

Propriety, Impropropriety, and the Gaining of *Kleos* in the Phaiakian Episode

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THE PHAIKIAN EPISODE of the *Odyssey* has provoked much critical commentary. The main reason is its ambiguity: the passage contains contradictory elements that demand explanation. For example, a main contradiction is that the Phaiakians are depicted as hyper-civilized and said to be unfriendly to strangers. Eustathius 1566.7–9 and the scholia to 7.16 and 7.32 explained the contradiction in terms of class: Phaiakian nobles are hospitable; Phaiakian commoners, rude. The text, however, fails to uphold such a distinction: Nausikaa and Athene speak of general Phaiakian unfriendliness, and the rudest treatment Odysseus suffers comes at the hands of the nobleman Euryalos. In modern times, genetic answers to such contradictions have dominated. Genetic explanations resolve discrepancies by noting different poets and lays;¹ by finding amalgamations of different folktale motifs and traditions;² or by suggesting that the Ithakan episode influenced the Phaiakian.³ Reece, for example, offers a genetic explanation for

¹For bibliography see S. Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor 1993: hereafter REECE) 101–113.

²See G. Crane, *Calypso: Backgrounds and Conventions of the Odyssey* (Frankfurt 1988) 135–166; R. Lattimore, "Nausikaa's Suitors," in *Classical Studies presented to Ben Edwin Perry* (Urbana/Chicago/London 1969) 88–102; B. Loudon, *The Odyssey: Structure, Narration, and Meaning* (Baltimore 1999) 16–18; W. J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford 1930) 54–65.

³On Ithaka influencing Skheria, see M. Lang, "Homer and Oral Techniques," *Hesperia* 38 (1969) 159–168; Reece 113–116. On similarities between Skheria

Odysseus' secret entrance into Alkinoös' hall in Book 7 and for the contests that the Phaiakian nobles hold in Book 8. Reece states that Odysseus' entrance is unmotivated by Homer's text but is explicable as the motif of the unknown stranger in folktale.⁴ Likewise, the contests are unmotivated in a simple hospitality scene but form part of the motif of the unknown stranger. Reece's explanations, as well as those of others who take a similar approach, insightful as they may be, fail because they seek external explanations for events that also require internal motivation. Or, to put it another way, elements of the motif of the unknown stranger may be present in the text; but the explanation for Odysseus' secret entrance, or for the contests, is not to be found in uncovering an amalgamation of various folktale motifs. Rather the text, though it surely combines various folktale motifs, motivates each of the actions in the episode for reasons integral to the dramatic progression of its own story.

In tracing this dramatic progression, this paper takes a narratological approach. Narratology analyzes the interaction between a fictional model author and model audience. The model author is the narrating persona that the actual author creates. The model audience is the person, or people, that this model author has in mind when he composes the *fabula*.⁵ By interacting with the model audience, the model author influences him to interpret events in a particular way. In offering an interpretation of the Phaiakian episode, the second half of this

and Phaiakia, see N. Austin, *Archery at the Dark of the Moon* (Berkeley 1975) 179–238; H. W. Clarke, *The Art of the Odyssey* (Englewood Cliffs 1967) 54–55; B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Wiesbaden 1974) 55.

⁴Reece 112. For Homeric variations of this type-scene, see Fenik (*supra* n.3) 32–34, 153–154.

⁵For signs of the narrator (model author), of the narratee (model reader), and of their interaction, see M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, transl. C. van Boheemen (Toronto/Buffalo 1985) chapters 2 and 4; I. J. F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam 1987) 41–99.

paper bases its argument on the expectations the model author creates in his model audience; the first half of the paper establishes the background for understanding these expectations. The background necessary for this understanding are the norms of the work—the cultural institutions and values that Homer’s narrator creates. In narratology, a narrator is reliable when he “speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work, ... unreliable when he does not.”⁶ Because Homer’s narrator praises characters deemed praiseworthy by the good-thinking characters of his *fabula* and condemns characters deemed improper by them,⁷ this paper assumes that he holds the same values as the good-thinking characters in his *fabula*.⁸ These values include honor, respect, justice, kindness, mercy, repaying slights and services, intelligence, fighting ability, and wealth.⁹ But ultimately Homer’s narrator values an acceptance of gods who are just and unjust, trustworthy and untrustworthy, and an embracing of life that includes peace and war, hardship and ease. For the sake of readability, henceforth Homer will be used in place of model author and audience in place of model audience.

What characters deem acceptable depends upon an ethical tradition that is ultimately overseen and determined by the gods.¹⁰ Hosts, for example, are to protect guests; guests, like-

⁶W. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago/London 1961) 158–159.

⁷Homer explicitly sees the actions of Odysseus’ men as wrong (1.7–9), likewise the suitors’ (17.169; 20.390–394), Herakles’ (21.26–27), and the Ithakans’ (24.469–471). Homer explicitly praises Odysseus (13.89–92).

⁸S. Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville 1990) 4, 165–166.

⁹On values in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see N. Yamagata, *Homeric Morality* (Leiden/New York/Cologne 1994).

¹⁰Ethics in the *Odyssey* have been called more advanced because they concern the *Gerechtigkeit der Götter*; they have been called simplistic, and inextricably dualistic. See J. S. Clay, *The Wrath of Athena: Gods and Men in the Odyssey* (Washington 1983: hereafter CLAY) 213–239, and D. L. Cairns, *AIDOS: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford 1993) 48–146. The description of the *Odyssey*’s ethics in this paper comes to the conclusion that they are complex, multiple, and contradictory. The reason, in my opinion, is that Homer sees life in this way.

wise, respect hosts (21.26–27). Incest is wrong (11.271–280). Burial is sacred (11.71–78). Pity is a virtue.¹¹ Mortals are to treat one another and the gods with honor and respect: should they do so, then they can expect similar treatment from the gods and their fellow man.¹² Should they not, gods or mortals may punish the malefactor, a relative, cohorts, or those who allow wrongdoing to occur.¹³ This summation appears rather tidy. Mortals expect to treat one another justly and expect the gods to punish malefactors. Gods expect the same of themselves; they uphold justice among mortals, and are concerned with treating mortals justly. Its tidiness, however, is complicated by several things.

Though mortals hold themselves responsible for wrongdoing,¹⁴ in general they attribute to gods' will what happens, or will happen, to them.¹⁵ This tendency complicates their view of the divine, because it holds the gods responsible for whatever happens, just or unjust, true or false.¹⁶ In this way of thinking, to prosper is to be god-loved,¹⁷ though misfortune is often

¹¹1.19; 4.364–365, 825–829; 5.191, 336, 445–453; 6.175; 10.156–159, 399; 14.389–390; 17.367; 19.210.

¹²1.64–79; 2.33–34; 3.55–61, 98–101, 380–384; 4.33–36, 328–331, 762–766; 7.804–807; 11.29–33, 129–134; 13.38–46, 356–360; 14.53–54, 83–84; 17.50–51, 240–246; 19.332–334.

¹³1.378–380; 2.66–67, 71–79, 143–145, 237–238, 316–317; 3.130–135, 197–198; 4.351–353, 378, 423, 469, 472–480, 500–511, 582–583; 5.108–109; 9.269–271, 475–479; 11.271–280, 311–320, 576–600; 13.213–214; 14.282–283; 15.478–479; 17.240–246, 474–476, 483–487; 19.325–331; 20.169–171; 22.412–416; 23.62–66; 24.351–353. For *αἰδώς* in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Cairns (*supra* n.10) 78–95.

¹⁴22.6–7, 54, 412–416; 23.67; 24.192–202, 351–353, 454–462.

¹⁵1.267, 347–349, 400; 3.119; 4.236–237, 261–264, 274–276, 667–668, 722–723; 6.187–190; 7.214; 11.341; 12.190, 214–216, 445–446; 14.183–184, 198, 443–445; 15.488–492; 16.117–118, 129, 211–212, 232, 364; 17.118–119, 423–426; 18.19, 130–137, 180–182, 251–256, 265–266, 271–273; 19.75–80, 124–129, 201, 512; 20.67, 201–203; 20.345–349; 21.363–365; 22.6–7, 51–55, 251–253, 273; 23.258–259, 286–287; 24.401–402.

