Mountains in the *Apologue*: Figures of Isolation in Society, Space, and Time

Hamish Williams

Abstract: While recent studies in the Homeric poems have explored the connotative value of topographic features (e.g. the sea, caves, etc.) and material objects (e.g. the bow, the olive tree, etc.) in the narratives, the significance of mountains has not been addressed. This study illustrates the pervasiveness of these spatial units in the *Apologue*, Books 9 to 12, of Homer's *Odyssey* and then goes on to explore the associations of isolation — from topographic, social, and temporal perspectives — which these units garner through their contexts and deployment.

Keywords: Homer; Odyssey; Mountains; *Apologue*; Space

The *Apologue* can been analysed from several interpretative perspectives: for example, as a site for inhospitable relationships;[1] as an argumentative speech designed to ensure that Odysseus, as speaker/guest, receives hospitality from his listening hosts;[2] as entailing a conflict between nature and culture, savage and civilized;[3] or as representing the threat of femininized entities.[4] This paper adopts a spatial perspective on the *Apologue* in the *Odyssey*,[5] identifying how these four books are characterized by a repetition of mountains and then exploring how these spatial units garner connotations of isolation through the contexts of their employment. This isolation is identified on three different levels: topographic, social, and temporal. Some critics have singled out the isolated quality of the *Apologue* and Odysseus' wanderings;[6] however, there is yet to be a decisive study which explores this characteristic on multiple levels, across several episodes of the *Apologue*, nor, moreover, has the particular role of mountains in elucidating this quality been discussed.

---

1 Cf. Reece (1993), 123-43. On Homeric hospitality, cf. Belmont (1962); Donlan (1982); Edwards (1975).

2 Cf. Most (1989); then, de Jong (1992), 11; (2004), 221; Hopman (2012), 21-3; Newton (2008), 9-14, 22-9.

3 Cf. Dougherty (2001), 95-7; esp. in the *Cyclopeia*, cf. Austin (1983), 14, 20-2; Reinhardt (1996), 81-3; Schein (1970), 76-7; Segal (1962), 34. For an ecocritical rereading of Odysseus' voyage, cf. Schultz (2009). On nature and culture in the Homeric poems, cf. Kirk (1970), 162-71; Redfield (1994); on ambiguities in this structural division, cf. Holmes (2015), 32-3.

4 Cf. Schein (1995), 19.

5 For general introductions to the recent "spatial turn" in Classics, cf. de Jong (2012b), 1-18; Gilhuly & Worman (2014), 1-13.

6 Cf. Cook (1995), 54-5; Lowenstam (1993), 197; Segal (1992), 490.

Jason König has recently observed that, to a large extent, the complexity of representations of mountains in ancient literature has only been dealt with in 'cursory terms'[7] by scholars, and that even in such insightful, pioneering examinations as Buxton's (1992) there is a paucity of critical engagement on how 'mountain depictions are woven through particular texts'.[8] König argues for the interpretative value of such intratextual readings of mountains in Greco-Roman literature in elucidating the cultural meaning and role of these figures.[9] This study undertakes such a closer, more detailed analysis of mountains within a specific Greek text, focusing on a defined portion of the Homeric *Odyssey*, which has a comparatively large density of mountain references and representations. I examine how these spatial units are deployed — and often enhanced through particular narrative techniques (such as narrator focalization, spatial contrasting, hodological spacing, and cartographic gazing) — so as to garner certain connotations or associated meanings (senses of isolation in society, space, and time) in the audience's imagination.

The semiotic approach of this paper follows recent spatial studies in the Homeric poems, which evaluate the symbolic value of certain figures in the narratives.[10] It is backed up, moreover, by studies into the traditional referentiality of the Homeric poems, which explore how repeated elements or units in the stories would have conveyed associated or connotative meanings, beyond their primary denotations, because of the audience's great familiarity with the contexts of these units' employment.[11] The ancient audience, attending a single performance of the Homeric songs, would not have simply ignored the traditional, repeated elements or units in a song as compositional fillers and looked for more creative, "unique" elements in the work; far from it, these traditional elements were what connected a particular performance to all other performances of that song, to other performances of a singer, and, indeed, to all the songs in that tradition.[12]

---

7 König (2016), 47.

8 König (2016), 47.

9 König (2016), 47-8.

10 On the symbolic value of spatial elements in the Homeric poems, cf. de Jong (2012b), 15; Elliger (1975), 100-2; Minchin (2001), 27; Tsagalis (2012), 7-8; for examples, cf. de Jong (2012a), 33-4; Tsagalis (2012), 79-90. In Odysseus' wanderings: for the sea, cf. Cook (1995), 50, 72; Dougherty (2001), 95-8; Purves (2010a), 71; the wind, cf. Purves (2010b), 334-5; caves, cf. Bergren (2008), 58; Bowra (1952), 135-6; Weinberg (1986), 26-8. For symbolic and ritual discussion of the sea and caves in Greek thought in general, cf. Buxton (1994), 97-108.

11 Cf. Foley (1991), 7; Kelly (2007), 4, 6. On space and traditional referentiality, cf. Tsagalis (2012), 79, 82.

12 Cf. Nagy (1996), 82.

The extent of the repetition of mountains in the *Apologue* can be ascertained in consultation with *Das Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (*LfgrE*).[13] By the term 'mountain', I include all Greek words which denote a spatial image of 'mountainousness' to the audience:[14] (i) forms of *oros*;[15] (ii) compounds from *oros*;[16] (iii) named mountains; and (iv) components of a mountain: *akries*,[17] *koryphē*,[18] *rion*,[19] *skopelos*,[20] and *skopiē*.[21]

Employing these parameters, the following 33 incidences occur in the *Apologue*:[22] ὄρος … Νήριτον (9.21-22); ὀρέων (9.113); κορυφὰς ὀρέων (9.121); αἶγας ὀρεσκῴους (9.155); ῥίῳ … ὀρέων (9.191-2); λέων ὀρεσίτροφος (9.292); ὄρος (9.315); ἄκριας (9.400); κορυφὴν ὄρεος (9.481); σκοπιήν (10.97); ὀρέων (10.104); ὄρεος κορυφήν (10.113); σκοπιήν (10.148); σκοπιήν (10.194); ὀρέστεροι … λέοντες (10.212); ἄκριας (10.281); Ὄλυμπον (10.307); οὔρεϊ (11.243); Ὄσσαν (11.315); Οὐλύμπῳ (11.315); Ὄσσῃ (11.315); Πήλιον (11.316); ὄρεσσι (11.574); σκόπελοι (12.73); κορυφῇ (12.74); κορυφήν (12.76); σκοπέλῳ (12.80); σκόπελον (12.95); σκόπελον (12.101); σκοπέλῳ (12.108); σκοπέλου (12.220); σκοπέλοισιν (12.239); σκόπελον (12.430).

Ithaca

The first reference to a mountain (9.21-2) occurs in Odysseus' autobiographic introduction to his Phaeacian hosts (9.16-28). Of interest to this study of isolation is the concessive disclaimer which immediately follows Odysseus' wish to be the Phaeacians' guest-friend: 'καὶ ἀπόπροθι δώματα ναίων' (9.18).[23] Odysseus creates a physical distance between himself and his hosts, declaring his own home to be far removed from them. In fact, his ensuing description of Ithaca[24] (9.21-7) serves to highlight the topographic seclusion of his island and to push his mountainous, 'rugged' ('τρηχεῖ' [9.27]) home into a spatial periphery. This is achieved in three ways: through Ithaca's focalization from afar by the narrator, through its positioning relative to the neighbouring isles, and through its westwardness.

---

13 All Greek text is based on the standard TLG edition.

14 For repetition as oriented by the audience's semantic recognition of similarity and not formal structures, cf. Kelly (2007), 14. For repetition as a cognitive process which can be recognized by an audience through visualization, cf. Minchin (2001), 25-8.

15 Cf. *LfgrE* (2004), 806-11.

16 Cf. *LfgrE* (2004), 764-7.

17 Cf. *LfgrE* (1955), 434. '*Höhen, Bergspitzen*' (434).

18 Cf. *LfgrE* (1991), 1495-6. '*Spitze d. Gebirges*' (1496).

19 Cf. *LfgrE* (2006), 40. '*Berg-, Felsvorsprung*' (40).

20 Cf. *LfgrE* (2006), 153. '*Klippe*' (153).

21 Cf. *LfgrE* (2006), 154. '*Ausschau, Warte*' (154).

22 Partitives/appositions counted together. Excluding proper nouns, 34 'mountain units' occur in the remainder of the *Odyssey* (cf. *LfgrE*: *as above*). Unless otherwise stated, all line references in this article refer to Homer's *Odyssey*.

23 '[A]lthough my own home is far from here' (Shewring [1980], 99). Translations/paraphrases not cited are my own.

