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## DIVIDING AND MULTIPLYING THE SELF IN THE *ODYSSEY*

ZINA GIANNOPOULOU

*Abstract.* In *Odyssey* 20.1-53 we encounter two deliberation scenes and two similes, Odysseus' barking heart and Odysseus as a sizzling paunch. This paper has two objectives. First, it offers a new reading of the similes that probes their ramifications for their immediate and broader context: the barking heart in tandem with the first deliberation "divides" Odysseus and foreshadows the killing of the maids, while the sizzling paunch together with the second deliberation and Athena's intervention "multiplies" Odysseus and anticipates the suitors' doom. Second, it explains the ordering of the two deliberations in a continuous narrative by locating in the first deliberation scene the temporal and thematic material of both scenes, as well as the main narrative stages of *Odyssey* 13-22.

### INTRODUCTION

Scenes of deliberation occur frequently in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and foreground the notion of the self in the poems. The presence in Homer of a self as an integrated whole capable of personal decisions has been the subject of a long-standing debate. Famously, Bruno Snell views the Homeric individual as a collection of more or less independent psychic forces, such as *κραδίη* or *θυμός*, rather than as an "I" conscious of making

decisions.<sup>1</sup> He claims that Homeric choices are made *for* the agent rather than *by* him: sometimes the gods propel one to action, at other times internal forces make one act, but at no time does the agent choose a course of action in clear awareness of what he is doing. Somewhat similarly, Arthur Adkins thinks that in Homer decisions result from the weighing of considerations with no sense of the person as a unitary “I” and a locus of will.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Hermann Fränkel argues that the Homeric man is not complex but simple and that his actions are those of the whole man even if the dividing line between self and external world is less clear than it is for us.<sup>3</sup> Richard Gaskin, drawing on cognitivism and contemporary theories of action, associates personal agency not with self-awareness, but with the provision of reasons for action.<sup>4</sup> Most recently, Christopher Gill has argued for a “functionalist” understanding of the Homeric self by reference to the person’s beliefs and desires with no requirement that he be conscious of them.<sup>5</sup> Selfhood is thus divorced from the Cartesian belief in consciousness and will.

The preoccupation with the Homeric self has sometimes informed the study of deliberation scenes, where the agent reflects on the mode(s) of action available to him.<sup>6</sup> In his classic *Überlegung und Entscheidung*, Christian Voigt examines the type-scene of pondering and decision and identifies two patterns of inquiry.<sup>7</sup> One of them is the soliloquy, usually introduced by the stock line, ὀχθήσας δ’ ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὄν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν, in which the hero addresses his θυμός, considers two alternatives, and usually chooses the second by uttering the stock line, ἀλλὰ τί ἤ

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<sup>1</sup> Snell 1928; 1930; 1953. Cf. Dodds 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Adkins 1970, 47, 90, 126, 196-197, 271.

<sup>3</sup> Fränkel 1975, 79. For the views of Snell, Adkins, and Fränkel and their relation to philosophical notions of the self (Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics), see Sharples 1983.

<sup>4</sup> Gaskin 1990. See also Williams 1993, 35-42.

<sup>5</sup> Gill 1996, 41-93.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Odyssey*, fourteen instances of μερμηρίζειν apply to Odysseus and four to Penelope.

<sup>7</sup> Voigt 1972. See also Arend 1933.

μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός.<sup>8</sup> The other pattern features the verb μερμηρίζειν (“to deliberate”) and is followed either by the disjunctive ἢ ... ἢ (“either ... or”), when the agent considers two alternative courses of action, or by the relative adverb ὅπως (“how to”), when he ponders how to achieve a chosen goal. In many instances of the μερμηρίζειν ἢ ... ἢ sub-pattern, Odysseus must choose between unchecked emotional expression and restraint or self-concealment (e.g., in Book 10, after his men have opened the bag of winds, he decides to endure rather than fall overboard). An interesting feature of the μερμηρίζειν pattern is that its most common Iliadic configurations do not occur wholesale in the *Odyssey*.<sup>9</sup> For example, in the *Iliad* gods interfere in a hero’s dilemma (μερμηρίζειν ἢ ... ἢ) but not in deliberations of the μερμηρίζειν ὅπως sub-pattern, whereas in the *Odyssey*, gods never intervene in decisions of the μερμηρίζειν pattern (with one putative exception, to be discussed in this paper). Here we find seven instances of deliberation of the μερμηρίζειν pattern — moments of introspection and debate, hesitation and doubt — which are concluded autonomously, free of divine intervention.<sup>10</sup> When Odysseus meets Nausicaa and debates whether he should fling his arms around her knees or stand back and talk to her (6.141-147) or when he faces Irus and ponders whether to kill him or beat him up (18.90-94), *he* chooses what seems advantageous to himself.

This paper aims to offer a new reading of Odysseus’ two deliberation scenes and use of similes in *Odyssey* 20.1-53. This is the lengthiest and most complex deliberation scene or rather cluster of scenes in Homer in which both μερμηρίζειν sub-patterns occur in rapid succession: Odysseus’ evil thoughts about the suitors (5-6) are momentarily interrupted by his debate whether to kill the maids (6-24) at whose conclusion they fuel the deliberation about how to kill the suitors (25-53). The two de-

<sup>8</sup> Instances of the soliloquy in the *Odyssey* include 5.354, 5.406, 5.464, and 6.118. For some of the differences in the formal appearance of the soliloquy between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see Russo 1968, 295 n. 10.

<sup>9</sup> See Russo 1968, 289-290.