¹⁶For example Agamemnon tells Achilles that Zeus devised his destruction at the hands of Aigisthos and Klytaimestra (24.95–97); but we know that Zeus told Aigisthos not to court Klytaimestra and not to commit the murder (1.32–43).

¹⁷3.218–224, 374–379; 4.754–757; 24.87–94.

mixed in (8.62–65) and there are no guarantees (15.244–247). To suffer is to be hated.¹⁸ In these instances, preference, rather than justice, is the determining factor. In addition mortals know that the gods do not always treat them justly:¹⁹ out of jealousy they may cause mortals to suffer (23.210–212); they may make them do shameful things (23.222–224); and they may trick them.²⁰ And so divine justice, though mortals acknowledge it and gods administer it, is only a part of the way things work.

An additional complication is the traditional ethical right of repaying slights and services, with no regard to context.²¹ Odysseus suffers for blinding Polyphemos, regardless of whether his action is justified. Epikaste suffers for unknowingly marrying her son (11.271–280). Odysseus' men perish for eating Helios' cattle, even though hunger forces them to do so and they offer recompense to the sun god (12.340–351, 377–383). The Phaiakians suffer for helping Odysseus, their ξείνος (13.128–138). All the suitors perish, although Homer notes that some of them are not wicked (17.362–364; 21.144–147). Though the suitors have done wrong in the eyes of men, gods, and Homer, Odysseus expects retribution from the Ithakans (20.41–43; 23.117–122); one of the Ithakans, Eupheithes, considers it shameful not to avenge the suitors' deaths (24.426–437). Against his view, Medon and Halitherses argue that no revenge should occur because the gods urged Odysseus on, the Ithakans themselves are to blame, and the suitors did wrong (24.442–462). Medon and Halitherses contextualize the killings. But because their society is retributive, what is just and what is not becomes quite muddled and it takes a *deus ex machina* to set things straight.

¹⁸5.423; 10.70–75; 11.436–439, 559–560; 19.363–367; 20.195–196; 24.24–34.

¹⁹1.60–62; 2.229–241; 4.694–695.

²⁰5.173–179, 356–364; 10.297–301, 336–344, 378–380; 16.194–195; 17.485–487.

²¹2.132–137, 192–193; 6.181–185; 9.528–535; 11.101–103, 110–118; 15.272–278; 16.380–382; 19.325–334.

Another complication is that their society is one in which mortals gain status from warring, raiding, and exacting blood-vengeance. Thus Penelope delights in listening to all the trouble Odysseus inflicted on others (23.306–309). Because harming as well as helping is valued, it is not always clear when killing, for example, is acceptable. Killing someone in defense of one's possessions is declared just (17.468–472), as is blood-vengeance (1.298–300; 3.196–198), though the gods deny the Ithakans the right of requital for Odysseus' killing (24.478–486, 531–548). Killing in booty raids is more ambiguous: it is appropriate but at the same time may result in divine retribution (14.83–88). Aigisthos' murder of Agamemnon, however, is not acceptable because it is forbidden by the gods (1.32–43). And so a traditional ethical code enables the characters to distinguish right from wrong; but the gods ultimately oversee it and may override it if they please.²² Homer himself embraces the complexity of his *fabula's* ethics:²³ his world allows for any contingency, just,

²² Amphinomos says that he will be willing to kill Telemachos only if the gods approve (16.403–405).

²³ Although Homer is not critical of his *fabula's* ethics, it is worth asking whether he ever distances himself from them. For example, in the scene where Menelaos offers Telemachos gifts that he finds impractical to accept (4.587–619), does Homer take a distanced view of the institution of ξενία? Though it is possible that he does, it seems more likely that in the scene Homer is most concerned with characterization. That is, he is not distancing himself from the institution of ξενία, but is giving insight into the character of Telemachos and of Menelaos, who is a bit off in what he offers Telemachos. The misconception, then, may reflect poorly on Menelaos' judgment but not at all poorly on the institution itself. Additionally, Menelaos' misconception reflects well on Telemachos' judgment—which is probably the main thrust of this little exchange. Since the epic ends not with a resolution from within but with one imposed from outside (Athene's last-minute intervention to stop further carnage at Ithaka), it is also worth asking whether Homer is offering us an ironical and mixed view of his *fabula*. This possibility should be a certainty were there present in the epic any skepticism about gods' existence or gods' ability to intervene directly in mortal affairs. The *deus ex machina* can be problematic in Euripides' plays because skepticism of both types is rampant. In the *Odyssey*, however, the gods are not outside but an integral part of the cultural institutions and values of Homer's *fabula*. Were Athene not to come resolve the conflict between Odysseus' vengeance on the suitors and the Ithakans' right to retaliation, then the justice of Odysseus' requital would be weakened and a cycle of retribution on Ithaka would have to ensue. Many times throughout the epic. Homer is, of

arbitrary, or whimsical, and it never questions the existence of its divine overseers.²⁴

Within the *fabula's* cultural institutions and values, Homer presents us with characters whose actions and qualities either redound to their κλέος or do not. The suitors, Aigisthos, Klytimestra, Agamemnon because of his ignominious death (24.3–34) do not gain κλέος ἐσθλόν. Telemachos, Penelope, Achilles, Orestes, Eumaios do. The one who gains the most κλέος, however, is Odysseus. For Homer, Odysseus, though not flawless, represents a paragon of the epic's virtues.²⁵ Odysseus' piety (1.67), kindness,²⁶ justice (4.689–693; 5.7–12), mercy (16.418–433), toiling for another (4.151–154, 170), fighting ability,²⁷ intelligence,²⁸ familial devotion,²⁹ self-control,³⁰ endurance,³¹ and caution (5.173–191) are presented in as favorable a light as possible.³² His punishment of the suitors is viewed as just by Homer (20.390–394) and by Athene and Zeus, who thwart the Ithakans' right to retribution. Homer exalts Odysseus and expects his audience to do the same.³³

course, critical of characters' actions; nowhere, however, is he critical of, or does he distance himself from, the cultural institutions and values of his *fabula*.

²⁴Laertes comes close to questioning the gods' existence when he declares his belief in them because Odysseus has returned and punished the suitors (24.351–355).

²⁵For some of his flaws, see I. J. F. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey* (Cambridge 2001) 134. Eurylochos blames him for the deaths of the men the Polyphemos killed (10.431–437).

²⁶2.47, 230–234; 5.7–12; 14.137–147.

²⁷1.253–266; 4.340–346; 24.526–532.

²⁸3.120–122, 126–129; 13.89–92.

²⁹1.59; 5.13–15, 81–84, 215–224; 7.151–152, 222–225, 331–333; 8.154–157; 13.42–43.

³⁰13.330–334; 17.233–238, 462–465; 18.394–398; 20.300–302.

³¹4.240–264, 266–289; 13.89–92.

³²On Homer's love of Odysseus, see Clay 34–38.

³³Of course in the historical Greek world Homer's Odysseus is not everybody's. In the *Telegony* Odysseus seems to have tired of Penelope and home life on Ithaka and moved on; in Euripides' *Cyclops* Odysseus' civilization is hardly less barbaric than Polyphemos' lack of it. But these different portraits of Odysseus do not mean that the authors of these works disagree with or even

Read this way, the *Odyssey* can be said to be a book about proper social action.³⁴ This is not to suggest that it is to be read as a sort of handbook of heroic virtue; rather it offers a reflection of what actions gain κλέος ἐσθλόν³⁵ and what ones do not, with the caveat that even if one acts virtuously, there is no guarantee. So powerful is the importance of κλέος ἐσθλόν in the epic's culture that Odysseus, faced with an imminent unknown death at sea, wishes that he perished in Troy, for then he would have gained κλέος.³⁶ Telemachos expresses the same sentiment—would that his father had perished at Troy rather than at sea,³⁷ for Odysseus' κλέος would then have passed on to him.³⁸

By upholding the *fabula's* cultural institutions and values, Odysseus and the epic's other characters gain κλέος ἐσθλόν. There are two main ways they do so: by their intellect and by their fighting ability. When Odysseus considers his companion Elpenor, he judges him by his abilities in these two spheres (10.552–553):

Ἐλπήνωρ δέ τις ἔσκε νεώτατος, οὔτε τι λήην
 ἄλκιμος ἐν πολέμῳ οὔτε φρεσὶν ἦσιν ἀρηρώς,
 Elpenor, the youngest, was in no way very stout in war or in mind
 fit.³⁹

dislike Homer's: they have created a different Odysseus for their own reasons. For the treatment of Odysseus in post-Homeric literature, see W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme* (Oxford 1963).

