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The Best of the Achaeans? Odysseus and Achilles in the *Odyssey*[1]

As the papers in this volume illustrate, the making of Homeric epic can be approached from various critical angles. While archaeological and epigraphic evidence permits us to assess the role and use of writing in archaic Greece, comparative studies help us understand the dynamics of oral composition and oral-derived traditions. Later Greek literature provides potential clues about the institutional setting in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* may have been performed as a whole or in parts. Finally, the epics themselves shed light on their own performance. Achilles' singing of κλέα ἀνδρῶν in the *Iliad* as well as the entries of Phemius and Demodocus in the *Odyssey* has been seen as an embedded mirror of the performance of the Homeric poems.

The making of the epic has also left traces that are tightly interwoven in the *Iliad's* and *Odyssey's* poetic textures. As Monro pointed out at the beginning of the 20th century, 'the *Odyssey* never repeats or refers to any incident related in the *Iliad*'.[2] This observation first led to the thesis that the *Odyssey* was composed without an awareness of the *Iliad*.[3] However, the monumentality of the *Iliad* and the salience of the Trojan War in the *Odyssey* have made it hard to maintain this view; the systematic avoidance of references to the *Iliad* in the *Odyssey* seems rather to be intended. Moreover, there are numerous passages in the *Odyssey* which apparently allude to the *Iliad* – and perhaps also Iliadic verses that acknowledge the *Odyssey*[4] – through a careful and marked reworking of its language. Drawing on studies in oral poetry, Homerists have argued that, emerging at the same time, both poems influenced each other. In the words of Pietro Pucci: 'The two texts probably evolved simultaneously, each aware of the other, before being fixed in the monumental compositions we now have, and it is likely that during the formative period some passages in each were intentionally revised to

[1] It is with great admiration that I offer this article to Antonios Rengakos. I have learnt a great amount from Antonios' important publications on Homeric epic, ancient historiography and in other fields, and it has been a delightful experience to work with him on various occasions.
[2] Monro (1901) 325.
[3] E.g. Page (1955).
[4] This is contentious, see Currie (2016) 39–40, who assumes that only the *Odyssey* responds to the *Iliad*.

corresponding passages in the other. Clearly, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* presume each other, border and limit each other, to such extent that one, as it were, writes the other.'[5]

My paper offers a case-study of this kind of interaction between oral poems by exploring the *Odyssey*'s presentation of its main hero against the backdrop of the *Iliad*'s Achilles. Homer not only juxtaposes the two heroes explicitly, he also evokes more subtly specific actions of Achilles in the *Iliad* as a foil to Odysseus' deeds in the *Odyssey*. While some of these allusions have been duly noticed, others still wait to be teased out. As we shall see, the juxtaposition of Odysseus with the Iliadic Achilles does not exhaust itself in its metapoetic significance nor can it be reduced to the antagonism of μήτις versus βίη.[6] While some passages strive to cast Odysseus as the greater hero and the *Odyssey* as the superior epic (I), others rather align Odysseus with Achilles (II). This resemblance with Achilles, I contend, gives substance to a view of Odysseus that challenges his positive portrayal. As Eustathius shrewdly observed in his commentary, Homer is *philodysseus* (1878.47); nonetheless, hidden under the narrative surface of the *Odyssey*, notably in the *mnēstērophonia* (III), but also earlier in the *Apologoi* (IV) we can detect a layer that is critical of Odysseus. The evocation of Achilles as a model is crucial to this deviant perspective of Odysseus. My argument thus illustrates the complexity of the kind of intertextuality to which oral composition and tradition gave rise. The interaction of Odysseus with the *Iliad's* hero implies far more than a competition between the best of the Achaeans and the rivalry of two monumental poems.

I. Odysseus versus Achilles

Odysseus is explicitly juxtaposed with Achilles three times in the *Odyssey*. Demodocus' first song in Book eight deals with the 'quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, son of Peleus' (νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλεΐδεω Ἀχιλῆος, 8.75). We can leave aside the tricky question of whether Homer simply invents this controversy or alludes to another oral tradition.[7] What matters for our purposes here is that Odysseus and Achilles are adduced as

[5] Pucci (1987) 18. See also Nagy (1979) 20–2, and more recently Tsangalis (2008). Burggess (2006) approaches Homeric intertextuality from an angle that combines oral poetry with neoanalysis. Most recently, Currie (2016) has made a case for the pervasiveness of intertextuality in Homer. Bakker (2013) 157–69 offers a general reassessment of inter– and intratextuality in the oral tradition of Homeric epic. On the *Odyssey* as responding to the *Iliad*, see also Usener (1990); Rutherford (1991–3); Danek (1998); Rengakos (2002).

[6] Nagy (1979) has become the canonical reference. The tendency to combine a diachronic approach to Homer with metapoetic readings continues to thrive. Elmer (2013), for example, interprets scenes of decision–making in the *Iliad* as reflective of the evolvement of the epics. Currie (2016) follows a very different agenda, but he also tends to link intertextual references to other poems to poetic rivalry.

[7] See, for instance, Marg (1956) Rüter (1969) 247–54; Nagy (1979) 42–58; Clay (1983) 97–106, 241–6; Finkelberg (1987); Danek (1998) 142–50.

'the best of the Achaeans', who are at loggerheads with each other (…ὅ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο, 8.78). Several modern scholars have adopted the idea of some ancient commentators who note that the quarrel is about how to capture Troy, with Achillean force or with Odyssean ruse.[8] Even if we do not follow this interpretation, the phrase 'through the designs of great Zeus' (…Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς, 8.82) seems to gesture to the beginning of the *Iliad* and to complement the confrontation of the two heroes by a juxtaposition of the two epics.[9]

While the brief summary of Demodocus' song does not give one hero an advantage over the other,[10] the meeting of Odysseus with Achilles in the *nekyia* suggests the superiority of the former over the latter. Odysseus first gives Achilles the pride of place. He addresses him as 'by far the greatest of the Achaeans' (ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ, Πηλῆος υἱέ, μέγα φέρτατ' Ἀχαιῶν, 11.478) and closes his speech (11.482-6):

> …Achilleus,
> no man before has been more blessed than you, nor ever
> will be. Before, when you were alive, we Argives honored you
> as we did the gods, and now in this place you have great authority
> over the dead. Do not grieve, even in death, Achilleus.
> (…Ἀχιλλεῦ,
> οὔ τις ἀνὴρ προπάροιθε μακάρτερος οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω·
> πρὶν μὲν γάρ σε ζωὸν ἐτίομεν ἶσα θεοῖσιν
> Ἀργεῖοι, νῦν αὖτε μέγα κρατέεις νεκύεσσιν
> ἐνθάδ' ἐών· τῷ μή τι θανὼν ἀκαχίζευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ.)

