# Victims of the Gods' Vengeance

This excerpt is the main body of chapter three of my dissertation, "Homeric Tisis: Narrative Revenge and the Poetics of Justice in the Odyssey." The following should serve to contextualize the argument of the excerpt that begins on the next page.

*After reviewing in my first chapter how earlier scholars have narrowly analyzed τίσις, "retribution," in terms of etymology or economic/transactional relations between heroes, I argue in my second chapter that it serves a central thematic role in the* Odyssey. *I establish a new and better contextualized definition for τίσις through an inductive examination of the first, programmatic usage of the theme—the vengeance of Orestes, which Zeus cites in his opening speech. The case of Orestes' τίσις is paradigmatic within the* Odyssey*: characters regularly allude to it as a comparison to their present situation.*

*Under my analysis, τίσις signifies an entire narrative pattern consisting of seven stages:*

| Stage | Generic Sequence | "Oresteia" Sequence |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Background conditions | Orestes and Agamemnon have left Mycenae, leaving behind Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. |
| 2 | Warning | Zeus sends Hermes to warn Aegisthus. He is not persuaded. |
| 3 | Preparation I | Wooing of Clytemnestra. Plotting Agamemnon's murder (setting ambush). |
| 4 | Precipitating crime | Adultery with Clytemnestra. Murder of Agamemnon. |
| 5 | Preparation II | Orestes returns to Mycenae. |
| 6 | Retributive killing | Orestes kills Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. |
| 7 | New conditions | Aegisthus has repaid in full. |

*This narrative pattern serves two main purposes: it acts as an artistic tool in the singer's re-composition and performance of the poem and makes actions and agents morally intelligible to audiences.*

*In chapter three, "Victims of the Gods' Vengeance," I consider two examples of τίσις that have the poem's protagonists as victims.*

# 3. Victims of the Gods' Vengeance

In chapter two I established how Orestes' τίσις functions as a paradigmatic example of the narrative of "retribution." The poet uses this narrative several more times in the *Odyssey*. These other occurrences conform to the same basic pattern, though some interesting differences present themselves. No realization of the theme in words takes a form identical to another in all its particulars. To put it in Saussurean terms, every occurrence of τίσις has a unique expression in the *parole* of the poem, as opposed to its unexpressed form in the poem's *langue*. This is inevitable where the precise circumstances (or, in textual terms, context) of the performance are never the same. Like all masterful artists, the poet of the *Odyssey* is attuned to the implications of context, the space in which each line, each phrase of his performance lives. Thus the poet uses the formal tool of the τίσις theme creatively, highlighting or minimizing certain elements for artistic effect as suits the context. But I stress that this practice is entirely traditional, not the stamp of the poet's "originality," over and "against" his tradition.[1]

Among the dozen or so occurrences of the theme in the poem, the central, organizing τίσις narrative is Odysseus' plot of retribution against the suitors. Though

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[1] My view here is consistent with Foley's 1990 and 1999 and Edwards' 1980, esp. 1, interpretation of Homeric technique. I oppose this view to notions such as Russo's 1968 that that the poet showed his skill in so far as he worked "against his tradition." My view is that it is much more consistent with the realities of oral-poetic performance that he worked through his tradition, which already contained the practice of manipulating formal features.

this plot is crucial to the program of the poem, I argue that it is atypical in certain striking ways. But before I argue this point further, I need to extend the analysis I began in the last chapter of the contours of τίσις to an investigation of how the theme functions in its other iterations in the poem. Most prominent in my analysis is a set of major τίσις narratives that have the poem's protagonists—Odysseus, his companions, and their allies—as victims of retribution. Far from being merely background to my study of Odysseus' τίσις against the suitors, my analysis of these other narratives begins to explicate some of the main aspects of the ideology of τίσις in the poem: a rigorous observance of symbolic, talionic justice, the ease with which those in control of the language of a narrative—in particular the poet of the *Odyssey*—can manipulate such a system in favor of their own biases, and the ultimate failures of a system of justice thus conceived to bring about a harmonious order for society. I take up these issues in more detail in part two.

## *3.1 Divine Justice: The τίσις of Zeus*

Though Odysseus' τίσις dominates the plot of the poem, the first intimations of the theme of retribution come in the proem and center on another agent (1.6–9):

> ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὡς ἑτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἱέμενός περ·
> <u>αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν</u> ὄλοντο,
> νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἠελίοιο
> ἤσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν <u>ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ</u>.
>
> But even so he could not save his companions, though he longed to.

For they perished by their own recklessness—
fools—who ate the cattle of Hyperion Helios.
He took from them the day of their return.

As the paradigmatic example of Orestes' τίσις theme shows a few lines later, this language is part of the traditional diction of the τίσις theme. These few lines present succinctly the narrative of τίσις: Odysseus' companions, though forewarned (as ἀτασθαλίῃσιν denotes),[2] commit a crime that elicits a retributive response. They thus die as the avenger has brought about a new, "just" arrangement.

The elements of the background to this theme (stage 1) appear in Circe's warning to Odysseus (12.127–36). Two nymphs, Lampetie and Phaethusa, the daughters of Helios, watch over the herds of immortal cattle and sheep. Their mother, Neaera, has stationed them on the island, "far off" (τηλόθι, 135), which implies the absence of their parents, as does Lampetie's later mission to inform Helios of the crimes that transpire (374–75). This arrangement provides the opportunity for Odysseus' companions to commit their transgression and conforms to the established pattern for τίσις. The poet's desire to keep to this thematic pattern—in particular, the motif of the master's unwitting absence while the crime is plotted—requires that he limit Helios' perception in this episode, contrary to his depiction elsewhere as all-perceiving.[3]

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[2] See p. 18–21 above.

[3] Cf. 11.109, 323, where Helios is said to "see all things and hear all things" (πάντ' ἐφορᾷ καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούει). This characterization comes meaningfully in Teiresias' and Odysseus' warnings against eating Helios' cattle, where the implication in these admonishments is that Helios is sure to know it if they kill the cattle. Cf. the scholium (in Dindorf) ad 12.374: ἐναντίον τοῦτο τῷ "Ἥλιος δ' ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' Footnote cont. next pg.

