

The *Odyssey* Sets Sail Again

Wanderlust* in Modern Literary Transformations of the *Odyssey

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Aristoteles, *Met.* A 1, 980a

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1. Introduction

1.1 Odyssean *Wanderlust*

The Homeric *Odyssey* tells of Odysseus' wanderings after the Trojan War. The epic's better-known incidents are Odysseus' adventures such as the blinding of the Cyclops Polyphemus, his encounter with the Sirens or even his sojourn on the island of the sorceress Circe. Nevertheless, the *Odyssey* is primarily the story of a homecoming journey and, despite all the temptations that he faces on this journey, Odysseus never really loses sight of his final goal: his native land Ithaca. This journey is imposed upon him by the gods and he only undertakes it because he has to. For good reason, the Homeric Odysseus¹ is repeatedly described as πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς² (much-enduring godly Odysseus) and he is in the end happily reunited with his family. However, *Wanderlust* and an urge of discovery already play an important role in Odysseus' characterization. The prophecy in *Od.* 11.91–137 also already indicates a continuation of his travels (including his death). While in the *Odyssey* this continuation is only anticipated in an external *prolepsis*³ announcing events lying beyond the work's actual limits (i.e. the *fabula*⁴), these very events will become the main focus of a new literary work a few centuries later: the *Telegony* (*Τηλεγονεία* or *-ία*⁵). This ancient work is generally attributed to Eugammon of Cyrene and, assuming that this ascription is correct, probably dates back to the sixth century B.C.⁶ It is part of the so-called *Epic Cycle*, a group of 'early Greek hexametric epics' written in a style imitating Homer that covered events which are not narrated in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁷ The title *Telegony* refers to Telegonus, "the far-away born", who is here presented as the supposed son of

1 Even though the label 'Homeric Odysseus' can, strictly speaking, also apply to the Odysseus of Homer's *Iliad*, when used in this study it exclusively refers to the Odysseus described in Homer's *Odyssey*.

2 E.g. *Od.* 5.171 or 7.1. All subsequent quotations of the *Odyssey* follow the edition by P. von der Mühl (Homerus 1962).

3 For a definition see de Jong 2001, xvi.

4 Here, I use Irene de Jong's narratological terminology, who distinguishes between the *fabula* and the *story* of the *Odyssey*, in which *fabula* denotes all events as reconstructed in their chronological order and *story* the events as actually presented in the text (de Jong 2001, xiv; xviii).

5 See Latacz 2006b. Cf. West 2013, 288 who argues for *-ία*.

6 On the controversial dating of the work see West 2013, 38–39 who argues that 'the poem must be one of the latest in the Trojan cycle, composed surely well into the sixth century'.

7 Thus such poems both filled the gap between the two epics and covered the periods preceding and following them, i.e. the time before the events of the *Iliad* and after the events of the *Odyssey*. See Latacz 2006a.

Circe and Odysseus, and who unwittingly kills his father in the end.⁸ It is the first work describing a continuation of Odysseus' travels that we know about,⁹ but only a few fragments have been preserved.¹⁰

The motif of an entirely voluntary continuation of Odysseus' travels motivated by *Wanderlust* is not found until the fourteenth century A.D., in the work of Dante Alighieri. In his *Divina Commedia* (1307–1327) Odysseus never returns to Ithaca but out of pure curiosity sets sail for the limits of the known world and then miserably fails (*Inferno* XXVI, 90–142). Regardless of whether Dante was himself positively or negatively inclined towards an unbridled thirst for knowledge and discovery, or so-called *curiositas*, and whether or not he morally condemned Odysseus' quest, the figure of Dante's Odysseus certainly testifies to a new attitude to the world. It is the attitude of the restless explorer which predominantly characterizes the Dantean Odysseus distinguishing him from both his Homeric model and the post-Homeric Odysseus of Eugammon's *Telegony*.

The appearance of Odysseus in the *Inferno* of Dante's *Divine Comedy* can be considered a turning point for the reception of the *Odyssey*, as Dante was the first one to introduce us to a hero struck by *Wanderlust* and a nostalgia for the foreign. Since then the idea of the eternal wanderer has spread and inspired later authors to compose new and further transformations of the *Odyssey*. This idea originating in Dante re-emerges in the nineteenth century with Alfred Tennyson's poem *Ulysses* in 1833. Tennyson's poem marks the beginning of a literary tradition that continues into the present, and covers a vast linguistic and cultural area. The most significant of these literary transformations will be analyzed in the course of this study. As a contribution to the field of the history of ideas and classical reception studies, the present study offers a comparative approach to modern transformations of the *Odyssey* from six different languages (English, Modern Greek, Italian, German, Spanish and French), ranging from Tennyson's poem *Ulysses* (1833) to Karla Suárez's novel *La viajera* (2005). The fifteen modern texts which will be analysed are discussed in chronological order, making it possible to understand the literary-historical circumstances of their creation and, importantly,

8 See West 2013, 300–303.

9 See Stanford 1954, 86; 88.

10 Martin L. West (West 2003, 164–71; West 2013, 288–315) has united and commented on the fragments and other sources that give us knowledge about the work. According to West, '[t]here are no verse fragments explicitly attributed to the poem' (West 2013, 288).

allowing for connections to be drawn between them. This main analysis is preceded by two chapters devoted to the Homeric (chapter 2) and the Dantean Odysseus (chapter 3), which together lay the foundation for all further considerations. The following chapter (chapter 4), which prepares for the analysis of the *Odyssey* transformations from the nineteenth century onwards, focuses on two examples of Odyssean *Wanderlust* from the Italian Renaissance: Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516–32) and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575). Following Dante's portrayal of a *Wanderlust* beaten Odysseus, these Renaissance texts testify to the changing perception of the world during the European Age of Exploration. Even though the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* has mostly been an inspiration to authors of the nineteenth and twentieth century, with the heyday of the motif being ushered in by Tennyson, the increasingly positive view of Odyssean *curiositas* during the Renaissance represents an important step towards the motif's later elaborations.

1.2 The Criterion for Text Selection – *Wanderlust*: A Definition

Odyssean *Wanderlust*¹¹ represents the overarching motif, the *tertium comparationis*, that runs through and connects all of the modern transformations of the *Odyssey* which form the corpus of this study. In the majority of these texts, which deliberately turn the idea of the Odyssean *nostos* into its opposite, *Wanderlust* manifests itself as the re-departure of Odysseus for yet another (and usually a final) journey. However, such a new journey does not constitute grounds for exclusion from the selected corpus. What *Wanderlust*, the criterion for text selection, primarily denotes is the mental state and psychological disposition of inner unrest and a yearning for the journey more than the journey itself. *Wanderlust* thus becomes an existential condition.¹² It is the central anthropological

11 Despite the fact that the term has its roots in German Romanticism and literally only denotes 'the joy of traveling by foot' ('Lust, Freude am Wandern', see Wahrig-Burfeind 2011, 1627), it is here used in its later, general sense of 'a strong desire to travel' (see Stevenson 2010).

12 Stanford makes a similar distinction between the Homeric Odysseus and the one found in modern adaptations of the myth as follows: '[...] figures like Dante's doomed seeker after forbidden knowledge and Tennyson's Byronic victim of wanderlust are fundamentally different from Homer's Odysseus. They are outward bound, centrifugal, while in the *Odyssey* the force of Odysseus' heart and mind is essentially homeward bound, centripetal, towards Ithaca and Penelope.' (1954, 89). He calls the Homeric premise of a homeward bound Odysseus 'the classical conception', which could also be found in Joyce, Du Bellay, Heine and Ovid, as well as 'centripetal and conservative' (1954, 223). On the other hand, the opposite hypothesis presupposed a hero, who was 'centrifugal and experimental', as in Nikos Kazantzakis' *Οδύσσεια* [*Odissia*]: 'In contrast Kazantzakis adopts the *non-Homeric hypothesis* that Ulysses was an

problem of the *inquietum* of human existence that connects the texts of this corpus and is reflected in the reworking of the Odysseus myth, and especially in the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust*. In addition, there are certain (major and minor) motifs that, despite the different contexts of the works considered, are encountered time and again across different linguistic, cultural and temporal borders. With this in mind, the texts can be divided into the following categories:

Odyssey transformations describing:

1) (no journey):

a psychological disposition of inner unrest (*Wanderlust*), often combined with the mere longing for a new departure.

2) a new (or continued) journey:

a psychological disposition of inner unrest (*Wanderlust*), leading to an actual departure for a new journey (or a continuation of the journey)

a) the visit of known places, followed by disillusionment.

b) the visit of unknown places.

The first basic distinction to be made is the one between transformations of the *Odyssey* that describe a new journey (2) and those which do not (1). Although there are a few transformations that fall into this latter category, i.e. which only describe the psychological disposition of inner unrest and the mere longing for a new departure, in most cases this mental condition also leads to an actual re-departure in a new journey. The category of texts describing a new journey can in turn be distinguished with regard to the journey's destination. For these journeys can either lead to completely unknown or unspecified places (2b) or they can represent a return to known, once visited places (2a), namely the sites of Odysseus' past adventures.

Although the initial aim was to find all texts that met the criterion of *Wanderlust*, the following analysis is necessarily selective. The texts considered represent only the most

incurable wanderer at heart and after his return from Troy set out from home again to seek further adventures.' (1954, 222). Stanford only uses the term *Wanderlust* for Tennyson's Ulysses, and instead generally speaks of 'the non-Homeric hypothesis'. I have chosen not to adopt this particular term, because strictly speaking it is wrong. It may rightly indicate the main 'centripetal' tendency of the Homeric Odysseus, to use Stanford's own words, but *Wanderlust*, even if not his prevailing characteristic, is still inherent in his characterization, and thus Homeric as well. As Stanford was well aware of that (Stanford 1954, 74–78; 181), the use of the term 'non-homeric' appears slightly inconsistent. See chapter 2.2, where I deal with the signs of *Wanderlust* in the Homeric *Odyssey*.

relevant manifestations of Odyssean *Wanderlust* in the six above-mentioned languages.¹³ It is of course possible that some texts worthy of consideration simply escaped my attention. As for the texts considered it would be impossible to offer a holistic discussion of each and every one. Therefore, my study instead examines how the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* was repeatedly modified over time.

At the beginning of the literary development that will be outlined in the main analysis stands Tennyson's influential poem *Ulysses* (1833). This Victorian portrait of an outward-bound hero yearning for a new departure is followed by a variety of *Odyssey* elaborations that all address the *inquietum* of human existence with reference to Odysseus as a mythical archetype. However, the answers that these authors provide in relation to the hero's existential search vary greatly, ranging from a pessimistic picture of human life to a dynamic-optimistic one. Some of the recurring themes in the context of existential *Wanderlust* are curiosity and (anti-)nostalgia, disillusion and return, (re)departure and the Other, as well as the meaning of time, home and belonging. Indeed, among these modern transformations it can be no longer taken for granted that Odysseus returns home (and still feels at home), as identity becomes more and more difficult to define, as does Otherness.

As a result of Dante's revolutionary portrayal of Odysseus as an eternal wanderer, the latter motif was often taken up by succeeding Italian authors. Arturo Graf's *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* (1897), which remains strongly oriented towards Dante, is followed by two diametrically opposed adaptations that appear at the beginning of the twentieth century: Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Maia* (or *Laus Vitae*, 1903) and Giovanni Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio* (1904). While D'Annunzio starts out from a superhuman Odysseus of Nietzschean influence, Pascoli's Odysseus is a man who embarks on the (futile) search for his own identity. The action of Pascoli's poem begins with the completion of Odysseus' last journey as prophesied by Tiresias in the Homeric *Nekuia*. The foundations for a quiet retirement are now set, but after nine years at the side of Penelope, the elderly Odysseus feels the need to depart again. Hoping to revive the past and feel like a hero once more, he embarks on a new, third journey leading to the venues

¹³ I decided to only include texts that I can read and fully understand in the original language.

of his past adventures. Yet with the beginning of this journey a gradual disillusionment sets in that eventually leads to his identity crisis and Odysseus' death.

In contrast to the manifold representation of Odyssean *Wanderlust* in Italian literature, in French literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Odyssean *Wanderlust* is mostly seen in a negative light. Instead of the tragedy of an adaptation such as Pascoli's, we here encounter an ironic and mocking distancing from the Odyssean struggle, while the connection forged with the Homeric and Dantean hypotexts¹⁴ is not quite as strong. This applies to both Charles Baudelaire's poem *Le voyage* (1859) and, especially, to two narratives from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Jules Lemaître's *Nausicaa* (1894) and Émile Gebhart's *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902). In *Nausicaa*, a short sequel to the Homeric *Odyssey*, where Telemachus embarks on a new journey instead of Odysseus, the protagonist is ridiculed and knocked off his epic pedestal. This mock-heroic tone is intensified in Gebhart's narrative, which holds a particularly cruel ending for the hero.

A very different tone is struck by two English works focusing on Odyssean *Wanderlust* that are published towards the end of the nineteenth century. The first one of these is Andrew Lang's poetic cycle *Hesperothen* (1872), which explores the meaning of time and ageing in the context of a new journey. This journey is, however, not undertaken by Odysseus but by a group of anonymous sailors, as a result of which the

14 Throughout this study, I use the term "hypotext" for any text (in the narrow sense of a written literary work) that, either in its parts or as a whole, is (consciously or unconsciously) reworked by a later text or parts of it. This broad definition, which allows a text to have more than one hypotext, differs from the narrower definition of the term which was introduced by the literary theorist Gérard Genette and lies at the centre of his study *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* (Genette 1982; the term "hypotext" was originally introduced by Mieke Bal in the context of embedded narratives. See Bal 1977, 35; Bal 1981, 48). Even though Genette at first provides us with a very broad definition of *hypertextuality*—'By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary.' (Genette 1997, 5; Genette 1982, 11–12)—he implicitly uses both "hypotext" and "hypertext" to refer to entire texts and not just individual passages of a text. He later explicitly states: 'With some exceptions, I will therefore deal here with the sunnier side of hypertextuality: that in which the shift from hypotext to hypertext is both massive (an entire work B deriving from an entire work A) and more or less officially stated' (Genette 1997, 9; Genette 1982, 16). Accordingly, the first example he gives for an earlier text is the Homeric *Odyssey*, which functions as a hypotext for both Vergil's epic poem *Aeneid* and Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (Genette 1982, 12). The authorial intention that underlies the reworking of an earlier text, which Genette here makes a condition of *hypertextuality*, is another important difference from the definition on which this study is based. While Genette is only interested in conscious references to earlier texts (and not in what the recipient may see in the text, regardless of the author's intentions), this study assumes a dialogical relationship between earlier and later literary works. That is, it does not assume a fixed meaning of texts, but their general openness to interpretability. For more on the theoretical premises of this study, see my remarks in chapters 1.3 and 1.5.

existential search takes on a general human dimension. Not quite as serious is the popular novel *The World's Desire* (1890), which Andrew Lang co-wrote together with H. Rider Haggard. Here, Odysseus sets out for a new journey in search of Helen, who personifies everything that men desire.

Published five years after Lang's *Hesperothen*, Paul Heyse's *Odysseus* (1877) is one of the few German texts relevant to our corpus.¹⁵ On the one hand, this balanced poem is again more strongly oriented towards Tennyson. Yet, with its melancholic tone it also anticipates a major characteristic of Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio*, which was written a few decades later.

In 1894, another poem is written by the Greek author Constantine Cavafy in Alexandria, Egypt, which for a long time remained outside the public eye. In fact, Cavafy's poem *Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια* (*Second Odyssey*, January 1894) as well as his essay *Τὸ τέλος τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως* (*The End of Odysseus*, April 1894) written in that same year, represent two highly relevant texts with regard to Odyssean *Wanderlust*, although they remained unpublished for almost a hundred years. In *Second Odyssey* Cavafy not only wrote a continuation of the *Odyssey* in which he explicitly positioned himself within the literary tradition of Homer, Dante and Tennyson—something that also sheds new light on the canonical poem *Ἰθάκη* (*Ithaca*, 1911)—but he was also the first author of this corpus to reflect upon the act of rewriting Homer and thereby emphasise the metapoetic aspects of Odyssean *Wanderlust*.

Particular attention will also be paid to another Greek *Odyssey* transformation: Nikos Kazantzakis' epic poem *Odyssey* (1938). Here, the hero leaves Ithaca again to seek new experiences, in a way that stands out in many ways from the remaining corpus at hand. Kazantzakis' work, which runs to 33.333 lines and confidently bears the same name as the Homeric epic, is by far the most comprehensive and complete transformation of the *Odyssey* centered on the motif of *Wanderlust*.¹⁶ The holistic approach of what

15 Franz Blei and Lion Feuchtwanger have also written relevant *Odyssey* transformations. Even though there is no separate chapter dedicated to them, these texts will also be dealt with in the course of this study.

16 Cf. Stanford 1954, 211. For Stanford, there is only one other author besides Kazantzakis who 'attempted to rival the comprehensiveness of Homer's account under the present century': James Joyce with his novel *Ulysses* (1922). However, even though Joyce's work speaks of Odyssean *Wanderlust*, it does not make it the hero's main characteristic; for like the Homeric hero, Joyce's protagonist Leopold Bloom is both centripetal and centrifugal in nature, displaying 'a desire for adventure conflicting with a

undoubtedly became Kazantzakis' life's work results in a very dense and complex text that is impossible to summarize in a few lines. Kazantzakis' Odysseus embodies vitality and strength, and represents a new type of Nietzschean superman¹⁷ who commits himself to an absolute freedom that ultimately results in what we could call an 'optimistic' or 'positive nihilism'.¹⁸ His continuous existential search leads him to Sparta, Crete, Egypt, all the way through Africa and to the South Pole. In the course of his journey he plays an important part both in the downfall of a whole civilization and in the creation of a new one, builds an ideal city at the source of the Nile, witnesses its destruction and finally becomes an eremite. Although Odyssean *Wanderlust* represents one of the work's major concerns, it has not yet received any scholarly attention. Hence, this study will be the first to discuss this central aspect.

Lastly, the final part of the analysis will deal with two more recent works centring on a centrifugal Odysseus, namely the twenty-first century novels *L'ignorance* (*Ignorance*, 2000) by the Czech-French writer Milan Kundera and *La viajera* (*The traveler*, 2005) by the Cuban writer Karla Suárez.¹⁹ Both these works take their cue from the re-departure and continuation of Odysseus' travels. On the one hand, *L'ignorance* compares the feelings of two Czech émigrés who return to their home country after an absence of twenty years or more with Odysseus' homecoming. By revealing the émigrés' alienation from their homeland, Kundera questions the existential necessity of returning to one's homeland and the (conventional) conception of home. The protagonist of Suárez's novel, on the other hand, who performs the role of Odysseus, is

love of home'. See Stanford 1953, 127–28, where we also learn that Stanford's distinction between centrifugal and centripetal (cf. p. 3) actually goes back to Joyce's *Ulysses*: '[...] Joyce provides the perfect word for this Dantesque conception. He calls Stephen "centrifugal" as opposed to the "centripetal" Bloom. There is only an apparent inconsistency in the fact that he applies "centrifugal" to his Telemachus, not to his Ulysses. [...] But Bloom, though ultimately centripetal, also feels some centrifugal yearnings. [...]'. Cf. Stanford 1954, 222: 'The working hypothesis of *Ulysses* is the same as that of Homer's *Odyssey*: it assumes that Ulysses' controlling motive is to reach home safely, and that he does not seek adventure for its own sake. This, the classical conception, is to be found as clearly in du Bellay and Heine as in Ovid and Homer.'

17 Cf. the enlightening introduction of Kimon Friar's translation in Kazantzakis 1958, xv.

18 Cf. p. 190 as well as Stanford 1954, 236.

19 In the twenty-first century, the Odysseus myth and especially the idea of Odysseus as an eternal wanderer has increasingly been used to describe contemporary migration from a non-European perspective. Two works which take up the *Odyssey* in this context have not been included in our corpus of *Wanderlust*, namely *El camino a Ítaca* (*The path to Ithaca*, 2000) by the Uruguayan author Carlos Liscano, as well as *Le chien d'Ulysse* (*Ulysses' dog*, 2001) by the Algerian author Erick-Salim Bachi. The novel *Ulysse from Bagdad*, on the other hand, is written by the French author Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. Even though Odysseus' modern reincarnation here is an Iraqi refugee named Saad Saad, the narrative ultimately remains attached to a Eurocentric view. See Schmitz 2019, 308.

a woman named Circe who apparently suffers from a lack of nostalgia (here narrowly defined as the longing for one's homeland), and restlessly travels from one country to another. By describing the heroine's existential search, Suárez's novel also deals with the problematics of post-colonial (hybrid) identity. As a result, both these modern transformations of the *Odyssey*, question, deconstruct and reinterpret central Homeric concepts such as home and homecoming very differently from the usual stereotypes and within a contemporary context of migration and exile. By finding a mythical predecessor in the Homeric Odysseus and writing an old story anew, these twenty-first century works touch on highly relevant contemporary issues.

1.3 Theoretical Approach

The present study does not aim to defend a mono-directional, linear process of reception or a literary tradition in the strict sense of the term. Especially nowadays, the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* is so widespread that it is often impossible to say exactly where each individual author draws it from. Thus, the reception of the Homeric and Dantean hypotexts is sometimes not direct but mediated, and can be strong without a firm knowledge or textual basis in the latter. Furthermore, I understand reception as a dynamic process, meaning a dialogical or multi-directional relationship between a literary work and a recipient, who may be the reader but also the writer. As a result, no fixed meaning can be ascribed to a text, but it is produced and expanded over and over again. It would hardly do justice to literary texts to treat them like mathematical equations that can only lead to one correct result, and to try to pin them down to a fixed meaning, which would make any new interpretation unnecessary. Especially ancient texts are often reworked by modern authors in an original way and thus appear in a light that opens up whole new perspectives on old and familiar material. This openness to interpretability is of course not exclusive to ancient texts. Reading modern texts against the background of Odyssean *Wanderlust* is thus not meant to denote the single correct way to read and understand these texts or as an attempt to pin them down to a particular meaning. While the observations made here are designed to illuminate an important dimension of the texts considered, there always remain other dimensions to be discovered.

The most prominent critics of the idea that it is possible to determine and define literary meaning in the field of Classics are exponents of so-called *classical reception studies*. According to this approach, one can no longer place the intentions of the author or the meaning of a text in its original context above and separate from the meaning derived from a new context. Located primarily in the English-Speaking world, classical reception scholars are concerned with the reception of antiquity.²⁰ Particularly in the United Kingdom the field of reception studies has grown steadily over the past three decades,²¹ becoming an important part of classical studies.²² In fact, the ideas to which the representatives of classical reception studies explicitly refer date back to the 1967 inaugural lecture of Hans Robert Jauß, whose *Rezeptionsästhetik* describes a ‘dialogical and at the same time process-like relationship between work, audience and new work’.²³ The other scholars to which the representatives of reception studies mostly refer as predecessors of their discipline are Jauß’s contemporary Wolfgang Iser, together often referred to as the *Constance School*, and Hans-Georg Gadamer.²⁴

In contrast, the older approach, which is often accused of positivism²⁵ for presupposing that ancient texts only have one ‘original’ and fixed meaning, is often called *classical tradition*. Charles Martindale, one of the main representatives of classical reception studies, points to the differences between the two approaches:

20 Of course, classical reception studies are also conducted outside the English-speaking world. Cf. Gély 2012, 391, who draws attention to Italian and Spanish representatives of the field. In fact, Gély’s own French contribution is one such example.

21 Charles Martindale’s *Redeeming the Text* published in 1993 is considered one of the founding texts of classical reception studies. See Hardwick 2013.

22 As an effect of this development, the presence of classical reception studies on the internet has also become more prominent. Networks such as the *Classical Reception Studies Network (CRNS)* founded in 2004 and the *Australasian Classical Reception Studies Network (ACRSN)* started in 2006 aim to facilitate scholarly exchange in this growing field of studies. On their websites (<https://classicalreception.org>; <http://www.acrsn.org>) they provide valuable link collections listing all important current research centres and projects, journals and networks associated with classical reception studies. But the two most important journals of the field are the *Classical Receptions Journal* (Oxford) and the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* (Boston). See also De Pourcq 2012, 220.

23 Unless otherwise stated all translations are my own. See the whole German sentence in Jauß 1996, 43: ‘Im Dreieck von Autor, Werk und Publikum ist das letztere nicht nur der passive Teil, keine Kette bloßer Reaktionen, sondern selbst wieder eine geschichtsbildende Energie. Das geschichtliche Leben des literarischen Werks ist ohne den aktiven Anteil seines Adressaten nicht denkbar. [...] Die Geschichtlichkeit der Literatur wie ihr kommunikativer Charakter setzen ein dialogisches und zugleich prozeßhaftes Verhältnis von Werk, Publikum und neuem Werk voraus [...]’

24 See Hardwick 2003, 6–8; Martindale 1993, 6–10; Martindale 2006, 3–6. See also Porter 2007, 474.

25 Micheal Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow 2014, 12–13 argue against this view and defend the term ‘classical tradition’: ‘Against all these doubts, we insist on ‘classical tradition’ as a meaningful label and an essential critical concept. Not only is ‘reception’ too narrow a term to comprehend the full extent of ‘the’ tradition; it actually obscures the way that developments that are *not* receptions may themselves facilitate developments that *are*.’

The etymology of “tradition,” for example, from the Latin *tradere* suggests a – usually benign – handing down of material from the past to the present. “Reception,” by contrast, at least on the model of the Constance school, operates with a different temporality, involving the *active* participation of readers (including readers who are themselves creative artists) in a two-way process, backward as well as forward, in which the present and past are in dialogue with each other. When texts are read in new situations, they have new meanings; we do not have to privilege the meanings that they had in their first “original” contexts (even assuming these to be recoverable in principle).²⁶

In this study, we should avoid labels or adopt any extreme positions that may turn out to be too one-sided. Both the classical tradition and classical reception studies offer useful approaches for our analysis and for classical studies in general. For three reasons I consider the open, contemporary focus of classical reception studies to mark an important development that advances classical studies significantly. If we accept the presence of multiple receptions of ancient texts, then the eternal question about the meaning of a work is always new. Classical reception studies also stands for a critical approach to antiquity rather than its unreflective idealization, which encompasses an (anti-elitist) inclusion of non-European and non-Western receptions. Thirdly, a general valorisation or appreciation of modern receptions necessarily challenges the assumption that the latter are inferior to the ancient “originals”.²⁷ Classical reception studies therefore constitutes an approach that is both reasonable and appropriate to our times, being one that attempts to engage with the constantly changing nature of our world.

Its openness to non-European literature is also a declared premise of this study. Nevertheless, for historical reasons the relevant non-European texts which truly reflect this diversity do not appear until well into the twentieth century. As a result, Karla Suárez’s novel *La viajera* (2005), the most recent text in the corpus examined, is also the only one written by a non-European, female author.²⁸ As a matter of fact, the motif

26 See Martindale 2007, 298.

27 See, for example, Gély 2012, 391–92. In referring back to Derrida, Gély proposes the concept of ‘sharing/ dividing antiquity’ (‘partages de l’Antiquité’) as a new ‘paradigm for Comparative Literature’. This enables us to critically distance ourselves from a Eurocentric view of Greco-Roman antiquity while retaining the alleged universalism and timelessness of the so-called “Classics”. Cf. Gély 2017.

28 In this context, the *Odyssey* elaborations by two other non-European authors should be mentioned: firstly, Jorge Luis Borges’ short story *El Inmortal* (*The Immortal*, 1947), his poem *Odisea, libro vigésimo tercero* (*Odyssey, Book Twenty-Three*, 1964), as well as a theoretical essay called *Él último viaje de Ulises* (1982), where Borges is primarily concerned with the Dantean Odysseus in *Inferno* XXVI; and secondly

of Odyssean *Wanderlust*, as it emerges from Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Commedia*, remains a primarily European affair in the nineteenth century, as it is initially only dealt with by European authors. Not only does it emerge at a time when many regions of the world are still suffering from colonial oppression by their European occupiers (or the consequences of the latter), but also when most writers are still male. The unintended lack of diversity of the corpus examined is thus primarily determined by historical factors. The inclusiveness of the text corpus chosen also met a natural limitation in the boundaries of my own language skills.

Another point that needs to be addressed in order to prepare the ground for this study of the relationships between texts²⁹ is 'intertextuality'. While the idea of texts referring and alluding to one another arguably goes back to the beginning of literature itself, the term 'intertextuality' was coined by the French-Bulgarian scholar Julia Kristeva in 1967³⁰ and has since undergone a long and complex development.³¹ To explain this development in detail would go far beyond the scope of this introduction.³² Nevertheless, a few remarks are necessary to situate this study in the scholarly discourse in which it participates. According to Kristeva's famous definition, which built on French structuralism and Michail Bakhtin's theory of 'dialogicity', 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another'.³³ Thus, it is the very implications of Kristeva's universal intertextuality that make it necessary for us to briefly address the history of the term and determine how we want to use it in this study.

the epic poem *Omeros* (1990) and *The Odyssey: A stage version* (1993), both written by the Anglophone Saint Lucian poet and Nobel laureate Derek Walcott. While in most of these texts, the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* is not a central aspect, it is indeed important for Odysseus' characterization in Walcott's play. However, since Walcott's works have already been the subject of numerous studies, I will refrain from dedicating a separate chapter to him here. Indeed, Odysseus' *Wanderlust* in Walcott's play has already been analyzed by Friedman 2007, 467–77, while the full length study by Tynan 2011 explores both the 'centrifugal' and the 'centripetal' dimension of Walcott's Odysseus. Conversely, for an extensive discussion of the references to the Homeric and Dantean hypotexts in Borges' works, see Stead 2009, 383–432; 463–75 as well as Stead 2014.

29 While a 'text' can denote any set of signifying elements, I here understand 'text' in the narrow sense of the word, to mean a piece of writing, and within this category only the literary text.

30 See the essay Kristeva 1967 that was later also included in Kristeva 1969.

31 Cf. Worton and Still 1990, 2; Schmitz 2002, 91.

32 In fact, there already exists ample introductory literature on the subject. Allen 2011, Worton and Still 1990, 1–44 and, for the reader of French, Rabau 2002 offer a good introduction, while, for example, Nünning 2004, 110–13 provides us with a very brief overview of just a few pages. With regard to intertextuality and Classics, see especially Hinds 1998, Fowler 1997, Fowler 2000, 110–37, Schmitz 2002, 91–99 and Schmitz 2015.

33 See Kristeva 1980, 66. For the French original see Kristeva 1969, 146: 'tout texte se construit comme mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte.'

Kristeva's post-structuralist definition of intertextuality stated that no text (being every signifying element within a cultural structure) can exist without reference to the totality of remaining texts, as it inevitably carries traces of earlier texts within it. But even though Kristeva's definition was greeted with a positive response, her definition ultimately did not prevail. Nowadays, the term "intertextuality" (together with its derivatives) is mostly no longer used in the Kristevan sense, but is instead rather vaguely defined and in literary theory usually refers to the ability of literary texts to refer to one another. Truth be told, Kristeva's philosophical concept of an all-encompassing intertextuality (or intertextuality as 'a central feature of human life', as Don Fowler describes it)³⁴ which originally had nothing to do with the citing and alluding practice in literary texts, is rather ill-suited for those texts' actual analysis.³⁵ Perhaps this is why the understanding of the term slowly but surely moved away from Kristeva's ontological definition to refer to a descriptive principle which is useful for the practical analysis of literary texts. In this respect, Kristeva's university teacher Roland Barthes took a key step with his analysis of "cultural codes". In the late 1970s, the French-American literary scholar Michael Riffaterre then developed his own theory of intertextuality which mainly applied to the reception of poetic texts.³⁶ Arguably the most noteworthy approach in a more practice-oriented direction was taken by Gérard Genette. In *Palimpsestes* (1982), the term 'intertextuality' is replaced by 'transtextuality', a principle that no longer applies to all texts but only to certain ones. Genette's notion of transtextuality is divided into five subcategories, one of which he calls 'intertextuality' and which, according to his (narrower) definition of the term, only refers to 'the actual presence of one text within another', as in the case of 'the traditional practice of *quoting*', 'the practice of *plagiarism*', or 'the practice of allusion'.³⁷ Another subcategory of Genette's transtextuality is 'hypertextuality'³⁸, on

34 See Fowler 1997, 17.

35 For this and the following, cf. Schmitz 2002, 92–97.

36 For more details on Riffaterre's theory of intertextuality, see Worton and Still 1990, 24–27.

37 See Genette 1997, 2. For the French original, see Genette 1982, 8.

38 Cf. p. 6, for his definition of the term.

which *Palimpsestes* is primarily centered. He also provides a detailed classifying system for all the different types of references which fall into this subcategory.³⁹

Even though the concept of intertextuality has come a long way from its original meaning, to date there is unfortunately no good alternative to this easily misunderstood term. I therefore retain the term, but, contrary to Kristeva's original definition, I use it as a neutral umbrella term to denote references between texts whether these were produced consciously or unconsciously, i.e. whether they were intended by an author or not. This study is therefore not concerned with examining authorial intentions or simply listing alleged "source" texts in a positivist manner, as was done for ancient texts by the tradition of so-called *Quellenforschung* long before the term 'intertextuality' first appeared,⁴⁰ nor is it about completely ignoring the author as such or denying the existence of deliberate allusions. Rather, I choose a middle ground between the various research approaches to intertextuality that have emerged before and after the term itself was coined, and which usually were either author-, reader- or text-centred.⁴¹ In fact, the *Odyssey's* transformations considered here are mostly conscious rewritings, and the intertextual references to Homer, Dante or other literary predecessors accordingly tend to be allusions that were most likely intended by the respective author. Yet, this does not mean that our interpretation is bound to an author's intentions (even assuming that these can be determined with any certainty), but first and foremost to the text. So, although I do not deny the existence of intended allusions, authorial intention is not a condition for an interpretation to be valid. This means that a text can always be re-interpreted and re-read – at another time, in another context, and by someone with a different perspective. In this connection, it is important to be aware of the fact that every interpretation is necessarily influenced by its wider cultural, historical and social imprint. Once we realise that, it becomes clear that any interpretation must remain provisional.⁴²

39 While I do not adopt Genette's definition of intertextuality (or his detailed terminology of 'hypertextuality'), Genette did make notable efforts in another field, namely narratology, which are indirectly relevant to this study. In Genette 1972 and Genette 1983 an elaborate narratological system is developed in its own right and – even though many of Genette's terms have been replaced by others by later scholars – he laid the foundations for further progress in this field. The narratologist Mieke Bal, for example, based her own narrative analysis methods on Genette's model. The Classicist Irene de Jong then applied Bal's narratological model to ancient texts and in particular to the Homeric epics. I have mainly oriented myself towards de Jong's terminology, as it is characterised by particular clarity and was most helpful for the purposes of this study.

40 See Schmitz 2015, 529–33 in detail.

41 Cf. Hinds 1998, xii; 48, who opts for a similarly balanced approach.

42 Cf. Gerbrandy 2020, 124.

1.4 State of Research

My study offers a transcultural perspective on the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust*, which widens the scope to include texts that have hitherto been overlooked in this context. To date, there has been no directly comparable study, although there have been several assessments that focus on another motif,⁴³ as well as some studies that mostly consider texts from a single language or a few authors who lie in close chronological proximity to each other.⁴⁴ My research intends to fill this gap by examining literature written in English, Modern Greek, Italian, German, French and Spanish from the nineteenth century until the present day, and by expanding the focus beyond Europe.

Of course, there is a substantial number of general studies of the *Odyssey* and its reception. William Stanford's *The Ulysses Theme* from 1954 has hardly lost its significance, and it remains an important orientation for all further studies in this field. However, given that Kazantzakis' *Οδύσσεια* (1938) is the most recent text examined, Stanford does not consider newer receptions such as post-colonial or feminist literature.⁴⁵ The works of Piero Boitani⁴⁶ can also provide an initial orientation for modern reception of the Homeric Odysseus. Boitani mentions numerous texts, but does not analyse them in detail. François Hartog (1996), Barbara Graziosi (2007) and Emily Greenwood (2007), and Edith Hall (2012) have all made general contributions with a more cultural and anthropological focus.⁴⁷

By far the most relevant publication for my study is the commented edition *Seconde Odyssée (Second Odyssey, 2009)* by Évanghelia Stead.⁴⁸ This text-collection unites

43 See, for example, the dissertation by Détoç 2008 whose focus is on the return journey rather than on its continuation and who discusses Ovid, Du Bellay, Seferis and Kundera.

44 Especially the Italian reception of the *Odyssey* has often been discussed separately. See representatively the extensive volume Nicosia 2003, which also includes a few enlightening essays on the Modern Greek reception of Odysseus. The article by Schironi 2015 provides a comprehensive overview of Italian receptions of the motif of Odysseus' last voyage. Other publications about particular texts discussed in this study will be noted in the course of the analysis,

45 Cf. Hall 2012, 3–4.

46 Boitani 2004; Boitani 2007. The latter (*Sulle orme di Ulisse*) is written in a very personal, autobiographic and not a strictly academic style. His last book (Boitani 2016) is addressed to a wider audience.

47 Graziosi and Greenwood 2007; Hall 2012. Works that focus on the modernist reception are Flack 2015; Oikonomou 2016; Efstathiou and Karamanou 2016 is mostly concerned with the reception of Homer in antiquity but also in modern film and music. Hardwick and Stray 2008 also deals with various aspects of the reception of Homer.

48 Stead 2009. I would like to express my gratitude to Évanghélia Stead who more than once took the time to discuss ideas with me at length, and always provided highly valuable suggestions and friendly

fifteen texts written in six languages from 1842 (Tennyson) to 1964 (Borges), that are all based both on the Homeric Odysseus *and* the Dantean Odysseus.⁴⁹ The volume contains the original, unabridged texts together with at least one French translation,⁵⁰ while each text is followed by an analysis (*Notice*) of up to fourteen pages. All in all, Stead's work represents an important point of orientation for my study. However, the texts examined by Stead cover a shorter time-period, while her thematic focus is also different from mine in that she makes the reception of Dante's *Inferno* passage an explicit condition for selection. Hence, a hallmark of the present study is not only its wider focus on Odyssean *Wanderlust*, but also the inclusion of texts that have never been examined in such a context before. As noted, this study will be the first to discuss Kazantzakis' epic with regard to Odyssean *Wanderlust*, the *Odyssey* transformations by Émile Gebhart, Lang and Haggard, as well as Karla Suárez. To this day, the number of publications concerned with Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* has remained relatively small, since the reception of this work has always been highly polarized because of both its content and its linguistic peculiarities.⁵¹ Admittedly its length alone may deter critical engagement and so favour a negative prejudice about its quality, but, as Stanford was already able to see, its content completely justifies its length.⁵² There is an urgent need to rectify the deficit in its scholarly reception in order to do justice to this exceptional work. The comparative examination of Kazantzakis' epic, as well as the other texts mentioned here and *Odyssey* adaptations that have been more thoroughly studied in the past (such as Tennyson's, D'Annunzio's or Pascoli's), opens up new perspectives on the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* and its cultural implications, and is therefore particularly fruitful.

1.5 Odysseus the Adventurer – A Modern Topos

Seeing Odysseus as the eternal wanderer and restless explorer, as Dante did for the first time, has undoubtedly developed into a modern topos. While this particular view of Odysseus was originally the result of the many literary reworkings of the *Wanderlust* motif from the late nineteenth century onwards, it has since then passed into the cultural

support.

⁴⁹ See Stead 2009, 12–13; 477.

⁵⁰ In the case of Tennyson's poem, the collection also offers three different European translations, one of them by Giovanni Pascoli. See Stead 2009, 45–57.

⁵¹ See again Friar in Kazantzakis 1958, ix–x.

⁵² See Stanford 1954, 211.

memory of the Western world.⁵³ In fact, wherever we see Odysseus' name or an allusion to his journey nowadays, it almost always has something to do with discovery and experience, adventure and curiosity. References to Odysseus the adventurer are everywhere. Countless travel agencies bear his name. There is even a spacecraft named *Ulysses*, which the NASA space shuttle *Discovery* launched in 1990 to explore the sun.⁵⁴ But there is no need to go as far as space. In Germany I came across a museum in Cologne called *Odysseum—Das Abenteuermuseum (The Adventure Museum)*.⁵⁵ An advertisement in an online city guide for Cologne describes it as a science centre where children can interactively explore different areas devoted to themes such as life, earth and cyberspace, 'where visitors can themselves become adventurers and discoverers'.⁵⁶ In all these cases the *Odyssey* is presented as a voyage of pure exploration and Odysseus as the adventurer par excellence.⁵⁷

Although we can trace the origins of this shift from nostalgia to *Wanderlust* back to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, in most of the mentioned contemporary cases there is no such awareness. The implication for the corpus analysed here is that, while all texts share the same basic premise of endorsing Odyssean *Wanderlust*, it does not matter whether this happens intentionally or not, consciously or unconsciously. Why the texts all treat this particular aspect of the myth, is always due to their specific conditions of origination. Simultaneously, despite their different contexts there are remarkable similarities. The analysis to follow will read the works comparatively, focusing on their main common

53 Cf. Martindale 1991, 46, where he makes a similar statement about Virgil's influence on our understanding of Homer: '[...] since Virgil, no reading of Homer, at least in the West, has been, *or could be*, wholly free of a vestigial Virgilian presence – not even one given by an interpreter not directly familiar with Virgil's poems – because the Homer-Virgil opposition is so widely inscribed, both in the exegetical and critical tradition and in the wider culture. In general poets have played the largest part in creating our sense of what earlier poems can mean, partly because their "readings" have carried such cultural authority.' Much the same applies to the influence of Dante's Odysseus.

54 See "Solar System Exploration: NASA Science: In Depth" 2018 In this case, though, the naming was indeed a conscious reference to Dante's Odysseus. See the autobiographical account in the chapter *Di retro al Sol* in Boitani 2007, 21–25, where Boitani narrates how he discovered the story behind the space shuttle's name.

