

Thrinakia and Zeus' Ways to Men in the *Odyssey*

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THE THRINAKIA ADVENTURE OCCUPIES four of the nine verses of the proemium to the *Odyssey* (1.6–9):

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὡς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ·
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἱ κατὰ βούς Ἵπερίονος Ἡελίοιο
ἦσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἡμᾶρ.

To be sure, this adventure will form an important stage in the *nostos* of Odysseus. But so do others: the Cyclops adventure, for instance, which the proem does not even mention, let alone give four full lines. One therefore wonders why the poet gives such prominence here to the Thrinakia adventure. Line 7 seems to provide a clue: “they perished by their own blind recklessness.” The phrase *σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν* anticipates the wording of Zeus' speech in the divine assembly that opens the epic action of the poem (1.32ff):

ὦ πόποι, οἶον δὴ νῦν θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται.
ἐξ ἡμέων γὰρ φασὶ κάκ' ἔμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἀλγέ' ἔχουσιν. . . .

Ever since W. Jaeger and R. Pfeiffer shed new light on Zeus' speech by connecting it with Solon's *Eunomia*, attention has focused on line 33.¹ In what Jaeger has described as the “oldest Greek theodicy”² Zeus expresses the novel notion of man's own responsibility for suffering he incurs “beyond his allotted portion” (*ὑπὲρ μόρον*) as a result of his “reckless folly” (*ἀτασθαλίαι*). Zeus' example is Aegisthus, who perished in consequence of committing, against divine warning, crimes born from such blind recklessness. Now, both the status of the speaker

¹ W. Jaeger, “Solons Eunomie,” *SBBerl* (1926) 69–85 (= *Five Essays*, tr. A. M. Fiske [Montreal 1966] 75–99); R. Pfeiffer, “Rezension Schwartz/Wilamowitz,” (1928) and “Gottheit und Individuum in der frühgriechischen Lyrik” (1929), in *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Munich 1960) 17 and 50 n.9.

² Jaeger (*supra* n.1) 84.

(the supreme god) and the appearance of these lines in the first divine assembly suggest that they announce a programme.³ The epic action develops this programme most clearly in the punishment of the suitors. The Aegisthus story serves as a mythological paradigm that expounds their fate in advance: as heedless of warnings as Aegisthus, the suitors suffer as a result of their *atasthaliai*. Pfeiffer was the first to link the Thrinakia adventure to the Aegisthus paradigm and the theme of the suitors.⁴ The connection seems to be supported by the appearance of *atasthaliai* in 1.7 and 33 and again at 22.416: (μνηστῆρες) ἀτασθαλίησιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐπέεστον. And it recurs in Odysseus' demand that his comrades swear to abstain from Helios' cattle on Thrinakia (12.300f):

(ὀμόσσατε) . . . μή πού τις ἀτασθαλίησι κακῆσιν
ἦ βοῶν ἤέ τι μῆλον ἀποκτάνη.

If, as the pointed use of *atasthaliai* suggests, the killing of the sun-god's cattle by Odysseus' crew is on a par with the hybris of Aegisthus and the suitors, then Odysseus' comrades can be said to bear responsibility for their suffering: they brought ruin on themselves, just as Aegisthus and the suitors did; and the fate of Odysseus' comrades serves as a third illustration of the new ethos enunciated by Zeus. Vis-à-vis the *Iliad*, man's responsibility for suffering incurred *hyper moron* is a new notion that is significantly illustrated by the Thrinakia incident; hence the prominence accorded it in the proem here.

Such is the interpretation an innocent reading of the text would suggest; too innocent, in the view of some, who see the Thrinakia adventure in a quite different light. The episode has always held the attention of analysts, mainly for the assumed doubling of the motif of divine anger in books 9 and 12.⁵ The focus of debate shifted, after Pfeiffer had connected the Thrinakia adventure with Zeus' speech in the first divine assembly, with Focke's vigorous objection to the equation of the slaughter of Helios' cattle with the crimes of Aegisthus and the suitors.⁶ Heubeck adopted Focke's view and elaborated upon

³ Cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951) 32: "Placed where it is at the very beginning of the poem, [Zeus'] remark sounds . . . programmatic." H. LLOYD-JONES, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley 1971 [hereafter 'Lloyd-Jones']) 29, in quoting Dodds adds: "in the *Odyssey* as a whole the programme which it announces is carried out."

⁴ "Rezension" (*supra* n.1) 16f.

⁵ For literature see P. Von der Mühl, *RE Suppl.* 7 (1940) 730f s.v. "Odyssee."

⁶ F. FOCKE, *Die Odyssee* (Stuttgart 1943 [hereafter 'Focke']) 247ff. Against Pfeiffer, Focke held that the transgression of Odysseus' crew differs both in principle and in every detail from Aegisthus' case.

it.⁷ Fenik, drawing on the interpretations of Focke and Heubeck, arrived at conclusions that rendered the Thrinakia adventure a central problem for the moral and theological outlook of the *Odyssey*.⁸

It is on this aspect of the debate that the following discussion will concentrate. Here the old division of analysts and unitarians does not seem to apply: the analyst Focke attacks the analyst Pfeiffer and is supported by the unitarian Heubeck, who in turn is criticized by the unitarian Stockinger,⁹ while the analyst position of Schadewaldt¹⁰ in discerning the hands of two poets in the Thrinakia episode attempts to give both views their due; finally, the unitarian Fenik, in surveying the views of both sides, ends by siding with the analyst Focke and the unitarian Heubeck. Obviously the debate cuts across both fronts, and this allows us to enter it independently of the Homeric Question; as the traditional terms of debate would unduly complicate the discussion, I shall leave them for the most part aside.

I

As to the theology of the *Odyssey*, some broad agreement exists among Homerists and students of Greek religion and ethics: the continuity between the religious outlooks of both Homeric epics is undeniable, but—as H. Lloyd-Jones expresses the *communis opinio*—“few people doubt that the *Odyssey* is a poem in which Zeus and Justice play an important, and indeed a preponderating part: and few doubt that its theology is in some important ways different from that of the *Iliad*.”¹¹ What is different in the *Odyssey* is the moral con-

⁷ A. HEUBECK, *Der Odyssee-Dichter und die Ilias* (Erlangen 1950 [hereafter ‘Heubeck’]) 72–78.

⁸ B. FENIK, *Studies in the Odyssey* (=Hermes Einzelschr. 30 [Wiesbaden 1974: hereafter ‘Fenik’]) 208–230.

⁹ H. Stockinger, *Die Vorzeichen im homerischen Epos* (St Ottilien 1959) 62 and n.30.

¹⁰ W. SCHADEWALDT, “Der Helios-Zorn in der Odyssee,” *Studi in onore di L. Castiglioni* (Florence 1960) 961–76 (=Hellas und Hesperien I [Zürich/Stuttgart 1970: hereafter ‘Schadewaldt’]) 93–105.

¹¹ Lloyd-Jones 28. See also Dodds (*supra* n.3) 32–34 and J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 164f. Cf. also H. Erbse, *Zur Funktion der Götter im homerischen Epos* (Berlin/New York 1986) 237ff, esp. 255f, on the differences in the Zeus figures of both epics. A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (Oxford 1960) 62–65, doubts that the *Odyssey* differs from the *Iliad* in ethical and theological respects, despite his dependence on Dodds in formulating his general position. M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*² (Harmondsworth 1978) 140f, speaks of a ‘moral revolution’ in the Olympian religion “in which Zeus was transformed from the king of a heroic society to the principle of cosmic justice. There are elements of this new conception in the *Odyssey*” (140); the moral conception of the gods was a long step from the view of the divine in the *Iliad*, “and the poet of the *Odyssey* took it

ception of the gods. The nature of the gods has changed, as Walter Burkert observes: "Zeus . . . hat die Aufgabe, über Sitte und Recht zu wachen. . . . Götterversammlungen . . . haben nur die menschlichen Verhältnisse, die Wiederherstellung des Rechts, zum Gegenstand."¹² Zeus' 'theodicy' in the prologue of the poem points in this direction: it contains "the prevailing religious and moral ethos of the *Odyssey*, the one which is categorically enunciated at the beginning, and which informs the central action."¹³ What Zeus illustrates by expounding the fate of Aegisthus, the epic action will exemplify in the punishment of the suitors. The gods' rôle is that of guardians of justice.