ἀτασθαλίᾱ denotes reckless indifference in the face of a warning of impending retribution (stage 2). Odysseus' companions ignore his clear, thrice-repeated command not to eat the cattle (12.271–76, 297–302, 320–23), based on the warnings he had received from Teiresias and Circe (11.105–17, 12.127–41). These repetitions highlight the moral element of the theme in this iteration, underlining the culpability of the companions in their own demise, just as Zeus emphasizes Aegisthus' acting with ἀτασθαλίᾱ and "beyond fate" in order to highlight that perpetrator's blameworthiness (1.34–35).[4] Words on the stem ἀτασθαλ- are part of what Irene de Jong has called "character-language";[5] that is, they are terms of moral censure restricted in usage to direct speech. De Jong notes two exceptions to this rule out of thirty occurrences for the stem ἀτασθαλ-: one is in "embedded focalization" (21.146) and the other is the one in the proem. The narrator has made a specific point in this proem of subjectively condemning the actions of the companions.[6] Odysseus will also use this language of moral censure for ἀτασθαλίᾱ in his warning to them not to eat Helios' cattle (12.298–302):

> ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν μοι πάντες ὀμόσσατε καρτερὸν ὅρκον·
> εἴ κέ τιν' ἠὲ βοῶν ἀγέλην ἢ πῶϋ μέγ' οἰῶν

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ἐπακούεις." Cf. also *Il*. 14.344–45, where Zeus says that Helios's "light is the keenest at perceiving" (καὶ ὀξύτατον πέλεται φάος εἰσοράασθαι).

[4] The connection between the companions' ignoring these warnings and their justified death on account of their ἀτασθαλίᾱ has been well established at least since Rothe 1914, 103. The tripling of warnings is a conventional feature: see p. 73 n. 2 below.

[5] De Jong 2001, xii, 12. See also Griffin 1986.

[6] In my final chapter I discuss the complex issue of the relationship between the proem's subjective moral posture regarding the actions of characters and the poet's own artistic goals.

εὕρωμεν, μή πού τις ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῇσιν
ἢ βοῦν ἠέ τι μῆλον ἀποκτάνῃ· ἀλλὰ ἕκηλοι
ἐσθίετε βρώμην, τὴν ἀθανάτη πόρε Κίρκη.

But, come, now all of you swear a strong oath for me:
if ever we find any herd of cattle or great flock of sheep,
let no one with evil recklessness
kill a cow or any sheep; rather, at your ease
eat the food that Circe provided.

In this case, Odysseus' use of the phrase ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῇσιν is laced with irony, since it is only through the warning he is at that moment in the act of giving that his companions acquire the knowledge of the doom that is certain to fall on them should they eat the cattle. Odysseus' warning, in its various iterations, cautions that on Thrinacia "is a most terrible evil for us" (αἰνότατον κακὸν ἔμμεναι ἄμμιν, 12.275) and that they should not eat the cattle, "lest something befall us" (μή τι πάθωμεν, 12.321). These admonishments provide the condition for the emergence of the companions' ἀτασθαλία; that is, the foreknowledge of the consequences of their actions that makes them blameworthy. Thus with an ironic circularity it is Odysseus' warnings, which he gives in order to protect his companions, that require Zeus to submit to Helios' plea for retribution if he is to keep to the principles of justice he articulated in his opening speech. In effect, Odysseus' attempt to save his companions causes their destruction.[7]

[7] The close juxtaposition in the proem of Odysseus' desire and attempt to save his companions (1.5–6) with their death by their ἀτασθαλία (7) hints at the narrative and causal connections between the two. Buchan 2004, 134, makes the provocative claim that Odysseus has a repressed desire to kill his companions. In the Thrinacia episode, Buchan ibid., 155–61, draws out what he sees as malicious negligence on Odysseus' part, who gives his companions "every opportunity to show their infamous *atasthalia*" (157). Others have remarked on what they see as various shortcomings of Odysseus' warnings: Fenik 1974, 212 n. 126;
Footnote cont. next pg.

This illustrates as well a more general point about ἀτασθαλία: it can only exist as an intelligible concept within the context of a larger narrative—the narrative of τίσις—that provides a logical sequence of events to frame the actions of the agents involved. In other words, ἀτασθαλία only exists as a retrospective judgment on the character of agents once the results of their actions are known. This *ex post facto* aspect of the application of the concept of ἀτασθαλία is evident, among other places, in the proem (1.7) and in Zeus' condemnation of Aegisthus (1.34–35), where, respectively, the narrator and Zeus ascribe this trait after the respective narratives have finished. But in his warning to Eurylochus and his companions, Odysseus ascribes this trait to a hypothetical violator before any crime has been committed. The audience—both the poet's and Odysseus'—knows full well that this threatened doom will occur: the proem proclaims as much at the outset to the auditor, as does Odysseus' state as a solitary wanderer to the Phaeacians. Likewise, even at the moment he is admonishing his companions, Odysseus himself knows that ignoring his warning will ensure death. Properly, a mortal ought not to be able to know this, to escape the bounds of the poem's linear narrative. But Odysseus has stepped outside the limits normally imposed on humans by traveling into Hades and learning from Teiresias the secret truths of the course of his life and the outcome for the companions should they eat Helios' cattle. And

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Schadewaldt 1960. But no one, as far as I can tell, has noted the ironic, justifying circularity to which I have drawn attention.

thus, from this privileged position of knowledge, Odysseus can warn his companions in terms of ἀτασθαλία. As the paradigmatic example of the τίσις of Orestes also demonstrates, when the gods exercised their superior knowledge to make a similar warning to Aegisthus, special knowledge such as that acquired through prophetic gifts regularly serves as the foundation for warnings that occupy stage 2 of the τίσις sequence. Other examples of the theme that I discuss later point to this fact as well.

Odysseus' companions prepare for their crime (stage 3), chiefly by engaging in "hateful speech" (στυγερῷ…μύθῳ, 12.278) and "evil counsel" (κακῆς…βουλῆς, 339). Just as Aegisthus persuades Clytemnestra to break her obligations to marital fidelity (3.263–64), Eurylochus manages to convince the others to break the oath they gave Odysseus (298–302) and join in the crime (294, 352). Also important to their preparation is Odysseus' falling asleep and his consequent inability to counter the destructive influence of Eurylochus as he had previously done (10.244–73, 10.429–48). Odysseus parallels in this situation the anonymous singer that Agamemnon had set as a guard over his wife and whom Aegisthus removed to a desert isle (3.267–71). Both could speak with authority to dissuade the coconspirators from participating, and with both out of the way the crime could commence.

When the companions perform their criminal slaughter of the cattle (stage 4), they follow the typical pattern of an animal sacrifice, only at every stage of the ritual they pervert the details, substituting profane elements for sacred (12.353–65, 394–98). Their meal becomes, as Jean-Pierre Vernant has put it, "une dérision, une subversion du

sacrifice."[8] A significant but unappreciated detail underscores the significance of the companions' transgression: outside the narration of sacrifice, the slaying of these cattle is referred to as "killing," using the verb (ἀπο)κτείνω, which is typically constrained in its application to the killing of humans.[9] The poet could have avoided the diction of "killing"—the slaughter of animals typically employs verbs such as "cut down" (ἐπικόπτω, 3.443, 449) or simply "do" (ἔρδω, 7.202; 11.132; et al.; ῥέζω, 1.61; 3.5; 5.102; 9.553; 10.523; et al.). But he chose to emphasize the violent, transgressive aspect of this slaughter through use of this anthropomorphizing language. If, as Vernant argues, the impropriety of brutally slaughtering and feasting on the cattle stems from their special divine status,[10] then the language of homicide encodes their particular value and ensures the brutality of companions' "fitting" punishment.[11]

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[8] Vernant 1979, 243, who describes the perverse substitutions the companions make in the rite. See also Vidal-Naquet 1970, 1289: "La façon même dont le sacrifice est conduit en fait donc un anti-sacrifice."

