, who, like Polyphemus, are descended from Poseidon through Nausithous, father of Alcinous. Even before narrating his story to the Phaeacians, who have shown Odysseus the hospitality Polyphemus did not, his request for supplication is met with acceptance by Nausicaa, Alcinous' daughter. He comes to her as a suppliant, beseeching her (λίσσεσθαι, 6.146) and even flatters her by comparing her to goddesses such as Artemis (Ἀρτέμιδί σε ἐγώ γε, Διὸς κούρη μέγαλοιο, εἰδὸς τε μέγεθός τε φύην τ' ἄγχιστα εἶσκω (6.151-2). In contrast to Polyphemus, who responds to this request with violence, Nausicaa and then the rest of the Phaeacians give him ξενία. In Odysseus' recounting of his encounter with Polyphemus to the Phaeacians, he presents a counterexample of the hospitality shown to him by his generous hosts. Both are descendants of the god Poseidon, but only one is civilized as exemplified by their shared practice of ξενία with the Greeks.

Yet were Odysseus successful in his endeavor to persuade Polyphemus to act as a proper host and perform a vital Greek custom, the consistent setup of differences between Greek and Cyclops would not come to fruition. In his refusal of Odysseus' request for guest-gifts, he begins by calling Odysseus a fool (νήπιός, 275) for even considering that he might fear (δειδίμεν, 276) or avoid (ἀλέασθαι, 276) the gods at all. He then says that the Cyclopes heed (ἀλέγουσιν) neither aegis-bearing Zeus (Διὸς αἰγιόχου) nor any of the blessed gods (οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων) (275-6). His reasoning is simply because the Cyclopes are superior masters, and by much (ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν) (276). Yet the gods he claims to care nothing for are the very same gods who prior in the book are said to have bestowed prosperity upon the land of the Cyclopes, οἳ ῥα θεοῖσι πεποιθότες ἀθανάτοισιν (107). The Cyclopes are even described as "trusting" (πεποιθότες) in the immortal gods to provide for them agriculturally, and Zeus himself is later said to provide

rain to water them (σφιν Διὸς ὄμβρος ἀέξει) (111). Thus, we arrive at somewhat of a paradox when it comes to understanding the Cyclopes. For if they are trusting in the immortal gods and Zeus to provide for them as Odysseus says they do, then how is it possible for them to display such arrogance towards the gods? Is Polyphemus not biting the many hands that feed him?

Heubeck and Hoekstra claim that the Cyclopes' benefitting of the gods' favor is not meant to imply any particular faith in the gods, or indeed any contradiction to lines 275-6 (1989, 20). However, to say there is no connection between this divine abundance and Polyphemus' arrogance seems dismissive, especially given Polyphemus' declaration that his people are better than the gods. Perhaps this is not the contradiction it initially may appear to be, but rather a natural consequence of the Cyclopes having wanted for nothing, and as such developing disrespect for their divine benefactors. Bakker states that Polyphemus' godlessness is apparent in the fact that he lives with his animals and due to his meat exclusive diet (2013, 57). According to Bakker, sacrificial logic dictates that vegetarianism is indicative of a godless way of life (2013, 57). In a culture where there is no consumption of meat, there is also no sacrifice of animals, and therefore no communication with the gods through that sacrifice. However, while this provides a link between the lifestyle of Polyphemus and his disdain for the gods, I believe there is yet another underlying explanation that may also shed light on the reasoning behind the Cyclopes' lawlessness and hyper-individualism.

As stated previously, the Cyclopes have no need for agriculture since the land, nourished by the gods, provides everything for them, "living as they do in a kind of Golden Age, in which the earth brings forth food spontaneously" (Said 2011, 167). As a result of this, there is a significant lack of lack. The Cyclopes want nothing because all is