In his much-quoted response, however, Achilles radically rejects this view of his bliss (11.488–91):

> O shining Odysses. Never try to console me for dying.
> I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another
> man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on,
> than be a king over all the perished dead.
> (μὴ δή μοι θάνατόν γε παραύδα, φαίδιμ' Ὀδυσσεῦ.
> βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν ἄλλῳ,
> ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ᾧ μὴ βίοτος πολὺς εἴη,
> ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.)

[8] Scholion ad *Od*. 8.75 HQV, ad 8.75 E, ad 8.77 BE, and, e.g., Clay (1983) 101–2; de Jong (2002) ad 8.73–82, contra Danek (1998) 146–50.
[9] On this and further echoes of the beginning of the *Iliad*, see Clay (1983) 103–4. For the confrontation of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, see Rüter (1969) 253–4; Nagy (1979) 40–41; Clay 1983: 106–7.
[10] Pace de Jong (2002) ad 11.482–91.

In certain important ways, Odysseus' fate is an inversion of the fate chosen by Achilles. Whereas Achilles traded the option of a happy life at home for eternal fame,[11] Odysseus rejected the immortality offered by Calypso and strives to return to Ithaca.[12] He may praise Achilles and, tossed around by the waves at the shores of Scheria, he may even have uttered the wish that he had died on the battle-field and thereby won glory: 'as I wish I too had died at that time and met my destiny/ on the day when the greatest number of Trojans threw their bronze-headed/ weapons upon me, over the body of perished Achilleus,/ and I would have had my rites and the Achaians given me glory' (ὡς δὴ ἐγώ γ' ὄφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν/ ἥματι τῷ ὅτε μοι πλεῖστοι χαλκήρεα δοῦρα/ Τρῶες ἐπέρριψαν περὶ Πηλεΐωνι θανόντι./ τῶ κ' ἔλαχον κτερέων, καί μευ κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί, 5.308–11).[13] But against this Achilles' bitter words highlight that Odysseus is the luckier of the two: he has escaped death which no amount of glory can counterweight.[14]

The comparison of Odysseus with Achilles is finally taken up in the second *nekyia*. When the killed suitors enter the underworld, they meet the shadows of Agamemnon and Achilles, who are conversing about their fates. Achilles moans about the murder of Agamemnon, who was denied a heroic death at Troy and who as a result does not have a tomb to preserve his glory. Conversely Agamemnon praises Achilles, as he received an elaborate proper burial. The Greeks 'piled up a grave mound that was both great and perfect,/ on a jutting promontory there by the wide Hellespont,/ so that it can be seen afar from out on the water/ by men now alive and those to be born in the future' (ἀμφ' αὐτοῖσι δ' ἔπειτα μέγαν καὶ ἀμύμονα τύμβον/ χεύαμεν Ἀργείων ἱερὸς στρατὸς αἰχμητάων/ ἀκτῇ ἔπι προὐχούσῃ, ἐπὶ πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντῳ,/ ὥς κεν τηλεφανὴς ἐκ ποντόφιν ἀνδράσιν εἴῃ/ τοῖσ', οἳ νῦν γεγάασι καὶ οἳ μετόπισθεν ἔσονται, 24.80–4). Odysseus enters this paragone as a third party when Amphinomus reports his return and the slaying of the suitors. Besides evoking the story of the Atrids as a foil to Odysseus and his family yet another time,[15] Homer here also envisages Odysseus specifically in light of Achilles. In his exchange with Amphinomus, Agamemnon addresses Odysseus directly: 'O fortunate son of Laertes, Odysseus of many devices' (ὄλβιε

[11] 9.412-6: 'If I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,/ my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting; / but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,/ left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly.' (εἰ μέν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι/ ὤλετο μέν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται·/ εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ' ἵκωμι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,/ ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν/ ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ' ὦκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη).
[12] Cf. Wender (1978) 42–3.
[13] For an Iliadic echo (*Il.* 21.281–3) in these verses, see Usener (1990) 141–7. With Odysseus' wish, compare also Telemachus' words in 1.237–40.
[14] Cf. Wender (1978) 43; Schein (1996) 10–14; Rengakos (2002) 180.
[15] Cf. D'Arms/Hulley (1946); Hölscher (1967).

Λαέρταο πάϊ, πολυμήχαν᾽ Ὀδυσσεῦ, 24.192). This address repeats the formula with which Agamemnon had directed himself to Achilles: ‘O fortunate son of Peleus, Achilles, like the immortals’ (ὄλβιε Πηλέος υἱέ, θεοῖσ᾽ ἐπιείκελ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῦ, 24.36). The parallel drives home the fact that, whereas Achilles had to renounce his *nostos* to gain *kleos*, Odysseus has been granted both *nostos* and glory.[16] More precisely: Odysseus has gained κλέος through his *nostos*.

The metapoetic significance is hard to ignore when the *Odyssey* compares the glory of its hero with the fame of the *Iliad*’s champion, Achilles. Parallel to Odysseus who gets the better off Achilles, the *Odyssey* outshines the *Iliad*. Just as the epic makes the hero, the hero makes the epic. And yet, another metapoetic reflection is more pronounced in the second *nekyia*. Agamemnon mentions song as the medium of Penelope’s glory and Clytaemnestra’s shame, but when he muses on Achilles’ fate, he refers to his tomb as the guarantee of fame. The tomb is placed conspicuously on a promontory so that it announces Achilles’ κλέος to ‘men now alive and those to be born in the future’ (οἳ νῦν γεγάασι καὶ οἳ μετόπισθεν ἔσονται, 24.84). The testimony of the grave, however, is bound to a specific place, it reaches only men ‘out on the water’ (ἐκ ποντόφιν, 24.83). Odysseus’ glory, on the other hand, ‘goes up to the heavens’, as he himself claims when he discloses his identity at the court of Alcinous (…καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει, 9.20). The spatial confinement of material bearers of memory is set in implicit contrast with the limitless circulation of song.

A much-discussed passage in the *Iliad* further reflects on the impermanence of material memory.[17] Before the chariot race in Patroclus’ funeral games, Nestor gives instructions to his son and describes the turn post (23.326–33):

> I will give you a clear mark and you cannot fail to notice it.
> There is a dry stump standing up from the ground about six feet,
> oak, it may be, or pine, and not rotted away by rain-water,
> and two white stones are leaned against it, one on either side,
> at the joining place of the ways, and there is smooth driving around it.
> Either it is the grave-mark of someone who died long ago,
> or was set as a racing goal by men who lived before our time.
> Now swift-footed brilliant Achilleus has made it the turning post.
> (σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ᾽ ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει.
> ἕστηκε ξύλον αὖον ὅσον τ᾽ ὄργυι᾽ ὑπὲρ αἴης
> ἢ δρυὸς ἢ πεύκης· τὸ μὲν οὐ καταπύθεται ὄμβρῳ,

[16] Cf. Nagy (1979) 39.
[17] Cf. Nagy (1983); Lynn–George (1988); Grethlein (2008) 31–2.