Disagreement exists as to how consistently the moral conception of the gods is applied to the pantheon of the *Odyssey*, and to what extent the new ethos, as enunciated in the prologue, penetrates the narrative. In Heubeck's view, for example, the theology of the *Odyssey* is far from being as clear-cut and uniform as my brief account might suggest. In his masterful discussion of the theological differences between both Homeric epics as to the causation of hybriatic acts and the suffering that ensues from them, Heubeck claims that in this respect the *Iliad* shows a greater unity than the *Odyssey*.¹⁴ It is in this context that he deals with the fate of Odysseus' crew on Thrinakia by comparing it with the fates of Patroclus in *Iliad* 16 and of Aegisthus as expounded by Zeus in *Odyssey* 1.

Although both Patroclus and Aegisthus suffer destruction as the result of their hybris, the causation of their acts differs. In Patroclus' case there is a double causation: on the one hand, his own hybriatic disposition, on the other the god-sent *ate* (*Il.* 16.685f) that urges him on along the path of hybris. By contrast, Aegisthus' hybris has as its sole causation his reckless folly, his *atasthalia*, engendered by an *ate* all his own in which the gods have no part. On the contrary, the gods are at pains to dissuade him from his crime by warning him of the consequences. Impervious to divine warning Aegisthus commits the crime and perishes: his hybris derives exclusively from his own in-

hesitantly and incompletely. Its implications were extensive and complex, and he did not always see them by any means" (141).

¹² "Das Lied von Ares und Aphrodite," *RhM* N.F. 103 (1960) 141.

¹³ Fenik 212; cf. 209: "at the very beginning of the *Odyssey* Zeus lays down the ethical norms that will underlie the central story."

¹⁴ Heubeck 72-87. His views have been largely adopted by Fenik (211ff; for some minor points of disagreement cf. 219 n.138 and 222 n.140). J. Strauss Clay, *The Wrath of Athena* (Princeton 1983), accepts on the whole Fenik's conclusions as to the inconsistencies in the theology of the *Odyssey* but explains them as thematic in character (see her chapter 5, "The Double Theodicy of the *Odyssey*," esp. 236-39).

born *ate*, his moral and intellectual blindness. Man is here solely responsible for the suffering he has brought on his head by his *atasthalia*, while the gods, as guardians of justice on earth, only carry out the punishment.

The fate of Odysseus' comrades on Thrinakia is, in Heubeck's view, of an altogether different order. At this point he resumes the interpretation of Focke (248f), who had held, against Pfeiffer, that Odysseus' comrades are desperate victims rather than evil-doers: the transgression is caused by an *ananke* to which the gods have arbitrarily subjected them. In Heubeck's elaboration of this view (85f) Zeus, with horrifying cruelty and cunning, first creates the conditions that force the men into committing their hybristic act: he sends adverse winds that maroon them on Thrinakia until the prospect of death by starvation drives them to slaughter the sun-god's cattle; then, having inextricably entangled them in his cruel intrigue, he makes them atone for their transgression by destroying them in a storm.

In the *Odyssey*, Heubeck concludes, the Iliadic unity of human inclination and divine agency as the two corresponding sides of one and the same process has been dissolved into its components. These then form separate conceptions of human guilt and divine retribution: on the one hand, man is solely responsible for the ruin he has brought upon himself as a result of his blindness (Aegisthus); and on the other, men become the victims of divine caprice forcing them into committing transgressions that will be their ruin (Odysseus' crew). What is gained from this dissolution is the new idea of man as a responsible agent, a concept that represents a great stride towards the idea of human freedom. The cost to the epic of this advance is that in the *Odyssey* the unified outlook of the *Iliad* gives way to two irreconcilable notions of human guilt and divine retribution (Heubeck 86f).

While Heubeck merely notes this incongruity, Fenik seizes upon it and throws it into sharp relief (222f). This leads him to far-reaching conclusions for the theology of the *Odyssey*; here too the Thrinakia adventure is central to the argument. In the process Fenik has translated Heubeck's analysis into a useful typology of the relationships between gods and men in terms of human guilt and divine retribution; as it clarifies matters and will simplify the discussion, I reproduce it here with a minor modification:¹⁵

Type 1: Through his transgressions resulting from reckless folly "man brings his own doom upon himself, and the gods oversee the working out of retribu-

¹⁵ The modification consists in differentiating two aspects of his Type 3, the reason for which will be explained below.

utive justice." Examples are Aegisthus and the suitors; implicit is the concept of "the gods as overseers and guardians of justice on earth."

Type 2: "The gods urge a man along criminal paths consistent with his inborn predilections." Examples are Patroclus in *Iliad* 16 and Ctesippus in *Od.* 20.284ff, urged on by Athena to commit further outrageous violations of the sacred law of hospitality that will lead to his downfall. Here the gods act as "aiders and abettors of human inclination."

Type 3a: The gods persecute a man in anger at deeds by which he has offended the deity, without regard for the circumstances or the merits of the case. Example: Poseidon's persecution of Odysseus. The gods behave here as "jealous, vengeful deities."

Type 3b: The gods "arbitrarily impose suffering, or lure men into misdeeds that are punished without respect for circumstances and deserts." Implicit is the notion of the "malevolent god," "a deeply rooted and wide-spread idea in the epics."

The Thrinakia adventure provides examples for both 3a and 3b. Helios' wrath against the crew is as narrow-minded and unencumbered by considerations of justice as is Poseidon's anger at Odysseus in Book 9: "both incidents show an angry god avenging a personal affront committed under circumstances that strongly encouraged or even forced the deed, without the god concerning himself with anything but the act itself" (Fenik 215). More important, by forcing Odysseus' comrades into committing the sacrilege against Helios for which he then punishes them by destroying them utterly in a storm, Zeus acts and behaves as the malevolent god of Type 3b. The strong tendency of the narrative is "to emphasize the *malevolent intervention of the gods*, with a corresponding mitigation of human fault, [that] determines the ethos of the incident on Thrinakia" (225f). From this it follows that, despite 1.7, one must not group the transgressions of Odysseus' crew together with those of Aegisthus and the suitors: line 7 is a "hasty attempt" on the part of the poet "to harmonize the Helios story with the ethical norms set forth by Zeus in his first speech, an attempt that is simply abandoned within the wrath tale itself" (225f). In short, the proem announces the fate of Odysseus' crew as a case of suffering incurred by the sufferers' own *atasthaliai*, but the actual presentation in *Od.* 12 is said to contradict this.¹⁶

The implications for the theology of the *Odyssey* are momentous. In terms of Fenik's typology, the gods of the Thrinakia adventure are of Type 3, while in *Odyssey* 1 the poet has introduced them as gods of

¹⁶ Fenik 216: the nature of divine intervention in the Thrinakia adventure is such that it is "in disharmony with Zeus' lecture [*i.e.* *Od.* 1.32ff] and with the poet's own editorial comment" [*i.e.* 1.7].

Type 1; and between both types lies a “very wide gulf” (Fenik 222). So wide indeed that Fenik feels compelled to conclude that the religious and moral outlook of the *Odyssey* is “inconsistent,” with “older and newer levels of thought sit[ting] uncomfortably side by side; that two of the poem’s most important episodes¹⁷ fail to correspond with its most important moral guidelines as exemplified by the suitors and explained by Zeus” (216).

There is much in Fenik’s argument with which one cannot but agree. What it says (extending Heubeck’s observations) about the nature of divine anger in the *apologoi* is largely convincing. The attitude Poseidon displays in *Odyssey* 9, and Helios in 12, is indeed one of ruthless vengefulness unencumbered by notions of justice and fairness. Jealous, vengeful divinities, Poseidon and Helios are solely concerned with their honour and their prerogatives; they avenge themselves without regard for motives and causes. Their behaviour does indeed fly in the face of divine justice as set forth by Zeus in the prologue. Their attitude is reminiscent of the savage wrath of Athena and Hera towards the Trojans in *Iliad* 4. In their ways to men Helios and Poseidon in the *Odyssey* resemble the more archaic gods of the *Iliad*.¹⁸ Obviously the *Odyssey*’s moral conception of the divine does not extend to all Odyssean deities.

