

Odysseus at Phaeacia [Unit 2]

SECTION A: THE FUNCTION OF THE PHAEACIAN EPISODE

Discussion Points:

This section of the seminar will be used to consider the function of the Phaeacian episode, why exactly Odysseus tells his stories at *this* particular point. The following discussion points should help you:

1. Who are the Phaeacians? What kind of society do they have? How familiar is this society?
2. To what extent do the Phaeacian books form a transition to the second half of the *Odyssey*?
3. What are the main themes of this episode? How do they cohere with the rest of the epic?
4. What is the function of Demodocus' two songs in book 8? What is their effect?
5. Why does Odysseus sing the *Apologoi* (Odysseus' tales) to the Phaeacians? How successful is he?
6. What is the structure of the *Apologoi* (Odysseus' tales) in particular? How does this contribute to a) Odysseus' narration and b) the epic's use of these books?

Secondary Reading:

Biles, Z. 'Perils of Song in Homer's *Odyssey*, *Phoenix* 57, 2003, 191-208. [Moodle]

Broeniman, C. 'Demodocus, *Odyssey*, and the Trojan War in *Odyssey* 8', *CW* 90, 1996, 3-13. [Moodle]

De Jong, I. J. F. *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*. Cambridge, 2001, 221-7. [Moodle].

Emlyn-Jones, C. 'True and lying tales in the *Odyssey*', in McAuslan, I, and Walcot, P. (eds.) *Homer*. Oxford, 1998, 144-54. [Library]

Most, G. W. 'The Structure and Function of Odysseus' *Apologoi*', *TAPhA* 119, 1989, 15-30. [Moodle]

Parry, H. 'The *Apologos* of Odysseus: Lies, all Lies', *Phoenix* 48, 1994, 1-20. [Moodle]

Segal, C. *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*. Ithaca and London, 1994, 12-64. [Library]

SECTION B: ODYSSEAN ADVENTURES

This section of the seminar will be used to consider the role of mythology in the *Apologoi* and function of the *Apologoi* itself.

This section shall consist of individual presentations. You should read all of the *Apologoi* (books 9-12) and familiarise yourself with all of the episodes. You should then focus on one episode of your choice, excluding the *Nekyia*, to present on (e.g. *inter alia* the Cyclops, Circe, Scylla and Charybdis,

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or the Sirens episode). PLEASE STAKE YOUR CLAIM ON THE MOODLE FORUM ASAP TO AVOID OVERLAP.

When analysing the episode you should think about:

- The folktale and mythological aspects of the episode.
- The themes brought out by the episode.
- The purpose behind Odysseus' narration of the episode.
- The purpose behind the epic's narration of the episode.

Secondary Reading:

This should mainly consist of your own personal analysis, but, in addition to the reading for section A, you should look at:

- Hansen, W. 'Homer and the Folktale', L. Morris and B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer*. Leiden, 1996, 442-62. [Moodle]
- Reinhardt, K. 'The Adventures of the *Odyssey*', in S. L. Schein (ed.) *Reading the Odyssey*. Princeton, 1996, 63-132. [Library]
- West, M. L. 'Odyssey and *Argonautica*', *CQ* 55, 2005, 39-64. [Moodle]

SECTION C: THE NEKYIA (BOOK 11)

Discussion Points:

Underworld journeys and necromancies can be found scattered throughout hero myths and epic. This section of the seminar will explore this myth and its place in the *Odyssey*. We will be trying to determine why Odysseus journeys to the underworld even though he receives detailed instructions from Circe regarding his travels (the ostensible reason for his journey) in book 12. The following discussion points should help you:

1. How is book 11 embedded in the *Odyssey*? Is the journey in anyway linked to the events on earth? Is book 11 an integral part of the *Odyssey*?
2. To what extent can we consider this episode a necromancy rather than a journey *through* the underworld? How does this affect our reception of Odysseus' character?
3. What is the structure of this episode? How does this structure contribute to a) Odysseus' narration and b) the epic's use of this book?
4. Who does Odysseus meet? Who does Odysseus see? What does each individual episode contribute to a) the *Nekyia*, b) the *Apologoi*, c) the *Odyssey* and, ultimately, d) our reception of Odysseus' character?
5. Why is the Intermezzo (11.330-84) included?

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Secondary Reading:

In addition to those pieces read for the previous sections, the following will be of help:

Doherty, L. E. 'The Internal and Implied Audiences of *Odyssey* 11', *Arethusa* 24, 1991, 145-76.

[Library]

Robertson, N. 'Heracles' *Catabasis*', *Hermes* 108, 1980, 274-300. [Moodle]