λᾶε δὲ τοῦ ἑκάτερθεν ἐρηρέδαται δύο λευκὼ
ἐν ξυνοχῇσιν ὁδοῦ, λεῖος δ᾽ ἱππόδρομος ἀμφὶς
ἤ τευ σῆμα βροτοῖο πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος,
ἢ τό γε νύσσα τέτυκτο ἐπὶ προτέρων ἀνθρώπων,
καὶ νῦν τέρματ᾽ ἔθηκε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.)

Nestor is the incarnation of memory, but even he is uncertain about the significance of what may have been a tomb. His uncertainty alerts us to the instability of the commemorative power of tombs. The glory created by stones is not only spatially limited, it is also menaced by the flux of time. Even though a material marker is foregrounded as the medium of Achilles' κλέος, the *Odyssey* obviously confronts the *Iliad* when it contrasts its own hero, his virtues and his life, with the *Iliad's* protagonist and his fate. Poetic rivalry is an important aspect of the *Odyssey's* oral intertextuality with the *Iliad* and it has duly attracted much attention in scholarship. It is however not the only aspect, as we will now see when we consider implicit references and more subtle allusions to Achilles in the *Odyssey*.

II. Odysseus as Achilles *redivivus*

Passages in which Achilles is conjured up implicitly as a foil to Odysseus cluster together in the execution of the suitors as narrated in Book 22. Odysseus first shoots Antinous and then reveals his identity. The suitors are terrified. In an attempt to avert the impending massacre, Eurymachus claims that the culprit, Antinous, has been punished. Odysseus ought to save the others for they would 'repay in gold and bronze' (χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τ᾽ ἀποδώσομεν…, 22.58) what they have eaten and drunk in his house (22.45–59):

(εἰ μὲν δὴ Ὀδυσεὺς Ἰθακήσιος εἰλήλουθας,
ταῦτα μὲν αἴσιμα εἶπες, ὅσα ῥέζεσκον Ἀχαιοί,
πολλὰ μὲν ἐν μεγάροισιν ἀτάσθαλα, πολλὰ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀγροῦ.
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἤδη κεῖται, ὃς αἴτιος ἔπλετο πάντων,
Ἀντίνοος· οὗτος γὰρ ἐπίηλεν τάδε ἔργα,
οὔ τι γάμου τόσσον κεχρημένος οὐδὲ χατίζων,
ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλα φρονέων, τά οἱ οὐκ ἐτέλεσσε Κρονίων,
ὄφρ᾽ Ἰθάκης κατὰ δῆμον ἐϋκτιμένης βασιλεύοι
αὐτός, ἀτὰρ σὸν παῖδα κατακτείνειε λοχήσας.
νῦν δ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἐν μοίρῃ πέφαται, σὺ δὲ φείδεο λαῶν
σῶν· ἀτὰρ ἄμμες ὄπισθεν ἀρεσσάμενοι κατὰ δῆμον,
ὅσσα τοι ἐκπέποται καὶ ἐδήδοται ἐν μεγάροισι,
τιμὴν ἀμφὶς ἄγοντες ἐεικοσάβοιον ἕκαστος,

χαλκόν τε χρυσόν τ᾽ ἀποδώσομεν, εἰς ὅ κε σὸν κῆρ
ἰανθῇ· πρὶν δ᾽ οὔ τι νεμεσσητὸν κεχολῶσθαι.)

However, Odysseus harshly rejects this offer (22.61–4):

Eurymachus, if you gave me all of your father's possessions,
all that you have now, and what you could add from elsewhere,
even so, I would not stay my hands from the slaughter,
until I had taken revenge for all the suitors' transgression.
(Εὐρύμαχ᾽, οὐδ᾽ εἴ μοι πατρώϊα πάντ᾽ ἀποδοῖτε,
ὅσσα τε νῦν ὔμμ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλ᾽ ἐπιθεῖτε,
οὐδέ κεν ὣς ἔτι χεῖρας ἐμὰς λήξαιμι φόνοιο,
πρὶν πᾶσαν μνηστῆρας ὑπερβασίην ἀποτεῖσαι.)

As has been noticed by previous scholars, Odysseus' response is reminiscent of Achilles' rejection of the goods offered by Agamemnon in *Iliad* 9 and the ransom that Priam is willing to pay for Hector's corpse in *Iliad* 22.[18] Context and language are strikingly similar. Like Achilles, Odysseus shows himself unimpressed by a seemingly generous offer and does not relent in his anger. Both consider material goods, no matter how vast, to be insufficient as a compensation for the harm they have experienced. Neither hero can be appeased; Odysseus as well as Achilles insists on the satisfaction of vengeance.

The linguistic parallel to Achilles' speech in *Iliad* 9 is particularly striking. Achilles is more abundant in his list of things that would fail to soften him, but syntactically Odysseus' refusal is closely modelled on his speech. It repeats *verbatim* one verse (ὅσσα τε νῦν ὔμμ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλ᾽ ἐπιθεῖτε) – and copies the syntactic structure of οὐδ᾽ εἰ... οὐδέ κεν ὣς... πρὶν (*Il.* 9.379–87):

Not if he gave me ten times as much, and twenty times over
as he possesses now, not if more should come to him from elsewhere,
or gave all that is brought in to Orchomenos, all that is brought in
to Thebes of Egypt, where the greatest possessions lie up in the houses,
Thebes of the hundred gates, where through each of the gates two hundred
fighting men come forth to war with horses and chariots;
not if he gave me gifts as many as the sand or the dust is,
not even so would Agamemnon have his way with my spirit
until he had made good to me all this heartrending insolence.
(οὐδ᾽ εἴ μοι δεκάκις τε καὶ εἰκοσάκις τόσα δοίη
ὅσσά τέ οἱ νῦν ἔστι, καὶ εἴ ποθεν ἄλλα γένοιτο,

[18] Cf. Schein (1999) 352–6; Bakker (2013) 151–2. In *Iliad* 22, Achilles will ultimately extradite Hector's corpse, but as Schein (1999) 355 observes, 'it is clear that he does not surrender his feelings because of this ransom'.

οὐδ’ ὅσ’ ἐς Ὀρχομενὸν ποτινίσεται, οὐδ’ ὅσα Θήβας
Αἰγυπτίας, ὅθι πλεῖστα δόμοις ἐν κτήματα κεῖται,
αἵ θ’ ἑκατόμπυλοί εἰσι, διηκόσιοι δ’ ἀν’ ἑκάστας
ἀνέρες ἐξοιχνεῦσι σὺν ἵπποισιν καὶ ὄχεσφιν·
οὐδ’ εἴ μοι τόσα δοίη ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε,
οὐδέ κεν ὧς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει’ Ἀγαμέμνων
πρίν γ’ ἀπὸ πᾶσαν ἐμοὶ δόμεναι θυμαλγέα λώβην.)