Yet does this constitute, as Fenik maintains, an inconsistency or even contradiction in the religious outlook of the *Odyssey*? Fenik speaks of the lack of uniformity and consistency in the Odyssean theology as if these terms were interchangeable.¹⁹ Uniformity and consistency are, however, different matters: consistency does not always require uniformity, and lack of uniformity does not therefore necessarily equal inconsistency. Once we have made this distinction for the Thrinakia adventure, we shall be able to identify and concentrate on the real problem.

Although the moral conception of the gods represents a theological

¹⁷ The other is the encounter with the Cyclops: the wraths of Poseidon and Helios are of essentially the same quality (see *infra*); however, the Cyclops adventure poses problems of a different kind which I leave aside, as they require a separate treatment.

¹⁸ Cf. J. Irmscher, *Götterzorn bei Homer* (Leipzig 1950) 65: “Helioszorn wie Poseidonzorn gehören in der Fassung des Odysseusnostos zu den urtümlichen Götterzornmythen, die wir von der Ilias her kennen. *Zu rächen, nicht zu strafen* ist das Anliegen des Gottes” (my emphasis). See also R. B. Rutherford, “The Philosophy of the *Odyssey*,” *JHS* 106 (1986) 148 n.20, who points to Poseidon’s strong concern with his *time* at *Od.* 13.128–38, esp. 128f: οὐκέτ’ ἐγὼ . . . τιμῆς ἔσομαι, ὅτε με βροτοὶ οὐ τι τίουσι. I shall comment on the Olympic scene at 13.125–64 in the last part of this essay.

¹⁹ E.g. Fenik 211: “The religious and moral outlook of the *Odyssey* is not uniform”; 219: “they [the divine anger of Poseidon and Helios] disturb its ethical uniformity.”

advance, it is not necessarily a blessing from an aesthetic point of view: under the burden of an ethical rôle, the colourful and multifaceted life of the Homeric gods inevitably atrophies.²⁰ The diversity we associate with a polytheistic religion thus reduced, the divine action of the *Odyssey* becomes, when compared to that of the *Iliad*, rudimentary.²¹ By retaining their more archaic (*i.e.* Iliadic) ways to men, at once more primitive and more colourful, Helios and Poseidon help retain some of the diversity of a polytheistic religion. The moral conception of the divine we find in the *Odyssey* is a further step beyond the notion of the gods as personifications of natural forces, still discernible to a degree in the capricious, cruel, at times savage ways of some Iliadic gods. This moral conception of the gods must, however, be viewed as a general tendency only: it predominates in the divine world of the *Odyssey*, yet does not wholly permeate and penetrate it. Indeed, such uniformity would go against the grain of a polytheistic religion and the principle of epic diversity.²² This allows for gods who deviate from the general tendency: deities who do not quite make the grade of the moral school. It is not by accident that these are the sun-god and the sea-god—deities still closely identified with the natural elements that form their spheres.²³

In the Odyssean pantheon, then, morally conceived gods who conform to the principles enunciated by Zeus in the prologue coexist with more archaic gods such as Poseidon and Helios, whose ruthless ways to men deviate from these principles. Fenik is therefore right in noting that the divine world of the *Odyssey* lacks uniformity; as well it might: for diversity is, to repeat, the hallmark of a polytheistic religion and of epic poetry. While the *Odyssey*, with its morally-conceived gods, is dangerously close to abandoning this diversity and the poetic character of its pantheon, this does not constitute an inconsistency in the religious and moral outlook of the poem, but simply

²⁰ Cf. Burkert (*supra* n.12) 141: "Das bunte Götterleben der Ilias . . . muss verkümmern unter der Last ethischer Aufgaben."

²¹ Irmscher (*supra* n.18) 53–55; R. Friedrich, *Stilwandel im homerischen Epos* (Heidelberg 1975) 135.

²² On epic diversity see R. Friedrich, "Epeisodion in Epic and Drama," *Hermes* 111 (1983) 45ff. Thus it is premature to conclude, with Rutherford (*supra* n. 18: 148), that because the actions of Helios and Poseidon "recall the ruthlessness of the gods of the *Iliad* . . . the divine background of the *Odyssey* shows little change."

²³ Cf. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Oxford 1987) 139: "Poseidon remains an embodiment of elemental force; seastorm and earthquake are the most violent forms of energy directly encountered by man, while the horse was the strongest energy which man could then control. One can grapple with such power and one must always take account of it, but clarity and illumination does not proceed from it—this must come from Athena or Apollo. . . . [Poseidon] sires the horse and rules the sea, but it is Athena who invents the bridle and builds the first ship."

represents the coexistence of different yet compatible gods. Further, the moral conception of the Odyssean gods took its rise, after all, from tendencies and dispositions in the portraiture of the Iliadic gods, chief among them the figure of Zeus. Here the *Odyssey* simply continues what has reached an already advanced stage in the *Iliad*: an evolution that points beyond the notion of the gods as personifications of natural forces.

Thus the primitive wrath of Helios and Poseidon poses no problem for the unity and consistency of the Odyssean theology. If there is a problem, it is Zeus and his ostensibly inconsistent ways to men. Fenik (223) sees “a *different kind* of Zeus . . . in the *apologoi*, a willing partner of Helios and Poseidon, no more fair or just than they, and no more an overseer of equitable justice.” Yet this is not all. Focke, Heubeck, and Fenik present Zeus as doing more than merely acting as “a willing partner of Helios and Poseidon.” From their interpretations of the Thrinakia-adventure Zeus emerges as a deity indulging in capricious malevolence. Poseidon and Helios have at least a motive for their ruthless ways to men: Odysseus has offended the sea-god by blinding his son, and Odysseus’ crew has violated the sun-god’s *time* by consuming the best of his beloved cattle. The revenge Poseidon and Helios take on the human offenders serves to restore their honour. By contrast, Zeus has no such motive: Fenik presents him as playing games of gratuitous cruelty with hapless mortals. In order to distinguish between the behaviour of merely vengeful gods, such as Poseidon and Helios on the one hand, and of malevolent gods, such as Fenik perceives the Zeus of the *apologoi* on the other, I have divided Type 3 of Fenik’s analysis into two parts to show that the “very wide gulf” Fenik notes between Types 1 and 3 is even wider than he assumes; and this, in turn, brings out the full implications of Fenik’s thesis that divine malevolence determines the ethos of the Thrinakia adventure. Here the discrepancy Fenik notes would not be one *between different gods* (whose coexistence a polytheistic religion can bear without becoming inconsistent) but *within one and the same god*—a discrepancy that divides the Zeus of the *Odyssey* into two mutually exclusive figures. It pits the Zeus of the prologue against Fenik’s malevolent Zeus of the Thrinakia adventure, whose ways to men make a mockery of the notion of divine justice enunciated in *Odyssey* 1: a colossal inconsistency in the *ethopoiia* of the supreme god. Such a contradiction would render the theology of the *Odyssey*—crystallizing as it does around the Zeus-figure²⁴—almost meaningless.

²⁴ Cf. Burkert (*supra* n.12) 144.

How to account for such an inconsistency? To the analyst the answer is clear: a contradiction so severe compels us to assume multiple authorship. This is Schadewaldt's solution. He holds that in our *Odyssey*, as transmitted, revisions and additions are discernible, which a younger "moralizing" author (Poet B) has incorporated into the work of an older poet with a more archaic mentality (Poet A, possibly the author of the *Iliad*, Homer).²⁵ To Poet B Schadewaldt attributes the moral conception of the gods, which thus turns out to be secondary, imposed on an epic with an archaic conception of the divine. Fenik (214) rejects Schadewaldt's solution in opting for the oralist assumption of multiple traditions, or rather of multiple strands within a complex tradition: the notion of savage and malevolent gods is said to be largely confined to the fairytale world of the *apologoi* and to inhere in narrative material taken from strands of the epic tradition more archaic than the material on which the main action draws (222f, 226f). In Fenik's view the poet has conflated divergent narrative materials without bothering to reconcile their inherently discordant notions of the divine. But this is not all. Fenik gives the oralist version of *bonus Homerus dormitans* an elegant aestheticist turn (219):²⁶

The epics . . . are a rich storehouse of contributions from many epochs and generations of poets. Their unity does not consist of a logically conceived philosophical or theological system. . . . Unity consists rather in certain narrative structures and in dominant emphases imposed upon a complex substructure. The angers of Helios and Poseidon do indeed contradict Zeus' words in the prologue. But they . . . contribute to the stylistic unity of the epic as much as they disturb its ethical uniformity. The story is always the same: strong stylistic tendencies and narrative emphases take precedence over a consistent world-outlook.