[9] As far as I can tell, this fact has gone unnoticed. Besides references to the "killing" (κτείνω/ἀποκτείνω) of Helios' cattle (12.301, 375, 379, 19.276), the only other uses in the *Odyssey* (out of a total of 74) which refer to the killing of animals instead of humans are at 19.543 (in Penelope's dream, in which the slain birds signify the suitors) and 1.108 (suitors' killing Odysseus' cattle, which, like the slaying of the Helios' cattle, takes on a moral significance and is thus characterized by the particular violence of κτείνω).

[10] Vernant 1979, 240.

[11] Vernant 1979 pairs this episode with the story of Cambyses' sending spies to learn about the Table of Sun (Hdt. 3.17–26). He concludes from these two stories that they both play describe a great confusion of categories in which the distinctions between human and animal break down, so that Odysseus' companions die "comme des bêtes" (248).

Besides Lampetie's informing Helios of the companions' infractions, the main part of the preparation for retribution (stage 5) is Helios' petition for Zeus' vengeance (12.377–83):

> "Ζεῦ πάτερ ἠδ᾽ ἄλλοι μάκαρες θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες,
> **τῖσαι** δὴ ἑτάρους Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος,
> οἵ μευ βοῦς ἔκτειναν ὑπέρβιον, ἦσιν ἐγώ γε
> χαίρεσκον μὲν ἰὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα,
> ἠδ᾽ ὁπότ᾽ ἂψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἀπ᾽ οὐρανόθεν προτραποίμην.
> εἰ δέ μοι οὐ τίσουσι βοῶν ἐπιεικέ᾽ ἀμοιβήν,
> δύσομαι εἰς Ἀίδαο καὶ ἐν νεκύεσσι φαείνω."
>
> "Father Zeus and you other blessed gods who are eternal,
> take vengeance on the companions of Odysseus son of Laertes,
> who violently slew my cattle in which I
> used to take delight as I went into the starry sky
> and when I turned back to the earth from the sky.
> If they will not repay me a fitting requital for the cattle,
> I will descend into Hades and shine among the dead."

The content of Helios' demand is that the companions "pay a fitting requital for the cattle" (τίσουσι βοῶν ἐπιεικέ᾽ ἀμοιβήν, 382). ἀμοιβή is not a typical Homeric word for retribution. Its associations are with reciprocal giving (cf. 1.318, 3.58) or, more generally, with exchange (14.521).[12] Helios thus casts his demand in economic terms, with particular stress on the need that his recompense be a "fitting" exchange for his cattle. As an economic transaction, a "fitting" exchange would be a counter-gift matching the

[12] Hesiod does use the term to describe the divine retribution that comes upon an impious man: "Against this man, Zeus himself is surely angry, and in the end he will make a harsh requital for his unjust deeds" (τῷ δ᾽ ἤ τοι Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀγαίεται, ἐς δὲ τελευτὴν ἔργων ἀντ᾽ ἀδίκων χαλεπὴν ἐπέθηκεν ἀμοιβήν, *Op*. 333–34). This passage emphasizes the final position of the act of retribution. It comes "in the end," as a final, retrospective part of a narrative sequence. Cf. *Od*. 1.43.

value of the first gift.[13] Some manner of payment for the loss of cattle would seem appropriate, and the metonymic use of the single word βοῶν in place of a full description for how the cattle are killed would suggest just such a transaction: payment in exchange for the loss (by theft or purchase) of cattle. As it is, Helios does receive his "fitting" requital—only, since he (and the characters who issued warnings) has cast the loss of his cattle as a "killing" (ἔκτειναν, 380), the payment that fits this loss is death. The same symmetry between Aegisthus' killing of Agamemnon and Orestes' killing of Aegisthus obtains in this case as well: Zeus kills the companions just as they killed the cattle.

Zeus is the avenging agent in the retributive act (stage 6) of this instance of the theme. The form of Helios' prayer casts Zeus as the subject of the imperative τῖσαι. Zeus, not Helios, nor any of the other gods, takes upon himself the role of avenger by stirring up a storm and destroying Odysseus' ship with a lightning bolt (403–419; 5.131–33).[14] Zeus' manner of taking of τίσις thus parallels Poseidon's wrath against Odysseus, insofar as Poseidon similarly stirs up a storm against Odysseus that nearly kills him in retribution for Polyphemus' blinding (5.282–464). Before setting out from Ogygia on his raft, Odysseus affirms he that will persevere even "if again some one of the gods smite

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[13] On the economy of gift exchange, see Finley 1954, 60–63; Donlan 1982; 1993; and, for more recent work, Wagner-Hasel 2006.

[14] Marks 2008, 41, 145, notes this fact, although for him its significance lies in the way it signifies Zeus' control over the narrative possibilities of the epic. See also Cook 1995, 121–27.

me upon the wine-dark sea" (5.221), implicitly connecting the destructive storm he faced at the hands of Zeus that landed him on the island with the possibility of new divinely wrought woes on the sea, which, in fact, will soon commence. Furthermore, Odysseus recognizes Zeus' role in the destruction of his ship when he narrates his journeys to Penelope, saying his ship's loss came at the hands of Zeus (23.329–32). He also affirms Zeus' part when, disguised, he tells her his lying tale that comes rather close to the truth of his plight—that he lost his ship and companions because "Zeus and Helios pained him" (ὀδύσαντο γὰρ αὐτῷ Ζεύς τε καὶ Ἠέλιος, 19.275) on account of the companions' killing the cattle. Only in one place in the poem does anyone claim that Helios is the sole or even primary agent of retribution for the eating of his cattle: the proem.

In the proem the narrator states Helios "took from them the day of their return" (αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ, 1.9). Though the proem attributes the action to Helios by way of the anaphoric pronoun ὁ, the figure of Zeus lurks in the background.[15] As Jim Marks has argued, Zeus is conspicuously absent from the proem, just as Odysseus is only allusively signified by the mere, anonymous "man" (ἄνδρα, 1.1).[16] Furthermore, the resonance of the phrase ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ hints at Zeus. When Eurycleia bemoans the fate of Odysseus, she claims Zeus "hates" (ἤχθηρε, 19.364)

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[15] Note as well that several scholiasts considered this pronoun vague enough that they needed to provide a gloss for it of ὁ Ἥλιος (Pontani, ad loc.).