<sup>10</sup> See 6.141, 10.50, 10.151, 17.235, 18.90, 22.333, and 24.235. For a discussion of more deviations of the *Odyssey* from the *Iliad*’s use of the μερμηρίζειν pattern, see Russo 1968, 290-291.

liberations revolve around the hero's mental preparation for the climactic event of his *nostos*, the punishment of the maids and the suitors on the following day. A restless night awaits Odysseus and Penelope after their meeting in Book 19. For Odysseus, this is a time of intense reflection and planning, careful weighing of possibilities and the summoning of courage.<sup>11</sup> In sections two and three below, I offer a symbolic reading of the similes.<sup>12</sup> I am interested in their "rhetorical-thematic"<sup>13</sup> resonances, the ways in which they relate to their immediate and broader context. Two interpretative issues inform my approach. First, Odysseus' address to his "barking heart" in the first deliberation involves more "personalizing" of the part addressed than we find elsewhere in Homer.<sup>14</sup> The heart is presented as amenable to "rebuke" (ἠνίπαπε, 17) and as an entity that "was thrust down" (καθαπτόμενος, 22), "obeyed" (ἐν πείσῃ, 23), and "remained, enduring stubbornly" (μένε τετληῦια νωλεμέως, 23-24).<sup>15</sup> In addition, although Homeric monologues are typically seen as dialogues between the speaker and his heart or spirit, the dialogic nature of Odysseus' address to his heart is foregrounded by his use of second-person verbal forms. How can we explain this robust hypostasizing of the heart and what is its contextual and broader significance? The second interpretative issue is the putative exception I mentioned above, that Odysseus' second deliberation over how to kill the

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<sup>11</sup> The quick succession of the two similes has been seen as an example of the frequent "clustering" of similes at crucial moments. See Rutherford 1992, 204.

<sup>12</sup> Scholars have offered symbolic readings of the *apologoi* according to which Odysseus' adventures are seen as rites of initiation and passage until he is spiritually ready to come home, or as enactments of death and rebirth, or as demonstrations of poetry in terms of memory, order, and enchantment. See, e.g., Segal 1962; 1967; 1983; and Austin 1975, 131-153. For the allegorical interpretations of Homer in antiquity, see Buffière 1956, 33-78.

<sup>13</sup> The characterization comes from Buxton 2004, 141. For this kind of approach to similes, see Coffey 1957; Porter 1972; Moulton 1977; and Friedrich 1981.

<sup>14</sup> Gill 1996, 184.

<sup>15</sup> The phrase "he reproved" (ἠνίπαπε) is only here used of a psychological part instead of a person in Homer, which *prima facie* supports the association of the heart with the maids.

suitors ends “abnormally,” i.e., not by his own decision, but through Athena’s intervention. My concern here is not with the impact of a god’s involvement in a debate on the individual’s autonomy or responsibility for the action.<sup>16</sup> Rather, I wish to explore whether the goddess’ appearance can be read in a way that renders Odysseus’ decision “normal,” and if so, what the advantages of this reading might be for a proper understanding of this deliberation scene and the killing of the suitors. Having studied the two scenes and their similes I turn, in section four, to issues of narrative structure and argue that the content of Odysseus’ first deliberation explains the ordering of the two deliberation scenes and illuminates the broad narrative structure of Books 13-22.

#### THE BARKING HEART

In the first deliberation scene (6-24), Odysseus lies awake as beggar in the portal of his own μέγαρον planning the suitors’ death when he hears some of the maids laugh on their way to join their lovers.<sup>17</sup> In Book 19, Odysseus set out to “provoke” Penelope and the maids (ἐρεθίζω, 45) by way of establishing their loyalty, and addressed Penelope as “noble wife of Laertes’ son, Odysseus” (165) only after she had expressed her abiding loyalty to her husband and divulged her three-year scheme with the suitors. In a somewhat similar vein, Book 20 opens with the need to test the serving women by probing their willingness to sleep with their master’s enemies. Odysseus’ θυμός is inflamed by their traitorousness, and he debates whether to kill them outright or grant them a last rendezvous. At this point, a new character — an organ — intervenes vocally: “his heart was growling within him” (κραδίη δέ οἱ ἔνδον ὑλάκτει, 13).<sup>18</sup> This inward barking is compared to that of a female dog standing protectively over her pups and barking at a stranger, eager to fight (13-16). Odysseus addresses his κραδίη, urges

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<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Dodds 1951; Lesky 1961; and Wüst 1958.

<sup>17</sup> This is the most elaborate instance of the “sleeplessness” motif in the *Odyssey*. See de Jong 2001, 484. For other instances of it, see 1.443-444, 15.4-8, 19.515-534. For the “lonely vigil” motif, see Leeman 1985, 213-230.

<sup>18</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the Greek come from Lattimore 1965 and Fagles 1996.

it to endure, and reminds it of the indignities it suffered in the Cyclops' cave, which were worse than the present trials, until μήτις got it out of the cave. The heart — ἦτορ is now used synonymously with κραδίη — obeys the speaker and is calmed.

Odysseus' psychic division has been interpreted in various ways. Gilbert Rose connects the simile with other dog-references in the *Odyssey* and takes the angry bitch to be "an image for Odysseus in his capacity as avenger."<sup>19</sup> He contrasts the hero's attitude as a helpless observer of the Cyclops' shamelessness with the aggression of a female dog eager to defend her pups, a symbol of Odysseus' dissipated property.<sup>20</sup> This interpretation faces two challenges. First, Odysseus is the agent of revenge in his entirety, not just with respect to his heart, as shown by the fact that he continues to plot the suitors' doom after he has subdued his heart. Yet the heart is cast as the hero's temporary enemy: the simile and the first deliberation stage a duel between the heart, which advocates immediate mayhem, and Odysseus who prefers postponing the revenge. The assimilation of Odysseus-the-avenger with the avenging heart ignores their conflicting motivations and disregards the fact that Odysseus' decision is "a spiritual process ... Odysseus is not the 'patient' man but the one who can wait."<sup>21</sup> Take away the rivalry between the angry heart and the prudent Odysseus, and the latter's ability to endure, evident in the repetition of the root τλα- (τέτλαθι, ἔτλης, ἐτόλμας, τετληῖα), is reduced to patience. Second, the heart is cast as a female dog (κύων ... βεβῶσα, 14-15) about to attack an unknown man (ἄνδρ' ἀγνοίσασ', 15). The opponents are representatives of different

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<sup>19</sup> Rose 1979, 227.