But the inconsistency Fenik registers has turned out to be of such a magnitude that it cannot be dismissed with a gesture as poetically insignificant. Fenik's separation of form (extolled) and content (depreciated) is here projected onto the *Odyssey*-poet as if he were a sort of Wildean *avant la lettre*, ruthlessly sacrificing content to style. To note a severe contradiction at the spiritual core of the *Odyssey* and to

²⁵ Schadewaldt (96–98) maintains that Poet B changed the primitive story of Helios' wrath (which depicted Odysseus' men as helpless victims of fate and of the gods) in order to make it conform to the examples of Aegisthus and the suitors by having them break their oath. See 105 for a list of the passages Schadewaldt considers the work of Poet B.

²⁶ Fenik's book is designed to establish doublets as a central structural device in the *Odyssey*: the divine angers form a pair and in this way "contribute to the stylistic unity of the epic."

assert in the same breath that it does not impair the unity of the poem stretches the unitarian concept to the point where one begins to wonder what the meaning of poetic unity might be.

II

Yet does the text bear out Fenik's thesis that it is Zeus' malevolent intervention that determines the ethos of the Thrinakia adventure? This thesis rests chiefly on the attribution of the storm at 12.313–15 to the agency of Zeus:

ᾠρσεν ἐπι ζαῆν ἄνεμον νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς
λαίλαπι θεσπεσίῃ, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε
γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει δ' οὐρανόθεν νύξ.

The storm persists in the form of adverse winds detaining Odysseus and his crew on Thrinakia for a whole month (12.325f), until hunger drives Odysseus' comrades to the slaughter of the sacred cattle.²⁷

One does well to remember that the Thrinakia adventure is part of a first-person narrative (the *apologoi*) and that it is its narrator, Odysseus, who attributes the storm to Zeus, and not the poet himself. On several occasions the poet has Odysseus ascribe to Zeus' agency events that the poet has previously attributed to other deities.²⁸ At 9.67–69, without any way of knowing, Odysseus attributes the storm to Zeus in terms similar to 12.313ff:

νηυσὶ δ' ἐπῶρσ' ἄνεμον βορέην νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς
λαίλαπι θεσπεσίῃ, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε
γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει οὐρανόθεν νύξ.

These verses are reminiscent of the lines describing Poseidon rousing the storm that wrecks Odysseus' raft at 5.291–94:

ὡς εἰπὼν σύναγεν νεφέλας, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον
χερσὶ τρίαιναν ἐλών· πάσας δ' ὀρόθυνεν ἀέλλας
παντοίων ἀνέμων, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε
γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει οὐρανόθεν νύξ.

Nevertheless the poet has Odysseus attribute the storm to Zeus (5.303–5):

οἴοισιν νεφέεσσι περιστέφει οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν
Ζεὺς, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον, ἐπισπέρχουσι δ' ἄελλαι
παντοίων ἀνέμων· νῦν μοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος.

²⁷ Cf. Fenik 213, with reference to Focke and Heubeck.

²⁸ 5.408f is a striking case in point: Odysseus attributes his rescue to Zeus, when in fact Leucothea (5.333ff) and Athena (5.382ff) are his saviours.

"It is merely a way of speaking," Woodhouse comments, "to ascribe to Zeus by reason of his primary function of god of the sky, and his supremacy among the gods, especially the sea-storm."²⁹ Thus Odysseus' ascription of the storm in *Odyssey* 12 to Zeus is not different from naming Zeus as the cause of the storm in Book 9 (where Odysseus cannot know it) or the storm in Book 5 (where he is patently wrong).

It is the form of the first-person narrative that prescribes this way of speaking. In the *apologoi* (Books 9–12) Odysseus is given the rôle of the epic poet, but not the epic poet's objectivity and omniscience.³⁰ Thus his perspective is necessarily the subjective and restricted one of an epic character. To sustain this perspective, the first-person narrative requires a certain stylization.³¹ This pertains especially to statements on divine agency, as Jörgensen has shown,³² for the first-person narrator's restricted perspective precludes any precise knowledge of supernatural processes. Thus when he refers to events that Homeric Man, as is his wont, ascribes to divine agency, Odysseus is necessarily vague, as he has no way of knowing which deity is at work. The poet therefore has him refer to the deity not by individual name, but by generic expressions such as *theos* or *daimon*. The name of Zeus is often used in the same way. *Theos, theoi, daimon, Zeus*: "these are in the conventional language of the poet but four names for one and the same thing."³³ 'Zeus' in this context stands either (by way of metonymy) for the gods in general or (by way of personification) for the natural forces (storm, thunder, and lightning) associated with his name.³⁴ Thus, according to Jörgensen's rule, in the phrase "Zeus stirred up a gusty wind" (12.294f), Odysseus might have substituted

²⁹ W. J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford 1930) 35.

³⁰ On the poet's claim to superior knowledge see Clay (*supra* n.14) 12ff.

³¹ Cf. W. Suerbaum, "Die Ich-Erzählungen des Odysseus," *Poetica* 2 (1968) 150–77.

³² O. Jörgensen, "Das Auftreten der Götter in den Büchern ι–κ der *Odyssey*," *Hermes* 39 (1904) 357–82. Suerbaum (*supra* n.31: 154–57) notes that in general the poet does not insist on a rigid restriction of the speaker's perspective. This flexibility, however, does not apply to divine intervention: here 'Jörgensen's rule' obtains.

³³ Jörgensen (*supra* n.32) 363. How closely the poet adheres to this narrative rule is nowhere more evident than in the much maligned lines 12.389f, which explain how Odysseus could have knowledge of the Olympian scene between Zeus and Helios: awkward though they are, these lines help avoid a break of the perspective of the first-person narration.

³⁴ Cf. G. M. Calhoun, "The Divine Entourage in Homer," *AJP* 61 (1940) 269ff; for a discussion of the few instances that depart from Jörgensen's rule see esp. 270f. Apparent exceptions in the *apologoi* are 12.403–25 (the Olympic scene, on which see the previous note and *infra*) and 10.275–308, where Hermes is named: this, however, narrates the speaker's personal encounter with the god, and it would be pedantic to argue that Odysseus does not report that Hermes identified himself and could not

‘a god’, ‘the gods’, or ‘a *daimon*’ for ‘Zeus’: these are simply four different ways of saying ‘a storm arose’. Those who, with Fenik, draw far-reaching theological conclusions from such usage, do so at peril.

The same applies to the other passages adduced to demonstrate the malevolence of the gods:

ὦς ἔφατ’ Εὐρύλοχος, ἐπὶ δ’ ἤνεον ἄλλοι ἑταῖροι.
καὶ τότε δὴ γίγνωσκον, ὃ δὴ κακὰ μῆδετο δαίμων
(12.294f)

ἠρώμην πάντεσσι θεοῖσ’, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν
οἱ δ’ ἄρα μοι γλυκὺν ὕπνον ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔχευαν
(12.337f).

When Odysseus blames Zeus and the other gods for having made him fall asleep “for his ruinous confusion” (*εἰς ἄτην*) while his comrades are committing their sacrilege (12.371ff), he has no way of knowing this. Therefore the reader is not obliged to accept his point of view.³⁵ Odysseus’ speculations as to a *daimon*’s “evil devising” (12.294f) are just that, speculations; and again we are not obliged to accept his point of view.

Thus to treat 12.313–35 along with 12.295, 338, and 371–73 as if they were the poet’s *ipsissima verba*, and deduce from them that the poet wants us to see divine malevolence at work in the destruction of Odysseus’ crew, is to ignore the narrative form of the Thrinakia adventure. Why Fenik, for whom form is otherwise so determinant an aspect of archaic poetry, should ignore the narrative form of this episode, when he singles out these passages to prove his thesis of divine malevolence, is hard to see. Odysseus’ utterances to this effect must be understood in terms of the first-person narrative and its conventions. As such, they function at the level of formulaic expressions. All we are allowed to conclude from Odysseus’ use of *theoi*, *daimon*, and Zeus in his account of the Thrinakia adventure is that he

therefore have known his identity. A possible breach of the rule may occur at *Od.* 9.553–55.