³⁴The conclusion of the poem in part warns against wickedness and inculcates virtue and piety: Clay 235.

³⁵On κλέος see S. D. Olson, *Blood and Iron: Stories and Storytelling in Homer's Odyssey* (Leiden/New York 1995) chapter 1.

³⁶5.306–312. Eumaios says that the gods hated Odysseus so much that they did not let him die fighting at Troy but killed him later at sea (14.366–371).

³⁷Telemachos also wishes that he had been the son of a man who grew old with his possessions intact (1.217–218).

³⁸1.240. Eumaios says nearly the same at 14.361–371. Achilles says the same of Agamemnon (24.30–34).

³⁹Penelope says that Telemachos is unversed in speaking and fighting (4.818–819). Odysseus judges Neoptolemos by these same two things when he tells Achilles about him (11.505–537). Odysseus the beggar praises Odysseus for his intelligence and fighting (14.491). Telemachos says that Odysseus' κλέος rests in his fighting ability and intelligence (16.242).

Though there are many words that refer to a hero's physical prowess, ἄλκιμος and ἀλκή are two that give good insight into the importance the epic places on fighting ability.⁴⁰ ἄλκιμος and ἀλκή represent strength⁴¹ and one's ability to act with it.⁴² Nestor tells Telemachos that his future ἀλκή bodes well since the gods already look after him (3.375–376):

ὦ φίλος, οὐ σε ἔολπα κακὸν καὶ ἄναλκιν ἔσεσθαι,
εἰ δὴ τοι νέφ' ὧδε θεοὶ πομπῆες ἔπονται.
Friend, I expect you will not be cowardly and weak, since the
gods escort and follow you though you are so young.

Twice in Book 22 Athene scolds Odysseus for complaining rather than being ἄλκιμος (22.226, 232). In the last book Odysseus reminds Telemachos that their family excels in ἀλκή when he encourages him to fight (24.509). Conversely Menelaos dismisses the suitors as inadequate mates for Penelope because they are weak: κρατερόφρονος ἀνδρὸς ἐν εὐνή / ἤθελον εὐνηθῆναι ἀνάλκιδες αὐτοὶ ἔοντες ("in the bed of a strong-minded man they wished to lie, though they are weak," 4.333–334). In this warrior culture, where men put on swords with their clothes (2.3; 4.308; 20.125), it is through ἀλκή that they obtain κλέος ἐσθλόν.

ἀλκή is but one part of the equation. Equally important for obtaining κλέος ἐσθλόν is intelligence.⁴³ Though he has great ἀλκή, Polyphemos is dim-witted and beaten by the much weaker Odysseus, who excels in intellect and ἀλκή. Throughout the epic Homer and his characters stress the importance of in-

⁴⁰For ἀλκή, see D. Collins, *Immortal Armor. The Concept of Alke in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Lanham/Boulder 1998).

⁴¹Polyphemos has great ἀλκή (9.214), as does the dog Argos (17.315).

⁴²Odysseus reports that Kirke told him that when he encounters Skylla, no ἀλκή will be possible (12.120), though Odysseus will attempt to fight anyway.

⁴³For αἰδώς and intelligence in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Cairns (*supra* n.10) 126–130. The opposite of intelligence is νήπιος, which when Homer uses it suggests not so much Homer passing judgment as making a comment he knows will be echoed by his audience: D. M. Gaunt, "Judgement and Atmosphere in Epic," *Ramus* 5 (1976) 59.

telligence. Athene recommends Nestor to Telemachos because of his intelligence (3.17–18). Athene and Zeus praise Odysseus for his (1.66; 13.29–99).⁴⁴ In an effort to spur Telemachos on, Athene tells him that she thinks he shares in his father's μῆτις (2.279). Athene praises herself for her μῆτις (13.299); Penelope does the same of herself (19.326). The most frequent epithet for Telemachos is πεπνυμένος (46 times); for Penelope it is περίφρων (50 times); and for Odysseus it is πολύμητις (68 times).⁴⁵ Examples abound, but perhaps the best indication of the importance of intelligence in the work is the epic's first line, where Homer introduces Odysseus to us as πολύτροπος.⁴⁶ The epithet suggests a mind capable of many different things, including deceit and guile.

Odysseus' ability to deceive has troubled commentators, both ancient and modern. For them deceit implies dishonor. For this reason, many readers today have felt compelled to see cunning as a special trait of Odysseus rather than a characteristic of all heroes: Odysseus, then, is not a typical hero. In ancient times Antisthenes went so far to say that by πολύτροπος Homer seeks to censure Odysseus rather than to praise him. The scholiast who quotes Antisthenes disagrees, arguing that Homer sees Odysseus as wise and that πολύτροπος represents his ability to change his manner of speech to suit his audience, not his ability to deceive.⁴⁷ But this is special pleading. Examination of the passages in which δόλος and δόλιος occur suggests that the characters of the epic and the epic's narrator take a neutral or positive view of the ability to deceive.

δόλος is what a mind full of μῆτις may conceive so as to achieve its ends. The noun and adjective occur forty-eight times.

⁴⁴For discussion of Athene's ironic praising of Odysseus, see Clay 198–200.

⁴⁵Odysseus has 13 epithets; the second most frequent is δῖος (42), third is πολύτλας δῖος.

⁴⁶For a discussion of πολύτροπος see Clay 29–34.

⁴⁷Antisth. fr.51 Deleva Caizzi; schol. *Od.* 1.1.

Homer uses them four times—three times of Odysseus, once in a simile to describe Penelope’s state of mind when she learns of the suitors’ deceitful ambush of Telemachos. Seventeen characters use the words to describe their own actions or another’s. The characters whose actions are described as deceitful include everyone in Homer’s world, male or female, mortal or divine. In the context of the epic’s ethics, actions performed through deceit can be considered appropriate or inappropriate. For example Nestor tells Telemachos that the Greeks used every δόλος in order to conquer Troy and that they finally were successful because of the δόλος of Odysseus (3.118–123). Subduing Troy, openly by force or by deceit, is considered appropriate. Penelope, speaking to the disguised Odysseus, uses it of herself to communicate how she has been opposing the suitors (19.137). Her trickery of the suitors is appropriate and is deemed to add to her κλέος ἐσθλόν (2.93–126). Conversely, various characters tell of how Aigisthos and Klytimestra used deceit to kill Agamemnon. The murder of Agamemnon is considered inappropriate. That the two used δόλος is not what makes it wrong; rather the murder is wrongly done by Aigisthos because the gods had expressly forbidden it (1.32–43). Klytimestra’s wrong consists in violating the husband and wife relationship: she is to protect the estate’s possessions and to help its friends and harm its enemies (6.181–185; 23.149–151). The actions of the two are improper, regardless of whether they kill Agamemnon openly or by deceit. There are instances, however, when it is not acceptable to use δόλος. These are times when openness, such as truth, honesty, or plain-speaking, is called for and when deceit is out of place (3.20, 327–328; 14.156–157). Here the problem is not deceit itself but the inappropriate use of it, much like the smiles and laughter of Catullus’ Egnatius (*Carm.* 39). Thus, the use of δόλος and δόλιος in the epic is either positive, in the case of appropriate actions, or neutral, in the case of inappropriate ones. Though

any character may use *δόλος*, it happens that Odysseus, Penelope, and Athene possess a *μητις* that is particularly good at it.