55 See the museum's website <https://www.odysseum.de>.

56 My translation. For the German original see <https://koeln-magazin.info/odysseum.html>.

57 Cf. Hartog 2001, 36: '[...] Odysseus, a reluctant voyager who saw and visited the cities of so many peoples, though propelled by no desire to see or to know, soon became an expert on the vast world, a patron of voyagers, ethnographers and historians, even the ideal for statesmen and sovereigns. It is as if the very first lines of Homer's poem have been detached from the rest of it and the fact that, immediately following them, he is presented as the only hero, the last of all, still deprived of his homecoming and his wife, has been forgotten.'

motifs. It will not only allow us to see how they interrelate and thus illuminate each other, but also enable us to adopt new perspectives on the Homeric hypotext itself. Alongside the Homeric *Odyssey*, the Dantean *Inferno* passage (XXVI, 52–142) often functions as an important (conscious or unconscious) hypotext. Some of the additional questions that our analysis will raise include: In what light do the modern transformations of the *Odyssey* present the Homeric hero, and how do these transformations signify cultural change? How does the tendency to see Odysseus as ‘an incurable wanderer at heart’⁵⁸ reflect contemporary issues such as migration or the constantly changing meaning of home? What might this imply for the confrontation with the Other/ Otherness? It will be interesting to see how the myth of Odysseus helps to provide answers to these questions. For, the way in which the myth is reworked through time not only sheds new light on an old story, but also hints at actual cultural change in the eras in which these transformations are produced.

⁵⁸ See the Stanford citation on p. 3.

2. Crying on the Shore, or How It All Began – The Homeric Odysseus

As we have seen, Odysseus as an adventurer driven by *Wanderlust*, is a common modern topos. In this chapter I want to show that these elements are not a completely post-Homeric invention but in fact already inherent to the Homeric *Odyssey* itself. In order to do so, we will have a closer look on the relevant passages where Odysseus bears traits of *Wanderlust*, such as curiosity and an urge of discovery, and is, in other words, rather centrifugal than centripetal but also the passages that point at a continuation of Odysseus' travels. Before we come to the exceptions of the rule, though, we will trace the general outline of the *Odyssey* in the text by also having a look on the passages, that point out its general centripetal character as a return journey.

2.1 Home Sweet Home

In book 15 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus says the following to the swineherd Eumaeus, the first person he encounters upon his long-awaited return to Ithaca (*Od.* 15.341–5)⁵⁹:

αἶθ' οὕτως, Εὔμαιε, φίλος Διὶ πατρὶ γένοιο
ὡς ἐμοί, ὅττι μ' ἔπαυσας ἄλης καὶ οἰζύος αἰνῆς.
πλαγκτοσύνης δ' οὐκ ἔστι κακώτερον ἄλλο βροτοῖσιν·
ἀλλ' ἔνεκ' οὐλομένης γαστρὸς κακὰ κήδε' ἔχουσιν
ἀνέρες, ὅν τιν' ἵκηται ἄλη καὶ πῆμα καὶ ἄλγος. 345

I wish, Eumaios, you could be as dear to our father / Zeus as to me, since you stopped my wandering and my terrible / sorrow. [343] There is nothing worse for

59 Cf. Stanford 1954, 86–87, where Stanford points out in detail Odysseus' negative attitude towards wandering and 'a similar attitude' in the *Odyssey* in general. In support he further indicates *Od.* 10.464 and 21.284 (Stanford 1954, 258). *Od.* 10.464 is, however, part of Circe's speech to Odysseus and his comrades in order to convince them to stay, and it contrasts their actual exhaustion and 'hard wandering' (ἄλης χαλεπῆς) with the rest and well-being she is offering. The wording here may therefore not really reflect a negative attitude towards wandering, as it is in her interest to present it as something negative. On the other hand, the passage can be regarded as an indication of Odysseus' not always strong determination of going back to Ithaca, because Circe is, in fact, successful. They stay with her for a whole year and do not depart until Odysseus is explicitly reminded by his comrades of his destiny of returning home and urged to leave (*Od.* 10.466–74, cf. Stanford 1954, 47 and Hartog 2001, 16).

The second case that Stanford lists (*Od.* 21.284) does not really show a negative attitude towards wandering, either. In this example Odysseus, still in disguise of an old beggar, speaks to the suitors of Penelope and asks them to let him try string the bow to see if he is as strong as he used to be 'or wandering and lack of care have ruined it for me.' (ἢ ἤδη μοι ὄλεσσαν ἄλη τ' ἀκομιστή τε). But neither has wandering really taken his strength away, as the following events prove, nor does Odysseus believe it did, as he is only trying to outwit the suitors by pretending to be a weak and harmless old man.

mortal men than the vagrant / life, but still for the sake of the cursed stomach people / endure hard sorrows, when roving and pain and grief befall them.⁶⁰

Odysseus could have hardly expressed his negative attitude towards wandering in a more explicit way—he says that he cannot imagine anything worse. The fact that he is talking here to the swineherd Eumaeus, in disguise of a Cretan beggar, does not diminish or invalidate the truth of his words but rather adds to their power, as those very words perfectly reflect his feelings.⁶¹ Another passage which illustrates Odysseus' aversion to the journey he has to undertake is to be found in his reply to Alcinous, king of the Phaeacians, who is rather curious about the people and cities that his guest has seen on the way (*Od.* 9.12–15):

σοὶ δ' ἐμὰ κήδεα θυμὸς ἐπετρέπετο στονόεντα
εἴρεσθ', ὄφρ' ἔτι μᾶλλον ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω.
τί πρῶτόν τοι ἔπειτα, τί δ' ὑστάτιον καταλέξω; 15

But now your wish was inclined to ask me about my mournful / sufferings, so that I must mourn and grieve even more. What then / shall I recite to you first of all, what leave till later?

According to Odysseus' words here, his journey means only suffering to him. And if the worst thing he can imagine for mortals is wandering, the best thing is, of course, home. After having revealed his real identity to the Phaeacians and before he tells the story of his 'voyage home with its many troubles' in detail he states: οὐ τοι ἐγὼ γε / ἦς γαίης δύναμαι γλυκερώτερον ἄλλο ἰδέσθαι (*Od.* 9.27–8)—'for my part I cannot think of any place sweeter on earth to look at'. He goes on to explain that, in spite of Circe's and Calypso's attempts to hold him back, they could never persuade him (*Od.* 9.29–33), for 'nothing is more sweet in the end than country and parents ever, even when far away one lives in a fertile place, when it is in an alien country, far from his parents.' (*Od.* 9.34–6):

⁶⁰ If not otherwise noted, the *Odyssey* translation cited (with occasional modifications) is the one by Richmond Lattimore (Homer 2007).

⁶¹ Cf. de Jong 2001, 376.

ἦ μὲν μ' αὐτόθ' ἔρυκε Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων,
 ἐν σπέεσσι γλαφυροῖσι, λιλαιομένη πόσιν εἶναι· 30
 ὧς δ' αὐτῶς Κίρκη κατερήτυεν ἐν μεγάροισιν
 Αἰαίη δολόεσσα, λιλαιομένη πόσιν εἶναι·
 ἀλλ' ἐμὸν οὐ ποτε θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔπειθεν.
 ὧς οὐδὲν γλύκιον ἦς πατρίδος οὐδὲ τοκῆων
 γίνεται, εἴ περ καὶ τις ἀπόπροθι πίονα οἶκον 35
 γαίη ἐν ἀλλοδαπῇ ναίει ἀπάνευθε τοκῆων.

Odysseus would have never left Ithaca if he had not been forced to do so. His wandering had never been anything other than a very long journey home, which he “endured” because he had no other choice.⁶² Even on Calypso’s island, the beautiful goddess who offers him nothing less than immortality to stay with her, he spends most of his time crying (*Od.* 5.151–8). Although he admits that she is more beautiful than his wife (*Od.* 5.215–8)⁶³, his desire to go back home is stronger: ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἡματα πάντα / οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἡμαρ ἰδέσθαι.—‘But even so, what I want and all my days I pine for / is to go back to my house and see my day of homecoming’ (*Od.* 5.219–20). Furthermore, he is willing to endure whatever woes the gods may have destined for him in order to get home (*Od.* 5.221–4)⁶⁴. These statements, which are uttered from the mouth of Odysseus himself, in fact come to confirm what the narrator has already outlined in a central passage describing Odysseus’ nostalgia. Before Odysseus speaks with Calypso, when he is found sitting and staring at the sea, the narrator gives us a peak into Odysseus’ feelings (*Od.* 5.151–8):

τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὔρε καθήμενον· οὐδέ ποτ' ὄσσε
 δακρυόφιν τέρσοντο, κατείβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν
 νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη.
 ἀλλ' ἦ τοι νύκτας μὲν ἰαύεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
 ἐν σπέεσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούση· 155
 ἡματα δ' ἄμ πέτρησι καὶ ἠϊόνεσσι καθίζων

62 This does not mean that he did not also partly enjoy it and thus made the best out of a situation he did not choose. *Od.* 5.153 gives us a hint here, as the fact that ‘he didn’t like the nymph *any more*’ (ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη) implies that there was a time when he did like her.

63 πότνα θεά, μὴ μοι τόδε χῶεο· οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς / πάντα μάλ', οὔνεκα σεῖο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια / εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρη μέγεθός τ' εἰσάντα ἰδέσθαι· / ἢ μὲν γὰρ βροτὸς ἐστί, σὺ δ' ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρωσ. (*Od.* 5.215–8).

64 εἰ δ' αὖ τις ραίησι θεῶν ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ, / τλήσομαι ἐν στήθεσσιν ἔχων ταλαπενθέα θυμὸν· / ἦδη γὰρ μάλα πολλὰ πάθον καὶ πολλὰ μόγησα / κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ· μετὰ καὶ τόδε τοῖσι γενέσθω. (*Od.* 5.221–4).

δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

[...] and [she] found him sitting on the seashore, and his eyes were never / wiped dry of tears, and the sweet lifetime was draining out of him, / [153] as he wept for a way home, since the nymph was no longer pleasing / to him. By nights he would lie beside her, of necessity, / [155] in the hollow caverns, against his will, by one who was willing, / but all the days he would sit upon the rocks, at the seaside, / [157] breaking his heart in tears and lamentation and sorrow / as weeping tears he looked out over the barren water.

Exceptions to the rule—i.e., passages that seem to contradict Odysseus' aversion to wandering—of course exist, as we will see in the next part of the analysis. Nevertheless, curiosity and a thirst for discovery do not constitute the rule in the *Odyssey*, whose main focus lies on Odysseus' wish to return home. Stanford rightly notes: 'Homer always insisted that Odysseus' love of home was his dominant desire, symbolized in the much-borrowed image of "the smoke rising up from his own land"'.⁶⁵

2.2 Exceptions to the Rule: *Wanderlust*

As already mentioned, there are also passages that, in contrast to the general tendency of the *Odyssey*, show an Odysseus who is *not* primarily driven by his desire to return home but by a genuine curiosity and desire to explore.

As I have already pointed out,⁶⁶ the attribute 'non-Homeric', which is applied by Stanford to the Odysseus of later reception of the *Odyssey*, and who is distinctly driven by *Wanderlust*, is inaccurate. On the other hand, Stanford is of course right when he warns us against projecting modern, romanticized notions of travelling or exploring onto the Homeric Odysseus. In this connection he points out that 'The early Greeks had no romantic illusions about the delights of voyaging to unexplored regions across the seas', but 'travelled for war or piracy or trade, or else by compulsion; seldom, if ever, for choice.'⁶⁷ And yet the Homeric Odysseus' characterization should not be oversimplified either, as it is anything but one-sided. Plenty of passages indeed testify to

⁶⁵ See Stanford 1954, 50.

⁶⁶ For this and the following cf. p. 3.

⁶⁷ See Stanford 1954, 86–87.

Odysseus' *Wanderlust*.⁶⁸ Instead of trying to pin him down to one character trait or another, we should rather acknowledge precisely this “many-sidedness” (or *πολυτροπία*) as his most characteristic attribute. Seen from this perspective, Odysseus is primarily defined by his undefinability. He is the incarnation of versatility. It is no coincidence, then, that numerous epithets which are used to describe him begin with the prefix *πολυ-*, such as *πολύτροπος*, *πολυμήχανος*, *πολύτλας* and *πολύμητις*.⁶⁹ Odysseus combines innumerable qualities and knows how to assert himself by skilfully adapting to every situation.

In spite of the use of the term ‘non-Homeric’, Stanford is clear about the fact that Odysseus’ desire for knowledge and curiosity is already present in the Homeric *Odyssey*. As he also writes, ‘Dante made it a dominant element in the vernacular tradition’⁷⁰. In chapter V of *The Untypical Hero* he similarly states:

The next quality to be considered [...] is a quality that points away from the older Heroic Age [...], and on to a coming era, the era of the Ionian exploration. This is Odysseus’s desire for fresh knowledge. Homer does not emphasize it. But it can be seen plainly at work in two of the most famous of Odysseus’s Odyssean exploits. It becomes the master passion of his whole personality in the post-classical tradition, notably in Dante, Tennyson, Arturo Graf, and Kazantzakis.⁷¹

Similarly, in Chapter XIV of the *The Wanderer*, he compares the Homeric and Dantean Odysseus in the following way⁷²:

Now under Dante’s guidance we see him as a scorner of religious and social ties, a man overpowered by one great passion, the characteristically Greek desire to know. Homer had, indeed, suggested that Ulysses was more eager than the other heroes for knowledge, and had portrayed him as more of an individualist than any of his associates. But the controlling motive of the *Odyssey*, as du Bellay

68 Cf. Bretschneider 2007, 251: ‘Weitgehende Übereinstimmung herrscht darüber, daß das Handeln und Denken des Odysseus in der homerischen Odyssee nicht immer von den gleichen Motiven bestimmt ist. Der ohne äußere Notwendigkeit neugierig in die Höhle des Polyphem Vordringende ist natürlich nicht derselbe wie der am Strand von Ogygia um die Heimkehr Weinende. [...] Bei der Ankunft auf der Kyklopen-Insel ist Odysseus noch Herr seiner Entschlüsse, kann daher seiner Neugier folgen und das Abenteuer suchen. Bei Kalypso dagegen ist er gebunden und kann nichts anderes tun als auf die Heimkehr zu warten’.

69 Cf. Lobsien, 1–2; Stanford 1954, 74; 247. For a complete list of Odysseus’ epithets and their frequency, see Dee 2000, 32–33; 302 et seq.

70 See Stanford 1954, 222–23.

71 See Stanford 1954, 74–75. Stanford 1954, 255 also cites Werner Jaeger (*Paideia*, 98), who apparently goes even further, describing the Homeric Odysseus as ‘the embodiment of the adventurous spirit, the explorer’s energy, and the clever practical wisdom of the Ionian’ and speaking of him as ‘the cunning storm-tossed adventurer Odysseus’ (*Paideia*, p. 20).

72 See Stanford 1954, 181–82.

recognized, was essentially social, leading homewards towards his little kingdom in Ithaca. In place of this centripetal, homeward-bound figure Dante substituted a personification of centrifugal force.⁷³

The following table provides an overview of the *Odyssey* passages which either show a centrifugal Odysseus, who is driven by *Wanderlust*, or who otherwise reflects the feeling of *Wanderlust*. I also present a range of passages that hint at a continuation of Odysseus' travels. In the following, these passages will be analyzed in detail.

⁷³ Cf. Stanford 1954, 75–76, where he points out that the ‘eagerness to learn’ is one of the central and indispensable characteristics of the Homeric *Odyssey*’s hero: ‘Odysseus is alone among Homer’s heroes in displaying this intellectual curiosity strongly. There is an obvious reason for this. [...] Odysseus’ personality and exploits are indivisible: he has curious adventures because he is Odysseus, and he is Odysseus because he has curious adventures. Set another hero in Circe’s palace or in Phaeacia and you may have some story like *Innocents Abroad*, or a *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, or an *Aeneid*, but not an *Odyssey*.’

Wander-lust	The Proem	Cyclops	Circe	Underworld	Sirens	Cretan Tale
Curiosity and Adventure	1.1–3 (‘Who was driven far journeys [...] Many were they whose cities he saw, whose minds he learned of’)	9.172–6 (‘[...] while I [...] go and find out about these people’), 224–9 (‘[...] not until I could <i>see</i> him’).		11.229–34 (‘and I questioned all of them’), 566–7 (‘[...] wanted to <i>see</i> the souls of the other perished dead men.’), 628–31 (‘[...] whom I wanted to <i>see</i> ’).	12.47–52 (‘[...] <i>if</i> you yourself are wanting to hear them’), 160 (‘me alone she <i>ordered</i> [...]’), 192–193 (‘my heart wished to <i>hear</i> ’).	14.222–8 (‘[...] but ships that are driven on by oars were dear to me always’)
Re-departure/ New Journey				11.119–37 ; 23.248–53 , 264–84 (Tiresias’ prophecy)		14.229–31 (‘I was <i>nine times</i> a leader of men and went in fast-faring vessels [...]’), 243–53 (‘one month only I stayed [...] but then the spirit within me <i>urged me</i> to make an expedition to Egypt’)
Forgetting the Homeland			10.466–75 (‘now <i>remember</i> your fatherland’ ⁷⁴)			

2.2.1 The *Odyssey's* opening

One of the first passages that comes to mind when thinking of a wandering and exploring Odysseus is placed prominently at the beginning of the *Odyssey*. The very first lines of the proem (*Od.* 1.1–3)⁷⁵ draw attention to Odysseus' extended wanderings as follows:

Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε·
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων. 5
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὧς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ·
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο, νήπιοι,
οἱ κατὰ βοῦς Ἑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο ἦσθιον·
αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ. 10
τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν.

Tell me, Muse, of the man of many ways, who was driven / far journeys, after he had sacked Troy's sacred citadel. / [3] Many were they whose cities he saw, whose minds he learned of, / many the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea, / [5] struggling for his own life and the homecoming of his companions. / Even so he could not save his companions, hard though he strove to; / [7] they were destroyed by their own wild recklessness, fools, / who devoured the oxen of Helios, the Sun God, / [9] and he took away the day of their homecoming. / From some point here, goddess, daughter of Zeus, speak, and begin our story.

The first lines may not attest to *Wanderlust* in the sense of a voluntary or intentional exploration of the world, but rather, when read in light of the following verses, they emphasise the suffering caused by the wanderings (*ἄλγεα*, *Od.* 1.4) as well as Odysseus' longing for his home and family (*νόστου κεχρημένον ἠδὲ γυναικός*, *Od.* 1.13). Nevertheless, they do play a part in shaping an image of Odysseus as an adventurer who has travelled far and wide in the world. By being placed so prominently at the beginning of the epic, this first description of Odysseus became widely known, as is evidenced by the widespread reception of the lines. Horace, for instance, translates them twice in order to characterize Odysseus (*Epist.* 1.2.18–20, *A.P.* 142). As we will see, we can also

⁷⁵ For general bibliography on the proem, see the works listed by de Jong 2001, 5.

find echoes of the passage in the modern texts examined in this study, such as in Tennyson's poem *Ulysses*.⁷⁶

As for the statement in *Od.* 1.3 (πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω), one can certainly argue about the extent to which the proem here represents an accurate preview of the epic's actual plot. Stephanie West already pointed out that on his journey home Odysseus did not really get to know many 'cities of men', but on the contrary spent most of his time in worlds far away from humankind where he mainly encountered supernatural beings ('Polyphemus, Aeolus, Circe, the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis'), none of which are mentioned in the proem.⁷⁷ The motif of visiting many cities does occur several times in the further course of the epic (*Od.* 8.572–6, 14.138–9, 15.492, 16.63–4, 19.170, 23.267). Yet, most of these passages are part of Odysseus' lying tales⁷⁸ and describe the experiences of his Cretan alter ego.⁷⁹ In *Od.* 8.572–6, however, Alcinous asks Odysseus, who has not yet revealed his identity, to tell his story and expects to hear something about the different countries and cities he has seen.⁸⁰ But, as Alcinous will shortly realize, neither is the man sitting in front of him an ordinary one, nor are his adventures. What follows is, of course, the revelation of Odysseus' identity and the account of his fantastic adventures which surpass all expectation. Finally, the motif of visiting many cities occurs again towards the end of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus tells Penelope about his fateful journey that still lies ahead.⁸¹ Bakker comments on this passage: '[T]he proem, the hearer now realizes, announces not just the poem he has just heard, but also substantial new adventures that come after in narrated time.'⁸² Yet this explanation is hardly convincing, since, in the proem, the motif of visiting many cities is clearly associated with Odysseus' return-journey. Thus the question remains why the proem announces something that does not really take place in the story while the encounters with non-human beings are left out altogether. To be sure, even if *Od.* 1.3 announces something that does not exactly come to pass, it does

76 See p. 95.

77 See Stephanie West in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth 1988, 1: Introduction and Books I–VIII:68–69. Cf. Bakker 2020, 62 and Malkin 1998, 123.

78 In 16.63–4, Eumaeus repeats to Telemachus what the stranger (i.e. Odysseus in disguise) has told him about himself: ἐκ μὲν Κρητῶν γένος εὐχεται εὐρείων, / φησὶ δὲ πολλὰ βροτῶν ἐπὶ ἄστεα δινηθῆναι / πλαζόμενος.

79 Cf. Bakker 2020, 62; Malkin 1998, 123. See also de Jong 2001, 381; 469, who points out the similarity of *Od.* 14.138–9 and *Od.* 9.170 with *Od.* 1.2–3.

80 See Malkin 1998, 123.

81 For a detailed analysis of this scene, see chapter 2.2.5.2.

82 See Bakker 2020, 62.

contribute to the image of Odysseus as a wanderer. We may therefore refrain from speculating on the possible reasons for the absence of the fantastic elements in the proem, which later on become so prevalent. Instead, it shall suffice to highlight the strong presence of the travel and discovery motif, regardless of where Odysseus' journeys actually lead in the course of the story. In mentioning both the element of travel and discovery and the desire to return home, the proem already gives us a first inkling of the multifaceted characterisation of the hero, which oscillates between curious adventurer and homeward-bound family man, or between wanderlust and nostalgia.

2.2.2 The Episode of the Sirens

The two passages that are most frequently referred to in support of a curious Odysseus are the episodes involving the Sirens and the Cyclops Polyphemus.⁸³ Both passages form a part of Odysseus' account of his own adventures which he delivers at the court of the Phaeacians. Odysseus first narrates the prophecy which Circe provided to him about his further journey (*Od.* 12.37–141), before he narrates his actual encounter with the Sirens (*Od.* 12.165–200). She tells him that he will first arrive at the Sirens, whose bewitching singing has fatal consequences for every man who approaches them in ignorance (*Od.* 12.39–46). For this reason, she advises him to cover his comrades' ears with wax (*Od.* 12.47–9). It is also Circe who gives him the idea to leave his own ears uncovered and let the comrades tie him to the ship's mast, in the case that he *wants* to hear the Sirens' song (*Od.* 12.49). Her detailed instructions make it possible for him to hear and enjoy the Sirens without endangering his life (*Od.* 12.52):

ἀλλὰ παρέξ ἐλάαν, ἐπὶ δ' οὔατ' ἀλειψαὶ ἐταίρων	47
κηρὸν δεψήσας μεληδέα, μή τις ἀκούση	
τῶν ἄλλων· ἀτὰρ αὐτὸς ἀκουέμεν αἴ κ' ἐθέλησθα,	
δησάντων σ' ἐν νηϊ̄ θοῆ χειρᾶς τε πόδας τε	
ὀρθὸν ἐν ἱστοπέδῃ, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ πείρατ' ἀνήφθω,	
ὄφρα κε τερπόμενος ὄπ' ἀκούσης Σειρήνοϊν.	52

⁸³ See Stanford 1954, 76–79; Hartog 2001, 16; Deisser 1999, 21–23; Boitani 1992, 150; Zimmermann 2007, 54; Burgess 2012, 288. Di Benedetto 2003, 85–86, on the other hand, plays down Odysseus' curiosity and accepts *Od.* 9.224–30 as the only exception.

You must drive straight on past, but melt down sweet wax of honey / and with it stop your companions' ears, so none can listen; / [49] the rest, that is, but if you yourself are wanting to hear them, / then have them tie your hand and foot on the fast ship, standing / [51] upright against the mast with the ropes' ends lashed around it, / so that you can have joy in hearing the song of the Sirens;

In this report of Circe's words, she does not give Odysseus an order but only an option that he is of course able to refuse. It is, then, by his own deliberate choice that Odysseus listens to the Sirens' song. Not only does he not *have* to do so, but it would in fact involve much less effort and danger to simply cover his ears with wax as well as those of his crew, in order to avoid the bewitching song. But Odysseus *wants* to hear the Sirens. The only possible explanation for this is his curiosity. He is simply not able to resist the temptation of listening to their song.⁸⁴ Of course, he does not admit so much to his comrades but instead presents things a little differently: when he informs them about what Circe told him (*Od.* 12.154–64), he says: 'Me alone she *ordered* to listen to them'⁸⁵ (οἶον ἔμ' ἠνώγει ὄπ' ἀκουέμεν, *Od.* 12.160), after which he gives to them the necessary instructions (*Od.* 12.160–4). So instead of telling his comrades that Circe actually gave him the choice, leaving it to him to decide, he pretends to be simply carrying out her order.⁸⁶ The reason for making it seem like an order ('actorial motivation'⁸⁷) could be to prevent possible objections from the crew, who might not be pleased about the prospect of risking their lives again for the sake of curiosity, especially after the disastrous encounter with the Cyclops. Another possible intention is to prevent the crew from wanting to hear the Sirens too.⁸⁸ In any case, the fact that

84 Interestingly, Odysseus' curiosity in the Sirens episode and as a part of his personality in general was already noted in antiquity. In the Q-scholion on *Od.* 12.160 (Dindorf 1962, 543) Odysseus' character is described as both eager for knowledge/ curious (φιλομαθῆς) and self-controlled (ἐγκρατής). He is self-controlled, because he did not taste the Lotus in the land of the Lotus-Eaters; curious, because he did not stand it *not* to hear the Sirens: '160. ἀλλά με δεσμῶ] ... φιλομαθεῖς δὲ καὶ ἐγκρατής, ὥστε τοῦ μὲν λωτοῦ οὐκ ἐθέλησε, τῶν δὲ Σειρήνων ἀνήκοος μεῖναι οὐκ ἐκαρτέρησιν.' (sic)

85 My translation.

86 Cf. the H-scholion on *Od.* 12.160 (Dindorf 1962, 543), which specifically points out this conscious withholding of information by Odysseus: 'ὁ δὲ τὸ ἂν θέλω οὐ προσέθηκεν, ἵνα μὴ δοκῇ πλεονεκτεῖν μετὰ ἀσφαλείας τὸ ὑδὸν θηρώμενος.' ('But he did not add the "if I want", so it does not seem like he is claiming more for himself when he pursues the pleasurable in safety', my translation).

87 See de Jong 2001, xi, who distinguishes between 'actorial' and 'narratorial motivation' here: 'actorial' refers to the intentions of a character of the story (in this case Odysseus), 'narratorial' the ones of the author.

88 Cf. de Jong 2001, 301. Cf. the Q-scholion to *Od.* 12.158 in Dindorf 1962, 543: '158. Σειρήνων] τὰ κατὰ μέρος οὐ λέγει, ὅτι θέλουσιν ἡδονῆ, ἵνα μὴ τῆς μελωδίας ἐπιθυμήσαντες ἀμελήσωσι τῶν παραγγελμάτων.' ('He does not tell the details, [i.e.] that they enchant through pleasure, so they do not desire the singing and ignore his instructions', my translation).

Odysseus does not tell his comrades the truth is a further indication that his reason for choosing to hear the Sirens is nothing other than his curiosity.

The phrase that is often cited as proof of Odysseus' curiosity in this episode is *αὐτὰρ ἐμὸν κῆρ / ἤθελ' ἀκουέμεναι* (*Od.* 12.192–3). It is debatable, however, whether this really constitutes curiosity, as here Odysseus has already heard the Sirens sing and address him with luring words (*Od.* 12.184–91), claiming to know all that happens on earth (*Od.* 12.191). At this point, their enchantment has already worked on him. As a result, he now wants to get closer and 'hear' what they promise to tell him, as anyone in his situation conceivably would. Homer could hardly have presented Odysseus as the only person who did not fall under their spell, as Circe made it perfectly clear in saying that everyone who hears their song reacts in the same way, and is doomed as a result.⁸⁹ On the other hand, one could argue that Odysseus opts not to resist this particular temptation because the Sirens' promise differs from the usual bodily pleasures which he has already been able to decline. This pleasure nevertheless appeals to his curious nature. The difficulty is that we do not know if the Sirens' promises are always the same or if they are supposed to be different for each individual who hears them. The fact that they call Odysseus by his name and know who he is could suggest the latter.⁹⁰ In any case, the mere fact of choosing to be tied to the mast of the ship is a clear indication of Odysseus' curiosity. Whether his later reaction is a consequence more of the Sirens' magical power or of his own curious nature cannot be clearly determined.

89 See *Od.* 12.39–40: *αἶ ῥά τε πάντας / ἀνθρώπους θέλγουσιν, ὅτις σφραεα εἰσαφίκηται.* and 12.41–6 for the deadly consequences. Similarly, in the Circe episode Odysseus is only able to avoid Circe's enchantment because of the magical herb *μῶλυ* (*Od.* 10.305) that Hermes has given him and the latter's instructions. In the Sirens' episode it is Circe's instructions that have an equivalent protecting function for Odysseus. See also Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:120, where Heubeck compares the normally bewitching effect of the Sirens' *λυγρὴ ἀοιδή* with the one of Circe's *φάρμακα*. Cf. also the scholia (B.H.V.) on 12.193: *᾿λῶσαι δ' ἐκέλευεν]: μαρτυρία τῆς ἡδονῆς ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἐγκρατέστερος ἤττηται.*' (Dindorf 1962, 545). ('Prove that even the most self-controlled is defeated by pleasure', my translation).

90 Stanford 1954, 78 seems to favour the latter interpretation. Deisser 1999, 21–22, who refers to Stanford, also imagines a 'personalised' version of the Sirens' song and says that this interpretation can be already found in Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum*. In *Fin.* 5.49 Cicero does indeed say that the lure of knowledge was most likely to convince us of being able to provoke this kind of reaction in Odysseus and was therefore chosen by Homer. Cicero understands Odysseus' reaction as a consequence of his thirst for knowledge: *'Vidit Homerus probari fabulam non posse, si cantiunculis tantus vir irretitus teneretur; scientiam pollicentur, quam non erat mirum sapientiae cupido patria cariorum esse. Atque omnia quidem scire, cuiuscumque modi sint, cupere curiosorum, duci vero maiorum rerum contemplatione ad cupiditatem scientiae summorum virorum est putandum.'* (see the edition by Theodor Schiche, Cicero 1993).

2.2.3 The Cyclops Episode

Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops Polyphemus is his third adventure. It takes place much earlier than the one with the Sirens, and is narrated near the beginning of the *Apologue* in *Od.* 9.106–566. Together with the Underworld episode and the Circe episode, which is divided into two parts, the Cyclops episode constitutes one of the longest adventure narrations within the *Apologue*. Odysseus, who begins his narration with a description of the Cyclopes and their (uncivilized) way of life (*Od.* 9.106–15), describes how he and his ships landed on a wild island (*Od.* 9.142–50) which was inhabited only by goats and not far from the land of the Cyclopes (*Od.* 9.116–24). After resting for the night, they explored the island and hunt a large herd of goats.⁹¹ The next day Odysseus calls an assembly and announces the following (*Od.* 9.172–6):

ἄλλοι μὲν νῦν μίμνεν', ἐμοὶ ἐρήρηες ἐταῖροι·	172
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν νηϊ τ' ἐμῇ καὶ ἐμοῖσ' ἐτάροισιν	
ἐλθὼν τῶνδ' ἀνδρῶν πειρήσομαι, οἳ τινές εἰσιν,	174 (= 6.120, 13.201)
ἧ ῥ' οἳ γ' ὕβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,	
ἧε φιλόξενοι, καὶ σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεοῦδης.	176 (= 6.121, 13.202)

The rest of you, who are my eager companions, wait here, / while I, with my own ship and companions that are in it, / [174] go and find out about these people, and learn what they are, / whether they are savage and violent, and without justice, / [176] or hospitable to strangers and with minds that are godly.

Odysseus' decision here is not motivated by any necessity or desperation, which would force him to make contact with the locals. His crew is, in fact, in no need of food or protection, as they have enough to eat and drink (even wine, *Od.* 9.163–5), and they find themselves in a safe place. For, as we already know, the Cyclopes are no seafaring people and therefore do not have any ships to reach the goat island (*Od.* 9.125–7). Therefore, the only possible explanation for Odysseus' will to find out about the people inhabiting the land nearby is curiosity.⁹² Also, Odysseus and his men have rested and gained new strength and they have not yet suffered too many negative experiences, so

91 Nine goats for each of the twelve ships following Odysseus and ten for his ship alone (*Od.* 9.159–60). This gives us a respectable total of 118 goats.

92 See Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:24; de Jong 2001, 233; Burgess 2012, 288. The ancient H-scholion on 9.174 provided in Dindorf 1962, 420 argues that Odysseus' motive for being this industrious (φιλόπονος) about everything was not only his curiosity (διὰ τὸ φιλιστορεῖν) but also the search for his homeland: 'τῶνδ' ἀνδρῶν πειρήσομαι] ἀνάγκη δὲ φιλόπονος ἅπαντα ἦν οὐ μόνον διὰ τὸ φιλιστορεῖν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀγνοίαν τῆς πατρίδος ἐρευνᾶν ποιούμενος.' However unconvincing the last argument may be, being curious (φιλιστορεῖν) is clearly recognized as a character trait of Odysseus.

rather different, since, in both these cases, the question about the nature of the inhabitants follows the phrase: ‘Oh my, whose country have I come to this time?’ (ὦ μοι ἐγὼ, τέων αὖτε βροτῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἰκάνω; *Od.* 6.119 and 13.200), which is uttered by Odysseus in a state of sheer desperation. In contrast to the situation on the goat island, Odysseus here (*Od.* 6.119 and 13.200) believes himself to be in a helpless and possibly dangerous situation. After the numerous threatening situations he has gone through, at this point⁹⁷ he is most probably afraid of what might await him—even though, ironically, this is when he is finally safe.⁹⁸ The desired knowledge about the inhabitants of the place is, in both cases, only a means of guaranteeing his own survival and not a sign of curiosity, as in *Od.* 9.175–6.⁹⁹

The same is the case for other similar passages to *Od.* 9.172–6, where Odysseus, usually after an initial exploration of the foreign territory, sends out scouts to find out more about the local inhabitants. This occurs on three occasions, at *Od.* 9.88–90 (Lotus-Eaters), 10.100–2 (Laestrygonians),¹⁰⁰ and 10.189–209¹⁰¹ (Circe).¹⁰² According to de Jong, both the ‘(iii) exploration of the new territory, in search of signs of habitation’ and ‘(iv) sending out of scouts to determine the nature of the inhabitants’ constitute elements of ‘the same typical structure’, which underlies ‘[f]our of Odysseus’ adventures’.¹⁰³ Of

⁹⁷ *Od.* 6.119 may be placed early in the *story* but, in contrast to the Cyclops episode, it occurs very late on the level of the *fabula*, because Scheria is Odysseus’ last station before his return to Ithaca. Cf. de Jong 2001, 235.

⁹⁸ However, in the first case (*Od.* 6.119) he should know that he probably arrived in the land of the Phaeacians, as Ino (Leucothea) told him to get there, where it was also his destiny to escape (*Od.* 5.344–5). He seems to have forgotten that. Another explanation for this inconsistency is suggested by de Jong 2001, 158, who points out that Ino ‘did not give him any clue as to what kind of people they are’. I would not go that far in search of an actorial motivation but rather argue that the narratorial motivation is the more decisive here, which aims at an effective contrast between Odysseus’ desperation and his long awaited escape from danger. For, in fact, upon his arrival on Scheria he has nothing to fear any more (apart from the human dangers, that await him at home, i.e. the threat that the suitors represent). The world of supernatural beings and mythical creatures lies now behind him. His arrival on Scheria is the last station before his return home and constitutes a transition point between the fantasy world of his adventures and the real world of his home. See Hartog 2001, 25; de Jong 2001, 149. Arguing against the ‘assumption that the Phaeacians are intended to be some sort of literary bridge between the world of folktale and the real world of Ithaca,’ see J. B. Hainsworth in Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth 1988, 1: Introduction and Books I–VIII:289.

⁹⁹ Cf. Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:24. Heubeck speaks of ‘a question of life and death’ in these two cases in contrast to 9.175–6, where ‘Odysseus is prompted merely by curiosity.’ Cf. also de Jong 2001, 157–8: ‘By now a certain weariness has crept into the question, as transpires from αὖ, “this time”.’

¹⁰⁰ Bretschneider 2007, 260, note 854, instead, also sees curiosity in *Od.* 9.88–90 and 10.100–2.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Stanford 1954, 255, who does not see any curiosity in ‘*Od.* 10, 190 ff.’, either, in contrast to 9.174–6.

¹⁰² Cf. de Jong 2001, 157 on *Od.* 6.119–21.

¹⁰³ Being his 2nd (Lotus-Eaters), 3rd (Cyclops), 5th (Laestrygonians) and 6th adventure (Circe). Only that in case the Lotus-Eaters episode, the third element (first exploration) is omitted. See de Jong 2001, 230.

course, these recurrent narrative elements, which together form this ‘typical adventure structure’, represent remnants of the oral¹⁰⁴ origins of the Homeric epics, and specifically the repertory of the oral poet-singer (*aoidós*). Other such elements which point at how deeply the Homeric epics are rooted in the oral tradition include ‘formulaic’ phrases and (half-)verses, recurrent themes and motifs as well as the so-called ‘type-scenes’.¹⁰⁵ These are mostly understood as narrative blocks with an identifiable structure and sometimes also contain similar language or even verbal repetition, which describe typical actions in the lives of the characters.¹⁰⁶ However, there are different opinions as to when exactly a narrative unit is to be classified as a ‘type-scene’¹⁰⁷. In both *Od.* 9.88–90 and 10.100–2 we encounter exactly the same wording:

δὴ τότε ἔγων ἑτάρους προΐην πεύθεσθαι ἰόντας,
οἳ τινες ἀνέρες εἶεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ σῆτον ἔδοντες, 89/101
ἄνδρε δὺω κρίνας, τρίτατον κήρυχ’ ἄμ’ ὀπάσσας.

then I sent / some of my companions ahead, telling them to find out / [89/101]
what men, eaters of bread, might live here in this country. / I chose two men, and
sent a third with them, as a herald.

The difference to *Od.* 9.175–6 is that, in both *Od.* 9.88–90 and 10.100–102, the sending-out of scouts appears to be of a purely strategic nature and to serve the basic orientation and protection of the crew against possible enemies.¹⁰⁸ In 9.175–6 by contrast, the interest in the inhabitants goes much further, even if Odysseus’ interest in guest gifts may already play a role in addition to his curiosity (cf. *Od.* 9.229).¹⁰⁹ In the case of *Od.*

104 In the late 1920s and 1930s, the Classicist and Homerist Milman Parry revolutionized the understanding of Homer through his theory of oral-formulaic composition (or what is now known as ‘Oral Poetry’), which preceded the written fixation of the Homeric epics and explains many of their stylistic peculiarities. Today Parry’s thesis, whose foundations he already laid in 1928 with his dissertation *L’Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* and which, after his early death in 1935, was further developed by his pupil Albert B. Lord (*The Singer of Tales*, 1960), is widely accepted. On ‘Parry’s approach and its consequences for Homeric studies’, see Bakker 1999, 163–83. See also M. Parry 1971.

105 Those scenes were first described in Walter Arend’s pioneering work *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer*, published in 1933. However, the step to connect those characteristics of the Homeric epics with Oral Poetry was not made until Parry’s review of Arend’s book, posthumously published in 1936 (M. Parry 1936 = M. Parry 1971, 404–7). Cf. Edwards 1992, 290; Edwards 1999, 358; Hoekstra 1972, 193). For an overview of the scholarly work on type-scenes, see Edwards 1992, 290–98.

106 Cf. Kirk 2000, 2:15.

107 For a definition, see de Jong 2001, xix.

108 Cf. Di Benedetto 2003, 86–87.

109 Cf. Stanford 1954, 76; 255–6.

10.189–209 (Circe), it is more than clear that the exploration of the foreign land is not motivated by curiosity. In this case, the crew has passed two days on the new land and finds itself in a state of exhaustion (*Od.* 10.142–3). It is this situation of despair which compels Odysseus to take up a vantage-point in the hope of seeing any signs of human life (*Od.* 10.144–8). It is not curiosity but the need for help that is his motive here. The following lines make this perfectly clear. For, Odysseus sees the rising smoke from what he later learns are Circe’s dwellings, and carefully considers whether to go there or not (*Od.* 10.151–2). He finally thinks it wiser to first return to his ship and later send some of his comrades out as scouts (*Od.* 10.153–5). The emphasis put on the question whether to contact the inhabitants or not in this “indirect deliberation” scene¹¹⁰ (*Od.* 10.151–5) may be intended to point out the difference from his behaviour in the Cyclops episode. Apparently he has learned something of the catastrophic outcome of his past venture, for he is much more cautious here than he was in the case of the Cyclops. Even if deliberation scenes are common in the *Odyssey* and involve Odysseus in particular¹¹¹, this is the only time that he considers this specific question. His careless behaviour in the Cyclops episode, which serves as an implicit foil to his caution here, is also explicitly mentioned and compared to the current situation in *Od.* 10.435–7. In this passage, it is Eurylochus who speaks after having witnessed Circe turning his comrades into animals. As he knows nothing about Odysseus’ previous encounter with the god Hermes, he does not want to go back to Circe for any reason (cf. also earlier *Od.* 10.264–9). He tries to hold back his comrades by reminding them of their past disaster with the Cyclops, accusing ‘(overly) bold Odysseus’ of being responsible for their death because of his reckless behaviour ([...] σὺν δ’ ὁ θρασὺς εἶπετ’ Ὀδυσσεύς· / τούτου γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο, *Od.* 10.436–7).

This particular accentuation of the Cyclops episode throughout the narration reinforces the impression that, in this special case, there was something different at work. For, as we can already see, the driving force in the Cyclops episode was Odysseus’ curiosity. The exceptional nature of the Cyclops episode is strongly

110 See de Jong 2001, 96 (here in ‘the “whether” form’). Apparently, de Jong does not consider deliberation scenes to be sufficiently formalized to be classified as ‘type-scenes’, but instead uses the simple term ‘scene’ as a subcategory in such cases (de Jong 2001, xvii). Regardless of the exact terminology one might prefer, i.e. whether we decide to define deliberation scenes as ‘type-scenes’ or not, they represent narrative units based on a recurrent motif, which can be elaborated and adapted each time according to the respective need of the singer/poet.

