Cyclopean Superlatives

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In the *Odyssey* of Homer, there is a body of epithets initiated by the prefix *huper* that together establish a common semantic field. Each of these epithets derives its meaning, not simply from its persistent sense or immediate context, but from its participation in this semantic field. In these epithets, in so far as they derive their meaning from this semantic field, the prefix *huper* bears the sense of 'beyond.' Together these epithets have the effect of expressing how Odysseus copes with extremes, geographical, cosmological, and moral. Odysseus himself hails from a geographical extreme, the distant island of Ithaca. He ventures to the edges of the world, to the lands of the Cyclopes and Phaeacians, where the Jovian laws of hospitality are, as judged by the norms of the centre, deranged. Odysseus returns to Ithaca only to encounter the suitors who manifest the extreme behaviour evident among the Cyclopes. We shall see how epithets initiated by the prefix *huper* are in play in all of these experiences of excess. We shall further maintain that this practice of invoking a semantic field brings into question Parry's fixed distinction between ornamental and functional epithets and invites a case for a literate, as opposed to an oral, Homer.

At the beginning of Book 6 of the *Odyssey,* Homer recounts how Odysseus is washed up upon the shores of Scheria and seizes the occasion to tell us something of the history of the Phaeacians who had formerly lived in Hypereia, but had moved to avoid the plundering Cyclopes. Phaeacia has been identified with places from Istris to Cyrenaica. The current favourite is Corfu.[1]

Wilamowitz is skeptical that we can provide a precise geographical location for Scheria.[2] In his entry under "Scheria," Autenrieth remarks: "the land of Phaiakes, which the ancients located in Kerkyra, whereas it really existed only in the poet's fancy."[3] Erbse compares the destruction of Phaeacia

1. A. Heubeck et al., *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* 3 vols. (Oxford, 1988–92) 1.294.

2. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die Ilias und Homer* (Berlin, 1916) 499 ff.

3. G. Autenrieth, *An Homeric Dictionary for use in Schools and Colleges,* tr. with additions and corrections by R.P. Keep (London and New York, 1963) 294.

Dionysius, Vol. XX, Dec. 2002, 9–22.

(*Odyssey* 13.159–87) with the devastation of the Achaean wall in the *Iliad* 12.13–33. The purpose of the latter passage is to advise the audience against positivistic interpretation of a work of the imagination. The destruction of Phaeacia serves a similar purpose. Thus we should prefer a poetic, rather than a geographical, understanding of Phaeacia's location.[4]

Liddell-Scott-Jones give "Highland" as the translation of Hypereia. Perhaps the names Hypereia and Scheria are merely "topographical descriptions:—'the Highlands'—'the Coast'." In this case, the meaning "coast" must be suggested by the similarity between "Scheria" and σχερός which Hesychius says can mean shore.[5] Doubtless, we are here working from the sense of Hypereia as "Highland" and reasoning that the coast would lie below it. If Hypereia need not bear the meaning "Highland," then the argument that Scheria must refer to the coast is not necessary, although possible since the Phaeacians are seafarers. Hypereia is more properly with Heubeck et al. to be understood as the "land beyond the horizon." As they comment: "The sense of the name (which is attested in the κρήνη ʽΥπέρεια (*Il.* ii 734, vi 457)) is in keeping with the Homeric idea of the extreme distance of the Phaeacians from the rest of mankind."[6]

Whatever the location or etymology of Scheria, the rendering of Hypereia as "Highland" appears to be a conjecture from the sense of *huper* as "above." The place name occurs in line 4 and is followed immediately by another use of the prefix *huper* in line 5: the Cyclopes are described as ἀνδρῶν ὑπερηνερεόντων "tyrannical, oppressive men." The word ὑπερηνερεόντων is an adjectival compound of the prefix ὑπέρ and a noun that does not occur in the nominative case, ἠνορέη, έηφι, έην, "prowess, manhood" and is derived from ἀνήρ, "man."[7] Segal comments that "the oxymoron of the phrase perhaps suggests the outlandishness of regarding the Cyclopes as 'men'."[8] The superlative *huper* means "over" in the sense either of (1) "above" or (2) "beyond." Thus ὑπερηνορεόντων can mean either "above what is appropriate to manhood," or "over or exceeding (the bounds of what is proper to) manhood." In either case, there is an instance of culpable excess. Surely we may, in addition to the topographical sense expressed in "Highland," admit

4. Cf. H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odysee* (Berlin and New York, 1972) 145; and Heubeck et al., 294.

5. W.W. Merry and J. Riddell, eds., *Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1886) 213; the etymology is doubtful, cf. Heubeck et al., 294.

6. *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. I.

7. Autenrieth, 146; cf. Schol. V: ὑπερεχόντων τῇ ἠνορέῃ, ὅ ἐστι τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὑπερηφάνων; Schol. T: τῶν λίαν ἀνδρείων, Dindorf 294.