<sup>20</sup> Rose 1979, 227-228. The bitch's brood is characterized as "weak" (ἀμαλήσι, 14), a rare word that occurs elsewhere in Homer only at *Iliad* 22.310 (of a lamb) and conveys the puppies' helplessness. de Jong (1994, 34) claims that the reason for Odysseus' aggression is that "he feels he must protect his house against the threat posed by the suitors and the disloyal maids." Elsewhere, she sees the "strange man" of the simile as a representation only of the suitors (de Jong 2001, 486). Argos in *Odyssey* 17 is another reference to a dog that keeps the dog imagery prominent as a theme between books.

<sup>21</sup> Arend 1933, 113.

species and different genders. These differences complement a third one, the gender difference between Odysseus and the maids who are referred to as “women” (γυναῖκες, 6) rather than “housemaids” (δμωαί). These asymmetries between the heart and its owner must play a role in the interpretation of the simile and the first deliberation scene.<sup>22</sup>

Stephen Halliwell explores the psychological implications of the simile. He sees the καρδίη as “the drive of a strong (here) animal character” and notes its cognitive aspect as expressed in the belief formed in the Cyclops’ cave “that you would die” (21).<sup>23</sup> Odysseus’ self-address thus manifests “the way in which the mental experience of the character *embraces* and holds together a complexity of drives and motivations”;<sup>24</sup> memory unifies a self that is torn between emotion and rationality. Finally, Christopher Gill draws on Daniel Dennett’s functionalist definition of self-reflexiveness as “acting upon oneself just as one would act upon another person”<sup>25</sup> and suggests that Odysseus “schools” himself in ways reminiscent of Homeric interpersonal discourse by suppressing indignation in order to achieve a desirable longer-term goal. He argues that the hero’s address to his heart exhibits a combination of self-distancing and self-identification: that Odysseus addresses the heart at all

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<sup>22</sup> Rose (1979, 228) sidesteps this difficulty by claiming that his interpretation of the simile establishes “correspondences, but not overly literal ones, for all its details”: e.g., the bitch fails to recognize the unknown man, whereas Odysseus recognizes the maids as the threat that they are. Rutherford (1992, 205) associates Odysseus with the “loyal and protective” bitch but describes the current application of the simile as “unusual: Odysseus is not wanting to protect the maids, but feels angry and possessive towards them: they correspond more to the unknown man at whom the bitch snarls.” If possible, we should avoid reversing the antagonists’ gender.

<sup>23</sup> Halliwell 1990, 40. Snell (1964, 53) sees the barking heart as the representation of “the irrational, the dangerous, the uncanny elements of the human action.” Claus (1981, 42) describes the καρδίη as “the anatomical heart” and notes that “almost all instances of [it] can be categorized as either ‘courage’ or ‘courage’ ambiguous with ‘wrath’.”

<sup>24</sup> Halliwell 1990, 41.

<sup>25</sup> Dennett 1976, 193.



demarcates it as something that is in some sense “other,” and this “otherness” informs the presentation of the heart in animalistic terms as a dog “barking” to protect her litter.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the heart is spoken to in a style appropriate to a person and treated as a partial substitute for Odysseus that embodies the capacity for being “much-enduring” and sharing his life history.<sup>27</sup>

In the following pages, I offer a symbolic reading of the simile that draws inspiration mainly from Gill in treating the heart like a person with whom Odysseus is identified and from whom he is also distanced.<sup>28</sup> The simile presents a self that is divided between an active/male/assertive part (Odysseus) and a passive/female/subordinate part (καρδίη) that is eventually unified (αὐτός, 24) through physical and psychological force: the angry heart growls, Odysseus strikes his chest, admonishes his heart, and subjects it to his will. This confrontation, as well as its victorious outcome, enacts, in the privacy of Odysseus’ mind, the maids’ imminent execution by their master, although in its display of both force and guile it also foreshadows the killing of the suitors, which involves guile — at the conclusion of the bow contest, Odysseus says that he intends to “hit another target that no one has hit before” (22.5-7) — and open force (he fights a battle).<sup>29</sup> The barking heart represents the treacherous maidservants who both belong to Odysseus’ estate and thus constitute part of him-qua-master-of-

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<sup>26</sup> In *Phaedo* (94d5-6) Plato registers the heart’s “difference” from Odysseus: in describing the relationship between an inharmonious soul and its parts, Socrates describes the soul as “conversing with desires and passions and fears as if it were one thing talking to a different one.” See also *Rep.* 3.390d1-5. Cf. Montiglio 2000, 287: “For the kind of endurance that results in the silencing of passions implies the recognition of a *separate matter* over which the mind must prevail” (emphasis added).

<sup>27</sup> Gill 1996. Gill’s notions of self-identification and self-distancing capture the fundamental duality created by the simile: although the part (heart) is part of a whole (Odysseus), it acts antagonistically to the whole. For a detailed analysis of terms of self as applied to Zeus in Homer and the Homeric Hymns, see Sullivan 1994.

<sup>28</sup> To the extent that Odysseus’ psychic integrity informs my reading, I have also drawn upon Halliwell’s (1990) interpretation.

<sup>29</sup> Athena offers the same two alternatives to Telemachus at 1.295-296. Cf. 11.120.

the-*oikos* (self-identification) and are individuals other than Odysseus who must be subordinated by him (self-distancing). This reading externalizes and projects onto the outer world (maids) a rift occurring in Odysseus' psyche between unchecked emotion and self-control. Odysseus addresses his heart — otherwise the reference to its past behavior would make little sense and its ability to endure like *polutlas* Odysseus even less — but he treats it as a stand-in for the maids, the impudent foe whose laughter and treacherousness he has just witnessed. This movement toward and away from the self is especially apt at this point in the narrative, the night before the slaughter of the suitors and the maids: the master finally occupies his house and should be carefree, as Athena light-heartedly tells him (34-35), but he is alien to it populated as it is by intruders (suitors) and disloyal servants (maids). His persistence in the role of stranger, as conveyed by his sleeping “at the periphery of the house,”<sup>30</sup> in the vestibule (1), and in the role of beggar, as suggested by his making his own bed (2), shows his liminal position in his own house. The maids' laughter and dalliances with the suitors challenge Odysseus' authority, and he responds to them by imaginatively making the bitchy heart/maids surrender to his will.<sup>31</sup>

The symbolic identification of the barking heart with the maids can be established on at least two grounds. First, Odysseus' self-address is a case of what Hayden Pelliccia calls “a mute-addressee speech”: although the division between Odysseus and his heart raises the possibility of dialogue between two agents of psychological action, the heart never engages in a discussion with the hero but makes inarticulate sounds — we have here the only instance in Homer of either *ύλακτέω* or *ύλάω* (“to bark”) used metaphorically.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Odysseus decided to ignore the heart's urgings before speaking to it: he “struck himself on the chest and spoke to his heart and scolded it” (*στηθος δέ πλῆξας κραδίην ἠνίπαπε μύθῳ*, 17)

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<sup>30</sup> Murnaghan 1987, 115. Telemachus also sleeps in the *prodomos* of Menelaus' house (15.5).