24 On reconciling the fictional/real Ithaca, cf. Andrews (1962), 17-20; Bittlestone (2005), 34-9; Luce (1998), 165-89.

Ithaca is 'εὐδείελον' (9.21), a word which denotes a sense of 'visual clarity' — '*gut sichtbar*'.[25] The spatial virtue of a landmark being 'εὐδείελον' lies not in a focalizing subject's proximity to such a landmark, but rather his or her great distance; outside of Homer, Greek lexicographers have occasionally rendered the word as 'far seen'.[26] In effect, Odysseus, as narrator, is visualizing Ithaca from an external position, from the sea.[27] The next piece of spatial information the Phaeacian listeners receive of Ithaca is an aspect of topography: Ithaca has a mountain called Neriton (9.22), which is qualified with two adjectives, 'εἰνοσίφυλλον'[28] and 'ἀριπρεπές' (9.22). The second adjective used to qualify Neriton, 'ἀριπρεπές', is similar to 'εὐδείελον' in its denotations — that is, of an object which is 'very clearly seen' or 'conspicuous'.[29] Odysseus is describing Mount Neriton, like Ithaca, as 'conspicuous' for the simple fact that he is focusing in on the island from a long range, an external position, and the mountain is the most observable topographical feature on Ithaca, 'viewed from afar'. But after Odysseus has offered his listeners a glance at his native land, he goes no closer. All we initially receive is a solitary mountain, clearly seen from a distance; there are no beaches, harbours, rivers, villages, houses — least of all, people. In fact, he turns away from Ithaca to examine the other islands, Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus (9.24), which are closest to his homeland.

This type of long range perspective, or 'extreme long shot' in film terms,[30] which Odysseus as narrator affords his Phaeacian audience of Ithaca and Mount Neriton in Book 9 can be compared and contrasted with the gradual "zooming-in camera" of the primary narrator, "Homer", in Book 5, when Odysseus, as hero, approaches Scheria on his raft, having departed from Ogygia:[31]

> At 279-281 the mountains of the island … become visible; at 358-359 he sighs that the island is still 'far off'; at 392, lifted up by a wave, he views it as nearby; at 398 he is able to see the woods; at 400-405 and 411-414 he hears the breakers and gets a good look at the steep coast; and at 441-443 he finally spots a place to go ashore, the mouth of a river, bare of rocks and out of the wind.[32]

The movement into land from sea here is focalized by the narrator from the perspective of the drifting hero, providing an increasing amount of visual data as the natural topography of Scheria draws nearer and into character view. In both narratives (5.279, 9.22), mountains act as the first landmark, focalized from afar; however, while in Book 5 'a highly refined technique of zooming in'[33] allows Odysseus, and the poem's

---

25 Cf. *LfgrE* (1991), 769; Luce (1998), 166-7. For 'εὐδείελον' as (a) 'clear, distinct' or (b) 'fair in the afternoon', cf. Stanford (1996), 349; *contra* (b) cf. Luce (1998), 166

26 Cf. 'εὐδείελον', Liddell & Scott (1940).

27 Luce (1998), 184.

28 '[Q]uivering with leafy coppices' (Shewring [1980], 99). For the image of a forested mountain in the *Apologue*, cf. 9.191, 10.103-4, 11.316.

29 *LfgrE* (1955), 1277-8. For other contexts of use, cf. 8.176, 8.390, 8.424.

30 Nelmes (ed.) (2012), 486. On Odysseus as film-maker, cf. Minchin (2001), 25-6; Tsagalis (2012), 63; Winkler (2007), 50.

31 De Jong (2012a), 26-7.

32 De Jong (2012a), 26-7.

33 De Jong (2012a), 26.

audience, to be gradually familiarized with the new landscape of Scheria, in Book 9 the reference to a mountain (Neriton) is the solitary topographic data we receive and is thus indicative of an 'extreme long shot', and one which never draws any closer to Odysseus' homeland. Ithaca is a land topographically far removed from the present position of storyteller and audience in Scheria. From a character-narrator perspective, this focalized physical distance is important in accentuating the suffering (9.12-13) and estrangement (9.34-6) which Odysseus expresses. From a thematic perspective of the *Apologue*, this sense of isolation, in differing respects, will be tied to the audience's connotative understanding of the various mountains which are encountered.

Aside from narrator/character focalization, the shift to Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus ('DSZ') (9.24) gives Odysseus a further opportunity to isolate Ithaca through a relative spatial contrasting, pushing his own island to the cartographic periphery (9.22-6).[34] DSZ are described as being 'away from' Ithaca, 'ἄνευθε' (9.26);[35] and this is to be contrasted with their extreme closeness to one another, 'μάλα σχεδὸν ἀλλήλῃσι' (9.23);[36] Ithaca lies to the west, 'πρὸς ζόφον' (9.26),[37] whereas DSZ lie to the east, 'πρὸς ἠῶ τ' ἠέλιόν τε' (9.26); and Ithaca lies farther out to the sea, 'πανυπερτάτη εἰν ἁλὶ κεῖται' (9.25),[38] and, therefore, the other three islands are closer to the mainland of Greece. All three of these relative spatial co-ordinates are designed to isolate Ithaca from its closest neighbours.

The association between Ithaca's westwardness and its topographic isolation is achieved through the lack of physical boundaries to the west of the island. Ithaca is given only eastern parameters, the islands of DSZ and the mainland. It is afforded no borders or relative position to the west, apart from the open mass of the sea itself, 'πανυπερτάτη εἰν ἁλὶ κεῖται' (9.25). Ithaca is positioned on the very edge of Greek habitation, beyond which lies the sea, and, ultimately, Oceanus (11.21).[39] The association between westwardness and remoteness in Ithaca becomes clearer upon examining other contexts of western travel in the *Apologue*.[40] The farthest west, 'ὑπὸ ζόφον' (11.57), which Odysseus and his men travel is to the very edge of the Ocean, where the Cimmerians live (11.13-19); life among these people exemplifies the literal denotations of westward travel, 'πρὸς ζόφον', as 'lying towards darkness'.[41] It is here

34 On the spatial ambiguity implied by this description of Ithaca, cf. Burgess (2017), 27-9

35 Cf. *LfgrE* (1955), 820; Andrews (1962), 18.

36 Andrews (1962), 18.

37 Andrews (1962), 18.

38 I have omitted 'χθαμαλή' (9.25) as semantically irreconcilable, cf. Stanford (1996), 349. 'χθαμαλή' might denote (a) 'low-lying' or (b) 'close to the shore' (cf. Luce (1998), 167; *LfgrE* (2006), 1205-6). While (a) is contradicted by Ithaca's rugged terrain, (b) ignores Ithaca's western removal from the mainland. Also, 'πανυπερτάτη' ('highest of all' or 'farthest out') is contradicted (Stanford [1996], 349). On the sense of 'χθαμαλή', cf. Andrews (1962), 18; Luce (1998), 168; Rebert (1928), 377-87 (on its focalization from the perspective of sailors on the mainland).

39 Norman Austin ([1975], 97) observes a tripartite connection between Ithaca's westwardness, its rugged terrain, and its isolation. He also transfers the remote quality of Ithaca to its inhabitants (98).

40 For a general study of western travel in the Greek imagination, cf. Nesselrath (2005)

41 *LfgrE* (1991), 876.

that Odysseus, under Circe's instructions, confronts Teiresias and the various shades of the Underworld. Travel into the extreme west has removed Odysseus from the sphere of human life, into what Dougherty describes as the 'ultimate expression of the other',[42] in the form of the Underworld. Similarly, westward travel, 'πρὸς ζόφον' (12.80-1), also takes Odysseus to the cavernous home of Scylla, which entails a radical movement away from a known human environment. Austin emphasizes the fact that, like the Underworld (11.57), Scylla's realm is clouded over, 'ἠεροειδές' (12.80), a place concealed from our gaze.[43]

The Cyclopes and Polyphemus

The next reference to mountains in the *Apologue* occurs in Odysseus' ethnographic prelude to his encounter with the Cyclopes; home for the anthropophagous ogres lies on the peaks of mountains, inside hollow caves (9.113-4).[44] The society of the Cyclopes is described as being without 'ἀγοραὶ βουληφόροι' and 'θέμιστες' (9.112).[45] The *agora* was a place of gathering in the Homeric world, a site of collective social interaction, where decisions could be made; thus the noun is partnered with the adjective 'βουληφόροι'.[46] In the *Apologue*, the formula, 'καὶ τότ' ἐγὼν ἀγορὴν θέμενος μετὰ πᾶσιν ἔειπον' (9.171, 10.188, 12.319)[47] is used three times for occasions when Odysseus summons his *hetairoi* and gives counsel as to what course of action to take.[48] Lowenstam views Odysseus' *agora* at 9.171 as an indication of the 'social conventions'[49] of the Ithacans, to be contrasted with the 'isolation'[50] of the Cyclopes, who are without any place of assembly. The fact that the Cyclopes are without 'θέμιστες' is a repetition of their earlier characterization as 'ἀθεμίστων' (9.106).[51] This lack of *themis*[52] denotes here a general lack of law and order, appropriate for a people who do not have any *agorai*; and, accordingly, at the end of the *Apologue*, in a splendid simile, we learn that the *agora* is the correct place where legal judgements are cast (12.438-40).