As Schein points out, Odysseus’ rejection of the rich compensation is somewhat surprising since he is ‘consistently represented as concerned with κέρδεα (profits) and the honor (τιμή) associated with them’.[19] Even more poignant is the irony that Odysseus, who in the *Iliad* conveys Agamemnon’s offer to Achilles, now himself rejects a similar offer with words reminiscent of Achilles’ speech.

It has been shown that ‘the *Odyssey*’s final battle, the climax of Odysseus’ return, is looking at the *Iliad’s* final battle, the climax of Achilles’ return.’[20] The arguably most striking parallel occurs between the killings of Leodes in the *Odyssey* and Lycaon in the *Iliad*. In a close reading, Pucci has analyzed the strongly Iliadic vocabulary in which the scene leading to the death of Leodes is couched.[21] The specific parallel to the Lycaon scene is cemented by the pointed repetition of a verse: Leodes addresses Odysseus with the same words that Lycaon uses in the *Iliad*: ‘I am at your knees, Odysseus/Achilles. Respect me, have mercy’ (γουνοῦμαί σ’, Ὀδυσεῦ/Ἀχιλεῦ· σὺ δέ μ’ αἴδεο καί μ’ ἐλέησον, *Od*. 22.312; *Il*. 21.74). Both plead innocent: Lycaon claims that he does not even have the same mother as Hector, whose killing of Patroclus has infuriated Achilles (‘Do not kill me. I am not from the same womb as Hektor,/ he who killed your powerful and kindly companion.’; μή με κτεῖν’, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ὁμογάστριος Ἕκτορός εἰμι,/ ὅς τοι ἑταῖρον ἔπεφνεν ἐνηέα τε κρατερόν τε, *Il*. 21.95–6). Leodes asserts that he was not involved in the suitors’ crimes, that, in fact, he even tried to dissuade them (‘For I claim that never in your halls did I say or do anything/ wrong to any one of the women, but always was trying/ to stop any one of the other suitors who acted in that way.’; οὐ γάρ πώ τινά φημι γυναικῶν ἐν μεγάροισιν/ εἰπεῖν οὐδέ τι ῥέξαι ἀτάσθαλον· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλους/ παύεσκον μνηστῆρας, ὅτις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι, 22.313–15).

The circumstances bestow pathos on both deaths, if for somewhat different reasons: Lycaon had already been captured by Achilles before, but while Achilles had sold him as a

[19] Schein (1999) 352.
[20] Bakker (2013) 151.
[21] Pucci (1987) 128–38. See also Usener (1990) 131–40.

slave the first time, he will now kill him with no mercy.[22] Lycaon had only eleven days in Troy after his release; the feasting which celebrated his being saved throws into relief his present destiny: Achilles 'drawing his sharp sword struck him/ beside the neck at the collar-bone, and the double-edged sword/ plunged full length inside' (Ἀχιλεὺς δὲ ἐρυσσάμενος ξίφος ὀξὺ/ τύψε κατὰ κληῖδα παρ' αὐχένα, πᾶν δέ οἱ εἴσω/ δῦ ξίφος ἄμφηκες, 21.116–18). He then throws Lycaon's corpse into the river Scamander to feed the fish. On the other hand, Odysseus rejection of Leodes' supplication is put more forcefully by the fact that his victim is a bard and had stood apart from the other suitors, not supporting the siege of Odysseus' court: 'To him alone their excesses/ were hateful, and he disapproved of all the suitors' (ἀτασθαλίαι δέ οἱ οἴῳ/ ἐχθραὶ ἔσαν, πᾶσιν δὲ νεμέσσα μνηστήρεσσιν, 21.146–7). As Pucci noted, the pointed echo and similarity between the two scenes draws our attention to the profound difference between Achilles and Odysseus: whereas Achilles deprives Lycaon of the joy of homecoming and emphasizes the inevitability of death, Odysseus 'murders the innocent Leodes because Leodes prayed that Odysseus might never return… Odysseus, in the garb of Achilles, vindicates the value of homecoming, of life and its pleasures'.[23]

Achilles' killing spree in the last third of the *Iliad* is also evoked as a model for the *mnēstērophonia* through a lion simile. Homer frequently compares his heroes with lions, commonly to highlight their courage and manliness.[24] Odysseus has been juxtaposed with a lion before: Menelaus and Telemachus describe Odysseus as a lion, which finds in his home two fawns that a doe has left there (4.333–40 = 17.124–31). The carelessness of the doe and the defenselessness of the fawns illustrate the situation of the suitors, who continue to feast on the goods of Odysseus after his return to Ithaca. When Odysseus leaves the thicket at the shores of Scheria and approaches Nausicaa, Homer compares him with a hungry lion, this time to make tangible Odysseus' destitution and the fright of the Phaeacan girls (6.130–6):

> …and went in the confidence of his strength, like some hill-kept lion,
> who advances, though he is rained on and blown by the wind, and both eyes
> kindle; he goes out after cattle or sheep, or it may be
> deer in the wilderness, and his belly is urgent upon him
> to get inside of a close steading and go for the sheepflocks.
> So Odysseus was ready to face young girls with well-ordered
> hair, naked though he was, for the need was on him;…

[22] On the killing of Lycaon, see further Grethlein (2006) 130–5; 161–3.
[23] Pucci (1987) 141.
[24] Cf. Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981); Lonsdale (1990). On Odysseus and lion similes, see Moulton (1977) 139–41; Magrath (1982); Friedrich (1981).

(βῆ δ’ ἴμεν ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, ἀλκὶ πεποιθώς,
ὅς τ’ εἶσ’ ὑόμενος καὶ ἀήμενος, ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε
δαίεται· αὐτὰρ ὁ βουσὶ μετέρχεται ἢ ὀΐεσσιν
ἠὲ μετ’ ἀγροτέρας ἐλάφους· κέλεται δέ ἑ γαστὴρ
μήλων πειρήσοντα καὶ ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν·
ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς κούρῃσιν ἐϋπλοκάμοισιν ἔμελλε
μείξεσθαι, γυμνός περ ἐών· χρειὼ γὰρ ἵκανε.)