Intelligence and fighting ability used appropriately and in accordance with divine will are two main values of the epic. They are not the only ways to obtain *κλέος ἐσθλόν*; there are many others: fine attire (6.27–30), piety (3.57, 380), athletic contests (8.147), generosity (17.418), goodness (19.333), prosperity (18.126), loyalty (18.255; 19.128; 24.196.), helping friends and harming enemies (6.184–185). But they are the most stressed. In the epic's culture there is one more main way that characters obtain *κλέος ἐσθλόν*: through acquiring possessions. Characters obtain them through war, raids, intelligence, general gift-giving, and *ξενία*. Material goods, whether booty or gifts, are fundamental to obtaining *κλέος*. Possessions may not make the man, but they do increase his stature.⁴⁸ Telemachos remarks that the house of a king quickly grows rich and that through wealth a king gains honor (1.392–393). Odysseus notes to Antinoos and the Phaiakians the greater honor he will have by returning home enriched (11.355–361). For reasons that will be discussed later, of particular importance is Odysseus' return home in possession of many gifts or of more gifts than he ever could have brought home from Troy. Zeus stresses this fact when he tells Hermes to tell Kalypso to let Odysseus go (5.38–40). This same point is stressed seven times after Odysseus' return to Ithaka.⁴⁹ Even though he comes home richly laden, the goods are not enough to replenish the devastation the suitors have caused to his property: after being reunited with Penelope, Odysseus tells her that by raiding and taxation he will replenish his depleted coffers—which will also serve to reestablish his *κλέος* (23.357). Throughout the epic, Athene is concerned with

⁴⁸In his lies Odysseus tells how he, son of a nobleman and slave woman, got a rich wife by virtue of his ability as a fighter (14.211–215).

⁴⁹13.135–138; 14.321–326; 16.229–231; 17.525–527; 19.280–282; 19.293–295; 23.338–341.

helping Odysseus reestablish his κλέος and also with establishing Telemachos'. She comes to Telemachos disguised as Mentès. He offers her ξενία. Among other things, she urges him to travel to the mainland so that he may begin to win a good reputation for himself (1.280–305). He visits the palaces of Nestor and Menelaos, both of whom offer him ξενία. Menelaos urges Telemachos to travel with him through Hellas and midmost Argos so as to win honor through obtaining gifts (15.78–85).

Characters act in accordance with the high regard possessions have in the culture. The suitors eat Telemachos' inheritance so as to force Penelope to choose among them. They calculate that she will choose to remarry rather than see the estate ruined (2.125–128). Ktesippos' fortune gives him the confidence that Penelope will consider him a viable suitor (20.289–290). Being wealthy suggests noble status and expects particular treatment: Penelope, daughter of a wealthy nobleman, expects gifts from the suitors and expects them to share the cost of entertainment.⁵⁰ Mentioning wealth is a way to recommend worth (15.425–429; 18.125–128). Nestor and Athene urge Telemachos to return home so as to safeguard his possessions (3.313–316; 15.10–19, 87–91). He does so. Penelope knows that the suitors will agree to her weaving a shroud for Laertes because it is disgraceful for so rich a man as him to be buried without one (2.101–102):

μή τις μοι κατὰ δῆμον Ἀχαιϊάδων νεμεσῆση,
αἶ κεν ἄτερ σπείρου κείται πολλὰ κτεατίσας
so no one among the people of the Achaian women fault me, if so
rich a man lies shroudless.

The epitome of a good life is to grow old at home with family and possessions intact⁵¹—a value that Odysseus embraces so

⁵⁰ 18.274–280. For an additional example see 24.253–255.

⁵¹ 1.217–218; 7.147–150; 11.136–137; 23.283–288.

much that he rejects immortality and a life of ease in preference for death and a life of hardship and uncertainty.

In a culture where reciprocity is crucial, gifts are given in gratitude for good service. Eurymachos criticizes Halitherses as a gift-seeker, for prophesying Odysseus' return home (2.184–186). Telemachos and Penelope promise Theoklymenos gifts should his prophecy come true (15.536–538; 17.163–165). Telemachos promises Peiraios gifts should the suitors be defeated (17.78–83). Odysseus promises Eumaios and Philoitios house, wife, possessions, and freedom should they successfully defeat the suitors (21.212–216). They surely would fight anyway; but the promise is an honorable reward for their loyalty and service. Masters give servants gifts at the end of a day's work (15.374–379). And yet, though they increase one's stature, possessions are not an absolute good. Fighting for them is just; being greedy is not. Odysseus condemns Antinoos for failing to show appropriate generosity toward one in need (17.454–457). Pirates and businessmen are charged with greed. With no home, the pirate travels about, existing to steal (3.72–74; 9.254–255; 14.83–89). The merchant's sole concern is with acquisition (8.159–164). In several instances possessions are not valued above life. Menelaos would gladly give away two-thirds of his property to have back the Greeks who died at Troy (4.97–99). Achilles tells Odysseus that he would rather be a thrall with nothing than king of the dead (11.488–491). Telemachos says that the suitors, should Odysseus return, will think of running to save their lives rather than of profit (1.163–165). Nonetheless, obtaining possessions in war or raiding, through intelligence, as a result of doing service, or through *ξενία* is an integral part of the culture and adds to one's *κλέος*.

In these ways characters, by upholding cultural institutions and values, obtain *κλέος ἐσθλόν*. In contrast to these examples of proper conduct, the suitors are seen as acting improperly. In Book 4 at Menelaos' palace a double wedding of his daughter

and of his illegitimate son Megapenthes is being celebrated. Though the celebration is a wedding-feast (γάμος) and not a communal pot-luck dinner (ἔρρανος), guests arrive bringing sheep, wine, and other food. Our poet switches immediately from the proper conduct of Sparta to the impropriety of Ithaka, where suitors are feasting and competing (4.620–630). Their chief fault lies in eating up the property of one man, instead of sharing the costs. In doing so, they show no respect to the gods, to Penelope, and to Odysseus' slaves.⁵² Their failure to act by the protocol of social propriety is a major theme of the Telemachy and of the second half of the work, serving to justify their death in Book 22.

It is in the context of propriety, impropriety, and the gaining of κλέος that the dramatic progression of the Phaiakian episode is to be understood. Skheria marks a crucial turning point in the adventures of Odysseus. It is prophesied that arrival there is the end of his struggles to reach home (5.286–290). Also for the first time in the epic Athene is able to intervene directly to assist Odysseus.⁵³ And she does so seven times. Through Athene's interventions, Homer creates dramatic tension that drives the entire episode.⁵⁴ This dramatic tension, however, is not immediately evident and is easily missed because of the ambivalent nature of the people of Skheria.

⁵²2.66–67; 16.105–111; 18.143–146; 20.315–319; 22.35–40; 23.62–67; 24.458–460.

⁵³Hitherto she has remained behind the scenes out of regard for Poseidon (6.328–331; 13.341–343).

⁵⁴G. P. Rose, "The Unfriendly Phaeacians," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 406, sees the tension as Odysseus not receiving transport home. F. Ahl and H. M. Roisman, *The Odyssey Re-Formed* (Ithaca/London 1996) 49; A. F. Garvie, *Homer: Odyssey Books VI–VIII* (Cambridge 1994) 23 and n.76; Lattimore (*supra* n.2) 101; Reece 120; and A. Thornton, *People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey* (London 1970) 17–19, see the tension as Odysseus' final temptation to abandon his quest for home; Clarke (*supra* n.3) 52–54 as a temptation that menaces his manhood; de Jong (*supra* n.25) 150, and S. V. Tracy, *The Story of the Odyssey* (Princeton 1990) 27–28, as a rehearsal for the more important events on Ithaka; I. M. Hohendahl-Zoetelief, *Manners in the Homeric Epic* (Leiden 1980) 8 n.8, as psychological preparation for his return to Ithaka.