³⁵ Cf. Lloyd-Jones 29: “It is true that the human characters sometimes blame the gods for their misfortunes, but the poet, unlike the poet of the *Iliad*, never in his own person blames the gods; when Helen blames Ate, sent by Aphrodite, for her elopement (*Od.* 4.261) or Odysseus blames Ate, sent by Zeus, for his having fallen asleep on the island of the Sun (12.371), the reader is not obliged to accept their point of view.” Against Lloyd-Jones’ view Rutherford (*supra* n.18: 153 n.44) adduces several passages where he says that “Athene leads the suitors into further crime”: 17.360–64, 18.155f, 346–48 (=20.284–86). I cannot see how this can be said of 17.360–64; on 18.155f see n.44 *infra*, which also applies to 18.346–48; on 20.284–86 see *supra* 380 (Type 2).

vaguely attributes to divine agency the circumstances that conduce to his comrades' fatal sacrilege. In this he follows both a narrative convention (Jørgensen's rule) and Homeric Man's notorious habit of blame that Zeus so emphatically deplors in the prologue (1.32).

What clinches the argument is the extraordinary length to which the poet goes when he has Odysseus refer in the *apologoi* to Zeus in person and wants to make sure that his audience knows this. A case in point is the storm that destroys ship and crew after their departure from Thrinakia (12.403–06, 415f):

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὴν νῆσον ἐλείπομεν οὐδέ τις ἄλλη
φαίνεται γαίᾳων, ἀλλ' οὐρανὸς ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
δὴ τότε κυανέην νεφέλην ἔστησε Κρονίων
νῆος ὑπὲρ γλαφυρῆς, ἥχλυσε δὲ πόντος ὑπ' αὐτῆς. . . .
Ζεὺς δ' ἄμυδις βρόντησε καὶ ἔμβαλε νηὶ κεραυνόν·
ἡ δ' ἐλελίχθη πᾶσα Διὸς πληγείσα κεραυνῶ.

The Zeus who sends the storm (405) and strikes the ship with lightning (415f) is neither the metonymic representative of the gods in general nor the personification of the natural forces at work in this storm. Rather, he is the avenging god who employs these forces to punish the transgressors for their sacrilege. To make sure that the audience does not mistake the name 'Zeus' for metonymy or personification, the poet has an Olympic scene precede the storm at 12.403–25: a scene we should hardly expect in Odysseus' *apologoi*. It is ostensibly the most serious breach of Jørgensen's rule that first-person narrative has no room for Olympic scenes. Yet the poet did avoid the breach by resorting to the awkward yet necessary verses 12.389f, in which Odysseus reveals the source of his knowledge,³⁶ for the Olympic scene is necessary here for bringing out the connection between the crew's transgression and their destruction in the seastorm.³⁷ It is because the use of Zeus' name in the *apologoi* is regularly generic that the poet had to resort to this irregular device; only in this way was it possible under the conditions of the first-person narrative to specify the Zeus of 405 and 415f as the avenging deity; here, instead of merely personifying natural forces, as he does in the other passages, Zeus is using them for a moral purpose.

³⁶ Σ PQ *ad Od.* 5.79 states that Odysseus lies when he says: "these events (on Olympus) I heard from fair-haired Calypso; and she said that she had heard them from Hermes" (=12.389f); Book 5 does not report any such conversation between Hermes and Calypso. Aristarchus therefore athetised the whole Olympic scene (see Von der Mühl's apparatus *ad* 12.374–90). H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee* (Berlin/New York 1972) 12–16, has shown such objections to be pedantic.

³⁷ Cf. Calhoun (*supra* n.34) 272 n.43; Suerbaum (*supra* n.31) 160 and n.19.

Matters have turned out to be much more complex than the thesis of Zeus' malevolence suggests. If one takes into account the narrative form of the Thrinakia adventure and its rules and conventions, one has to differentiate among the references to Zeus and other gods in this episode. To attribute to divine malevolence every circumstance that contributes to the crew's transgression and subsequent destruction is, to say the least, unduly reductive. It resembles Homeric Man's habit of blaming evils upon the gods (1.32f): Zeus might therefore justly respond to Fenik's interpretation with an exasperated ᾤ πόποι, οἶον δὴ νῦ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται.

To sum up, the textual basis invoked to support the assumption of divine malevolence in the Thrinakia adventure is a weak one, derived from an epic character's references to divine agency expressed in a conventional manner of speaking that reflects the narrator's restricted perspective in the first-person narrative and expresses a vague, conventional notion of divine agency. It appears weak enough to cast serious doubts on the notion of a malevolent Zeus imposing, with cruel cunning, a harsh *ananke* on Odysseus' men,³⁸ or inextricably entangling Odysseus' crew in a baneful intrigue (Heubeck 85f), or forcing hapless mortals with gratuitous cruelty into their predicament (Fenik 215). For all their elegance these interpretations of the Thrinakia adventure do not seem to be borne out by the text. On this count no inner rift disrupts, as these interpretations suggest, the *ethopoia* of the Odyssean Zeus; and in this respect the case against the consistency of the Odyssean theology is weakened.

III

What of the conditions under which the crew commits the transgression? Are they not such as to constitute, as Fenik holds, mitigating circumstances, regardless of whether or not divine malevolence is at work? If they do, Odysseus' comrades would rank as desperate victims after all—not of divine malevolence but of adverse circumstances. As victims of adverse circumstances they could hardly be conjoined with reckless transgressors such as the suitors and Aegisthus. In that case Fenik could still argue that Zeus' unquestioning willingness to make himself into the tool of Helios' savage revenge would represent a reversion to the primitive level of a vengeful deity

³⁸ Focke 249: "Von Grund auf und in allen Einzelheiten anders als the Fall des Aigisthos, liegt die Eigenart des Rinderfrevels in der von übermenschlichen Gewalten mit grausamer Planmässigkeit über die Gefährten verhängten ἀνάγκη."

indifferent to justice and the merits of the case. This would split the Odyssean Zeus-figure into a god of Type 1 and a god of Type 3a. Thus the problem of the *ethopoiia* of the Odyssean Zeus is unresolved, and so is the problem of consistency in the Odyssean religion. As the theological outlook of the *Odyssey* centers on the figure of Zeus,³⁹ its consistency depends largely on the consistency of Zeus' *ethopoiia*.

The issue hinges on the answer to the original question: can Odysseus' comrades truly be said (as they are in 1.7) to have perished by their own *atasthaliai*, or is the proemium simply a futile attempt to harmonize the Thrinakia adventure with the dominant ethos of the epic action? In short, can the crew be held responsible for its transgression, and is its destruction in line with the principles of divine justice enunciated by Zeus in the prologue?

What then are the circumstances that are said to mitigate the crew's transgression? On their approach to Thrinakia Odysseus' men reject their leader's warning to avoid the island and continue the voyage, for reasons Fenik finds "sensible and cogent" (213): evening is approaching, and the crew is weary and fears the prospect of sailing at night. More important, the circumstances that lead to the transgression itself a month later are in Fenik's view such as to reduce Odysseus' men to the grim choice between drowning and starvation; and they choose "rather to die at one stroke in the sea than to starve to death in prolonged agony." This is said to render the slaughter of the sacred cattle a "desperate act of self-preservation" (Fenik) and a "transgression committed in ultimate desperation"⁴⁰ rather than a deed of reckless folly.

In characterizing the mitigating circumstances, Fenik draws on Eurylochus' speeches. What he describes as the crew's sensible and cogent reasons for insisting on laying-over at the island are the arguments Eurylochus uses in opposing Odysseus' warning and advice (12.279ff). And the plight of being left with the choice between certain death by starvation and possible death by drowning is a figment arising from the rhetoric of Eurylochus' second speech (12.340–52), where Eurylochus vigorously dramatizes the situation in order to persuade his comrades to the forbidden meal. Fenik thus passes off as the poet's own a negatively-drawn character's tendentious view of the situation—and he does so although Eurylochus' words are twice re-

³⁹ Cf. Burkert (*supra* n.12) 144; Jaeger goes so far as to describe the Zeus of the *Odyssey* as the "philosophisch geläuterte Weltgewissen"—clearly an exaggeration.