8. C. Segal, "Divine Justice in the *Odyssey*: Poseidon, Cyclops, and Helios," *AJP* 13.4 (1992): 494, note 14.

another sense for Hypereia: that it is a land of excess, whether we construe *huper* as "above" or "beyond." The only sense of "above" that would contribute to the sense of the passage would be "superior in might." In a moral sense, what is required is *huper* in the sense of "over" or "beyond," as exceeding acceptable norms.

The scholiast commenting on the occurrence of "Scheria" at 5.34 tells us that Scheria was originally called Drepane (the Sickle) because it was there that the sickle was kept that was employed in the castration of Cronus. Later, it was called Scheria because Poseidon, at Demeter's request, undertook to stay the flood that was to overwhelm her (σχεθέντων τῶν ὑδάτων Σχερία ἐκλήθη).[9] Whatever we may wish to think of this explanation, the association of Scheria with ἔχειν is interesting. Scheria may be a place where excess is contained. The excess that would make sense in the immediate context belongs to the Cyclopes whose barbarism is to be contrasted with the apparent civility of the Phaeacians.

Using the word ἀνήρ for "man," Homer tells us that Nausithous settled the Phaeacians in Scheria "far from men who live by toil." Zeus tells Hermes (5.35) that the Phaeacians are "near kin of the gods" (ἀγχίθεοι). The removal from the company of ordinary men may be not merely geographical. Just as the Cyclopes are less than human in their excess of manhood, so are the Phaeacians more than human by their affinity with the gods.

Nausithous settled the Phaeacians in Scheria, "far from (ἑκὰς) men that live by toil" (6.8). If we were to understand the prefix *huper* in Hypereia, not as "above," but as "beyond," we might see that the Phaeacians, in relocating to Scheria, were moving beyond the Land of Beyond, itself a place of folk who are beyond the norms of civility. Perhaps "The Land Beyond" would be a better translation of Hypereia than "Highland." Nausicaa describes the Phaeacians as the "furthermost" (ἔσχατοι) of men with whom no other mortals have commerce (*Od.* 6.205). "Furthermost" is an epithet the Phaeacians share with the Ethiopians (*Od.* 1.23), half of whom dwell where the sun rises and half where the sun sets.[10] The use of this epithet would confirm the understanding of *huper* in Hypereia as "beyond."

In Book 9, Odysseus, revealing his identity to his Phaeacian hosts, describes his native Ithaca as "furthest (πανυπερτάτη) toward the gloom" (lines 25–26). Here, as in the place name Hypereia, and in the epithet of the Cyclopes, we encounter the prefix *huper.* Here the prefix has clearly the sense, not of "above" (as in the Liddell-Scott-Jones rendering of Hypereia), but of "beyond."

9. W. Dindorf, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Odysseam* (Amsterdam, 1962; reprint of the Oxford edition of 1855) 224; cf. Merry and Riddell, 213.

10. Merry and Riddell, 270.

Odysseus, in his account of his own engagement with the Cyclopes, uses another epithet containing this prefix ("overweening") to describe them: ὑπερφιάλων (9.106).[11] Clearly the Cyclopes are extremists. The same epithet is used of the suitors of Penelope (1.134; 2.310 etc.). In his discussion of the application of this epithet to the Phaeacians (6.274), Rose remarks, "the word is nearly restricted to Penelope's suitors."[12] While the word may be applied more frequently to the suitors than to anyone else, it is a nice question what is its *analogum princeps* in the *Odyssey*. We cannot think of any figure whom it would describe more appropriately than the Cyclopes. The epithet ὑπερηνορέων (I give here the putative nominative form) which, as we have seen, is used of the Cyclopes, is employed of the suitors as well. Thus both epithets, describing culpable excess, are used alike of the Cyclopes and the suitors. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the suitors are, in their excess of the norms of civility, the Cyclopes of Ithaca.[13]

There is another instance, in the *Iliad,* in which Homer is clearly playing with the *huper* prefix. In Book 11, Nestor is attempting to lure Patroklos back into the fray and recalls the advice of Peleus to Achilles on the day that he introduced him to Patroklos (784): "to be always best in battle and pre-eminent (ὑπείροχος) beyond all others" (αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων). At 11.673, in recounting the valour of his own youth to inspire Patroklos, Nestor slays Itymoneus, son of Hypeirochos as the first killed in the quarrel with the Eleians over the theft of cattle. The name Hypeirochos is the same as the word used above for "pre-eminent" and, of course, like it contains the prefix *huper.* Nestor could not be superior (ὑπείροχος) to Hypeirochos, for then Hypeirochos would not be pre-eminent, but he could be superior to his son.

