

MORAL ODYSSEUS

KOSMOS SOCIETY ~ AUGUST ~ TWO THOUSAND & TWENTY

1. [i,28] The other gods met in the house of Olympian Zeus, and the father of gods and men spoke first ... ‘Oh my, how mortals hold us gods responsible [*aitiōō*], for they say that their misfortunes come from us: but THEY RECEIVE THEIR SUFFERINGS, BEYOND WHAT IS FATED, BY WAY OF THEIR OWN ACTS OF RECKLESSNESS [*atasthaliā*] ... How can I forget godlike Odysseus than whom there is no more capable man on earth [in regard to *nóos*], nor more liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods that live in the sky? Bear in mind, however, that earth-encircler Poseidon is still furious with Odysseus for having blinded an eye of Polyphemus, king of the Cyclopes ... therefore though he will not kill Odysseus outright, he TORTURES him by preventing him from his homecoming [*nóstos*] ... [87] WE HAVE MADE UP OUR MINDS THAT HE IS TO HAVE HIS HOMECOMING.’

[v,28] ‘TELL CALYPSO THAT WE HAVE DECREED that poor enduring Odysseus is to return home [*nóstos*] ...’

3. [xxiv,477] Zeus gatherer of clouds answered, ‘My child, why should you ask me? WAS IT NOT BY YOUR OWN PLAN [NOOS] THAT NOBLE ODYSSEUS CAME HOME AND TOOK HIS REVENGE UPON THE SUITORS? Do whatever you like, but I will tell you what I think will be the most reasonable arrangement. Now that Odysseus is *revenged*, LET THEM SWEAR TO A SOLEMN COVENANT, in virtue of which he shall continue to rule, while we cause the others to forgive and forget the massacre of their sons and brothers. LET THEM THEN ALL BECOME FRIENDS AS HERETOFORE, AND LET PEACE AND PLENTY REIGN ...’ [547] Then Athena, daughter of Zeus of the aegis, assumed the form and voice of MENTOR, AND PRESENTLY MADE AN OATH between the two contending parties.

[xxiii,344] Then the owl-vision goddess Athena THOUGHT of another matter ...

1.1. MORAL PATTERNS ZEUS AND ATHENA converse (two openings), (a) both make speech acts in Scrolls One & Five that determine the plot (Zeus and Thetis in Homeric Iliad, also 40 days). (b) Causality of Zeus’ words: preliterate and non-secular culture, explanation < poetry and metaphor, not rational causality, natural > supernatural. Moral? (c) Poseidon ‘torments’ Odysseus in only one single incident, after leaving isle of Calypso: how does Zeus *know*? (Poseidon in v, no mention of Cyclops.) **Cyclops Question: the heart of the poem.**

THREE moral agencies in cosmos *moira*, Zeus, human action: (1) Irrational elements in Hom. Il.: Achilles and Patroclus, Sarpedon and Hector: are these logically *outside* of the plot? Circe’s and Cyclops’ prophecies? (2) How does Zeus have any effect in poem: bolt in xxiv (and after Thrinacia) and speech acts in i, v (three weeks at sea), and xxiv,539; *originates plot and authorises Athena*. (Bolt – Hom. Il.V, speech act in Il.I.) Zeus - *diké*.

(3) MORAL LIFE, human volition and moral agency: (a) Governing METAPHOR **commensality**: guest-host relations that establish moral conditions, protocols of food exchange including sacrifice where deities invited to consume, sacrificial cuisine briefly stabilises cosmos (smoke, meat, blood).

(b) Food circulation within the cosmos, ideally reciprocal exchanges that found moral relations: food, gifts, blood sacrifice, libation. Commensality establishes such social reciprocity.

(c) The *reckless* ignore commensality: FIRST MORTAL SCENE IN POEM, good and bad commensality, suitors perform no rites, despite altar of Zeus in palace. **Cyclops**, bad host and bad guest, hence central to plot. Final scene of heroic lineage dining. Commensality conduces to effect moral order in narrative.

Speech acts of Zeus *authorise* Athena, and commensality as METAPHOR OF MORAL ORDER: the argument.

1.2. MORAL STABILITY: (a) Hesiodic WD: two drives, destructive and creative > *diké* or moral stability (not Mosaic). (b) Judgement of RIGHT TIMING of work and rites, *hóra*, possesses moral valence. (c) WD: Oath, *hórkos*, verbal accord or commitment, speech act establishes equilibrium (xxiv), social contract enforced by conventional violence ... Violence of O (no amnesty) and oath of O.

1.3. Homeric JURISDICTION: (a) No judgement of king or legislation > conventions of *lex talionis* or *vendetta*, made civil by *ápoina* and *poiné* (-) not in WD, and *oath* (+). (b) O kills suitors, restores *diké* of kingdom: *ápoina* rejected, Eurymachus, xxii,54. Suitors *so* extreme that no customary *poiné* applies. Oath in xxiv resolves crisis.