The Cyclopes, in short, display a lack of social collectivity and order, what Segal terms 'rudimentary social organization and isolated nuclear families'.[53] Of relevance here is the juxtaposition which lines 112 and 113 display. The negation of 'ἀγοραί' and 'θέμιστες' leads to an adversative clause, where the antithesis of such social collectivity and order is explained *in terms of* the natural topography: 'ἀλλ' οἵ γ' ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων

42 Dougherty (2001), 98.
43 Austin (1975), 97.
44 The Cyclopes and Polyphemus were also associated with mountains in later Greco-Roman stories, particularly Mount Etna (Buxton [2016], 30).
45 '[A]ssemblies to debate in … ancestral ordinances' (Shewring [1980], 101).
46 Lowenstam (1993), 146-7.
47 'I called my men together and spoke to them all' (Shewring [1980], 103).
48 Cf. *LfgrE* (1955), 89.
49 Lowenstam (1993), 194.
50 Lowenstam (1993), 194.
51 Belmont (1962), 166.
52 For further readings on *themis*, cf. Hirzel (1966); Rexine (1977), 1-6.
53 Segal (1992), 495.

ναίουσι κάρηνα' (9.113). The Cyclopes do not have assemblies and laws, 'but rather live on the peaks of high mountains'. That a life spent among the mountains leads to social alienation is then further qualified by the ensuing clauses, 'θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος / παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων, οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσι' (9.114-5).[54] Each patriarch among the Cyclopes only cares for his immediate kin and does not pay any heed to the rest of the people. The social behaviour of the Cyclopes is thus linked with their inhabited topography.

In his discussion of mountains in the Greek imagination, Richard Buxton defines an *oros* not only by its physical height — a relative quantity which, under contemporary comparative survey, seems to have varied from some several thousand metres to a mere "hill" of about one hundred metres — but also often by its opposition to the social space of the city, where people dwell, and the space of the plains, where people engage in agriculture;[55] '[h]eight is once again only part of the story: a contrast with an area of cultivation is equally important'.[56] Mountains in the Greek myths are frequently places either where the wild or human wildness flourishes[57] or where social norms or identities are inverted.[58] Similarly, in the *Cyclopeia*, mountains are characterized not necessarily by virtue of their physical size but rather in oppositional terms to the social space of the agora, and thus the collectivity, group interactions, and law-making which occur there.[59] Such lack of cohesion and disregard for Greek customs (particularly, that of hospitality) are notable developments in the subsequent story of Polyphemus.[60]

In the descriptive preamble to Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus (9.187-92), the ogre is explicitly characterized as an isolated figure: he shepherds his flock alone, 'οἶος', and far away, 'ἀπόπροθεν' (9.188; cf. 9.315); he has no contact with other people, 'μετ' ἄλλους' (9.188); he is far away, 'ἀπάνευθεν' (9.189); and like his Cyclopean brethren (9.106, 112), he is marked out for his lack of social order, 'ἀθεμίστια' (9.189).[61] The context builds up his isolation, both geographic, in shepherding his flock in a far

54 '[A]nd the head of each family heeds no other, but makes his own ordinances for wife and children' (Shewring [1980], 101).

55 Buxton (1992), 2.

56 Buxton (1992), 2. Also, on distinguishing an *oros* from an *akropolis* (as lying in a *polis*), cf. 2.

57 Cf. Buxton (1992), 7-8. König's (2016) study of mountains in the *Geography* of Strabo contrasts the depiction of mountains in two respects (48-9, 65-7): as areas of the uncivilized (cf. 49-50) and as areas being domesticated (53-8) or already domesticated and thus productive to a city (59-65).

58 Cf. Buxton (1992), 9.

59 Edwards (1993), 33-4.

60 On the Island of the Goats (9.116-78), the references to mountains (9.155; cf. 9.121) are oblique. The island's isolation is indicated by a limitless food supply (9.118) (Bakker [2013], 61-2) and the presence of nymphs (9.154-5) (Ustinova [2009], 55-8). On this wild, remote land and Odysseus as colonist, cf. 9.119-35; Byre (1994), 358; de Jong (2004), 234; Edwards (1993), 28; Reinhardt (1996), 78; *contra* Louden (2011), 181. On the Cyclopes' relationship with the island, cf. Austin (1975), 144-6; Byre (1994), 360; Kirk (1970), 165; Mondi (1983), 27. For scholarship on the island, cf. Bakker (2013), 60; for its plot role, cf. Reinhardt (1996), 77; composition, cf. Reece (1993), 127; and the Phaeacians, cf. Clay (1980), 261-4.

61 Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989), 25.

removed territory, and social, in not interacting with his fellows and in being divorced from expected Greek behaviour, hence 'ἀθεμίστια'. In this context, it is appropriate that the ogre is compared to a mountain in a simile. And, tellingly, the mountain simile itself extrapolates this sense of seclusion from the preceding passage: Polyphemus is likened to a solitary 'wooded peak among high mountains, which appears apart from the rest', 'ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι / ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὅ τε φαίνεται οἶον ἀπ' ἄλλων' (9.191-92).[62]

The mountain simile characterizes Polyphemus as a topographically and socially isolated figure. Topographic remoteness occurs because the spatial image of the isolated mountain peak reminds us that Polyphemus himself is a mountain-dweller, his home is in the ranges like his fellow Cyclopes (cf. 9.113, 315, 400, 481), and so the landscape of geographical isolation in the metaphor can be transferred by the poem's audience to Polyphemus' own literal dwelling. There are, indeed, points of contact in the language used to describe the earlier dwellings of the Cyclopes — 'οἵ γ' ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων ναίουσι κάρηνα' (9.113) — and the Polyphemus mountain simile — 'ἀλλὰ ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι / ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων' (9.191-92). The two genitive plurals are identical and 'κάρηνα' (9.113) corresponds in sense to 'ῥίῳ' (9.191) as peaks of these mountains. These are people who live in geographically isolated peaks among mountain ranges. The landscape of the simile also, of course, becomes a vehicle to reflect Polyphemus' social alienation (the "tenor" of the simile) from the other Cyclopes at 9.187-9: just as the mountain peak is geographically removed from all other mountains, so Polyphemus as an individual is removed from all others. Through the simile, the land and its inhabitants have become fused; topographic isolation (dwellings) and social isolation (individuals) combine.[63]

Polyphemus' alienation reaches its plot fulfilment, the "pay-off", in the scene of his blinding. After he cries for help from his neighbours (9.399-400) and informs them of 'Nobody's' assault (9.408), his countrymen abandon him because of Odysseus' trick (9.410) and then diagnose his characteristic aloofness as a significant symptom of his particular malady (9.410-12). Polyphemus' isolation, 'οἷον ἐόντα' (9.410), in combination with his ailment is a sure sign that he is suffering at the hands of Zeus, 'Διὸς μεγάλου' (9.411). Finally, the other Cyclopes instruct Polyphemus to pray to his father, Poseidon, 'εὔχεο πατρὶ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι' (9.412). The references to Zeus and Poseidon at the moment of his defeat are significant in consolidating the ogre as an isolated figure. In the context of the *Cyclopeia*, Zeus, who is 'ξείνιος' (9.271) and 'ἐπιτιμήτωρ' (9.270) (cf. *Il.* 13.624), acts as a caretaker for the social-religious ritual of hospitality and for the welfare of guests (9.266-71).[64] While Polyphemus earlier rejects the sovereignty of Zeus and the social reciprocity of the hospitality ritual (9.259-76), preferring his own individual physical strength (9.276),[65] it is ironic that his subsequent

---

62 For another lonely mountain in the *Apologue*, cf. 11.574.

63 On the topography and inhabitants in the Homeric poems, cf. Austin (1975), 102; Cook (1995), 54.

64 Tsagarakis (1977), 25; cf. *Il.* 13.624-5, *Od.* 6.207-8, 14.402-6. On *xeinoi* and suppliants, hospitality and supplication, cf. Gould (1973), 78-9, 90-4.

65 This physical strength/violence/isolation is picked up by the mountain lion simile at 9.292. For associations of lion similes, cf. Scott (1974), 58-62; *contra*, cf. 6.130-6 (Glenn [1998], Rutherford [2001], 139-140), 10.212.

defeat is articulated by the other Cyclopes in terms of his very isolation and the wrath of Zeus.