The simile in the *mnēstērophonia* is very different from these earlier comparisons: Euryclea finds Odysseus among the corpses of the suitors, ‘spattered over with gore and battle filth, like a lion/ who has been feeding on an ox of the fields, and goes off/ covered with blood, all his chest and his flanks on either/ side bloody, a terrible thing to look in the face; so/ now Odysseus feet and the hands above them were spattered’ (αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον ὥς τε λέοντα,/ ὅς ῥά τε βεβρωκὼς βοὸς ἔρχεται ἀγραύλοιο·/ πᾶν δ’ ἄρα οἱ στῆθός τε παρήϊά τ’ ἀμφοτέρωθεν/ αἱματόεντα πέλει, δεινὸς δ’ εἰς ὦπα ἰδέσθαι·/ ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς πεπάλακτο πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὕπερθεν, 22.402–6).[25]

Here the image of the lion expresses neither a hero’s fortitude nor his isolation, but his animal-like appearance: Odysseus is covered with blood, besides his hands and feet his cheeks are dripping with blood, just as a beast which has chased and eaten another animal. The killing of the suitors is thereby aligned with the licentious chase of a predator. The comparison gains poignancy from an Iliadic echo: Homer also uses the image of a lion to illustrate Achilles’ rage on the battle-field after Patroclus’ death. Achilles wishes to eat Hector’s body raw (‘I wish only that my spirit and fury would drive me/ to hack your meat away and eat it raw for the things that/ you have done to me.’; αἰ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνήη/ ὤμ’ ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷά ἔοργας, *Il*. 22.346–7) and Apollo states that in Achilles’ breast ‘there are no feelings of justice, nor can/ his mind be bent, but his purposes are fierce, like a lion/ who when he has given way to his own great strength and his haughty/ spirit, goes among the flocks of men, to devour them’ (ἀλλ’ ὀλοῷ Ἀχιλῆϊ θεοὶ βούλεσθ’ ἐπαρήγειν,/ ᾧ οὔτ’ ἂρ φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὔτε νόημα/ γναμπτὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, λέων δ’ ὡς ἄγρια οἶδεν,/ ὅς τ’ ἐπεὶ ἂρ μεγάλῃ τε βίῃ καὶ ἀγήνορι θυμῷ/ εἴξας εἶσ’ ἐπὶ μῆλα βροτῶν ἵνα δαῖτα λάβῃσιν, *Il*. 24.39–43).[26] Whereas Achilles appears as a hungry lion, Odysseus is likened to a lion which has quenched its hunger. Despite this difference, the

[25] This simile is later taken up in direct speech by Euryclea in 23.45–8.
[26] Achilles is also compared with a lion in Il. 18.318–23; 20.164–75. In 22.262–3, he compares himself his relation with Hector to that between lions and men and between wolves and lambs. In Il. 22.189–193, Achilles is likened to a dog, in Il. 19.365–6 the grinding of his teeth evokes the idea of a wild boar. Cf. Grethlein (2005) 261–4.

Achillean model for Odysseus is obvious. Their revenge, the slaughtering of their enemies, is depicted as an act of predation; the lion image expresses that Odysseus and Achilles have transformed heroic warfare into bestial hunting.

Since the model of Achilles is so strong in the *mnēstērophonia*, it is at least possible that Athena's final intervention in the *Odyssey* evokes the intervention of the same goddess in *Iliad* 1. When Athena commands that the battle be stopped, all fighters are intimidated and pause. Only Odysseus, 'with a terrible cry' (σμερδαλέον δ' ἐβόησε…, 24.537), continues to rage. Zeus has to throw a thunderbolt and Athena must address Odysseus personally before he relents. The circumstances in *Iliad* 1 are different: here it is not a battle in full swing, but a quarrel between two men about to escalate, and yet, in both situations the same goddess stops a hero, caught up in his anger, from acting on his impulse. Just as Achilles 'did not disobey/ the word of Athena' (…οὐδ' ἀπίθησε/ μύθῳ Ἀθηναίης…, *Il.* 1.220–1), Odysseus 'obeyed her with happy heart' (…ὁ δ' ἐπείθετο, χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ, 24.545). If we follow through this parallel, then Odysseus' final appearance in the *Odyssey* is projected against the backdrop of Achilles' first entry in the *Iliad*. Placed prominently at the *Odyssey's* ending, the allusion would give emphasis to Odysseus' Achilles-like comportment.

Homeric scholarship primarily views Odysseus as an antipode to Achilles, who substitutes ruse for force. Nagy's juxtaposition of them as representatives of different kinds of heroism, Achilles the champion of βίη, Odysseus the master of μήτις, has become a staple in later readings.[27] While this is an important point, it should not detract us from further facets of the relation between Odysseus and Achilles in the *Odyssey*. As I have tried to show, Odysseus' revenge on Ithaca is closely modeled on Achilles' rage after Patroclus' death. Scholars who have already observed some of the parallels between Odysseus and Achilles in the *Odyssey* argue that the Iliadic foil throws into relief the heroic status which Odysseus recuperates on Ithaca. After traversing the miraculous world of the *Apologoi*, exposed to the threats of various monsters, Odysseus finally becomes an Iliadic hero again when he kills the suitors. Pucci comments on the repetition of verses from the *Iliad*: 'With such repetitions, the *Odyssey* puts Odysseus himself in the foreground – Odysseus as a champion of the Trojan War, inferior neither to Achilles nor to Diomedes.'[28] In a similar vein, Bakker writes: 'The extreme violence with which Odysseus retakes his house is not only a harsh necessity imposed on him by Poseidon…, who forces him to become just as savage as his son; it also places Odysseus in the rarefied sphere where Achilles obtains immortal κλέος without playing

[27] Nagy 1979.
[28] Pucci (1987) 136.

by the rules of the heroic code and without being part of the community of his peers and fellow Achaeans.'[29]

Pucci and Bakker identify a salient point that can be fruitfully combined with Cook's distinction of two sides of Odysseus' heroism.[30] As Cook argues, Odysseus is simultaneously an active hero, who punishes his enemies, and a passive hero, who endures ordeals. It is possible to find aspects of active heroism in the *Apologoi*, for instance when Odysseus blinds Polyphemus, and on Ithaca Odysseus has to handle humiliation at the hands of the suitors as well as physical attacks, but, on the whole, the *Odyssey* follows a trajectory in which the need for passive endurance cedes to the renewed empowerment of Odysseus as an active hero.[31] This dynamic of the *Odyssey's* plot, the movement from passive to active heroism, is enhanced by the foil of the *Iliad*'s hero, which 'stresses Odysseus' Achillean valor'[32] in the execution of his revenge plan.