<sup>31</sup> By contrast, in 14.29-34, Odysseus, his *μητις* notwithstanding, fails to placate the enraged dogs.

<sup>32</sup> Pelliccia 1995, 221.

prior to addressing it, and the heart stood “in obedience” (ἐν πείσει, 23) and “stayed and endured without complaint” (μένε τετληῖα νωλεμέως, 23-24). His soliloquy is “uniquely neither deliberative nor reflective, but exhortative:”<sup>33</sup> it is the means by which the heart is urged to exhibit a predetermined stance, obedience. Odysseus’ univocal address to his heart can be explained in a number of ways. For one, it reverses the suitors’ and Melanthius’ unilateral offenses against Odysseus: the beggar’s earlier silent endurance (e.g., his decision to endure silently the goatherd’s abuse at 17.238) is now replaced by the unyielding vocal admonition to his heart to endure silently; the oppressed becomes the oppressor. Also, the heart’s superfluous role in his deliberation reflects the unimportance of the maids’ voice and their largely inessential role in the household; these women are slaves and easily replaceable. Odysseus’ self-address thus serves more as an opportunity for the display of rational reflection and restraint than as a genuine assessment of equipollent alternatives.<sup>34</sup> His admonition silences the heart’s barking, which is to say that the voice of male reason eclipses the laughter (γέλω, 8) of the female slaves.<sup>35</sup> The reference to the role of μήτις in the Cyclops’ cave (20) is illuminating here: in Book 9 the poet puns on the resemblance between the pseudonym *Outis* (“Nobody,” “No-man”) and μήτις (“plan,” “clever counsel”). This pun finds an application in the symmetry between μήτις, which rescues the heart from the Cyclops’ feast, and *Outis*/the-beggar-of-Ithaca who saves his household from the disloyal serving women by silencing the bitchy heart/maids. From this point of view, the “unknown man” faced by the bitch/maids is Odysseus in his disguise as the nonentity-beggar.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the association of the maids with the bitch shows how their shameless and shaming laughter is reduced to an innocuous barking

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<sup>33</sup> de Jong 2001, 484.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. de Jong 1994, 34: “Barking inwardly is almost a paradox, since barking normally involves quite a bit of noise. The verb symbolizes Odysseus’ aggression, his eagerness to act.”

<sup>35</sup> For the contrast between the “emotional” and the “intellectual” parts in Homeric psychology, see Claus 1981, 15-47, esp. 45-47.

<sup>36</sup> de Jong (2001, 486) identifies the “unknown man” with the suitors, and the barking dog with Odysseus. But in what sense are the suitors “unknown” to Odysseus?

that ends in silence and passivity; the barking dog is prevented from biting.

Second, “dog” (κύων) is a common term of invective and is used of the maids four times in the *Odyssey*, all of which occur within a Book and a half prior to the canine simile.<sup>37</sup> Melanthe mocks her master after his fight with Irus whereupon Odysseus calls her a “bitch” (κύων, 18.338) and threatens to report her behavior to Telemachus; Penelope admonishes Melanthe for poking fun at Odysseus and calls her “brazen bitch” (κύων ἄδεός, 19.91); twice more she refers to the maids collectively as “she-dogs,” the first time when she informs the stranger of their betraying the loom trick to the suitors (κύνες, 19.154),<sup>38</sup> and then again when she bemoans their taunting the stranger (κύνες, 19.372). In these cases, Penelope attempts to regain power by belittling the maids who act as the enemies of the household. The difference in species reflects the difference in social status between master and slave. In the *Odyssey*, the near-synonym κυνώπις (“dogface”) is not used specifically of the maids but is attributed to three instances of the unfaithful wife: Helen (4.145), Clytemnestra (11.424), and Aphrodite in Demodocus’ song (8.319). By consorting with the suitors, the maids betray their master and aspire to a higher station in life by sleeping with Penelope’s suitors; in effect, they create an illicit *oikos* within Odysseus’ *oikos* of which they must be almost as protective as the she-dog is of her brood.<sup>39</sup> The maids would not welcome their master’s return, as it would certainly entail their punishment and the restoration of the true *oikos*. Odysseus’ strong feelings about their infidelity come to the fore when he upbraids the suitors by mentioning first their dalliances with the maids and then their pursuit of Penelope (22.37-38). The seriousness of the maids’ offence makes Telemachus mete out to them the disgraceful punishment of hanging

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Rose 1979, 228-229.

<sup>38</sup> It is generally agreed by Homeric commentators that Melanthe is the most likely candidate for the maid who tells the suitors the stratagem of the shroud. See von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1884, 50; Winkler 1990, 149; Vlahos 2011, 38.

<sup>39</sup> Graver (1995, 48) comments on Odysseus’ outrage at the maids’ transfer of their loyalty to the suitors which, as Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck point out (1992), “amounts to a form of theft from the master of the house.”

(22.461-473), instead of death by the sword as prescribed by Odysseus. Telemachus hangs the women “so that they might die most pitiably” (ὄπως οἴκτιστα θάνοιεν, 22.472) and characterizes hanging as “unclean” (μῆ ... καθαροῦ θανάτω, 22.462). Their unclean death is thus fitting punishment for their unclean life.<sup>40</sup> If we view the bitch as a stand-in for the maids, we can see that the simile and the first deliberation scene prefigure the maids’ doom: Odysseus silences the barking she-dog/maids before Telemachus cuts the serving women’s vocal chords.