111 See de Jong 2001, 96.

highlighted, in which it is repeatedly compared with the other episodes and acts as a foil and a warning. Odysseus' unusual behaviour in this extensively described episode is no coincidence. His curiosity in the Cyclops episode is not due to any inconsistency that has only found its way into the narrative by chance. It represents a motif that is consciously employed by the author and an integral part of the narrative.

In the Circe episode, Odysseus handles things differently and is not driven by any selfish desires (such as his desire to 'see'), even though Eurylochos does not believe that this is so. In fact, we know that Odysseus had thought about his choice carefully (*Od.* 10.151–5) before first sending out the scouts. Also, his following speech in front of the crew (*Od.* 10.189–97) clearly showed that, this time, his motive was not any kind of curiosity. For, he begins his speech by pointing out that they do not have any orientation about where they are, and that he does not see any way out of their situation (*Od.* 10.189–93). Only afterwards does he tell them about the smoke he saw rising from an island (*Od.* 10.194–7), implying that, to obtain help, they will need to follow it, thus presenting it as the only possibility for salvation. The comrades start crying and weeping, remembering all too well what happened on the last occasion that they did something similar.¹¹² But nevertheless they accept Odysseus' decision without opposition. Their reaction shows that this venture is—unlike the one in the Cyclopes' land—not undertaken for the sake of pure exploration, but because, this time, it is their last hope for survival.

2.2.4 The Circe Episode

Even if—in contrast to the already discussed Sirens and Cyclops episodes—the Circe episode does not show a curious Odysseus, it still contains one of the passages which displays what we here call Odyssean *Wanderlust*. This *Wanderlust* does not always manifest itself as curiosity and the active will to explore, but it can also denote the absence of an urge to return home,¹¹³ or even the forgetting of one's homeland, as is the

¹¹² In hindsight, both in the land of the Cyclopes (3rd adventure) and that of the Laistrygonians (5th adventure) the smoke (καπνὸν: *Od.* 9.167; 10.99) they saw from afar did not augur well, for following it had deadly consequences. After the Laistrygonians episode, Odysseus' ship is the only one left (*Od.* 10.131–2).

¹¹³ Cf. Bretschneider 2007, 259: 'Tatsächlich sind in vielen der homerischen Abenteuer Momente festzustellen, in denen der Ithaker die Heimkehr zu verschieben bereit ist.' and footnote 854 on the same page: 'In vielen Abenteuern des antiken Epos läßt das Verhalten des Odysseus nur den Schluß zu, daß er

case in *Od.* 10.466–75.¹¹⁴ In this scene, Odysseus has been living with Circe for a whole year and does not make any effort to leave again until his comrades strongly urge him to do so (*Od.* 10.472–4):

δαιμόνι', ἤδη νῦν μιμνήσκειο πατρίδος αἴης,
εἴ τοι θέσφατόν ἐστι σωθῆναι καὶ ἰκέσθαι
οἶκον εὐκτίμενον καὶ σῆν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

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Possessed one, now remember your fatherland, [473] if it is ordained that you be saved and reach your well-built house and your fatherland.¹¹⁵

One can only speculate whether he would have ever decided to leave Circe's island if it were not due to his comrades. When looking at this episode, its contrast with the Calypso episode (*Od.* 7.244–96)¹¹⁶ is particularly noteworthy. As we know, on Calypso's island Odysseus behaves quite differently (cf. chapter 2.1): after spending a certain length of time with the nymph, he is struck by a strong nostalgia and desperately wants to return home to his family, despite the tempting promise of eternal life at the side of a beautiful goddess. Odysseus' behaviour on Aea, which stands in opposition to his repeatedly stressed longing for Ithaca, highlights the constant danger of the loss of homecoming. The implication here is that even a hero such as Odysseus, who loves his home more than anything, can sometimes lose sight of his goal.¹¹⁷ His momentary forgetting of the homeland is hence exceptional to his general determination to return home, and represents one of the many obstacles that he ultimately surpasses. In this sense, it is comparable to his curiosity motivated behaviour in the Cyclops episode, insofar as it serves as a warning example.

die Heimkehr nicht immer mit aller Macht anstrebt'. Among other passages discussed later in this chapter, Bretschneider lists *Od.* 9.40–61 (Ciconians) and 10.14 (Aiolos). But when attacking the Ciconians, Odysseus is probably rather motivated by the desire to accumulate riches (*Od.* 9.41–2) than by curiosity. In the case of the one-month long stay with Aiolos, it could also be argued that not wanting to be impolite to the kind host (*Od.* 10.14–16) or to displease him (maybe even in order to facilitate his return home) could be Odysseus' motivation. Nevertheless, we can only speculate here, because in none of these cases does Odysseus explicitly name his motifs, nor does the text offer any more information regarding them. The narration of both episodes is actually very short and they are not given much importance by Odysseus.

114 Cf. p. 19.

115 My translation.

116 Calypso's island is Odysseus' last stop before he arrives at the court of the Phaeacians. In the *story*, however, it is located quite early, as Odysseus first tells the Phaeacians about where he was last and how he found their land, before he later takes up the events of his journey chronologically. Consequently, when the reader learns about Circe in *Od.* 10.135–574, he or she already knows about Calypso.

117 The forgetting of the homeland is also the dominant motif in the encounter with the Lotus-Eaters (*Od.* 9.82–105). But here, Odysseus is the one who realizes the danger and urges his companions to leave.

2.2.5 The Underworld episode (*Nekuia*)

2.2.5.1 Curiosity and Adventure

The following Underworld episode (*Nekuia*) is in fact the longest adventure narration in the *Apologue*, occupying the entire 11th book (*Od.* 11.1–640). It once more shows an occasionally curious Odysseus. When Odysseus visits the Underworld (*Hades*) as instructed by Circe (*Od.* 10.505–40) in order to question the seer Tiresias, he stays there much longer than is actually necessary. More precisely, after questioning Tiresias, he speaks to a number of other souls, despite the fact that he does not *have* to do so. For a first overview of the whole *Nekuia* we shall have a look at the episode's 'clear, largely parallel structure', as de Jong displays it in the following scheme:¹¹⁸

- A Journey to the entrance of Hades and sacrifice (1–50)
- B Meetings with Elpenor, Tiresias, and Anticlea (51–225) (*nostalgia*)
- C Catalogue of (fourteen) heroines from the remote past (225–330) (*curiosity*)
- D Intermezzo (331–84)
- B' Meetings with Agamemnon, Achilles, and Ajax (385–567) (*nostalgia*)
- C' Catalogue of (six) heroes from the remote past (568–635) (*curiosity*)
- A' Journey back (636–40)

As shown in the table above, it is not until section C and its equivalent C' that Odysseus' behaviour seems to become motivated by curiosity. In B and B', it is, instead, nostalgia and sadness¹¹⁹ that set the mood, since the encounters described here are those between Odysseus and individuals who were close to him (i.e. his friends, war comrades and his mother). To this end they are particularly emotional or directly concern his

118 See de Jong 2001, 272. Note that the words '*nostalgia*'/ '*curiosity*' in brackets are my addition. Cf. Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:111 where Heubeck had already described the structure of the episode in detail.

119 Cf. de Jong 2001, 272, although she defines 'sadness' as '[t]he dominant emotion throughout the entire adventure'. But this is not right for C, where Odysseus genealogically introduces all the female heroines to whom he talked, nor is it the case in C', where he rather adopts the role of a neutral observer without being emotionally involved or judging what he sees, be it joy or suffering.

return home (Tiresias). I will now first briefly outline the first two sections (A and B), before analyzing in detail the passages that show Odysseus' curiosity in C and C'.

In Part (A), Odysseus does not really descend into the Underworld but goes only as far as its entrance,¹²⁰ where he performs a sacrifice according to Circe's detailed instructions, in order to attract the soul of Tiresias. In the second phase, marked as (B), before speaking to Tiresias, Odysseus speaks to Elpenor, who approaches him first (*Od.* 11.51–83). Elpenor is able to do this without drinking from the sacrificial blood, as his body is still unburied and his soul is not yet able to enter Hades.¹²¹ As soon as Elpenor has left, Odysseus' mother Anticlea approaches. Even though it is only here that Odysseus learns of her death and he is struck by sadness and pity, he prevents her from drinking the blood (*Od.* 11.84–9). Only after his conversation with Tiresias (*Od.* 11.90–151), he waits for his mother to approach again and finally speaks to her (*Od.* 11.152–224). While the actorial motivation for Odysseus' behaviour is that he must fulfil the purpose of his journey and speak to Tiresias, the narratorial motivation for the postponement of Odysseus' and his mother's actual encounter (i.e. through a technique of 'retardation'¹²²) is that it increases the dramatic tension. The pathos-laden scene, then, of course emphasizes Odysseus' (own) pain and longing for his home¹²³ more than anything else, as well as the pain which is caused to others by his absence (*Od.* 11.181–3 and esp. 11.195–203). Together with Tiresias' prophecy this also 'prepare[s] the reader for the events of xiii–xxiv'¹²⁴. Hence, Odysseus' prevailing emotion and motive here is nostalgia (and not yet curiosity). In the following phase (C), this is, however, about to change. After the emotional conversation with his mother, he does not head directly for the light and leave as soon as possible, as she told him to (*Od.* 11.223). Instead, he stays and speaks to 'as many as there were wives and daughters of outstanding men' (ὄσσαι ἀριστήων ἄλοχοι ἔσαν ἠδὲ θύγατρεις, *Od.* 11.227), who are now gathering around the blood (*Od.* 11.225–8). It is in the following 'deliberation scene'¹²⁵ (*Od.* 11.229–32) in which Odysseus asks himself how to question all of them,

120 Cf. de Jong 2001, 271.

121 See Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:80–1.

122 See de Jong 2001, xvi–xvii.

123 Cf. de Jong 2001, 271. His questions in *Od.* 11.170–9 concern his mother's death but also the situation at home. He asks about his father, his son, his kingdom and, finally, his wife. His questions basically aim to determine whether they are still waiting for him or have already given up on (and moved on without) him.

124 See Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:88.

125 See de Jong 2001, 282 and Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:92.

and during the questioning of the heroines he—once again—appears as curious (*Od.* 11.229–34)¹²⁶:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ βούλευον, ὅπως ἐρέοιμι ἐκάστην.
ἦδε δέ μοι κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή· 230
σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ
οὐκ εἶων πίνειν ἅμα πάσας αἶμα κελαινόν.
αἱ δὲ προμνηστῖναι ἐπήϊσαν, ἠδὲ ἐκάστη
ὄν γόνον ἐξαγόρευεν· ἐγὼ δ' ἐρέεινον ἀπάσας.

I then thought about a way to question them, each by herself, / [230] and as I thought, this was the plan that seemed best to me; / drawing out the long-edged sword from beside my big thigh, / [232] I would not let them all drink the dark blood at the same time. / So they waited and came to me in order, and each one / [234] told me about her origin, and I questioned all of them.

Apparently Odysseus has no doubts about *whether* or not to speak to the women, but only about *how* to do it.¹²⁷ He decides in the end to speak to them all. What follows is the lengthy ‘catalogue of heroines’¹²⁸ (*Od.* 11.225–330), where Odysseus lists a total of fourteen important mythical women by name,¹²⁹ providing genealogical information for almost each of them.¹³⁰ But the list does not actually end here, as, shortly before the *Intermezzo* (*Od.* 11.331–84), where Odysseus interrupts his narration and the frame-story (1st level narrative) is taken up again, he says that it would take all night to name them all: *πάσας δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω, / ὄσσας ἠρώων ἀλόχους ἴδον ἠδὲ θύγατρας· / πρὶν γάρ κεν καὶ νύξ φθίτ' ἄμβροτος.* (*Od.* 11.328–30).

The question that arises is, why is Odysseus so eager to speak to all those women? In fact, the same question could be asked about the men that he speaks to in C' (‘catalogue of (six) heroes from the remote past’). By this point he has already completed his mission of speaking to Tiresias and would be free to leave this place, which could well be regarded as unpleasant (cf. *Od.* 11.155–6 and 11.473–6). From another point of view,

126 Cf. Burgess 2012, 288.

127 Cf. de Jong 2001, 282, who distinguishes between the “‘how’-form and the “‘whether’ form’ (de Jong 2001, 96) as the two types of “‘indirect deliberation’ scenes’.

128 See Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:90.

129 The fourteen heroines are Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, Megara, Epicasta, Chloris, Leda, Iphimedeia, Phaidra, Procis, Ariadne, Maira, Clymene and Eriphyle.

130 For a detailed structure of those ‘genealogies’, see de Jong 2001, 281–82.

the completion of his mission can also be regarded as precisely the reason that he remains. For, now he does not have to hold himself back, as when his mother first approached him, but he can take all the time that he likes to satisfy his curiosity. It is comprehensible that Odysseus uses this unique opportunity of visiting the Underworld to speak to people—his beloved ones and friends aside—that he would otherwise never be able to do so. Nevertheless, his behaviour is not self-evident, as in somebody else’s case fear or the longing for home may have prevailed over curiosity. While Odysseus’ curiosity is the main actorial motivation which explains his prolonged stay with the dead in C/C’ (together with the conversations in B/B’, these occupy the largest part of the book), the narratorial motivation of C/C’ also lies in the great narrative potential that these Underworld conversations offer. The extended Underworld scene makes it possible to address a multitude of myths and thus achieve considerable thematic variety¹³¹ that the (internal) Phaeacian audience, as well as the (external) historical hearer/reader,¹³² was probably expected to enjoy. In fact, Odysseus’ story-telling skills will be praised by his Phaeacian audience only a little later: ‘expertly, as a singer would do, you have told the story’ (μῦθον δ’ ὡς ὄτ’ ἀοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας, *Od.* 11.368) says Alcinous himself to Odysseus.¹³³

The authenticity of *Od.* 11.225–34, i.e the introduction of C, as well as the following catalogue of heroines, has, admittedly, been doubted in the past and has been the subject of much discussion. I agree with Heubeck,¹³⁴ who convincingly argues for the authenticity of the verses, as well as de Jong,¹³⁵ who points out the ‘unity’ of the episode. The carefully balanced structure of the episode (as evident in the table above) seems to me the most important argument for authenticity of both C and C’.¹³⁶

131 In the case of B/B’ the conversations are actually relevant to the further development of the story, e.g. as a warning to Odysseus regarding his return home (Agamemnon) but also in relation to what awaits him after his death (Achilles).

132 There has to be made a basic distinction between those two, as they are not identical. De Jong defines the ‘primary narratees focalizees’ (here the Phaeacians) as ‘the representatives of the hearers/readers in the text’ (de Jong 2001, xv). According to the same terminology, Odysseus here would be the ‘internal secondary narrator focalizer’. However, we will not explore the historical reception of Homer, as it is not our concern here.

133 This positive reaction of the internal audience may well be an attempt to guide the reaction of the external hearer/reader into a similar direction.

134 See Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:90–91.

135 See de Jong 2001, 272. Cf. Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:75–77 on the unity of the *Nekuia* as ‘a lucid and coherent whole’.

136 Cf. Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:111 on *Od.* 11.568–627: ‘The overall structure of the book guarantees the place of these disputed lines [...]’. They then present a detailed outlining of the episode structure.

Ὀδυσσεῖα ἐκουσίως τῆς τῶν παραδόξων θεαμάτων ἱστορίας ἀποστήναι, ἀξιόπιστον τὴν ἀπαλλαγὴν διὰ τοῦ δέους ἐποίησατο.’)¹⁴³

Now, if—with regard to Odysseus’ motivation—we look at the *Nekuia* as a whole, we are offered the Homeric characterization of Odysseus in miniature. This characterisation comprises both a centripetal and a centrifugal tendency, bringing together both a nostalgia and a *Wanderlust*. Odysseus’ descent (*katabasis*) into the Underworld happens by compulsion¹⁴⁴ and serves the general purpose of his return home (*nostalgia*), but it is by his own choice that Odysseus extends his stay there time after time (*Wanderlust*). By thus remaining true to the basic tendency of the *Odyssey*, which presents Odysseus as the centripetal hero trying to return home, and at the same time highlighting his curiosity, the *Nekuia* manages to balance both these dimensions and depict a picture of a multifaceted hero at an individual level.

2.2.5.2 Re-departure/ New Journey

Apart from the *Wanderlust* that characterizes Odysseus in the *Nekuia*, the episode is, of course, the key text for all later continuations of the *Odyssey*, as it anticipates the continuation of the hero’s travels after his return home in the form of a new journey which is predestined by fate. It is here that the motif of a new journey, which is so seminal for the later tradition that presents Odysseus as a wanderer and adventurer, occurs for the first time. When Odysseus speaks to the seer Tiresias, he is told that, after returning home, he will actually have to depart again. With an oar on his shoulder, he shall travel until he finds people who do not know the sea and a wanderer mistakes his oar for a winnowing shovel (ἀθηρηλοιογὼν, *Od.* 11.128). Only after sacrificing to Poseidon on that very spot shall he return home for good (*Od.* 11.119–37):

αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ μνηστῆρας ἐνὶ μεγάροισι τεοῖσι
κτείνης ἠὲ δόλω ἢ ἀμφοδὼν ὄξεϊ χαλκῶ,

120

143 See the H.Q.-scholion in Dindorf 1962, 527.

144 Cf. Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:76 where Heubeck describes the difference between Odysseus’ *katabasis* to the Underworld and of the heroes before him, i.e. Heracles and Theseus, as follows: ‘The difference lies in the motivation: Odysseus is seen by the poet as undergoing adventures inflicted by fate, against his will: he could not, therefore, undertake the journey to Hades on his own initiative with a view to some bold feat. His *katabasis* required an order which brooked no refusal, and so the poet made the consultation of Tiresias in Hades an essential pre-condition for Odysseus’ safe return home.’

ἔρχεσθαι δὴ ἔπειτα, λαβὼν εὐῆρες ἔρετμόν,
 εἰς ὃ κε τοὺς ἀφίκηαι, οἱ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν
 ἀνέρες οὐδέ θ' ἄλεσσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ ἔδουσιν·
 οὐδ' ἄρα τοὶ ἴσασι νέας φοινικοπαρήους,
 οὐδ' εὐήρε' ἔρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται. 125
 σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει·
 ὅπποτε κεν δὴ τοι ζυμβλήμενος ἄλλος ὀδίτης
 φήη ἀθηρηλοιγὸν ἔχειν ἀνὰ φαιδίμῳ ὄμῳ,
 καὶ τότε δὴ γαίη πῆξας εὐῆρες ἔρετμόν,
 ἔρξας ἱερὰ καλὰ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι, 130
 ἀρνεῖον ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα κάπρον,
 οἴκαδ' ἀποστείχειν ἔρδειν θ' ἱερὰς ἑκατόμβας
 ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὸν ἔχουσι,
 πᾶσι μάλ' ἐξείης. θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἄλδος αὐτῶ
 ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται, ὅς κέ σε πέφνη 135
 γήρα ὑπο λιπαρῶ ἀρημένον· ἀμφὶ δέ λαοὶ
 ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται. τὰ δέ τοι νημερτέα εἴρω.

But after you have killed these suitors in your own palace, / either by treachery, or
 openly with the sharp bronze, / [121] then you must take up your well-shaped oar
 and go on a journey / until you come where there are men living who know
 nothing / [123] of the sea, and who eat food that is not mixed with salt, who
 never / have known ships whose cheeks are painted purple, who never / [125]
 have known well-shaped oars, which act for ships as wings do. / And I will tell
 you a very clear proof, and you cannot miss it. / [127] When, as you walk, some
 other wayfarer happens to meet you, / [128] and says you carry a winnow-fan on
 your bright shoulder, / then you must plant your well-shaped oar in the ground,
 and render / [130] ceremonious sacrifice to the lord Poseidon, / one ram and one
 bull, and a mounter of sows, a boar pig, / and make your way home again and
 render holy hecatombs / to the immortal gods who hold the wide heaven, all /
 [134] of them in order. Death will come to you [out of the sea]¹⁴⁵, in / some
 altogether unwarlike way, and it will end you / [136] in the ebbing time of a sleek
 old age. Your people / about you will be prosperous. All this is true that I tell you.

As one would expect of a good prophecy, it is quite cryptic. It says that Odysseus shall
 have a gentle death ἐξ ἄλδος (*Od.* 11.134–5) after everything is fulfilled, and it is unclear
 whether that means ‘(coming) from the sea’ or ‘away from the sea’.¹⁴⁶ The sense of this

145 Here, I replaced Lattimore’s translation ‘from the sea’ with ‘out of the sea’.

146 The above translation ‘out of the sea’ reflects this ambiguity, which was already noted in antiquity. Cf. the first ancient scholion to the *Odyssey* listed in Dindorf 1962, 487: ‘διπλῆ ἀνάγνωσις, καὶ ἔξαλος, προπαροξυτόνως ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔξω καὶ πόρρω τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ, ἐξ ἄλδος, διηρημένως, διὰ τὸ τῆς τρυγόνος κέντρον, ᾧ ὁ Τηλέγονος ἀντὶ αἰχμῆς ἐχρήτο. V.’ (‘Double reading: ἔξαλος, with the acute on the antepenultimate, for ‘outside of’ (ἔξω) and ‘far away (πόρρω) from the sea’, and, ἐξ ἄλδος, separately

phrase, as well as the prophesied journey as a whole, have been much disputed. The most probable hypothesis concerning the latter is that the journey serves to mark a reconciliation with Poseidon,¹⁴⁷ ‘the Shaker of the Earth, who holds a grudge against you [Odysseus] in his heart, and because you blinded his dear son, hates you.’, as Tiresias says in vv. 102–3. The implication is that, by planting the oar, a symbol of the sea, in the ground and by sacrificing to Poseidon on that very spot, the god’s cult is introduced to new lands.¹⁴⁸

As for a possible interpretation of ἐξ ἄλός, it is worth taking a look at the folktale of the Sailor and the Oar, which is attested as part of the contemporary oral tradition in numerous variations in Europe and North America.¹⁴⁹ The prophecy of Tiresias in *Od.* 11 indeed bears considerable resemblance to the basic story of the Sailor and the Oar. In the latter

[...] a sailor who is unhappy with the sea takes an oar and walks inland with the oar on his shoulder until he finally meets someone who does not know what it is, and there he settles down. This is the essence of the story.¹⁵⁰

written, because of the sting-ray’s spine, that Telegonus used as a spear point. V.’ My translation). As we know, until very late Greek texts were written in majuscules only, without any word division, accentuation or punctuation (cf. Heubeck, West, and Hainsworth 1988, 1: Introduction and Books I–VIII:38; Rengakos 2011, 167). The use of minuscules made its way into the written language mainly through the systematic transfer and rewriting of existing texts into the new minuscule script (*metacharakterismos*) during the ninth and tenth century a. C. (cf. Brockmann, Deckers, and Lorusso 2014, 16–17). Consequently, the V-scholion makes a distinction between the separately written ἐξ ἄλός, understood as ἐκ/ἐξ, i.e. ‘(coming) from the sea’, and, the compound ἔξωλος, as standing for ἔξω τῆς ἄλός, i.e. ‘outside/away from the sea’. Like the V-scholion, the later quoted H.Q.-scholion also points to both interpretations and the distinction in the spelling. However, the H.Q.-scholion argues that the separately written ἐξ could as well stand for ἔξω, and points at an example in the *Iliad* where this is the case (‘ἄλλ’ εἶ γε καὶ ἐν παραθέσει εἶη ἢ ἐξ, δύναται τὸ ἔξω δηλοῦν, ὡς τὸ “ἔκ τ’ ἀνδροκτασίης” (Il. Λ, 164)’).

147 Cf. Heubeck in Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 2: Books IX–XVI:83: ‘In 119–37, however, Teiresias indicates how the god is to be appeased at the last.’

148 Cf. Hansen 1977, 32–35 as well as the revised version of his article Hansen 2014, 255, 262. As Hansen points out, this explanation was already provided by an ancient scholiast (V-scholion on *Od.* 11.121, 130) as well as Eustathios of Thessalonike (*ad. Od.*, p. 1675.30–35). The prophesied sacrifice to Poseidon also serves an aitiological function in that it implicitly offers an explanation for the existence of Poseidon sanctuaries far inland (Hansen 2014, 255, 262).

149 See Hansen 2014, 251: ‘The Sailor and the Oar is an international narrative type (ATU 1379**, *The Sailor and the Oar*) that is attested in Europe and North America.’. Hansen ‘draw[s] upon a corpus of around thirty texts of the Sailor and the Oar that [he] ha[s] gathered from published sources and from oral informants’ (see Hansen 2014, 248).

150 See Hansen 2014, 251.

In the modern Greek tradition, it is often Saint Elias (or Saint Nikolaos) who assumes the role of the unhappy sailor,¹⁵¹ while in the Anglo-american tradition it is sometimes a British seaman or a member of the U.S. navy.¹⁵² Yet none of these variants is attested before the nineteenth century, for it was at this time that the systematic transcription of folktales began.¹⁵³ It has been debated for decades¹⁵⁴ and ultimately remains uncertain whether such folktales were already in circulation in antiquity (and thus also in Homer's time) or whether they were in fact of later origin. However, as Hansen convincingly shows,¹⁵⁵ there is much to suggest that the modern variants go back to an ancient oral tradition, which Homer also adapted for the purposes of his *Odyssey*.¹⁵⁶ The modern folktale variants and Tiresias' prophecy are thus both likely to go back to 'a common ancestor or ancestors'¹⁵⁷, making the Homeric and the non-Homeric variants independent witnesses of the same tradition.¹⁵⁸ If we accept Hansen's and Edmunds's premise and on this basis compare the Tiresias prophecy with the folktale variants of the Sailor and the Oar, it makes perfect sense to understand ἐξ ἄλλοις as 'away from the sea' or 'outside the sea'. For, in the folktale narratives, the mariner always settles down far away from the sea and stays there until the end of his life; in other words, he *dies* far away from the sea (even though his death is not explicitly mentioned)¹⁵⁹. Another argument for interpreting ἐξ ἄλλοις as 'away from the sea' is that Odysseus reconciles Poseidon (who is nothing other but the sea in personified form) by taking his cult to a remote place far inland, so that the god, once appeased, no longer poses a threat to him¹⁶⁰. After fulfilling the demands of the prophecy, Odysseus therefore no longer needs

151 Interestingly, in the folktale variants which recount the life of Saint Elias the inland journey also has an aetiological function. By having him settle down on the top of a mountain at the end of his journey, these tales provide an explanation of the fact that chapels dedicated to Saint Elias are typically found on mountaintops. Thus, both the Tiresias prophecy in *Od.* 11 and the story of the Saint Elias provide an *aition* for the existence of an inland sanctuary (see Hansen 1977, 35).

152 See the exemplary texts printed by Hansen 2014, 248–50.

153 See Hansen 2014, 248.

154 See Lowell Edmunds' introduction to Hansen's reedited paper in Edmunds 2014, 246.

155 See Hansen 1977, 34–37 as well as Edmunds 2014, 246–47, who briefly lists Hansen's main arguments.

156 See Hansen 1977, 31–32 on Odysseus' prophesied return to Ithaca after the inland journey as an adaptation to the needs of the *Odyssey*.

157 See Edmunds 2014, 246.

158 Cf. Hansen 2014, 263: '[I]t is best to treat all the texts, including Homer's, as independent realizations of an old story'.

159 Cf. Hansen 1977, 47.

160 Cf. Hansen 2014, 255. However, 'the reason for the sacrifice prescribed by Tiresias is not obvious,' as Edmunds 2014, 247 points out (cf. Hansen 2014, 263). This is equally true of other details in the Tiresias prophecy, such as the aetiological function mentioned above (see Hansen 1977, 35–36; Hansen 2014, 263). Based, among other things, on the lack of explicitness and clarity in Tiresias'

In this first description, it is already clear that Odysseus sees (or at least presents) the journey that still awaits him in a very negative light, as he calls it ἀμέτρητος πόνος, πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπός (*Od.* 23.249–50). It is something that—if we believe him—he does not *want* but *must* do. As Penelope then wants to know all about this trial (ἄεθλον, *Od.* 23.261) at once, instead of postponing the discussion and going to bed (*Od.* 23.257–62), Odysseus, albeit reluctantly, repeats Tiresias’ prophecy in all detail (*Od.* 23.264–84). Here again, it is much emphasized by Odysseus himself that the journey to come is not his own choice (*Od.* 23.264–8).¹⁶³

δαιμονίη, τί τ’ ἄρ’ αὖ με μάλ’ ὀτρύνουσα κελεύεις
εἰπέμεν; αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μῦθήσομαι οὐδ’ ἐπικεύσω. 265
οὐ μὲν τοι θυμὸς κεχαρήσεται· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸς
χαίρω, ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὰ βροτῶν ἐπὶ ἄστε’ ἄνωγεν
ἐλθεῖν, ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχοντ’ εὐήρες ἐρετμόν, [...]

[Possessed one¹⁶⁴, why] do you urge me on and tell me / [265] to speak of it? Yet I will tell you, concealing nothing. [266] Your heart will have no joy in this; and I myself am not / happy, since he told me to go among many cities of men, [268] taking my well-shaped oar in my hands and bearing it [...]¹⁶⁵

Odysseus introduces the prophecy about his new journey as very bad news that Penelope will not like. He dwells almost conspicuously long on this negative perspective, pointing out that he is not happy about this development, almost as if to avoid that one might think the opposite. Here, it is particularly interesting that, before almost literally reproducing Tiresias’ prophecy (*Od.* 23.269–84), Odysseus claims that Tiresias ordered him ‘to go among many cities of men’ (ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὰ βροτῶν ἐπὶ ἄστε’ ἄνωγεν ἐλθεῖν, *Od.* 23.267–8)—which the seer never did. Instead, it is Odysseus who freely adds this detail.¹⁶⁶ It may well be that this is how Odysseus interprets the

163 Cf. de Jong 2001, 561: ‘Odysseus could have quoted Tiresias’ words in 11.121–37 in direct speech (as does Telemachus with Menelaus’ words in 17.124–46). Instead, he turns to indirect speech, which allows him to emphasize that the seer’s words were a command (cf. ἄνωγεν: 267 and ἐκέλευσεν: 276; ἔειπεν: 273 and φᾶτο: 284 correspond to the seer’s own emphatic ‘I tell you’).’

164 Here, I replaced Lattimore’s translation ‘You are so strange. Why [...]’ with ‘Possessed one, why [...]’.

165 The following verses 23.269–84 are an almost *verbatim* repetition of Tiresias’ speech in *Od.* 11.122–37 ‘with minor alterations arising largely from transposition from 2nd to 1st person’. See Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck 1992, 3: Books XVII–XXIV:342, and de Jong 2001, 561.

166 At the same time, of course, the wording here reminds us of the *Odyssey*’s opening (πολλῶν δ’ ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω, *Od.* 1.3). Cf. p. 27.

prophecy and what he believes it to imply.¹⁶⁷ However, thinking of Odysseus' visit of the Underworld and other instances, where he appeared more curious and adventurous than focused on his return home, one is tempted to read this passage as a sign of Odysseus' hidden *Wanderlust* and his actual desire for departure. Of course, this would be incompatible with the *Odyssey's* general tendency to explicitly express something like this in the text. Yet, one cannot deny that all those moments where Odysseus did not exactly try to get home remain in the back of our mind. On the other hand, we could also try to justify this markedly negative introduction by Odysseus by his intention to prepare Penelope for the worst, in order to avoid a big disappointment when she hears that her husband will have to depart again.¹⁶⁸ In the end, however, there always remains a little doubt as to whether Odysseus is actually telling the truth or not. Either way, the idea of an Odysseus who, soon after his long-awaited return home, feels the need to depart again has proved inspiring for a large number of later authors. The fact that Odysseus' final journey is not narrated in the *Odyssey* itself leaves an open end, offering plenty of space for imagination.¹⁶⁹

In contrast to later elaborations, in the *Odyssey* itself, the reason for the announced re-departure is not the psychological disposition or attitude of the hero himself, i.e. the existential condition of *Wanderlust*, but, as in case of Odysseus' first departure (i.e. the one for Troy), denotes an outcome dictated by fate. The Homeric Odysseus' new journey will hence not be a voluntary one. He will travel again 'not so as to see the towns of men once again but, on the contrary, until such time as he becomes an object of general curiosity'.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude that a (voluntary)

167 Contrary to this text-immanent interpretation based on Odysseus' actorial motivation, Hansen 2014, 258 explains this detail by comparing the Tiresias prophecy as reproduced by Odysseus with the folktale of the Sailor and the Oar. In the various versions of the folktale, the sailor often encounters several inlanders before he finally meets someone who does not recognise the oar as such. Hansen argues that Homer knew this more detailed version of the story involving several encounters with inlanders (who function as representatives of their local communities), and that Odysseus therefore speaks of many cities here. Even if Hansen's arguments are quite convincing, such an interpretation must ultimately remain speculative, since we do not know for sure whether the folktale material really preceded the *Odyssey* in time.

168 In fact, she reacts in a positive way (*Od.* 11.286–7): εἰ μὲν δὴ γῆρας γε θεοὶ τελέουσιν ἄρειον, ἐλπὼρή τοι ἔπειτα κακῶν ὑπάλυξιν ἔσεσθαι. ('If the gods are accomplishing a more prosperous old age, then there is hope that you shall have an escape from your troubles.')

169 Cf. Stanford 1954, 89.

170 See Hartog 2001, 35. Hartog thus points out the major difference between the journey of the Homeric Odysseus and the modern one. The Homeric Odysseus will not depart for his new journey *out of*

journey out of *Wanderlust* was completely unthinkable in the time of Homer, as the Cretan tale indeed shows. Instead, this would simply be incompatible with Odysseus' character and the narrative as a whole. If the prophecy of Tiresias was really based on the legend of the Sailor and the Oar, Odysseus' centripetal character was certainly the reason why Homer deviated from the folktale material and adapted the legend by having his hero embark on the journey inland out of compulsion and not in order to settle in a foreign land.¹⁷¹ For the family- and home-oriented Odysseus is firmly tied to Ithaca. A notable similarity to the folktale would still remain, especially since here too the journey, even if it is not taken by force, always serves to end all wandering and results in settling down.¹⁷² We can thus conclude that, despite the motif of Odysseus' second journey inspiring so many modern authors to portray him primarily as a curious explorer and adventurer and the many Homeric passages that indeed testify to Odysseus' *Wanderlust*, the emphasis in the *Odyssey* still lies on Odysseus' centripetal striving, to which his second journey is also subordinated. This becomes still clearer if one compares Odysseus' fated journey with the legend of the Sailor and the Oar, on which it might be based.

2.2.6 A Cretan Tale

A truly remarkable and central passage for *Wanderlust* in the *Odyssey* can be found in book 14. Here Odysseus has just returned to Ithaca and talks to the swineherd Eumaeus in the disguise of a Cretan beggar (cf. chapter 2.1). Although an apparent stranger, he is hospitably received by the swineherd, who almost immediately starts talking to him about his absent master (i.e. Odysseus, *Od.* 14.42 et seq.). Eumaeus shows himself to be exceptionally loyal and ironically Odysseus is the one he is talking to in that very moment.¹⁷³ When Odysseus is finally asked by Eumaeus about his 'own sorrows' (τὰ σ' αὐτοῦ κήδε', *Od.* 14.185), his identity (with the typical question τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες; *Od.* 14.187), and his arrival on Ithaca (*Od.* 14.188–90) he

curiosity (as many later authors have imagined him to) but to become himself an object of curiosity.

171 The motif of the fateful journey inland would then be a deliberate adaptation of the folktale material to the purposes of the *Odyssey*, in which the homeward-oriented Odysseus always wants to return to Ithaca in the end. Cf. Hansen 1977, 32.

172 See Hansen 1977, 31: 'The consequences of the two quests are, then, functionally, though not formally, identical.' Cf. Hansen 2014, 255.

173 On the dramatic irony inherent in this episode see de Jong 2001, 340.

answers with a long lying tale (*Od.* 14.192–359)¹⁷⁴, which tells the story of his life from its beginning up to the current moment. He pretends to be of Cretan origin, who is the son of a rich and influential man named Castor and a concubine. He describes how, despite a small inheritance, he acquired wealth and a family because of his virtue (*Od.* 14.192–213), referring to his ‘courage, that power that breaks men in battle’ (θάρσος [...] καὶ ῥήξηνορίην, *Od.* 14.216–7) which he describes at length (*Od.* 14.218–21). The following detailed self-characterization of the Cretan (*Od.* 14.222–31) is astounding:

τοῖος ἔα ἐν πολέμῳ· ἔργον δέ μοι οὐ φίλον ἔσκεν οὐδ’ οἰκωφελίη, ἣ τε τρέφει ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἀλλά μοι αἰεὶ νῆες ἐπήρετμοι φίλαι ἦσαν καὶ πόλεμοι καὶ ἄκοντες εὐξέστοι καὶ οἴστοί,	225
λυγρά, τὰ τ’ ἄλλοισὶν γε καταρριγηλὰ πέλονται. αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ τὰ φίλ’ ἔσκε, τὰ που θεὸς ἐν φρεσὶ θῆκεν· ἄλλος γάρ τ’ ἄλλοισιν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτέρπεται ἔργοις. πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Τροίης ἐπιβήμεναι υἷας Ἀχαιῶν εἰνάκις ἀνδράσιν ἦρξα καὶ ὠκυπόροισι νέεσσιν	230
ἄνδρας ἐς ἄλλοδαπούς, καί μοι μάλα τύγχανε πολλὰ.	

Such was I in the fighting; but labor was never dear to me, / [223] nor care for my house, though that is what raises glorious children; / [224] but ships that are driven on by oars were dear to me always, / [225] and the wars, and throwing spears with polished hafts, and the arrows, / [226] gloomy things, which to other men are terrible, / and yet those things were dear to me which surely some god had put there in my heart, / [228] for different men take joy in different actions. / [229] Before the sons of the Achaians embarked for Troy, I was / 230 nine times a leader of men and went in fast-faring vessels / [231] against outland men, and much substance came my way [...]

Odysseus’ Cretan character, who claims to prefer ‘ships that are driven on by oars [...] and the wars’ (*Od.* 14.224–5) to housekeeping and children (*Od.* 14.223), goes on to explain how, after his return from Troy and only a month at home, he felt the need to depart again and went on a new journey (*Od.* 14.243–53):

174 Odysseus’ lying tale to Eumaeus is one of a total of five lying tales which are placed into Odysseus’ mouth in the *Odyssey* and continued in *Od.* 14.468–503. See de Jong 2001, 326. For an overview of all lying tales told by Odysseus apart from *Od.* 14.468–503, see the helpful *Appendix E* in de Jong 2001, 586–87.

αὐτὰρ ἔμοι δειλῶ κακὰ μῆδετο μητίετα Ζεύς·
 μῆνα γὰρ οἶον ἔμεινα τεταρπόμενος τεκέεσσι
 κουριδίη τ' ἀλόχῳ καὶ κτήμασιν· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα 245
 Αἴγυπτόνδε με θυμὸς ἀνώγει ναυτίλλεσθαι,
 νῆας ἐὺ στείλαντα, σὺν ἀντιθέοισ' ἐτάροισιν.
 ἐννέα νῆας στείλα, θοῶς δ' ἐσαγείρετο λαός.
 ἐξῆμαρ μὲν ἔπειτα ἔμοι ἐρίηρες ἐταῖροι
 δαίνυντ'· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἱερήϊα πολλὰ παρεῖχον 250
 θεοῖσιν τε ῥέζειν αὐτοῖσί τε δαῖτα πένεσθαι.
 ἐβδομάτη δ' ἀναβάντες ἀπὸ Κρήτης εὐρείης
 ἐπλέομεν βορρῆι ἀνέμῳ ἀκραεῖ καλῶ

But for wretched me Zeus of the counsels devised more hardships; / [244] one month only I stayed, taking pleasure in my children / and my wedded wife and my possessions, but then / [246] the spirit within me urged me to make an expedition to Egypt / with ships well appointed and with my godlike companions. / [248] I appointed nine ships, and rapidly the people were gathered, / and for six days then my eager companions continued / [250] feasting, but I provided them with abundant victims / for sacrifice to the gods, and for themselves to make ready their feast. / [252] On the seventh day we went aboard and from wide Crete / sailed on a North Wind that was favorable and fair.

Of course, what is different here in comparison to the other passages discussed so far is that, in this case, the journey is explicitly staged on a fictitious level and is not supposed to be a true account of Odysseus' own life, as he has adopted a false identity. What Odysseus says here is therefore supposed to be an invented story, even if a very convincing one that Eumaeus does not recognize as such. Although the lying tales always 'consist of a mixture of fact and fiction', usually containing some variations ('allomorphs') of Odysseus' real adventures and experiences,¹⁷⁵ this is not the case for the cited passages. Even so, the above passages are of major importance, as they allow valuable conclusions to be drawn about Odysseus and the narrative as a whole.

What Odysseus says here catches attention and is well worth a closer look. He, whose biggest desire it always was to return home—in fact this very tale is just another means to secure his successful return—shows that he is very well able to imagine somebody who might *not* want that. In other words, he is able to imagine someone struck by an incurable *Wanderlust*, who again and again is drawn away from home rather than

175 See de Jong 2001, 327. There are true elements in this tale, too, for example the involuntary departure for Troy as described in *Od.* 14.235–9.

towards it. Even before the forced departure to Troy, the Cretan left his home nine times for a raid. Having returned from Troy, the delights of his wife, children and property could not hold him for longer than a month, because his ‘heart urged’ him to ‘sail to Egypt’ (Αἴγυπτόνδε με θυμὸς ἀνώγει ναυτίλλεσθαι, *Od.* 14.246). These words from the mouth of the person who never wanted anything more than to return home are particularly striking, and almost appear to be taken out of a modern continuation of the *Odyssey* focusing on the hero’s *Wanderlust*.¹⁷⁶ As it turns out, the influence of this passage on Kazantzakis’ *Οδύσσεια* is undeniable.¹⁷⁷

If, now, a restless, centrifugal hero like the Cretan is theoretically imaginable,¹⁷⁸ this means that Odysseus does have a choice (actorial motivation). He is how he is not because everyone was like that at the time (in fact, Odysseus in *Od.* 14.227–8 explicitly states that “everyone is different”), but because that is the way *he* is. The cited passage thus provides an alternative homecoming story by suggesting how it could have been. This acts as a strong contrasting foil for Odysseus’ own life, which emphasizes his homeward-bound character even more.¹⁷⁹

On an external level, this also means that the portrayal of a centripetal hero like Odysseus, who is primarily driven by nostalgia (and not *Wanderlust*), did not simply

176 Cf. Dentice di Accadia 2004, 13–16 who also notices this resemblance. Cf. also Cerri 2007, 17. Cerri mentions *Od.* 14.243–286 in the same context and refers to di Accadia, who—because of the passage’s striking resemblance to modern continuations of the *Odyssey*—proposed to see it as an unconscious source for Tennyson and Pascoli (rather than the Tiresias’ prophecy of a new journey). Although I would not go as far as to specifically call the passage an ‘unconscious source’ for later authors, one can argue that the reader takes home a rather diffuse, contradictory impression of the *Odyssey*, which may facilitate such a reception (i.e. continuation of the *Odyssey*).