The dramatic tension Homer creates through Athene's repeated interventions is best seen by asking what she is attempting to accomplish by them. A ready answer is in her speech to Odysseus at the start of Book 7 (75–77):

εἴ κέν τοι κείνη γε φίλα φρονέησ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ,
 ἐλπωρή τοι ἔπειτα φίλους ἰδέειν καὶ ἰκέσθαι
 οἶκον ἐς ὑπόροφον καὶ σὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.
 If she [Arete] thinks kindly of you in her heart, there is then
 hope that you will see your people and reach your grand home
 and land of your fathers.

In order to win conveyance home from Alkinoös Odysseus must win over Arete. Implied is that if he does not win her over, he will not obtain transport. And so the obvious conclusion is that Athene intervenes because she is worried about effecting his return home. But this explanation is not without problems. First, five passages contradict it. Alkinoös says to the Phaiakian lords (8.32–33):

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδέ τις ἄλλος, ὅτις κ' ἐμὰ δώμαθ' ἵκηται,
 ἐνθάδ' ὀδυρόμενος δηρὸν μένει εἵνεκα πομπῆς.
 for never does anyone, who reaches my palace, stay here griev-
 ing for a long time for conveyance.

To Odysseus (8.565–566):

ἀλλὰ τόδ' ὡς ποτε πατὴρ ἐγὼν εἰπόντος ἄκουσα
 Ναυσιθόου, ὃς ἔφασκε Ποσειδάων' ἀγάσασθαι
 ἡμῖν, οὐνεκα πομποὶ ἀπήμονές εἰμεν ἀπάντων.
 but this once I heard my father, Nausithoös, say: he declared
 that Poseidon would be angry with us because we, without harm,
 give convoy to all.

To the Phaiakians (13.172–174, 179–181):

ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ με παλαίφατα θέσφαθ' ἰκάνει
 πατὴρ ἐμοῦ, ὃς ἔφασκε Ποσειδάων' ἀγάσασθαι
 ἡμῖν, οὐνεκα πομποὶ ἀπήμονές εἰμεν ἀπάντων.

Alas, heavily upon me the prophecy of old comes, that of my father, who declared that Poseidon would be angry with us because we, without harm, give convoy to all.

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ', ὡς ἂν ἐγὼ εἶπω, πειθόμεθα πάντες·
πομπῆς μὲν παύεσθε βροτῶν, ὅτε κέν τις ἵκηται
ἡμέτερον προτὶ ἄστυ·

So come, with what I say, let us all agree: stop our conveyance of mortals, whenever any of them comes to our city.

Finally, Odysseus himself says the same thing as Alkinoös when he reveals himself to Telemachos (16.226–228):

τοιγὰρ ἐγὼ τοι, τέκνον, ἀληθείην καταλέξω.
Φαίηκές μ' ἄγαγον ναυσικλυτοί, οἳ τε καὶ ἄλλους
ἀνθρώπους πέμπουσιν, ὅτις σφεας εἰσαφίκηται·
Certainly to you, son, the truth I shall tell. Phaiakians brought me, famous seafarers, who also escort other people, whoever should come upon them.

If we are to take these claims as truthful, then once he reaches Skheria, Odysseus' return home is a foregone conclusion and Athene need not intervene to secure him transport. Second, Athene continues to intervene even after Odysseus has secured his return home. An explanation that is in better accord with the facts is required. A closer examination of Athene's actions before and after Alkinoös agrees to give Odysseus transport home suggests one.

Before Alkinoös agrees to do so, Athene intervenes five times. First (6.2–47) she appears in disguise to Nausikaa, “devising for great-hearted Odysseus his return” (νόστον Ὀδυσσῆϊ μεγάλῃτορι μητιόωσα, 6.14). Her plan for his return involves having Odysseus and Nausikaa meet. She intervenes a second time when she goes to wake Odysseus to make sure that the paths of the two will cross (6.110–114). Athene's machinations prove successful—they meet, though Athene has to intervene a third

time to prevent Nausikaa from fleeing (6.138–140).⁵⁵ Nausikaa agrees to help Odysseus, who has been physically enhanced by Athene (fourth intervention: 6.229–237), win his return home, giving him clothing and advice (to win Arete over to obtain return). Athene appears for a fifth time (7.28–36) disguised as a young Phaiakian girl: she gives Odysseus directions to the palace, information about the people and place, and the same advice that Nausikaa does—to win Arete over to obtain return (7.48–77). Within 230 lines of Book 7 Odysseus’ return is secured: Alkinoös decides to transport him home and the Phaiakians shout their assent, arrangements to be made at assembly the next day (7.186–206, 226–227). A bit later Alkinoös tells Odysseus he will transport him tomorrow (7.309–328). Nonetheless, in Book 8 Athene intervenes two more times.

At the athletic contests, Euryalos insults Odysseus, calling him a man of business, concerned only with profit. In response, Odysseus throws a discus that overflies the others by a considerable distance. Athene appears in the form of a Phaiakian nobleman, marking Odysseus’ discus throw and speaking words that embolden Odysseus, glad to find one friendly companion amidst what he views as a hostile crowd (8.199–200). Before these events Athene takes the form of Alkinoös’ herald, urging the Phaiakians to attend the assembly where the arrangements for Odysseus’ return home are to be made. Athene persuades the Phaiakians to attend by appealing to their curiosity, noting that Odysseus seems to be divine (8.11–14). Homer tells us that her intent is the same as that of 6.14, “devising for great-hearted Odysseus his return” (νόστον Ὀδυσσῆϊ μεγάλῃτορι μητιόωσα, 8.9). Why, one may ask, is this line repeated verbatim, when Odysseus has already secured transport home? A possible answer is that νόστος to Athene means more than simply Odysseus’ return home from Skheria, that

⁵⁵For the mock-heroic or witty tone of the meeting, see Lattimore (*supra* n.2) 89–91.

νόστος for her involves his coming home and regaining his crown.

Phaiakians are the key to his return home. But what role, if any, do they have to play in his regaining kingship? The importance of social conduct, material wealth, and κλέος in the epic has already been noted. Material wealth and κλέος are inextricably bound. As important as Odysseus' return is, it is just as crucial that he not return home after twenty years empty-handed. In addition to the cultural importance placed on wealth, it is imperative that Odysseus come home with riches because the suitors have been depleting his coffers, because he must have something to show for all his years apart, and because coming home empty-handed would mark him as god-hated and thus unlikely to regain his kingdom. Since Phaiakian transport is a foregone conclusion, Athene must be intervening because the giving of gifts is not. This interpretation accords with Athene's interventions and renders irrelevant the contradiction between Alkinoös' and Odysseus' "the Phaiakians give transport to all" and Nausikaa's and Athene's "win Arete over to obtain transport": Athene's concern is not simply that he be returned home but that he be returned home with gifts. For this contention to be correct, however, Homer must create in his listeners the expectation that the Phaiakians, hyper-civilized though they be, are not inclined to give Odysseus gifts, especially since we have been told by Zeus that the Phaiakians will honor him like a god, return him home, and give him gifts (5.35–40). And Homer does so.