11. The epithet is used otherwise of Locrian Ajax (4.503) and Telemachus (4.663; 16.346) in what G.P. Rose describes as "one of those instances in which the suitors ascribe to others what in reality fits themselves" ("The Unfriendly Phaeacians," *TAPA* 100 [1969]: 390).

12. Rose, 390.

13. P. Vivante remarks that normally derogatory epithets are applied to the suitors, not as part of the narrative, but from the viewpoint of the characters in opposition to the suitors (*The Epithets in Homer. A Study in Poetic Values* [New Haven and London,1982] 205–06). This is, e.g., true of ὑπερφίαλος (Penelope to Telemachos: 18.167; Odysseus: 15.315; 16.271)—see Vivante *ad loc.* for other instances. Vivante offers the uses of ὑπερηνορεόντων at 2.324 and ὑπερφίαλος 20.291 as apparent exceptions to the rule that derogatory epithets are not employed in narrative, but notes that ὑπερηνορεόντων is qualified elsewhere by κακῶς (2.266: Telemachos to Athene; 4.766: Penelope to Athene) so that it might not be derogatory in narrative or, even in the mouths of persons hostile to the suitors, unless qualified by the adverb. Yet at 2.324 ὑπερηνορεόντων describes the suitors who mock and jeer at Telemachos and at 20.291 ὑπερφίαλος describes the haughty wooers among whom Ctesippus is speaking, a man who is ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς (287). In both cases, the context would suggest a derogatory use of these terms in narrative.

Odysseus himself comes from a land that is beyond. In his wanderings after the sack of Troy, he journeyed far indeed beyond the civilized ecumene of his day. Indeed, over the whole course of his wanderings, if we begin with his departure from Ithaca, he has traveled from one extreme to another. His last stop before he reaches Scheria, the final destination before his return, is Ogygia, the "navel of the sea" (ὀμφαλός ... θαλάσσης) (*Odyssey* 1.50). Does Homer intend a contrast with Delphi as navel of the earth?

Apart from the extremes of literary geography, there are other extremes to be observed in the relationship between the Cyclopes and the Phaeacians. Hospitality, the law of host and guest, is one of the most important norms of Homeric conduct. The Cyclopes offer the greatest violation to this principle. Instead of offering hospitality, they eat their guests![14] The Phaeacians, on the one hand, would at first appear to be monsters of hospitality. They give safe convoy to all men in their self-steering ships, even though there is a prophecy that one day Poseidon would punish them for this practice by throwing a mountain over their city, cutting them off from the sea (8.564–69). What is more, they knew from Odysseus' own account that Poseidon was the particular source of his sufferings.

On the other hand, as Rose argues, their hospitality is as uncertain as it is exaggerated.[15] Athene, in the guise of a young maiden with a pitcher, warns Odysseus (7.32–33): "For the men here do not endure stranger-folk, nor do they give kindly welcome to him who comes from another land." Nausicca says to Odysseus of the lower class of the Phaeacians (6.274): "For indeed there are insolent fellows in the land." Significantly, the word for "insolent," ὑπερφίαλοι, is the same epithet applied to the Cyclopes.

Athene wraps Odysseus in a thick mist "that no one of the great-hearted Phaeacians, meeting him, should speak mockingly to him" (7.14–17). Arete warns Odysseus to secure the lid to his treasure chest lest the Phaeacian crew steal from him (8.443–45). Echeneüs rebukes Alcinous for allowing Odysseus to sit so long among the ashes before attending to him (7.155–60). Before Odysseus is through with his dinner, Alcinous launches into a speech designed, in clear contravention of the norms of Homeric civility, to seek Odysseus' identity: he does so by suggesting that Odysseus may be a god in disguise (7.199–206). Euryalus taunts Odysseus for not engaging in the games and calls him a merchantman (8.158–64) while Alcinous is slow to redress the insult. Zeus had promised Hermes the Phaeacians "shall heartily shew him all honour, as if he were a god" (5.36). While this prophecy is true in its

14. Cf. R. Friedrich, "Heroic Man and *Polymetis*: Odysseus in the *Cyclopeia*," *GRBS* 28 (1987a): 182.

15. Rose, 387–406; cf. Segal, 496.

outcome, Rose argues that Odysseus must exercise his every gift as a guest to secure it.[16] In the land of the Phaeacians, politeness and xenophobia are precariously balanced. Nevertheless, in the outcome, at least, which imperiled Phaeacia, they have moved far beyond the incivility of the Cyclopes.

It is an oversimplification to state that the Phaeacians represent the extreme of hospitality, while the Cyclopes manifest the extreme of barbarism. We have seen that the hospitality of the Phaeacians is uncertain. We might think that Odysseus' appeal before the Cyclops to Zeus' laws of host and guest would have universal validity. Odysseus himself expresses disappointment that Zeus did not heed his sacrifice at the end of the episode (*Odyssey* 9.551–55). We may wonder why Zeus does not intervene to rectify the violation of the Jovian principles that Odysseus invokes.