[16] Marks 2008, 3–4. He does not, however, note the difference in the purported agent of retribution against the companions, which would strengthen his case.

him and imagines he "took away the day of his return" (ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ, 369). On her interpretation of events, Zeus must be responsible if Odysseus has perished. Her viewpoint serves to further the audience's developing interpretation of the role that Zeus plays in the *Odyssey*—in particular, his role as avenger.[17] Thus, the proem's attribution of the death of the companions to Helios is tendentious, if not suspect. There is no theological reason Helios could not have acted as the agent of revenge, but his powers are curiously restrained in this episode.[18] The poet has done this in order to maintain and strengthen his structure of three distinct roles of avenger, avenged, and victim. Indeed, this design is crucial for his narrative goals, as I show later.

The result of this theme (stage 7) is that Zeus preserves his conception of δική, the proper cosmological and moral order of the universe: Helios remains in the land of the living and transgressions stemming from ἀτασθαλία against divine regulations are punished.

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[17] On Zeus' dominant role in the plot of *Odyssey*, read as a device to "conceptualize Panhellenic narrative paths," see Marks 2008, 5, passim. See also p. 145–46 below.

[18] See p. 45 and n. 3 above. It is worth adding that, according to some other traditions, Helios is perfectly capable of exacting violent revenge under his own power: in a myth Aelian, *NA* 14.28 preserves, Helios out of νέμεσις against Nerites (an ἐρώμενος of Poseidon's) changed him into a "spiral-shelled fish" (κόχλος). Retributive metamorphosis is not foreign to the *Odyssey*: cf. Poseidon's petrifaction of the Phaeacian's ship (13.159–64).

The sequence of events constituting Zeus' τίσις forms this schema:

**Table 4: Zeus-Companions τίσις Sequence**

| Order | Event/State |
|---|---|
| 1 | Helios has left his herd on Thrinacia. |
| 2 | Companions ignore warnings from Teiresias, Circe, and Odysseus. |
| 3 | Eurylochus' plotting. Odysseus' falling asleep. |
| 4 | The slaughter and feast of the cattle. |
| 5 | Lampetie informs Helios of the slaughter. Helios pleads with Zeus. |
| 6 | Zeus sends a storm and destroys the ship. |
| 7 | Companions have atoned. Helios remains in the land of the living. |

## *3.2 Retribution Disguised: Poseidon's Vindictive τίσις*

As several scholars have noted,[19] the revenge that Poseidon takes upon Odysseus for his blinding of Polyphemus and the retribution that Helios demands upon the companions are strikingly similar. Though several unitarian and neoanalytic critics have argued persuasively for the artistic merit of the coexistence of both figures in the poem,[20]

[19] Kirchhoff 1879, 292–314; Pfeiffer 1928, 2361–62; Von der Mühll 1940, 731; Schadewaldt 1960, 861; et al. See Schadewaldt 1960, 861 n. 1, for further bibliography. The analytic view is that Poseidon and Helios are redundant doublets, the latter derivate of the former.

[20] A representative and necessarily selective list would include, among unitarians, Fenik 1974, 208–30, (with some reservations); Segal 1994, 195–227, and among neoanalysts, Heubeck 1954, 72–78, and in Heubeck et al., ad 11.104–15. Teiresias directly connects these two plots of τίσις in his prophecy of Odysseus' fate (11.100–37). The curse brought down on Odysseus for his blinding of Polyphemus works itself out through the companions' impious slaughter of Helios' cattle and their subsequent punishment. This results in Odysseus' losing his ship and its crew, which are his means of getting home timely and in a good state. Teiresias repeats the final two lines of Polyphemus' curse verbatim, save only that he has adapted it from third person wish to a second-person apodosis of a conditional (9.534–35, 11.114–15). In Polyphemus' mouth, this fate is the effect of Odysseus' blinding him; in Teiresias', it is the (immediate) effect of the
Footnote cont. next pg.

they have done so without recognizing a key distinction between them. As I argued in the last section, the agent of retribution in the Thrinacia episode is Zeus. Helios is a mere petitioner. In contrast, the agent of retribution for the blinding of Polyphemus is Poseidon himself. Even when Poseidon petitions Zeus in his anger against Odysseus, as when he comes before Zeus and demands that the Phaeacians must be punished for their aid to Odysseus (13.128–38), he alone executes his violent revenge (13.159–184). Though Poseidon feels slighted and evinces personal animosity toward Odysseus,[21] he, like Orestes and Zeus, is still performing retribution on behalf of another, namely Polyphemus. The strict parallel between the two narratives with respect to the roles of avenger-avenged-victim is Zeus-Helios-companions and Poseidon-Polyphemus-Odysseus.

Claude Calame's most recent study of the episode represents the most elaborate attempt at a structural analysis of its narrative.[22] Following Greimas' methods,[23] Calame considers the Odyssean episode as a version of a common folktale known in many other

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companions' eating the cattle. I note in this connection also that in Odysseus' lying tale he tells Eumaeus, the presence of "companions that stand ready, who will send him to his homeland" (ἐπαρτέας ἔμμεν ἑταίρους, οἳ δή μιν πέμψουσι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν, 14.332–33) is the final necessary condition for his (supposed) return. Cf. also 4.558–59, where Proteus tells Menelaus that Odysseus can not make it home from Ogygia precisely because he has no companions (in addition to be held there by Calypso).

[21] For Poseidon's choleric attitude towards Odysseus, cf. 1.68–79, 5.282–90, 13.125–38.

[22] Calame 1995, 139–73. See also his two earlier studies: 1977a and 1977b. This line of folkloristic study for the "Cyclops story" has as its founder Wilhelm Grimm, who in his 1857 study *Die Sage von Polyphem* sought to uncover the "original" form of the story. Hackman 1904 catalogued a full 221 versions of this story. For further bibliography, see Zamb. 1.676–77.

[23] Greimas 1970–1983.

European and non-European versions (he studies seven examples in detail). He finds that the "Cyclops story" consists of a particular syntactic structure—two pairs of ordeals and counterordeals framed by an initial "manipulation," or "modal statement of will," and a final "sanction," or attribution of the predicate to the hero—and a set of semantic characteristics—e.g., the heroism of the protagonist and the monstrous savagery of the antagonist. He thereby achieves some useful insights into what elements in the Odyssean version of the folktale are highlighted—e.g., the implied contest between nature and culture.[24] In contrast, my analysis follows Aristarchus' exegetical methods and uses the body of the Homeric text as the source for parallel structures with which to analyze any one example.[25] Specifically, I contrast this narrative against the other narratives of τίσις in the poem, taking them all to have a single, manipulable, but recognizably consistent structure. This method has the advantage of bringing greater attention to the function of this episode within the poem composed as a whole, artistic

[24] Calame 1995, 171.