Homer offers us a society that differs in significant ways from the norms of the rest of human society in the *fabula*.⁵⁶ The Phaiakians are full of ambivalence and contradictions. They are

⁵⁶On the lack of heroism among the Phaiakians and similarities between them and the Kyklopes, see Clay 130–132.

neither divine nor mortal (5.32).⁵⁷ Of the two it seems that they think of themselves as closer to the gods than to mortals: two of their chief interests are in things divine and in being as similar to the gods as possible. The gods themselves are said to be accustomed to visiting them without disguise (7.199–206). Their fields miraculously provide sustenance for them yearlong (7.117–119). Immortal dogs of gold and silver guard the palace (7.91–94). Their ships sail by themselves (8.557–558) without fear for damage or destruction (8.563). They live far from anyone else (6.8), are insular, without war, and god-beloved (6.200–205). Without any work to do, the Phaiakians devote themselves to song, dance, feasting, and athletic contests—the very thing the suitors are criticized for.⁵⁸ In addition they are unwarlike (6.200–205, 270) and cowardly⁵⁹ with their queen taking unheard of pride of place.⁶⁰ Their idea of κλέος and ἀρετή rests solely on peaceful endeavors rather than in the normal heroic martial ones.⁶¹ Having fled from the raids of the *Kyklopes*, the soft and cowardly Phaiakians are as unfit for the difficult and dangerous world of Odysseus as are the *Kyklopes* with their lack of any civilized virtues.⁶²

⁵⁷Rose's article (*supra* n.54) remains the most thorough argument for Phaiakian hostility. The main difference between his argument and that offered here is that the latter sees the tension as Odysseus' winning gifts from a people disinclined to give; the former sees the tension in general Phaiakian hostility and the danger that Odysseus will not be returned home (see Rose 390). Despite Rose's study, many continue to view *Skheria* as an idyllic, safe haven for Odysseus. Such a reading has its roots in antiquity: scholiasts found them as most kind to strangers: scholia to 7.32, φιλοξενότατοι; Heraclid. Pont., quoted in scholia to 13.119, φιλοξενία; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 7.90, φιλανθρωπία. For bibliography on modern scholars in agreement, see Rose 388. See also G. J. De Vries, "Phaeacian Manners," *Mnemosyne* 30 (1977) 113–121; Fenik (*supra* n.3) 32, 126–127; Garvie (*supra* n.54) 24–25; Lang (*supra* n.3) 163.

⁵⁸1.158–162. The Phaiakians were proverbial for soft and luxurious living, W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer*² I (London 1959) 338.

⁵⁹8.190–192. "The dignity of the resounding epithets adds a humorous touch of incongruity to their 'air-raid precautions'" (Stanford [*supra* n.58] 337).

⁶⁰7.6–68. For bibliography on the atypical status given *Arete*, see Garvie (*supra* n.54) 22 and n.72, Reece 114 n.29.

⁶¹8.145–151, 244–249; de Jong (*supra* n.25) 206.

⁶²For a similar view, see Clarke (*supra* n.3) 54 and Clay 125–132.

They are unfit because existence on Skheria is utopian—feasting, dancing, contests. Except for petty quarreling, there is little struggle. The Phaiakians exult in peace and divinity. What happens one day differs little from the next. What the Phaiakians do from one day to the next is of no great concern or significance. Conversely, because they struggle and are exposed to adversity, what characters like Odysseus do matters and is meaningful. Odysseus recognizes this difference and embraces it: as he had done to Kalypso's offer of immortality, he declines Antinoös' request to stay and takes pains to stress as clearly as possible how he differs from them: he is an experienced warrior (8.202–229) and wholly mortal (7.208–225). Like Odysseus, Homer embraces the sufferings of mortal life and the consequent meaning it gives to actions and choices. This is not to say that characters and Homer do not appreciate peace and ease or that the Phaiakians are to be wholly despised. Their hyper-civilization is somewhat enviable and peace and ease are valued.⁶³ At the same time Phaiakian society is a pipe-dream: its existence requires that the Phaiakians be cordoned off and protected from the rest of the world. The reality of existence requires us to reject this utopia. At the same time even if the Skherian utopia were possible, Homer's epic shows us that it is still to be rejected: Skherian peace and ease cost mortals things that are of significance to the human condition.⁶⁴

Given their insularity, ease, and divine favor, the Phaiakians have no need of the institutions and values of Odysseus' world.⁶⁵ When it comes to the custom of *ξενία*, they do not

⁶³4.561–570; 11.136–137; 13.38–46; 14.222–228; 15.403–411; 23.281–288; 24.478–486, 531–532.

⁶⁴For a similar reading see Clay 132.

⁶⁵Garvie (*supra* n.54: 24–25) sees the Phaiakians as observing all the rules and etiquette of Homeric society and argues, following K. Rüter, *Odysseeinterpretationen: Untersuchungen zum ersten Buch und zur Phaiakis* (Göttingen 1969) 229, 239–245, and H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee* (Berlin/New York 1972) 148, that upon his return Odysseus tries to create on Ithaka the utopia he observed on Skheria.

stand to benefit from its reciprocity:⁶⁶ they may give, but never collect. As the Phaiakian narrative unfolds Homer keeps the audience in suspense as it, along with Odysseus, wonders how Odysseus will win gifts from these strange creatures. This suspense is seen clearly by considering what Odysseus and Homer's audience are led to expect when Odysseus first arrives on the island.

When he is awakened by Athene on Skheria, Odysseus' initial thought is whether the people are hostile or hospitable (6.119–121):

ὦ μοι ἐγώ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαίαν ἰκάνω;
 ἦ ῥ' οἳ γ' ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,
 ἦε φιλόξενοι καὶ σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής;
 Ah me, of what sort are the people at whose land I have
 arrived? Are they violent and savage and unjust, or hospitable
 to strangers and of godly mind?

The treatment he receives from Nausikaa suggests the latter; the information she, and later Athene, gives him about the Phaiakians suggests the former. Nausikaa welcomes Odysseus as a suppliant and tells him his needs will be met. Later he learns from her to watch out for general Phaiakian insolence and mockery (6.273–274):

τῶν ἀλεεῖνω φῆμιν ἀδευκέα, μή τις ὀπίσσω
 μωμεύῃ· μάλα δ' εἰσὶν ὑπερφίαλοι κατὰ δῆμον·
 I keep clear of their harsh talk, lest someone later mock me: for
 there are exceedingly brash folk amongst us;

Nausikaa calls them *ὑπερφίαλοι*, an important epithet in the epic. Of its twenty-six occurrences, twenty-one condemn the suitors or their actions. Its use, in connection with the other hostile traits of the Phaiakians, may ask the audience to compare the two in regard to improper conduct. At the start of

⁶⁶On the reciprocal nature of *xenia* see 24.281–286, 314.

Book 7 Athene envelops Odysseus in a mist so that no Phaiakian accosts him, asking him who he is in violation of *ξενία*. Shortly thereafter Athene, disguised as a young Phaiakian lass, leads Odysseus to expect outright hostility from the Phaiakians (7.31–33):

μηδέ τιν' ἀνθρώπων προτιόσσεο μηδ' ἐρέεινε.
 οὐ γὰρ ξείνους οἷ γε μάλ' ἀνθρώπους ἀνέχονται
 οὐδ' ἀγαπαζόμενοι φιλέουσ', ὅς κ' ἄλλοθεν ἔλθῃ.
 Do not look at or speak to any of the people. For they do not put
 up at all with foreign folk and they do not give kind hospitality
 to anyone who comes from elsewhere.

She next informs Odysseus that the Phaiakian race stems from Poseidon and the giants (7.59–60):

ὅς ποθ' ὑπερθύμοισι Γιγάντεσσιν βασίλευεν.
 ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ὄλεσε λαὸν ἀτάσθαλον, ὄλετο δ' αὐτός·
 he once was king over the high-minded Giants. But he lost his
 reckless people and died himself,

the former being Odysseus' chief enemy and the latter known for their insolence. From both Nausikaa and Athene, he learns that his return depends upon winning over the queen Arete. And so, though he receives excellent treatment from Nausikaa, what he learns from her and from the disguised Athene, while it does not lead him to expect violence, does lead him not to expect *ξενία*. At no time does Homer offer his audience information that suggests that this expectation is false.

Rather he narrates another curious event that adds to its validity. When Odysseus enters the hall, grasps Arete's knees in supplication, and then sits in the ashes next to the fire, nothing happens for a long time. All stare in a silence, which remains unbroken until an elder Phaiakian speaks, telling Alkinoös the proper thing to do. The Phaiakian is introduced as the eldest of them all and one who knows many things from times past. For over a generation the Phaiakians have lived apart, without fear

of invasion, and without intrusion from outside. Alkinoös' father, Nausithoos, brought them to Skheria, seeking refuge from attacks by the *Kyklopes* (6.4–10). Alkinoös is among the first of the *Phaiakians* to have lived apart from the rest of the Greek world. His failure to treat the stranger in an appropriate manner is, perhaps, attributable to his having lived an insular life.⁶⁷ The old customs are being forgotten as the *Phaiakians* become less and less like the rest of humankind.