⁴⁰ Focke 248: "wenn je ein Frevel in letzter Verzweiflung begangen wurde, dann dieser." Focke's description of the crew's plight is overdramatized: Fate has put a noose around their necks and tightens it by snatches and jerks.

moved from the poet's own, as they are reported within another speech.

The poet has Odysseus describe the situation quite differently. According to Odysseus the men do not starve but are forced, after their provisions have been exhausted, to survive on their catches of small birds and fish. It is a diet that keeps them alive—if only barely. It also keeps them permanently hungry and is certainly not agreeable to the palate of Homeric Man, who is an avowed meat-eater and does not relish fish, which he consumes only when he has nothing else to sustain him.⁴¹ This is their situation on Thrinakia: a difficult one, to be sure, but not as desperate as Eurylochus and Fenik represent it. The crew cannot cope, but Odysseus does; and this is the point: he demonstrates that it is possible, after all, to cope—which should give the lie to all talk of *ananke* leaving the crew no choice.⁴² Thus it is not necessity or the prospect of certain death by starvation that makes the crew decide to break their oath and consume the sacred cattle. Something much less dramatic and far more mundane causes them to go against Odysseus' warning: the desire for a richer and tastier diet. This hardly renders the slaughter of Helios' beloved cattle a desperate act of self-preservation.

Fenik adduces one more argument in order to show that *Od.* 1.7 does not apply to the Thrinakia adventure. Unlike the crimes of the suitors, the deed of Odysseus' comrades lacks criminal intent: no "willful criminality" or "hardened viciousness" motivates them; on the contrary, Odysseus' comrades even offer to build a shrine to Helios upon their return to Ithaca in reparation for the cattle consumed (Fenik 215, 213). This is a real difference, but does it affect the issue at stake? In archaic thought intention is not yet a criterion for determining guilt;⁴³ thus in the *Odyssey* it is not the criterion for determining what an act of *atasthalia* may be; yet it may serve to determine different degrees of *atasthalia*, as we shall see. Not every one of the suitors can be accused—as Antinous, Eurymachus, or Leocritus certainly can be—of hardened viciousness or evil intent as an aggravation to their *atasthalia*. Amphinomus, for one, is a suitor who, free of these flaws, appears in a favourable light; Odysseus even

⁴¹ Another such occasion is *Od.* 4.368; cf. A. Lesky, *Thalatta* (Vienna 1947) 17, and *RE* Suppl. 11 (1967) 55 s.v. "Homeros."

⁴² If an inescapable *ananke* is imposed on Odysseus and his crew, then how is it, as Stockinger rightly asks (*supra* n.9: 62 n.3), that Odysseus does escape?

⁴³ Cf. K. Latte, "Der Rechtsgedanke im archaischen Griechentum," *AuA* 2 (1946) 69; Adkins (*supra* n.11) 46ff. Even the Sophoclean Oedipus of the fifth century still acknowledges his guilt for crimes he not only committed unwittingly, but actively tried to avoid.

takes a liking to him, warning and advising him to part company with the others before it is too late (18.119–50). And yet, by ignoring the warning, he perishes with the other suitors, sharing their collective *atasthalia*.⁴⁴ The decisive element of *atasthalia* is obviously not evil intent.

What then are the criteria for determining what is ruin by *atasthalia*? We can deduce them from Zeus' speech in the prologue: there must be (1) a warning so that the transgressors know what they are doing, and (2) a path for alternative action and behaviour so that those warned have a chance to heed the warning. Does the fate of Odysseus' crew meet both these criteria to qualify as a case of perishing by one's own blind recklessness, as described in the proem?

It does. As for the first criterion, there is plenty of warning—in fact the crew receives a triple warning. As for the second, alternative paths are open albeit difficult to follow. Odysseus' comrades receive the warning before they set foot on the island: their leader conveys to them the prophecies of Teiresias and Circe (12.271–75), combining them with advice to continue the voyage and avoid the island and its dangers altogether (276). The crew, tired and hungry, is dismayed at Odysseus' suggestion to sail by night—a practice generally avoided in Homeric nautical usage. True, the circumstances are not conducive to making the crew appreciate both warning and advice (but are they ever, in the world of the *apologoi*?): weariness, the need for a meal, and the fear of sailing by night quite naturally weigh heavily on their minds. But these circumstances do not pose insurmountable difficulties. Nighttime sailing, for example, cannot always be avoided (*cf.* 9.67–73, where the men are forced into it by circumstances). Succumbing to their natural needs and desires, Odysseus' comrades fail to heed their leader's warning because the alternative is too unpleasant for them at the moment. So already in the prelude to the Thrinakia adventure both criteria are met: the crew not only receives a warning but also advice as to an alternative course of action.

Before yielding to his comrades' wishes, Odysseus warns them again, this time by demanding that they swear a solemn oath (12.300f),

⁴⁴ Admittedly it is not made easy for Amphinomus to heed the warning; *cf.* 18.155f: ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὡς φύγε κῆρα· πέδησε δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀθήνη Τηλεμάχου ὑπὸ χερσὶ καὶ ἔγχει ἴφι δαμῆναι. One might expect Fenik to see in these lines evidence for divine malevolence. But he does not; Athena “does not force him into any path not of his own choosing” (222). Amphinomus' case is an example of Type 2: divine action aids and abets human inclination; he has insight into the good but is too weak to act on it (*cf.* Fenik 193, 224f).

μὴ πού τις ἀτασθαλίησι κακῆσιν
ἢ βοῦν ἤέ τι μῆλον ἀποκτάνη.

Here the poet emphatically repeats the central term *atasthalia*. Odysseus' insistence on this oath highlights the potential danger of the situation: it is another form of warning. When adverse winds prevent their departure the next morning, an apprehensive Odysseus calls an assembly to warn his comrades for a third time. They are expressly told that the cattle on the island are sacred to Helios, the "dreaded god who sees and hears all things," and is therefore forbidden food; any harm done to the cattle is a sacrilege from which punishment and suffering will ensue (320–23).

Fully warned and therefore fully aware of what they are doing, Odysseus' comrades break their oath and slaughter the best of Helios' cattle. Did they have an alternative course of action? Or were they, as Focke floridly put it, caught in the noose of *ananke*, with every step they took towards their destruction one more tug by which *ananke* tightened the rope? As we have seen, the thesis that the crew was reduced to the desperate choice between dying a slow death by starvation or a quick one by drowning was a figment of the rhetoric of Eurylochus' *kake boule* (339). The true alternative to committing the sacrilege was to endure an inadequate and disagreeable diet and resist the craving for roast meat, thus displaying the necessary respect for the sun-god's sacred property. The alternative, to be sure, was difficult and painful, but it was feasible nevertheless. The living proof of this is Odysseus, who refrained from killing and consuming the cattle and survived. His survival represents the triumph of *tlemosyne*, his physical and mental endurance.

IV

Endurance, *tlemosyne*: mention of this other virtue of Odysseus is a reminder that there are important aspects of the Thrinakia adventure that are easily neglected when one is preoccupied with the theological and ethical questions it raises. We must accommodate these other aspects in our conclusions reached so far in order to indicate the full extent of the poet's complex task of incorporating an ancient legend into the larger epic action and the poem's religious and ethical outlook. What emerges is the careful design by which the poet endeavoured to integrate the story of Helios' wrath into the theology of his epic.⁴⁵ A comparison of Helios' wrath in Book 12 with Poseidon's

⁴⁵ This is said *pace* Fenik 225f: *Od.* 1.7 is "a hasty attempt to harmonize the Helios

wrath against the Phaeacians in Book 13 will provide a final articulation—and, it is hoped, a convincing resolution—of the problem of Zeus' ways to men.

The Thrinakia episode is, first of all, an adventure story; besides entertaining the audience, it reveals the adventuring hero's character in action as he seeks to survive in a hostile world. As an adventure story it focuses on the hero—more precisely, on the hero seen in sharp contrast to his companions. The Thrinakia adventure is as much the *aristeia* of Odysseus' *tlemosyne* as the Cyclops adventure is the *aristeia* of his *metis*. The hero and his men face the ultimate challenge to their mental and physical capacities necessary for surviving in the hostile world of the *apologoi*. Odysseus possesses the *tlemosyne* required for survival; his companions do not, hence their destruction.