#### THE SIZZLING PAUNCH

In the second deliberation scene (24-53), Odysseus begins rolling in bed from side to side (ἀτὰρ αὐτὸς ἐλίσσετο ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα, 24), a movement that the poet conveys with a simile: just as a man cooking a paunch on a big fire rolls it from side to side, eager to get it done quickly, so Odysseus rolls from side to side, anxiously pondering how he might kill the suitors, given that he is one against many (25-30).<sup>41</sup> Suddenly, Athena intervenes in the guise of a woman and asks what could possibly be bothering him, now that he is in his own house with a faithful wife and an excellent son (30-35). Odysseus tells her his worries, and Athena promises to help him through “cunning counsels” (μῆδεα, 24). She reminds him of her past support (45-48), predicts the end of his tribulations (48-51), sheds sleep onto him, and departs for Olympus (52-55).<sup>42</sup>

As we saw earlier, this instance of the μερομηρίζειν-ὄπως sub-pattern has been considered abnormal in that Odysseus’ deliberation concludes not autonomously, but through Athena’s interference. Joseph Russo, echoing Voigt, has attributed the scene’s deviation from the norm to Homer’s wish to convey through it that “Odysseus’ famous self-mastery is at last wearing thin. This scene of dilemma and decision ... must rise above the ‘general’ or ‘typical’ to serve Homer’s special artistic needs” by creating

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<sup>40</sup> Loraux (1987, 14) calls death by the sword “pure,” as opposed to death by hanging.

<sup>41</sup> For a hero’s tossing and turning, cf. Achilles in *Il.* 24.5-11. For the view that Odysseus’ insomnia reflects impatience and not a loss of confidence, see Focke 1943, 339; for a response, see Besslich 1966, 17 and Belzner 1912, 181-182.

<sup>42</sup> Morris (1983) reads Athena’s intervention as a “dream scene,” even though Odysseus is awake.

the impression that the hero's "private mental activity has risen to an unprecedented intensity."<sup>43</sup> Although Odysseus' anxiety over the impending crisis with the suitors has escalated, we should prefer an interpretation of the scene that makes it conform to the norm without mitigating the hero's psychic intensity.

Let us first look at the simile in whose context the deliberation occurs. Just as a man tosses back and forth his sizzling paunch (γαστήρ), filled with blood and fat, and the paunch (or the man) is eager for it to be grilled quickly, so Odysseus twists and turns back and forth as he ponders what to do (25-28). On the most straightforward reading, suggested by the appearance of the "man" in the nominative (άνήρ), the cook represents Odysseus, and the paunch his restless body, a division that recalls the earlier split between the hero and his bitchy heart.<sup>44</sup> In both similes, a human (Odysseus, a man) works on an animalistic entity (bitchy heart) and an animal product (paunch) and attempts to prevail over it either by restraining it (heart) or by cooking and, one assumes, eating its inside (paunch).<sup>45</sup> Yet there are two major differences between them: first, the canine simile is static and noisy, while the paunch simile involves physical and mental agitation apparently conducted in silence; second, whereas in the canine simile Odysseus and his heart emerge as autonomous agents with conflicting desires, the paunch simile stresses Odysseus' unity: the hero is no longer "in bits" but is a whole person (αὐτός), and his physical restlessness is conveyed by the middle verb ἐλίσσετο, which makes Odysseus the subject and the object of the activity of "twisting and turning" and is mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the simile (24, 28). Although Odysseus refers to his θυμός as the organ that ponders how to kill the suitors (θυμὸς ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμηρίζει, 38), three lines later he is the one pondering (ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμηρίζω, 41; cf.

<sup>43</sup> Russo 1968, 293-294.

<sup>44</sup> As the simile progresses, Odysseus is also compared to the paunch, "eager to be grilled quickly" (27). Rutherford (1992, 206-207) shrewdly notes that the ambiguity "matches the uncertain position of Odysseus in the narrative at this point: is he agent or victim, avenger or helpless onlooker?"

<sup>45</sup> Fränkel (1921, 58) thinks that the tossing of Odysseus suggests his longing for his plans to "be cooked very quickly."

μερμηρίζων, 28).<sup>46</sup> His psychic unity is also intimated by his anxiety, repeated twice, over the way in which he, being alone (μουῖνος, 30, 40), will fight the many suitors. Likewise, the cook is a unified agent, the subject of a verb of action (αἰόλλη, 27) and of desire (λιλαίεται, 27).<sup>47</sup>

The canine simile allows Odysseus to use the recollection of a past event as a vehicle for the communication of a current experience. By describing his suffering at the Cyclops' cave as more "doglike" than overhearing the maids' laughter, he suggests that the two episodes differ only in the degree of their shamelessness: since the present incident is less shameless than the past one, Odysseus should find it easier to endure it, and so he does.<sup>48</sup> The paunch simile, however, unfolds entirely in the present and foregrounds Odysseus' mobility by comparing his restless body (and the spirit animating it) to a slowly grilled haggis (and the fat and blood within). This time, however, the narrator suspends the end-result of the compared activities: we never learn whether the cook grills the paunch to his satisfaction or whether Odysseus can allay his anxieties by himself. The canine simile thus enacts Odysseus' *successful* struggle with his heart, whereas the paunch simile enacts his *inconclusive* struggle with himself.

This rarely observed feature of the paunch simile is an important aspect of the hero's second deliberation because it mitigates his seemingly limitless power and necessitates the intervention of a higher being. The first deliberation is, quite appropriately, a self-address because it celebrates

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<sup>46</sup> Pelliccia (1995, 207) calls Odysseus' θυμός here his "second (and misbehaving) self" because it disagrees with Athena's injunction to shed all worries, whereas Odysseus agrees with what the goddess says (37). Yet *both* Odysseus *and* his θυμός have the same worry, which is expressed verbatim twice, the first time as issuing from Odysseus (29-30), and the second time as issuing from his θυμός (39-40). This repetition suggests that Odysseus is to be identified with his θυμός, the result of his psychological unity.

<sup>47</sup> The subject of λιλαίεται can also be the paunch, another unified (and personified) agent: Odysseus is like a paunch filled with delectable "food," the μήδεα about the suitors' death.