Polyphemus' filial attachment to Poseidon (cf. 9.412, 517-21, 528-35), on the other hand, is also reflective of a sense of estrangement in the *Odyssey*. Whereas Zeus, among his various divine roles,[66] is often motivated towards ensuring social justice among men in the *Odyssey*,[67] Poseidon tends to act in a more 'private'[68] manner.[69] Several factors characterize Poseidon as an isolated figure in the *Odyssey*: he is geographically dislocated in the far-removed territory of Ethiopia at the start of the epic (1.22-6);[70] his angry attitude to Odysseus (e.g. 5.282-96) is to be contrasted with the more benevolent, pitying stance adopted by the other gods (1.19-21);[71] and he is the father of numerous primordial monsters, who are hostile to the Olympian gods, and can thus be associated with an older order, a more primitive form of power[72] — Poseidon is temporally removed from the current state of affairs in the Greek world, the 'here and now of Zeus' reign'.[73]

Of particular interest to the thematic connection between mountains and isolation is Poseidon's threat against the Phaeacians. Alcinous recounts Poseidon's threat before Odysseus commences his narration (8.564-9): Poseidon, angry that the Scherians are rendering his tempestuous seas a little too easy to cross (undermining an important part of his identity as a sea god), threatens to put a stop to their easy-going movements across the seas by smashing a ship and through wrapping 'a great mountain around their city', 'μέγα … ὄρος πόλει' (8.569). Isolation is implied by the verb 'ἀμφικαλύψειν' (8.569). If this mountainous threat were to be carried out, Scheria would be geographically concealed from the rest of the world, 'veiled all around' and removed from sight. Furthermore, the characteristic sea-trade and voyaging of the Phaeacians, their fondness for visiting foreign shores (8.557-63), would also be hindered, and thus the mountain would entail social alienation for the residents of Scheria.[74]

The final reference to mountains in Book 9 occurs when Odysseus' ship endeavours to make its escape from Polyphemus. The hero proceeds to lecture the ogre about his failure to understand proper hospitality, to which the giant responds by breaking off the peak of a large mountain, 'κορυφὴν ὄρεος μεγάλοιο' (9.481), and tossing it at Odysseus' ship (9.475-82). The literal employment of mountains, or parts thereof, for violent ends

66 Cf. Tsagarakis (1977), 1-19, 27-33.

67 Tsagarakis (1977), 19-27.

68 Lloyd-Jones (1983), 29; cf. Friedrich (1991), 16.

69 On not oversimplifying the character of the Homeric gods, cf. Allan (2006), 25; Fenik (1974), 211; Friedrich (1991) 19. On Zeus' many functions (including destructive), cf. Friedrich (1991), 17; Tsagarakis (1977), 1-33. On a sociable picture of Poseidon in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, cf. Allan (2006), 22; Erbse (1986), 115; Segal (1992), 499.

70 Cook (1995), 20-1; cf. Austin (1975), 93; Tsagalis (2012), 147-8.

71 Segal (1992), 490-1; cf. Cook (1995), 20-3.

72 Segal (1992), 497.

73 Segal (1992), 498; *contra* Allan (2006), 15-27.

74 For another mountainous act by Poseidon, cf. 11.241-4 (cf. 3.290). As in the isolation of Scheria, a form of *kryptein* is used. On such mountains as purely scalar devices, cf. Scott (1974), 21-3, 120-1.

is repeated in two other passages in the *Apologue*.[75] Firstly, in Book 10 (118-24), the Laestrygonians hurl rocks at Odysseus' trapped fleet from the cliff-tops, 'ἀπὸ πετράων' (10.121).[76] And, secondly, in Book 11 (305-20), we hear of Otus and Ephialtes, whose plan was to make war with and defeat the Olympians by piling mountain upon mountain until they reached heaven (11.315-6).[77] These three encounters fashion mountains as instruments of war, as objects which can be torn apart or up-rooted for destructive purposes. In the case of Polyphemus, this almost results in the beaching of Odysseus' ship back onto the giant's shore (9.485-6); the Laestrygonians are far more successful in their anthropophagy than the Cyclops, annihilating the entire Ithacan fleet, barring a single ship (10.121-30); and the brothers Otus and Ephialtes are only stopped from attacking the home of the gods, and up-rooting the universal order, on account of their unripened youth (11.317).

In these passages (9.475-82, 10.118-24, 11.305-20), the upheaval of mountains connotes a temporal detachment or removal from the present state of Olympian autocracy in the *Odyssey*, where Zeus is in charge,[78] to a more distant, primitive time, which was characterized by a violent opposition to the Olympians and, in particular, Zeus *xeinios*. Such an opposition is most manifest in the mythological portraits of the catalogue of heroines, where Otus and Ephialtes plan a mountain-based attack on the Olympian gods; and their desired course of action, moreover, mirrors that of other early hostile figures in Greek mythology, such as the Titans.[79] A similar temporal removal, to a prehistoric time before the story time of the *Odyssey*, is also apparent in the assault of the Laestrygonians upon Odysseus' men. In the very line before these cannibals rain rocks down from the cliff tops upon the Ithacan ships (10.121-2), they are described as: 'μυρίοι, οὐκ ἄνδρεσσιν ἐοικότες, ἀλλὰ Γίγασιν' (10.120).[80] The comparison to Giants at this exact point in the narrative suggests that the subsequent mountain-breaking actions of the Laestrygonians belong to a primitive and hostile order of interaction. Thus Segal characterizes both the Cyclopes and the Phaeacians as belonging to a more primitive time on account of their respective associations with Giants.[81]

The Giant simile might fulfil a scalar function, like that which Scott recommends for mountain similes;[82] it is instructive, however, to observe that in post-Homeric artistic and poetic depictions the mythical Giants were not marked out to such a degree for their physical scale, like their Titanic predecessors or Otus and Ephialtes, but rather for their hostile actions towards the Olympian gods — only in later classical representations did their physical size become both inflated and conflated with that of the Titans.[83] Although it should be noted in passing that our knowledge of the Gigantomachy, the battle of the Giants with the Olympians, itself post-dates Homeric verse, and that there is no

---

75 For an interrelation between landscape and action in the *Iliad*, cf. Fenno (2005), 492-4.

76 '[*F*]*elsiges Gebirge, Felsmassiv … Felsvorsprung, Klippe*' (*LfgrE* [2004], 1198).

77 On Mount Olympus (11.315) as unrelated to heaven, cf. Stanford (1996), 393.

78 Segal ([1992], 491) argues that Zeus' hegemony is consolidated in the course of the poem.

79 Segal (1992), 497.

80 '[T]hronging up in multitudes, looking not like men but like the lawless Giants' (Shewring [1980], 116).

81 Segal (1992), 497.

82 Scott (1974), 22.

83 Delcourt & Rankin (1965), 211-3.

reference to this event in the poems, the characterization of Giants as being savage, lawless, beyond divine order, over-bearing, and even hubristic is still evident in the text, and does not need specific references to the battles with the gods to indicate this feature of their natures.[84]

Alcinous declares his people's kinship to the Giants, along with the Cyclopes, and refers to them as 'ἄγρια' tribes (7.206), a word which in the *Odyssey* often denotes a wild people, who are outside the law — and also a sense of godlessness.[85] When Athena provides Odysseus with a history of the royal house of the Phaeacians, she names Eurymedon, the king of the Giants, as the grandfather of Nausithous, father to Alcinous (7.56-60). The choice of adjectives to characterize the Giants in this passage is not positive. While 'ὑπερθύμοισι' (7.59) ('high-hearted' or 'high-spirited') can have positive connotations,[86] its combination with 'ἀτάσθαλον' (7.60), 'reckless', cannot be deemed to form an overall benevolent description. There is an explicit recognition in the narrative of their fall here, 'ὤλεσε' (7.60), that their lofty, reckless natures, 'ὑπερθύμοισι … ἀτάσθαλον' have contributed partly towards their destruction (7.59-60). Polyphemus' hubris (9.106, 275-80) led, similarly, to the loss of his eye,[87] and the youthful recklessness of Otus and Ephialtes to their destruction by Apollo (11.307-20).[88] It should be noted that 'ἀτάσθαλον' (7.60) does not have positive connotations elsewhere in the poem.[89] The ethical orientation of the Giants is further consolidated by their familial relation to Poseidon (7.56). Poseidon is a common factor connecting several prehistoric, anti-Olympian entities, including Otus and Ephialtes and Polyphemus.

In short, the juxtaposition of the Laestrygonians' 'Gigantic nature'[90] and their upheaval and tossing of rocks from the cliff tops (10.120-22) is reflective of their primitive, anti-social, anti-Olympian behaviour in this part of the narrative. And while the Laestrygonians may not be openly scornful of Zeus *xeinios*, like Polyphemus and brothers Otus and Ephialtes, their behaviour is in contravention of the custom of *xenia*: they ignore the rights of their guests, and, instead of offering them food, they turn them into food (10.124).

Polyphemus' tossing of the mountain peak at Odysseus' ship (9.481-2) occurs after a direct rebuke from the Ithacan hero (9.475-9). Odysseus' speech is intended to lecture Polyphemus on his failure to recognize hospitality, and therefore on the consequent punishment which he has earned from Zeus *xeinios* and the other Olympians. Polyphemus responds to the Ithacan hero's censure in the only way he knows how — through individual brute force,[91] the very quality which Odysseus has just condemned, 'κρατερῇφι βίηφι' (9.476). This individual physical force of Polyphemus is then to be contrasted with the appropriate behaviour which he ought to have displayed to his

84 Segal (1992), 497.
85 Cf. *LfgrE* (1955), 97; Nestle (1942), 65.
86 *LfgrE* (2006), 739.
87 Thornton (1970), 39.
88 Fuqua (1991), 51-2.
89 Bakker (2013), 114-6. On the differences of *atasthaliē* in the *Iliad*/*Odyssey*, cf. Muellner (1996), 43-4. On *atasthaliē* as a key concept linking the proem of the *Odyssey* to the *Apologue*, cf. Nagler (1990), 339.
90 Cf. Cook (1995), 72.
91 Segal (1992), 504.