The episode marks a most important stage in the epic action, for the conception of Odysseus' *nostos* prescribes that the hero return home in bad case, bereft of his men and ships. The poet therefore had to do away with the last ship and its crew at some point, and the Thrinakia adventure provided an ideal occasion. The loss reduces the famous leader of men and conquering warrior of the Trojan War to the figure of the solitary, shipwrecked man bound for an extended sojourn in the obscurity of a nymph's island, whence he will arrive as a nameless stranger in Scheria to begin the arduous struggle to regain his identity and former position.⁴⁶

The Thrinakia adventure is thus a significant turning-point; hence its prominence in the proem. Because of this prominence, the poet deemed it necessary to bring the destruction of Odysseus' comrades in line with the religious and moral ethos of the epic action. Odysseus' men had to perish at this point of the *nostos*-action, but not as innocent victims of Poseidon's wrath, the target of which was their leader: the poet's solution was to have them perish through their own reckless folly,⁴⁷ which defeated the hero's vigorous efforts to save them. This serves a double purpose: for one thing, it not only exculpates the hero from any responsibility for their destruction, it shows him also as a leader who deeply cares for his men; for another,

story with the ethical norms set forth by Zeus in his first speech, an attempt that is *simply abandoned within the wrath-tale itself*" (my emphasis).

⁴⁶ Cf. R. Friedrich, "On the Compositional Use of Similes in the *Odyssey*," *AJP* 102 (1981) 131–33. On the central importance of the Thrinakia adventure for the epic action and the significance of Zeus' involvement see Erbse (*supra* n.11) 242–44.

⁴⁷ Cf. H. Eisenberger, *Studien zur Odyssee (=Palingenesia 7 [Wiesbaden 1973])* 202. The question is why the ruin of the crews of the eleven ships destroyed by the Laestrygonians in Book 10 is not so motivated: here we have to register that the new ethos does not penetrate the entire narrative material.

presenting the men as the architects of their own ruin serves to exemplify the epic's novel idea of man's responsibility for his suffering *hyper moron*.

Research into the sources of the *Odyssey* suggests that the Thrinakia adventure is based on a traditional cult legend.⁴⁸ Integrating a traditional story with an inherent narrative pattern of its own into the framework of a large-scale epic such as the *Odyssey* is a task of considerable complexity in terms of characterization, narrative structure, and ethos. To begin with, the poet had to make it conform to the action-pattern of the adventuring and home-coming hero; thus the focus had to be shifted from the sun-god to the adventurer-hero, and from the theme of divine wrath to the hero's display of *arete*, understood in its pre-moral sense of mental and physical strength and excellence, which is thrown into sharp relief by being contrasted with his comrades' shortcomings. At this point the poet faced an almost impossible task: he had to bring a story that originally turned on the primitive revenge of an archaic god in line with the more advanced moral and theological ethos of his epic; at the same time the motif of divine anger had to be retained as the cause of the hero's loss of his last ship and comrades, from which derives the transition from famous conquering and adventuring hero to the figure of the shipwrecked stranger without a name.

Once we have discarded the notion of divine malevolence in the Thrinakia adventure, we are able to appreciate how carefully the poet designed the story of the slaughter of the sun-god's cattle in order to make it compatible with the new ethos. Those very elements of the story that are said to militate against it—such as the storm that maroons Odysseus and his men on the island, the hero's untimely sleep, and the primitive wrath of the sun-god—may be said, on closer inspection, to contribute to this design, rather than (as the critics have it) to disturb it.

That the poet set great store by the Thrinakia incident can be gleaned from his careful preparation for it as early as Book 11, with Teiresias' response to Odysseus' inquiry about his *nostos* (11.100–37). Here, as in the proem, Thrinakia figures prominently (104ff), and from the outset the emphasis is on the element of choice (110–13):

⁴⁸ Cf. L. Radermacher, *Die Erzählungen der Odyssee* (SBWien 178 [1915]) 23ff; Von der Mühl (supra n.5) 730; K. Reinhardt, "Die Abenteuer der Odyssee," in *Von Werken und Formen* (Bad Godesberg 1948) 112f; Eisenberger (supra n.47) 201. Fenik seems to follow them but thinks that the poet made only external changes to adapt the story to its new context: "No significant internal changes were made within the story to adapt it to Zeus' speech, and given the distance from the prologue, the discrepancy can easily pass unnoticed" (225f).

τὰς (sc. βόας) εἰ μὲν κ' ἄσινέας ἔαας νόστου τε μέδῃαι
καὶ κεν ἔτ' εἰς Ἰθάκην, κακά περ πάσχοντες, ἴκοισθε·
εἰ δέ κε σῖνῃαι, τότε τοι τεκμαίρομ' ὄλεθρον
νηΐ τε καὶ ἑτάροισ'

Teiresias' words are not a prophetic forecast of what is bound to happen, but a warning of a danger that can be avoided. He also hints at how it can be avoided, thereby introducing the theme of *tlemosyne* (11.104–07) that is central to the Thrinakia adventure.

ἴκοισθε (sc. εἰς Ἰθάκην)
αἴ κ' ἐθέλῃς σὸν θυμὸν ἐρυκακέειν καὶ ἑταίρων,
ὀππότε κέν πρῶτον πελάσῃς ἐνεργέα νῆα
Θρινακίη νῆσφ. . . .

Circe, amplifying Teiresias' words (12.127ff), emphasises the same point: Odysseus and his men have a choice (137ff). Translating the warnings of Teiresias and Circe into his advice to pass by the island, Odysseus tries in vain to persuade his comrades to exercise this choice when conditions are still favorable. Once they have set foot on the island, it will be harder to exercise choice, as conditions will be more difficult. The point is that there is a choice; and the emphasis the poet places on it supports the interpretation of the crew's subsequent sacrilege as an act of *atasthalia*.

The crew's rejection of their leader's warning not to enter the baneful island, and their assent to Eurylochus' mutinous speech, amounts to virtual revolt. Odysseus senses that the continuation of the voyage is not possible, but to ignore their rebellious behaviour is not possible either. The oath demanded by Odysseus and readily sworn by the crew offers a way out of this delicate situation.⁴⁹ Thus the oath-motif, maligned as an all-too-obvious device of a moralising poet,⁵⁰ felicitously combines several things: for one, it allows Odysseus to save face as a leader; for another, designed as a measure to prevent the comrades from heading straight for their ruin, it shows Odysseus as a leader concerned for the welfare of his men; further, his demand for so solemn an act as an oath alerts his comrades to the seriousness of the danger and so constitutes, as we have seen, an indirect warning: their second.

The adverse winds that prevent their departure from the island prompt the third and most explicit warning (12.320–23). Now, the winds, lasting more than a month, do create the harsh conditions

⁴⁹ Cf. Eisenberger (*supra* n.47) 204.

⁵⁰ See Schadewaldt 97ff.

under which Odysseus' men break their oath, for the circumstances are sufficiently difficult to render the sacrilege understandable; in this way they serve to distinguish the crew's transgression as free of criminal intent from the hybriatic crimes of the suitors.⁵¹ It is a necessary distinction: they are, after all, Odysseus' men, and the suitors are his evil foes—a difference that must be reflected in the quality of their actions. But harsh circumstances, mitigating though they may be, can ultimately mean only a difference in degree in assessing their guilt; and the absence of evil intent does not, as we have seen, exculpate Odysseus' comrades. The slaughter of the sun-god's cattle remains a transgression born of human *atasthalia*: this is the decisive feature it shares with the crimes of the suitors, although theirs is an *atasthalia* aggravated by willful criminality. Finally, Odysseus' untimely sleep during the slaughter turns out to be quite timely in terms of narrative economy: Odysseus could only have delayed but not prevented his comrades' transgression; in his absence, the last obstacle to the slaughter of the cattle is out of the way. His absence further reinforces the notion that this act is exclusively the affair—and thus the sole responsibility—of his comrades: left to their own devices, they cast their leader's warning to the winds and, succumbing to their natural desires, bring ruin on themselves. Accordingly the sun-god's wrath and Zeus' punishment are directed only against them (12.378).