<sup>48</sup> That the maids/bitches make Odysseus suffer a less "doglike" or offensive experience than the Cyclops further diminishes their power.

Odysseus, his power to speak and thereby silence his opponent. By contrast, the second deliberation takes the form of a dialogic exchange between an anxious Odysseus and a solicitous Athena. A dialogue requires the presence of another and limits one's self-sufficiency and independence. Since, however, this "other" is Odysseus' immortal double, the hero's conversation serves more like a dialogue with an extension of himself — a discussion conducted out loud where speaker and addressee are ontologically distinct but mentally akin to one another — than an interpersonal exchange between two completely different beings.<sup>49</sup> As in other "move-into-contact" scenes (e.g., Athena's appearance to Achilles in *Iliad* 1 and to Diomedes in *Iliad* 10), the divine epiphany does not have "the effect of breaking the character's isolation ... it simply continues the inner deliberation in a different mode."<sup>50</sup> In *Odyssey* 20.30-53, this "mode" is a dialogue between a person and a perfect version of himself, an exchange between Odysseus and his divine alter ego. From this point of view, the second deliberation observes the μερμηρίζειν-ὄπως sub-pattern because it is not Athena in her divine otherness that tells how Odysseus will prevail over the suitors, but Odysseus' divine double. This "doubling" occurs, naturally, after the hero has assembled his psychic "parts" (θυμός, καρδίη, ἦτορ) into a whole (αὐτός); with his heart overpowered by prudence, Odysseus is all of a piece and can talk to Athena.<sup>51</sup>

Odysseus' identification with Athena receives support from the text. When the goddess visits him, she teases him about not being like others, quick to trust a weaker mortal "who is far less cunning than her" (οὐ τόσα μήδεα οἶδεν, 46). The reference to her many μήδεα picks up on Odysseus' standard epithet πολύμητις, used ten lines earlier

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<sup>49</sup> Dimock (1989, 265) makes a similar point: "Athena speaks the words which reason might speak in a case of this kind, convincing words, and we can believe that they would produce the same result without Athena's presence ... Athena serves to express a natural power and Odysseus's ability to command it, rather than to suggest divine interference with the natural order of events."

<sup>50</sup> Both the label of the scene and the quote come from Pelliccia 1995, 221.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Segal 1994, 39: "[Athena] serves as an objective correlative of [Odysseus'] inner wholeness, his ability to act with rational comprehension of and full orientation in the human world."



(πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς, 36), and signals the mental affinity between the hero and his patron goddess.<sup>52</sup> Odysseus' and Athena's cunning also explains their role in the scene: Odysseus cannot sleep because of his "many counsels," and Athena asks to be trusted because she knows more "counsels" than a mere mortal. Her appearance as a mortal woman does more than enable her to banter with Odysseus;<sup>53</sup> it makes her seem his equal from an ontological standpoint, which stresses their affinity. Her divine status, however, which Odysseus registers right away (37), puts things into perspective and establishes a hierarchy of wits according to which Athena is superior to Odysseus in cunning, just as Odysseus is superior to his heart in prudence; the weaker party submits to the stronger one.

The kinship between Odysseus and Athena is evident in other ways. Just as Odysseus reminded his *κραδίη* of its feat in the Cyclops' cave, so Athena reminds Odysseus of her unfailing support of him: "But I am a goddess, look, the very one who guards you in all your trials to the last" (47-48). In both cases, the stronger party uses recollection of a past success to elicit faith from the weaker party in the present endeavour. It might be objected that the analogy between Athena and Odysseus downplays the goddess' blameless cognition: can the hero foretell the future like his divine protector? Odysseus certainly lacks divine omniscience but it is noteworthy that in reproaching his heart he registers *its* false belief that it would die (σε ... ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι, 20-21). Although this remark need not mean that at the time he had the foresight that his heart lacked, his correction of the heart's erroneous belief implies his own cognitive superiority to it, probably indicative of self-assurance, borne of his past feats, that could be relied upon to save him again. Second, as observed earlier, Odysseus subdues his rebellious

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<sup>52</sup> The use of the dual *vōi* (50) also suggests the strong bond between goddess and mortal protégé. Cf. Besslich 1966, 15-18.

<sup>53</sup> At other times, Athena takes the appearance of a specific human (e.g., 2.268, 6.22-23) or that of an anonymous young man (13.222). Later in Book 13, she takes the form of a beautiful woman (288-289) and reveals herself to him as his helping goddess (299-302). On divine disguises, see Clay 1974.

heart, and Athena soothes Odysseus. In both cases, the speaker's words overcome the addressee's resistance, and a faintly militaristic language conveys the opponent's surrender: the heart yields to Odysseus' "assailing" (καθαπτόμενος, 22) and "obeys" him (ἐν πείσῃ, 22), while Athena urges Odysseus to let sleep "seize" him (ἀλλ' ἐλέτω σε καὶ ὕπνος, 52).<sup>54</sup> Both the heart and Odysseus appear in the accusative (φίλον ἦτορ, σε) because they are the patients of others' actions.<sup>55</sup>

Together the two similes yield the contours of Odysseus' course throughout the epic: the canine simile has an analeptic function because it represents the hero as divided into two parts, a bifurcation that evokes his loss of power — in men and material possessions, as well as the diminution of his estate in Ithaca — up to this point in the *Odyssey*. The paunch-simile, by contrast, is followed by Athena's intervention, which augments the hero's power by "multiplying" him. This augmentation has a proleptic function as it prefigures the recovery of his *oikos* with the goddess' help in the remaining Books of the poem.<sup>56</sup>

#### ORDERING THE DELIBERATION SCENES

Having examined the two deliberation scenes and their similes we are in a position to think about their organization in a continuous narrative. Why does Homer place Odysseus' debate about the killing of the maids (and the canine simile) before his deliberation about how to kill the suitors (and the paunch-simile)? The question is less capricious than it might appear once we realize that Odysseus' sole concern at the beginning of Book 20 is the death of the suitors (5-6), while the punishment of the maids is an incidental worry. The maids irrupt into the scene, within earshot of Odysseus and in his mind, unexpectedly and as an afterthought, yet they are given first place in his deliberations. The hero's debate about whether to kill the maids comes first because it furnishes the temporal and conceptual material for the staging of *both* scenes.