MORAL PARADIGM: divine speech acts, metaphor of commensality, conventional violence, oath.

2.1. MORAL NARRATION PLOT AND STORY (English Patient). Hom. Od. many concurrent narratives, polytropic. *Two beginnings* at outset of Scrolls One & Five where Zeus and Athena converse about the voyage: TROY, CYCLOPS (-), CALYPSO, PHAEACIA (+), ITHACA, the hypostatic core narrative or voyage, a sequence implicit within the overall narrative of the poem, not explicit. **{First hypothetical Odyssey}**.

(a) i-iv, hearsay. Story (plus speech acts of deities).

(b) Speech act of Zeus > v-viii, Ogygia, Phaeacia > Audience. Origin of plot; O alone, Athena present.

(c) ix-xii VOYAGE, heroic Odysseus with crew, no Athena, (fiction at xi,362 - false/true, Theog. 27: *pseúdea?*).

{Second ancient Odyssey, like Herakles, Jason - ancient Paleo/Neolithic journey, not IE but Semitic, as Gilgamesh? Bacharova, 2016}. Story.

(d) xiii-xxiv, Ithaca > Audience. Mostly plot, excluding micronarratives.

(e) xxiii,310 integration, no Athena nor Poseidon **{Third edited Odyssey**, first plus second}. Story?

Half poem on Ithaca, one quarter on Phaeacia. Audience: Ogygia, Phaeacia, Ithaca (see and hear of O).

The Moral - PLOT: A FEW LINES FROM (a) AND ALL OF (b) AND MOST OF (d); rest is Story. [HEURISTIC.]

2.2. (a) NARRATIVE: cognitive not empirical, metonymy: aeroplane, cinema frames. (b) Mnemonics, 'poem comes to mind'? (c) At i,8 and xix,275 Thrinacia; i,70, and xx,19 the Cyclops occurs: irrational or due to **Edition**, not inspiration? CYCLOPS, THE CRUCIAL METONYM - contact point between plot and story (mattress): Thrinacia, Calypso (34 mentions, *navel*), Cyclops. (d) PROPHECIES in story, of Halitherses in i; Cyclops ix,512; Circe x,331; xii, Sirens know of O; Theoclymenus at xvii,155; and bird auguries of Helen and Theoclymenus.

3. MORAL EFFICACY Vyāsa in Epic Mahābhārata plot: creator and actor. (a) Athena as MENTOR of the PLOT (O's agent on Ithaca): this is her *NOOS*, her words *make* the plot (151 mentions). (b) Her first words to a mortal, a lie; her polytropic disguises/deceptions (Il.I). [Polytropic Poseidon in XIII.] (c) At xiii,302 she informs O that the suitors will soon die. (d) At v,22 and xxiv,479 Zeus knows that her *nóos* controls the plot. At xxiii,344 'she thought of another matter' (five mentions). At xxiv,547 she causes the OATH to be made: *termination of plot and story*. (e) O, Penelope, and Telemachus all influenced and transformed in *nóos* through her agency and active volition DURING THE PLOT: heroic family. **Athena, the moral force in the poem, Odysseus is the agent.**

4. (a) Triform O, in *hearsay* (self-promotion of ix-xii), in disguise, and in appearance when he violently, ritually, then verbally restores order to the kingdom: this last is the actively **Moral**. [Voyage/journey not terrestrial but verbal, usually in dialogue with the FEMININE: the hero as *speaker*.]

(b) ATHENA DOES WITH WORDS – THE REAL PLOT, beginning with Calypso.

(c) **Commensality** *the* metaphor of **moral order** in the poem: commencing with good and bad dining > Cyclops, a bad guest-host > a lineage of heroic men dine together at xxiv,384 in admission of each other.

The MORAL: Speech of Zeus, commensality, *nóos* and words of Athena, violence and oath of King Odysseus.

Apart from reference to the Cyclops, the narratives of Scrolls Nine to Twelve are apart from this process.

Methodology: inference, interpretation, argument: ART OF CLOSE READING

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The Sanskrit Hero, Karna in Epic Mahābhārata (2004); *Strī*, Women in Epic Mahābhārata (2009);

Jaya, Performance in Epic Mahābhārata (2011); *Supernature* (2012); *Heroic Kṛṣṇa*, Friendship in Epic Mahābhārata, and *Eroica* (2013);

In The Kacch, and *Windward* (2015); *Arjuna Pāṇḍava*, **The Double Hero in Epic Mahābhārata**, and *EROS* (2016);

Rāja Yudhiṣṭhira, Kingship in Epic Mahābhārata (2017); *Bhīṣma Devavrata*, Authority in Epic Mahābhārata (2018);

Vyāsa Redux, Narrative in Epic Mahābhārata (2019); and, *Song Of The Republic* (forthcoming, 2020).