Odysseus uses the plural of the word πεῖραρ to describe the shoreline of Polyphemus' island (9.284). Bergren observes: "Five times in Homeric poetry the plural of πεῖραρ clearly denotes the ends of the earth. The sense is concrete. The πείρατα γαίης are the physical extremities of the earth. When you stand upon the land by the farthest sea, when with one step forward you will leave the land behind, you stand upon the πείρατα γαίης. It is a precarious position. It is the line between opposite elements, the limit of the human world."[17] Although the word is used here of a shoreline within this world, the reader familiar with the sense of the word as an extreme will associate it with that sense. The Cylcops is ethically removed from the norms of the centre.[18]

At *Odyssey* 1.32–4, Zeus addresses these words to the council of the gods:

> O for shame, how the mortals put the blame upon us
> gods, for they say evils come from us, but it is they rather,
> who by their own recklessness win sorrow beyond what is given.[19]

Jaeger (who sees in this passage a precursor of Solon) argues that a new element is introduced: human folly may account for our human suffering

16. Rose, 406.

17. A.L.T. Bergren, *The Etymology and Usage of ΠΕΙΡΑΡ in Early Greek Poetry* (New York, 1975) 22–23.

18. Bergren, 22–23; 27–28; cf. 102–15; J.S. Romm, *The Edges of the World in Ancient Thought* (Princeton, 1992) objects: "Bergren uses this passage to advance a parallel between the Cylops' island and 'the other side of the world' ... but this seems somewhat strained; although the island reveals certain golden-age features ... it is far from 'other-worldly' by comparison with other paradiscial landscapes" (12n9). The whole argument of the present study, stressing as it does that vocabulary initiated by the prefix *huper* conveys the notion that the Cyclopes and Phaeacians live at the extremes, obviously supports Bergren's position.

19. *The Odyssey of Homer*, translated and with an introduction by Richmond Lattimore (New York, 1965).

which should not be attributed alone to divine will, let alone caprice. This view gave birth to the view that human folly and transgression is a human responsibility which is punished by the gods: Zeus has throughout the *Odyssey* a scheme of moral edification so that it announces the programme of the poem to be a theodicy.[20]

The passage is thought (in contradiction to Monro's Law) to reply to the words of Achilles at *Iliad* 24.527 in which Achilles complains that there are two urns at the doorsill of Zeus: one contains blessings, the other curses. Sometimes Zeus mixes sorrows and blessings and at other times he allots unmixed sorrows: by implication, he never assigns only blessings. The theodicy of the *Odyssey* poet is thought to be a divine refutation of this tragic view of life. In fact, there is nothing in this passage that contradicts the words of Achilles. There is no suggestion that Zeus does not assign sorrows and blessings in the manner Achilles describes: it is only that *beyond* that allotment, mortals may contribute to their suffering ὑπὲρ μόρον, which may be understood as "beyond what is expected."[21]

Brown argues persuasively that Jovian laws might not have currency in the Cyclops' cave.[22] The Cyclopes dwell at the ends of the world. As we move from the navel of the earth toward those geographical extremes, the world changes and the extremes are not merely geographical, but cosmological, and moral. Polyphemus expresses surprise at Odysseus' appeal to Zeus and the gods by remarking that he is obviously foolish and from far away not to know that the Cyclopes do not care for Zeus or the gods (9.272–75). It is not only individuals, but peoples, such as the Cyclopes, who have their peculiar portion from the gods. The Cyclopes dwell unto themselves,

20. W. Jaeger, "Solons Eunomie," *SBBerl.* (1926): 69–85 = *Scripta Minora* (Rome, 1960) 1.321. For a good summary see Friedrich, "Thrinakia and Zeus' Ways," *GRBS* 28 (1987b): 375–400; cf. C. Brown, "In the Cyclops' Cave: Revenge and Justice in *Odyssey* 9," *Mnemosyne* 49 (1996): 1–29. Segal speaks of "Zeus' program for retributive justice" and refers to his speech at *Odyssey* 1.32–43 as a "theodicy." He remarks: "The discrepancy between the 'higher' morality of Zeus articulated in the proem and the vindictiveness of Poseidon and Helios has long been regarded as one of the major obstacles to a coherent theology in the *Odyssey* and one of the most serious compositional problems of the poem" (489). Segal interprets Zeus' turning away from Odysseus sacrifice (9.553–55) by locating it within the a scheme of authorial omniscience excluded from Odysseus' knowledge at that point in the narrative (505–06).