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<sup>54</sup> On the peremptory use, by a god addressing a mortal, of third-person imperatives, see Pelliccia 1993, 84-105.

<sup>55</sup> The heart appears in the nominative only after its desire has conformed to Odysseus' (ἐν πείσῃ, μένε, 23).

<sup>56</sup> For the terms "analeptic" and "proleptic," see Genette 1972; 1980.

Even though the maids are dispatched after the suitors, their shenanigans arouse Odysseus' anger and enhance his motivation to kill the suitors. In order to show the importance of Odysseus' first deliberation for the ordering of both scenes, I must quote it in full (18-21):

τέτλαθι δῆ, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης,  
 ἥματι τῶ, ὅτε μοι μένος ἄσχετος ἦσθιε Κύκλωψ  
 ἰφθίμους ἑτάρους· σὺ δ' ἐτόλμας, ὄφρα σε μῆτις  
 ἐξάγαγ' ἐξ ἀντροῖο οἴομενον θανέεσθαι.

Bear up, my heart. You have had worse to endure before this,  
 On that day when the irresistible Cyclops ate up  
 My strong companions, but you endured it until intelligence  
 Got you out of the cave, though you expected to perish.

In this *consolatio* to his heart, Odysseus appeals to an *exemplum*, a previous instance of worse suffering whose positive outcome is meant to instruct the heart on what to do in the present.<sup>57</sup> The narrative involves four entities and one set of characters — the Cyclops, Odysseus, the heart, cunning, and the companions — in a three-stage narrative of crime and punishment. In the first stage (S1), the Cyclops eats the companions as Odysseus looks on (18-20); in the second stage (S2), the heart endures the painful sight (20); in the third stage (S3), cunning rescues a heart bereft of hope (20-21). The narrative progresses linearly: the Cyclops' crime makes it necessary for the heart to endure, which means that (S1) slightly precedes (S2), although the two stages unfold for the most part simultaneously. (S3) is occasioned by (S2): endurance ensures self-preservation but prolongs entrapment in the cave and must yield to action. The narrative foregrounds Odysseus' division from a whole person in (S1) into two organs in (S2) and (S3), which behave differently: κραδίη is an autonomous agent that holds fast (ἔτλης, ἐτόλμας), whereas μῆτις leads κραδίη out of the cave (ἐξάγαγ'). The heart's "posture of endurance"<sup>58</sup> is informed by a false belief in defeat, whereas cunning shows that the heart's fears are empty by guiding it to safety. (S3) is thus an inverted image of (S1): just as the Cyclops "acts" on the

<sup>57</sup> The incident comes from *Odyssey* 9.299-306 and 316-318.

<sup>58</sup> I borrow the phrase from Pucci 1987, 75.

crew by eating them, so Odysseus' μήτις acts on the enduring heart by saving it from mortal danger and in so doing it punishes the Cyclops for his insolence and shows its superiority to the hapless crew.

Odysseus' *consolatio* serves as a *mise-en-abîme* version of the entire passage (1-53), a narrative within another narrative that structurally resembles or reflects the outer narrative.<sup>59</sup> This interpretation enriches the connections that critics have established between the *Cyclopeia* and Odysseus' revenge on the suitors, and adds the punishment of the maids to the mix.<sup>60</sup> (S1) corresponds to (S1'), the maids' dalliances with the suitors (5-8), which Odysseus overhears as he plots evils for his rivals. This is the offence for which the maids, as well as their lovers, will soon pay. By sleeping with the suitors, the maids offer themselves to their master's enemies without his permission. The suitors thus appropriate what belongs to Odysseus, further misusing another's property and thereby imitating the Cyclops' feasting on the crew. (S2) both belongs to the *consolatio* and corresponds to (S2'), the effect of the *consolatio* on Odysseus' heart: the κραδίη "endured and stood it without complaint" (μένε τεπληυῖα νωλεμέως, 23-24), echoing its stance of endurance in the Cyclops' cave. The temporal arrangement of (S1') and (S2') mirrors that of (S1) and (S2): the maids' escapades in (S1') slightly precede and provoke the rebellion of Odysseus' heart in (S2'), yet they continue to unfold as the heart endures. Finally, (S3) corresponds to (S3'), Athena's calming Odysseus by promising him victory over the suitors (48-51). The goddess leads her protégé out of idle restlessness and into sleep. Thus in (S3') Athena — and, through her, sleep — mimics the action of μήτις in the cave: both agents (μήτις, Athena) act on another entity (κραδίη, Odysseus) and rescue it/him from danger or distress: μήτις frees κραδίη from the clutches of ἄσχετος Κύκλωψ (19) and spares it the fate of ἰφθίμους ἑτάρους (20), and Athena frees Odysseus from his physical and mental restlessness by promising him that they

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<sup>59</sup> For the concept of *mise en abyme*, see Dällenbach 1989 and White 2001. For a study of Achilles' shield as a case of *mise en abyme*, see de Jong 2011.

<sup>60</sup> See Schröter 1950, 121-136; Müller 1966, 136-144; Cook 1999, 165; Hopman 2012, 24; and Bakker 2013, 53-57.

will drive back the suitors.<sup>61</sup> Temporally, just as (S3) succeeds (S2) so (S3') succeeds (S2') since Athena's intervention is necessitated by Odysseus' failure to sleep after he has subdued his heart.