177 Cf. Bretschneider 2007, 1–2 and especially footnote 4: ‘Deutlich ist zu erkennen, daß sich Kazantzakis in der Odissia an den Handlungsverlauf (vgl. die Stationen Kreta und Ägypten) und die Charakterisierung des Odysseus als verwegener Abenteurer in den homerischen Trugreden (vgl. hierzu Reinhardt 1960, 50-53; Fenik 1974, 161; Hölscher 1991, 384) anlehnt.’

178 The repeated references to Zeus (e.g. *Od.* 14.243) or another deity (e.g. *Od.* 14.227) are merely conventional and do not annul the voluntary nature of the journeys undertaken out of the Cretan’s own initiative. They are rather to be read as a further explanation or even a paraphrase of his own decision, as they seem to rely on the belief that whenever a person does something, it was a god who put it in his/her mind. So, there is no particular case of divine interference here. Cf. Dentice di Accadia 2004, 10: ‘Poco importa che al verso 243 si accenni a Zeus come causa del viaggio, che rimane di fatto il frutto di una scelta autonoma! Zeus è convenzionalmente invocato come causa di vicende significative del finto Odisseo ai vv. 243, 268, 273, 300, 303, 306, 310 (ben sette volte in uno stesso brano). Proprio il numero così alto di occorrenze dà all’espressione un carattere convenzionale.’

179 Cf. Bretschneider 2007, 260: ‘Das, was den Dichter am meisten interessiert, ist die Heimkehr. Alles Übrige wird zwar nicht unterdrückt – sonst wüßten wir nichts davon –, aber doch diesem Thema untergeordnet und so kunstvoll in die Geschichte verwoben (z. B. durch die Trugreden), daß es die Sehnsucht des Helden nach Rückkehr zu Familie und Besitz um so deutlicher hervortreten läßt.’

result from the fact that an outwardly oriented hero exceeded the imagination of the poet or the time. Rather, this hero, to whom the Cretan functions as an effective counter-example, represents a conscious choice of the poet.

This may be also the reason why the Cretan's re-departure on account of his *Wanderlust* is presented in hindsight as the wrong decision, that has brought much misery upon him.¹⁸⁰ Again, we have to remember that it is Odysseus who talks here and who supposedly "invents" this story. It fits his (centripetal) character that he draws a negative moral from the Cretan's life so far. Of course, the adventures and especially the misfortune of the Cretan also meet the need to explain his current presence to Eumaeus and to prevent Odysseus' disguise from being uncovered. Still, there was no necessity which forced Odysseus to present the Cretan's journey as a voluntary one motivated by *Wanderlust*. Whatever the actorial motivation may be here, it proves that the feeling of *Wanderlust* was not alien to Odysseus, even if (in accordance with his Homeric characterization) he seems to condemn it. This balance between *Wanderlust* on the one hand and its condemnation on the other hand could also make us think of Dante's *Inferno* (XXVI, 52–142). While here Odysseus is completely struck by *Wanderlust* himself and does not condemn his own striving, the course of action which results in his tragic death has also often been interpreted as a moral condemnation on the part of Dante.

The Homeric Odysseus refuses to fit in a box. On the one hand, he has a strong desire to go back home. On the other hand, he is itching to see and know things from time to time and there are plenty of passages that display his curiosity and adventurous side. The existential condition of *Wanderlust*, that is the main focus of many modern transformations of the *Odyssey*, is therefore not something which is purely modern and alien to Homer, but is already an important element of the *Odyssey* itself.¹⁸¹ Also, a continuation of Odysseus' travels is clearly indicated in the prophecy that he receives in

180 See the negative view expressed in *Od.* 14.196–8 (ῥηϊδίως κεν ἔπειτα καὶ εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἅπαντα / οὐ τι διαπρήξαιμι λέγων ἐμὰ κήδεα θυμοῦ, / ὅσσα γε δὴ ξύμπαντα θεῶν ἰότητι μόγησα.) and *Od.* 14.243 (αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ δειλῶ κακὰ μῆδετο μητίετα Ζεῦς). Although his adventures do not comprise only negative experiences, he has lost all of his former fortune and is now a beggar dressed in rags.

181 Bretschneider 2007, 251 argues (with reference to Suerbaum 1968, 176) that Odysseus' adventurous nature is only expressed in his first-person narratives in the *Apologue*, while the third person speech of the narrator (i.e. the primary narrator focalizer = NF¹) on the other hand emphasizes Odysseus' nostalgia. It is true that the *Wanderlust*-passages are primarily to be found in Odysseus' own speech, but so is his nostalgia, which can be found both in Odysseus' and the narrator's speech (cf. chapter 2.1).

the Underworld and is announced once more at the end of the *Odyssey*. Finally, the lying tale in *Od.* 14.192–359 shows that a primarily centrifugal hero who is struck by *Wanderlust* was nothing unthinkable for Homer. Instead, it is precisely this type of hero that is deliberately distinguished from Odysseus, who, despite his moments of *Wanderlust*, remains primarily homeward-oriented. The very fact that Odysseus is also curious and often tempted to explore his surroundings, being presented in doing so in a very human way, all the more emphasizes his iron will to return home and makes his success such an achievement. *Wanderlust* is therefore already an integral part of the Homeric Odysseus' highly differentiated characterization and as such represents a motif which is consciously presented by the author.

3. Dante's Odysseus – The *Divine Comedy* as a Turning Point in the *Odyssey's* Reception

Despite its shortness, the Odysseus passage in the *Inferno* (XXVI, 52–142) from Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* (1307–1327) is—alongside the Homeric *Odyssey*—a highly important, though often unconscious, hypotext for all modern transformations of the *Odyssey* which centre on *Wanderlust*. As I shall argue in this chapter, it is Dante who shifts the emphasis from nostalgia to *Wanderlust* and who transforms Odysseus, the Homeric hero of *nostos* par excellence, into the restless explorer and adventurer of modern times.¹⁸²

3.1 The Question of Dante's Sources and the Situation in the Latin Middle Ages

However groundbreaking Dante's new version of Odysseus' story was, it is not clear whether he knew about the exact ending of the story in Homer's *Odyssey*. Dante did not derive his knowledge of the Homeric epics directly from the Greek text, which in the Latin Middle Ages was practically unknown,¹⁸³ and he had no knowledge of the Greek language whatsoever. Nor was a complete Latin translation available to him. Instead, his knowledge of Homer was exclusively based on secondary Latin sources.¹⁸⁴ It is, however, nearly impossible to determine which sources those were and any statement in this matter has to remain speculative. In any case, it is not our aim here to engage in a positivistic research of source-material (*Quellenforschung*). Still, although we cannot determine Dante's sources¹⁸⁵ in this study, it makes sense to present a rough picture of

182 Cf. Grossardt 2003, 233–34.

183 'Erst 1354, mit der Übersendung eines griechischen Homer-Manuskriptes aus Konstantinopel an Francesco Petrarca, erlangte das Abendland wieder Zugang zu den Originaltexten.' See Thoss 1989, 38. Cf. Stanford 1954, 159: '[...] the revival of interest in Greek studies removed the accumulated load of Latin and Frankish odium from Ulysses. The beginning of this rehabilitation may be dated near the 1360's, when Petrarch arranged to have the *Odyssey* translated into Latin for Western readers.' For more details, see Finsler 1912, 15–17. According to Finsler, it was the Byzantine Nikolaos Sigeros who sent Petrarch the Homer manuscript. In his letter of thanks, Petrarch regrets that he is unable to understand the original. Later, he convinces a man called Leonzio Pilato (Leontius Pilatus), who has come to Italy from Byzantium, to translate the manuscript into Latin.

184 Cf. Sensi 2012, 51 and Scott 1977, 119–20.

185 Numerous attempts have been made in this direction. Some of the Latin texts that are often dealt as possible sources for the Dantean Odysseus are: Cicero, *De fin.* 5.48–49 (cf. p. 30) and Horace, *Epist.* 1.2.17–18. See Di Benedetto 2003, 84. Cf. Tucker 2003, 7; Vöhler, Seidensticker, and Emmerich 2005, 97. For further discussion of the sources, see Scott 1977, 119–23, who among other passages names Ovid, *Met.* 14 as a possible inspiration for Dante (1977, 120), as well as Most 2006, 33. Logan 1964, 19 instead, believed that Dante's 'treatment of Ulysses is largely due to Virgil's treatment of Homer's hero in the *Aeneid*.

the general situation regarding the texts with “Homeric” content which circulated throughout the Middle Ages.

There is no doubt that one highly diffused text in the Middle Ages was the so-called *Ilias Latina*, which offered a short version of the Homeric *Iliad* in 1070 verses and which was written from an anti-Ulyssean perspective.¹⁸⁶ Other influential texts which circulated in the Latin Middle Ages and passed on knowledge of the Trojan War mythology were the late antique Troy ‘novels’ (i.e. fictional war chronicles) of Dictys of Crete and Dares Phrygius, as well as the popular¹⁸⁷ medieval Troy novel by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, entitled *Roman de Troie* (1160–1170). Other works were also produced in the same genre as a result.¹⁸⁸ Before the establishment of the Italian vernacular as a literary language in the fourteenth century, the French language and literature was widely known in Italy.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, Dante, who himself knew French and Provençal (Old Occitan)¹⁹⁰, could theoretically have read the French original of Saint-Maure’s text. While the main focus of Benoît’s story is on the events in Troy, and although it is ‘emphatically pro-Trojan and anti-Greek’¹⁹¹, he also relates how the Greeks returned home,¹⁹² including some detailed passages about Odysseus, who is often presented in a rather negative light.¹⁹³ According to Stanford, Benoît ‘relates Ulysses’ Odyssean

186 Cf. von Koppenfels, Krasser, and Kühlmann 2010, 152 as well as Courtney 2013.

187 See Stanford 1954, 159.

188 See Bagordo 2012, 11: ‘The Homeric epics disappeared from the educational canon for a thousand years or so in the Latin Middle Ages, and hence also lost their function as transmitters of the Trojan material. Their place was taken by the Trojan “chronicles” of the late antique authors “Dictys Cretensis” and “Dares Phrygius”, works of modest literary merit but great popularity. The *Roman de Troie* (1160–1170) by Benoît de Sainte-Maure and its Latin adaptation by the Sicilian Guido delle Colonne, the *Historia destructionis Troiae* (late 13th cent.), circulated as an illustrated book and made the Trojan material extraordinarily popular in text and image.’ Cf. Stanford 1954, 163 on Benoît and his followers. For more details on the ‘fictional war diaries’ by Dictys and Dares, see Bagordo 2012, 9 as well as Lobsien 2012, 5.

189 See Thoss 1989, 7; Pöll 2017, 24.

190 See Thoss 1989, 11: ‘Daß auch Dante noch auf provenzalisch zu dichten verstand, wissen wir - außer durch sein eigenes Bekenntnis, er habe sich von frühester Jugend an durch die Lektüre lateinischer und provenzalischer Dichtung geschult - aus den Schlußversen des 26. Gesangs im Purgatorio.’ See also Thoss 1989, 40: ‘Purgatorio XXVI, 140-147, Auftritt des provenzalischen Troubadours Arnaut Daniel, der sich in seiner Muttersprache an Dante wendet: [...]’.

191 See Stanford 1954, 163.

192 See Benoît de Sainte-Maure 2017, 51.

193 After his return to Ithaca, for example, he does not kill the suitors of Penelope in a fight but cuts off their heads while they are sleeping and hacks them all to pieces. See Benoît de Sainte-Maure 2017, 399.

adventures (in direct imitation of Dictys)¹⁹⁴. Benoît's version also includes the motif of Odysseus being killed by Telegonus, his son by Circe, adhering to a mythical variant which dates back to the ancient *Telegony*.¹⁹⁵

3.2 The Importance of Eugammon's *Telegony*

As already mentioned, Dante was not the first creative writer to imagine a continuation of Odysseus' travels. A continuation of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus went on a new journey, existed long before that in the form of the ancient *Telegony*, which is most frequently attributed to Eugammon of Cyrene. It is here where Stanford places '[t]he one radical change from Homer's conception'¹⁹⁶ and the 'origins' of the 'non-Homeric hypothesis that Ulysses was an incurable wanderer at heart'¹⁹⁷, which I denote as the existential condition of *Wanderlust* (for the reasons for this choice see above, footnote 14).¹⁹⁸ Despite the undoubted importance that the *Telegony* had for the future reception of Odysseus, I would not go as far as Stanford to trace the motif of *Wanderlust* back to Eugammon. On the basis of the little text that has been preserved of (and about) the *Telegony*, it is hardly possible to make any valid statement on this matter. Moreover, the attribution of the extant fragments is highly controversial.¹⁹⁹ However speculative any assumption in this regard may be, the few fragments and secondary sources we have (some of which we will now look at briefly) do not strongly indicate the presence of the *Wanderlust* motif in Eugammon. If anything, it rather appears to have been Dante who made Odysseus' new journey a voluntary one, motivated by the existential condition of *Wanderlust*, which is so fundamental for the characterization of the Dantean Odysseus and his later reception.

194 See Stanford 1954, 163.

195 See Benoît de Sainte-Maure 2017, 51.

196 See Stanford 1954, 86.

197 See Stanford 1954, 222–23.

198 Even if he is not sure, if 'all this [i.e. the further development of the story as related by Eugammon] [was] based on pre-Homeric tradition or [it was] Eugammon's own invention' (Stanford 1954, 88.

199 See Tsagalis 2014, 448: 'Bernabé lists five fragments, Davies two (only one in common with Bernabé), and West six (four in common with Bernabé, one in common with Davies, and one published by Livrea ten years after the appearance of the editions of Bernabé and Davies).' The relevant publications are Bernabé 1996, M. Davies 1988, Livrea 1998 and West 2003. Only in two cases (West F 1* and F 2*) are those fragments actually hexameters ('two anonymous ones [...] conjecturally assigned to it [i.e. the poem]', see West 2013, 288) whereas the other four fragments listed by West (West F 3–6) constitute only 'paraphrases of certain parts' Latacz 2006b, 1

The *Telegony* deals with the events after Odysseus' return to Ithaca. What we know from the summary included in the *Chrestomathy* of a certain Proclus²⁰⁰ is that Odysseus here goes on a new journey twice. He first departs for Elis to visit the herds of Augias and is hosted by a certain Polyxenos. The narratorial motivation for the journey to Elis is unclear,²⁰¹ as is the actorial one. *Wanderlust*, in any case, does not appear to play any role in this episode. According to Proclus' very brief account, on his return from Elis, Odysseus makes the necessary sacrifices on the instructions of Tiresias, and afterwards leaves again, this time for Thesprotia.

Apollodorus²⁰², however, whose account in his *Bibliothēke* (*epit.* 7.34–37) seems to be based on the *Telegony* (in contrast to Proclus, he does not mention the name of the work or its author), provides different information regarding the sacrifices performed by Odysseus. According to Apollodorus, the plot after Odysseus' return from Elis goes as follows. After making sacrifices to Hades, Persephone and Tiresias²⁰³ in Ithaca (although not yet the sacrifices which were ordered *by* Tiresias, as in Proclus), Odysseus travels inland until he reaches Thesprotia, where he performs the sacrifices to Poseidon as ordered by Tiresias. It appears to be Apollodorus who is more accurate here, inasmuch as his account is much more detailed than Proclus' highly abbreviated version and it accords with the events which were prophesied by Tiresias in the Homeric *Odyssey*.²⁰⁴ Both Proclus and Apollodorus at least agree on the fact that Odysseus

200 See West 2013, 4–11 on Proclus. For the relevant passages of Proclus' *Chrestomathy* (*Chrest.* 306 Severyns), see *PEG Teleg.* Arg. 1 (Bernabé 1996, 1:101–2) and West *Teleg.* Arg. 1b and Arg. 1c (West 2013, 293; 295) as well as West *Teleg.* Arg. (West 2003, 166–69) for an uninterrupted citation provided with an English translation and 'with additions and variants from Apollodorus, *The Library*' (West 2003, 167).

201 West 2013, 293–94.

202 This Apollodorus is not identical with the famous Apollodorus of Athens, the author of the *Chronika* (Χρονικά), and is therefore often referred to as pseudo-Apollodorus.

203 See West 2013, 295: 'The sacrifices to Hades, Persephone, and Teiresias represent the fulfilment of the vow made in *Od.* 11. 29–33 (following Circe's instructions, 10. 521–5) to sacrifice a cow to the ghosts and a black sheep to Teiresias; Hades and Persephone (10. 491, 534) take the place of the *νεκύων ἀμειννά κάρηνα*.'

204 See West 2013, 295: 'What follows in Apollodorus is faithful to Teiresias' programme. Proclus had abbreviated severely and confused the order by conflating the sacrifice *to* Teiresias with the ones ordained *by* Teiresias.' For the contrary view, see Ballabriga 1989, who gives priority to Proclus' over Apollodorus' account. Since, in this scenario, the journey to Thesprotia lacks an actorial motivation (the sacrifices ordained by Tiresias are already carried out in Ithaca, before the Thesprotian journey), Ballabriga sees Odysseus' *Wanderlust* as the only possible explanation, replacing the allegedly original motivation being the banishment of Odysseus for the killing of the suitors: 'Il semble en effet que l' *Odyssee* ait réussi à éliminer le thème du bannissement d'Ulysse sans parvenir à imposer celui du courroux de Poséidon. Un Ulysse qui n'est plus en butte à la colère des hommes ou des dieux ne peut être

travels to Thesprotia. If Apollodorus' account is believed to be the more accurate one, by sending Odysseus to Thesprotia, Eugammon takes up the motif of the fated journey which was prophesied by Tiresias in the Homeric *Nekuia*, even if Thesprotia, 'which in the *Odyssey* is a coastal kingdom entirely familiar with ships',²⁰⁵ does not really match with the land inhabited by 'men who don't know the sea and don't eat food mixed with salt' (*Od.* 11.122–3), as Tiresias had originally prophesied.

Odysseus' journey to Thesprotia in the *Telegony* would hence appear to be a journey dictated by fate, which is by no means comparable to the voluntary journey that it will later become in Dante. Of course, we can never be sure of how the story went and the reasons that led Odysseus to this second, Thesprotian journey, unless the *Telegony* was to miraculously reappear somewhere. The only valid assumption in this matter can therefore be the non-existence of the motif (*Wanderlust*) until the opposite is proven, instead of reading something into the story for which there is no textual evidence whatsoever. At best, a possible hint at a certain *Wanderlust* may be seen in the events following the hero's departure for Thesprotia, where Odysseus stays in Thesprotia and marries the queen Callidice.²⁰⁶ Only when she dies and after many years (approximately 15–20, according to West²⁰⁷) he returns to Ithaca and is later killed by his own son, Telegonus. West notices that:

This is incongruous with the rest of Odysseus' story. The hero who for ten years yearned and strove to get home to Penelope, refusing the offer of marriage to a goddess, now goes away, voluntarily marries another woman in a distant realm, and stays with her for longer than the duration of his previous wanderings.²⁰⁸

Still, I suggest that it would be wrong to conclude that Odysseus here is driven by any *Wanderlust*. For one thing, the actorial motivation in this text is generally rather undefinable, and it is questionable whether this would be any different if the work were actually preserved. The *Telegony* is, so our sources suggest, not greatly concerned with the psychological motivation of events, any character feelings in general, or, in

mû que par une mystérieuse force qui l'empêche de rester en place.' (Ballabriga 1989, 299). However, this assumption is purely speculative and is not supported by any evidence in fragments, testimonies or mythological summaries of the *Telegonia*.

205 See West 2013, 295.

206 PEG, *Teleg.* Arg. 1 (Bernabé 1996, 1:102) = West *Teleg.* Arg. 2 (West 2013, 297).

207 See West 2013, 297–98: 'In the *Telegony* he must have stayed in Thesprotia for fifteen or twenty years if Polypoites was to be old enough to take over the throne when he left.'

208 West 2013, 298.

Odysseus' case, some existential urge. Rather, it appears that various motifs and elements were simply thrown together to compile a nice story.²⁰⁹ According to West, Eugammon chooses Thesprotia as the destination of Odysseus' journey 'for the sake of a connection with the Kallidike saga'.²¹⁰ Odysseus' extended stay in Thesprotia then serves for the establishment of a dynastic genealogy, by deriving the origin of a Thesprotian dynasty from (the mythical ancestor) Odysseus.²¹¹ An actorial motivation of the Callidice episode, on the other hand, does not seem to be of any importance here. The same applies to Odysseus' decision to leave Thesprotia and go back to Ithaca, for which the motive is unclear. Again, the ambition to incorporate different narratives and legends seems to have been decisive rather than a consequent actorial motivation of events. As West writes, '[i]t was the combination with the Telegonus myth, that required his return to Ithaca'.²¹² Dante, on the contrary, explicitly and convincingly ascribes Odysseus' further journey to the inner condition of his unquenchable *Wanderlust*. Although there is no evidence proving that Odyssean *Wanderlust* originates in Eugammon's *Telegony*, Stanford is at least right in observing that Eugammon's continuation of the *Odyssey* and his version of the hero's fate had a decisive impact on the further tradition, giving rise to a multitude of theories about Odysseus' fate which extend from antiquity until today.²¹³

209 Cf. West 2013, 290 on Eugammon's combination of 'two narrative plots that have no connection with one another and do not harmonize very well', with reference to Odysseus' Thesprotian journey (here 'identified with the inland journey enjoined on him by Teiresias in the *Odyssey*') and the Telegonus plot.

210 See West 2013, 295.

211 Cf. West 2013, 297 on the Callidice episode: 'This episode, in which Odysseus takes over an inland kingdom and leaves it in the hands of a son, is a self-contained tale serving to confer Odyssean ancestry on a Thesprotian dynasty.'

212 See West 2013, 298.

213 See Stanford 1954, 88–89.

3.3 *Inferno* XXVI, 52–142

In the *Inferno* (*Hell*), the first part (*cantica*) of Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia*, Dante²¹⁴ himself is guided by Virgil through Hell.²¹⁵ In *Inferno* XXVI, Virgil and Dante encounter Odysseus—who is here always referred to by his Italian name *Ulisse*, derived from the Latin *Ulixes*²¹⁶—together with Diomedes in a double flame in the eighth 'bolgia' (i.e. 'ditch'; 'l'ottava bolgia', *Inf.* XXVI, 32)²¹⁷ of the eighth circle of Hell (*Malebolge*, *Inf.* XVIII, 1). As Dante first looks down into the eighth 'bolgia' (*Inf.* XXVI, 43–45), he sees a large amount of wandering flames.²¹⁸ When Virgil explains to him that 'inside the fires are the spirits' (XXVI, 47), Dante is very eager to know who burns in one specific flame that has caught his attention:

« [...] chi è 'n quel foco che vien sì diviso di sopra, che par surger de la pira dov' Eteòcle col fratel fu miso?». 54	“ [...] who is in that fire that comes so divided above that it seems to be rising from the pyre where Eteocles was put with his brother?”
Rispuose a me: «Là dentro si martira Ulisse e Diomede, e così insieme a la vendetta vanno come a l'ira; 57	He answered me: “There within are punished Ulysses and Diomedes; thus together they go to punishment as they went to anger.
e dentro da la lor fiamma si geme l'agguato del caval che fé la porta onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme. 60	And within their flame they bemoan the deceit of the horse that made the gate to send forth the Romans' noble seed;

214 For the sake of clarity, during the textual analysis in this chapter when talking of Dante as a character of the *Commedia*—who in Dante criticism is generally referred to by 'the pilgrim Dante/Dante pilgrim'—I will simply use 'Dante', whereas to the historical Dante, the author of the *Commedia*, I will refer by his full name 'Dante Alighieri'. The historical Dante should, however, not be confused with the first-person narrator (primary narrator focalizer = NF¹) of the *Commedia* who is mostly referred by Dante scholars to as 'the poet Dante/Dante poet' in contrast to 'Dante pilgrim' (see Burke 2017, 3–4). As a matter of fact, 'Dante poet' is as much part of the poem's fiction as 'Dante pilgrim', representing that very 'pilgrim' at a later stage, i.e. after the completion of his journey. 'Dante poet' is the one, 'who has, in the fiction of the poem, completed the journey and who, therefore, understands its significance in a way that the often-confused pilgrim frequently does not or cannot.' See Burke 2017, x.

215 Dante Alighieri's *Commedia* consists of three parts (pl. 'cantiche'): *Inferno* (Hell) – *Purgatorio* (Purgatory) – *Paradiso* (Paradise). Each of them is divided into thirty-three Cantos. In the *Commedia*, Dante in a first-person narrative tells the story of his journey through the three realms of the afterlife.

216 As such, his name evokes the negative stereotype of Odysseus which dominated the Latin tradition (see Stanford 1954, 179–80 on the 'anti-Ulyssean tradition'). However, I will refer to him as (the Dantean) 'Odysseus'.

217 All citations and text references regarding the *Commedia* are based on the critical edition by Giorgio Petrocchi Alighieri 1994.

218 The big amount of flames is expressed through an elaborate simile where the flames are compared to fireflies (*Inf.* XXVI, 25–33).

Piangevisi entro l'arte per che, morta, Deidamia ancor si duol d'Achille, e del Palladio pena vi si porta». 63	there within they weep for the art that makes Deidamia, though dead, still grieve for Achilles; and there they bear the punishment for the Palladium.”
«S'ei posson dentro da quelle faville parlar», diss' io, «maestro, assai ten priego e ripriego, che 'l priego vaglia mille, 66	“If they can speak within those flames,” I said, “master, much do I beg you, and beg again that each prayer may be worth a thousand,
che non mi facci de l'attender niego fin che la fiamma cornuta qua vegna; vedi che del disio ver' lei mi piego!». 69	that you not refuse to wait until the horned flame comes here: see that I bend toward it with desire!”
Ed elli a me: «La tua preghiera è degna di molta loda, e io però l'accetto; ma fa che la tua lingua si sostegna. 72	And he to me: “Your prayer is worthy of much praise, and therefore I grant it; but see that your tongue restrain itself.
Lascia parlare a me, ch'i' ho concetto ciò che tu vuoi; ch'ei sarebbero schivi, perch'è' fuor greci, forse del tuo detto». 75	Let me speak, for I have conceived what you wish; for perhaps they would shun, because they were Greeks, your words.”
Poi che la fiamma fu venuta quivi dove parve al mio duca tempo e loco, in questa forma lui parlare audivi: 78	When the flame had come to where my leader thought it the time and place, in this form I heard him speak:
«O voi che siete due dentro ad un foco, s'io meritai di voi mentre ch'io vissi, s'io meritai di voi assai o poco 81	“O you who are two within one fire, if I deserved from you while I lived, if I deserved from you greatly or little
quando nel mondo li alti versi scrissi, non vi movete; ma l'un di voi dica dove, per lui, perduto a morir gissi». 84	when in the world I wrote my high verses, do not move away; but let one of you tell where, lost, he went to die.”
Lo maggior corno de la fiamma antica cominciò a crollarsi mormorando, pur come quella cui vento affatica; 87	The greater horn of the ancient flame began to shake, murmuring, like one a wind belabors;
indi la cima qua e là menando, come fosse la lingua che parlasse, gittò voce di fuori e disse: «Quando 90	Then, moving its peak here and there, as if it were a tongue that spoke, it cast out a voice and said: “When
mi diparti' da Circe, che sottrasse	I departed from Circe, who held me

me più d'un anno là presso a Gaeta, prima che si Enëa la nomasse,	93	back more than a year there near Gaeta, before Aeneas gave it that name,
né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta del vecchio padre, né 'l debito amore lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta,	96	neither the sweetness of a son, nor compassion for my old father, nor the love owed to Penelope, which should have made her glad,
vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto e de li vizi umani e del valore;	99	could conquer within me the ardor that I had to gain experience of the world and of human vices and worth;
ma misi me per l'alto mare aperto sol con un legno e con quella compagna picciola da la qual non fui diserto.	102	but I put out on the deep, open sea alone, with one ship and with that little company by which I had not been deserted.
L'un lito e l'altro vidi infin la Spagna, fin nel Morrocco, e l'isola d'i Sardi, e l'altre che quel mare intorno bagna.	105	The one shore and the other I saw as far as Spain, as far as Morocco, and the island of the Sardinians and the others whose shores are bathed by that sea.
Io e' compagni eravam vecchi e tardi quando venimmo a quella foce stretta dov'Ercule segnò li suoi riguardi	108	I and my companions were old and slow when we came to that narrow strait which Hercules marked with his warnings
acciò che l'uom più oltre non si metta; da la man destra mi lasciai Sibilia, da l'altra già m'avea lasciata Setta.	111	so that one should not go further; on the right hand I had left Seville, on the other I had already left Ceuta.
"O frati," dissi, "che per cento milia perigli siete giunti a l' occidente, a questa tanto picciola vigilia	114	'O brothers,' I said, 'who through a hundred thousand perils have reached the west, to this so brief vigil
d'i nostri sensi ch'è del rimanente non vogliate negar l'esperienza, di retro al sol, del mondo senza gente.	117	of our senses that remains, do not deny the experience, following the sun, of the world without people.
Considerate la vostra semenza: fatti non foste a viver come bruti, ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza".	120	Consider your sowing: you were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.'
Li miei compagni fec' io sì aguti, con questa orazion picciola, al cammino, che a pena poscia li avrei ritenuti;	123	My companions I made so sharp for the voyage, with this little oration, that after it I could hardly have held them

		back;
e volta nostra poppa nel mattino, de' remi facemmo ali al folle volo, sempre acquistando dal lato mancino.	126	and, turning our stern toward the morning, of our oars we made wings for the mad flight, always gaining on the left side.
Tutte le stelle già de l'altro polo vedea la notte, e 'l nostro tanto basso, che non surgëa fuor del marin suolo.	129	Already all the stars of the other pole I saw at night, and our own pole so low that it did not rise above the floor of the sea.
Cinque volte raccesso e tante casso lo lume era di sotto da la luna, poi che 'ntrati eravam ne l'alto passo,	132	Five times renewed, and as many diminished, had been the light beneath the moon, since we had entered the deep pass,
quando n'apparve una montagna, bruna per la distanza, e parvemi alta tanto quanto veduta non avëa alcuna.	135	when there appeared to us a mountain, dark in the distance, and it seemed to me higher than any I had seen.
Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto; ché de la nova terra un turbo nacque e percosse del legno il primo canto.	138	We rejoiced, but it quickly turned to weeping; for from the new land a whirlwind was born and struck the forequarter of the ship.
Tre volte il fé girar con tutte l'acque; a la quarta levar la poppa in suso e la prora ire in giù, com' altrui piacque,	141	Three times it made the ship to turn about with all the waters, at the fourth to raise its stern aloft and the prow to go down, as it pleased another,
infin che 'l mar fu sovra noi richiuso».		until the sea had closed over us." ²¹⁹

The overall structure of the episode (*Inf.* XXVI, 52–142) can be represented as follows:

52–54: Dante's inquiry about the double flame.	Dante and Virgil
55–63: The punishment of Diomedes and Odysseus (58–63: their sins)	
64–69: Dante's urgent request and desire to speak to	

²¹⁹ The translation given here is the prose translation by Robert M. Durling. See Alighieri 1996.

them.	
70–75: Virgil’s agreement, under the condition that Dante himself will <i>not</i> speak.	
76–78: Virgil waits for the right moment to address the flame. 79–84: Virgil addresses both Diomedes and Odysseus and asks one of them a question.	Virgil
85–89: The greater tip of the flame starts to move and murmur, preparing to speak.	The Flame
90–142: Odysseus’ account of his last voyage	Odysseus speaking out of the Flame
90–99: Departure from Circe with one ship, but <i>not</i> back to Ithaca.	
100–102: Instead, sailing towards the open sea.	
103–111: Leaving behind several places until reaching the Pillars of Hercules.	
112–120: Odysseus’ speech to his comrades.	
121–123: Their positive reaction.	
124–129: Sailing beyond the pillars of Hercules.	
130–135: After five months, a big, brown mountain appears in the distance.	
136–142: (Ironic) moment of joy; storm and death.	

The *Malebolge* (i.e. ‘evil ditches’) is the eighth circle of Hell, which is itself divided into ten sub-circles (‘bolge’), where all the different types of “simple” fraud (‘frode’) are punished.²²⁰ The eighth ‘bolgia’, where Odysseus and Diomedes are found, is most probably the sub-circle which is reserved for the fraudulent counsellors of war.²²¹ Virgil,

220 The structure of Dante’s Hell is outlined by Virgil in *Inf.* XI, 16–111. Cf. Durling and Martinez in Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:178: ‘Dante now puts in Virgil’s mouth an explanation of the structure of Hell as a whole and the classification of sins on which it is based [...]’. A basic distinction is made between *simple* (*Inf.* XI, 52–60) and *treacherous* fraud (*Inf.* XI, 61–66). The latter is meant to be a fraud committed against someone ‘who trusts in him’ [i.e. the sinner] (*Inf.* XI, 53), thus violating a special trust bond exceeding the loving bond which is assumed to exist naturally between all men (cf. Robert Hollander in Alighieri 2002, 214). Treacherous fraud is thus considered the greater sin and therefore punished in the ninth circle, which is situated deeper in Hell. *Simple fraud*, on the other hand, the punishment for which takes place in the eighth circle (the *Malebolge*), denotes fraudulent actions committed against anyone else, i.e. actions that do *not* violate a particular trust bond. Comprised in the list here are sins such as hypocrisy, flattery or thievery.

221 The list in *Inf.* XI, 52–60 is incomplete, since the fraudulent counsellors of the eighth ‘bolgia’ are not mentioned here but only once and indirectly in *Inf.* XXVII, 116. Here, a black cherub names the sin committed by Guido da Montefeltro, who just like Odysseus and Diomedes is found in the eighth ‘bolgia’, as ‘l consiglio frodolente’, i.e. ‘fraudulent counsel’ or ‘advice’. Cf. Durling and Martinez

who tells the curious Dante that it is Diomedes and Odysseus who burn in the divided flame (vv. 55–7²²²), also names the exact sins for which they are atoning (vv. 58–63)²²³: (1) the stratagem of the Trojan horse, that led to the sack of Troy (vv. 59–60), (2) the cunning (‘l’arte’, v. 61) by which they tricked Achilles into joining the Trojan War, which also led to the abandonment and death of Deidamia (vv. 61–2) as well as (3) the theft of the Palladium (v. 63), the wooden statue of Athena, out of Troy. This last sin is reckoned to be especially sacrilegious, since it removed the protection it was believed to provide to the city, and at the same time served as a pretext for the horse as an alleged peace-offering to Athena in order to secure the Greeks a safe return home, as well as provide a new protection for the city.²²⁴

Dante, who was interested in the double flame from the moment that he first saw it (vv. 52–4), is even more eager to speak to it after he has learned who finds himself inside it.²²⁵ He himself signals to his strong ‘desire’, which manifests itself even in a physical leaning towards the flame (vv. 64–9). Dante’s apparent curiosity in this episode (which could well be regarded as something that he has in common with Odysseus²²⁶) and the fact that he feels almost magically attracted to Odysseus’ flame, is particularly noticeable.

(Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:430) on this verse: ‘These words, spoken by the devil, are the only description of the sin punished in this *bolgia*; on their basis, this sin, not mentioned in Virgil’s list (11.58–60), is commonly termed “false counsel,” [...] it is clear also that fraudulent advice is involved in many other sins, such as pandering (cf. 18.55-57), simony (cf. 19.70-72), or sowing discord (cf. 28.106-11). What distinguishes Ulysses and Guido from the practitioners of fraud in other *bolge* would seem rather to be the use (and counseling the use) of fraud in war; the next *bolgia* punishes those who counsel resorting to violence.’ Thus, one could agree with Durling and Martinez that most probably the sinners punished in the eighth ‘*bolgia*’ are the fraudulent counsellors of war. Cf. Robert Hollander (Alighieri 2002, 214) on the incompleteness of Virgil’s account in *Inf.* XI, 52–60: ‘Here the poet for whatever reason (to keep his readers on their toes?) allows Virgil to name the sins in no discernible order, while also omitting two of them [...] totally omitted from mention are (8) false counsel and (9) schismatic acts.’ and on *Inf.* XXVII, 116: ‘Since Virgil, in Canto XI.52–60, leaves the sins of the eighth and ninth *bolgia* unnamed, this is the only indication we have for a clear determination of the sin punished in these two Cantos. Any other solution seems less satisfactory, if there have been many who have been eager to try to find one.’ (Alighieri 2002, 510).

222 In the remainder of this chapter, for simplicity’s sake, when referring to Canto XXVI of the *Inferno* only the verse number will be given.

223 It is, of course, debatable whether these actions truly justify Odysseus’ damnation and placement in the eighth circle of Hell. On this matter, see Stanford 1954, 179, who argues that ‘this first part of Dante’s judgement on Ulysses is propagandist, not moralistic or judicial.’

224 Cf. Robert Hollander (Alighieri 2002, 489–90) on vv. 58–63 who point at *Aen.* II.163–169. Here Aeneas tells the story of Troy’s downfall at Dido’s court.

225 Cf. Robert Hollander (Alighieri 2002, 490) on vv. 64–9.

226 Cf. Most 2006, 34–35.

Virgil, who grants Dante his wish under the condition that Dante himself will not speak (vv. 70–5), now addresses both Diomedes and Odysseus and asks them not to move away (vv. 79–83).²²⁷ He then asks: ‘but let one of you tell where, lost, he went to die.’ (vv. 83–4), without clarifying whom he means by ‘one’. The answer, in any case, will be provided by Odysseus, as we shall see.²²⁸

What follows now (vv. 85–142), was to become the most seminal adaptation of the Odysseus theme²²⁹, as it decisively influenced and shaped the further reception as well as our modern-day image of Odysseus as an adventurer.

Upon Virgil’s request, Odysseus does not simply begin to speak. Rather, it appears to be the flame surrounding him that speaks, appearing like a giant tongue (vv. 85–9).²³⁰ The movement (shaking, then moving from here to there), the sound (murmur) and the form (divided at the top) of the flame all evoke the image of a tongue.²³¹ Significantly, Odysseus’ following words all come out of that flame.²³² The fact that its shape is not that of a simple tongue but of a forked one enhances the impression that the flames

227 A question that remains unclear to me is (1) why Virgil thinks that he in particular is the right person to talk to them and (2) why he refers to his ‘high verses’ (v. 82) to persuade Odysseus and Diomedes to stay and talk to him, when it is in these very verses, i.e. the *Aeneid*, that the Greeks appear in an entirely negative light (cf. Durling and Martinez in Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:410–11; for a different interpretation see Lobsien, 3), while Odysseus himself is presented as the perpetrator of all evil. The assumption of ‘some commentators [...] that Virgil is pretending to be Homer’ (see Robert Hollander in Alighieri 2002, 491) has no evidence in the text. So, why does Virgil assume that Diomedes and Odysseus would want to talk to him (more than to Dante)? Should his ‘high verses’ not be expected to have the exact opposite effect (even if in fact they do not, as Virgil receives the desired answer). Although there have been various approaches to this matter, none seems to me altogether convincing.

228 Durling and Martinez (Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:411) comment on verse 84 as follows: ‘Since Diomedes was supposed to have migrated to Italy and to have died there, this can only refer to Ulysses; *perduto* [lost] can refer to the fact that Ulysses’ fate had been unknown, as well as to his having lost his way or being damned [...]’. Apparently Stanford 1954, 180 also understands the text as if the question were addressed to Ulysses.

229 Cf. Stanford 1954, 178.

230 Despite the definitive article ‘la’, I understand verse 89 (‘come fosse la lingua che parlasse’) in terms of a comparison, as Durling and Martinez do: ‘as if it were a tongue that spoke’ (cf. Mandelbaum’s translation in Alighieri 1995, 172: ‘as if it were a tongue that tried to speak’). If, instead, ‘la lingua’, was simply taken as a synonym for ‘fiamma’, the phrase could also mean: ‘as if it were the tongue of fire (and not Odysseus’ tongue within it) that spoke’ (for this interpretation, see the translation of Robert and Jean Hollander in Alighieri 2002, 483: ‘as if it were the tongue of fire that spoke,’). But the words used in the rest of Canto XXVI for the sinners’ flames and for Odysseus’ flame in particular are either ‘fiamma/e’ (vv. 31, 42, 58, 68, 76, 85) or ‘foco/fuochi’ (vv. 47, 52, 79), never ‘lingua’. It is therefore improbable that verse 89 would be the only incident where ‘lingua’ was used as a synonym for ‘fiamma’. Still, the definite article here is unusual.

231 See Stead 2009, 10: ‘Cet Ulysse-là, représenté par Dante en conseiller perfide, brûle dans le huitième cercle des fraudeurs (et dans la huitième bolge), dans une grande flamme fourchue qui a tout d’une langue (le bruit, le mouvement et la forme) en application de la terrible loi du talion qui régit l’Enfer.’

232 Cf. Stead 2009, 20: ‘Le langage d’Ulysse naît dans le tristique de la flamme. La langue de feu portera la parole jusqu’à la fin du chant. Tout l’épisode de la Seconde Odyssée, le récit du dernier voyage, s’énonce dans la flamme.’

themselves correspond to the sins committed by the ones they enclose, a principle which is outlined by Vergil already in verse 48: '[E]ach [spirit] is swathed in that which burns him inwardly' ('catun si fascia di quel ch'elli è inceso'). 'In other words, the flame that hides each sinner is the externalization of the fire within him: the fire of intellect, of the malice that motivated his counsels, and of the power of his rhetoric'²³³. It is, then, only a small step to see in Odysseus' divided flame, reminiscent of a forked tongue, a symbol of the 'sins' or 'fraudulent' actions which he committed. For it is with the power of his tongue, i.e. with his eloquent speech, that he committed those 'sins'. Of course, all fraudulent counsellors of the eighth 'bolgia' burn in flames,²³⁴ but it is only Odysseus' flame that looks and behaves like a tongue.