'ξείνους' as monitored by Zeus (9.478-9). Like the 'Gigantic' Laestrygonians and Otus and Ephialtes, Polyphemus' actions, ripping a peak off a mountain, place him in a primitive category, in which the social order imposed by Zeus was not respected, but, rather, challenged through sheer physical might. It is of further interest to this characterization that when Polyphemus does recognize his own defeat by the crafty Ithacan, his response is to turn to his father, Poseidon (9.528-35), who represents a more archaic form of divine power, governed by hostile, private vengeance rather than the social justice of Zeus in the *Odyssey*.

The Laestrygonians

The dispersal of mountains in the Laestrygonian episode follows a similar pattern to that of the *Cyclopeia*: as topographical markers in the land (e.g. 9.113=10.104), as part of a simile (9.191-192=10.113), and as a means for a violent attack (9.481-2=10.121-2). With regard to mountains as topographical markers, there are three main references in the sequence leading up to the Ithacan arrival in the city: the high cliff, 'πέτρη / ἠλίβατος' (10.87-8), which wraps around the Laestrygonian harbour, broken only by an inlet formed by opposing headlands (10.89-90); a rugged peak, 'σκοπιὴν … παιπαλόεσσαν' (10.97), which Odysseus climbs up; and the inland mountains, 'ὀρέων' (10.104), which the Ithacan embassy witnesses.

Just as in Odysseus' opening description of Ithaca and Mount Neriton (9.21-8), the introduction to the Laestrygonian land (10.80-6) juxtaposes its mountainous quality and sheerness (cf. 'αἰπὺ' [10.81]) with its extreme topographic seclusion, its position on the very edge of the map.[92] Thus it is said to have taken a considerable amount of sailing time, six days and six nights, for the Ithacan fleet to arrive at this far-flung country from the isle of Aeolus (10.80). This distance can be added to the distance between Aeolus' isle and Ithaca, which was previously said to take nine days and nine nights (10.28).[93] In total, at the start of Book 10, from Ithaca, then presumably west to Aeolus' isle (10.47-55),[94] and then north to the Laestrygonians, the sailors have journeyed fifteen days and nights away from the known world of Greece (10.81). Indeed, the land of the Laestrygonians is so distant (either to the east[95] or north)[96] that the normal movement of the celestial bodies seems to have been altered, such that the country is characterized by a near perpetual light (10.82-6).[97]

However, apart from a generic association between topographic seclusion and high terrain in Laestrygonia, mountains function more specifically as distancing tools in the exploration sequence (10.87-112), between the previous space of the sea and the later space of the city or *ptoliethron* (10.112ff.), entailing the king's home, 'δώματα' (10.112), and the meeting place, 'ἀγορῆς' (10.114). This technique in creating distance between two locations can be deemed hodological space, a feature which Alex Purves

92 Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989), 48.
93 On the symbolic value of the number "9" in the *Odyssey* (e.g. 5.278-80, 9.81, 12.447), cf. Germain (1954), 8-11, 13-5, 34-5; Hölscher (1988), 142; Lesky (1947), 152.
94 Nesselrath (2005), 156.
95 Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989), 48.
96 Austin (1975), 94; Bowra (1952), 135.
97 Stanford (1996), 368.

identifies in Greek literature — most notably in Herodotus' histories[98] but also to an extent in Homer's *Odyssey*.[99] Purves, in contrasting hodological space with cartographic space, a proto-form of the second of which is to be found in the *Iliad*,[100] describes the phenomenon in Herodotus as follows:

> [Herodotus'] understanding of space follows a trajectory from A to B, following the traveler's experience and perspective rather than that of an abstract, overseeing eye. Narratives based on a model of hodological space tend to proceed in one direction (forward) and usually present the space they traverse as a series of places and landmarks en route … The layout of hodological space, because it can only look forward and because its vision is limited to what can be seen by the naked eye from a particular point along the route, is disorienting and fragmented.[101]

The exploration sequence through the Laestrygonian countryside (10.87-112) conforms to this hodological or "road-viewing" model in several respects. The cliffs of the outer harbour provide a natural entrance, 'εἴσοδός' (10.90), through which the Ithacan fleet passes. This point is, to translate *eis-odos* somewhat inelegantly, the 'into-the-road' spot: the division between the previous space of the sea and the ensuing hodological space in the harbour and countryside.[102] The narrowness, 'ἀραιὴ' (10.90), of the entry-point also suggests a break with the previous wide-open space of the sea, leading to a more confined, road-like perspective ahead. And as in Purves' description of hodological space in Herodotus, this spatial perspective is naturally forward-looking, which is ensured, conversely, by the fact that the Ithacans' view back to the sea is mostly obscured by the surrounding cliffs. Entry into this enclosed bay entails a removal from the outer sea into the deceptively quiet calm of the harbour waters (10.93-4); further on in the narrative this confinement will enable the giants to trap the Ithacan ships.

Odysseus, as narrator-focalizer, is also forward-looking. When he climbs up a hill, 'σκοπιὴν' (10.97), Odysseus does not attempt a panoptic or even partial cartographic perspective of his surroundings, which is characteristic of a hill-top focalizer, but his vision is more tunneled as he tries to make out the Laestrygonian settlement ahead. However, he only receives tokens of their dwelling, a line of smoke (10.98-9) — road signs, as it were, fragmented information which points and moves the nominated Ithacan embassy forward. The *skopiē*, as a feature of the hodological space, "pushes" the *ptoliethron* further ahead into the distance. Next, the Ithacan embassy encounters a road, 'ὁδόν' (10.103), coming down from the mountains, a defining confirmation of their presence in hodological space. The Laestrygonian town is not encountered at once by the travelling Ithacans but is oriented through the imposition of mountainous locales along their road, along their journey: the city space, 'ἄστυδ'' (10.104), is to be found *away* from the high mountains, 'ἀφ' ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων' (10.104). Mountains function as a means of distancing the city from the countryside; they are both topographic fillers and signposts in this 'roaded' space. Finally, a third "landmark" is encountered in the form

98 Purves (2010a), 144-8.
99 Purves (2010a), 66-80.
100 Purves (2010a), 65-6.
101 Purves (2010a), 145-6.
102 Purves ([2010a], 71-3), in an example from Odysseus' fated inland journey (11.119-37), similarly shows how that hodological space is initiated by Odysseus' leaving the sea behind.

of the daughter of the Laestrygonian king, who, like a mute signpost, merely points the men in the direction of the city, 'ἐπέφραδεν' (10.111). Again, the emphasis is on moving forward through the space.

Mountains, then, act as topographic tools in this hodological space in Laestrygonia: the initial cliffs help cut off the Ithacans' retro-spective of the sea space, confine them in a limited domain, and introduce the hodological (*eis-odos*) space; then, the hill which Odysseus climbs provides fragmented, 'countercartographic',[103] "road-sign" information to Odysseus, which compels him to nominate an embassy; and the inland mountains are themselves associated with hodological space, as a road runs down from them, and act as physical markers which are removed from the city. The sum effect of this mountainous topography is to create a greater sense of distance between the sea space and the city space.

Within the city space itself, the Laestrygonians present a complex melding of isolated and integrative social behaviour.[104] There are notable differences between the society of the Laestrygonians and the Cyclopes: whereas the latter live at the very tops of mountains (9.113), the former (or at least the royal family) live in *dōmata* (10.112), and display structures of developed social organization, such as an *agora* (10.114) and a king (10.114), which seem beyond the individualistic lifestyle of the Cyclopes.[105] While the Laestrygonians demonstrate greater social cohesion within their society, acting as a unified collective which gathers at an *agora*, their reaction to *xeinoi* is no more sophisticated than that of Polyphemus.[106]

The whole scene is, in fact, a parody and perverse inversion of a typical hospitality reception, and the Laestrygonians show no inclination to interact with the *xeinoi*. One can start here by observing the complete absence of speech between the Laestrygonians and the Ithacans;[107] there are no words of welcome from King Antiphates' wife (10.112-14), not even the uncouth demand which Polyphemus managed (e.g. 9.252-5). Similarly, Antiphates' daughter did not bestow any speech on the ambassadors when they asked for directions to her city but simply pointed in the direction of her father's house (10.105-111). This repetition of the "girl at the well motif" is a parody of the polite, welcoming greeting which Odysseus receives from Nausicaa (6.187-97).[108] In the absence of any appreciable intercourse with their guests, the Laestrygonian response is entirely self-contained, limited to their own internal arrangements: the wife calls the husband from the *agora* and Antiphates kills one of the ambassadors in his home and prepares a meal for himself (10.114-16). The phrasing recalls that of the *Cyclopeia*, after Polyphemus kills and consumes two of Odysseus' men (9.289, 291).