The *consolatio* plays a central role in the ordering of the deliberation scenes because its theme, the evocation of the Cyclops, is relevant to both scenes. In the first scene, Odysseus reminds his heart that in Polyphemus' cave it endured something "more shameless" or, literally, "more doglike" (κύντερον, 18) than its current predicament. The adjective κύντερον has in its root the word κύων, which connects the canine simile with Odysseus' reaction to Polyphemus' cannibalism. This connection receives support from the fact that the Cyclops smashed the men to the ground "like puppies" (ὡς τε σκύλακας, 9.289) before he devoured them. The metaphor conveys the victims' helplessness by contrasting their relatively small physical size with the Cyclops' huge frame. It also suggests that they are thought to belong to a different species from him: the crew members are perceived as puppies dying a doglike death, whereas Polyphemus is the giant who inflicts this ignominious death upon them.<sup>62</sup> By casting this past event as a more "doglike" experience than his present one, Odysseus imaginatively puts himself in the place of his companions and feels the shame of having had to watch their death while himself is exempt from it; he is a would-be puppy who remained a human, more cunning than his thoughtless crew and more empathetic than the brutish Cyclops. The reference to the Cyclops may also serve as an indication of a lesson learned after Odysseus' adventure with Polyphemus. Once out of the cave, the hero bursts into insults, boasts, and impious claims, which endanger his own life and

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<sup>61</sup> Odysseus' cunning spared him the gruesome death of his crew and will enable him to inflict death on the suitors. This connection reinforces the parallelism between the devoured crew and the soon-to-die suitors, for which see Nagler 1990 and Hopman 2012, 24.

<sup>62</sup> Minchin (2001, 36) thinks that the Cyclops' killing of the men "resembles the unthinking killing, in the rural world, of unwanted new-born pups. We feel a moment of shock because the two acts do not to us seem compatible. We may not be used to dealing with dogs in this way, but we understand the rationale for what is being described. When Homer makes us realize that the Kyklops treats humans as casually we might treat pups, we recoil."

that of his companions (9.475-479, 502-505, 523-525). His behaviour in Ithaca, however, is cautious and involves restraint.<sup>63</sup> By silencing his bitchy heart in Ithaca, Odysseus teaches it a prudent course of action that he himself failed to follow at a crucial moment in the past, as crucial *mutatis mutandis* as the present time in his house.

In the second deliberation scene, Athena's diction alludes twice to the Cyclops. First, she calls Odysseus "stubborn" (σχετλιε, 45), an adjective whose root meaning (< σχεθειν) is "capable of holding (back)." This expression contrasts with Odysseus' reference to the Cyclops in the first deliberation scene as "irresistible" (ἄσχετος, 19), a word whose root meaning (< ἄσχεϊν) is "not to be checked." As the man who can hold back or endure, Odysseus punishes the "ungovernable" Cyclops and will soon prevail over the unchecked suitors. Second, the goddess says that with her help Odysseus could drive away "the herds and sleek flocks" (βόας καὶ ἴφια μῆλα, 51) of fifty bands of mortal fighters. The enemy is envisioned as the cattle of a great number of mortals, which recalls the Cyclops (the size of the men evokes his huge size) and his sheep and goats. By driving away, instead of tending, this cattle Odysseus will be acting as an anti-Cyclops.<sup>64</sup> The scene also contains a verbal allusion to the Cyclops: in order to exit Polyphemus' cave, Odysseus clutched the Cyclops' best ram by his back and "tucked up under his shaggy belly, there [he] hung, face upward" (τοῦ κατὰ νῶτα λαβῶν, λασίην ὑπὸ γαστέρ' ἔλυσθεις κείμεν, 9.433-434); once out of the cave, he "first loosed [himself] from the ram" before loosening his men (πρωτος ὑπ' ἀρνειοῦ λύομεν, ὑπέλυσσα δ' ἑταίρους, 9.463). His safety thus involves hiding in and coming up from the underside of the ram, which illustrates his ascent from captivity to freedom. Now, in plotting revenge against the suitors, Odysseus is concerned not only with how to kill them, but also with "how to get out from under" (πῆ κεν ὑπεκπροφύγοιμι, 20.43) their

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<sup>63</sup> For Odysseus as more prone to life-preserving silence after the *Cyclopeia* than before it, see Montiglio 2000, 258-259. At 13.309, Athena stresses that Odysseus must suffer "the cruel abuse of men" "in silence" (σιωπῆ).

<sup>64</sup> Rutherford (1992, 208) thinks that the reference to "cattle and herds" is designed to appeal to Odysseus' "acquisitive nature."

avengers. As if echoing this phrase, Athena tells Odysseus that he “will soon come up from [his] troubles” (κακῶν δ’ ὑποδύσειαι ἤδη, 20.53).<sup>65</sup> In both cases, the preposition ὑπό expresses the hero’s emergence from under the weight of his evils in Ithaca and recalls the manner of his escape from the Cyclops’ cave.<sup>66</sup>

The three thematic components of the *consolatio* — crime, endurance, and punishment through force and cunning — make it also a *mise-en-abîme* version of Books 13-22. In Book 13, Athena reveals to Odysseus the suitors’ crime, i.e., their having courted Penelope for three years, and invites him to think about how he might lay hands on them (375-378). She also urges him to be silent: “Endure, even if you have to compel yourself, and do not reveal to anyone, man or woman, that you have come back after your wanderings, but suffer in silence many griefs, submitting to the violence of men” (307-310). Books 14-21 show Odysseus enduring “many griefs” as he puts up with the suitors’ brazenness (there are three attacks by them), is mistreated by Melanthius (the goatherd abuses the disguised Odysseus at 17.212, wishes Telemachus dead at 17.251-253, calls Odysseus to the suitors’ attention at 17.370, and runs to fetch weapons for the suitors at 22.160-162), is insulted by Melanthe, and witnesses the maids’ betrayal. Finally, Book 22 registers the punishment of the guilty parties. Although it is true that “the Cyclops episode, which occupies the greater part of Book 9, is in many ways, both structural and thematic, the centerpiece of the *Odyssey*,”<sup>67</sup> its evocation at the beginning of Book 20, on the eve of the *mnêstêrophonia*, plays a comparable role for the first fifty-three lines of the Book and serves as the structural and thematic crux of the second half of the *Odyssey*.

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<sup>65</sup> Dimock (1989, 266) sees in the use of the verb ὑποδύσειαι an allusion to Odysseus’ name (ὑπ-οδύσειαι), which means that he will “come through.” If this is true, the hero’s second deliberation scene ends with Athena celebrating the essence of Odysseus’ self as expressed in his name.

<sup>66</sup> The phrase ὑπερθεν κῶεα πόλλ’ ὄϊον (2-3) also recalls Odysseus’ clinging for life under the fleece of the ram that carried him out of the cave. Cf. Bakker 2013, 54.

<sup>67</sup> Bakker 2013, 53.

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