What Odysseus (who is not named but who is easily identified as the speaker) now reports in a first-person narrative (vv. 90–142) has never been heard before. He describes how, after his one-year stay with Circe (vv. 90–3), he did *not* return back home but instead went on a journey into the unknown (vv. 94–102). The longing for his family, which in the Homeric *Odyssey* was the driving force that motivated him to endure the long journey home, is here referred to in a triple negation (vv. 94–6): 'né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta / del vecchio padre, né 'l debito amore / lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta, / vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore / ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto / e de li vizi umani e del valore;'. Accordingly, it is no longer the longing for his homeland that characterizes this Odysseus, but the 'ardor [...] to gain experience of the world and of human vices and worth' (vv. 97–9). The Dantean *Ulisse* is therefore fundamentally different from the Homeric Odysseus. His last journey is not the fated journey that was once prophesied by Tiresias, but a completely voluntary endeavour that emerges from his inmost self.

Dante Alighieri's strong focus on *Wanderlust* aligns well with the information given by Odysseus himself about his extended stay with Circe, an episode that already attested to a more centrifugally driven Odysseus in the Homeric *Odyssey*. The Homeric Odysseus, however, after his year with Circe, resumes his journey home and—

²³³ See Durling and Martinez in Alighieri 1996, 1: Inferno:408.

²³⁴ Cf. Stead 2009, 19: 'Les fraudeurs ont dissimulé la vérité, ils ont trompé leurs victimes. La flamme les dissimule, les dérobe de la vue et les châtie, leur peine est donc à l'image de leur faute. Comme le dit la belle traduction d'André Pézard, "chacun se vêt de ce qui le consume" (v. 48).'

following her instructions—goes to the *Underworld* to speak with Tiresias. Dante Alighieri, however, does not mention any of that. It is, moreover, unclear, if he even knew about the further development of the story in Homer. Whether this is coincidental or not, Dante's story agrees with Homer's point that there was only one ship left of Odysseus' fleet ('sol con un legno [...]', vv. 101–2) at the time of his (first²³⁵) departure from Circe's island. It is with this ship and comrades he has left that Odysseus now puts out 'on the deep, open sea' (v. 100–2). After passing by, among others, the shores of Spain, Morocco and Sardinia (vv. 103–5), they finally arrive at the Pillars of Hercules, which mark the boundaries of the known world and which must not be crossed (vv. 106–111).²³⁶ At that time they are already 'old and slow' ('vecchi e tardi', v. 106).

The speech (vv. 112–20) that Odysseus now addresses to his comrades may be short, but is all the more powerful and is one of the most famous passages of the entire *Commedia*. In it Odysseus strongly appeals to his comrades (whom he intimately addresses as 'brothers', v. 112) to 'not deny the experience, following the sun, of the world without people' (vv. 116–7), now that they have reached the Western end of the world and after the many dangers which they have already gone through. He cleverly uses the old age of the crew, which could also be regarded an obstacle, as an argument for the undertaking: they do not have much time left, and it is effectively now or never (vv. 114–5). He goes on by appealing to their human nature: 'Consider your sowing: you were not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.' (vv. 118–20). Odysseus thus praises the daring enterprise as the pursuit of man's highest goal.²³⁷

There could be no better demonstration of the persuasive power of Odysseus' oratorical and rhetoric skills than this. With this in mind, several interpreters have seen

235 In Homer, Odysseus will come back to Circe's island Aea after his visit to the Underworld to bury Elpenor (*Od.* 12.1–143). The adventures to follow in the *Odyssey* before Odysseus' return home are the encounter with the Sirens (12.144–200), Scylla and Charybdis (12.201–59), the island Thrinacia and a sea storm (12.260–425), Calypso (12.447–50) and finally the Phaeacians. Thus, including his stay with the Phaeacians, the Homeric Odysseus' adventures amount to twelve.

236 See Peter Armour on v. 107 (Alighieri 1995, 603): '*the narrows*: the Straits of Gibraltar, with a mountain on each side, known since ancient times as the Pillars of Hercules, set there to mark the boundary of the world for navigators. To sail beyond them out into the great uncrossable sea, Oceanus, was to overstep a limit set by God.' The first mentions of the Heracleian Pillars that we know about were made by the Greek poet Pindar in some of his *Odes*. See Erbse 1969, 276: 'Jene Säulen erwähnt Pindar mehrmals (scil. Ol. 3, 44 und Isthm. 4, 12, ferner N. 4, 69), jedoch ohne Einzelheiten über sie zu berichten.' A more detailed mention occurs in Pindar, *Nem.* 3, 20–26 (see Erbse 1969, 273).

237 Cf. Armour on v. 120 (Alighieri 1995, 603): 'Ulysses' speech to his crew presents the proposed voyage as the ultimate moral and intellectual goal in life for all true men. Dante would have accepted this, not least in his own journey of discovery, the poem, but not at the expense of overstepping divine limits, as Ulysses did.'

in the persuasion of his companions, which ultimately leads to their death, the last manifestation of Odysseus' sin (i.e. *fraudulent counsel*).²³⁸ According to Odysseus, after his 'little speech' (v. 122), the crew is left craving for the voyage (vv. 121–3). The 'folle volo' ('mad flight', v. 125) of their last voyage then begins. By turning their ship towards the unexplored south,²³⁹ that is the uninhabited 'hemisphere of water'²⁴⁰, and sailing beyond the Pillars of Hercules (vv. 124–9) Odysseus and his crew have gone past the point of no return. As they sail south, at night Odysseus can already see the stars of the southern hemisphere, while the stars of the northern hemisphere are now barely visible at the horizon (vv. 127–9). Time passes and after five months a big 'brown mountain' appears in the distance (vv. 130–5). A short moment of joy at the sight of the 'new land' is soon followed by 'weeping', as a storm rises from that very land, turning the ship around three times until it is finally swallowed by the sea (vv. 136–42).

The description of the death of Odysseus and his crew is limited to just a few verses, while the end of Odysseus' speech also marks the end of Canto XXVI. It is followed by no immediate reaction, either from Vergil or Dante or from Diomedes, whom we have almost completely forgotten at this point, but who is still supposed to be sharing the flame with Odysseus.²⁴¹ Moreover, the beginning of the next Canto informs us that: 'Already the flame was erect and quiet, no longer speaking, and already it had left us with the permission of my sweet poet [...]' (*Inf.* XXVII, 1–3)²⁴². Only in vv. 19–21 of the same Canto (XXVII, 21), where Guido da Montefeltro's flame addresses Vergil with the words 'O you [...] who were just now speaking Lombard,²⁴³ saying: '*Istra* you may

238 Representatively, cf. Robert Hollander on vv. 124–6 in Alighieri 2002, 493.

239 V. 124 ('turning our stern toward the Morning'), of course, suggests that they go west, but, to be precise, it is a southwest course they take. Cf. Durling and Martinez on v. 126 in Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:414.

240 See *Inf.* XXXIV, 12–118 on the two hemispheres and the mythical aetiology of their creation in vv. 119–26, i.e. the fall of Satan (Lucifer), that caused the southern land to flee to the north as well as the rising of Mount Purgatory. As such, Mount Purgatory is the only piece of dry land in the south, situated right at its centre and on the exact opposite of Jerusalem (cf. Armour in Alighieri 1995, 624 on *Inf.* XXXIV, 122). It makes sense that this explanation is given here, at the end of the *Inferno*, where Dante and Vergil are about to leave Hell and ascend to Mount Purgatory.

241 Cf. Musa 1978, 191–93 on the silence of Diomedes. Cf. also Stead 2009, 20–21.

242 See Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:417.

243 The retrospective information that at least Virgil's last words to Odysseus were spoken in the Lombard dialect was already the cause of discussion. By way of example, see Robert Hollander in Alighieri 2002, 507.

go, I incite you no further,' do we learn what must have been Vergil's last words to Odysseus (XXVII, 21). After this, the latter took his leave.

According to the conception of the world in Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*, the mountain which Odysseus encounters in the southern hemisphere shortly before his death can only be Mount Purgatory, with the Garden of Eden at its top.²⁴⁴ Robert Hollander comments on this passage: 'They are the first mortals to see the mount that became purgatory since Adam and Eve left it.'²⁴⁵ Odysseus, of course, does not know this at the time, while v. 141 ('com' altrui piace') suggests that he *does* know about the existence of the Christian God, now that he is in Hell. Two later passages of the *Commedia* also indicate that, by continuing his journey to 'the world without people', Odysseus had indeed entered an area forbidden to men and that he had approached a place where no man had set foot since the banishment of Adam and Eve. With this in mind, it is in *Purgatory* I, 22–4 that the poet Dante says: 'Then I turned to the right, setting my mind / upon the other pole, and saw four stars / not seen before except by the first people'²⁴⁶. Those stars have to be the same stars which Odysseus had seen after passing the Pillars of Hercules ('Already all the stars of the other pole I saw at night,' vv. 127–8) and before his death. He was the only one to ever see them. The implication of this passage could also be that, as a result of seeing, he had to pay for it with his life. A little later, in *Purg.* I, 130–2, Dante (poet) says: 'Then we *arrived* at the deserted shore, / which never yet had seen its waters coursed / by any man who journeyed back again.'²⁴⁷ Armour rightly concludes: '*any man*: principally Ulysses, the pagan explorer, who did not return from seeing Purgatory (*Inf.* XXXVI, 141).'²⁴⁸

Hence, we can say that it was Mount Purgatory that Odysseus saw. As a pagan, he could only be denied access to it, which meant that he had to die. There was no other way for him to go, so to speak.²⁴⁹ Death was his punishment for crossing the divine boundary. His position in Hell, on the other hand, equals his punishment for the 'sins'

244 Cf. Durling and Martinez (Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:414) on vv. 133–5: 'This is, as we learn in the *Purgatorio*, the mountain at whose summit is the Garden of Eden, forbidden to man (Gen. 3.24)'.

245 See Alighieri 2002, 493.

246 See Alighieri 1995, 217.

247 See Alighieri 1995, 220.

248 See Alighieri 1995, 629.

249 Cf. Armour in Alighieri 1995, 604 as well as Schironi 2015, 344: 'In Dante's Christian view, the ultimate disaster is unavoidable, as Ulysses went beyond the limits set by God.' Schironi is one of the interpreters who assume Dante Alighieri to have a positive attitude towards Odysseus.

which were mentioned by Vergil at the beginning (vv. 58–63), not for his daring journey.²⁵⁰ That much is certain.

The question whether this episode suggests a moral condemnation of Odysseus or not²⁵¹ must ultimately remain open, even if many interpreters like to present it as a fact that it does.²⁵² In any case, Odysseus himself does not condemn his own striving or show any signs of shame or guilt (quite the contrary, in fact, see vv. 121–3). It is as if, even in Hell, he still preserves a certain dignity (or, more precisely, that he is *allowed* to do so by the author).²⁵³ The majesty of his appearance, together with the absence of an explicit moral judgment of his last journey in the mouth of Dante,²⁵⁴ has led to controversy concerning the meaning of this episode, which is reflected in a numerous scholarly approaches, which cannot all properly be discussed here.²⁵⁵ Perhaps, however,

250 Cf. Most 2006, 34: ‘The story of Ulysses’ voyage does not explain what Ulysses was punished for – Vergil has already indicated the crimes for which he is suffering endless torment (“simartira,” 55) in a definitive catalogue: the Trojan horse, Achilles’ betrayal of Deidamia, the theft of the Palladium (59–63). Thus Ulysses’ voyage is not a sin, or at least it is not the sin for which he is punished’. See also Blumenberg 1966, 333 and Flasch 2011, 13. The undoubted focus on the last voyage (–Odysseus is *not* asked about the ‘sins’ he is atoning for but about his death, and his whole following speech centres on his last voyage–), which is also the reason why many interpreters automatically assumed it to be Odysseus’ sin, may be due to the fact that Vergil (and the reader) already knew enough about what happened at Troy but not about the events that followed. As for Dante Alighieri’s perspective, it must simply have been more interesting and tempting to let Odysseus tell a story never heard before.

251 Representatives of these two main interpretations could also be referred to as *punicionists* and *innocentists*. See Flasch 2011, 16–17. Cf. Girardi 1977, 299, who speaks of “‘colpevolisti” e “‘innocentisti””.

252 Odysseus’ infernal punishment is incredibly often misrepresented as a punishment for his journey, although the sins for which he repents in Hell are explicitly mentioned. Cf. Wuttke 1991, 3: ‘Dante hat in seiner “Göttlichen Komödie” den großen Seefahrer Odysseus in die Hölle versetzt. Dies wird überwiegend als Verurteilung des Strebens nach neuem Wissen und nach Entdeckung angesehen.’ Though Wuttke himself opposes the view that Dante Alighieri condemned Odysseus’ ambitions, he too misinterprets the infernal punishment: ‘Odysseus hat sein und seiner Männer Wissensstreben nicht durch Besonnenheit gezügelt, darum gingen alle unter und darum muß er in der Hölle büßen.’ (Wuttke 1991, 4).

253 Cf. Robert Hollander (Alighieri 2002, 511) on *Inf.* XXVII, 128–32: ‘Unlike Ulysses, who ends his speech with a certain majesty, Guido insists upon his bitterness, realizing eternally his foolishness in his having given over his chance for love and salvation when he did the bidding of Boniface. The Canto opens with Ulysses’ flame calm and steady (vv. 1–2) and ends with that of Guido writhing.’ See also Stanford 1954, 181: ‘When Ulysses has finished speaking his flame becomes ‘erect and still’. Without groan, boast, or curse, he moves firmly away. His austere and majestic self-restraint, worthy of a Regulus or Cato, contrasts with the abject lamentations of the fraudulent counsellor who comes next to Dante’s view.’ Odysseus’ dignified appearance is in hindsight only slightly diminished by the fact that he apparently needs Vergil’s permission to leave (*Inf.* XXVII, 2–3; 21).

254 Cf. Blumenberg 1966, 336 who points to Dante’s ‘Zurückhaltung [...], mit der er seine Wertekategorien auf diesen Fall anwendet; immerhin ist dieser Verdammte der einzige auf den Rängen des Inferno, aus dessen Mund kein Wort der Selbstanklage oder Selbstverwerfung kommt.’

255 Cf. Durling and Martinez in Alighieri 1996, 1: *Inferno*:572: ‘Commentators have been sharply divided about the significance for Dante of Ulysses’ voyage and its relation to the sins for which he is explicitly condemned. [...]’. Cf. Robert Hollander on vv. 55–7 (Alighieri 2002, 489).

one should not attempt to reduce the text to one interpretation, since it could be moral ambivalence that is precisely intended.²⁵⁶ The unusual silence²⁵⁷ after Odysseus' appearance, as well as Dante's ardent desire to speak to him at the beginning of the scene, might lend further support to this. In this connection, several interpreters have also pointed out the striking similarities between Dante and Odysseus.²⁵⁸ The difficulty of extracting a clear moral judgement on Odysseus and his last voyage from the text is, therefore, a direct consequence of the strong ambiguity²⁵⁹ that characterizes Dante Alighieri's presentation of Odysseus, which might in turn reflect the effect which the author intended.

In the *Inferno* passage we can see Odyssean *Wanderlust* in its purest form. It is here that Odysseus for the first time goes on a completely voluntary journey, which is driven only by his inner restlessness and curiosity. For the Odysseus theme, the *Commedia* represents a total shift of focus from nostalgia to *Wanderlust*.

256 Cf. Stanford 1954, 179–80, who speculates about what might have led Dante Alighieri to such a portrayal of Odysseus. Among other things, he argues that Dante Alighieri may have not only been influenced by the 'Greek and Latin anti-Ulysean tradition—Euripides, Virgil, Seneca, Philostratus, Dictys of Crete—or from any of the contemporary anti-Ulysean writers on the Troy tale', but also by pro-Ulysean voices (mainly 'Cicero, Horace[...], and some Fathers of the Church'). Stanford, however, believed that Dante Alighieri morally condemned Odysseus because of his striving for 'forbidden knowledge' (Stanford 1954, 181).

257 Cf. Stead 2009, 20–21: 'Le discours d'Ulysse—et son récit du dernier voyage—est un grand monologue isolée, tout d'une pièce, sans question, ni réponse. Fait exceptionnel dans l'*Inferno*, non seulement Dante se tait, mais de plus son entretien avec l'âme qui témoigne (fréquent dans l'*Inferno*) n'advient pas.' However, Stead considers the isolation of Odysseus an additional punishment.

258 Cf. Most 2006, 34–35: 'That character [i.e. Ulysses'] displays remarkable similarities to Dante's own, especially as it manifests itself in this very Canto: Ulysses' curiosity [...] is much like Dante's own [...]. Ulysses' desire to go beyond the geographical limits whose validity he nonetheless recognizes [...] is mirrored in the way in which Dante almost loses his balance and falls down, so great is his desire to see these shades [...]. Clearly, Dante's curiosity is directed to someone to whom he bears a special affinity; hence the intensity of his desire.' Most then points out what he believes to be the crucial difference between Dante and Odysseus: 'In all these ways, Dante is very much like Ulysses, but with one difference. Ulysses has Dante's eloquence and can even surpass it, but he does not have Dante's religious faith. The whole difference can be expressed in the fact that when Dante saw Ulysses and the other shades he almost fell, but did not, for he grasped a saving rock (Inf. 26.44-45)—while Ulysses did indeed fall, together with his ship and crew, into the sea which closed up above them (141-42). This is not a small difference, but an essential one.' (Most 2006, 39–40) Finally he states: 'we may call Ulysses Dante's dark twin.' (Most 2006, 41). Cf. Armour in Alighieri 1995, 604: 'Ulysses' voyage stands as both a parallel and a warning in relation to Dante's audacious enterprise, the journey-poem, which is his own epic voyage of exploration but which, unlike that of Ulysses, is being made by a Christian who has the authorization and assistance of Heaven.'

259 Cf. Most 2006, 40: 'Dante imagines Ulysses not only as the supreme expression of a specific quality of Greekness which provokes in him both intense admiration and intense anxiety, but also as an instrument with which better to understand himself, his own virtues and limits. Ulysses is not really about Ulysses: he is about Dante;' cf. also Armour on v. 27 (Alighieri 1995, 601).

Dante Alighieri's portrayal of Odysseus testifies to a new way of thinking and attitude towards the world.²⁶⁰ It has been pointed out often enough that, not long after the composition of the *Commedia*, the age of European exploration overseas and discovery began, ultimately leading to the European re-discovery²⁶¹ of the Americas and the discovery of the sea-route to India in the fifteenth century. Seen from this vantage-point Dante Alighieri thus found himself at the threshold of a new era. Odysseus is therefore also often seen as a kind of literary precursor of Christopher Columbus.²⁶² As a matter of fact, the first known voyage in search of the sea-route to India already took place in 1291, even before Dante Alighieri wrote his *Commedia*. It was led by two Italians, the Genoese brothers Ugolino and Vadino Vivaldi (sometimes *Vivaldo*). Interestingly enough, they disappeared soon after passing the Straits of Gibraltar and nothing more was heard about their expedition.²⁶³ The story of the Vivaldi brothers must have been widely known in Italy at Dante Alighieri's time.

Whatever moved Dante Alighieri to present Odysseus as a restless adventurer and explorer, who traveled beyond the limits of the known world, there is no doubt that his *Inferno* passage had a decisive impact on the further development of the *Odyssey's* reception. For it is to Dante Alighieri's portrayal of Odysseus in this passage of the *Commedia* that the entire later tradition of Odyssean *Wanderlust* from Tennyson onwards can be traced.

In the course of the remainder of this study, we will see, among other things, how Dante Alighieri's text influenced the literary *Odyssey* transformations to come, such as

260 Cf. Blumenberg 1966, 336: 'Die Gestalt, über deren Weltneugierde schon Cicero und die Patristik kein einhelliges Werturteil finden konnten, bezeichnet auch hier eine Unentschiedenheit, zumindest die Schwierigkeit, gerade diese Werthaltung mit den gültigen oder noch gültigen Maßstäben der Epoche zu messen. Schon das könnte genügen, um zu sagen, daß sich Neues abzeichnet.'

261 Since the 1960 archaeological discovery of a Viking settlement in North America (L'Anse aux Meadows, Canada) from around 1000 A.D., it is safe to assume that the Vikings were the first Europeans to have traveled to America and temporarily to have settled there almost five centuries before Columbus.

262 See Boitani 1992, 152. Bloch 1993, 1204.

263 See Rogers 1955, 35–39, who cites the annals of Jacopo d'Oria, the earliest source on the Vivaldi expedition, and explores the possibility of a connection between the Vivaldi expedition and Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* passage. Even though he states that '[i]t is possible that these lines represent more than a mere development of the Ulysses theme, that they constitute a reminiscence of the Vivaldi expedition.' (Rogers 1955, 35), he later adopts the 'opposite point of view' that it was not the historical event that influenced Dante Alighieri, but 'the poet' who 'influenced history' (Rogers 1955, 45). On the Vivaldi expedition, cf. also J. H. Parry 1981, 69, Diffie and Winius 1977, 24–25.

in the case of Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, where the Dantean flame motif will assume a key role.

4. Early Modernity – The Positive (Re)-Interpretation of Odyssean *curiositas* in the Italian Renaissance

If Dante Alighieri's portrayal of a centrifugal Odysseus was not yet clearly distinguished as positive or negative, and therefore testified to an upheaval between the Middle Ages and the early modern period, the Renaissance adopts a much clearer position. During the Renaissance, Odyssean *Wanderlust* is now mainly presented in a very positive light. Moreover, *curiositas*, or the pursuit of knowledge and experience, is no longer a vice, as it was often characterised before. Yet, I would not speak of a 'rehabilitation' of Odysseus and his *curiositas*, or of a simple turn from a negative to a positive perspective in the Renaissance, as Lobsien and Stanford do.²⁶⁴ This would both presuppose an implied condemnation of Odysseus' striving implicit to Dante Alighieri's representation and oversimplify the often complex representation of *curiositas* in Renaissance texts. Rather, it is Dante Alighieri's indecisiveness and ambiguous presentation of Odysseus that the Renaissance, with its conscious recourse to classical antiquity, turns into positive affirmation.²⁶⁵ Historical events of course have a major part to play in this literary shift, as the European rediscovery of the Americas in 1492 and the beginning of colonization extended the former limits of the known world and led to a new European spirit of discovery and imperialistic territorial expansion. This development also undermined the traditional notion of the Pillars of Hercules as the end of the world and as a border that was not to be crossed.²⁶⁶ Odysseus' last voyage, as described by Dante, is no longer regarded as an absurd endeavour but becomes all the more plausible and realistic. The widening of geographical borders leads, as it were, to

264 See Stanford 1954, 182: 'Doubtless Dante intended his Ulysses to convey a terrible warning to the medieval world in general. But within a few years the first stirrings of Renaissance began to alter his [i.e. Dante's] underlying assumption that experiment and exploration were better avoided.' See also Lobsien, 7: 'The final voyage of O., which Dante had still reproved with the charge of *curiositas* ('curiosity'), was emphatically rehabilitated in Renaissance epic poetry.'

265 Cf. Stanford 1954, 183: 'Classical writers had not, on the whole, emphasized the vein of intellectual curiosity in Ulysses [...]. They preferred to dwell on Ulysses' reactions to the various sensual temptations which beset him on his homeward voyage [...] Renaissance writers generally followed antiquity in this, and agreed that Ulysses had, on the whole, come through his ordeals with credit.' He goes on to cite Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570) as 'typical of the renaissance attitude', in which Homer's Odysseus is described as 'the wisest traueler' who overcomes all possible dangers and temptations and serves as an example for all travellers. On Ascham, cf. Lobsien, 6.

266 Cf. Deisser 1999, 28 who states: 'depuis le XVI^e siècle, on ne peut plus concevoir que Dieu aurait mis des limites à la connaissance humaine' and speaks of a 'nouvel état d'esprit' in the Renaissance'.

an expansion of the possible and the imagination associated with it. It is this changed perception of the world during the Age of Discovery that makes the Renaissance essential for the literary development to follow. Of course, a very long period of time lies between Dante and Tennyson, of which the Renaissance marks only the beginning. It is not the aim of the present study, which is primarily concerned with modern transformations of the *Odyssey*, to cover the whole period between Dante and Tennyson. Nevertheless, the Renaissance represents an important step in preparing the ground for the later re-emergence and flourishing of the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust*. The consideration of two Italian Renaissance texts in this chapter shall therefore help to understand this development.

4.1. Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516–32)

Two Italian literary works that are reflective of the pivotal change of spirit²⁶⁷ during the Renaissance are Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando furioso* (*Mad or Raging Orlando*), whose third and final edition appeared in 1532²⁶⁸ (1516¹, 1521²), and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered* or *The Liberation of Jerusalem*) from 1575.²⁶⁹ The story of *Orlando furioso*—whose literary predecessor is Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (*Orlando in Love*, 1483–1495²⁷⁰)—is set against the background of a war for domination of Europe in the eighth century between the Saracens and the Christians, with the latter led by Charlemagne. The plot, which is difficult to grasp and may seem chaotic at first glance,²⁷¹ is situated 'in a fantasy world

267 Other comparable Renaissance texts that we cannot examine here are the epic poem *Morgante* (1483) by Luigi Pulci (esp. *Morg.* XXV, 130, 7; cf. Hofmann 1999, 40) the French *Cosmographie du Levant* (1554) by André Thevet (cf. Deisser 1999, 28), as well as the Portuguese national epos *Os Lusíadas* (1572) by Luís Vaz de Camões (cf. Lobsien, 7). Of course, negative representations of Odysseus and his *curiositas* also existed, for example Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1390), as Stanford 1954, 182 shows. Needless to say, there were other aspects of the Odysseus theme as well that were taken up beyond Odyssean *Wanderlust*. For a general overview of the reception, see again Stanford 1954 and Lobsien.

268 See Ariosto 2009, ix. The date of 1533 (which is the year of Ariosto's death), which Poirier 2016, 257 offers as a date for the last edition, is incorrect.

269 See Poirier 2016, 257–66 on Ariosto and Tasso, Deisser 1999, 28 on Tasso, as well as Lobsien, 7: 'In 1575, Torquato Tasso has Fortuna explicitly refer to the failure of the ancient whose great adventure still remained undone (*Gerusalemme liberata* 15). From the fictionalized perspective of the Crusades, the impending expeditions of discovery and mission could be prophesied and the old limits abolished; O. [i.e. Odysseus] became the symbol of the universal Christian seafarer.'

270 While the first two books had already been published in 1483, the first complete edition was published only posthumously in 1495.

271 On the *entrelacement* technique as a conscious device employed by the author and self-reflexively commented on by the narrator (primary narrator focalizer = NF¹) himself, see e.g. Zaiser 2009, 133–37.

of knights, ladies, giants and orcs²⁷². Orlando, the hero who gives his name to the poem, is one of Charlemagne's paladins. The main storyline deals with Orlando's love for and pursuit of the pagan princess Angelica, as well as his disappointment and falling into madness (whence the poem's title) upon learning that his love will not be reciprocated. Another storyline deals with the Saracen Ruggiero and his love for the female Christian warrior Bradamante, whom he later marries after converting to Christianity. The Ruggiero storyline provides the genealogy for the ruling Este dynasty of Ferrara, whom Ariosto served.²⁷³ Regarding the geographical location of the plot, there is hardly any limits, as the story takes place in various places all across Europe, as well as the Near East (Jerusalem, Syria), Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia), a fictional version of the New World²⁷⁴ (i.e. Alcina's island in Canto VI–VIII, see below) at the other side of the Atlantic, and even on the moon.²⁷⁵ This geographical diversity reflects a broader perception of the world (despite its obvious incompleteness and partly fantastic nature) than that of the Middle Ages.²⁷⁶

272 See Charles S. Ross' introduction in Ariosto 2009, 13. Cf. also the opening of the poem (vv. 1–2): 'I sing of knights and ladies, of love and arms, of courtly chivalry, of courageous deeds' (Ariosto 1974, 1). This is the prose translation by Guido Waldman, which I will be citing in the following discussion. As his translation lacks an explicit numbering of each stanza, I will also indicate the page, in order to make the passages easier to find. As for the Italian original, I use the edition of Cesare Segre (Ariosto 2010).

273 See the dedication of the work to Ippolito d'Este in stanzas 3 and 4 of the first Canto (*Orl. fur.* I, 3–4): 'Seed of Ercole, adornment and splendour of our age, Hippolytus, great of heart, may it please you to accept this [...] / Among the most illustrious heroes to whose names I am about to pay honour you will hear mention of Ruggiero, your forefather, the founder of your noble line.' (Ariosto 1974, 1). However, this genealogy was already established in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, where Ruggiero is praised as the progenitor of the House of Este. See Zaiser 2009, 132–33 as well as Ariosto 2009, xii. For the detailed genealogy of Ruggiero in *Orlando furioso*, see XXXVI, 70–6.

274 Even though the Americas are already known in Europe at that time, Ariosto does not mention them here. Cf. Carthy 2007, 406 on the combination of reality and fiction in the *Furioso's* geography: 'The majority of the poem's places, as well, originate in fiction as much as in real life. Despite the cartographical precision of their terrestrial locations, the journeys beyond the environs of the poet's Ferrara are also metaphorical travels to poetic spaces. So although ostensibly located somewhere in the New World, Alcina's island is also a post-Columbian Ogygia [...] Cartographical details lend authenticity and relevance to the *Furioso's* journeys, but the destinations themselves are equally inspired by fictional spaces of the literary past.'

275 Cf. Carthy 2007, 397 for more details.

276 Cf. Carthy 2007, 399: 'So despite Ariosto's refusal to travel, his poem's knowledge of and enthusiasm for new worlds express, at least on a literary level, a certain eagerness to participate in the Age of Exploration. This intellectual embrace of the voyages of the Renaissance is perhaps no great surprise, given the well-documented interest of the Ferraresi in the New World.'

Among the multiple intertextual connections that the *Furioso* establishes with other literary works, the Homeric *Odyssey* serves as an important hypotext of the poem.²⁷⁷ In the Alcina episode—which is a part of the Ruggiero plot, with Ruggiero being Odysseus’ equivalent here in Canto VI—Ariosto takes up and transforms both the Dantean *Inferno* passage (XXVI, 52–142) as well as the Homeric *Odyssey*.²⁷⁸ Sitting on the back of a fantastic beast called a ‘ippogrifo’ (hippogriff), Ruggiero passes the Pillars of Hercules through the air (*Orl. fur.* VI, 17–18).²⁷⁹ What Ariosto imagined lay beyond this formerly outermost boundary of the known world, is no longer the void of Dante Alighieri’s *Commedia*—the endless sea which is home only to Mount Purgatory, or unavoidable death for whoever dares to cross this boundary. But nor is it the Americas which Columbus reached in 1492, 40 years before the final edition of the *Furioso* appeared in 1532. Instead, the hero Ruggiero here arrives on an island, a *locus amoenus* modelled on the Homeric islands of Ogygia and Scheria²⁸⁰ (*Orl. fur.* VI, 20–2). Moreover, the rest of the episode especially evokes the encounter with the sorceress Circe on her island Aeaea (*Od.* 10.135–574), highlighting the free combination of Homeric material.

The episode is further worth looking at for another reason. After landing on Alcina’s island, Ruggiero ties (*Orl. fur.* VI, 23) the hippogriff to what turns out to be a talking tree, who has undergone some sort of metamorphosis (*Orl. fur.* VI, 28). Ruggiero reacts very politely to the complaints of the tree and is curious to know more about it: ‘But do not deny me an answer: tell me who you are, who live and speak, a rational being in a

²⁷⁷ Ariosto had access to the *Odyssey* and explicitly cites it on several occasions in the text. Cf. Lansing 1987, 313: ‘Ariosto was so universally believed to have imitated Homer, even if in what way was not always terribly clear, that for centuries he was called the “Ferrarese Homer.”’

²⁷⁸ Cf. again Lansing 1987, who identifies a number of important references to the *Odyssey*, as well as Carthy 2004 on the reception of Homer and Dante in the Alcina episode.

²⁷⁹ *Orl. fur.* VI, 17 (Ariosto 1974, 52): ‘He had left the European mainland far behind him, and had passed way out beyond the bounds which matchless Hercules had set for mariners.’ (‘Lasciato avea di gran spazio distante / tutta l’Europa, et era uscito fuore / per molto spazio il segno che prescritto / avea già a’ naviganti Ercole invito.’ Ariosto 2010, 109).

²⁸⁰ Cf. the Homeric description of Ogygia in *Od.* 5.63–73, where Hermes, the messenger of the gods, has just arrived on the island and even he—a god—marvels at the place’s beauty (*Od.* 5.73–6). Like Hermes, whose flight from Olympus to Ogygia is described in detail in *Od.* 5.43–58, Ruggiero, too, approaches the island through the air. The other Homeric island which serves as a literary model for Alcina’s island is Scheria, home of the Phaeacians, with its ever blooming gardens described in *Od.* 7.112–32, while the name of the sorceress ‘Alcina’ is strongly reminiscent of the Phaeacian king’s name ‘Alcinoos’ (Ἀλκίνοος). By locating Scheria beyond the Pillars of Hercules, Ariosto also positions himself with regard to the question of the geographical location of the island, that has been disputed since ancient times. It is not unthinkable that Ariosto is reacting to a current discussion of the matter in the Renaissance. However, we have no knowledge of such a discussion.

spiky, contorted body [...]?'²⁸¹ (*Orl. fur.* VI, 30). Ruggiero, who functions as the equivalent of the Dantean and Homeric Odysseus in this episode—he passes the Pillars of Hercules like the Dantean Odysseus, and arrives at a place inspired by the adventures of the Homeric Odysseus on Ogygia and Aeaëa—is clearly portrayed as curious and eager for knowledge, while his curiosity is at no point characterized as something negative. Displaying such curiosity, Ruggiero of course resembles the Dantean Odysseus as well as the Homeric one, who, as we know, was often driven by *Wanderlust*, although his first departure from home was not of a voluntary nature. Similarly, Ruggiero's arrival on Alcina's island is not the consequence of his own decision, as he does not appear to have any control of the hippogriff and the course that it takes (*Orl. fur.* VI, 17–19).²⁸² Later on, Ruggiero also forgets his home and purpose (including his beloved Bradamante)²⁸³ while he is with Alcina, just as Odysseus does during his year on Circe's island. In the *Furioso*, however, the hero is justified by the author as having been bewitched by Alcina ('Good Ruggiero must be forgiven, then, for this show of inconstancy', *Orl. fur.* VII, 18).²⁸⁴

And yet Ruggiero is not the only character in the *Furioso* whose curious nature reminds us of a centrifugal Odysseus driven by *Wanderlust*. Flattered by Ruggiero's courtesy (*Orl. fur.* VI, 32), the tree now answers by telling him its story in full detail (*Orl. fur.* VI, 33–53). His name is Astolfo and he was once a wealthy English duke (*Orl. fur.* VIII, 16) as well as a paladin of France (*Orl. fur.* VI, 33), who arrived on Alcina's island much before Ruggiero did. He was first seduced and later turned into a myrtle tree by the powerful sorceress (*Orl. fur.* VI, 35).²⁸⁵ He reveals his story to Ruggiero and warns him not to repeat his mistake (albeit in vain, see *Orl. fur.* VII, 16–18).²⁸⁶ In this

281 See Ariosto 1974, 53.

282 Cf. X, 69 about Ruggiero's return journey, where this is made explicit: 'Ruggiero departed, but did not retrace the path he had earlier taken against his will, when the hippogryph kept course out over the sea and he scarcely sighted land.' (Ariosto 1974, 100).

283 See VI, 47: 'Lost in contemplation of her looks, I quite forgot about France and all else—my every thought, my every good design ended in her, and never went beyond.' (Ariosto 1974, 55).

284 See Ariosto 1974, 62.

285 Cf. the Homeric Circe episode, where the sorceress turns Odysseus' comrades into swine (*Od.* 10.237–240). Just like Odysseus' comrades, who, despite their transformation, are still in possession of their human mind (10.239–40), Astolfo, the myrtle tree, also thinks like a human, despite his transformation. In contrast to Odysseus' comrades, however, he is also able to speak.

286 However, both Astolfo and Ruggiero are finally freed by the good sorceress Melissa (*Orl. fur.* VIII, 15–18). Later, Astolfo will be the one to restore Orlando's wits by locating them in a bottle on the moon (*Orl. fur.* XXXIV, 87).

embedded narrative (Astolfo's story), Astolfo himself appears as the equivalent of a clearly centrifugal Odysseus. He narrates that, when he first met Alcina, she offered to show him 'a siren, who can still the waves with her sweet singing'²⁸⁷ (*Orl. fur.* VI, 40). Of his companions he was the only one unable to resist her offer of showing to them the Siren: 'Rinaldo, and Dudone likewise, signalled to me not to go, but to no avail'²⁸⁸ (*Orl. fur.* VI, 41). In alluding clearly to the Homeric episode of the Sirens (possibly mediated by Cicero, *De fin.* 5.48–49), this scene parallels Astolfo's behaviour to Odysseus' when he wanted to hear the Sirens sing despite the dangers they posed. The Cyclops episode in the *Odyssey* also comes to mind, where Odysseus dismisses the warnings of his comrades who beg him to leave the cave. Admittedly, Astolfo's curiosity here turns out to be of a rather harmful and dangerous nature (again in accordance with the Homeric episode, where Odysseus' urge to see the Cyclops leads to the death of many of his companions), as it causes him to forget his purpose as well as his later transformation into a tree. Despite the general tendency of a positive turn regarding the representation of *curiositas* in the Renaissance, the *Furioso* does not lack negative representations of it altogether, as this example shows. In this ambiguity, one may say that it resembles the Homeric *Odyssey*.²⁸⁹

In addition to the curiosity of the characters Ruggiero and Astolfo, both of whom are partly staged as a centrifugal Odysseus, another characteristic of the text also suggests the slowly but surely changing perception of the world during the Renaissance. In particular, even if Alcina's island does not correspond to the historical New World, the Columbian (re)discovery of the Americas is incorporated into the narrative in the form of a prolepsis, and thus projected into a fictional future. This is achieved by means of a prophecy which Astolfo receives during his return journey by ship from Andronica, who escorts him half-way home to England, i.e. 'into the Arabian Sea or the Persian Gulf'²⁹⁰ (*Orl. fur.* XV, 11). 'The trip occasions Andronica's "prediction" of the Renaissance discovery of the sea route to the East Indies, the circumnavigation of Africa, and the discovery of the New World.'²⁹¹ Now, Astolfo, living in the eighth century, does not

287 See Ariosto 1974, 54.

288 See Ariosto 1974, 54.

289 As chapter 2.2. has shown, Odysseus' *Wanderlust* (including his curiosity) is often highlighted throughout the epic and generally not judged in any way but as a part of the hero's differentiated characterization. Only his behaviour in the Cyclops episode is characterized as wrong (Odysseus himself admits it in hindsight) and used as a warning example for situations to come.

290 See Ariosto 1974, 154.

291 See Carthy 2007, 398.

know anything about the maritime journeys of Vasco da Gama or Christopher Columbus. So, when they sail past Cochin and before they enter the Persian Gulf, he asks Andronica: '[D]id vessels hailing from the lands of the setting sun, whether driven by oars or sail, ever appear in the Eastern Seas? And was it possible to set sail from India and reach France or England without once making land?'²⁹² (*Orl. fur.* XV, 18). Andronica answers him with a long prophecy (*Orl. fur.* XV, 19–35), foreseeing that future 'argonauts' will pass the Pillars of Hercules, sail all the way from Europe to Asia, and 'open routes unknown to this day'²⁹³ (*Orl. fur.* XV, 21). Furthermore, she explains that, when people saw the large land masses extending to the South, they mistakenly assumed that the ocean did not continue and turned back (XV, 19–20).²⁹⁴ In the future, however, '[o]thers shall leave to their left and right the Pillars established by Hercules, and, following the circuit of the sun, discover new lands, a new world.'²⁹⁵ (*Orl. fur.* XV, 22). This shall only happen under the future reign of Charles the Fifth as Holy Roman Emperor, albeit in no less than seven centuries to come (*Orl. fur.* XV, 23–4)²⁹⁶, 'for He [i.e. God] has reserved its discovery until the day when He places the world under the monarchy of the wisest emperor [...] after Augustus'²⁹⁷ (*Orl. fur.* XV, 24). Andronica thus presents the future discovery of the Americas, as well as the reign of Charles the Fifth, as the will of God.

For now, Astolfo himself will continue his journey by land through Arabia (*Orl. fur.* XV, 37), as the sea route to India—which was, in fact, discovered by the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama in 1497–8,²⁹⁸ before the *Furioso's* publication—is assumed to be still unknown at this time. Now, even though the *Furioso's* story is set in the eighth century and the European discoveries of the fifteenth century are projected far into the fictional future, the geographical details of Astolfo's journey already reveal a knowledge

292 See Ariosto 1974, 155.

293 See Ariosto 1974, 155.

294 See Ariosto 1974, 156.

295 See Ariosto 1974, 156. See also the original 'altri lasciar le destre e le manine / rive che due per opra Erculea fêrsi ; / e del sole imitando il camin tondo, / ritrovar nuove terre e nuovo mondo.' (Ariosto 2010, 328) and cf. with Dante's 'di retro al sol' in *Inf.* XXVI, 117.

296 We may here remember that the story takes place in the eighth century under Charlemagne.

297 See Ariosto 1974, 156.

298 The new route to India involving the circumnavigation of Africa actually broke the Arab trade monopoly, which up until then entailed the high taxation of spices and other trade goods.

of later exploratory journeys.²⁹⁹ In fact, the locations mentioned in *Orl. fur.* XV, 16–17³⁰⁰ match the locations described in Marco Polo’s controversial travel itinerary as stops on his return journey from China at the end of the thirteenth century. It is also worth noting that the passage of Andronica’s prophecy (*Orl. fur.* XV, 19–35) is part of six Cantos which were only included in the *Furioso*’s final edition of 1532.³⁰¹ At this time, one might conclude, the news of the New World are penetrating more and more into the general consciousness and thus slowly finding their way into literary works such as the *Furioso*.

To judge from these few excerpts, we can conclude that, by its particular reworking of the Odysseus theme (as found in Homer and Dante) in the background of the voyages of discovery, the *Furioso* at least partly reflects the spirit of navigational discovery that characterised the time.