[25] See p. 3 n. 2 above. Even within the *Odyssey* there exists another story, Menelaus' encounter with Proteus, that, while not strictly a "Cyclops story," exhibits many of the same features as the story of the encounter with Polyphemus: Menelaus encounters a "shepherd"—the simile comparing Proteus to "a shepherd in the middle of his flocks of sheep" (ἐν μέσσῃσι νομεὺς ὣς πώεσι μήλων, 4.413) reveals the simpler, realistic form of the story; the protagonist's motive is a desire for knowledge and escape (468–70); he physically defeats a stronger god(-like) being (454–61) in an ambush (441) by means of a "trick" (437) of posing as one of the "shepherd's sheep" beneath a skin (440), which allows the protagonists to escape the "shepherd's" count of his "flock" (411–13, 451–53). These similarities have gone largely unnoticed; but see Powell 1970, 429; Block 1985, 3; Dué and Ebbott 2009, ?? n. 73.

work, rather than as a collection of *Märchen*, as some analytic-minded scholars are wont to do.[26]

One objection to placing this narrative of retribution alongside the other instances of the τίσις theme confronts my analysis at its outset. As Charles Segal has pointed out, "Poseidon never mentions justice." Segal claims that Poseidon is not motivated by a sense of a higher moral order, which Segal interprets as τίσις or δική.[27] In a similar fashion, Bernard Fenik has characterized both Helios' and Poseidon's anger as manifestations of the common motif of "the more or less arbitrary persecution of a mortal by an angry deity," inconsistent with the moralizing paradigm of human suffering that Zeus establishes in the proem (1.32–43).[28] Fenik's "more or less," however, covers a wide range of possible responsibility. While by some reckonings Poseidon's wrath may be excessive, it is hardly without motive. Zeus, in his opening council with Athena, connects Poseidon's animosity directly with Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus, stating that Poseidon "is angry because of the Cyclops, whose eye [Odysseus] blinded"

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[26] Cf. Page's 1955, 1–20, discussion of this "Cyclops story," in which he states, "The *Odyssey*, then, is composed of folk-tales having little or nothing in common with each other except the fact that they are folk-tales and that they are here concentrated on the same person, Odysseus." See also Hölscher 1989 for the most exhaustive attempt at this kind of criticism of the poem, esp. 214–15, on the "Niemand-Märchen," although his conclusions are more unitarian. In fairness to Calame 1995, 164, he does think that some of the elements of the story owe their character to the story's place within the epic—the semantics of "guest-gifts," hospitality, and nature/culture. He also argues that Polyphemus' curse owes its existence to reintegrating the story "into the sequence of Odysseus' adventures." These are, however, the limits of Calame's integration of his analysis of this story's structure into the larger concerns of the epic.

[27] Segal 1994, 217–18, 20.

[28] Fenik 1974, 216. He writes, "It is impossible to justify Odysseus' suffering at the hands of Poseidon in terms of Zeus' explanation of guilt and punishment in the prologue" (211).

(Κύκλωπος κεχόλωται, ὃν ὀφθαλμοῦ ἀλάωσεν, 1.69); likewise, Teiresias tells Odysseus in Hades that Poseidon "is angry because you blinded his son" (χωόμενος ὅτι οἱ υἱὸν φίλον ἐξαλάωσας, 11.103).[29]

Poseidon's wrath, thus, is neither unintelligible nor arbitrary. Yet Segal's claim remains true: τίσις *per se* is never mentioned in connection with Poseidon's persecution of Odysseus. But this is not due to an objective evaluation of the merits of the case against Odysseus, as Segal implies.[30] Rather, this results from a choice on the part of the speakers who tell of Poseidon's revenge to eschew the readily available narrative pattern of τίσις, which, if used, would reckon the woes and tribulations of Odysseus' lengthy voyage home as just punishment. Indeed, Athena, Odysseus, and the narrator cite Poseidon's anger in ways that exculpate Odysseus in contrast to those who suffer fittingly, such as Odysseus' companions. As I discuss in more detail in part two, this practice is in keeping with poem's overt program of presenting Odysseus as a sympathetic, model figure. And yet, though the poem has granted Odysseus a privileged moral position as protagonist of the epic,[31] the plot of his encounter with Polyphemus and its aftermath does exhibit the features that can be construed as a τίσις

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[29] Cf. also Athena's verbatim repetition of the claim at 13.343. See also p. 65–66 below.

[30] Segal 1994, 217–19, writes, "Odysseus had committed no crime in punishing the Cyclops, and the god is merely holding a bitter grudge," acting out of "anthropomorphic, personal animosity." In contrast, Helios' wrath is "carefully motivated," and "has a moral structure."

[31] De Jong 2001, ad 1.32–43, calls this "selective moralism," which is "one of the strategies [the narrator] uses to make Odysseus' bloody revenge on suitors acceptable." See ibid., 12 n. 25, for further bibliography.

narrative. Tendentiously, the speakers favorably disposed to Odysseus never use this narrative pattern. Even Poseidon—as the narrator portrays him, it must be noted—avoids the diction of τίσις. And if, as I argue, the set of events neatly matches the pattern expected of a τίσις narrative, the avoidance of the explicit diction of the theme is conspicuous. In many places it lurks just beneath the surface, barely hidden and ready for detection by an audience whose perception of patterns of justice has been primed by the paradigm of Orestes' τίσις.

The present τίσις narrative is set in motion by Odysseus' choice to travel from "Goat Island" to the land of Cyclopes (9.166–76), which coincides with Polyphemus absence from his cave (stage 1). He, like Agamemnon, has left his home (216–17), which now lies open for strangers to occupy.

Against the wishes of his companions, Odysseus wants to remain, see the Cyclops for himself, and receive "guest-gifts" (ξείνια, 229; cf. 266–68). His companions attempt to dissuade him of this plan (224–27), in effect, warning him (stage 2). In Odysseus' recounting of events, he does not frame their advice as a clear warning, like the one he would give them about eating Helios' cattle. To do so would imply he is responsible for his resultant wandering after the encounter. Rather, he casts their advice simply as an alternative course of action, and he presents the consequences of rejecting their advice in understated terms: to heed his companions "would have been much more profitable" (ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν, 228), because Polyphemus "was not going appear desirable to the companions" (οὐδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔμελλ᾽ ἑτάροισι φανεὶς ἐρατεινὸς

ἔσεσθαι, 230). While in retrospect recognizing the soundness of his companions' advice, he justifies his rejection of it at the time: he wished, he claims, to establish a civilized guest-friendship (ξενία) that would morally elevate their appropriation of the Cyclops' goods from mere piracy to benevolent reciprocity.[32] Nonetheless, the diction of his refusal betrays a formal and ethical similarity to Aegisthus' rejection of Hermes' advice, both being signified by the contrastive adverb ἀλλά introducing the element of a failure of persuasion (οὐ πείθειν). Odysseus states, "but I did not heed [them]" (ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην, 228), just as Zeus claims of Hermes, "but he did not persuade the mind of Aegisthus" (ἀλλ᾽ οὐ φρένας Αἰγίσθοιο πεῖθ᾽, 1.42–43). Odysseus admits that he knew that the inhabitants of this land were as likely to be "violent, wild, and unjust" as they were "guest-loving and god-fearing" (ἤ ῥ᾽ οἵ γ᾽ ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι, ἦε φιλόξεινοι, καί σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής, 175–76). Establishing ξενία with these unknown natives was chancy at best, and Odysseus' attempt proved reckless.