---

103 Purves (2010a), 65.
104 Lowenstam (1993), 195.
105 Cook (1995), 70.
106 Cook (1995), 70; Lowenstam (1993), 195.
107 Cf. Hopman (2013), 43-4.
108 Reece (1993), 6, 12-3.

The absence of dialogue on the part of the Laestrygonians, alongside their subsequent actions, is indicative of the relationship between them and the Ithacans, not an interaction between hosts and guests, but rather predators and prey. The Laestrygonians do not waste time talking to their "guests" but proceed at once to preparations for a feast, 'δαῖτα φέροντο' (10.124); appropriate here is the comparison of the trapped Ithacan fleet to fish, 'ἰχθῦς δ' ὡς' (10.124), being hunted by the giants. Polyphemus, it will be recalled, devoured Odysseus' men like puppies (9.289). The anthropophagy of Polyphemus and the Laestrygonians animalizes the Ithacan travellers, removing the possibility of any social interaction, of a scene of *xenia* between guests and hosts.

In the context of this parodic reception scene, where the native inhabitants shun any form of social interaction with their "guests", one should consider the mountain simile used to describe Antiphates' wife: 'τὴν δὲ γυναῖκα / εὖρον ὅσην τ' ὄρεος κορυφήν' (10.112-13).[109] The simile does on the surface indicate physical scale, 'ὅσην' (10.113): she is a gigantic monster and she strikes loathing into the hearts of Odysseus' men.[110] One should, however, consider this simile in light of other references to mountains in the Laestrygonian episode.[111] The Laestrygonian *ptoliethron* was framed topographically in oppositional terms to the mountainous terrain of the countryside. The Ithacans would find the town as they moved away from the high mountains (10.104); the landscape of the society — the *agora* and *dōmata* (10.112, 114) — is articulated spatially in terms of a distance from mountains. Ironically, when the travellers do arrive at the home of the chieftain of this land, they immediately encounter an individual who is compared to a mountain peak (10.113). While they are physically in a home, the figurative presence of a mountain suggests that the men are still removed from the domestic space they expected here. The Ithacans are not welcomed to this "home" with any words, the mountainous wife of Antiphates ignores them entirely in search of her husband, and the king himself slaughters and eats one of the Ithacans (10.114-16). Like Polyphemus, who, at the moment of his anthropophagy was compared to a mountain lion (9.292), the behaviour of Antiphates' wife at the time of the mountain simile is removed from acceptable social conduct.

Circe

Circe's island of Aeaea is characterized by high terrain: Odysseus voyages up a 'σκοπιήν' (10.148), a journey which he repeats to his men later, 'σκοπιήν' (10.194); we are told that there are mountain lions, 'ὀρέστεροι … λέοντες' (10.212) on the island; and, lastly, Odysseus meets Hermes on a mountain top, 'ἄκριας' (10.281). Our spatial orientation of Aeaea is initially divided according to three main theatres of action: the coast or shoreline along which the ship is beached and the majority of the men wait (10.135-43, 172-88, 198-209, 244-50, 261-74); Circe's home (10.210-43, 251-60 [reported speech], 308-405); and the highlands between the shoreline and the witch's *domos* (10.144-71, 189-97 [reported speech], 275-308). The *skopiē* lies in a middle

109 '[They] found his wife there, but she stood mountain-high' (Shewring [1980], 115).

110 Bowra (1952), 177; Scott (1974), 81.

111 On reading Homeric similes in conjunction with related, non-simile imagery across the narrative, cf. Fenno (2005), 478-9, 503.

ground between the shore and Circe's home. This hilltop breeds an uncertainty, 'μερμήριξα' (10.151),[112] in Odysseus. He has had a glimpse of what lies ahead in the island (10.152), but he would need to advance farther in order to ascertain just who dwelt here; at the same time, while looking ahead on the hilltop, Odysseus turns his mind back to the seashore, 'θῖνα θαλάσσης' (10.154), and his compatriots, whose help he desires. This sense of physical estrangement which the hill engenders is expressed by Odysseus' own separation from the rest of his crew, 'μοῦνον ἐόντα' (10.157).

The association of this hill as a site of physical dislocation is picked up later, when Odysseus narrates his earlier adventure to his shipmates (10.190-97). Instead of providing the Ithacan hero with some definite geographic bearings, his sojourn up the hill has instead filled him with a general sense of dislocation, destroying all sense of direction, east and west,[113] and of alienation, since the island is bordered by a limitless expanse of sea, 'πόντος ἀπείριτος' (10.195). The lookout spot provokes doubt in the hero: 'μερμήριξα' (10.151), 'ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἴομαι εἶναι' (10.193).[114] A similar dislocation is recognized by the god Hermes when he appears before Odysseus on a hilltop on Circe's island (10.281-83). Just as Odysseus declared his spatial bewilderment to his comrades upon descending the *skopiē*, so the messenger god confronts the hero on a mountain-top and identifies that Odysseus has no knowledge of this country, 'χώρου ἄϊδρις ἐών' (10.282). Hermes then proceeds to point out the direction to Circe's home (10.282-83).[115]

The physical dislocation and uncertainty which Odysseus experiences on the mountaintops in Aeaea — 'μερμήριξα', 'ἐγὼ δ' οὐκ οἴομαι εἶναι', 'χώρου ἄϊδρις ἐών' — is in fact the exact reverse of a common motif which we can find in Greco-Roman literature, wherein a narrator or author takes advantage of the superior height of a mountain peak, either through memory of prior experience or through imagined ascent, so as to gain complete vantage over the surrounding land, engendering 'a kind of cartographic gaze'[116] in the narrative. The viewer-narrator can thus pivot on the axis of the mountaintop and circumspect the surrounds to the north, west, south, and east.

König gives an example of this type of cartographic gaze in the *Geography* of Strabo, in which the geographer, in order to provide an account of the relative position of Corinth, "re-scales" the mountain Acrocorinthus as narrator (with reference to his own previous experience) such that from the summit he can give a lay of the land: including Mount Parnassus and Helicon, the Crisaean Gulf, and the regions of Phocis, Boeotia, Megaris, and, partially, Corinthia and Sicyonia (Str. 8.6.21).[117] Surveying the land from the Acrocorinthus, Strabo's *cartographic gaze* looks first north (across the Crisaean Gulf at the mountains), before panning east (Phocis and Boeotia), south (Megaris), and back west (Sicyonia). This type of topographic circumspection from a

112 'I wondered inwardly' (Shewring [1980], 116).

113 Austin (1975), 93.

114 '[T]hough I fear there is none [i.e. a plan the Ithacans could come up with]' (Shewring [1980], 117).

115 For the motif of a mortal encountering a god on a distant mountaintop, as a place removed from the *polis*, cf. Buxton (1992), 9.

116 König (2016), 52.

117 König (2016), 52.

mountaintop affords the narrator-viewer 'authorial control'[118] and a sense of topographic clarity — 'it gives him a way of imagining the world, spread out before him'[119] — especially useful in an age bereft of satellite imaging. Examples of a cartographic gaze or a 'panoptic'[120] view from a mountaintop by a focalizing character can be found throughout the *Iliad*,[121] wherein the gods 'watch the action of the battlefield from the heights of Olympus or from the hilltops of Pergamon, Samos, or Ida … [and] [t]hey are able to command an extensive visual range from such a position'.[122] Purves notes that the association between the panoptic prowess of Zeus and his superior vantage (whether from the sky or mountaintops) is reflected by the fact that he never descends lower in the narrative than the top of Mount Ida in the *Iliad*.[123]

In the Aeaean episode, however, this motif is inverted. While Odysseus certainly *expects* some manner of cartographic clarity in scaling the mountain on the island and gazing out from the top — hence the references to the regions of light and darkness and to the movements of the sun (cf. *Od*. 10.190-2) — there is no chance here of any cartographic gazing for the narrator-hero by which he can better orient himself in his surroundings: the perspective from the mountaintops in Circe's land only serves to dislocate the viewer and destroy definite bearings, creating a sense of topographic aporia and removal from the known world.

Scylla and Charybdis

Finally, in Book 12, cliffs and high peaks, *skopeloi* and *koryphai*, mark out the spaces where Scylla and Charybdis live. Circe first introduces these two opposing cliffs, 'σκόπελοι' (12.73), before describing in detail the high peak, 'κορυφῇ', 'κορυφὴν' (12.74, 76), of Scylla's cliff. Scylla herself lives in a cave halfway up this cliff, 'σκοπέλῳ' (12.80); and the multiple-headed monster searches around the 'σκόπελον' (12.95) for prey. Circe then describes the 'σκόπελον' (12.101) which lies near Charybdis whirlpool, but advises Odysseus against taking this route, and recommends, instead, going past Scylla's cliff, 'σκοπέλῳ' (12.108). After their encounter with the Sirens, Odysseus' instructs his men to hug the cliff, 'σκοπέλου' (12.220), of Scylla, though he does not tell them of her existence, so as to avoid the menace of Charybdis, who tosses spray on the tops of both cliffs, 'ἄκροισι σκοπέλοισιν ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροισιν' (12.239). And, lastly, towards the end of the *Apologue*, when Odysseus is washed back towards Scylla and Charybdis, after Zeus has destroyed his ship, he nears the 'σκόπελον' (12.430) of Scylla once more.

