

Update for the 2/14/19 (second) session of CSAIR course on Homer's *Odyssey*

Richard Sacks, Columbia University

My current plan for the second of our three sessions – that of Thursday February 14 – is to focus on the following passages. The idea is to be ready to tackle the end of the poem – and thus its overall arguments and potential comparisons to *Genesis* – in our final session on March 7. I will post a handout with excerpts from some of these passages sometime on Sunday February 3. Looking forward to seeing you all again on the 14th!

- 1) What do you make of **Odysseus in book 5, our first direct glimpse of him in the narrative present**: on Kalypso's island in 5.151-268 and then at sea in 5.269ff. when he leaves her? Note in particular Odysseus' first two speeches in the poem (5.173-179 and 5.215-224, both to Kalypso), as well as his first speech at sea (on his raft at 5.269-312 amidst the storm sent by Poseidon).
- 2) What do you make of **Odysseus' narration of his travels to the Phaiakians in books 9-12**? More specifically:
 - 2A) What do you make of Odysseus' "introduction" to his narration of his travels (9.1-38)?
 - 2B) What do you make of the Cyclops episode which comprises the bulk of book 9 (9.105-566), given its crucial importance in delaying Odysseus' return to Ithaka, and what of its position immediately following the first two adventures (the Kikonians at 9.39-81 and Lotus Eaters at 9.82.104)?
 - 2C) What do you make of the Circe episode which comprises the bulk of book 10 (10.132-574 as well as a bit more at 12.1-164), given her role in advising Odysseus about his underworld and his post-underworld travels?
 - 2D) What do you make of the package that makes up the underworld scene in book 11, as it ranges from scenes of obvious importance – e.g., the scenes with Teiresias (11.90ff.), with his mother (11.152ff.), and with his ex-colleagues Agamemnon (11.387ff.), Achilles (11.467ff.) and Aias (11.541ff.) – to those whose importance is less obvious: e.g., the more than 100 lines spent on the so-called catalogue of women (11.225-330), the break in O's story-telling which immediately follows that catalogue (11.333ff.), and the progression of "other perished dead men" (11.564 & 567) he sees at the end of his underworld adventure (11.568ff.)?
 - 2E) What do you make of the package of post-underworld adventures in book 12 (Sirens at 12.165-200, Skylla and Charybdis at 12.201-259, and Cattle of the Sun at 12.260-446)?
- 3) What do you make of **Odysseus' first scene back in Ithaka in book 13** (beginning at 13.93 and comprising the bulk of book 13)? Note that the second half of book 13 is taken up by Odysseus' encounter there with Athene (13.221-440), though there are earlier interruptions from the scene back on Ithaka for brief narrative moments on Olympos (13.125-158) and in Phaiakia (159-187), and there is also Odysseus' first speech back on Ithaka at 13.200-216.
- 4) What do you make of **the two extended scenes with Odysseus and Penelope in book 19** (19.102-360 and 19.508-599), as well as the intervening scene in which the old nurse Eurykleia recognizes Odysseus' scar? More specifically:
 - 4A) What do you make of the two lies Odysseus tells to Penelope (at 19.165-203 and 19.261-307) during the first of their extended scenes together in book 19?
 - 4B) What do you make of Penelope's long speech to Odysseus (19.509-553) at the beginning of their second extended scene together in book 19? In particular, what do you make of the simile Penelope uses at 19.518-529 and of the dream she tells Odysseus at 19.535-553?
 - 4C) Note – in the midst of the intervening recognition scene in book 19 –the narrative's emphasis on Odysseus' name at 19.406ff. A form of the verb odussomai occurs in line 407. Lattimore translates it there as "distasteful." The semantics of the verb are more along the lines of "hate," and the verb occurs elsewhere in the *Odyssey* at 1.62, 5.340, 5.423 and 19.275, and in the *Iliad* at 6.138, 8.37, 8.468 and 18.292. Also, because of a grammatical peculiarity of Greek, we can't tell with certain verbs (odussomai included) whether it's an active or passive verb.