4.2 Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581)

Almost fifty years after the *Furioso*, the Odysseus theme is taken up again in Torquato Tasso’s epic poem and early modern romance *Gerusalemme liberata*. This story takes place against the background of the First Crusade in 1099, with fantastic and historical elements being mixed together throughout. Like the *Furioso*, on which it highly depends, the *Gerusalemme liberata* also reflects the changed view of the world in the European Renaissance and draws on Dante and Homer alike. In *Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde* Hans Blumenberg states:

299 Carthy 2007, 398–99 also refers to Ruggiero’s return journey as an indication of the influence of exploratory voyages of the Renaissance: ‘Ruggiero’s return journey, as well, shows the geographical precision and cartographical accuracy of an early modern explorer. [...]’ Carthy goes on to point out Ruggiero’s *Wanderlust* along the road: ‘Following Marco Polo’s footsteps along one of the famous ‘silk routes’, the itinerary takes days and months, as Ruggiero delays coming home to his betrothed Bradamante in his eagerness to witness and describe the lands and seas on route (X.69–73).’ Up to a certain point, this behaviour, being a conscious striving for experience, could be paralleled to the Homeric Odysseus’ repeated display of curiosity on his way home, which causes the delay of his return. However, in the *Furioso*, which is written in an era of European overseas exploration, the hero’s delay of his return home and to his loved ones is presented as something perfectly understandable: ‘For all his pressing desire to return to Bradamant, Ruggiero was unwilling to forgo the pleasure of discovering the world, but had perforce to pass by way of the Poles, Hungarians, and Germans and the rest of those bleak northern lands. [...] Days and months went by as he pursued his way, so eager was he to visit lands and seas.’ (X, 72–3). Exploration for its own sake is now nothing to be ashamed of. Rather, it has gained a *raison d’être*.

300 Before they reach the Persian Gulf by ship, their route is said to lead north and past the ‘golden Chersonnese’, i.e. the Malay Peninsula, Ceylon and Cochinchina.

301 Cf. MacPhail 2001, 32: ‘The *Orlando Furioso* was first published in 1516 in 40 cantos with a second edition in 1521 and a third edition expanded to 46 cantos in 1532. For the revised edition of 1532, Ariosto added to canto 15 a prophetic speech by Andronica to Astolfo foretelling the discovery of the New World and the reign of Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor.’

[...] Dante hat in seinem >System< eine Stelle geschaffen, die ein neues Bewußtsein umbesetzen und umwerten konnte: im ausgehenden 16. Jahrhundert konnte Torquato Tasso in seinem *Befreiten Jerusalem* mit deutlicher Anspielung auf den 26. Gesang des *Inferno* die Überschreitung des Säulen des Herkules neu sehen und werten, weil Kolumbus die *nuova terra* inzwischen erreicht und betreten hatte. Die Selbstbestätigung der menschlichen Neugierde ist zur Form ihrer Legitimation geworden;³⁰²

As a matter of fact, Canto XV of the *Gerusalemme liberata* (esp. XV, 22–7 and 33)³⁰³ clearly builds on the Dantean *Inferno* passage (XXVI, 52–142) about Odysseus' last journey. In *Ger. lib.* XV the Christian knights Carlo and Ubaldo set out in search of the lost Rinaldo, an important Crusader without whose help the battle cannot be won. Led by the goddess Fortune,³⁰⁴ they sail West ('invèr ponente', *Ger. lib.* XV, 10), past the Pillars of Hercules and into the Atlantic Ocean, until they finally arrive on the Isles of the Blessed (*Ger. lib.* XV, 37). Just as in Ariosto's *Furioso*, where Ruggiero has been bewitched by Alcina and forgotten about the war and his duties, the hero Rinaldo has been living with the Pagan sorceress Armida on her enchanted island and forgotten about the crusade.

When Ubaldo and Carlo have passed the Strait of Gibraltar (*Ger. lib.* XV, 23: 'lo stretto') and cannot see anything but water, Ubaldo asks Fortune: 'into this ocean without limit, say, has anyone come so far before? And do people inhabit the lands we're sailing to?' ('in questo mar che non ha fine, / di' s'altri mai qui giunse, e se più inante / nel mondo ove corriamo have abitante.', *Ger. lib.* XV, 24). Fortune then tells them about Hercules, who once installed the Pillars in order to mark a boundary for all humans, which only one man so far has dared to cross (*Ger. lib.* XV, 25–7):

302 Blumenberg 1966, 334–35.

303 For the Italian original I will be quoting the edition of Lanfranco Caretti (Tasso 2008). The English translation I use is that of Anthony M. Esolen (Tasso 2000; page numbers will not be referred to each time. Instead, the indication of the Canto and paragraph may suffice). Up to now it actually lacks a reliable critical edition of the *Gerusalemme liberata*, so we have to content ourselves with the present edition by Caretti. The translation provided by Esolen is possibly based on a slightly different text than Caretti's but mostly 'the 1585 edition of Bonna'. See Tasso 2000, x.

304 She can be identified as such, even though she 'is never so named outright'. See Tasso 1987, 484. See her description in XV, 4 and her designation as 'fatal donzella', 'the lady of the fates', in XV, 3.

<p>[...] ma quei segni sprezzò ch'egli prescisse; di veder vago e di saper, Ulisse.</p>	<p>[...] but one man thought the mark he set to low: Ulysses, ever eager to see and know.</p>
<p>26 Ei passò le Colonne, e per l'aperto / mare spiegò de' remi il volo audace; ma non giovogli esser ne l'onde esperto, perché inghiottillo l'ocean vorace, e giacque co 'l suo corpo anco coperto il suo gran caso, ch'or tra voi si tace. S'altri vi fu da' venti a forza spinto, o non tornovvi o vi rimase estinto;</p>	<p>He passed the Pillars and on the open seas he set the oars for his audacious flight; no help was all his seaman's expertise, for the ravenous ocean swallowed him outright, and now his great fall, with his body, lies still cloaked in silence. And though storm winds might thrust others out so far, they either die or manage to get home, and never try</p>
<p>27 sì ch'ignoto è 'l gran mar che solchi: ignote isole mille e mille regni asconde; né già d'abitator le terre han vòte, ma son come le vostre anco feconde: son esse atte al produr, né steril pote esser quella virtù che 'l sol n'infonde. –</p>	<p>this way again. So the sea we furrow now is unknown; islands, kingdoms, all unknown; the lands there are not uninhabited but are as rich and fertile as your own, ready to bring forth crops. For that great power cannot be sterile which the sun pours down.”</p>

In this relatively short passage, Tasso takes up the Dantean tale of the centrifugal Odysseus, who is clearly evoked by the description ‘di veder vago e di saper’ (‘ever eager to see and know’, *Ger. lib.* XV, 25). Except for its brevity, up to *Ger. Lib.* XV, 26 Tasso’s account does not differ much from the Dantean account, although Odysseus’ undertaking is not called a ‘folle volo’ (‘mad flight’, *Inferno* XXVI, 125) but, more moderately referred to as ‘il volo audace’ (‘his audacious flight’, *Ger. lib.* XV, 26).³⁰⁵ The result, however, is the same as in Dante Alighieri’s *Commedia*: Odysseus’ death and the abrupt end of his attempted exploration of the unknown world. It is in the following paragraph (*Ger. lib.* XV, 27) where Tasso’s account significantly deviates from the Dantean one. In this, Odysseus’ failure (for which no explicit reason is given) does not lead to his undertaking being presented as wrong. On the contrary, the world behind the Pillars of Hercules, whose existence is no longer in doubt, is still unexplored. Being

³⁰⁵ Cf. Poirier 2016, 261.

surrounded only by water, Carlo and Ubaldo may not yet be able to see for themselves what Fortune here explicitly confirms: there are lands across the Atlantic and they are even inhabited. Dante's 'mondo senza gente' (*Inferno* XXVI, 117) is thus replaced by a vast world of 'isole mille e mille regni' (*Ger. lib.* XV, 27), which is yet to be discovered. At a later stage of their journey (*Ger. lib.* XV, 33–43), Carlo and Ubaldo will indeed have the chance to see these places (inhabited as well as uninhabited) with their own eyes.³⁰⁶

Now, after Fortune's first answer (*Ger. lib.* XV, 25–7) Ubaldo is curious to learn even more about 'this secret world, [...] of its religion and its laws' (*Ger. lib.* XV, 27). Then Fortune answers by providing further information about the 'laws' and 'faith' of the Pagan people inhabiting this world, characterizing them all as 'barbarian and infidel' (*Ger. lib.* XV, 28). One day, however, these lands shall be Christianized (*Ger. lib.* XV, 29), as, so she predicts, a man from Liguria called Columbus will then pass the Pillars of Hercules and—against all obstacles—successfully sail to these unknown parts of the world (*Ger. lib.* XV, 30–2):

<p>30 Tempo verrà che fian d'Ercole i segni favola vile a i naviganti industri, e i mar riposti, or senza nome, e i regni ignoti ancor tra voi saranno illustri. Fia che 'l più ardito allor di tutti i legni quanto circonda il mar circonda e lustri, e la terra misuri, immensa mole, vittorioso ed emulo del sole.</p>	<p>A time will come when the Pillars of Hercules will to the busy men who sail the sea become a silly fable; and all these waters and lands that have no name shall be made famous. The boldest sailor³⁰⁷ in those days will circle the earth along the circling sea, mapping the world, vast labor undergone, victoriously striving with the sun.</p>
<p>31 Un uom de la Liguria avrà ardimento</p>	<p>Liguria will produce this man so brave</p>

³⁰⁶ Much like Odysseus and his comrades in Dante's *Inferno* passage ('quando n'apparve una montagna, bruna / per la distanza', *Inf.* XXVI, 133–4), they will see 'a dark mountain in the distance' ('lor s'offri di lontano oscuro un monte', *Ger. lib.* XV 33). Fortuna will then sail to Armida's island (*Ger. lib.* XV, 43) and show to them her dwelling on top of the mountain (*Ger. lib.* XV, 44), to which they will start their ascent on the next day.

³⁰⁷ Strictly speaking, 'legni' is to be understood as 'woods' and therefore, metonymically, as 'ships' and not 'sailor[s]'. However, the characterizations 'ardito' (bold, daring) and 'vittorioso' (victorious) suggest that the verses are about Columbus himself, rather than his ship.

<p>a l'incognito corso esporsi in prima; né 'l minaccievol fremito del vento, né l'inospito mar, né 'l dubbio clima, né s'altro di periglio o di spavento più grave e formidabile or si stima, faran che 'l generoso entro a i divieti d'Abila angusti l'alta mente accheti.</p>	<p>to take the unknown trek for the first time, no matter that the seas roar, the winds rave, no matter the uncertain, changing clime, no matter all things perilous and grave— whatever dangers men consider prime— nothing could keep that generous heart once gone Through the forbidden straits from sailing on.</p>
<p>32 Tu spiegherai, Colombo, a un novo polo lontane sì le fortunate antenne, ch'a pena seguirà con gli occhi il volo la fama c'ha mille occhi e mille penne. Canti ella Alcide e Bacco, e di te solo basti a i posteri tuoi ch'alquanto accenne, ché quel poco darà lunga memoria di poema dignissima e d'istoria.</p>	<p>Columbus, in a new, far hemisphere you spread your happy banners to the skies! Fame shall hardly follow your voyage there, she of a thousand wings and a thousand eyes! [To your descendants, bold adventurer, she hardly nods, yet sings of Hercules— yet that nod brings a lasting memory worthy of epic and long history.]³⁰⁸</p>

The prophecy of Fortune (*Ger. lib. XV, 30–2*) thus foretells the European discovery of the Americas by Columbus and the Christian mission. The geographical exploration of these unknown territories is no longer depicted as a presumptuous or impious transgression of boundaries, but, on the contrary, as the accomplishment of God's will (*Ger. lib. XV, 29; 39*), as, of course, fits with the imperialist spirit of the time. Throughout the whole prophecy, Columbus is hence highly praised for his endeavour ('the boldest sailor [...] victoriously striving [...] *Ger. lib. XV, 30*; 'this man so brave to [...] that generous heart [...]', *Ger. lib. XV 31* etc.). Considering the preceding retrospective passage about Odysseus (*Ger. lib. XV, 25–26*), Columbus is presented as the accomplished and successful one of the two, as, according to Fortune, Odysseus failed and was no longer much heard of ('his great fall [...] lies still cloaked in silence', *Ger. lib. XV, 26*). One could say that both Columbus' voyage (embedded narrative) as

308 I am unable to understand how exactly Esolen might have come to this translation (see brackets). In my opinion, the last four verses are to be understood as follows: 'Fame may sing of Heracles and Bacchus, however, in your case, it suffices for her to give a little sign to posterity, because that little sign will bring long memory worthy of [being praised in] poetry and history.' Cf. the paraphrase in Tasso 1961, 456: '5-6. La fama narri pure ampiamente le imprese di Ercole e di Bacco (famosi per I loro leggendari viaggi); in quanto a te, sarà sufficiente che essa accenni soltanto alle tue imprese. 7-8. «giacché quel poco che essa accennerà darà larga materia degnissima d'essere celebrata nelle storie e nei poemi » (Sansone).'

well as Carlo's and Ubaldo's voyage (frame narrative) are not set in parallel with the journey of the Dantean Odysseus, but rather invite a comparison with the journey which Dante (pilgrim) undertakes in the *Commedia*.³⁰⁹ In contrast to Odysseus' unauthorized journey, both the journey of Carlo and Ubaldo, who are led by the goddess Fortuna, as well as that of Columbus are legitimized by God, and both are only successful because of this very legitimization, while the same applies for Dante's journey in the *Commedia*. Therefore, Columbus is not presented as a spiritual successor of Odysseus but rather one of the pilgrim Dante. We can conclude that, however strong its presence in the *Gerusalemme*, curiosity and, on a higher level, *Wanderlust* alone do not provide the characters with a *raison d'être* (as they seem to have done so in the *Furioso*³¹⁰), because for Tasso they still require a divine legitimation.³¹¹ Despite the strong influence on the *Gerusalemme* of a Christian conception of the world, it is not the moral of Odysseus' story that the urge for knowledge and discovery is to be condemned in any way. It just does not coincide with Divine Providence.³¹²

The heroes Carlo and Ubaldo also show a considerable hunger for knowledge about the unknown world, and in so doing they display some Odyssean *Wanderlust*.³¹³ Carlo, however, is quickly put in his place by Fortune, when he expresses his desire to explore this world himself and set foot on the Isles of the Blessed (*Ger. lib. XV, 38*). Even though Fortune does not blame him for his wish but rather compliments him on it ('Your request does you credit [...] this noble wish of yours', *Ger. lib. XV, 39*)³¹⁴, she cannot grant it either, '[f]or the completed time has not come round / which God has

309 Cf. Zatti 1995, 510: '[...] Tasso offre una sua personale rilettura del rapporto Dante-Ulisse che coglie perfettamente il senso dell'opposizione fra il «fatale andare» del pellegrino e il «folle volo» del navigatore: entro tale prospettiva quel Colombo mosso sulla via delle Indie da un volere provvidenziale non è più veramente l'epigono temerario dell'Ulisse personaggio dantesco, ma piuttosto l'erede spirituale del Dante personaggio dantesco.'

310 Cf. p. 85.

311 Cf. Zatti 1995, 510; 'Solo quando il Cielo decide che i tempi sono maturi per l'apprendimento dell'uomo, allora la curiosità diventa lecita e la scienza uno strumento necessario di progresso: ma una virtù soltanto umana rischia di ripetere il naufragio di Ulisse. Uomo di un'altra epoca, Colombo subordinerà la sua impresa a un decreto divino, così che la Scoperta non sarà l'effetto dell'orgoglio umano, ma tutt'al contrario l'esecuzione della volontà di Dio. [...]'

312 Odysseus' endeavour cannot be successful, because it simply does not coincide with God's particular plan. In this representation of Odysseus' journey as neutral (if not positive), yet leading to his inevitable death, the *Gerusalemme* again resembles the Dantean *Inferno* passage, where Odysseus as a Pagan can only be denied access to Mount Purgatory.

313 See Ubaldo's questions in *Ger. lib. XV, 24, 27 and 29*.

314 'Ben degna in vero / la domanda è di te [...] al bel desio'.

fixed for the discovery. Nor will you even be allowed to keep / a memory of your voyage to the deep/ to bring news to your world' (*Ger. lib. XV*, 39–40)³¹⁵. He has to content himself with what he already has been privileged to experience and not ask for more (*XV*, 40). Fortune thus approves of their curiosity, but also sets a clear limit on their exploration. This restriction also makes sense from a narrative point of view, since the discovery of the New World predicted by Fortune for later centuries would otherwise become obsolete. Historically, it is as if Carlo's and Ubaldo's journey had never taken place. Similarly to Ruggiero's passing of the Pillars of Hercules and his arrival on a paradisaical island on the back of the hippogriff in Orlando's *Furioso*, this journey, too, has to remain in a sphere outside of historical reality. Both in the *Furioso* and in the *Gerusalemme*, those journeys only happen with the help of some kind of magic or supernatural power.³¹⁶ And so it is in both these works that a successful passing of the Pillars of Hercules, without the help of any magic (a 'real' one, if we may say), and a sailing to the historical New World (and not an imaginary place like Alcina's or Armida's island), is predicted only for a later time.

To conclude this chapter, the influence of the European voyages of discovery on these two Renaissance texts has become more than obvious. It is in this particular context that Odysseus, in his role as the Dantean transgressor, becomes important once again and is re-interpreted. His undertaking is no longer regarded as absurd but has become quite realistic. Even if still paired with (and sometimes limited by) Christian piety, curiosity—as a particular manifestation of *Wanderlust*—has become legitimate and no longer requires a specific justification. This major change signals an undeniable shift in the perception of the world during the Renaissance and represents an important step in the development which ultimately leads to the reception of Odyssean *Wanderlust* from the nineteenth century onwards.

315 'ch'ancor vòlto non è lo spazio intero / ch'al grande scoprimento ha fisso Dio, né lece a voi da l'ocean profondo / recar vera notizia al vostro mondo.'

316 In the latter, it is not a normal ship on which they travel. See the whole passage about the ship in *XV*, 6–8, especially *XV*, 8: 'with more than natural velocity [...]' ('Veloce sopra il natural costume [...]') and *XV*, 9: 'that wondrous vessel' ('la mirabil nave'). Tasso 2000, 287–88; Tasso 2008, 339.

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20
 For ever and forever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me 25
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners, 45
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil; 50
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep 55
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,

'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order, smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' 65
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

Tennyson's Odysseus is unsatisfied and tired of his role as king to 'a savage race' (v. 4) and husband to 'an aged wife' (v. 3). 'I cannot rest from travel: I will drink / Life to the lees', he states in vv. 6–7. In the second stanza he confidently looks back on his adventurous life, his achievements ('I am become a name', v. 11) as well as the many experiences that made him who he is ('I am part of all that I have met', v. 18.),³¹⁹ while at the same time he laments the 'untravelling world, whose margin fades away / For ever and ever when I move' (vv. 20–1). There next follows an emphatic expression of his *Wanderlust* ('How dull is it to pause, to make an end,', vv. 22–32). The whole second stanza (vv. 33–43) is about his son Telemachus, who is described as a paragon of dutiful and decent behaviour. It is tempting to read a certain irony into these verses, even if there is no explicitly negative or judging statement.³²⁰ However, Odysseus clearly distances himself from his son ('He works his work, I mine.', v. 43). Then, in the third and final stanza, he ultimately turns away his gaze from Ithaca and towards the sea and

319 Stead 2009, 35 rightly points out that this Odysseus defines himself through his epic past, his adventures, and not through his homeland Ithaca.

320 This motif of the well-behaved son ("Musterknabe", would be the German word that comes to mind) is going to be further elaborated by Émile Gebhart (*Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse*, 1902), Franz Blei (*Des Odysseus letzte Ausfahrt*, 1923) as well as Nikos Kazantzakis in his *Odyssey* (henceforth abbreviated by the Greek 'Οδ.' for the purpose of distinguishing it from the Homeric *Odyssey*, abbreviated as 'Od.'). In the latter, the mild-minded and peace-loving Telemachus (see, for example, *Od.* 1.246–9; 369–71) stands in a sharp contrast to his wild, freedom-loving father who does not care much about social conventions or boundaries of any kind. As an example for the many passages centring on the father-son-contrast, see Telemachus' thoughts about his father in *Od.* 2.202–3: "Τοῦτος τὰ σύνορα πατάει, θνητό κι ἀθάνατο μπερδεύει, / χαλνάζει τὴν ἄγια τάξη ποὺ κρατᾶει πᾶ στὸν γκρεμὸ τὸν κόσμο!" ("This man breaks through all bounds, confounds men with the gods, smashes the sacred laws that hold the toppling world", Kazantzakis 1958, 39). For the motif of the father-son-contrast in D'Annunzio, Gebhart and Blei, see p. 178.

a new journey (vv. 44–70). He now speaks to his aged companions, who are apparently still alive. Much like the Dantean Odysseus, he appeals to them in flamboyant, stirring words to embark with him on this final journey of uncertain outcome (‘Come, my friends [...]’, vv. 56–70).

By having Odysseus first return to Ithaca and be seized by *Wanderlust* only upon his return home, Tennyson skilfully combines the Homeric and Dantean account of the myth. Odysseus returns home like the Homeric hero, but he wants to ‘follow knowledge’ like the Dantean one. Yet Tennyson also enriches the myth by adding a new element of his own: the disillusion and frustration of the hero upon his return home.³²¹ Thus, the Homeric nostalgia for the homeland is replaced by the nostalgia for the journey and an aversion against his formerly beloved homeland. Tennyson is the first author to describe this sort of disillusion and disaffection in the homecoming hero. This theme will in turn be taken up again by many writers to come (e.g. Heyse, Pascoli, Kazantzakis and Feuchtwanger, to name only a few).

As for Homer’s *Odyssey* and Dante’s *Inferno*, both hypotexts are clearly echoed at various points of Tennyson’s poem. Vv. 13–14 (‘Much have I seen and known; cities of men / And manners, climates, councils, governments’) strongly remind us of the *Odyssey*’s opening, were it not for the preceding v. 12: ‘For always roaming with a hungry heart [...]’. This verse bestows a rather active character on the hero’s wanderings, that stands in contrast to the Greek passive μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη (‘was driven far journeys’, *Od.* 1.2) and πολλὰ [...] πάθεν ἄλγεα (‘many the pains he suffered’, *Od.* 1.4) in the *Odyssey* proem, as well as the *Odyssey*’s general leitmotif of an involuntary journey that Odysseus is forced to ‘endure’. Tennyson further adds a positive aspect to Odysseus’ hardships by letting him say: ‘I have enjoyed / Greatly, have suffered greatly’ (vv. 7–8). The self-inflicted death of the hero’s companions mentioned in the *Odyssey* proem is hence annulled and replaced by a positive reference to merry comradeship (‘And drunk delight of battle with my peers, / Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.’, vv. 16–17). Further, v. 11 (‘I am become a name’) evokes the highly self-confident revelation of Odysseus’ identity in front of the Phaeacians in *Od.* 9.19–20: ‘I am Odysseus son of Laertes, known before all men for the study of crafty

321 Cf. Stead 2009, 34.

designs, and my fame goes up to the heavens.’ (εἴμ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς Λαερτιάδης, ὃς πᾶσι δόλοισιν / ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει). Accordingly, v. 15 ([...] honoured of them all’) can be associated with the honour that is bestowed upon him by his Phaeacian hosts.

The text further contains a series of verbal echoes of Dante’s *Inferno*. ‘To follow knowledge like a sinking star / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought’ (vv. 31–2) of course echoes the famous Dantean verses ‘Considerate la vostra semenza: / fatti non foste a viver come bruti, / ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza’ (*Inf.* XXVI, 118–20). Ulysses’ ‘purpose’ (v. 60) as described in vv. 60–1 —‘To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths / Of all the western stars, until I die’—clearly takes up the Dantean Odysseus’ journey towards the West, ‘di retro al sol’ (*Inf.* XXVI, 117), which ends with the story of the hero’s death.

Tennyson’s hero displays a melange of egoistic and heroic sentiments, with the latter prevailing in the end.³²² It may indeed be the accounts of the maritime explorations of English seafarers that, among other things, inspired Tennyson’s portrayal of an outward-bound Odysseus, as Stanford suggests.³²³ At the same time, along with the heroic and optimistic elements, notions characteristic of late modernity, such as the hero’s disillusionment and fatigue as well as his rootlessness and alienation from home, are already beginning to show. Tennyson’s poetic activity falls largely within the post-Romantic era of Victorian England (1837–1901), where life and society were greatly shaped by industrialization and urbanization.³²⁴ The defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo (1815) by the Seventh Coalition had strengthened Britain’s power and laid the foundations for continuous economic growth and the political expansion of the British Empire. From a literary-historical point of view, Tennyson stands between Romanticism and the decadence of the *fin de siècle*. Many characteristics of the latter cultural crisis are already reflected in Tennyson’s works. In Victorian poetry, the dramatic monologue,

322 Cf. Stanford 1954, 202–4 who distinguishes five different voices and primarily locates the (Byronic) egoistic element (or ‘mood’) in the first part of the poem, which in the process ‘is dissolved in a [Dantean] desire for new experience’. As he writes, ‘the Byronic demon of boredom and disgust is exorcized and yields to a spirit of high heroic endeavour.’ In the final section, he sees ‘the poem’s most original feature’: ‘a boldness derived from the exploits of Elizabethan sea-dogs and strengthened for Tennyson’s generation by Nelson’s recent triumphs.’

323 See Stanford 1954, 204: ‘Tennyson, living in a post-Columban age, familiar with the deeds of English explorer-adventurers from Cabot to Cook, impressed by the expanding power of England’s empire and navies, could adopt the Navigator Hero as an emblem of justifiable scientific enterprise and of a commendable pioneering spirit.’

324 See Amigoni 2011, 31–32; 109.

which was distinctively re-invented by Tennyson, becomes a typical form of expression.³²⁵ Alongside medieval motifs and legends, which were particularly popular in the Romantic period, Tennyson also makes frequent use of classical themes.³²⁶ While the Romantics had previously rejected the classicist ideals in favour of the imperfect and grotesque,³²⁷ the Victorian period shows a renewed taste for Greek antiquity.³²⁸

In the course of time, Tennyson's poem has undergone a multitude of interpretations, many of them contradictory. Even without wishing to interpret *Ulysses* by means of biographical events (as has often been attempted³²⁹), it does make sense to give a brief account of the biographical circumstances in the author's life which accompanied the creation of the poem. When Tennyson wrote the poem, he was only twenty-four years old. At this time, it is not yet apparent that, during his lifetime, he will become one of the most famous poets of his day.³³⁰ In fact, in 1850 Tennyson will make his ultimate breakthrough with *In Memoriam A. H. H.* and become the official *Poet Laureate* that same year, Queen Victoria being one of his greatest admirers.³³¹ In 1865, the mass distribution of books will even enable a miniature edition of Tennyson's works that comes to enjoy great popularity (*A Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson*, published in the series *Moxon's Miniature Poets*).³³² In 1833, however, all this is still a long way off. Indeed, this year is important for another reason, since it marks the year of the sudden death of Tennyson's closest friend, Arthur Hallam (15.09.1833).

325 On Tennyson's other dramatic monologues with mythical content *Tithonus* (written 1833, published 1860) and *Tiresias* (written 1833, published 1883), see Stead 2009, 32 and Pearsall 2008, 4: "St. Simeon Stylites," "Ulysses," "Tithonus," and "Tiresias," [...] were all begun in 1833. Although some parts of these poems may predate the death of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam in Vienna on September 15, 1833, all were substantially developed in the aftermath of that staggering loss. After telling revisions, the first two were published in 1842, and the other two reached their final forms, respectively, in 1860 and 1883.' However, the classification of *Ulysses* as a dramatic monologue, which as such presupposes an audience (for a definition see Amigoni 2011, 113–14; 190), is controversial for various reasons (see Mitchell 1964, 87–89).

326 See Thomas 1990, 12: 'Like Keats in "The Eve of St Agnes" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn", Tennyson exploited the myths of chivalry and of the ancient world.'

327 Cf. Thomas 1990, 4–5 and 9: 'Classicism might be about perfection, but romanticism was the creed of imperfection, uncertainty, debate, turmoil, and revolution.'

328 Cf. H. A. Davies et al. 2020: 'Most fundamentally of all, the rapid change that many writers interpreted as progress inspired in others a fierce nostalgia. Enthusiastic rediscoveries of ancient Greece, Elizabethan England, and, especially, the Middle Ages by writers, artists, architects, and designers made this age of change simultaneously an age of active and determined historicism.'

329 See, for example, Hughes 1979.

330 See Stead 2009, 31.

331 See Drabble 2000a; Thomas 1990, 19–21.

332 See Amigoni 2011, 15.

Additionally, another stroke of fate had befallen Tennyson two years earlier; his father died in 1831, forcing him to give up his studies in Cambridge and return to his parents' house in Somersby.³³³ On 20 October 1833, only a month after Hallam's death, Tennyson writes his poem *Ulysses* under this heavy loss, while that same year, he also begins writing his elegy *In Memoriam A. H. H.* in commemoration of Hallam's death, although it was only published in 1850.³³⁴ We know of two comments that Tennyson himself made about *Ulysses*. The first one is reported by his son Hallam Tennyson, who had himself been named after his father's deceased friend:

"Ulysses", my father said, "was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and it gave my feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life of life perhaps more simply than anything in 'In Memoriam'."³³⁵

The second one is a comment that Tennyson made to his friend James Knowles:

There is more about myself in "Ulysses", which was written under the sense of loss and that all had gone by, but that still life must be fought out to the end. It was more written with the feeling of his loss upon me than many poems in "In Memoriam".³³⁶

A straightforward, affirmative reading of the poem based on these statements of the author about its role in processing of Hallam's death, is not without controversy, due to the poem's rather atypical qualities compared to Tennyson's other works.³³⁷ Many attempts have, therefore, been made to defend one or other alternative reading, be it affirmative or ironic, through biographical facts.³³⁸ Of course, there is no question that the life of a poet influences his work in many ways. However, such a biographical interpretation always remains speculative, and, more importantly, it reduces poetry to a mere processing of real events. Rather, it is the literary tradition in which Tennyson places himself with his poem and, at the same time, the innovative value of his poetry that is important to us here. Inspired by Dante, Tennyson does not present Odysseus'

333 See Hughes 1979, 196; Stead 2009, 32.

334 See Stead 2009, 32

335 See H. Tennyson 1897, 1:196.

336 See Knowles 1893, 182.

337 See Hughes 1979, 193. According to Hughes, the poem displays a rejection of exactly that domesticity, 'that Tennyson celebrates elsewhere in his poetry'. The same goes for 'Ulysses' apparent lack of belief in spiritual immortality' that contrasts with the values expressed in other poems.

338 For an affirmative reading based on biographical facts, see Hughes 1979, 197 who suggests that 'Tennyson's own domestic situation, combined with the special meaning he assigned to Hallam and his friendship, accounts for the peculiar treatment of the domestic theme in "Ulysses".'

last journey as another experience which is painfully imposed on the hero by the gods (i.e. as the fateful journey announced by Tiresias in *Od.* 11), but rather as a continuity of his character. The last journey, which this Odysseus will only undertake *after* his return to Ithaca, is not the inescapable fate of the *Odyssey*, but is made into a psychological expression about one's own character, desire and imprint on one's age: the restless hero cannot bear the limitation of his homeland. He chooses freedom and doubt, risk and even death instead of family fortune and a well-secured social position. Thus, Odysseus becomes the cipher of the "modern" man who has lost his certainties and ties.

5.2 Charles Baudelaire's *Le voyage* (1859)

Following Tennyson's *Ulysses*, whose popularity reached far beyond the British borders³³⁹, the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* was elaborated in French, English, German, Greek and Italian literature in the nineteenth century alone. Évanghélia Stead lists a total of six elaborations of the motif of a 'Second Odyssey'—it is Cavafy's poem after which she names the entire corpus³⁴⁰—published in the nineteenth century: 1) George F. Preston, *The Phantom Bark* (1860), 2) Andrew Lang, *Hesperothen* (1872), 3) Paul Heyse, *Odysseus* (1877), 4) Constantine Cavafy, *Second Odyssey* (1894)³⁴¹, 5) Jules Lemaître, *Nausicaa* (1894) and 6) Arturo Graf, *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* (1897). To the beginning of that list we have to add Charles Baudelaire's *Le voyage* (1859),³⁴² the final poem of his verse collection *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857¹, 1861², 1868³), which Stead treats only briefly.³⁴³ Yet, the poem can clearly be read as an elaboration of the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust*.

339 Cf. Stead 2009, 13 who stresses the widespread circulation of the poem in Europe, among others reflected by its 'numerous translations' ('les nombreuses traductions').

340 See Stead 2009, 137.

341 See my later discussion of Cavafy's poem and essay in chapter 5.11. Since *Second Odyssey* was not published until 1985, I decided to deviate from the chronological order here exceptionally and discuss Cavafy's early texts in a joint chapter together with *Ithaca*, for the understanding of which they are directly relevant. For a chronological overview of all the texts discussed, see the motif table in the Appendix.

342 Written in February 1859 in Honfleur, it was most likely first published within the same month, together with the poem *L'Albatros* on a 'placard' of only a five or six copies, none of which has survived. Thereupon, it was published in the *Revue française* on the 10th of April 1859. Only later, in 1861, a revised version appeared in the second edition of *Les fleurs du Mal* (see Schenck and Gilman 1938, 262–63; Le Dantec/ Pichois in Baudelaire 1971, 1561; Pertile 1983, 110). It is the text of this 1861 edition—the last to be published before Baudelaire's premature death in 1867—which Claude Pichois follows in Baudelaire 1971 and which I will be using here (see Pichois in the edition's introduction, Baudelaire 1971, XIII).

The French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) ushered in a new era of lyric poetry in Europe. He is regarded with good reason as a pioneer of modern European literature. With his combination of the morbid and the ugly, in which the industrialized Parisian metropolis makes its first appearance, his poetry has left a lasting mark on subsequent generations of poets and artists.³⁴⁴ As with so many great artists, his fame only came after his death, while to his contemporaries he was better known as a literary critic and translator than as a poet.³⁴⁵ His short, restless life is marked by the world of the Parisian *bohème* of poets and artists, prostitutes and drugs. In maintaining a self-destructive lifestyle, and despite the inheritance of a considerable sum of money, he spent his whole life in financial misery.³⁴⁶ Already his childhood was difficult, his youth rebellious.³⁴⁷ Just one year after his father's death in 1827, his mother married the lieutenant-colonel Jacques Aupick and Charles was sent to a boarding school. Yet, shortly before his graduation he was expelled from school. After coming of age, he squandered more than half of his paternal inheritance in record time, whereupon he is forever stripped of the tutelage of his inheritance. A failed suicide attempt follows one year later (1845). When his major literary work *Les Fleurs du Mal*, a collection of 101 poems, was first published in 1857, it caused a scandal. Baudelaire was put on trial and sentenced to a fine for an affront to public morals.³⁴⁸ As a result, the work was censored and six poems were banned from it. For posterity, Baudelaire thus became the *poète maudit* par excellence, the nefarious poet at the margins of society, whose values he despised. After experiencing a cerebral stroke in 1866, he died one year later, at the age of forty-six.

In *Le voyage*, the closing poem of *Les fleurs du Mal* which contains several clear references to the *Odyssey* and Dante's *Inferno*, *Wanderlust* and a sense of never-ending

343 See Stead 2009, 160–1. Baudelaire's text is actually preceded by another *Odyssey* transformation. Walter Savage Landor's (1775–1864) narrative poem *The Last of Ulysses* (1847) is an interesting re-interpretation of the fateful last journey prophesied by the Homeric Tiresias. It is here replaced by the prophecy that Odysseus would die at the hands of his own son originating in the post-Homeric *Telegony*. In order to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecy, Odysseus leaves Ithaca again since he believes it to be referring to his son Telemachus. Years later, when Odysseus and Penelope are living at the court of Diomedes in Arpi, in which he eventually dies at the hands of Telegonus before the latter can reveal himself to him. The motif of Odysseus being killed by Telegonus, his son by Circe, thus finds its way into this modern *Odyssey* reception, which is otherwise in many aspects oriented on the events of the Homeric *Odyssey*. However, Odysseus' new journey is in no way motivated by *Wanderlust*, so I do not pursue its analysis here.

344 For more details on Baudelaire's wide ranging influence, see for example Schlossman 2005.

345 See Lloyd 2005, xiii.

346 See Jackson 2005, 3; 8–9.

347 For this and the following see Lloyd 2005, xv–xvii.

348 See Jackson 2005, 9.

restlessness is an important leitmotif. From the beginning, however, the poem is dominated by an ironic undertone that becomes increasingly stronger as the poem goes on. The traveller's *Wanderlust* is ultimately reduced to absurdity and in hindsight ridiculed as a naive idealization of reality.³⁴⁹ The very beginning of the poem already suggests that the childlike enthusiasm³⁵⁰ of the traveller is going to be disappointed (*Le Voyage* I, 4).³⁵¹ In contrast to his initial *Wanderlust* stands the actual experience of a monotonous world, 'an oasis of horror in a desert of ennui!' ('Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui!', VII, 4).³⁵² With *ennui*³⁵³ prevailing at the end of the journey, the ultimate "new" or unknown which remains to be discovered is death. As a result, the last voyage with (personified) death as a captain is eagerly awaited.

The poem consists of eight sections preceded by roman numbers (I–VIII). The voice speaking ('nous partons', *Le Voyage* I, 5) belongs to the travellers themselves, while their journey already lies in the past and is now described in hindsight from beginning to end. As the travellers themselves describe it at the outset of their journey, the driving forces for the traveller, who sets out with 'brains aflame' ('le cerveau plein de flamme',

349 Cf. Boitani 1992, 144–5.

350 The motif and children's curiosity in particular is also explored in Karla Suarez' novel *La viajera*, where Ulises, the infant son of the protagonist Circe, represents another incarnation of the outward bound Odysseus. The association of children's nature with curious exploration and discovery is indeed an obvious one. One may even say that children's nature represents the embodiment of curiosity par excellence.

351 Following references to the text of the poem will be made by section and line number only. I decided against a consecutive numbering, so that every section of the poem is numbered separately. As most editions do not include line numbering at all, the separate numbering of the sections will allow the reader to locate the relevant passage in the text more easily.

352 Here and in the following, I cite the poem's English translation by William Aggeler, Baudelaire 2015, 124–29; for the French text see Baudelaire 1971, 122–27.

353 The concept of *ennui*, which became an important literary topos in the nineteenth century, has been the subject of much scholarly discussion, although the definitions and temporal limitations of the phenomenon vary widely. A good overview of the existing research literature is provided by Rudek 2010, 13–14. On the importance of the concept of *ennui* for French Romantic literature in general and Baudelaire in particular, see Hannoosh 2011, 457: 'In a society in which responsibility was sometimes brutally conferred upon the individual, the sense of limitless possibility was matched by a kind of despair. The individual's search for happiness, peace, and inner tranquillity sometimes brought instead a restless agitation, unsatisfied desire, melancholy, and lassitude – what the Romantics called *ennui* or *spleen*. [...] Much Romantic literature takes pleasure in this ennui, a depth and intensity of feeling which rivals the sublime – Baudelaire's 'delicate monster' which forms the fraternal bond between poet and reader in 'Au lecteur', the liminal poem of *Les Fleurs du Mal*.' Cf. Wild 2002, 73 on 'Ennui or Spleen' as 'an essential element of Baudelaire's poetry' ('Ennui oder Spleen sind ein [...] wesentliches Element der Baudelaire'schen Lyrik [...]').

I, 5)³⁵⁴, are a childlike curiosity and an ‘immense hunger’ (‘vaste appétit’, I, 2) for the unknown world. But already here a quick glimpse at the situation *after* the journey contrasts with the enthusiastic departure (I, 3–4):

CXXVI

LE VOYAGE

A Maxime du Camp

I

Pour l’enfant, amoureux de cartes et d’estampes,
L’univers est égal à son vaste appétit.
Ah! que le monde est grand à la clarté des lampes!
Aux yeux du souvenir que le monde est petit! 4

THE VOYAGE

To Maxime du Camp

To a child who is fond of maps and engravings
The universe is the size of his immense hunger.
Ah! how vast is the world in the light of a lamp!
In memory’s eyes how small the world is! 4

In the following, travellers are categorized into different groups according to their motivation for departure. While there are various reasons to set off on a journey (‘Les uns [...] D’autres [...] et quelques-uns [...]’, I, 9–12; 13–16)³⁵⁵ the ‘true voyagers’ do not need such a reason, but depart for the sake of departing itself (‘Mais les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seuls qui partent / Pour partir;’ I, 17–18). The next two stanzas (I, 17–20; 21–4) are about these so-called ‘true voyagers’, who, as it turns out, include the speakers themselves (‘Nous’, II, 1) at an earlier stage of their life. What at first

354 This wording could be seen as an allusion to the Dantean Odysseus of *Inferno* XXVI, who is completely surrounded by a flame as he speaks.

355 These two stanzas bear the first of two *Odyssey* references, in this case evoking the Homeric Circe episode (see I, 10–16; for the second instance, see the ‘charming voices’ of the Lotus-Eaters described in VII, 129–134). Yet, combined with the following Dante references it is not the Homeric but the Dantean Odysseus with whom they invite us to compare the travellers.

glance reads like an homage to *Wanderlust*, soon proves to be strongly ironic: the ‘desires’ of the ‘true voyagers’ ‘have the form of the clouds’ ([...] dont les désirs ont la forme des nues,’ I, 21), while they follow their calling ‘[a]nd without knowing why they always say: “Let’s go!”’ ([...] sans savoir pourquoi, disent toujours: Allons!’ I, 20). They are further compared to a naïve, enthusiastic recruit before going into war (‘et qui rêvent, ainsi qu’un conscrit le canon, de vastes voluptés, changeantes, inconnues, [...]’ I, 22–3).

In the following Part II, ‘Curiosity’ is described as a torturing, ‘cruel angel’ ([...] un Ange cruel’, II, 3–4). Human *Wanderlust* is hence reduced to the obsession of a delusional madman (‘l’Homme [...] Pour trouver le repos court toujours comme un fou!’ II, 7–8) and his complete idealization of reality (II, 9–12): everywhere he expects an Eldorado, where, of course, there is none (II, 13–16; 21–4). Thus, the travellers retrospectively ridicule their own striving and that the goals of anyone who resembles them. As a result, the eternal seeker is subsequently (II, 17–24) presented as a poor fool (‘O le pauvre amoureux des pays chimériques!’ II, 17), and a ‘drunken tar’ (‘matelot ivrogne’, II, 19), who ‘Dreams with his nose in the air of brilliant Edens’ (‘Rêve, le nez en l’air, de brillants paradis;’ II, 22).