III. The dark side of Odysseus in the *mnesterophonia*

There is, however, more to the analogies between Odysseus and Achilles. The similarities, I contend, not only stress Odysseus' return to the elevated realm of an Iliadic hero, they also raise crucial questions about the ethical correctness of his actions. Achilles, especially in his rage after Patroclus' death, is, after all, a highly ambivalent heroic model. After Patroclus' death, Achilles is in a liminal state which brings him close to the gods, notably when he is fed nectar and ambrosia, but which also aligns him with beasts.[33] His beast-like killing spree is reinforced by the fact that, against Odysseus' advice, he wishes to enter battle before having eaten. He thereby follows the lead of animals, which hunt in order to have something to eat. The *propter hoc* is replaced by a *post hoc*, but the order of first killing, then eating puts Achilles in line with beasts. Achilles himself presents his slaughtering as a perverted sacrifice, which fills the waves of Scamander with corpses:'…and there will not/ be any rescue for you from your silvery-whirled strong-running/ river, for all the numbers of bulls you dedicate to it/ and drown single-foot horses alive in its eddies. And yet/ even so, die all an evil death…' (οὐδ' ὑμῖν ποταμός περ ἐΰρροος ἀργυροδίνης/ ἀρκέσει, ᾧ δὴ δηθὰ πολέας ἱερεύετε ταύρους,/ ζωοὺς δ' ἐν δίνῃσι καθίετε μώνυχας ἵππους./ ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς ὀλέεσθε κακὸν μόρον…, 21.130–

[29] Bakker (2013) 155.
[30] Cook (1999).
[31] Cf. Grethlein (2017) 177–9.
[32] Pucci (1987) 133.
[33] Cf. Grethlein (2005). On Achilles' rage after Patroclus' death as a threat to order and civilization, see also Segal (1971); Hammer (2004), ch. 4.

3). Moreover, when Hector asks him before their duel to agree to a fair treatment of the fallen warrior's corpse, he harshly rejects this idea, saying that 'there are no trustworthy oaths between men and lions,/ nor wolves and lambs have spirit that can be brought to agreement/ but forever these hold feelings of hate for each other' (ὡς οὐκ ἔστι λέουσι καὶ ἀνδράσιν ὅρκια πιστά,/ οὐδὲ λύκοι τε καὶ ἄρνες ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν,/ ἀλλὰ κακὰ φρονέουσι διαμπερὲς ἀλλήλοισιν, 22.262–4). Perhaps most disturbingly, after his victory, Achilles disregards the ritual of burial and cruelly mutilates Hector's corpse. Sacrifice, contractual agreements and burial are central tenets of civilization; Achilles' disdain for them demonstrates the transgressive nature of his rage.

The ambivalent model of Achillean heroism may thus do more than underpin Odysseus' heroic valour. That the Iliadic intertext also serves to question Odysseus' behaviour is evident in the poet's comparison of him with a lion. In addition to coupling Odysseus with Achilles, the simile also uncannily echoes the earlier comparison of Polyphemus with a lion.[34] The Cyclops kills two of Odysseus' companions: 'Then he cut them up limb by limb and got supper ready,/ and like a lion reared in the hills, without leaving anything,/ ate them, entrails, flesh and the marrowy bones alike' (τοὺς δὲ διὰ μελεϊστὶ ταμὼν ὁπλίσσατο δόρπον·/ ἤσθιε δ' ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, οὐδ' ἀπέλειπεν,/ ἔγκατά τε σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα μυελόεντα, 9.291–3). The later likening of Odysseus to a lion parallels the earlier depiction of one of his fiercest opponents. There is however one difference: unlike Odysseus, Polyphemus eats his victims. Meal and murder are metaphorically blended together in the *mnesterophonia*,[35] but there is no actual case of cannibalism.

Nonetheless, the parallel between the two lion similes invites disconcerting questions: Is Odysseus' revenge different from Polyphemus' behavior? Is Odysseus not unlike a cannibalistic giant, who tramples on the basic rules of civilization? Odysseus himself aligns the suitors with Polyphemus when he compares his situation as a beggar at his own court with his stay in the Cyclops' cave: '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.' (τέτλαθι δή, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης,/ ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε μοι μένος ἄσχετος ἤσθιε Κύκλωψ/ ἰφθίμους ἑτάρους· σὺ δ' ἐτόλμας, ὄφρα σε μῆτις/ ἐξάγαγ' ἐξ ἄντροιο ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι, 20.18–21). In both cases, he deploys a guest gift to punish a violation of the laws of

[34] Cf. Bakker (2013) 69–73.
[35] See, for example, 20.392–4; 21.428–9. See also the comparison of Odysseus and his bow with a bard and his lyre, whose singing is the 'crowning of the feast' (21.406–9; τὰ γάρ τ' ἀναθήματα δαιτός, 21.430). Cf. Saïd (1979).

hospitality, Maron's wine to trick the Cyclops and Iphitos' bow to shoot the suitors.[36] However, the tables can be turned: in entering Poyphemus' cave and eating his food in his absence, Odysseus resembles the suitors, who make use of Odysseus' absence to feast on his supplies. Odysseus' revenge also yields parallels to Polyphemus' crime: just as Polyphemus imprisons the invaders, Odysseus shuts the suitors into his megaron and kills them. The Cyclops closes the entrance of his cave with a massive stone, 'like a man closing the lid on a quiver' (ὡς εἴ τε φαρέτρῃ πῶμ' ἐπιθείη, 9.314); in the *mnēstērophonia* it is a real quiver from which Odysseus takes his lethal arrows. How different, after all, is Odysseus from Polyphemus?

Admittedly, the thrust of this question is mitigated when, immediately after the lion simile in Book 22, Odysseus tells Euryclea not to rejoice too ostentatiously for 'it is not piety to glory so over slain men' (οὐχ ὁσίη κταμένοισιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν εὐχετάασθαι, 22.412). Nor should we forget that Homer takes pains to cast the suitors as reckless sinners. An impressive lexical arsenal is marshalled to present their courtship of Penelope as a transgression. The suitors are called ἀλεῖται, ὑπερηνορέοντες and ἄγριοι, they are charged with ὕβρις, ἀναιδές, αἴσχεα and ὑπερβασίη. Incisively, the suitors' consumption of Odysseus' goods is couched in vocabulary that suggests murder: βίοτον (κατ-)ἔδειν.[37] Βίοτος primarily means 'life', and metonymically signifies what nourishes life, livelihood. That this phrase helps legitimize the suitors' execution comes to the fore in Telemachus' words in 1.374–80 (2.139–45):

> …that you go out of my palace and do your feasting elsewhere,
> eating up your own possessions, taking turns, household by household.
> But if you decide it is more profitable and better
> to go on, eating up one man's livelihood, without payment,
> then spoil my house. I will cry out to the gods everlasting
> in the hope that Zeus might somehow grant a reversal of fortunes.
> Then you may perish in this house, with no payment given.
> (ἐξιέναι μεγάρων [ἔξιτέ μοι μεγάρων]· ἄλλας δ' ἀλεγύνετε δαῖτας,
> ὑμὰ κτήματ' ἔδοντες, ἀμειβόμενοι κατὰ οἴκους.
> εἰ δ' ὔμιν δοκέει τόδε λωΐτερον καὶ ἄμεινον
> ἔμμεναι, ἀνδρὸς ἑνὸς βίοτον νήποινον ὀλέσθαι,
> κείρετ'· ἐγὼ δὲ θεοὺς ἐπιβώσομαι αἰὲν ἐόντας,
> αἴ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς δῷσι παλίντιτα ἔργα γενέσθαι·
> νήποινοί κεν ἔπειτα δόμων ἔντοσθεν ὄλοισθε.)