21. See Brown, "In the Cyclops' Cave" 9–11.

22. Brown ("In the Cyclops' Cave") reviews negatively the argument that the speech of Zeus at *Odyssey* 1.32–43 is the oldest Greek theodicy and is put forth by a poet who belongs to the age of emerging Ionian rationalism. Jaeger (who sees in this passage a precursor of Solon) argues that a new element is introduced: human folly may account for our human suffering which should not be attributed alone to divine will, let alone caprice. This view gave birth to the view that human folly and transgression is a human responsibility which is punished by the gods: Zeus has throughout the *Odyssey* a scheme of moral edification.

each exists only with reference to himself and his own *oikos*. They are ἀθέμιστοι (9.106) and each declares θέμις to his own family (9.114–15). The Jovian laws of host and guest are meant to extend in concentric circles from the *oikos* to the *polis* to the outside world. Since the Cyclopean interaction is restricted to the *oikos,* it is not expandable in this way and these laws have no application to the situation of the Cyclopes.

The Phaeacians also exist at the extremes of the world and we must not simply take them as paragons of Jovian correctness. As they flee Hypereia and the Cyclopes, their politeness is deranged on either side of the Jovian mean. Brown finds exceptional felicity exempt from Nemesis (in this context the "alternations of fortune and circumstance that characterize the lives of men"[23]) at the extremes among another people sharing the prefix *hyper*, the Hyperboreans, in Pindar's *Tenth Pythian.*[24] The Hyperboreans "dwell far from toils and battles escaping Nemesis which is very just" (πόνων δὲ καὶ μαχᾶν ἄτερ οἰκέοισι φυγόντες ὑπέρδικον Νέμεσιν, 42–44) (Brown locates the felicity of the Hyperboreans "within the context of cosmology, not piety.")[25] The justice of Nemesis is not in question, but the Hyperboreans live beyond the reach of its dispensation.[26] Perhaps Pindar associates the prefix *huper* in "Hyperboreans" with the same prefix in ὑπέρδικος, "very just." The Hyperboreans, who live "beyond Boreas," beyond the North Wind, also dwell beyond Nemesis who is above in or excels in justice.[27]

Poseidon is associated with various extremes in the *Odyssey*: the Ethiopians, the Cyclopes, the Phaeacians, and the Giants. When Odysseus rounds Cape Maleia, he passes into a different world, a topsy-turvy and extreme world, where all *xenia* is deranged. At Ogygia, the navel of the sea, he is subject to the perverse hospitality of Calypso. The navel of the sea is not the

23. C. Brown, "The Hyperboreans and Nemesis in Pindar's *Tenth Pythian,*" *Phoenix* 46 (1992): 103.

24. Brown, "The Hyperboreans and Nemesis."

25. Brown, "The Hyperboreans and Nemesis" 105.

26. For the translation of ὑπέρδικος as "very just" see Brown, "The Hyperboreans and Nemesis" 104 and note 37. Brown criticizes H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*[2] (Munich, 1962), who understands this adjective as the equivalent of ὑπὲρ δίκης on the grounds that "Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones has persuaded me that it is untenable by stressing that ὑπέρ in compound rarely intensifies" (562n15). But Fränkel translates *im Namen des Rechtes*, "in the name of justice": surely his understanding of the adjective does not require intensification. Appropriately Brown is critical of J.G. Griffiths, who translates "more than just, severely just" (*The Divine Verdict: A Study of Divine Judgment in the Ancient Religions* [Leiden, 1991] 52). If the context is cosmological, then there should be no contest between Nemesis and Dikê.

27. Brown ("In the Cyclops' Cave" 20n55) cites his treatment of the Hyperboreans in "The Hyperboreans and Nemesis" to reflect that the Cylcopes dwell beyond the dispensation of human moral norms.

navel of the earth. The *dasmos* of *Iliad* 15.190–91 gives the sea to Poseidon alone. While Goat Island is ostensibly real estate, we may imagine that, at the extremes, Poseidon rules and an appeal to the norms of Jovian hospitality is out of place. While I agree with Brown that the Jovian laws of hospitality do not apply at the extremes as they do at the earth's centre, I submit that this principle of geographical, cosmological and moral dislocation is adapted by the *Odyssey* poet to his own purposes. Odysseus has entered upon the domain of Poseidon where Jovian norms do not hold sway. It is important that both Phaeacians and Cyclopes are descendants of Poseidon.

To this argument, it might be objected that Polyphemus says that the Cyclopes have no regard for Zeus *or the blessed gods* either to fear or shun them (*Odyssey* 9.276). If indeed the Cyclopes have no regard for the gods, then why would they owe any loyalty to Poseidon, himself a god? We must not forget that Poseidon cares for the Cyclopes, not in his capacity as a god, but as their father. The impiety of the Cyclopes also seems to be at variance with the statement (*Odyssey* 9.107) that the Cyclopes, in their life of ease and freedom from agriculture, trust in the immortal gods. To understand this statement, it is necessary to suspend any Judaeo-Christian notions of trust in God and its moral implications. It is a fact that the gods assign to the Cyclopes as their particular portion that they lead such a life and they may trust in it. It has nothing to do with piety or its rewards. What is more, as each Cyclops provides *themis* to his own *oikos*, there is no necessity for the custom of religious observance, so associated with social life in all of its expressions by the Greeks.