Verses II, 9–12, a simile where the human soul is compared to a three-masted ship, further allude to the sudden doom of the Dantean Odysseus after sailing past the Pillars of Hercules:

Notre âme est un trois-mâts cherchant son Icarie;
 Une voix retentit sur le pont: «Ouvre l’oeil!»
 Une voix de la hune, ardente et folle, crie:
 «Amour... gloire... bonheur!» Enfer! c’est un écueil! 12

Our soul’s a three-master seeking Icaria;
 A voice resounds upon the bridge: “Keep a sharp eye!”
 From aloft a voice, ardent and wild, cries:
 “Love... glory... happiness!” Damnation! It’s a shoal! 12

Despite the warning from the bridge, another voice described as ‘ardente et folle’ (II, 11) cries out in unrestrained enthusiasm, while the climatic structure of the exclamation,

‘«Amour... gloire... bonheur!»’, skilfully illustrates the increasing excitement. This is closely followed by the sudden realization of immanent danger. In a highly condensed form, this scene (and especially verse II, 12) echoes the abrupt shift from a short (ironic) moment of joy to the drowning and death of Odysseus and his crew in Canto XXVI of Dante’s *Inferno*.³⁵⁶ The latter rejoice when they see a mountain in the distance, just before a storm breaks out that makes their ship vanish into the depths of the sea (‘Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto; [...]’, *Inf.* XXVI, 136–42). The adjectives ‘ardente et folle’ (II, 11; cf. II, 8: ‘comme un fou’), which describe the euphoric, delusional voice of the traveller, further allude to the Dantean Odysseus’ ‘folle volo’ (‘mad flight’, v. 125), which is his own description of his last voyage, as well as to the burning flame surrounding him in the *Inferno*.

Following the second part of the poem, in which the restless seeker was portrayed in a ridiculous light, the shorter third part (Part III, which is only nine verses long) now opens with an enthusiastic salutation (‘Etonnant voyageurs!’), III, 1) to the travellers by a new group (‘nous’, III, 2) inviting them to tell of their journey (‘mémoires’, III, 3; ‘souvenirs’, III, 8). The new voice belongs to the ones who have not yet set out (‘Nous voulons voyager [...]’, III, 5), and who display the kind of naïve enthusiasm that had just been caricatured by the disillusioned travellers. In light of their excitement and fascination, the new speakers obviously missed those previous words. By hearing about the journey, they hope to escape the ‘ennui’ of their ‘prisons’ (III, 6). Part III ends with the direct question: ‘Dites, qu’avez-vous vu?’ (‘Tell us what you have seen.’, III, 9).

As in Part IV, a dialogue unfolds between the inquiring, who have not yet travelled, and the answering travellers, which effectively illustrates the contrast of mindsets before and after travel in a new way. With this second group a more tangible example of the

356 Cf. Pertile 1983, 114: ‘In Dante – un elemento che non si riscontra né in Omero, né in Tennyson – c’è l’allegria che esplode sulla nave alla vista della nuova terra e subito dopo l’amara e definitiva delusione: “Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto” (v. 136). Così in Baudelaire, anche se il momento supremo è più a lungo drammatizzato: ...’ (There follows the text of *Le voyage*, II, 9–12). However, I disagree with Pertile’s last statement that in *Le voyage* a single verse (II, 12) covers the events which in Dante take up vv. 136–42. Pertile (ibid.) further sees an allusion to Dante’s *Inferno* passage in *Le voyage* I, 12–13 (where Circe is mentioned in the context of a departure that shall avoid being ‘changed into beasts’) to *Inf.* XXVI, 91 (‘I departed from Circe [...]’) as well as XXVI, 119 (‘you were not made to live like brutes’). In the first case (Circe), this may well be the case, but to assume a reference to Dante only due to the mention of ‘beasts’/‘brutes’ seems a little too far-fetched. In fact, the context in which the ‘brutes’ are mentioned in the *Inferno* is a totally different one than in *Le voyage*: in the speech of the Dantean Odysseus the ‘brutes’ are in no way associated with a transformation by Circe, but only provide an effective contrast to (the idealized) human pursuit of ‘virtue and knowledge’ that Odysseus advertises.

pre-travel condition is introduced, which takes on the function that was hitherto fulfilled only by the travellers' former selves. As is to be expected, the answer of the travellers is quite sobering: despite everything they saw, they 'were often bored' while travelling, just as they were at home ('Nous nous sommes souvent ennuyés, comme ici.' IV, 4). The 'troubling desire' of their hearts ('une ardeur inquiète', IV, 7) was never quieted, because the reality encountered was unable to match their imagination (IV, 9–12). This much is not made explicit, but the logical consequence that results is that being all-seeking and travelling is pointless: the *ennui* remains and so does the desire of the heart, which is here compared to an ever-growing tree striving towards the sun (IV, 14–17). Even though all hopes of escaping *ennui* have been shown to be in vain, the travellers agree to satisfy the curiosity of their interlocutors by telling them what they saw on their journey (IV, 18–20):

– Pourtant nous avons, avec soin,
Cueilli quelques croquis pour votre album vorace,
Frères qui trouvez beau tout ce qui vient de loin! 20

– However, we have carefully
Gathered a few sketches for your greedy album,
Brothers who think lovely all that comes from afar! 20

In the following two stanzas (IV, 21–7) the travellers list all sorts of spectacular and exotic things. In response, the inquiring are eager to hear even more ('Et puis, et puis encore?' V, 1). In their second response the travellers now draw a much darker picture of the world, covering the rest of the poem (parts VI–VIII) and silencing the voice of the questioning interlocutors once and for all. Introduced by the appellation 'O childish minds!' ('Ô cerveaux enfantins!', VI, 1) the following six stanzas (VI, 2–24) enumerate the evils of the world, all of which are subsumed under 'the wearisome spectacle of immortal sin.' ('Le spectacle ennuyeux de l'immortel péché', VI, 5). The conclusion drawn at the end of the sixth stanza is: '— That's the unchanging report of the entire globe.' ('— Tel est du globe entier l'éternel bulletin.' VI, 24). The conclusion is continued in part VII:

Amer savoir, celui qu'on tire du voyage!
 Le monde, monotone et petit, aujourd'hui,
 Hier, demain, toujours, nous fait voir notre image: 3
 Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui!

Faut-il partir? rester? Si tu peux rester, reste;
 Pars, s'il le faut. [...] 6

Bitter is the knowledge one gains from voyaging!
 The world, monotonous and small, today,
 Yesterday, tomorrow, always, shows us our image: 3
 An oasis of horror in a desert of ennui!

Must one depart? Remain? If you can stay, remain;
 Leave, if you must. [...] 6

This pessimistic view of a monotonous, never-changing world inevitably leads to a fundamental questioning of the journey itself (VII, 5). But whether one chooses to depart or not, there is no way of escaping 'the vigilant, fatal enemy, Time!' ('l'ennemi vigilant et funeste, / Le Temps!' VII 7–8). Only when the time of the last journey, i.e. the journey to death, has come, 'We can hope and cry out: Forward!' Hope and joy in the light of departure, which had previously been ridiculed, become legitimate here (and only here):

Nous nous embarquerons sur la mer des Ténèbres
 Avec le coeur joyeux d'un jeune passager. 18

We shall embark on the sea of Darkness
 With the glad heart of a young traveler. 18

In the two remaining stanzas of the poem (VIII, 1–8), personified death is addressed as the ship's captain (VIII, 1–2):

Ô Mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps! levons l'ancre!
 Ce pays nous ennuie, ô Mort! Appareillons! 2

O Death, old captain, it is time! let's weigh anchor!
 This country wearies us, O Death! Let us set sail! 2

The travellers now enthusiastically urge for departure. The last journey finally enables them to escape their *ennui*, which is inescapable while alive, and so they call out: ‘To the depths of the Unknown to find something new’ (‘Au fond de l’Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!’ VIII, 8).

Living in a time of a growing fascination for traveling and the exotic,³⁵⁷ Baudelaire in *Le voyage* opposes the voyager-spirit as well as the idea of infinite technological progress.³⁵⁸ In a letter to Charles Asselineau dated to the 20th of February, 1859, he declares that he has written ‘un long poème dédié à Max Du Camp, qui est à faire frémir la nature, et surtout les amateurs du progrès’³⁵⁹ (‘a long poem dedicated to Max du Camp, to make nature tremble, and especially the lovers of progress.’). Baudelaire, who was openly anti-progressive and anti-naturalist, ridicules the travel “mania” of his time, as well as the mania of the oriental East to which contemporary travel is often linked.³⁶⁰ The real exile is, in his view, the one experienced in the city of Paris, which is defaced and alienated by the works of Haussmann.³⁶¹ He ridicules the exile of Victor Hugo, who is according to him a heroic “posture”.³⁶² His dedication of *Le voyage* to Maxime du Camp, on the other hand, is an ironic stab at the writer and photographer who in 1849 left for the East (‘Egypt, Palestine, Greece and Italy’)³⁶³ with Gustave Flaubert, in order

357 See Forsdick 2014, 462–63: ‘In the postrevolutionary era, however, the romantic propensity for travel outside France (and the public appetite for accounts of it) led to the creation of the neologism *exotism* (exoticism). Greater opportunities for movement abroad and the steady mechanization of travel afforded the romantics a chance to journey beyond France and hence to come into contact with those exotic cultures that were suddenly more readily accessible. [...] the mix of expansionism, and the growth of tourism led to the opening of vast areas of Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa (known collectively as the Orient), as well as North America.’

358 Cf. Guentner 2011, 507: ‘The long closing poem of the collection, ‘Le Voyage’, brilliantly lays bare the illusion that travel to anywhere in this world, however unfamiliar and exotic, is capable of eradicating the suffering inherent in the human condition.’

359 See Baudelaire 1973, I: 1832-1860:553. Cf. Abé 1967, 273.

360 It is ironic, that on the advice of his stepfather, at the age of twenty Baudelaire was forced by his family to make a trip to Calcutta, India, which would put the rebellious young man back on the right track. After seven months on board the ship, he abandoned the journey at Réunion and returned to France. The influence of the voyage on his poetry is nevertheless perceptible in the exotic themes and setting of some of his poems. See Jackson 2005, 2–3.

361 See especially the poem *Le cygne*, published 1861 in *Les fleurs du Mal* and dedicated to Victor Hugo. Cf. Wright 2005, 43–44.

362 See Baudelaire’s letters to Victor Hugo, dated to the 23th of September 1859 (Baudelaire 1973, I: 1832-1860:596–99) and 13th of December 1859 (Baudelaire 1973, I: 1832-1860:627–29).

363 On Flaubert’s and Du Camp’s journey to “the Orient”, see Wall 2014, 439.

to find a solution to the impasse of the “old” West in this allegedly unspoiled world.³⁶⁴ As Baudelaire wrote, ‘[...] Du Camp [...] fut le poète par excellence du voyage.’³⁶⁵ (‘Du Camp [...] was the poet par excellence of the journey.’). He thus embodied the very *Zeitgeist* which the Baudelairean poem opposes. In a letter to Maxime du Camp dated to the 23rd of February, 1859, Baudelaire writes:

Si le ton systématiquement byronien de ce petit poème vous déplaisait, si, par exemple, vous étiez choqué de mes plaisanteries contre le progrès, ou bien de ce que le Voyageur avoue n’avoir vu que la banalité, ou enfin de n’importe quoi, dites-le-moi sans vous gêner; je ferai pour vous autre chose avec tout autant de joie.³⁶⁶

If you disliked the systematically Byronic tone of this little poem, if, for example, you were shocked by my jokes against progress, or by the fact that the Traveller admits to have seen nothing but banality, or finally by anything, tell me without any discomfort; I will write something else for you with just as much joy.³⁶⁷

Baudelaire hence makes no secret of the poem’s intended meaning. His criticism of Du Camp that the very poem implies is, however, concealed (or at least lightened) by the reference to ‘mes plaisanteries [...]’.

The link between Baudelaire’s *Le voyage* and the outward bound Odysseus figures that are found in Tennyson and Dante has already been established by Lino Pertile (regardless of whether Baudelaire was aware of the theme’s former existence or not).³⁶⁸ According to Pertile, Baudelaire’s ambivalent representation of Odyssean *curiositas* is surprisingly characteristic of the Middle Ages and stands in contrast to the generally positive connotation of *curiositas* in the eighteenth century.³⁶⁹ Seen in the context of his own time, however, it becomes clear that Baudelaire rejects the journey—and with it the enthusiastic Dantean Odysseus who embodies it—as an illusion that is unable to disguise either the monotony and banality or the corruption of the world.

364 I would like to express my gratitude to Michela Landi from the University of Florence, to whose expertise on Baudelaire the above passage is highly indebted.

365 See Abé 1967, 274. Cf. Pertile 1983, 113–14.

366 See Baudelaire 1973, I: 1832-1860:554–55. Interestingly, Baudelaire asks Du Camp for permission to dedicate him the poem, although the placard has already been printed (cf. Abé 1967, 273). The following day he includes a copy of it in a letter to Asselineau (dated 24. February 1859, see Baudelaire 1973, I: 1832-1860:555), with the request not to mention it to Du Camp. See Pichois on the letter in Baudelaire 1973, I: 1832-1860:1012.

367 My translation.

368 See Pertile 1983.

369 See Pertile 1983, 117.

5.3 Andrew Lang's *Hesperothen* (1872)

Baudelaire's influential poem is followed³⁷⁰ by an English text, *Hesperothen* (1872)³⁷¹, by the prolific and multi-faceted Scottish writer Andrew Lang (1844–1912). Amongst other things (anthropologist, folklorist), Lang was also a classical scholar and collaborated on a prose translation of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. In 1879 he published the former together with Samuel Henry Butcher.³⁷² Lang's poetry, like that of other Victorian poets of his time (Tennyson, Arnold, Morris, Swinburne), draws on both medieval Arthurian legend and Greek antiquity, in particular Homer.³⁷³ *Hesperothen* represents one of Lang's early, less known poetic writings, produced before '[t]he poor reception of his ambitious narrative poem *Helen of Troy* (1882) discouraged him from serious poetry, and his verse became increasingly lightweight.'³⁷⁴

As the first *Odyssey* transformation describing a new journey that is written as a poetic cycle, *Hesperothen* prepares the ground for Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio*.³⁷⁵ In Lang's poem, a group of anonymous sailors returns to the venues of Odysseus' past adventures, as will later also be found in Pascoli's text. This is already announced in the prologue of the cycle. In the end, they arrive at the Isles of the Blessed at the western edge of the world, but are trapped in immortality, eternally ageing in a sphere of nothingness³⁷⁶ and longing for their old life. The cycle's title *Hesperothen* translates into '(coming) from Hesperia', or '(coming) from the West'.³⁷⁷ As such, it possibly refers to the attraction that emanates from the mysterious west and motivates the sailors' journey.

370 *The Phantom Bark*, a short poem published by John Byrne Leicester Warren already in 1860 under the pseudonym 'George F. Preston' (see Stead 2009, 63–65 on the complicated background story), offers only a rather loose reception of the motif of Odysseus' last voyage found in Dante and Tennyson and is therefore not considered here.

371 From 1872 to 1888, the poem is re-edited several times and appears in three different verse collections: while a small part of it was already published in a weekly magazine in 1868 (see Stead 2009, 102; 484), the poem first appears in its entirety in *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France with Other Poems* (1872), a volume of translations where Lang's own poems are only presented in the second half (*Other poems*; see Stead 2009, 102–3). In 1884, a revised version of *Hesperothen* appears in the collection *Ballades and Verses Vain*, in the section *Post Homerica*. Finally, in 1888 the poem re-appears in *Grass of Parnassus, Rhymes Old and New* (see Stead 2009, 484–85).

372 Cf. Drabble 2000b: 'As a Greek scholar Lang devoted himself largely to *Homer. He was one of the joint authors (with S. H. Butcher) of prose versions of the **Odyssey* (1879), preceded by his well-known sonnet 'The Odyssey', and (with W. Leaf and E. Myers) of the **Iliad* (1883). He wrote on the Homeric question, arguing the unity of Homer.'

373 See Hubbard's introduction in Lang 2017, I: Folklore, Mythology, Anthropology General and Theoretical:xvii.

374 See Drabble 2000b; cf. Stead 2009, 100.

375 Cf. Stead 2009, 102.

376 The nihilistic notion is an element that will be most prominent in Pascoli's elaboration.

377 Cf. Stead 2009, 106: '[...] *Hesperothen* étant la transcription de l' adverbe du grec ancien ἑσπερόθεν, littéralement *venant du couchant, de l'ouest*.'

Like the Isles of the Blessed, the land of the Hesperides, ‘daughters of Night’, is traditionally ‘most often located on a mythical island [...] in the extreme west [...] and endowed with paradisaal features’³⁷⁸.

The prologue of the cycle clearly alludes to the Odysseus myth from the very first sentence:

By the example of certain Grecian mariners, who, being safely returned from the war about Troy, leave yet again their old lands and gods, seeking they know not what, and choosing neither to abide in the fair Phaeacian island, nor to dwell and die with the Sirens, at length end miserably in a desert country by the sea, is set forth the *Vanity of Melancholy*. And by the land of Phaeacia is to be understood the place of Art and of fair Pleasures; and by Circe’s Isle, the places of bodily delights, whereof men, falling aweary attain to Eld, and to the darkness of that age. Which thing Master François Rabelais feigned, under the similitude of the Isle of the Macraeones.³⁷⁹

By announcing the anonymous sailors’ new departure after their return home, ‘seeking they know not what’³⁸⁰, the prologue connects the cycle to the motif of a new journey from *Wanderlust* and thereby implicitly takes up the reception by Tennyson,³⁸¹ while extending the story beyond the mere desire for the journey to an actual journey, and from the individual hero Odysseus to the anonymity of a group. The plot’s course (i.e. the restless extension of the journey, only to ‘end miserably, in a desert country by the sea’), so the prologue declares, shall prove the ‘*Vanity of Melancholy*’. The prologue further suggests an allegorical reading of the adventure venues (i.e. ‘the land of Phaeacia’ and ‘Circe’s isle’), and closes with a rather cryptic remark on Rabelais, whose meaning only reveals itself at the end of the cycle.

In the didactic announcement of the prologue, it is tempting to see a parallel to Baudelaire, who unlike many of his contemporaries saw no point in restless travel. One

378 See Ambühl 2006.

379 Here and in the following, I am quoting the text from Stead 2009, 70–94.

380 Cf. Baudelaire, *Le voyage* I, 20: ‘[...] sans savoir pourquoi, disent toujours: Allons!’. Regarding their anonymity, Lang’s Greek sailors can be compared to Baudelaire’s group of ‘travellers’. The latter also undergo a similar change, as they are enthusiastic before the journey and disillusioned afterwards. In both *Le voyage* and *Hesperothen* a dialogue between the travellers/ sailors and a second group (future travellers/ Phaeacians) develops, while the voice of the second group falls silent again towards the end.

381 Cf. Stead 2009, 102. The motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* is also touched upon in Andrew Lang’s short sonnets *The Odyssey* and *In Ithaca* (Lang 1884, 121; 132).

might almost consider the cycle to be a negative reaction to Romantic melancholy. But the sober, didactic tone of the prologue soon changes into a deeply melancholic one. In the course of the cycle, the mood of the sailors shifts from a hopeful striving for rest and peace and the liberation from all desires, to a dull disillusion and regret at the realization ‘that rest is nowise bliss’ (*The Limit of Lands.*, v. 35). In fact, their longing for their lost youth proves that there is no such thing as true peace in life. Lang’s poetic cycle thus offers a new, tragic interpretation of the human condition.

According to Stead, the following seven poems of the cycle are structured as follows³⁸²:

(1) <i>The Seekers of Phaeacia.</i>	Three poems on the land of Phaeacia
(2) <i>A Song of Phaeacia.</i>	
(3) <i>The Departure from Phaeacia.</i> <i>The Phaeacians.</i> <i>The Seekers.</i>	
(4) <i>A Ballad of Departure.*</i>	Intermediary poem
(5) <i>They Hear the Sirens for the Second Time.</i>	Three poems on the adventure venues
(6) <i>Circe’s Isle Revisited.</i>	
(7) <i>The Limit of Lands.</i>	

The first poem *The Seekers for Phaeacia* describes the world as divided between the man-inhabited East and the ‘mysterious’ West, ‘[w]ith coasts enchanted where the Sirens be, / With islands where a Goddess walks alone [...]’ (vv. 9–10). Between these two parts of the world, the home of the Phaeacians, who are loved and often visited by the Gods, represents ‘a quiet midland’ (v. 26). Only at the end of the poem can we identify the speakers. It is the anonymous sailors (‘us’, v. 31), who express their wish to reach ‘[t]he dreamy isles that the Immortals keep!’ (v. 32). It is not quite clear whether this refers to the land of the Phaeacians or the Isles of the Blessed. According to the poem’s title *The Seekers for Phaeacia*, ‘[t]he dreamy isles’ must be the land of the

382 Cf. Stead 2009, 104.

Phaeacians. Yet, it is odd that Phaeacia should be referred to in the plural form ‘isles’.³⁸³ In any case, the sailors will later want to leave Phaeacia, in order to find the Isles of the Blessed (see the third poem, *The Departure from Phaeacia*).

In the second poem *A Song of Phaeacia*, which is purely descriptive, a surreal scenery is created and Phaeacia is pictured as a dreamy, idyllic landscape.³⁸⁴ V. 20 (‘[...] in this land of ours’) reveals that it is the voice of the Phaeacians themselves that we are hearing. In the third poem, *The Departure from Phaeacia*, the action of the story is resumed. The poem is a dialogue between ‘the Phaeacians’ and ‘the Seekers’, in which the former ask why the latter want to leave ‘the dreamy meadows / more fair than any dream’ and instead ‘seek the shadows / Beyond the ocean stream?’ (vv. 1–4). They ask them why they want to travel to a place where there is ‘[n]o sight of any sun’ (v. 12), and no sign of human life (vv. 13–16). But the Seekers answer that, in contrast to Phaeacia, there are no shadows in the land they seek, and finally they declare (vv. 33–36):

We seek a city splendid,	33
With light beyond the sun ;	
Or lands where dreams are ended,	
And works and days are done.	36

The city ‘beyond the sun’ is a clear allusion to the westward journey of Dante’s Odysseus ‘following the sun’ (‘di retro al sol’) and to the ‘world without people’ (‘mondo sanza gente’, *Inf.* XXVI, 117). The anonymous sailors here seek a place where they can find true rest and exist free from all longing and striving.

The next poem *A Ballad of Departure** divides the poetic cycle into two parts: while the first three poems revolve around the land of the Phaeacians, the following three poems describe the subsequent stages of the journey. The intermediary poem is based on the fragment of a modern Greek folk song, mediated by Claude Fauriel’s Greek-French anthology *Chants populaire de la Grèce moderne* (1825) and the English translation by

³⁸³ One explanation here could be, that in the Homeric *Odyssey*, Scheria (Σχερίη), the land of the Phaeacians, is nowhere explicitly described as an island and is therefore freely interpreted as a group of islands here.

³⁸⁴ See, for example, vv. 9–12: ‘The strange flowers’ perfume turns to singing, / Heard afar over moonlit seas; / The Sirens’ song, grown faint in winging, / Falls in scent on the cedar trees.’ This poem is, however, completely omitted in the edition of 1884 (Lang 1884, 103–14).

the waning light' (v. 21–2) and away from the 'fallen places of [their] dead delight' (v. 24).³⁸⁷

The Limit of Lands is the title of the cycle's seventh and last poem. Here, the sailors have already arrived at their destination, the Isles of the Blessed, at the western edge of the world.³⁸⁸ This last poem paints a desolate picture of the land that is the final stop of the sailors' journey: 'a strip of barren sand' (v. 3), that lacks any kind of life: far and wide, no humans, no vegetation. The sailors are apparently immortal (vv. 13–14), but they are also old. In the last two stanzas (vv. 25–36) it becomes clear that they have not really found the 'rest' they had hoped for. Instead, they regret having traded life and all its possibilities, including their youth, for this dull existence:

Ah, flowers and dance ! ah, sun and snow !	25
Glad life, sad life we did forgo	
To dream of quietness and rest ;	
Ah, would the fleet sweet roses here	
Poured light and perfume through the drear	
Pale year, and wan land of the west.	30
Sad youth, that let the spring go by.	
Because the spring is swift to fly,	
Sad youth, that feared to mourn or love,	
Behold how sadder far is this,	
To know that rest is nowise bliss.	35
And darkness is the end thereof.	

387 Cf. this episode with Cantos XV–XVII of Pascoli's *L'Ultimo viaggio* (Pascoli 1905, 76–81). Here, an aged Odysseus leaves Ithaca again with his old companions and Femio, who was once the (court) rhapsode in his palace. After a storm, they arrive at the island of Circe (Canto XV), where Odysseus and Femio set out to explore the island (Canto XVI). But, even though Odysseus recognizes the island, they find neither Circe nor any sign of her existence.

388 In accordance with *Od.* 4.561–5, where they are not yet called 'Isles of the Blessed', but 'the Elysian plain' (Ἠλύσιον πεδίον). Cf. Sourvinou Inwood 2006: 'In the beginning of its tradition E[lysium] was a 'paradise' for heroes. It appears only once in Homer: in *Od.* 4.561–5 Proteus tells Menelaus that he will not die but the gods will instead send him, as Zeus' son-in-law, to a paradise with perfect climate, to the Elysian fields at the end of the earth, where Rhadamanthys resides. [...] In *Hes. Op.* 167–173 the paradise that heroes attain, instead of dying, is named μακάρων νῆσοι (*makārōn nēsoi*), 'Islands of the Blessed', but otherwise corresponds to E.'

Ironically, they who sought the complete liberation from all desires and aspirations, an existence free from all striving, are now trapped in eternal longing. The expected paradise has already become a disappointment.

The motif of eternal ageing was, according to Stead, already explored by Tennyson in his poem *Tithon* (1833, later *Tithonus*), which ‘Lang cannot be unaware of’ (‘Lang ne peut l’ignorer’).³⁸⁹ As Stead rightly points out, in this context the prologue’s mention of Rabelais and ‘the Isle of the Macraeones’ gains an additional layer of meaning. The *Fourth Book* (*Quart Livre*, 1552) of François Rabelais’ pentalogy of mock heroic novels about the giant Gargantua and his son Pantagruel can be read as a satirical rewriting of the *Odyssey*. Here, the hero Pantagruel comes to an island where he does not, as expected, encounter the Blessed, but age-old men called the ‘Macraeons’.³⁹⁰ Rabelais’ ‘Macraeons’ thus parody the Islands of the Blessed and their immortal inhabitants, since they are not, as one would expect, eternally young, but eternally ageing. According to Stead, this ironic reversal is reflected in the play on words that the name ‘Macraeons’ implies, which, transcribed as μακράϊων (‘long-lived’), could be an ironic modification of the word μακάρων (‘blessed’) in μακάρων νῆσοι. Hence, the Isles of the Blessed become the isles of the Old. Lang’s poetic cycle skilfully takes up the motif of eternal ageing and modifies it: his navigators do not encounter the ‘Macraeons’, they *become* them.³⁹¹ Yet, unlike Rabelais’ comic episode on the island of the ‘Macraeons’, which is itself clearly a parody of Dante’s *Inferno* passage,³⁹² there is nothing amusing about the sailors’ futile quest in *Hesperothen*. Rather, their endless, dull existence in a sphere of nothingness has something unsettling about it. The human condition, in this tragic view, implies that there is no ‘rest’ for man in life. Instead, he is condemned to eternal striving, from which only death can release him. But it is precisely this release that *Hesperothen* denies.

Just like Lang’s sailors, who seek ‘lands where dreams are ended / And works and days are done’, Kazantzakis’ Odysseus also seeks to free himself from all bonds, such as hopes or fears, in order to attain an absolute freedom.³⁹³ He succeeds in achieving this

389 See Stead 2009, 109.

390 ‘«vieillard[s] homme[s] qui [ont] des ans beaucoup.»’ is the explanation of the word ‘Macraeons’ in Rabelais’ text as cited by Stead 2009, 108.

391 See Stead 2009, 109.

392 See Stead 2009, 108.

393 Cf. *A Ballade of Departure**, v. 10, where the bird says that ‘who eats of the fruit’ of the cypress tree, growing in the ‘far off fields’, ‘has no more sorrow, and no more love;’. This would actually be an apt description of Kazantzakis’ Odysseus declared life goal.

freedom to the extent that this is possible in life, eventually leading an ascetic life as a hermit. But he only becomes completely free at the moment of his death. In contrast to Lang's anonymous sailors, Kazantzakis' Odysseus is always aware that an absolute freedom, or 'quietness and rest' (*The Limit of Lands*, v. 27), can never be attained while one is alive. From this awareness results his fundamental principle, formulated as one of the ten commandments he proclaims as a new kind of Moses: 'The greatest virtue on earth is not to become free / but to seek freedom in a ruthless, sleepless strife.' (*Oδ.* 15.1171–3). Eternal searching and restless striving are here described as the ideal state of man. Just as for Baudelaire only death could deliver freedom from the monotony and the *ennui* of existence, in both Lang's and Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* transformations, true rest can only be found in death. In contrast to Lang's sailors, Kazantzakis' Odysseus is finally granted this rest.

5.4 Paul Heyse's *Odysseus* (1877)

Five years later in 1877, the German poem *Odysseus* is published by the writer and later Nobel Prize winner Paul Heyse (1830–1914). This represents the only German text that we will discuss in detail.³⁹⁴ Heyse, who was the son of a classical philologist and linguist, studied Classical Philology in his first years at university before turning to History of Art and Romance Philology.³⁹⁵ Following his early call to the court of Maximilian II of Bavaria in Munich (1854), where he remained until 1868,³⁹⁶ he became an important representative of the poet's society *Die Krokodile* (or *Münchner Dichterkreis*) which was committed to classicist ideals, thus distancing itself from the contemporary literature of realism (*Realismus*).³⁹⁷ Early in his life, Heyse is already one of the favourite authors of the Germans. By the end of his career, Heyse had compiled a vast oeuvre, including about 180 novellas, some 70 dramas, and numerous poems.³⁹⁸ He is known for, among other things, his anti-naturalistic attitudes: he rejects the 'ugly realities' of the naturalists, and instead prefers to depict the ideal and harmoniously

394 Cf. p. 7.

395 See Stead 2009, 117.

396 See Nelhiebel 2000, 20; 26.

397 See Katja Lubitz's remarks on the *Münchner Dichterkreis* in Kitzbichler, Lubitz, and Mindt 2009, 136, note 110.

398 See Niefanger 2016, 319.

beautiful.³⁹⁹ Quite unlike a poet such as Baudelaire, Heyse does not represent a tragic existence on the fringes of society, who is awarded with the deserved fame only after his death. Instead, he leads a comfortable, financially secure life, while enjoying a high reputation. Contemporaries such as Theodor Fontane considered him an epoch-making successor to Goethe, heralding a new age of his own.⁴⁰⁰ Towards the end of his life, however, and despite being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1910, his popularity decreased to such an extent that by the later twentieth century he has already fallen into oblivion and to this day remains largely unknown.⁴⁰¹ Indeed, his extensive oeuvre was often accused of being artificial and lacking substance,⁴⁰² including because of its supposedly superficial formal perfection.⁴⁰³ Whether or not this judgement is justified with regard to his poem *Odyseus* remains to be seen.

As for the literary influences that shaped his work, Italian literature in general and Dante⁴⁰⁴ in particular deserve special mention. In fact, Heyse, who had a great affinity with Italian culture, was responsible for the literary rediscovery of Italy in nineteenth-century Germany, as he introduced a large number of more recent Italian texts to the German public.⁴⁰⁵ After a one-year journey through Italy (1852–3), undertaken before his time in Munich,⁴⁰⁶ Heyse devoted himself intensively to contemporary Italian literature and published five volumes of translations, four in 1889 and a final fifth edition in 1905.⁴⁰⁷ Yet, he generally preferred minor poets⁴⁰⁸ and only marginally dealt with D’Annunzio and Pascoli. Even in the fifth and last volume of his *Italienische Dichter seit der Mitte des 18ten Jahrhunderts* (1905), he does not consider the

399 See the Nobel Lecture given in 1910 by C. D. af Wirsén in honour of Heyse, Wirsén 1999, 102. Cf. Stead 2009, 118.

400 For Fontane’s frequently quoted words of praise see, for example, Nelhiebel 2000, 10–11; cf. Niefanger 2016, 320.

401 For this process of canonization and subsequent decanonization as representative of a more general phenomenon during the years between 1848 and the beginning of World War I, see Beutin et al. 1993, 277; cf. Grube 2014, 15–16.

402 On Heyse’s typical representation in German literary histories, see Grube 2014, 161–75.

403 See Stead 2009, 127; Grube 2014, 174–75. Stead for her part firmly defends Heyse’s poem against this accusation.

404 See Stead 2009, 118–19.

405 See Wirsén 1999, 102.

406 See Heyse’s short autobiography printed together with Wirsén’s Nobel Lecture, Wirsén 1999, 104.

407 See Stead 2009, 119–21.

408 See Stead 2009, 120. She quotes his preface to the edition of 1889 (Heyse 1889, VII–VIII), where Heyse states that his (unconventional) choice of authors was rather a result of what happened to fall into his hands. It is, however, worth considering the previous sentence as well: ‘Zu dieser Tatsache [...] kam [...] der Umstand, daß ich es von vornherein nicht darauf abgesehen hatte, alle namhaften modernen Lyriker Italiens in einer umfassenden Auslese aufzuführen.’ It seems that it was more of a conscious choice after all.

respective *Odyssey* elaborations of Arturo Graf (1897), D'Annunzio (1903) or Pascoli (1904).

Resuming the narrative of the *Odyssey* after Odysseus' return, Heyse's poem describes the hero's turn from nostalgia for his homeland to nostalgia for travel (i.e. *Wanderlust*). The poem begins with Penelope and Odysseus waking up one morning:

Odysseus

Sie hatten im luftigen Söller geruht,
Der Dulder, entronnen der stürmenden Flut,
Und Penelopeia, die Hehre.
Der Morgen dämmerte rosig herauf,
Da stützt sich der Held auf dem Lager auf, —
Kühl weht der Wind vom Meere. 6

Wie wandert' er lang durch die Wellenflur!
O sah' er den Rauch seiner Insel nur!
So seufzte sein Herz voll Schwere.
Nun blickt er ins Weite vom Heimathstrand
Und seufzt und birgt das Haupt in die Hand —
Kühl weht der Wind vom Meere. 12

„Was seufzest und sinnst du im Morgenstrahl?
Was bleibt dir zu sehnen, mein trauter Gemahl,
Das irgend ein Gott dir gewähre?
Du bist geborgen bei Weib und Sohn,
Und Ruh' und Ruhm sind der Mühen Lohn.“ —
Kühl weht der Wind vom Meere. 18

„Und hast du daheim nicht Lieb' und Luft?
Noch ist nicht verwelkt die getreueste Brust,
Noch werth, daß sie Kindlein nähre.
Sie blühen dir auf mit den Enkeln zumal —
Was bleibt dir zu seufzen, mein theurer Gemahl?“ —
Kühl weht der Wind vom Meere. 24

Er küßt ihr die Augen, er schüttelt das Haupt:
„Was hat dir so frühe den Schlummer geraubt?
Nun forschtest du, was mich verzehre.

Mir gaben die Götter ein göttliches Loos,
Und doch – mein Sinnen ist ruhelos“ –
 Schwül weht der Hauch vom Meere. 30

„Mir träumte zu Nacht, auf gescheitertem Kiel
Hintrieb’ ich, den wüthenden Wogen ein Spiel,
Ringsum unermeßliche Leere.
Da taucht aus den Tiefen ein süßes Gesicht,
Ein Weib mit Augen wie Sternenlicht“ —
 Schwül weht der Hauch vom Meere. 36

„Sie wirft mir den Schleier, den rettenden, zu,
Ich sehe sie winken und schwinden im Nu,
Die ich nun ewig entbehre.
O seliges Wagen, o Heldengeschick!
Wie soll ich nun tragen ein ruhiges Glück?“ —
 Schwül weht der Hauch vom Meere. 42

Odysseus⁴⁰⁹

They had rested in the airy chamber,
The great sufferer, who escaped the storming tide,
And the noble Penelopeia.
The morning dawned, rosy.
When the hero leaned on the bed, —
 Cool blows the wind from the sea. 6

How he wandered long through the wavy sea!
Oh, if only he saw the smoke of his island!
So his heavy heart sighed.
Now he looks into the distance from his homeland’s shore
And sighs and puts his head in his hands —
 Cool blows the wind from the sea. 12

“What do you sigh and ponder in the morning rays?
What is left for you to long for, my dear husband,
That some god shall grant you?
You are safe with wife and son,
And rest and glory are the wages of your labor.”
 Cool blows the wind from the sea. 18

409 My translation.

“And don’t you have love and air at home?
 Still the most faithful breast has not withered,
 Still it is worthy to nurture little children.
 They’ll flourish along with your grandchildren,
 What is left for you to sigh, my dear husband?” —
 Cool blows the wind from the sea. 24

He kisses her eyes, he shakes his head:
 “What robbed you of your sleep so early?
 Now you seek to know what consumes me.
 Divine is the lot the gods gave me,
 And yet – my mind is restless” —
 Muggy blows the breeze from the sea. 30

I dreamed at night, on a broken keel
 I was driven, a plaything of the raging waves,
 All around immeasurable emptiness.
 There a sweet face emerges from the depths,
 A woman with eyes as starlight” —
 Muggy blows the breeze from the sea. 36

“She throws to me the saving veil,
 I see her waving and disappearing at once,
 Whom I now eternally miss.
 O blessed venture, O heroic life!
 How shall I now bear a quiet happiness?”—
 Muggy blows the breeze from the sea. 42

Odysseus, who during his long wanderings ‘sighed’ (‘seufzte’⁴¹⁰, v. 9), longing to ‘see the smoke of his island’, now ‘sighs and puts his head in his hands’, when he ‘looks into the distance from his homeland’s shore’ (vv. 7–11). The Homeric motif of nostalgia is thus evoked from the very beginning, only to be turned upside down right away.⁴¹¹ In response to her husband’s apparent melancholy, Penelope asks him what is wrong (stanzas 3–4). Odysseus’ answer makes up the rest of the poem (stanzas 5–7).

410 I am quoting the poem’s second edition from 1877 (Heyse 1877, 81–82). This text is slightly different from the one presented by Stead—in this case, it is not clear which edition she uses. V. 9 (Stead 2009, 112), for example, reads ‘bangte’ instead of ‘seufzte’, which makes the contrast of the situation before and after the return less pointed.

411 Cf. Stead 2009, 122.

Significantly, the refrain at the end of the stanza changes along with the speaker from ‘Cool blows the wind from the sea’ (vv. 6, 12, 18, 24) to ‘Muggy blows the breeze from the sea’ (vv. 30, 36, 42). Odysseus’ perception seems to have entered the narrator-text here.⁴¹² While Penelope addresses all the joys of home, which originally brought him back, Odysseus has no peace. Although, like Homer’s Odysseus and unlike many other modern reincarnations, Heyse’s Odysseus still seems to be the loving husband who is affectionate towards his wife (v. 25), he cannot help but feel unhappy. In the dream he recounts, he is haunted by his life as an eternal castaway. It turns out that the man whom Penelope believes to be next to her, the man who is evoked by this poem so rich in Homeric motifs, no longer actually exists. To the eternal wanderer that he has become, the comfort and safety of the marital bed are insufferable. Instead of the fateful new journey announced by Tiresias in *Od.* 11, which the Homeric Odysseus presented to Penelope after their reunion as an unwelcome continuation of his hardship (ἀμέτρητος πόνος, πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπός, *Od.* 23.249–50), in Heyse’s poem we have an Odysseus who does not speak a word of such a journey. The imposed fate that he cannot bear, is not the extension of his wanderings, but, on the contrary, their ending.

As in Tennyson’s *Ulysses*, where the new journey announces itself in the poem without being narrated, a definitive course of action remains open in the poem of Heyse. It is quite safe to assume that Heyse knew Tennyson’s poem.⁴¹³ Heyse’s Odysseus, however, is still the suffering hero, consumed with a rather melancholic and desperate longing, in a quite different way from Tennyson’s energetic and optimistic Ulysses, who can barely hold himself back from breaking out of the narrow confines of his homeland. Although Heyse’s poem reveals itself more easily to the reader—Stead mentions, in particular, the more conventional choice of language, rhythm, and rhymes⁴¹⁴—it is also characterized by a delicate balance. The refrain as an effective poetic device, the gently melancholic mood, as well as the dream as a symbolic expression of the unconscious, all remind us of Pascoli’s *L’ultimo viaggio*, which was written more than twenty years later. By no means, however,—and we must finally agree with Stead here—does the often encountered devaluation of Heyse’s work seem justified in the case of this poem. Rather, with his portrayal of an Odysseus consumed by indeterminate longing and

412 In de Jong’s terminology, that would be an *implicit embedded focalization* (de Jong 2001, xiii).

413 Stead 2009, 126 goes one step further and suggests reading Heyse’s poem as ‘une réponse allemande à l’*Ulysse* de Tennyson’ (‘a German answer to Tennyson’s *Ulysses*’).

414 See Stead 2009, 125.

paradoxically “lost” in the security of his home, Heyse strikes at the core of Odyssean *Wanderlust*. Indeed, his short poem contains all the elements that will become central to the further elaboration of Odysseus as an eternal wanderer in many later transformations.

5.5 Andrew Lang’s and H. Rider Haggard’s *The World’s Desire* (1890)

The World’s Desire (1890), a fantastic adventure novel co-written by Andrew Lang and H. Rider Haggard (1856–1925)⁴¹⁵, tells of Odysseus’ third and last journey until his death by the hands of his son Telegonus. The story thus offers an interpretation for the cryptic ἐξ ἄλλος (*Od.* 11.134–5) in Tiresias’ prophecy.⁴¹⁶ Yet Odysseus, who is constantly referred to as ‘the Wanderer’, does not, at first, leave his home out of *Wanderlust*, but rather because he finds nothing but death when he returns to Ithaca ‘from his unsung second wandering’, as prophesied by Tiresias (p. 2).⁴¹⁷ When he arrives at his house, he must realize that, while he was away to fulfil the prophecy, a plague has caused everyone’s death. All he can find are ashes and bones, among them the remains of Penelope (p. 4). Even though he first sinks into deep grief and despair, his will to live ultimately prevails. And so he leaves his house forever, armed with his bow and the golden armour of Paris (p. 7). In the city, he goes to the temple of Athena, which lies in ruins due to an earthquake that followed the plague (p. 9). When, in the distance, he sees a light burning in the temple of Aphrodite, he follows it. In the temple, Aphrodite speaks to him. She wants Odysseus, who never permanently succumbed to any female temptation during his travels and who has always worshipped Athena, to finally become her servant (p. 11):

415 According to Drabble 2000c, 443 Haggard, who also ‘wrote books on South African history and on farming’, mainly owed his fame to the authorship of thirty-four adventure novels.