One more reason *Odysseus* and Homer's audience are not led to expect the *Phaiakians* to follow the protocol of *ξενία* is that the *Phaiakians* test *Odysseus*. Though *Odysseus* immediately wins transport home, he does not immediately earn the love, admiration, and respect of the *Phaiakians*. They must test him first. At the start of Book 8 *Athene* makes him stronger and divine in appearance so that the *Phaiakians* will love, admire, and respect him and so that he will accomplish their tests.⁶⁸ During the contests he is insulted and views the crowd as hostile. Though he is a suppliant under the king's aegis, *Alkinoös* does nothing to protect him, although custom says he should.⁶⁹ Emboldened by *Athene* disguised as a *Phaiakian* noble, *Odysseus* nonetheless takes the offensive, throwing the discus and retorting harshly to his attacker and the rest of the crowd. His going on the offensive is best seen as his following the advice *Athene* as a *Phaiakian* girl had just given him (7.51–52):

⁶⁷ *Alkinoös*' behavior throughout books 7 and 8 shows further improprieties. In addition to failing to take *Odysseus* out of the ashes, *Alkinoös* suggests marriage to *Odysseus* before he knows who *Odysseus* is (Reece 111 and n.24); tells a foolish lie, asserting that the *Phaiakians* excel in activities in which they do not; fails to protect suppliant *Odysseus* from the hostility of *Euryalos*; and fails to give the honored portion of chine to, and to request a particular song from, *Demodocos* (Reece 106–107). Woodhouse (*supra* n.2) 59 calls *Alkinoös* somewhat of a buffoon; G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 370, calls him a bit of a fool.

⁶⁸ 8.21–23. For the implication of these words to *Odysseus*' expectation of *ξενία*, see Cairns (*supra* n.10) 89–90.

⁶⁹ 16.69–72; 17.564–568; 18.215–225.

θαρσαλέος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀμείνων
ἔργοισιν τελέθει, εἰ καὶ ποθεν ἄλλοθεν ἔλθοι.

For the bold man in every endeavor fares better, even if he comes
from somewhere else.

And it proves successful. After Odysseus threatens the Phaiakians, stressing his skill in the very activities they have no experience of—fighting with spear and bow, especially when hard-pressed by a crowd of attackers⁷⁰—Alkinoös confesses, telling him that they are really not so good in activities he had previously claimed excellence in, boxing and wrestling, but that they do excel in running, sailing, feasting, singing and dancing, weaving, bathing, and beds. Alkinoös then puts on a show for Odysseus to prove to him their excellence in singing and dancing, after which Odysseus, though he says nothing about the singing, admits that the Phaiakians are the best dancers. At this point Odysseus has passed the tests of the Phaiakians, proving himself to be their equal in civilized virtues and their superior in martial ones. As a result the first of three gift-giving episodes occurs—Odysseus is offered gifts from the thirteen kings and from his taunter, Euryalos: from the kings a robe, tunic, and gold talent; from Euryalos, a sword.⁷¹ Right after this offer, however, we and Odysseus are reminded of Phaiakian ambivalence: Arete places the gifts in a chest and she tells him to tie it with an unbreakable knot lest a Phaiakian steal the loot when they take him home (8.443–445). Given who they are, insular and misoxenic, it is understandable that the Phaiakians

⁷⁰Odysseus' prowess with the bow has been a point of controversy because nowhere else is he given this ability. Woodhouse therefore suggests that Odysseus as archer is a figure of folk-tale (*supra* n.2: 157, 184–185). Others take the bow-reference as foreshadowing his prowess in the upcoming contest on Ithaka: de Jong (*supra* n.25) 204, Garvie (*supra* n.54) 282, Reece 115. While this latter point is surely correct, I suggest that the primary reason for Odysseus' mentioning his prowess with the bow is to intimidate what he sees as a hostile crowd of Phaiakians, especially since he knows that they have nothing to do with the weapon (6.270).

⁷¹8.408–411. I think it is not without jest that Odysseus upon receipt of the latter hopes that Euryalos may never find himself in need of it.

give transport to all—they themselves stand to benefit from keeping the island free of outside influence. There is, however, no benefit to their giving gifts. ξενία for them is not reciprocal—they give but do not receive. The implication of the testing, then, appears to be that should he fail to pass, he will be sent home empty-handed. And so he has to work to get his gifts. Through the assistance of Athene, he is successful.

Though enriched, Odysseus is not satisfied. His actions from this point on are designed to win more loot from the Phaiakians—an act unprecedented in typical hospitality scenes.⁷² Though he has yet to reveal his identity, he asks the Phaiakian bard Demodokos to sing the story of the wooden horse and how Odysseus used it to sack Troy. This story leads to the public announcement of his identity and to his own storytelling, a theme of which is the interaction between guests and hosts.⁷³ Throughout the tales, Odysseus demonstrates his ability in the various activities that win one κλέος. His goal is to win as many gifts as possible—in doing so he seeks to impress his listeners, to win their pity (look at all I've suffered and lost), and to frighten them (see what happens to those that do not treat me hospitably). So well does his ploy work that when Odysseus pauses, Arete breaks the silence by exhorting the assembled Phaiakians to give him more gifts (11.336–341). At this point Odysseus has succeeded in doing what Nausikaa and Athene told him he must: he has won over Arete and con-

⁷²See Reece 113.

⁷³In each of the tales Odysseus tells his hosts, the theme of friendly or hostile guest and host is present. Odysseus and his men raid the Kikones. They reconnoiter to see what kind of men the Lotus-Eaters are and find that their hosts offer them forgetfulness, which improperly deprives them of their desire to go home. The Kyklops offers Odysseus ξενία, though in a perverse form—he asks his guests' identity first; eats them instead of feeding them; and gives Odysseus the non-gift of eating him last. The god Aiolos treats Odysseus well, entertaining him lavishly for a month and giving him a wind to take him home. The Laistrygonians offer destruction. Kirke at first attempts destruction but ends up lavishly entertaining them for a year. Finally Kalypso entertains Odysseus for seven years. Skheria offers us an additional venue to see how hosts and guests interact.

sequently he reaps the benefits.⁷⁴ Alkinoös delays his return home so that all the loot can be gathered. Odysseus makes clear his gratitude and the importance he places on the gifts by noting that he would gladly remain a year if that meant he would return home with more gifts, so much the more respected would he be (11.355–361):

Ἄλκινόε κρείον, πάντων ἀριδείκετε λαῶν,
εἵ με καὶ εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἀνώγοιτ' αὐτόθι μίμνειν
πομπήν τ' ὀτρύνετε καὶ ἀγλαὰ δῶρα διδοῖτε,
καὶ κε τὸ βουλοίμην, καὶ κεν πολὺ κέρδιον εἶη
πλειοτέρῃ σὺν χειρὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδ' ἰκέσθαι,
καὶ κ' αἰδοιότερος καὶ φίλτερος ἀνδράσιν εἶην
πᾶσιν, ὅσοι μ' Ἰθάκηνδε ἰδοῖατο νοστήσαντα.

Lord Alkinoös, esteemed among all people, if even for a year you press me to remain here and promise conveyance and give glorious gifts, this in fact would I desire, for it would be all the more advantageous to return to my beloved fatherland with fuller hand; and more respected and admired would I be to all, who should see me return to Ithaka.

At the completion of Odysseus' tales, Alkinoös makes a third offering—tripod and cauldron from the kings. But Phaiakian ambivalence comes to the fore again when Alkinoös says that the nobles will recoup the cost of the gifts by taxing the people (13.13–15). It is also present when Odysseus, on the shores of Ithaka, thinks that the Phaiakians may have taken him elsewhere because he cannot recognize his homeland (13.205–206) and when he counts his goods to make sure that no Phaiakian stole any of them (13.215–216).