Athene is able to rescue Odysseus from the navel of the sea because of the absence of Poseidon among the Ethiopians at the world's extremes. The incident in the Cyclops' cave happened, of course, before Odysseus was on Ogygia when Poseidon was presumably at hand and Zeus would not interfere with his domain. The absence of Poseidon may be fruitfully compared with the first lines of *Iliad* 13, where the attention of Zeus is diverted so that the other gods may break their truce. What does Zeus see when his attention is diverted from Troy? The Hippomolgoi, drinkers of milk, and the Abioi, most righteous of men (*Iliad* 13.5–6). Who are the Hippomolgoi and why do they drink milk? Who are the Abioi and why are they the most righteous of men? Perhaps Homer's audience knew. However we look at the passage, it suggests the seamless character of Homer's world, the reader's sense of constantly falling into parallel universes, or being prevented from doing so by a mighty act of restraining the bursting paratactic narrative. It is this sense that is violated by those who would force the *Odyssey* into the Procrustean framework of a Jovian theodicy supposedly announced in *Odyssey* 1.32–43. In the invocation to the Muse, we are told that Odysseus knew many cities

of men and their minds (*Odyssey* 1.3). The diversity is not only respected, but celebrated. Each is allowed to be what it is in its own place.[28]

When we say that the Cyclopes are extreme, that a vocabulary initiated by the prefix *huper* is paradigmatically applicable to them, we should understand that their extremism has then many dimensions: geographical, cosmological, and moral. It is not that their extreme is to be measured by the norms of the earth's centre: it is rather that their morality is appropriate in its way to the extremes.

Beside the fact that the Cyclopes, and some, at least, of the Phaeacians share the epithet ὑπερφίαλος, there are also similarities between the Cyclopes and the Phaeacians. The Cyclopes practise no agriculture, but their crops spring of themselves from the soil (9.105–11). The description of the orchard of the Phaeacian palace is similar. While Homer does not explicitly say that there is no agriculture in practice, the description suggests that the fruits are born and ripen of themselves (7.114–31). The self-steering ships of the Phaeacians fit into the same pattern (8.555–62). Thus we have in the Cyclopes and the Phaeacians two very different responses to affluence, one an exaggerated if precarious civility, the other a crude barbarism. The description of the Elysian plain where life is easiest for men (4.563–68) portrays a similar paradise. In the case of the Phaeacians, the similarity to Elysium may emphasize their proximity to the gods which we have already discussed. Thus the self-perpetuating garden exists at the extremes of the subhuman and the divine. Both Phaeacians and Cyclopes resemble the Golden Age of Hesiod in their spontaneous agriculture,[29] but the Cyclopes resemble the Silver Age in their violence and lack of civility.[30] Alcinous explains that the Phaeacians, Cyclopes, and Giants are all close to the gods (7.205–06).[31] The Giants and Cyclopes are of great antiquity and the association of the Phaeacians with these creatures lends them an aura of anachronism.[32] Per-

28. Friedrich ("Thrinakia and Zeus' Ways") outlines the view that Zeus is presenting a programme of theodicy in which men commit sins by their own foolishness and are punished by the gods. But he remarks, "Although the moral conception of the gods represents a theological advance, it is not necessarily a blessing from an aesthetic point of view: under the burden of an ethical role, the colourful and multifaceted life of the Homeric gods inevitably atrophies" (381–82). To this effect he quotes (387n30) W. Burkert ("Das Lied von Ares und Aphrodite") 141: "Das bunte Götterleben der Ilias ... muss verkümmern unter der Last ethischer Aufgaben."

29. *WD* 117 ff. and Segal, 496.

30. *WD* 134–37 and Segal, 496–97.