provided for them. They need nothing. We have already established that a need for large quantities of food creates a need for farming and plowing, which creates the backbone for a complex society and in turn the need for assemblies to help govern a people. These are all activities that require interaction with other people, such as one's neighbors, but the rustic lifestyle of the Cyclopes does not allow for this social interaction. Instead, keeping in line with their existence in opposition to the city-dweller bound by cultural norms and laws, they exist in a manner more akin to "nomadism, hunting, and even brigandage" (Bakker 2013, 60). None of these lifestyles truly requires the aid of others, and indeed Polyphemus living all on his own separate from all the rest of his kind compounds this isolation. They have naught but their own passions...to guide them and are unrestrained in their behavior in the absence of laws or any justice as a consequence of their actions (Cook 1995, 60). This sentiment is evident in Polyphemus' statement that will only obey the will of his θυμός (278). It is no small wonder then, that following his blinding, Polyphemus' neighbors have little reason to care for him and his cries of pain. After all, why should they care for his pain and suffering when he has gone out of his way to avoid them, particularly when the very prosperity they enjoy from the gods they disparage makes it unnecessary to interact with him at all? Lack of need produces lack of reliance upon one's peers, and inevitably lack of empathy and respect for both their benefactors and each other.

In his failure to acknowledge and grant ξενία to Odysseus and his men, Polyphemus and by extension the other Cyclopes of the island are cast by Homer as violent barbarians, violating the trust of their guests who rightly, at least in their perspective as Greeks, expect to be sheltered. In response, Odysseus and his men are themselves forced to violate the very ξενία they attempted to instigate by tricking and

harming their host, and are reduced to breaking their own customs in order to escape with their lives. One party violating the custom results in the other having to do the same lest they not survive the encounter.

Conclusions

To quote Egbert Bakker, the episode of the Cyclops and the island he inhabits is “a definition of the standard conception of Greek culture as seen through the description of its opposite” (2013, 56). The Cyclopes represent everything the Greeks are not, all the qualities they lack becoming the end-product of all that is granted to them by their lush paradisiacal environment. The blessings of the land granted to them by the gods, blessings in which Odysseus sees value for the benefit of *polis*-dwelling humans, are also what cause them to be arrogant and isolationist. When agriculture is rendered unnecessary, the development of civilization becomes stunted, resulting in an apathetic and lawless culture whose only interest is that of the individual, not the collective. However, the arrival of the Greek Odysseus challenges this pastoral existence with its lack of shared customs or meat-eating diets to facilitate communion with the gods. Odysseus’ experiences on the island of the Cyclopes demonstrate what could best be described as a thought experiment as to how first contact with a foreign people in one’s travels could go drastically wrong. The land itself provides a tempting landscape to colonize and transform for human needs, a task to which the Greeks were no stranger, because they had to colonize Italy and surrounding islands circa the 8th century BCE. Yet in *Odyssey* 9, any attempts at colonization are thwarted by the disastrous results of Odysseus attempting to entreat Polyphemus for hospitality, a custom which Polyphemus’ people do not share. Yet the conflict is merely the culmination of all the ways in which Greeks and Cyclopes are cultural opposites, making it impossible for them to interact, let

alone negotiate in peace. Ultimately, the interaction with Polyphemus is an imagined encounter reported by a highly unreliable narrator. However, the possibility of cultural clash or misunderstanding would have been a valid concern whilst exploring and colonizing the Mediterranean. The perilous fallout of failed foreign relations in Book 9 of the *Odyssey* shows a worst-case scenario that reflects fears of the unknown world, even as the external realm presents tempting prospects.

V: CLOSING THOUGHTS

The *Odyssey* is a rich tale full of monsters and adventures, yet it is also a story that speaks of the various relationships the Greeks had with place, particularly that which was shared with one's own home. Continuously, we see characters shaped and defined by the places which they inhabit, and which in turn also impact the environment around them. However, it is only in analyzing these various relationships that we also begin to understand the complex understandings of personal identity, gender and power, and even the qualities which are necessary for the creation of civilization held within the Greek imagination. Odysseus' journey is as much about navigating the wanderings of the imagination in relation to the world as it is about navigating the physical path home to Ithaca.