[36] Cf. Grethlein (2008) 42–3.
[37] 1.160; 11.116; 13.396; 428; 14.377; 15.32; 18.280.

Νήποινος refers not only, as elsewhere, to murder, but also to the destruction of Odysseus' livelihood, literally 'the eating of his life' (βίοτον ὀλέσθαι). The phrasing insinuates that the suitors' crime is equivalent to murder, and that consequently their death is the only appropriate response to it. Homer's persuasiveness shows not least in the comments of scholars, who emphasize the reciprocity in Odysseus' dealing with the suitors. Reece, for one, notes that the suitors 'should be prepared to be paid back in the same coin'.[38]

One may ask how grave the suitors' offence actually is: the suitors woo Penelope and try to assassin Telemachus; however, neither endeavour is successful. Doubts about the appropriateness of the killing of the suitors may increase in the light of the fate of the Atreids which Homer repeatedly compares with Odysseus' family. Whereas Orestes follows the so-called law of *talion* when he kills Aigisthos, the murderer of his father, Odysseus requites a material damage with mass murder. As we have seen, Odysseus is offered ample material compensation, but he rejects it with Achillean furor. Seen from this perspective, the *mnēstērophonia* may appear as an excessive act of revenge. That being said, we ought not to project onto the world of archaic epic our repudiation of revenge as nourished by the Christian idea of charity. In archaic Greece, revenge was a legitimate, indeed necessary defence of one's honour.[39] It was not necessarily bound to the measure of the harm one had received. Even later in the classical era, Xenophon considered it a virtue to outdo friends in benefactions and enemies in harm (…ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν εἶναι νικᾶν τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιοῦντα, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς…, *Mem.* 2.6.35).

And yet, while going out of his way to stigmatize the suitors, Homer embeds in his account voices that present an alternative view of their killing. Before offering recompensation, Eurymachus appeals to Odysseus: 'Then spare your own people' (…σὺ δὲ φείδεο λαῶν/ σῶν…, 22.54–5). The men Odysseus is about to slaughter are not random men but Odysseus' own people, some from Ithaca, others from neighbouring islands. Like Odysseus they belong to the local elite and form part of the dense aristocratic network that extends beyond the individual *polis*. The suitor Amphimedon, for example, is a guest-friend of Agamemnon (…ξεῖνος δέ τοι εὔχομαι εἶναι, 24.114). Together with Achilles and Ajax, Odysseus fought against Trojans, in his wanderings he braved monsters, but now he is killing his peers.

The weight of killing one's own people is palpable in the words with which Odysseus reminds his son of their precarious situation after the *mnēstērophonia* (23.118–22):

[38] Reece (1993): 179.
[39] On revenge in ancient Greece in general, see, e.g., Gehrke (1987), in the Homeric epics Wilson (2002).

For when one has killed only one man in a community,
and then there are not many avengers to follow, even
so, he flees into exile, leaving kinsmen and country.
But we have killed what held the city together, the finest
young men in Ithaca.[40]
(καὶ γάρ τίς θ' ἕνα φῶτα κατακτείνας ἐνὶ δήμῳ,
ᾧ μὴ πολλοὶ ἔωσιν ἀοσσητῆρες ὀπίσσω,
φεύγει πηούς τε προλιπὼν καὶ πατρίδα γαῖαν·
ἡμεῖς δ' ἔρμα πόληος ἀπέκταμεν, οἳ μέγ' ἄριστοι
κούρων εἰν Ἰθάκῃ...)

The damage done by Odysseus is also visible in Agamemnon's comment on the shadows of the suitors, as they enter Hades (24.106–13):

Amphimedon, what befell you that you came under the dark earth,
all of you choice young men, of the same age, nor could one, gathering
the best men out of all a city have chosen otherwise.
Was it with the ships, and did Poseidon, rousing a stormblast
of battering winds and waves towering prove your undoing?
Or was it on the dry land, did men embattled destroy you
as you tried to cut out cattle and fleecy sheep from their holdings,
or fight against them, for the sake of their city and women?
(Ἀμφίμεδον, τί παθόντες ἐρεμνὴν γαῖαν ἔδυτε
πάντες κεκριμένοι καὶ ὁμήλικες; οὐδέ κεν ἄλλως
κρινάμενος λέξαιτο κατὰ πτόλιν ἄνδρας ἀρίστους.
ἢ ὔμμ' ἐν νήεσσι Ποσειδάων ἐδάμασσεν
ὄρσας ἀργαλέους ἀνέμους καὶ κύματα μακρά,
ἦ που ἀνάρσιοι ἄνδρες ἐδηλήσαντ' ἐπὶ χέρσου
βοῦς περιταμνομένους ἠδ' οἰῶν πώεα καλά,
ἦε περὶ πτόλιος μαχεούμενοι ἠδὲ γυναικῶν;)

The *Odyssey* describes the killing of the suitors as a just punishment, at the same time it indicates the rupture that the extinction of an entire generation of aristocrats on Ithaca constitutes. The havoc which Odysseus wreaks on the *polis* can only be compared to the consequences of a war or a natural disaster.

The model of Achilles and his excessive violence adds weight to this alternative assessment of Odysseus and his revenge. The main perspective that dominates in the *Odyssey*

[40] Theoclymenus (15.224), an Aitolian (14.380) and one of Odysseus' fictitious Cretan personae (13.259) illustrate the exile of murderers.

is certainly positive in explicitly moralist terms: the killing of the suitors is presented as the deserved punishment following from an unbearable transgression. Not least the semantics used for the consumption of Odysseus' goods suggests that Odysseus merely pays back the suitors in kind. And yet, just as some comments alert us to the considerable damage to the *polis*, the foil of berserk-like Achilles makes us wonder about the appropriateness of Odysseus' response. Does Odysseus not go off the rails in his revenge, when he, seemingly out of character, rejects material recompensation and rages in a manner which brings him even close to Polyphemus? The Iliadic echoes make the *Odyssey* into more than into an adventure story, into a multi-facetted narrative engaged with ethical issues.[41]

IV. Odysseus and the companions: whose ἀτασθαλίη?

The capacity of the *Iliad's* Achilles to establish a critical perspective on Odysseus is confirmed by an allusion that occurs before the *mnēstērophonia*, in the *Apologoi*. Only one of the men sent to inquire about the smoke ascending from what turns out to be the house of Circe, returns from this mission: Eurylochus; the others Circe has transformed into animals. When Odysseus asks the remaining men to go to Circe's house, Eurylochus vehemently opposes this plan and challenges Odysseus' authority. Odysseus' response is vehement (10.438–42):

> So he spoke, and I considered in my mind whether
> to draw out the long-edged sword from beside my big thigh,
> and cut off his head and throw it on the ground, even though
> he was nearly related to me by marriage; but my companions
> checked me, first one then another speaking, trying to soothe me.
> (ὣς ἔφατ', αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γε μετὰ φρεσὶ μερμήριξα,
> σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ,
> τῷ οἱ ἀποτμήξας κεφαλὴν οὖδάσδε πελάσσαι,
> καὶ πηῷ περ ἐόντι μάλα σχεδόν· ἀλλά μ' ἑταῖροι
> μειλιχίοισ' ἐπέεσσιν ἐρήτυον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος·)

The evocation of Achilles in *Iliad* 1 at the end of the *Odyssey* remains an alluring, but tentative suggestion. Here, in contrast, the comparison is clearly 'intended', as Heubeck notes in his commentary.[42] It is not Athena, but the comrades who appease Odysseus; still, the

[41] Cf. Grethlein (2017) 205–42.
[42] Heubeck (1988-92) ad 10.438–42.

thought process of whether or not to draw the sword and to kill the man brings both scenes together.