31. Cf. Rose, 393; cf. Segal, 496.

32. Hesiod, *Theogony* 185–87 derives the Giants from Gaia and the severed genitals of Ouranos together with the Erinyes and the Meliae; the Cyclopes are the children of Gaia and Ouranos (*Theogony* 139); cf. Segal, 497. It is worth noting that in this line the Cyclopes are described as ὑπέρβιον ἦτορ ἔχοντας. The word ὑπέρβιος, again a word bearing the prefix *huper*, is used of the suitors in the *Odyssey* (1.368; 15.212; 16.315).

haps their geographical separation is complemented by a sense of their remoteness in time.[33]

The Cyclopes trace their descent to Poseidon. When Athene instructs Odysseus to approach Queen Arete first, she tells him that Arete is from the same line as Alcinous. She is the descendant of Nauisthous who was born of Poseidon and Periboea. Thus both the king and queen of the Phaeacians are, like the Cyclopes, descendants of Poseidon. Of Eurymedon, the father of Periboea, Athene tells us (7.59–60) that he once ruled over the insolent Giants (ὑπερθύμοισι Γιγάντεσσιν), but he destroyed his froward people and was himself slain. Here again Homer, in "insolent," uses an adjective with the prefix *huper*. We have seen how the Phaeacians, in moving from Hypereia, a place of excessive barbarism, came out the other side, as it were, into a condition of exaggerated politeness. Perhaps the same distance is traversed genealogically.[34]

Perhaps Odysseus, in narrating the story of the Cyclops, has a purpose that transcends mere entertainment of his guests. As Rose contends, Odysseus gains his final success in obtaining Phaeacian hospitality through reaching Arete with his storytelling.[35] If some, at least, of the Phaeacians are overweening and dangerous, the story of the Cyclops might serve as a cautionary paradigm of that quality. We may note that the Cyclops' rude question whether Odysseus and his crew are merchantmen, seafarers, or pirates (9.252–55) parallels Euryalus' insult that Odysseus seems more like a rude seafaring merchant than an athlete (8.159–64). Just as Phoinix's story of Meleagros in the ninth book of the *Iliad* (9.524–605) argues by example that Achilles should re-enter the battle, Odysseus' story of the Cyclops would demonstrate the dangers of Poseidonian inhospitality.

The similarities and differences between the Phaeacians and the Cyclopes prepare our minds for the return of Odysseus to Ithaca. Unlike the land of the Cyclopes and Scheria, Ithaca is not a fertile place (9.27). In the absence of Odysseus, hospitality is deranged as the suitors eat Penelope and Telemachos out of house and home. The return and vengeance of Odysseus accomplish the mean between the xenophobia of the Cyclopes and the vacillating, exaggerated, and potentially self-destructive hospitality of the Phaeacians.[36] Odysseus is magnificently prepared for the overweening suit-

33. See Segal (498) on the *Odyssey's* subsumption of the diachronic into the synchronic mythical dimension.

34. Cf. Segal, 496.

35. Both Nausicaa (6.310–15) and Athene (7.75–77) told Odysseus that Arete was the linchpin of his success. The Phaeacians are overwhelmed by Odysseus' story (11.333–34). Homer uses the powerful word κηληθμός to describe the effect. Arete orders the Phaeacians to reward Odysseus with generous gifts (11.336–41). See Rose, 404–05.

36. For resemblances between the Cyclopes and the Suitors, cf. Segal, 512, 514.

ors by his encounter with a place where overweening behaviour is most at home, the Cyclops' cave. The harshness of the land and the need for toil emphasize Odysseus' inveterate humanity and remove him from the life of agricultural ease enjoyed by the semi-divine Phaeacians and Cyclopes.

Milman Parry distinguishes between an ornamental epithet and a particularized epithet that admits of a special meaning in a certain context. The epithet πολύτροπος is particularized at *Odyssey* 10.330–31 where Odysseus, unlike his men, avoids porcine metamorphosis through the use of an herb given him by Hermes:

> ἦ σύ γ' Ὀδυσσεύς ἐσσι πολύτροπος, ὅν τε μοι αἰεὶ
> φάσεν ἐλεύσεσθαι χρυσόρραπις ἀργειφόντης.
>
> You are then resourceful Odysseus. Argeiphontes
> of the golden staff was forever telling me you would come
> to me.[37]

The isometric epithet διίφιλος is regularly used to fill the line between the feminine caesura and the bucolic diaeresis and would be expected here. The deliberate choice of πολύτροπος demonstrates that the poet thematizes the resourcefulness of Odysseus with reference to a particular incident so that the epithet is rendered functional. The epithet appears otherwise in Homer only in *Odyssey* 1.1 where it modifies ἄνδρα and cannot be ornamental.[38]

Apart from the place name Hypereia, the words we have studied that are initiated by the prefix *huper* are all epithets. Parry observes that the epithet ὑπερφίαλος (the isometric equivalent of the ornamental epithet ὑπέρθυμος) is a particularized epithet, both in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*. Noting that this epithet is used both of the Cyclopes and the Suitors, Parry observes, "in each case there is more than the inherent wickedness of the Suitors to explain the use of the word," so that its use is particularized.[39] Parry does not note the application of this epithet to the Phaeacians, but its use of them at 6.274 is clearly particularized.