To restate the problem: Helios' anger serves to motivate Odysseus' loss of his last crew and ship; yet its ethos is primitive, as the angry god is solely motivated by revenge and concerned only with his *time*; this has the effect of calling the moral theology of the *Odyssey* into question. But as we have seen, the real problem is not the primitive nature of the sun-god's wrath, but Zeus' ready adoption of Helios' cause in the scene on Olympus in Book 12. There is another such scene in Book 13, so similar to it that critics speak of two instances of a type-scene:⁵² in both, Zeus, confronted by an angry god, must defend the fellow-god's honour slighted by the actions of humans. In *Odyssey* 13, Poseidon's anger at the Phaeacians for having aided Odysseus, his foe, raises the same questions about divine justice as does the Olympic scene in Book 12; thus the interpretation of the one will have a bearing on the interpretation of the other, and comparison of the two will enable a final articulation of the theological problem at

⁵¹ Cf. Eisenberger (*supra* n.47) 204.

⁵² Cf. Fenik 209 n.122, who connects these scenes with a third instance at *Il.* 7.443ff, which can be omitted from the issue at hand.

issue. Both scenes show Zeus in his double rôle as defender of a fellow-god's honour and as guardian of divine justice on earth: this, according to his own words in the prologue, implies that there be no arbitrary imposition of suffering on mortals. Perhaps we should not speak of two rôles, but rather of two different aspects of Zeus: the father of gods and men must vindicate the rights of his fellow-gods, as well as secure justice for mortals. The theological problem arises from the potential conflict between the two; its resolution obviously requires that the restoration of a fellow-god's honour (which in Homeric religious thought has priority) be carried out in such a way that it does not run counter to the theodicy of the prologue. Nothing more or less is required for maintaining the consistency of the epic's religious and ethical outlook.

This requirement seems to be particularly difficult to meet in the Olympic scene at 13.127ff. Here the theological inconsistency is, according to some critics, most flagrant.⁵³ Noting that Odysseus has returned to Ithaca with more treasures than he would have brought home without being persecuted by the sea-god (137f), Poseidon is not at all amused; that his own protégés the Phaeacians should have done this to him aggravates his wrath. Like Helios he immediately confronts Zeus to express his outrage at such violation of his honour. Now, Poseidon's vengefulness does not surprise us; and again, the real problem is the attitude of Zeus, who seems to endorse a fellow-god's primitive and unjust vengeance (143–45). To complicate matters, Zeus' endorsement appears as an egregious act of divine injustice in view of the fact that the Phaeacians incur Poseidon's wrath because (in sharp contrast to the Cyclops) they have observed Zeus' law of hospitality: Zeus should therefore protect them against, rather than expose them to, the revenge of Poseidon. But a closer look at the details of the scene will convey a different impression.

There is no question that Zeus has to defend his fellow-god's honour; again the problem, as in the Thrinakia adventure, is that of giving the god satisfaction without becoming unjust to men in the process. How does the Father of Gods and Men go about this? First, Zeus affirms, as he must, Poseidon's right to take revenge on those who have slighted his honour. The revenge Poseidon announces is exces-

⁵³ Cf. most recently Rutherford (*supra* n.18) 148, who sees in the punishment of the Phaeacians a disturbing example of the theological ambiguity of the *Odyssey*: "although they (*i.e.*, the gods) are said, and sometimes seem, to uphold justice, there are disturbing exceptions (in particular, the punishment of the Phaeacians by Poseidon, endorsed or at least condoned by Zeus himself, hardly corresponds to any human canons of justice)." See also Erbse (*supra* n.11) 145–58, 241f.

sive: he will destroy the ship that conveyed Odysseus home in the open sea and hide the city of the Phaeacians under a mountain. In announcing his revenge, Poseidon is eager to make sure that he acts in accordance with Zeus' will (148); indeed, has he not come to seek counsel from his brother (*cf.* 127, *Διὸς δ' ἐξείρετο βουλήν*)? Zeus responds by persuading the sea-god to reduce his reprisals against the Phaeacians (155–58) to the petrification of the returning ship close to the shore, where it would remain visible to all as a warning against future convoys (161–64).⁵⁴ As a result, all that the Phaeacians suffer at the hands of Poseidon is the loss of one ship (and nothing in the text suggests that human life is lost by the sea-god's action). Thus Poseidon's revenge, if it can still be called that, is a far cry from what critics usually interpret it to be. Zeus can hardly be accused of condoning or even endorsing the arbitrary imposition of suffering on hapless humans; on the contrary, by the power of gentle persuasion Zeus prevents a harsh injustice that could indeed have called into radical doubt the justice of the Olympian gods. At the same time, Poseidon's *philotimia* is satisfied: all in all, a felicitous reconciliation of Zeus' two potentially conflicting rôles.

For all their similarity, the Olympic scenes in *Odyssey* 12 and 13 offer different resolutions to the problems they raise. In the Thrinakia adventure Zeus restores the fellow-god's honour by taking it upon himself to punish harshly those who committed an actual transgression. He cannot act otherwise: once the sun-god has appealed to the Father of Gods and Men, Zeus, as the defender of the gods' honour, has to protect and vindicate the rights of his fellow-god. But despite the primitive motive on the part of Helios, Zeus' punitive action cannot be said to cause arbitrary suffering for hapless mortals; for it is meted out to men who, against several warnings, have committed an actual sacrilege, although an alternative course of action—albeit a difficult one—was open to them. What matters is that those who die in Zeus' tempest ultimately perish, as we have seen, by their *atasthaliai* (while at the same time Odysseus, alone innocent, escapes destruction): this makes Zeus' intervention on behalf of his fellow-god

⁵⁴ As transmitted, line 158 (*μέγα δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι*) would suggest that Zeus also counsels Poseidon to hide Scheria under a mountain. As this does not fit the context (Poseidon, who is otherwise eager to act in accordance with Zeus' will—*cf.* 127, 148—does not heed this suggestion), many have either athetized the whole line (see Von der Mühl's apparatus *ad* 158: “del. Bethe, multi, iure ut vid.”) or followed (as does R. Lattimore in his translation) Aristophanes' reading of *μή* for *μέγα* (see p.23), which is preferable, as it conforms to the ethos of the speech and the context of the scene as a whole.

compatible with his theodicy. Far from engulfing the Zeus-figure, the primitive ethos of Helios' wrath is neutralised by Zeus' involvement, and the sun-god's motives for invoking Zeus' vindication of his honour become secondary, as the focus of the story shifts to the theme of *atasthalia* and to the contrast between the hero and his comrades that is determined by this theme. Thus Zeus' intervention in the Thrinakia adventure conforms to the principles of divine justice he enunciates in the prologue: his ways to men remain just. There is no inconsistency here; the justice of Zeus emerges intact from the Thrinakia adventure.

Odysseus' comrades, then, join Aegisthus and the suitors to provide a third example of man's own responsibility for suffering "beyond his allotted fate" as a result of his *atasthalia*. The objection that the transgression of Odysseus' crew differs, as indeed it does, in motives and circumstances from the crimes of Aegisthus and the suitors, amounts to no more than stating that the three examples are not strictly uniform. The author of our *Odyssey* obviously avoids such uniformity. As well he might. The days have long passed when analysts used to dismiss him as the *redactor obtusus* who ruined the superior work of his predecessor; yet a faint echo of this still persists in comparisons between him and the author of the *Iliad*, from which the *Odyssey*-poet emerges, with depressing regularity, as the *Deutero-homeros*. He is disparaged for his alleged moralising intellectualism, against which his critics play off Homer's alleged native hue of resolution not yet sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought and morality.⁵⁵ Assuming the *Odyssey*-poet had indeed intended and achieved uniformity in his portrayal of the gods, as well as in the three examples of *olesthai atasthalieisin*, would he not most likely have laid himself open to the charge of ethical and theological schematicism and pedantry? Now that he has avoided unepic uniformity he incurs the charge of inconsistency. Obviously the *Odyssey*-poet is in some kind of double bind. It is time to lift him out of it.

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⁵⁵ Schadewaldt's essay "Der Prolog der Odyssee" (*Hellas, supra* n.10: 42-58) is a case in point.