Such a rejection of good advice forms the basis of ἀτασθαλία, though Odysseus never admits to it. But he can only repress moral condemnation of his recklessness so far. It falls to Eurylochus to give voice to this negative interpretation of Odysseus' actions, when he fears that some similar misfortune will befall them at the hands of Circe as did with Polyphemus (10.435–37):

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[32] Cf. Odysseus' stated desire to acquire "guest-gifts" (ξείνια, 229) from the Cyclops, a transaction which would entail the inception of ξενία. Underlying this episode is a conflict of nature vs. culture, on which the classic study is Kirk 1970, 162–71. See also Zamb. 1.678–79, for further bibliography.

ὣς περ Κύκλωψ ἔρξ᾽, ὅτε οἱ μέσσαυλον ἵκοντο
ἡμέτεροι ἕταροι, σὺν δ᾽ ὁ θρασὺς εἵπετ᾽ Ὀδυσσεύς:
τούτου γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο.

So indeed did the Cyclops shut them in when our companions came
to his courtyard. With them followed this audacious Odysseus,
through whose recklessness they too perished.

Eurylochus attributes *ἀτασθαλία* to Odysseus and claims that it is precisely on account of this moral error that Odysseus is responsible for the death of his companions. The final line of Eurylochus' complaint is a striking adaptation of the formulaic line attributing blame for the companions' demise in the proem (1.7):[33]

αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο…

For by their own reckless did they perish…

Whereas in the proem the poet attributes the companions' deaths to their own *ἀτασθαλία*, here, by way of the same, thematically weighty words, the companions' deaths lie at the feet of Odysseus. In contrast to the events on Thrinacia where the companions act against the expressed will of Odysseus, Odysseus directs every action in their encounter with Polyphemus. And there can be no argument with Eurylochus' accusation. Odysseus has no response save the threat of death, checked only by the other companions (10.438–48). But this indictment of Odysseus is studiously circumscribed: the poet gives it voice doubly mediated (via Odysseus' version of Eurylochus' version of events) in the mouth of a character he repeatedly portrays unfavorably (cf. 10.264–74,

[33] Cf. also *Il*. 4.409. For more extensive analysis of this formulaic line, see chapter one.

12.278–352). And whereas the proem's attribution of blame for the companions' deaths extrapolates by synecdoche from the single ship lost at Thrinacia to include all of Odysseus' companions who perished since they departed from Troy,[34] the poet restricts Eurylochus' charge to Odysseus' liability for only the six who died in Polyphemus' cave. Yet, as both Teiresias (11.100–37) and Athena (13.339–43) make clear, Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus is the ultimate cause of the loss of "all" (πάντας) the companions—at least since the Cyclops' prayer for revenge.[35] Despite all the calculated constraints the poet places on the scope of Odysseus' culpability, the accusation nonetheless comes through. This is significant. Alongside the prevailing, glorious story of the returning hero's defeating his evil enemies, the poet is telling a gloomier narrative as well. A morally ambiguous anti-hero justly suffers for his transgressions and loses his companions—or I might even say *causes* their loss, which is to say, *kills* them, to draw out the dark ambiguity in the phrase, ὀλέσας ἄπο πάντας ἑταίρους.[36] For the charge that Odysseus is at fault in the death of the companions does not die with Eurylochus. It reappears in the end, when Eupeithes, father of Antinous, making none of the careful distinctions implicit in Eurylochus' charge, views Odysseus' part in the death of his companions (the Ithacans' kin) as grounds for retribution (τισόμεθ', 24.421–38).

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[34] See p. 66 n. 44 below.

[35] On Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus as the cause of his punishment, see p. 58 above and p. 65–66 below.

[36] 11.114, 13.340. The verb ὄλλυμι in the active voice has both the sense of "lose" and the more active sense of "destroy, kill." For the latter, cf. *Il*. 8.498, where Hector declares his desire to defeat the Achaean force: "having destroyed all the Achaeans and their ships," (νῆάς τ᾽ ὀλέσας καὶ πάντας Ἀχαιοὺς).

Odysseus' preparation for blinding Polyphemus (stage 3) consists of an extended sequence of scheming that integrates his actions with the poem's "cunning versus force" (δόλος vs. βίη) theme (299–367).[37] The poet uses a set of resonant terms to bring out this theme and connect it with other instances of cunning in the poem. The most prominent of such terms in this episode is μῆτις, "craft, trickery," and its cognates. The wordplay on μῆτις/μή τις/Οὖτις at 406–14 highlights its significance in this narrative context. This culminates with Odysseus' summarizing his success in blinding Polyphemus and escaping harm by saying his μῆτις deceived Polyphemus (414). I need not rehearse the details of Odysseus' cunning in this encounter,[38] except to note that the diction of trickery and craftiness that Odysseus claims for himself in his telling of the encounter parallels the earlier descriptions of Aegisthus' murderous, vengeance-incurring actions. Aegisthus has the epithet δολόμητις (1.300, 3.198, 250, 308, 4.525), which corresponds with Odysseus' common epithet of πολύμητις. He "plots" his murder (ἐμήσατο, 3.194, cf. 3.261) and plots "evil" for Agamemnon, as Odysseus "plots" against Polyphemus. He devises a "devious trick" (δολίην…τέχνην, 4.529), an ambush, as Odysseus uses trickery (δόλος/μῆτις, 9.406, 8, 22) to ambush Polyphemus as he sleeps and escape (immediate) reprisal. Additionally significant are other parallels that are apparent on a

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[37] On this theme's significance in the poem (cf. esp. 9.406–8), see de Jong 2001, ad 8.266–366 and 9.100–566. The poet (and his tradition) also expresses this opposition as μῆτις vs. βίη. For an extended reading of μῆτις vs. βίη as "culture vs. nature," see Cook 1995.

[38] Many others have analyzed Odysseus' cunning in this passage in detail. See *inter alios* Podlecki 1961; Schein 1970; Peradotto 1990, 47: "It is *mētis* at its best: a story about *mētis*, achieved by *mētis*."

thematic level. Aegisthus uses words to deceive and corrupt Clytemnestra (3.263), as Odysseus tricks Polyphemus with wordplay. Aegisthus breaks the code of ξενία by attacking Agamemnon in a feast (4.530–35, cf. 11.409–34), as Odysseus attacks Polyphemus after his dinner. All told, the characterization Odysseus' actions in this passage fit within an established verbal and thematic framework of deceitful, criminal behavior. While certainly Odysseus can use the tropes of guile to augment his own glory,[39] his actions do carry a darker resonance.