The cliffs in this sequence connote a world beyond the limits of human ken.[124] They are so very high that some parts are eternally concealed by clouds such that the normal

118 König (2016), 52.
119 König (2016), 53.
120 Purves (2010a), 65.
121 On the switch from a panoptic, protocartographic narrative view in the *Iliad* to a more countercartographic view in the *Odyssey*, cf. Purves (2010a), 66-7.
122 Purves (2010a), 33.
123 Purves (2010a), 33.
124 Hopman ([2012], 17-18) compares Scylla's abode in the *Apologue* to the infernal regions described in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

seasons have no place here (10.74-6). This is a realm which is beyond the limits of the mortal man, 'βροτός' (12.77), to transcend. Thus the image of a mutated man, with an abnormally large number of appendages (12.78), is indicative of this removal from the human into the unknown other; the dysmorphic picture is also, perhaps, a subtle foreshadowing to the many-armed creature whom they will soon encounter (12.89-92). Another negation of a mortal endeavour serves to place us in a realm beyond human reach (12.83-4); Scylla's cave, half way up the mountain (12.80), is beyond the heroic, bow-wielding prowess of a Greek.

While this landscape is estranged from human ken, so too its inhabitant, Scylla, is removed from human form and experience: her physical appearance is dysmorphic (12.89-92) and her eating habits are without limits (12.95-7). Anything, irrespective of size, within the vicinity of her *skopelos* (12.95) is acceptable prey for Scylla. Her hunger and greed are limitless. Her fishing prowess, moreover, will have a grim consequence for Odysseus' men whom the monster consumes in the manner of a fisherman (12.251-5), an act of anthropophagy similar to that of the Laestrygonians (10.124). And as in the case of the Cyclopes and the Laestrygonians, Scylla's character seems to be matched by the topography of her mountainous dwelling: her behaviour, which is without limits and cannot be countered by human endeavour, although Odysseus does attempt to do so in heroic fashion (12.228-31), is akin to the insurmountable scale of her *skopelos*. If Odysseus wishes to attempt to go past the other *skopelos* (12.101), leading past Charybdis, he will experience an equally indomitable foe: one who is beyond even the power of Poseidon to control (12.107), and who, furthermore, can toss her spray so high that it can land on top of both her and Scylla's *skopeloi* (12.239).

Concluding Remarks

Mountains are potent tokens of isolation in the *Apologue*, whether this be: *topographic*, where homes are pushed to peripheries, where a sense of distance is created, or where physical disorientation is engendered; *social*, in which characters display anti-social tendencies, distancing themselves from communication with others or deliberately subverting accepted social behaviour; and *temporal*, whereby certain actions characterize individuals as belonging to a more primitive era.[125] The return of Odysseus from the world of the *Apologue* to the world of Ithaca involves a movement from geographic seclusion to geographic familiarity, from an arena in which Greek social customs are ignored to a place where they will be restored, and from a pre-Olympian world of Giant-like beings to a contemporary, Zeus-governed world.

From a narratological perspective, this paper has also demonstrated how the link between mountains as spatial units and the connotative resonances of isolation is enhanced through the deployment of specific narrative devices or techniques in the poem. In the case of Ithaca, narrator focalization can be analogously likened to the extreme long shot of a film camera, where the mountainous landscape is viewed from afar. Among the Cyclopes and Polyphemus, the spatial contrasting between the *agora* (or *polis*) and the *oros* has socio-ethical functions. In Laestrygonia, the mountains and cliffs form significant components of a hodological spacing, designed to create a

125 For mountains as places of origin and birth, cf. Buxton (1992), 8-9.

distance between the sea and the city space. For both Polyphemus and the wife of Antiphates, similes become a way of uniting topographic and social isolation. And in Aeaea, the negation of the characteristic motif of the cartographic gaze from the mountaintop enhances the sense of topographic isolation and disorientation.

Finally, some words of caution are needed here. This paper does not assert that isolation is the only symbolic value of mountains throughout the Homeric poems and early Greek myth, but rather that it is the dominant connotation in the *Apologue*.[126] It must also be conceded that named or specific mountains such as Mount Olympus may carry distinct cultural associations beyond the generic connotations of nameless mountains;[127] Olympus, while distant to humans, is of course a place of assembly for the gods among themselves.[128] In such a case, the generic connotation of the spatial feature is overridden by the specific cultural connotations of the well-known mountain.

Furthermore, since mountains were (and obviously still are) a pervasive feature of the Mediterranean topography,[129] we should expect some of their real-world applications at the time to have been transferred into epic poetry. To this end, one might reflect on the economic importance of mountains in the Greek world in providing pasture for the flocks of shepherds and goatherders, raw materials such as timber or minerals to the community, and game such as deer and wild boar for hunters to catch;[130] from a military perspective, mountains served as thoroughfares for armies, as sanctuaries for weakened forces unwilling to risk open warfare, as vantage points to survey a wider area of ground, and, of course, as places of concealment to ambush opposition troops.[131] The presence, however, of such real-world, everyday applications of mountains in epic, mythic, or imaginative landscapes of Greek literature[132] need not negate their symbolic or connotative function in these same stories;[133] it is, I have argued, the repeated contexts of employment in the narrative of the *Apologue* which raise and rarify mountains from features of the physical world, and of daily Greek life, into figures of

126 'Greek mythology speaks with an astonishing range of voices; reductivism is the surest way of muffling them' (Buxton [1992], 15). Variation in connotations can be found with respect to: literary genre (e.g. tragedy, cf. Buxton [1992], 12-14); different focalizers in a single story (cf. de Jong [2012a], 35); or the topographic origin/biases of the author[s]/audiences (Buxton [1994], 80-1).

127 Richard Buxton contrasts the generic mythic value of mountains in the Greek imagination (cf. Buxton [1992]) with the specific values assigned to Mount Etna, observing both conformity and divergence from the generic image ([2016], 41-3). Buxton (26-41) also illustrates connotative variation in evaluations of Etna depending on the genre of a text. Christina Williamson (2016) studies another specific hill, Kalerga Tepe/ancient Teuthrania in the territory of Pergamon. In contrast to my study of mountains, her analysis shows how Kalerga Tepe was a focal, unifying point, used to assimilate and consolidate spatial/territorial and cultural/mythic identity in the Pergamon region in the time of the Attalid dynasty (90-3).

128 On Zeus' "ownership" of a number of mountains in the Greek world, cf. Buxton (1992), 5

129 Buxton (2016), 25; McNeill (2009), 12-14.

130 Buxton (1992), 2-4.

131 Buxton (1992) 4-5.

132 Buxton (1992), 6-7.

133 Buxton (1992), 7.

greater cultural meaning in the imagination of the Homeric audience — shaping their sense of society, space, and time.[134]

Leiden University

List of References[135]

Allan, W. (2006). 'Divine Justice and Cosmic Order in Early Greek Epic.' *JHS* 126: 1-35.

Andrews, P.B.S. (1962). 'Was Corcyra the Original Ithaca?' *BICS* 9: 17-20.

Austin, N. (1975). *Archery at the Dark of the Moon: Poetic Problems in Homer's Odyssey*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Austin, N. (1983). 'Odysseus and the Cyclops: Who is Who?' In *Approaches to Homer*, C.A. Rubino & C.W. Shelmerdine (eds.), Austin: University of Texas Press. 3-37.

Bakker, E.J. (2013). *The Meaning of Meat and the Structure of the Odyssey*, Cambridge: CUP.

Belmont, D.E. (1962). *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, PhD thesis, Princeton: Princeton University.

Bergren, A. (2008). *Weaving Truth: Essays on Language and the Female in Greek Thought*, Washington D.C.: HUP.

Bittlestone, R. (2005). *Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca*, Cambridge: CUP.

Bowra, C.M. (1952). *Heroic Poetry*, London: Macmillan & Co. LTD.

Burgess, J.S. (2017). 'Land and Sea in the *Odyssey* and the *Telegony*.' In *Time and Space in Ancient Myth, Religion and Culture*, A. Bierl, M. Christopoulos, & A. Papachrysostomou (eds.), Berlin: de Gruyter. 27-41.

Buxton, R. (1992). 'Imaginary Greek mountains.' *JHS* 112: 1-15.

Buxton, R. (1994). *Imaginary Greece: The Contexts of Mythology*, Cambridge: CUP

Buxton, R. (2016). 'Mount Etna in the Greco-Roman *Imaginaire*: Culture and Liquid Fire.' In *Valuing Landscape in Classical Antiquity*: *Natural Environment and Cultural Imagination*, J. McInerney & I. Sluiter (eds.), Leiden: Brill. 25-45.