In Book 13, we are reminded two more times that the Phaiakians were not inclined to follow the protocol of *ξενία*. In the

⁷⁴See de Jong (*supra* n.25) 285. Many argue that the mandate that Odysseus must win over Arete is not fulfilled (for bibliography see Fenik [*supra* n.3] 105–130). Fenik sees the fulfillment when Odysseus answers Arete's question about the clothes in Book 7.

first Homer gives Athene credit for Odysseus' being given the gifts (13.120–121):

ἐκ δὲ κτήματ' ἄειραν, ἃ οἱ Φαίηκες ἀγαυοὶ
 πασαν οἴκαδ' ἰόντι διὰ μεγάθυμον Ἀθήνην.
 They carried off the possessions, which the noble Phaiakians
 gave to him, returning home, because of great-hearted Athene.

In the second Athene herself takes credit (13.302–305):

καὶ δέ σε Φαίηκεσσι φίλον πάντεσσιν ἔθηκα.
 νῦν αὖ δεῦρ' ἰκόμην, ἵνα τοι σὺν μῆτιν ὑφήνω
 χρήματά τε κρύψω, ὅσα τοι Φαίηκες ἀγαυοὶ
 πασαν οἴκαδ' ἰόντι ἐμῇ βουλῇ τε νόῳ τε
 And I made you beloved to all Phaiakians. And now again I am
 here, to contrive with you a plan and to hide the gifts, the many
 which the noble Phaiakians gave to you, returning home, by my
 planning and thought.

Again the implication seems to be that the Phaiakians had to be compelled to give gifts.⁷⁵ Had they not been, Odysseus would not have been rewarded.⁷⁶

We have seen the importance of possessions in Odysseus' society. In the Ithakan episode Odysseus' return home in pos-

⁷⁵Clay (200) correctly sees that Athene takes credit for Odysseus' being given gifts, but does not see what Athene does in the Phaiakian episode that entitles her to make that claim.

⁷⁶It has been noted that greed is improper. By seeking to obtain so many gifts from the Phaiakians, does Odysseus open himself up to the charge of greed? Had the Phaiakians been inclined to send Odysseus home and to give him gifts, his machinations to obtain as many as possible would be subject, perhaps, to the charge of opportunism and greed. Since the Phaiakians are not inclined to give him gifts, his use of *μητις* to win them is admirable and gains him *κλέος*. And in the rest of the epic Odysseus treats the gods, his peers, and underlings with respect and generosity. Eumaios and Philoitios are loyal because Odysseus has treated them well. He duly rewards them for it. Antinoos is disloyal even though Odysseus has treated his father with undeserved mercy. Eurymachos is disloyal even though Odysseus helped raise him. Odysseus goes to Kirke's hut to save his men, even though doing so may result in his death. Homer and the other characters consistently refer to his kindness and proper thinking. He is never explicitly criticized, by Homer or any other good-thinking character, for any of his actions. Throughout the epic he acts with intelligence and kindness. The text fails to charge him, implicitly or explicitly, with greed or opportunism.

session of many gifts or of more gifts than he ever could have brought home from Troy is mentioned seven times. Each time one character addresses another. In the first (13.134–138), Poseidon, addressing Zeus, is piqued because the Phaiakians have given Odysseus transport and gifts. It is uncertain which, if either, bothers Poseidon more. If anything can be inferred from the number of lines he devotes to each, then the two (134–135) he devotes to decrying the transport are overshadowed by the four (135–138) he devotes to the gifts. Four of the next five passages occur in the context of Odysseus' reassuring various members of his household of his rich return. At 14.321–326 Odysseus in disguise assures Eumaios that Odysseus will return wealthy. Eumaios rejects the possibility and thinks Odysseus god-hated because the gods did not allow him to die at Troy but rather let him die ingloriously at sea (14.365–371). At 16.229–265 Odysseus, undisguised, tells his son of how he was returned and rewarded. He then asks his son about the suitors. Telemachos responds by saying that the suitors are too numerous for them to slay. Odysseus replies that the assistance of Athene and Zeus will more than amply make up for their lack of men. Telemachos agrees, for Odysseus' rich return makes him all the more willing to believe that the gods are helping his father. At 17.525–527, Eumaios tells Penelope the claims the beggar later makes to her in Book 19. This report has the direct result of her wanting to meet the stranger forthwith and of her hoping for Odysseus' return and vengeance (17.539–540). At 19.280–282 and at 19.293–295, Odysseus, the beggar, assures Penelope of her husband's imminent return and new-found wealth. These claims result in her outwardly denying that Odysseus will ever return. What effect these words have on her inwardly is uncertain and entails consideration of the debate over whether Penelope recognizes, or suspects, that the beggar is Odysseus. Finally, at 23.338–341 Odysseus tells his wife how he came home and was rewarded.

In the second through sixth of these examples, Phaiakian gifts are not merely verbally stressed but play an important role in the reestablishment of Odysseus on his throne. They appear in contexts where it is important for characters to hold the hope that Odysseus return, not beaten, but in full possession of his capabilities, not god-hated, but god-beloved. A beaten and god-hated Odysseus does Eumaios, Telemachos, and Penelope no good. To have any hope for what they each want—Odysseus to return and punish the suitors—they need an Odysseus who, with divine assistance, will be able to kill suitors, greatly outnumbering him. He creates this hope in each of them as he considers how to take his revenge; and each subsequently plays a crucial role in helping him regain his throne.

Skheria, then, marks a crucial turning point in Odysseus' affairs. He is in a place of transition: his struggles to return home are over; his struggles to regain his ascendancy are about to begin.⁷⁷ He needs to rid his palace of the suitors and reestablish his wealth. The Skherian episode serves as fitting prelude to the Ithakan one. The Odysseus we see on Skheria shows us what he is capable of, rendering the near impossible exploits he performs upon his return to Ithaka more believable.⁷⁸ Skheria also provides Odysseus with a good part of the wealth necessary for reestablishing his κλέος on Ithaka. But the Skherian episode is more than just prelude; it contains dramatic tension crucial to the progression of its own events. On Skheria we see the complex interaction of guests and hosts and are

⁷⁷Clarke (*supra* n.3) 52; Fenik (*supra* n.3) 54–55, 62; and C. Segal, "Transition and Ritual in Odysseus' Return," *ParPass* 22 (1967) 321–342, wrongly see the transition as Odysseus moving from brutality to humanity. From the moment of arrival to departure, Odysseus is in full possession of the qualities that make him an exceptional hero. The transition that occurs on Skheria has nothing to do with his inner self and everything to do with what he needs to regain his status in Ithaka.

⁷⁸Garvie (*supra* n.54) 26 and C. Segal, "The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return," *Arion* 1.4 (1962) 23, see the episode as making Odysseus ready for his return to the real world. Rather it tells the audience what this accomplished and experienced man is capable of.

made aware of what is proper and improper. In terms of the appropriate behavior the *Odyssey* offers us, the Phaiakians are a strange mix of hyper-civilization, cowardice, and misoxenia. They are suitor-like in their pursuit of feasting, dancing, singing, and contesting. Because they are insular, they have begun to forget the traditional ways and have no need for the reciprocity of the cultural customs the rest of Odysseus' world depends upon. For them, ξενία offers no advantage. And so we see Athene and Odysseus working successfully against the Phaiakian inclination not to give gifts. The episode is anything but a typical one of hospitality. The dramatic progression goes from Phaiakian hostility to Phaiakian love, admiration, and respect, from expectation of no gifts to acquisition of unprecedented largesse. Just as Penelope obtains κλέος because of her ability to win gifts from the suitors, so, in this episode, does Odysseus, and all the more so because he wins gifts from such an unlikely source: a people who are the opposites of their counterparts, the Kyklopes, and whose world, like the Kyklopes', is equally flawed but in the opposite direction.⁷⁹

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