As Odysseus' ultimate goal, Ithaca serves to define Odysseus. He is reintegrated into society through tests of his identity which connect him to the place. Contained within Ithaca are social, familial, and even environmental connections (trees, dogs) which metaphorically and physically root him to the land. Through his family-tree and status as the son of Laertes, he is enmeshed with the power structure of Ithaca as head of the royal family. Furthermore, his bloodline will continue through his son Telemachus so long as

he is able to re-establish his identity in Ithaca through revealing himself and reclaiming his political and social position. Two of these tests of identity involve his relationship to both his wife Penelope and his father Laertes and to the land by means of trees. In proving his intimate knowledge of the marriage bed as having been built from a tree by his own hands, Odysseus confirms his marriage to Penelope, affirming both their relationship and his hold on the throne through union with the queen. Reuniting with Laertes, he establishes their connection through his childhood recollection of the trees bequeathed to him by his father as inheritance. Dogs such as Argos show themselves to also be a mirror to the state of affairs and the state of their master. Argos becomes a mirror for Odysseus' home, a fine hound that has been rendered old and full of parasites from neglect, a parallel to the oikos being bled dry by the suitors. Ithaca acts as an example for Greek society juxtaposed against the world at large full of dangers, yet also opportunity. Yet it is only within the boundaries of one's own home and culture that whatever gains they make while abroad can be properly enjoyed. Ithaca is not just a home; it is the crux of Odysseus' identity and must recognize him before he can reintegrate himself into Greek society.

On the islands of Aeaia and Ogygia, we meet Circe and Calypso and, like Odysseus, we stumble upon places that reveal fears of Greek men regarding women in power. Both women represent the dual role of hinderer/helper often prescribed for female characters, but the places they inhabit reflect the circumstances required for them to possess the power necessary for that role. The islands they call home are inhabited only by themselves, isolated and far away from the civilization of the *polis* and the presence of men who would otherwise enforce male dominion over them. Within the confines of their crafted worlds, they are surrounded by overgrown wilderness and nature that is both

paradisiacal yet strange and otherworldly. In contrast to the world of men inhabited by Odysseus, they exist in a state of primordial nature thronged with animals. In a world of patriarchal authority, Circe and Calypso exist cut off from it all, and their power is evident in their ability to weave and sing, actions which equate them to the poet and exemplify their power over the narrative. In their separation, they are allowed to possess power, and from that power they are allowed to exert sexual authority over whatever men find themselves in their lands. Their spheres are distinctly feminine and communicate the power allowed to them from their isolation, as well as the threat they pose sexually to Odysseus and men in general.

Finally, there is the island of antitheses to Greek culture, namely the land of the Cyclopes. Living in a land which Odysseus characterizes equally by what it lacks and its potential, the Cyclopes as foreigners who represent everything the Ithacans, and by extension, the Greeks, are not. Where the Greeks are a people who utilize naval navigation and agriculture, building a society that involves community and social interaction, the Cyclopes are primitive in their lives as pastoralist shepherds who outright shun each other's company. It is not clear, however, if many of the things the Cyclopes lack results from the gifts of the gods, that is, abundant harvests and rain. Do they lack assemblies and care for each other because they lack agriculture? Do they lack agriculture, the crux of civilization, because they have no need for it? Do they not sacrifice because they do not work or do they not have the "gifts" of a social life because they do not work? Ultimately, what is posed is a rather circular chicken and egg issue. Regardless, the result of Polyphemus' godlessness and violence is the same. The land of the Cyclopes is a place within the cultural geography of the *Odyssey* defined by its contrast to the "civilized" home of the Greek *polis*, as well as that of his audience, the

Phaeacians. The *polis* of the Greeks is represented by Odysseus, who displays a vision for human transformation of pastoral land and customs of hospitality. The adventure details an imagined clash of Greek and foreign cultures which would be an expected anxiety as the Greeks began to interact with other peoples.

The *Odyssey* is as much an exploration of the Greek imagination of the unknown world as it is a recollection of Odysseus' many adventures on his voyage. Through oral tradition, Homer explores the many dangers and anxieties associated with going abroad, whether those dangers be foreigners personified as monsters, strange lands full of temptation, or the risk of shipwreck and the anonymous death of drowning at sea. At the beginning and end of it all is the home realm of Ithaca, waiting for both Odysseus' return and the reclamation of his identity which is imbedded there. Although Odysseus' adventures are fantastical, they mirror real human fears and anxieties about travel and how the Greeks perceived their homeland in relation to the rest of the world. Although the external world is where a hero gathers a glorious legacy, it is the home realm where his actual identity lies in wait for him to validate with his return.

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