The crime that Odysseus commits within this τίσις narrative is his act of blinding Polyphemus (stage 4). Notwithstanding the prevailing view among scholars since Reinhardt that Odysseus' fault in the episode—if he has any—lies in his boasting,[40] the poem is explicit elsewhere that the cause of Poseidon's anger is the blinding of his son Polyphemus (1.68–75, 11.101–3, 13.339–43).[41] And the act of blinding is not *necessarily* amoral and merely the product of from the exigencies of Odysseus' situation (i.e., self-defense).[42] The crucial point is that Poseidon, Polyphemus, and Eurylochus can interpret Odysseus' actions as immoral within the context of a certain τίσις narrative that casts

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[39] See Segal 1994, 90–98.

[40] Reinhardt 1960, 64–69; Bradley 1968; Grau 1973–74; Fenik 1974, 216; Friedrich 1987a; Segal 1994, 96, 201; Brown 1996, 21–22, 28–29, agrees that Odysseus' boasting is a principal reason for his incurring the wrath of Poseidon, but he characterizes this as "an error of judgment" (like ἁμαρτία) rather than as ὕβρις. For further bibliography, see ibid., 6 n. 11 and n. 12.

[41] On this point I agree with Heubeck's 1954, 85, statement: "Der Frevel des Odysseus liegt allein in der Tat der Blendung…" But see the next note.

[42] *Pace* Heubeck ibid.; Lloyd-Jones 1971, 29; Fenik 1974, 210–11.

Odysseus as aggressor. Because they (especially Poseidon) can apply this narrative to these events, Odysseus suffers for his actions. At play in this episode is a conflict of moral narratives: Odysseus, just like Polyphemus, can tell these events as a narrative of τίσις in which he is exacting retribution for the violence Polyphemus has done to his companions. But neither the poet nor Odysseus is an impartial narrator: on their telling, Odysseus' revenge is explicitly a narrative of τίσις; Poseidon's is only implicitly so.[43]

But why does the poet present this single act of blinding as the source of Poseidon's anger? These causal statements are succinct and selective—a single line with reference to a single act excluding the other possible reasons for his anger from the encounter, such as Odysseus' boasts, the theft of sheep and stores, and the practice of deceit. But just as the proem presents a single act as the cause of the companions' deaths—their eating of Helios' cattle—when in the course of the narrative many different causes exist for their deaths,[44] so also does the poem (through a variety of voices) fix upon this one cause for Poseidon's anger.

This focus has a particular purpose: it establishes a symmetry between the crime Odysseus committed and its symbolically equivalent punishment. Poseidon's conception of punishment trades on a paronomasia between the verbs ἀλάομαι ("I

[43] On Odysseus' τίσις narrative on behalf of his slain companions in this episode, see p. 72–73. I explore these issues about the conflict of moral narratives in my final chapter.

[44] Mark Buchan 2004, 3, wittily calls this "a particularly violent synecdoche." Though Buchan seems unaware of it, the selectivity of this statement is an ancient *zetema*: see the scholia ad 1.7. More generally on the apparently inordinate significance given to this one episode, see especially Rüter 1969, 49–52. See also Cook 1995, 16–18, for further bibliography on this issue.

wander") and (ἐξ)αλαόω ("I blind").[45] Odysseus's blinding of Polyphemus (ἀλάωσεν, 1.69) has its "natural" punishment in Poseidon's demand that Odysseus "wander" (ἀλόω, 5.377). And when Odysseus reaches to Ithaca he will continue to suffer as a "wanderer" (ἀλήτης, 17.483, et al.) in his own home.[46] Polyphemus presented Poseidon with two options for Odysseus' punishment: Odysseus should either perish and not reach Ithaca (530–31) or, failing that, arrive late and in a bad state (532–36). No matter the reason why Poseidon executes the latter, lesser retribution—be he compelled by Zeus and fate or freely choosing this punishment—, his choice does have the effect of maintaining a symbolic symmetry between the crime of blinding and the punishment of wandering. This symmetry follows the pattern that Zeus establishes in his opening paradigmatic example of Orestes' τίσις. Orestes dealt to Aegisthus (and Clytemnestra) a

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[45] As far as I have been able to ascertain, no scholar has noticed this paronomasia, save a passing reference Buchan 2004, 242 n. 33, makes in an endnote, although he only connects the blinding to Polyphemus' disposition as a "wanderer" after the act and not to Odysseus' punishment of wandering.

[46] The similarity between these verbs is even closer if a reconstructed active form of ἀλάομαι "I wander" is posited as *ἀλάω, "I cause to wander," beside the active form of ἀλαόω, "I cause to be blind." Ultimately, both derive from a nearly identical root: ἀλα-. While some regard the root of ἀλαόω as *λα- with an alpha-privative: i.e., ἀ-λα (*GEW* s.v. ἀλαός, but with some doubts), this derivation is far from certain: *LfgrE* s.v. ἀλαός regards the etymology ultimately as "obscure." According to Chantraine, the obscurity of this etymology may be due to a tendency for taboo replacement for words denoting physical infirmities. See *DELG* s.v. ἀλάομαι and ἀλαός. I suggest that the root ἀλα-, "blind," has nothing to do with a root of *λα-, but comes by way of taboo replacement from the root ἀλα-, "wander." The second alpha in ἀλάομαι may be due to the intensive suffix -α- attached to the root. (Chantraine, ibid. compares ποτάομαι). But even if this is the case and the root of ἀλάομαι is ultimately *ἀλ-, ἀλαός can derive from ἀλάομαι by a secondary derivation. In short, the adjective ἀλαός may mean, in its literal sense, "wandering." And as I am arguing, the disposition of wandering is associated with disposition of being blind. Another objection may be leveled against my argument: in order to solve the metrically difficult verse 10.493, which begins in most manuscripts μάντιος ἀλαοῦ, Beekes 1973, 244, has proposed a solution of *μάντηος ϝαλαοι(ο). This reconstruction of the phrase would preclude the reconstructed verb of *ϝαλαόω from having a root of ἀλα-, but nothing makes this reconstruction with an initial digamma certain. There is no other evidence in Homer of the observance of this digamma (or admittedly of its neglect).

precise equivalent of the crime he committed against Agamemnon—death. Poetic diction enforces this equivalence by rendering both acts with the same word: ἔκταν(ε) (1.30, 36). With my claim that diction "enforces" this symmetry (rather than simply "captures" it), I am arguing that a speaker's rhetorical move to cast the two violent actions with the same word inscribes the events in a τίσις narrative where the suffering of the victim of retribution becomes just. The underlying ideology of punishment is the retributive principle of the *lex talionis*: an injury suffered incurs a like injury in return.