Parry lays down the law: "After what we have learned of the ornamental meaning of the Homeric epithet, we must recognize the principle that an epithet used in a given noun-epithet formula cannot sometimes be ornamental, sometimes particularized: *it must always be either the one or the other* [Parry's emphasis]."[40] The distinction between "ornamental" and "particu-

37. Trans. Lattimore.

38. M. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford, 1971) 156–57.

39. Parry, 159.

40. Parry, 156.

larized" epithets is not sufficient to explain the use that is made of a semantic field of epithets that is invoked by the use of one of its members as read against its general and programmatic background. Parry judges an epithet to be particularized by its consistent occurrence in contexts that suggest a meaning that transcends ornamental employment. Yet the contextualization of the particularized epithet is specific to its several instances.

I am arguing that the description of some of the Phaeacians, the Cyclopes, and the Suitors by the epithet ὑπερφίαλος contextualizes the use of the epithet, not only with reference to the immediate circumstance of its use, but to the general thematic scheme in which these characters are depicted as extreme, or as lying at the extremes of the Odyssean universe characterized by a semantic field of words initiated by *huper*. Similarly the use of ὑπέρθυμος, of the Giants, although Parry regards that epithet as ornamental, when we measure it against that same semantic field, pulls them within the ambit of that same literary geography. In the use of ὑπερηνορεόντων at 6.5, describing the Cyclopes just after we are told that the Phaeacians had to move away from Hypereia to get away from them, we may be tempted to regard the epithet as particularized by its conjunction with the place name (*pace* Parry who would insist that it must then in all of its other instances be particularized). More importantly it is more broadly contextualized with respect to the semantic field of epithets to which it belongs.

We see then that an epithet may be particularized by its specific context. A particularized epithet may admit of negative definition: it is not an ornamental epithet, i.e., it does not exist *metri gratia*. Now the practice by which a particularized epithet gathers special meaning by its association with a larger semantic field that includes it will, in one sense, universalize it. Yet that universalization will have the effect of realizing possibilities that transcend any specific context and charges the negative definition with positive content, i.e., it has a meaning in depth beyond its surface significance. Of course, an epithet like πολύμητις, which, fixed and distinctive, is used only of Odysseus, will also have a universal significance in that it characterizes the wiliness of Odysseus throughout the epic. Yet if we have regard to the fact that the ornamental epithet πολύμητις, like the particularized epithet πολύτροπος, is initiated by the prefix *polu*, we may see that they both express the many-faceted nature of Odysseus, in contrast to other heroes characterized by more monodimensional epithets. In fact, common reference to a semantic field may put in question the distinction between the ornamental and the particularized epithet.[41]

41. Parry will not allow that the generic fixed epithet may be particularized (150). Against this view, R. Sacks argues that the generic epithet may be seen as functional if we examine it in all its contexts (*The Traditional Phrase in Homer: Two Studies in Form, Meaning, and Interpreta-*

In traditional philology, we seek to trace the etymology or semasiology of a particular word through various texts to determine its derivation and meaning. In this paper, I have mapped a semantic field of words initiated by the prefix *huper*. The assumption is that an author may use words, not only individually, but with reference to a wider semantic field. In observing the techniques of phenomenology, close observation of the use of such semantic fields can contribute to our understanding of the poet's use of language. We come to see something of his ideolect. In oral poetry, we seek unity in consistency of linguistic and thematic usage. We can see consistency in the material presented in this paper. However, the kind of consistency we observe here manifests the practice of literate rather than of oral poetry. The careful use of anaphora and reprise suggest an overarching plan that would not be open to the oral poet. The fact that consistent reference to a common semantic field renders nugatory the distinction between ornamental and particularized epithet also suggests that we are in the presence of literate composition.

Odysseus in the *Iliad* is ever the centrist, the mediator. Yet in the *teichoskopia* of the *Iliad* Helen describes his odd appearance in such a way that we can only think that Ithaca is a most odd place of origin for a Homeric hero (3.191–202). Perhaps it is Odysseus' very origin that allows him to manifest qualities of perspective and persuasion not to be encountered among other Homeric heroes. When Odysseus' homeland is described as πανυπερτάτη πρὸς ζόφον Homer is telling us that Odysseus the centrist comes himself from the edges of the Homeric world. The wrath of Poseidon exacts a most fitting penalty upon Odysseus: the man of the centre is driven from extreme to extremes.

tion [Leiden, 1987]). For example, the epithet φαίδιμος ("shining") is generic, as it applies to Hektor, Aias, son (υἱός), Achilles, and limbs (γυῖα). A close study of all the contexts in which the epithet is employed in the *Iliad* shows that it is always associated with loss. Its use of Hektor always portrays him in a losing situation. Thus the epithet gathers specificity from its habitual contextual employment. (By contrast, the same epithet in the *Odyssey* is always ornamental as its association with loss does not belong to the programme of its use in that epic.) (Sacks, 105–51).

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