Eurylochus is a shady figure. He behaves cowardly in this scene and later he will talk the Greeks into landing on Thrinacia and ultimately into slaughtering the cows of Helius. Nevertheless, Eurylochus' challenge to Odysseus is a strong one – Odysseus becomes angry not without reason. To bolster his plea, Eurylochus reminds the comrades of another trial: 'So too it happened with the Cyclops, when our companions/ went into his yard, and the bold Odysseus was of their company;/ for it was by this man's recklessness that these too perished' (ὥς περ Κύκλωψ ἔρξ', ὅτε οἱ μέσσαυλον ἵκοντο/ ἡμέτεροι ἕταροι, σὺν δ' ὁ θρασὺς εἵπετ' Ὀδυσσεύς·/ τούτου γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο, 10.435–7). Odysseus himself admits that he is to blame for the disastrous experience with the Cyclops (9.224–30):

> From the start my companions spoke to me and begged me
> to take some of the cheeses, come back again, and the next time
> to drive the lambs and kids from their pens, and get back quickly
> to the ship again, and go sailing off across the salt water;
> but I would not listen to them, it would have been better their way,
> not until I could see him, see if he would give me presents.
> My friends were to find the sight of him in no way lovely.
> (ἔνθ' ἐμὲ μὲν πρώτισθ' ἕταροι λίσσοντ' ἐπέεσσι
> τυρῶν αἰνυμένους ἰέναι πάλιν, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
> καρπαλίμως ἐπὶ νῆα θοὴν ἐρίφους τε καὶ ἄρνας
> σηκῶν ἐξελάσαντας ἐπιπλεῖν ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ·
> ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην, —ἦ τ' ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν, —
> ὄφρ' αὐτόν τε ἴδοιμι, καὶ εἴ μοι ξείνια δοίη.
> οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλ' ἑτάροισι φανεὶς ἐρατεινὸς ἔσεσθαι.)

Eurylochus' allegation gains force from the word ἀτασθαλίη. This is the very word with which Homer, prominently in the proem, blames the comrades for their fate and with which, repeatedly throughout the poem, the suitors are chastised. Here, however, the reproach of recklessness is leveled at Odysseus. This is a singular occurrence, and yet it has the capacity to make one wonder about whether the stigmatizing of comrades and suitors is not also a rhetorical strategy of exculpating Odysseus. We should not unduly press this interpretation – it is a vague possibility of reading the *Odyssey* against the grain, but it is noteworthy that another critic of Odysseus blames him for the death of both suitors and comrades in the same sentence. When the relatives of the murdered suitors meet, Eupeithes, the father of Antinous, exclaims (24.426–9):

Friends, this man's will worked great evil upon the Achaeans.
First he took many excellent men away in the vessels
with him, and lost the hollow ships, and lost all the people,
and then returning killed the best men of the Kephallenians.
(ὦ φίλοι, ἦ μέγα ἔργον ἀνὴρ ὅδε μήσατ' Ἀχαιούς·
τοὺς μὲν σὺν νήεσσιν ἄγων πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς
ὤλεσε μὲν νῆας γλαφυράς, ἀπὸ δ' ὤλεσε λαούς,
τοὺς δ' ἐλθὼν ἔκτεινε Κεφαλλήνων ὄχ' ἀρίστους.)

For my argument, it is of particular interest that the implicit evocation of Achilles in *Odyssey* 10 occurs in another context which opens up a critical perspective on Odysseus. While the model of Achilles in the *mnēstērophonia* may instil in the audience doubts about the revenge as a suitable and fairly reciprocating punishment, in the *Apologoi* it raises uncomfortable questions about Odysseus' relation with his comrades. After the quarrel with Agamemnon, Achilles withdraws from the battle and nearly provokes a full defeat of the Greek army. Just as he becomes responsible for the death of numerous soldiers, Odysseus may be more involved in the doom of the comrades than is explicitly stated in the *Odyssey*. The death of six men in the cave is only the immediate consequence of Odysseus' decision to meet the Cyclops. Polyphemus' curse arouses the anger of Poseidon. The storm in front of Scheria is the only intervention of Poseidon that Odysseus mentions in the *Apologoi*, but the narrator and speakers who possess authority such as Teiresias repeatedly name Poseidon's wrath as the cause of Odysseus' troubles. When seen from this perspective, Odysseus takes at least partial responsibility for the death of the men under his commando.

I hope to have shown that the relation between Odysseus and Achilles in Homeric epic is far more complex than the metapoetically charged juxtaposition of βίη versus μήτις, which Greg Nagy's *The Best of the Achaeans* has made a central creed of Homeric scholarship. There are certainly passages which envisage Achilles and Odysseus along these lines. In the embassy scene of the *Iliad*, for example, Achilles rejects Odysseus' speech with the words 'For as I detest the doorways of Death, I detest that man, who/ hides one thing in the depths of his heart, and speaks forth another' (ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν/ ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπῃ, 9.312–13). The explicit juxtapositions of the two heroes in the *Odyssey*, however, rather centre on their different fates: whereas Achilles gained κλέος at the expense of his *nostos*, it is the *nostos* that grants Odysseus fame. What is more, Achilles appears not only as Odysseus' antagonist, he is also repeatedly evoked as his model through oral intertextuality. Particularly in the *mnēstērophonia*, Odysseus is depicted against the backdrop of the *Iliad's* Achilles. Through pointed echoes, his revenge against the suitors

evokes Achilles' rage against the Trojans. This implicit alignment raises critical questions about Odysseus: does he become in his revenge as savage as Achilles after the death of Patroclus? Is he as responsible for the death of the comrades as Achilles for the death of the Greeks on the battlefield of Troy? These nagging questions go against the grain of the *Odyssey*, which presents Odysseus as a wily hero, and yet, raised and sustained by the poem's intricate dialogue with the *Iliad*, they make us wonder how good the best of the Achaeans actually are.

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