Byre, C.S. (1994). 'The Rhetoric of Description in "Odyssey" 9.116-41: Odysseus and Goat Island.' *CJ* 89.4: 357-67.

Clay, J.S. (1980). 'Goat Island: *Od*. 9.116-141.' *CQ* 30.2: 261-4.

Cook, E.F. (1995). *The Odyssey in Athens: Myths of Cultural Origins*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

De Jong, I.J.F. (1992). 'The Subjective Style in Odysseus' Wanderings.' *CQ* 42.1: 1-11.

De Jong, I.J.F. ([2001] 2004). *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*, Cambridge: CUP.

---

134 I would like to thank: Associate Professor Clive Chandler, for suggesting revisions on initial drafts of this paper; Leiden University, for their hospitality; The University of Cape Town, The National Research Foundation of South Africa, The Classical Association of South Africa, and the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust for research funds; and Ksjusha, for your faith and support.

135 [D, O, C, H, P]UP = [Duke/Oxford/Cambridge/Harvard/Princeton] University Press.

De Jong, I.J.F. (2012a). 'Homer.' In *Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative, Volume 3*, I.J.F. de Jong (ed.), Leiden: Brill. 21-38.
De Jong, I.J.F. (2012b). 'Introduction: Narratological Theory on Space.' In *Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative, Volume 3*, I.J.F. de Jong (ed.), Leiden: Brill. 1-18.
Delcourt, M & Rankin, R.L. (1965). 'The Last Giants.' *HR* 4.2: 209-42.
Donlan, W. (1982). 'Reciprocities in Homer.' *CW* 75.3: 137-75.
Dougherty, C. (2001). *The Raft of Odysseus: The Ethnographic Imagination of Homer's Odyssey*, Oxford: OUP.
Edwards, A.T. (1993). 'Homer's Ethical Geography: Country and City in the *Odyssey*.' *TAPhA* 123: 27-78.
Edwards, M.W. (1975). 'Type-Scenes and Homeric Hospitality.' *TAPhA* 105: 51-72.
Elliger, W. (1975). *Die Darstellung der Landschaft in der griechischen Dichtung*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Erbse, H. (1986). *Untersuchungen zur Funktion der Götter im homerischen Epos*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
Fenik, B. (1974). *Studies in the Odyssey*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH.
Fenno, J. (2005). '"A Great Wave against the Stream": Water Imagery in Iliadic Battle Scenes.' *AJPh* 126.4: 475-504.
Foley, J.M. (1991). *Immanent Art*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
Friedrich, R. (1991). 'The Hybris of Odysseus.' *JHS* 111: 16-28.
Fuqua, C. (1991). 'Proper Behavior in the *Odyssey*.' *ICS* 16.1/2: 49-58.
Germain, G. (1954). *La Mystique des Nombres dans l'Épopée Homèrique et sa Préhistoire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Gilhuly, K & Worman, N. (2014). 'Introduction.' In *Space, Place, and Landscape in Ancient Greek Literature and Culture*, K. Gilhuly & N. Worman (eds.), Cambridge: CUP. 1-20.
Glenn, J. (1998). 'Odysseus Confronts Nausicaa: The Lion Simile of *Odyssey* 6.130-36.' *CW* 92.2: 107-16.
Gould, J. (1973). 'Hiketeia.' *JHS* 93: 74-103.
Heubeck, A & Hoekstra, A. (1989). *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey: Volume II: Books IX-XVI*, Oxford: OUP.
Hirzel, R. ([1907] 1966). *Themis, Dike, und Verwandtes*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.
Holmes, B. (2015). 'Situating Scamander: 'Natureculture' in the *Iliad*.' *Ramus* 44: 29-51.
Hölscher, U. (1988). *Die Odyssee: Epos zwischen Märchen und Roman*, München: Verlag C.H. Beck.
Hopman, M. (2012). 'Narrative and Rhetoric in Odysseus' Tale to the Phaeacians.' *AJPh* 133.1: 1-30.
Hopman, M. (2013). *Scylla: Myth, Metaphor, Paradox*, Cambridge: CUP.
Kelly, A. (2007). *A Referential Commentary and Lexicon to Homer, Iliad VIII*, Oxford: OUP.
Kirk, G.S. (1970). *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*, Cambridge: CUP.

König, J. (2016). 'Strabo's Mountains.' In *Valuing Landscape in Classical Antiquity*: *Natural Environment and Cultural Imagination*, J. McInerney & I. Sluiter (eds.), Leiden: Brill. 46-69.

Lesky, A. (1947). *Thalatta: der Weg der Griechen zum Meer*, Wien: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag.

Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos. (1955, 1991, 2004, 2006), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Liddell, H.G. & Scott, R. (1940). *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition, Oxford: OUP.

Lloyd-Jones, H. ([1971] 1983). *The Justice of Zeus*, 2nd edition, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Louden, B. (2011). *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East*, Cambridge: CUP.

Lowenstam, S. (1993). *The Scepter and the Spear: Studies on Forms of Repetition in the Homeric Poems*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Luce, J.V. (1998). *Celebrating Homer's Landscapes*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

McNeill, J.R. (2009). *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World*: *An Environmental History*, Cambridge: CUP.

Minchin, E. (2001). *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the Iliad and the Odyssey*, Oxford: OUP.

Mondi, R. (1983). 'The Homeric Cyclopes: Folktale, Tradition, and Theme.' *TAPhA* 113: 17-38.

Most, G.W. (1989). 'The Structure and Function of Odysseus' *Apologoi*.' *TAPhA* 119: 15-30.

Nagler, M.N. (1990). 'The Proem and the Problem.' *ClAnt* 9.2: 335-56.

Nagy, G. (1996). *Homeric Questions*, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Nelmes, J (ed.). (2012). *Introduction to Film Studies*, 5th edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

Nesselrath, H. (2005). '"Where the Lord of the Sea Grants Passage to Sailors through the Deep-Blue Mere no More": the Greeks and the Western Seas.' *G&R* 52.2: 153-71.

Nestle, W. (1942). '*Odyssee*-Interpretationen I.' *Hermes* 77: 46-77.

Newton, R.M. (2008). 'Assembly and Hospitality in the *Cyclopeia*.' *College Literature* 35.4: 1-44.

Purves, A.C. (2010a). *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative*, Cambridge: CUP.

Purves, A.C. (2010b). 'Wind and Time in Homeric Epic.' *TAPhA* 140: 323-50.

Rebert, H. F. (1928). 'Χθαλαμός in Homer.' *CPh* 23.4. 377-87.

Redfield, J.M. (1994). *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector*, Durham: DUK.

Reece, S. (1993). *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Reinhardt, K. ([1960] 1996). 'The Adventures in the *Odyssey*.' In *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretative Essays*, S.L. Schein (ed.), H.I. Flower (trans.), Princeton: PUP. 63-132.

Rexine, J.E. (1977). 'The Nature and Meaning of Justice in Homer.' *CB* 54.1: 1-6.

Rutherford, R.B. (2001). 'From the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*.' In *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad*, D.L. Cairns (ed.), Oxford: OUP. 117-46.

Schein, S. (1970). 'Odysseus and Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*.' *GRBS* 11.2: 73-83.

Schein, S. (1995). 'Female Representations and Interpreting the Odyssey.' In *The Distaff Side: Representing the Female in Homer's Odyssey*, B. Cohen (ed.), New York: OUP. 17-27.

Schultz, E. (2009). 'Odysseus Comes to Know his Place: Reading *The Odyssey* Ecocritically.' *Neohelicon* 36: 299-310.

Scott, W.C. (1974). *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, Leiden: Brill.

Segal, C. (1962). 'The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return.' *Arion* 1.4: 17-64.

Segal, C. (1992). 'Divine Justice in the *Odyssey*: Poseidon, Cyclops, and Helios.' *AJPh* 113.4: 489-518.

Shewring, W (trans.). (1980). *Homer: the Odyssey*, Oxford: OUP.

Stanford, W.B. ([1947] 1996). *Homer: Odyssey I-XII*, London: Bristol Classical Press.

Thornton, A. (1970). *People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press.

Tsagalis, C. (2012). *From Listeners to Viewers: Space in the Iliad*, Cambridge, MA: HUP.

Tsagarakis, O. (1977). *Nature and Background of Major Concepts of Divine Power in Homer*, Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner Publishing Co.

Ustinova, Y. (2009). *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind*: *Descending Underground in the Search for Ultimate Truth*, Oxford: OUP.

Weinberg, F.M. (1986). *The Cave: The Evolution of a Metaphoric Field from Homer to Ariosto*, New York: Peter Lang.

Williamson, C.G. 2016. 'Mountain, Myth, and Territory: Teuthrania as Focal Point in the Landscape of Pergamon.' In *Valuing Landscape in Classical Antiquity*: *Natural Environment and Cultural Imagination*, J. McInerney & I. Sluiter (eds.), Leiden: Brill. 70-99.

Winkler, M.M. 2007. 'The *Iliad* and the Cinema.' In *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic*, M.M. Winkler (ed.), Oxford: John Wiley & Sons. 43-67.