The device of paronomasia has more widely accepted parallels in the poem: e.g., the μή τις / μῆτις pun (9.405–14) and the several puns on the name of Odysseus (ὠδύσαο, 1.62; ὠδύσατ', 5.340; ὀδώδυσται, 5.423; ὀδυρόμενος, 16.145; ὀδυσαντο, 19.275; ὀδυσσάμενος, 19.407).[47] These two puns meet in the trick that Odysseus plays upon Polyphemus, when he uses the paronomasia of Οὖτις in order to escape the retribution of the other Cyclopes (9.364–414). However, Odysseus will not escape without woe. Poseidon in his anger over events "gives him pain," (ὠδύσατ', 5.340, cf. 423). He uses Odysseus' name against him, thus symmetrically returning the same violence against

[47] The story of Autolycus' naming of Odysseus secures the intentionality of the paronomasia at 19.407. From this one assured example, I consider valid the extension of this interpretative frame to the other listed instances. The literature on the name of Odysseus is extensive. Important are Stanford 1952; Dimock 1956; Clay 1983, 54–64; Peradotto 1990, passim, esp. 143–70. Ahl and Roisman 1996, 28, (following Steinrück) detect a play also on the name of Zeus at 1.62, 65. On the figure of paronomasia in general in the *Odyssey*, see Louden 1995. In a recent article, M. D. Usher 2009, 211, has drawn attention to the technique of "homophonic substitution" in oral poetry, in particular in the performance of Cynic χρεῖαι. He draws on the analyses of composition by analogous "punning" that Parry 1971, 72–74, first noted, and Nagler 1974, 1–26, developed at length.

him that he had used against Polyphemus. This phonetic correspondence signifies a deeper correspondence tit-for-tat violence.

The equivalence of blindness and wandering also rests upon cultural correspondences between the two states.[48] To blind someone is to render him helpless and lost. Polymestor, as depicted in Euripides' *Hecuba*, appears on stage blinded by Hecuba and decries his loss of direction and spatial sense: "Woe is me! Where will I go? / Where will I stay? Where will I land?" (ὤμοι ἐγώ, πᾷ βῶ, / πᾷ στῶ, πᾷ κέλσω; Eur. *Hec*. 1056–57). His whole speech centers on his loss of orientation, using interrogative adverbs of location ten times and a recurrent metaphor of a ship wandering the sea. In a similar fashion—but humorously—Polyphemus in Eurpides' *Cyclops* appears after his blinding to wander about the stage in desperate search for Odysseus and his men, relying on the chorus for directions (Eur. *Cyc*. 682–89). Likewise, this depiction of Polyphemus holds true in the *Odyssey*, though it is less pronounced: he is lost, enfeebled, and having to resort to "groping with his hands" (χερσὶ ψηλαφόων, 9.416) to make it about his cave.[49] The figure of myth who most typifies the connection of blindness and wandering is Oedipus, who, in Sophocles' depiction, blinds himself and becomes an outcast to wander among the mountains (Soph. *OT* 1451, 1518), without any human

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[48] Much of this discussion of Greek attitudes to blindness is dependent on Bernidaki-Aldous 1990, 33–47, who summarizes the attitude connecting blindness with helplessness as thus: "the condition of blindness and the physical limitation of the blind captured Greek imagination and stirred the Greek heart" (41).

[49] Buchan 2004, 34–35, writes of Polyphemus, "His blindness leads to a wandering, as he frantically searches both for those responsible for his loss and for allies to help him recover his loss."

contact (1436–37).[50] Deborah Steiner has argued that blindness and invisibility are in many contexts interchangeable in the Greek mind, hence the double meaning of τυφλός as both "hard of seeing" and "hard to see."[51] With this in mind, the sense Odysseus' "disappearance" (his becoming ἄιστον, 1.235) on his voyage home takes on a new layer of meaning: causing Odysseus to wander, Poseidon has dealt him a form of "blindness" by making him invisible to the world.[52]

Just as Helios prayed to Zeus to set the stage for Zeus' retribution against the companions, so does Polyphemus pray to Poseidon that Odysseus "return suffering evils and late" (ὀψὲ κακῶς ἔλθοι, 9.534).[53] This constitutes the second preparation stage of the theme (stage 5).

Poseidon's making Odysseus wander and suffer further woes in the course of his travels is the retributive action of his τίσις narrative (stage 6). A further aspect of Poseidon's retribution is his destruction of the rest of the companions, which has as its proximate cause the companions' slaughter of Helios' cattle—though the ultimate cause

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[50] Blindness and exile are connected in several other myths: e.g., the case of Phoenix (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.175).

[51] Steiner 1995, 207, 10–11. I add ἀβλεψία as another word with the double meaning of "unseeing" and "unable to be seen." See LSJ s.v.

[52] I could advance further connections between Odysseus' wandering and blindness. Like Odysseus' wandering, blindness frequently results from the anger of a god: e.g, Lycurgus (*Il*. 6.138–40), Teiresias (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.69–72; Call. *Lav. Pall*. 53–130), Thamyris (Apollod. *Bibl*. 1.17), Stesichorus (Pl. *Phdr*. 243a), etc. Blindness appears as the penalty for crimes such as theft from our earliest evidence: an 7th century BC inscription from Cumae on an aryballos records, "I am the *lekythos* of Tattaie, whoever steals me will be blind." (Ταταίες ἐμὶ λε͂ϝυθος· *h*ὸς δ' ἄν με κλέφσει, θυφλὸς ἔσται, *LSAG* 236, 240.3, pl. 47.3).

[53] On the parallels between this prayer and Teiresias' prophecy, see p. 55 n. 20 above.

is Polyphemus' curse, as Teiresias' prophecy makes clear.[54] Since the companions are Odysseus' means for making a timely return, their deaths result in his wandering. Their loss has a parallel symmetry in Polyphemus' loss of his flock of sheep, which are the nearest approximation to a community for Polyphemus. The common Homeric metaphor that makes a leader the "shepherd" of his men, along with Polyphemus' pathetic and personal address to his best ram (446–59), suggests a correspondence between the Cyclops' flock and Odysseus' men. Thus as Odysseus and his men steal the sheep, Polyphemus loses his pseudo-companions, which he vainly wished could have helped him in his incapacitated state (456–60). Accordingly, Odysseus faces a fitting punishment. As a result, a new, "just" set of conditions come about (stage 7), in which Poseidon has upheld his authority as a god by blocking Odysseus' return and making him vanish from mortal life.

In summary, Poseidon's τίσις narrative consists of the following sequence:

**Table 5: The Poseidon-Odysseus τίσις Sequence**

| Order | Event/State |
|---|---|
| 1 | Polyphemus is absent from his cave. Odysseus enters. |
| 2 | Companions advise fleeing. Odysseus is not persuaded. |
| 3 | Odysseus plots and prepares to deceive and blind Polyphemus. |
| 4 | Odysseus and companions blind Polyphemus. |
| 5 | Polyphemus prays to Poseidon. |
| 6 | Poseidon makes Odysseus wander. Companions perish. |
| 7 | Odysseus is lost and kept from returning. |

[54] See p. 55 n. 20 above.

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Note: The abbreviations used herein for journals and book series follow the conventions of the *American Journal of Archaeology* and *L'Année philologique*. The abbreviations used for ancient sources follow the conventions of Liddell-Scott-Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* and the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.


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