416 This is something that the novel has in common with Pascoli’s *L’Ultimo viaggio* (1904), even though the interpretation of Tiresias’ words that Pascoli offers is a completely different one. Another aspect in common is that the journey described by Pascoli also constitutes Odysseus’ third journey, who at the beginning of the poem has already completed his second journey prophesied by Tiresias and leaves Ithaca for a third time.

417 All citations and page references refer to the novel’s new edition Lang and Haggard 2011, which is ‘based on the 1894 edition of *The World’s Desire* by H. Rider Haggard and Andrew Lang, London: Longmans, Green & Co.’ (see the title pages of the new edition). The 1894 edition only differs from the first edition (1890) by the addition of 27 illustrations (see <http://www.visualhaggard.org/novels/11>) and a new preface of the authors, which provides detailed information about the inspiration for the novel.

[...] but didst thou ever give so much as a pair of dove to *me*? [...] Therefore, Odysseus, ere yet it be too late, I would bow even thee to my will, and hold thee for my thrall. For I am she who conquers all things living [...] And hast thou thought that thou only shalt escape Aphrodite?

For his love for Penelope was not the kind of passionate longing that falls within the scope of Aphrodite's authority (p. 11):

Thou that has never loved as I would have men love; thou that has never obeyed me for an hour ... As for her who is dead, thy dear wife Penelope, thou didst love her with a loyal heart, but never with a heart of fire.

Aphrodite now wants to inflame his heart for the beautiful Helen, *The World's Desire*, as she calls her (p. 11). Hence, it is the proud goddess's personal and selfish motives that ultimately lead to Odysseus' third and last journey. Of course, one could argue that Aphrodite only symbolically stands for the passionate longing itself. But the presence of the goddess as a character throughout the narrative is too strong for her to be understood as a mere personification of Odysseus' longing and a paraphrase of his own desire. Interestingly, Aphrodite presents it as if Odysseus had always been unconsciously searching for something (p. 11):

What have all thy wars and wanderings won for thee, all thy labours, and all the adventures thou hast achieved? For what didst thou seek among the living and the dead? Thou soughtest what which all men seek—thou soughtest *The World's Desire*. They find it not, nor hast thou found it, Odysseus;

Shortly after seeing Helen in Egypt for the first time, Odysseus too will look back on his entire life as an unconscious search (p. 109):

What was it that he had seen? That which he had sought his whole life long; sought by sea and land, not knowing what he sought. For this he had wandered with a hungry heart⁴¹⁸ [...].

As far as the existential condition of *Wanderlust* and voluntary departure are concerned, the novel thus adopts an intermediate position: Odysseus goes on a voluntary journey in search of that 'which all men seek' (p. 11), but only after Aphrodite has inspired him to do so.⁴¹⁹ One could say that, through the intervention of Aphrodite, he is seized by an

418 Note the Tennysonian wording ('with a hungry heart'), which is hardly accidental.

419 Yet regardless of (how one might interpret) the motivation for his journey, he is later characterized in terms of Odyssean *Wanderlust*: 'Now the Wanderer bethought him of his desire to look upon the

existential urge, namely the desire for Helen, ‘Beauty’s self’ (p. 108). What Helen (or ‘Beauty’) here really stands for, however, is not so easy to grasp. For every man who looks at Helen sees in her ‘changeable beauty’ (p. 68) what he most longs for, as she appears to each man differently (pp. 68, 108): her face and voice take the shape of ‘each man’s desire’ (pp. 67–8, 107). Yet this desire does not appear to be of a purely carnal nature. Stanford understood ‘Helen, [...] the world’s desire’ to be ‘the supreme manifestation of spiritual Beauty.’⁴²⁰ Nevertheless, the erotic element is also important here.⁴²¹ Therefore, it would be more appropriate to speak of a diffuse desire ranging between the spiritual and the erotic.⁴²²

In order to captivate Odysseus for good and to awaken his desire, Aphrodite lets Helen appear to him in a vision that evokes Odysseus’ memory of how he first met Helen and fell in love with her in his early youth (p. 12). Finally, the goddess of Love announces (p. 13):

[...] Therefore I breathe into thy heart a sweet forgetfulness⁴²³ of every sorrow, and I breathe love into thee for her who was thy first love in the beginning of thy days. [...] And I will send thee on the quest of Helen, and thou shalt again take joy in war and wandering. Thou shalt find her in a strange land, among a strange people, in a strife of gods and men; and the wisest and bravest of men shall sleep at last in the arms of the fairest of women. But learn this, Odysseus: thou must set thy heart on no other woman, but only on Helen.

Aphrodite makes the fulfilment of her promise subject to one condition: Odysseus must swear not to give his heart to any other woman. He can surely recognize Helen only by a designated ‘sign’ (p. 13), a red jewel that she wears around her neck.⁴²⁴ If, however,

Hathor, for to see new things and try new adventures was always his delight.’ (p. 91).

⁴²⁰ Stanford 1954, 275.

⁴²¹ See, for example, p. 107 about the effect of Helen’s song: ‘She ceased, and a moan of desire went up from all who heard.’

⁴²² Cf. again Stanford 1954, 275, who concludes his short comment on the novel, by stating that ‘Nothing significant is added to Ulysses’s character, except a vague yearning for half-spiritual, half-erotic revelations.’ Stead also mentions *The World’s Desire* twice, but does not analyse it in detail (Stead 2009, 107; 376).

⁴²³ Additionally, before Odysseus leaves the temple he will drink a wine that makes him forget his sorrows, ‘a draught of Nepenthe, the magic cup that puts trouble out of mind.’ (p. 14).

⁴²⁴ ‘And I give thee a sign to know her in a land of magic, and among women that deal in sorceries.’ (p. 13). Lang’s and Haggard’s *Odyssey* transformation belongs to the genre of fantastic literature. The magical and the fantastic were both typical elements of Haggard’s adventure novels. Note that, in addition, Odysseus’ bow ‘was wondrously made and magical. A spirit dwelt within it which knew of things to come, which boded the battle from afar, and therefore always before the slaying of men the bow

Odysseus breaks his oath, he must die: ‘And thine own death shall come from the water—the swiftest death—that the saying of the dead prophet may be fulfilled.’ (p. 13).

In the course of the story, Odysseus’ journey in pursuit of Helen leads him to Egypt. He finds her in the city of Tanis, where she resides in the temple of Hathor, the Egyptian ‘Goddess of Love’. There people call her ‘The Strange Hathor’ and men ‘worship her for her beauty’, which some believe has brought the wrath of the real goddess (‘the Divine Hathor’) and plagues upon the land (p. 29).⁴²⁵ On the day of the month that she shows herself to the crowd, Odysseus sets out for the temple along with a multitude of men (pp. 102–4). Arriving from all directions, they are guided by an almost magical attraction emanating from the Hathor, whom they all long to see and win for themselves. At the gates, however, a priest of the temple warns them that everyone who enters the chapel and does not succeed in winning the Hathor will die, as did all who came before (p. 104).⁴²⁶ Upon entering, all those who do not object are blindfolded because the Hathor’s sight drives men to madness even faster than her voice (p. 105). Yet, when her ‘sweet sound of singing’ resounds from afar, all men except Odysseus and the priests instantly fall into a frenzy (p. 106). For: ‘Sweetly she sang a song of promise, and her voice was the voice of each man’s desire’ (p. 107).⁴²⁷ When the men finally tear down the bandages off their eyes, each of them sees a different woman.⁴²⁸ Only Odysseus, after looking at her repeatedly, finally succeeds in seeing Helen herself (p. 110). The other men, now irrevocably struck by madness, all rush on to the second gates in order to enter the shrine into which Helen has moved. Odysseus stays back, albeit with difficulty. ‘But his desire had not wholly overcome him, nor had his wisdom left him.’ (p. 111). As it now transpires, Helen is guarded by the invisible spirits of three Greek heroes. Everyone who tries to approach her is struck down by these ‘Wardens of the Gate’ (p. 112). Odysseus, ‘the stoutest man alive in the whole world’ (p. 114) is at last able to get past them. At first Helen is terrified, since his armour makes her mistake

sang strangely through the night.’ (p. 5).

425 As it turns out later, Helen is indeed immortal (p. 205).

426 With the only exception being the Pharaoh himself. The explanation given is that he loved his life more than he loved ‘the World’s Desire’ (p. 68).

427 The fatal attraction of Helen’s song (p. 106) strongly recalls Odysseus’ encounter with the sirens in *Od.* 12.165–200 where, under the known precautions, he exposes himself to their song. Likewise, Odysseus here exposes himself to Helen’s voice and sight, despite the explicit warning of the priests (p. 104). Although he does not want to be blindfolded like most others, he is careful enough, for he ‘looked once and then cast down his eyes and stood with his face hidden in his hands’ (p. 109).

428 Cf. p. 68: ‘[...] and to each she wears a different face and sings in another voice.’

him for Paris who has returned from the dead. Odysseus first plays along to test her feelings and only reveals himself to her after she has confessed her love for him. Together they plan their escape for the next day (pp. 119–25).⁴²⁹ This venture, however, is thwarted by the Pharaoh's wife, Merianum, who has fallen in love with Odysseus and would rather see him dead than in the arms of another (p. 136). Using evil magic, she appears to Odysseus in the shape of Helen and seduces him (p. 147). Although Odysseus first doubts her when he notices the absence of the unmistakable 'sign', he finally believes her and swears 'by the Snake⁴³⁰ who should have sworn by the Star' (p. 147). In so doing, he irrevocably seals his fate. As predestined by Aphrodite (p. 13), he loosens Helen and dies in her arms (pp. 225–6). His death is caused by an arrow that his son Telegonus⁴³¹, who also mistakes him for Paris because of his golden armour, shoots from aboard a ship (p. 223). 'Then he knew that his fate was accomplished, and that death had come upon him from the water, as the ghost of Tiresias in Hades had foretold.' (p. 223).

The story is told retrospectively by one of its characters ('Rei the Priest'), who performs the function of an extradiegetic narrator (NF¹) with zero focalization and who speaks of himself in the third person. To distinguish between Rei, the extradiegetic narrator, and Rei, the character of the story, who does not yet have the level of knowledge of his future narrator-self, we may call them 'Rei narrator' and 'Rei protagonist', respectively.⁴³² As such, both 'Rei narrator' and 'Rei protagonist' form a part of the novel's fiction. The narrative framework is created by an interjecting remark that appears near to the beginning of the novel ('This story, whereof the substance was set out long ago by Rei the instructed Egyptian priest, tells that he found there, and the tale of the last adventures of Odysseus, Laertes's son.' p. 2). A similar intervening

429 In return, she, too, asks to see his scar as a token of recognition. This scene combines elements of the Homeric recognition scenes (*anagnorisis*) between Odysseus and his nurse Eurykleia (*Od.* 19.317–507) as well as that with his wife Penelope (*Od.* 23.1–240). It is a good example of the many passages in the novel that are obviously based on Homeric material.

430 The Snake is a pendant that Merianum wears around her neck, which gives her the shape of Helen, and which contains the personified Evil of Merianum herself (pp. 135–7). In exchange for her transformation, Merianum has to completely surrender to this evil and carry it with her at all times, in the form of her pendant (p. 137).

431 Like his father, Telegonus is described as particularly strong and warlike (p. 223).

432 Cf. p. 63 on the distinction between 'Dante poet' and 'Dante pilgrim' in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*.

remark also appears at the very end of the story, the only instance where the narrator speaks of himself in the first person ('This is the tale that I, Rei the Priest, have been bidden to set forth [...]', p. 227).

In terms of content, the novel bears many similarities to other transformations of the *Odyssey* with its focus on *Wanderlust*. Lang's and Haggard's novel deliberately sets itself apart from Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*, which is a conscious hypotext. While in *The World's Desire* Odysseus is sent on a completely different 'last journey', the Dantean Odysseus' destination, the unknown world beyond the Pillars of Hercules, is mentioned almost *en passant* near to the beginning of the novel. It is in the third episode (book I, III: *The Slaying of the Sidonians*), in which Odysseus is captured by Sidonian merchants who plan to sell him into slavery, that the Sidonian ship is said to be 'returning from Albion, an isle beyond the pillars of Heracles and the gates of the great sea, where much store of tin is found' (p. 15). A little later, we learn that (pp. 16–17):

[...] their hearts were light, for they had been among the first of their people to deal with the wild tribes of the island Albion, and had brought tin and gold for African sea shells and rude glass beads from Egypt. And now, near the very end of their adventure, they had caught a man whose armour and whose body were worth a king's ransom. It was a lucky voyage, they said, and the wind was fair!

Ironically enough, they will soon face their death in spite of having completed a journey, from which, in Dante's *Commedia*, nobody came back alive. It is a doomed voyage, after all. Furthermore, the fact that Dante's uninhabited world is referred to in this new context as an inhabited world, whose exploration has already begun, reflects the historical situation, that is the (European) exploration of the Americas, which in the nineteenth century was of course long since (re)discovered. As a result, the authors' interest focused on other regions of the world (such as Egypt) rather than the Americas. The actorial motivation which is shown in Odysseus' journey to Egypt, of course, is that in *The World's Desire* he is not interested in exploring the unknown, but in finding Helen, who just happens to be in Egypt. Even if, then, on the level of the plot, it is not curiosity about the unknown but a different form of *Wanderlust* that draws him there, his journey still leads him to an unknown place, a place where he has not been before.

Although the main focus here is not on exploring the unknown, we can still detect a shift regarding the definition of the unknown as the destination of the hero's journey. In

order to understand the literary motif of exploring the unknown in the broader context of its development, it makes sense to briefly review its manifestations considered so far, and to provide a short outlook of its future development. As a matter of fact, the literary motif of exploring the unknown, as it occurs in some of the *Odyssey* transformations considered in this study,⁴³³ has undergone a gradual modification that is naturally owed to historical development over time. For, along with the progressive opening-up of the world by Europeans, the literary definition of the unknown was subject to constant change. In Dante's *Commedia*, a work poised between the Middle Ages and Early Modernity, the unknown world to be discovered was still the world beyond the Pillars of Hercules, which was uninhabited and whose attempted exploration was said to prove fatal. In the transformations of the *Odyssey* during the Italian Renaissance, whose appearance was preceded by the Columbian (re)discovery of the Americas in 1492, it is still the world beyond the Heracleian Pillars that is considered unknown, but it is now inhabited and becomes more and more tangible. As we have seen, this change clearly reflects the discovery spirit of the time as well as the influence of the European voyages of exploration. Accordingly, the discovery of the Americas, which was predicted for the future in both Ariosto and Tasso, is brought into harmony with the Christian world-view at that time. In the course of time and following the increasing exploration of the world, the literary interest is redirected towards regions of the earth that have not yet been fully mapped by Europeans or are less accessible.⁴³⁴ During the nineteenth century, archaeological finds also awaken the interest in Troy and Egypt which is reflected in the literature of the time. Only in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries does the literary focus, from a more globalized perspective, shift increasingly towards other worlds (e.g.

433 In the texts of the corpus, *Wanderlust*, being a psychological disposition of inner unrest, does not always lead to an actual journey and, if it does, it is not necessarily a journey to an unknown place. (cf. the motif table in the Appendix). In the few modern texts of the corpus that are still closely orientated towards Dante, namely Cavafy's *Second Odyssey* and, more importantly, Arturo Graf's *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse*, the destination of the journey remains the same, i.e. the world beyond the Pillars of Hercules. In Baudelaire's *Le Voyage*, on the other hand, the ultimate unknown is not to be found on this earth, but only in death. The exploration of the unknown is further central to the *Odyssey* transformations of Kazantzakis and Suárez, while the destination of the journey is different in each case.

434 See Pringle et al. 2015: 'The lost-world story, however, belonged to a cartographically "closed" world: in Jules Verne's and H Rider Haggard's day unknown territories were fast disappearing. The options were running out, and hence the nineteenth-century lost lands tended to be situated in the most inaccessible regions of the globe: the Amazon basin, Himalayan valleys, central-Asian and Australian deserts, at the poles, or within the Hollow Earth.'

extraterrestrial or parallel worlds, to name just a few possibilities), which represent the new unknown. This happens mainly in modern fantasy and science-fiction literature, where the discovery of unknown worlds constitutes a central element, and, from the late nineteenth century onwards, forms the entire sub-genre of the *lost world* (or *lost races*) literature. It was Haggard's novel *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) that popularized this genre and that can therefore be regarded as its modern founding text.⁴³⁵ Haggard's adventure novels were preferably set in remote regions of Africa⁴³⁶ that were still unexplored by Europeans, and, as in *The World's Desire*, also in ancient Egypt.⁴³⁷

The World's Desire is not the only *Odyssey* transformation to be set in Egypt. Stead had already pointed out that Émile Gebhart's narrative *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902), on which Franz Blei's *Des Odysseus letzte Ausfahrt* (1923) heavily relies, in turn shows 'troubling similarities' to *The World's Desire* (1890).⁴³⁸ Indeed, there are a number of similarities between them that are worth mentioning. In Gebhart's narrative, published twelve years after Lang's and Haggard's novel, Helen's whereabouts is also a temple in Egypt, where she is a Priestess of Death and the mistress of the high priest of Serapis. Again, Helen is surrounded by a mysterious aura and not known by her real name. Here too, she is worshipped like a goddess.⁴³⁹ However, it is not Odysseus but a desperate Menelaus, who seeks to find her, and whom

435 Cf. Pringle and Clute 1997, 594: 'The LR [Lost Races] tale was established as a major popular form by H. Rider HAGGARD in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *She* (1886 US) and *Allan Quatermain* (1887), but of course there were many earlier occurrences of this motif-cluster, which descends from TRAVELLERS' TALES and FANTASTIC VOYAGES of the 18th century and before. There is a sense in which much early fantasy (and almost all Scientific Romance) was about unknown lands or undiscovered societies. Nevertheless, it only becomes meaningful to talk of the LR story as a distinct subgenre in the period after the globe was fully mapped and hence geographically "closed": the period of its emergence in this sense was the last third of the 19th century.'

436 Haggard himself had lived in South Africa for six years. See Drabble 2000c.

437 Cf. Magus 2017, 483–84: '[...] ancient Egypt and its study was his life-long passion: at least 11 of his romances feature Egyptian themes or motifs. [...] Interest in Egyptology was pervasive in British cultural consciousness especially following the establishment of the British Protectorate in Egypt in 1882'. Cf. Pringle et al. 2015, on the influence of archaeology on Haggard and others.

438 See Stead 2009, 375–76 on the question whether Blei's text is to be considered plagiarism: 'Alors plagiat? Plutôt expression d'un phénomène plus général, qui a marqué la littérature du tournant des XIX^e-XX^e siècles: écrire en procédant par emprunts et amalgames, reconstruction et recombinaison des motifs. *Les Dernières Aventures du divin Ulysse* de Gebhart lui-même illustre bien ce phénomène puisqu'il montre des similitudes troublantes, quoique pas aussi étroites, avec le roman d'Andrew Lang et de H. Rider Haggard *The World's Desire* (1890), succès éditorial de la fin du XIX^e siècle (cinq éditions entre 1890 et 1916), qui tourne – comme le récit de Gebhart – autour du séjour d'Hélène en Égypte et de la mort d'Ulysse par la main de Télégoné.'

439 However, the Helen portrayed by Gebhart is strong and self-determined and not willing to give up her position of power in Egypt to go back to Sparta with a whining Menelaus. In *The World's Desire*, on the other hand, Helen is herself a victim of the situation, because despite being 'the World's Desire', she is condemned to a life in loneliness and isolation (p. 169).

Odysseus accompanies. Egypt thus represents only one of the many stops on Odysseus' journey. As it was in *The World's Desire*, it is Telegonus who kills Odysseus in the end. Yet, in Gebhart's narrative Telegonus is no longer a bright figure resembling his heroic father, but a sadistic young man who kills his father knowingly. Overall, there are several elements of Lang's and Haggard's novel to be found in Gebhart's narrative, but they are transformed and integrated into an entirely different text. For it is a mock-heroic and highly ironic tone that dominates Gebhart's narrative.⁴⁴⁰

The Egyptian setting is something that *The World's Desire* has in common with still another *Odyssey* transformation to follow: Nikos Kazantzakis' *Οδύσσεια* (1938). After leaving Ithaca forever (book 2), Kazantzakis' Odysseus travels to Sparta (books 3–4), Crete (books 5–8) and Egypt (books 9–12). He takes part in the destruction of Knossos, as well as in an unsuccessful revolution in Egypt. He flees Egypt together with a group of followers, whom he leads into the desert in an Exodus-like march (book 12). The journey continues through Africa and to the source of the Nile (book 13). There, he builds an ideal (socialist) city (book 15). But after witnessing its complete destruction by a volcanic eruption (book 16), he becomes a hermetic figure. He continues south until he reaches the South Pole (book 22), where he finally dies, at peace with the world and free (book 24).

While Lang and Haggard's choice to locate Helen in Egypt actually follows an alternate version of the myth that was circulated since antiquity,⁴⁴¹ Kazantzakis, in keeping with the Homeric *Odyssey*, locates her back in Sparta with her husband Menelaus. After leaving Ithaca forever, Kazantzakis' Odysseus only heads for Sparta because of a dream that he has on the ship, where Helen appears to him and calls for his help.⁴⁴² As it turns out, Menelaus, softened by wealth, has become a fat and sluggish drunkard, whereas Helen has lost none of her beauty and vitality.⁴⁴³ She and Odysseus

440 For more details, see the analysis of Gebhart's text (chapter 5.5).

441 See Harder 2006a: 'Stesichorus (fr. 192 PMG) retracted his negative representation, by having only an *eidōlon* ('phantom') of H. taken to Troy with Paris, while H. herself was removed to Egypt (Hdt. 2,113-115 with a slight variation), where she lived until Menelaus found her there on his return from Troy and took her back to Greece (Eur. Hel.).'

442 This may remind us of the vision Odysseus has at the beginning of *The World's Desire* (cf. p. 124).

443 The motif of a debilitated Menelaus is already present in Gebhart's text. See his first description in *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse*, pp. 13–14: 'Au fond de la chambre de poupe richement ornée un personnage bizarre gisait sur un amas de coussins. Le crépuscule déjà sombre ne laissait entrevoir qu'un visage glabre et mélancolique, une ample robe de lin couleur de safran, semée de fleurs et de

are two of a kind, in that neither of them were made for the monotonous life at court. So, Odysseus absconds with Helen to Crete (book 5). Yet, it is not a love story that follows. Instead, Helen will play a decisive role in founding a new civilization on Crete through her self-chosen union with a blond barbarian. In Helen's freedom-loving spirit, which is reflected in her decision to stay with the barbarian, Odysseus recognizes himself and therefore endorses her decision (book 7). Significantly, Kazantzakis' Odysseus is not, as in *The World's Desire*, overcome by that 'which all men seek', but rather rises above that desire.⁴⁴⁴ Inspired by the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, he is the exception in everything. Accordingly, Odysseus' sublimity over carnal temptations is a leitmotif of Kazantzakis' text. To some extent, this sublime characterization of Odysseus is already apparent in *The World's Desire*. First of all, Odysseus here is, like everybody else, seized by the desire for Helen, but only after Aphrodite has instilled such desire in him. Secondly and more importantly, it is not merely a carnal desire. Despite the almost magical attraction that emanates from Helen, Odysseus' survival in the temple is due to the fact that he is the only one who has his senses under control. In the end, however, he is 'blinded by his desire' (p. 177) and commits the crucial mistake that seals his fate. It is only in Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* that Odysseus, in his quest for absolute freedom, is a superior human being who is completely lifted above common human desires.⁴⁴⁵

Besides the Egyptian setting and the appearance of Helen, *The World's Desire* also shares a number of other similarities with Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*. Needless to say, the aspirations of the two texts are fundamentally different, and the character-drawing in this popular adventure novel is not nearly as elaborate as in Kazantzakis' epoch-making work. Nevertheless, there are some further common elements that stand out here and are worth looking at. A number of other similarities can be noted with regard to the protagonist himself. In both works, Odysseus is characterized as war-like and strong, to

feuillages d'or, une coiffure asiatique en forme de mitre, brodée d'oiseaux et de dragons d'or, telle qu'en portait souvent Pâris, fils de Priam. Le noble voyageur avait beaucoup pâti des secousses de son navire. Il demeurait inerte, déconfit, sans regard et sans voix. De longs cheveux jaunâtres décoraient cette tête désolée. Cf. my discussion of Gebhart's text, pp. 161–70, as well as pp. 178–6 on D'Annunzio's Telemachus as a similarly obese ruler.

444 'But he had never longed to embrace lascivious Helen, / for this seductress drew him far from carnal wars / to the high valor of the mind, the peaks of passion;' (*Oδ.* 3.670–72).

445 Cf. González Vaquerizo 2015, 8 who lists 'a non carnal attraction for the figure of Helen' ('una atracción no carnal por la figura de Helen.') as a common characteristic of both works, and considers 'Helen of Troy' ('Helen de Troya') the 'expression of supreme spiritual beauty' ('expresión suprema de la belleza espiritual') in *The World's Desire*. Yet, González-Vaquerizo completely ignores the sensual aspect of Helen here, which is just as important.

the point of being terrifying. When, in *The World's Desire*, Odysseus is about to fight the Sidonians, Haggard and Lang write: 'Before they could touch him he was on his feet again, crying his war-cry terribly, the cry that shook the towers of Ilium, and he rushed upon them, clutching at his sword hilt' (p. 16).⁴⁴⁶ But, like Odysseus' sublimity over desire, in Lang's and Haggard's novel even these qualities remain within the human limits. Thus, in the fight against the Sidonians, despite his extraordinarily strength and fighting ability, Odysseus is ultimately overwhelmed and taken captive.

In the first half of Kazantzakis' poem, Odysseus appears as especially fierce and violent. As textual evidence of his fierce and terrifying nature, I shall mention only the first of countless examples, which thus sets the tone for the first half of the poem. At the very beginning of Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* (*Oδ.*), whose action does not begin where the Homeric account ends, but already after the killing of the suitors in *Od.* 22, the two maids that prepare Odysseus' bath shriek with terror at the sight of their blood-dripping master (*Oδ.* 1.77–9). Then, Kazantzakis writes: 'The wandering man smiled gently in his thorny beard and with his eyebrows signed the frightened girls to go.' (*Oδ.* 1.81–2)⁴⁴⁷ His calm reaction is telling, since it already indicates the hard-edged, ruthless nature of this Odysseus, one of whose many epithets will be 'the (man-)murderer' (ὁ φονιάς, e.g. *Oδ.* 1.389; ἀντροφονιάς, e.g. *Oδ.* 12.601)⁴⁴⁸. When Penelope first sees Odysseus, she is terrified by his savage aura and believes that she is looking at a 'forty-footed dragon' (*Oδ.* 1.97–100).⁴⁴⁹ She is not entirely mistaken, though, as Odysseus, who senses her fear and tries to calm her down, 'spoke, but still his heart leapt not in his wild chest, / still in his nostrils steamed the blood of newly slain;' (*Oδ.* 1.107–8).⁴⁵⁰ However, Odysseus' grim and violent nature manifests only in 'the first half of the

446 Cf. p. 210, before his final battle: 'Then his heart was filled with the lust of battle, and his warlike cunning awoke. For of all leaders he was the most skilled in the craft of battle, [...].'

447 For Friar's translation, see Kazantzakis 1958, 3. I will only indicate the page number of Friar's translation in the first book, where the verse numbering differs significantly from that of the Greek edition, as Friar does not include the Prologue in the count. As a result, the numbering of the first book is always 73 lines short in comparison with the Greek edition. However, even in the following books, the enumeration of the Greek edition naturally does not always match the enumeration of the English translation. Therefore, the verse numbering given here does always refer to the Greek edition, regardless of whether the translation or the Greek is quoted.

448 Sometimes reinforced by an adjective, as in ὁ ἀνέσπλαγχνος (ἀντρο)φονιάς ('the pitiless (man-)killer', e.g. *Oδ.* 7.1045; 8.362; 8.382) or ὁ μέγας φονιάς ('the great murderer', e.g. *Oδ.* 7.495; 7.1139).

449 Kazantzakis 1958, 3

450 Kazantzakis 1958, 3.

poem', where 'Odysseus is purely a man of action', to put it in Kimon Friar's words.⁴⁵¹ Later Odysseus' character undergoes a radical and irreversible change, after he witnesses the complete destruction of his ideal city by the eruption of a volcano (book 16). In the immediate aftermath of the horrible events of the destruction, during which all the city's inhabitants and almost all of his companions are killed, Odysseus finds himself in a state of shock. When his last surviving companion Granite (Χάλικας), who was absent during the volcano eruption, returns and finds him amidst the ashes, Odysseus is seen manically striking 'a heavy column made of earth' (*Oδ.* 16.370). The column slowly reveals the burnt body of their companion Rocky (Πέτρακας), and collapses before Odysseus is able to embrace it (*Oδ.* 16.377–84). Odysseus, who now is no longer approachable, eventually enters a state of introverted contemplation (*Oδ.* 16.413–4).⁴⁵² What follows next, however, is not a period of mourning, but a cheerful life in absolute harmony with nature. In the forest that surrounds him, Odysseus suddenly perceives and rejoices at the sight of even the smallest event of nature (*Oδ.* 16.430–55). He literally senses all of the forest's life as if it happened inside himself until he seemingly becomes one with it: 'For the first time he felt he lived and had a soul. / Odysseus brimmed with waters, trees, fruit, beasts, and snakes, / and all trees, waters, beasts and fruit brimmed with Odysseus' (*Oδ.* 16. 476–8). With Odysseus'

451 See Friar's introduction in Kazantzakis 1958, xxi–xxii.

452 The inner transformation that he is about to experience (*Oδ.* 16.415–29) is already anticipated by a change in his appearance, as his hair has turned completely white and he no longer wears his characteristic cap (*Oδ.* 16.361–8). His change is also reflected in the epithet ὁ μονιάς ('the lone man') which is used more frequently from here on as well as in new combinations such as ὁ κάτασπρος μονιάς ('the pure white lone man', e.g. *Oδ.* 16.376). For further evidence of Odysseus' inner and outer transformation, we may turn to a later passage, namely *Oδ.* 21.295–476. In this scene Odysseus, who has finally reached the ocean after travelling south through Africa for quite some time (*Oδ.* 21.50–8), finds himself in a fish tavern. After he has heard two sea captains speak about their homeland, he is asked to introduce himself (*Oδ.* 21.392–3). What follows is Odysseus' self-description (*Oδ.* 21.398–423), which can be read as tracing back his development so far. For he presents himself as wealthy 'tower-lord', 'king', 'ascetic' and 'worm'. The two captains are mesmerized by his story, while Odysseus shines 'like the Dog Star' in ever-changing colours. When a religious procession passes by the tavern, they tell him that it is in honour of a new god that a group of shipwrecked Cretans worships as their saviour. The new god is a sea demon who destroyed Crete in a single night and with whose blessing they now seek 'to found new city states' (*Oδ.* 21.437–56). Odysseus reacts to the story by saying: 'I think I've also seen him in my trips somewhere, / but I can't now recall his face or even his name.' (*Oδ.* 21.459–60). One of the captains then describes the sea demon in detail according to the figurines of the god that he himself sells as well as mentions 'Odysseus' as the god's 'secret name' (*Oδ.* 21.467–72). His description exactly matches Odysseus' former appearance. Odysseus can barely hold back his laughter, 'yet he pitied wretched man, that craven dog / that wags its tail and fawns upon the hand that beats it.' (*Oδ.* 21.475–6; cf. 21.509–16). In this scene, the god described by the captains corresponds to Odysseus' former (albeit human) self, whom he neither resembles nor identifies with any longer. Odysseus is a new man, who has left his old self behind.

transformed self comes the joyful embracing of his senses,⁴⁵³ which were previously rejected in favour of the Spirit, and in an attempt to detach himself from the Flesh. Having abandoned his spiritual search for God, he is now free from all bonds, at peace with life and all its contradictions.⁴⁵⁴ Meanwhile, his fame as a hermit⁴⁵⁵ soon attracts pilgrims from all over Africa (*Oδ.* 16.736–49).⁴⁵⁶

While before the catastrophe Odysseus was a ‘man of heroic action, a leader of men’, as Stanford puts it, he now ‘abandons the cult of doing for the cultivation of being’, while ‘being’ here is to be understood in the sense of an attentive awareness that does not seek change.⁴⁵⁷ Although Odysseus travels on until he reaches the South Pole, he no longer concerns himself with performing great deeds, but concentrates on attaining inner growth through contemplation. Unlike earlier, in the second part of the poem he is no longer violent but peace-loving, no longer pitiless but full of compassion, no longer bold and unyielding but humble before Mother Earth (*Oδ.* 16.1386–94).⁴⁵⁸

In contrast to Kazantzakis’ Odysseus, whose fierce and violent nature is only visible in the first part of the poem, and is radically transformed at the poem’s turning point, the protagonist of *The World’s Desire* does not undergo any such transformation. Yet, there is still another feature that the protagonist of both works has in common. Especially in the context of fighting scenes, Odysseus’ appearance in *The World’s Desire* is often described as godlike. When he is about to fight the Sidonians on their ship and free himself from captivity, the authors write: ‘Here he stood with an arrow on the string, and the bow drawn to his ear, looking about him terribly [...] one of the sailors cried: “Alas! what god have we taken and bound?”’ (p. 20). This motif of Odysseus as a godlike warrior becomes particularly strong towards the end of the novel, where he fights his last great battle.⁴⁵⁹ The motif of a godlike Odysseus is recurrent in

453 See *Oδ.* 16.482–563 where he blesses his body and all of his five senses.

454 Cf. Friar’s introduction in Kazantzakis 1958, xxi–xxii. See, as well, *Oδ.* 16.556–7 (‘What do I want with the mind’s hollow satisfactions, / why should I seek gods in the clouds, grandsons on earth?’) and 16.561–2 (‘Mother, you know I love you, for I’m not pure soul / but filled with sucking pores like you, with flesh, like you.’) where Odysseus speaks to his sense of touch.

455 Cf. his new epithet ‘ὁ μέγας ἀσκητής’ (‘the great ascetic’).

456 Cf. Friar’s synopsis in Kazantzakis 1958, 800.

457 For this and the following see Stanford 1954, 232, who already noticed the apparent influence of the Indian philosophy of Yoga here.

458 Cf. Friar’s synopsis in Kazantzakis 1958, 801.

459 Before the battle, ‘the Captains [...] said one to another that this man was no mortal, but a God come from the Under-world.’ (p. 209). During the battle, the barbarians take him for a ‘God of War’ (pp.

Kazantzakis' text as well. Again, a motif that is developed by Lang and Haggard in a comparatively simple, straightforward manner, in Kazantzakis' poem appears in a highly elaborated form. With regard to the work as a whole, the motif manifests itself in the general portrayal of the hero as an *Übermensch*. Especially in the first half of the poem, he shows extreme self-confidence and yields to nothing and nobody. His disregard for any kind of boundaries or authority (Law, Fate, God, the human Mind) becomes one of the poem's leitmotifs: Kazantzakis' Odysseus is the breaker of boundaries par excellence. Furthermore, he neither allows himself to be controlled by carnal desires, such as hunger or sexual desire, nor by feelings such as compassion and love in the first half of the poem, or fear and hope, which he rejects until the very end. Normally, one would be inclined to mistake his audacity and bold self-confidence as it manifests in the poem's first half for hubris or some sort of megalomaniacal madness. Yet the narrative never allows such a conclusion. Odysseus never really fails and the course of the plot only confirms his superiority, at least until the destruction of his new built city, that changes the course of his life for ever.

In addition to this general characterization, the motif of a godlike Odysseus also manifests itself in a similar way to *The World's Desire*, that is, in the external perception of the hero. In Kazantzakis' poem, other characters frequently take the hero for a god or some other supernatural being. An important passage is, of course, the already mentioned scene in the fish tavern (*Oδ.* 21.295–476), where Odysseus learns about the cult around his person that has established among Cretan settlers, who worship him as a sea demon.⁴⁶⁰ Later in book 21, Odysseus builds 'his last new ship' (*Oδ.* 21.747), a

214–5). After defeating the champion of the barbarians, '[...] the Wanderer laughed like a God at that old score paid, and at the last great stroke of the hands of the City-sacker, Odysseus.' (p. 217). However, Odysseus' godlike superiority is immediately counterbalanced at the beginning of the next chapter by a verbatim reprise of the last sentence: 'The Wanderer laughed like a God, though he deemed that the end was near, [...]' (p. 219). For Odysseus' godlike appearance in passages outside the fighting context, see, for example, p. 31: '[...] the Pharaoh [...] heard how there had come to Khem a man like a god, wearing golden armour, and cruising alone in a ship of the dead.'; cf. also pp. 63–4.

460 Cf. Lion Feuchtwanger's narrative *Odysseus und die Schweine oder Das Unbehagen and der Kultur (Odysseus and the Swine, or the Unpleasantness of Culture, 1946; see Feuchtwanger 1950, 7–32; for an English translation, see Feuchtwanger 1949, 167–90)*, where the story of Odysseus' adventures has already taken a life of its own, and, with several versions circulating, even Odysseus himself can no longer tell the difference between what is true and false. When, on his second visit to the Phaeacians, he hears Demodocus sing an inaccurate version of his adventures, he tries in vain to set right the part about the events on Circe's island by telling Demodocus what really happened. In a similar way, in *Last Islands*, the forty-fourth episode of Zachary Mason's 'novel' *The Lost Books of the Odyssey* (2007), Odysseus' fame relies on a mythologized version of his story. Here, Ithaca and Troy have become popular tourist destinations. However, like in Feuchtwanger's story, Odysseus cannot remember 'the actual events so much as their retellings and the retellings' retellings, which through a gradual accretion of spurious detail

small boat for his last voyage that is supposed to be his ‘coffin’ (e.g. *Oδ.* 21.780; 803). When word spreads that beasts and spirits are assisting him, people come and bring him gifts (*Oδ.* 21.850–909). What at first seems to be true, however, is in hindsight exposed as people’s deluded perceptions (*Oδ.* 21.869–73):

The brains of men are always filled with wings and air,
nourished on bubbles always, and well fed with smoke: 870
alas, no spirits ached for the old man, and beasts
but snarled and left him all alone to fight the woods
with but an ax for comrade, and no other help;

These two scenes in which Odysseus is perceived as a god or supernatural being share the motif of the gullibility of humankind, which always seeks stability in God or religion and therefore clings to erroneous faith. In both scenes, people are exposed in their futile striving. One could cite numerous other passages where this is the case. As in the tavern scene, this representation is often accompanied by Odysseus’ knowing awareness and reflection on people’s false perceptions, revealing his superiority over the common man.⁴⁶¹

and embellishment had, for all [he] knew, diverged drastically from the truth.’ (see the revisited edition, Mason 2011, 219).

Of course, the motif that Odysseus is already famous during his lifetime has its origins in the Homeric *Odyssey* (books 8–9), where Odysseus, still incognito, hears the Phaeacian singer Demodocus sing about the Trojan War and is unable to suppress his feelings, which leads to him revealing himself, whose ‘fame goes up to the heavens.’ (*Od.* 9.20). Yet, here it is still the true story that has become part of the rhapsodic repertoire and that Odysseus’ fame (*kleos*) relies upon.

⁴⁶¹ See, for example, *Oδ.* 1.896–8, where Odysseus (whilst incognito) talks to an old man in Ithaca about someone he supposedly knew, but actually describes himself: ‘People called him a beast, a god, and he but laughed, / for he knew well, quite well, he was not god or beast / but only a light drifting smoke, a passing crane.’ After Odysseus has left, the old man says (*Oδ.* 1.915–7): ‘“That’s not the stature nor the tread of mortal man; / either a god’s descended to my hut to tease me / or my decrepit eyes have looked upon the dread Odysseus!”’. In *Oδ.* 3.482–526, Odysseus takes advantage of a girl that mistakes him for a sea god. In *Oδ.* 9.480–4 an old man offers him hospitality because he could be a god. Odysseus enjoys this comment and humorously introduces himself and his companions as gods. In *Oδ.* 11.1243–6, Odysseus, who is imprisoned by the Pharaoh, dances for him while wearing the self-carved mask of his new god. Since the Pharaoh believes to recognize in him the demon that has been haunting him in his nightmares, he releases Odysseus in horror and commands him to leave the country. In *Oδ.* 22.688–9, Odysseus reaches an Arctic settlement whose inhabitants take him for their ‘Great Ancestor, the Great Spirit’ (*Oδ.* 22.700). He pities them for their fear and submissiveness (*Oδ.* 22.768), yet leaves them in their beliefs. After wintering with them, he sets off on his raft speaking to the people as ‘the Spirit’ who guards them (*Oδ.* 22.1341–4). He is not unmoved, but wishes he could actually give ‘blessings [...] [...] to those poor souls’ (*Oδ.* 22.1406–8). Shortly afterwards, he must watch in horror from afar how suddenly ‘the ice gapes, and all—men, dogs, and sleighs—are plunged into an abyss of roaring, freezing waters.’ (Friar’s synopsis in Kazantzakis 1958, 810).

are a number of other motifs that the two works share. We have already noted the Egyptian setting and the appearance of Helen. Further motifs can be added to this list, namely: 1) the motif of barbarians, who threaten and attack an ancient civilization, 2) the literary reworking of the biblical Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt, in the particular context of the Greek Odysseus myth, and 3) Odysseus' journey towards the source of the Nile.

In *The World's Desire*, Odysseus' last battle is against the so-called 'Nine-bow barbarians' who 'overrun the ancient land of Khem' (p. 185). This group consists of 'nine nations', as well as 'a fleet of [his] own people, the Achaeans', which sails with them (p. 177; cf. p. 181). Thus Odysseus, who (as in Kazantzakis' poem) is held prisoner by the pharaoh, fights on the side of the Egyptians in the service of the pharaoh. Although the latter is long dead by the time of the battle (murdered by his wife Merianum, who is in love with Odysseus, p. 194), this news has not yet reached Odysseus. Still, even if he goes into battle believing that he is still bound to his oath (p. 213), he is no less eager to fight, for 'he desired that his, his last war, should be the greatest war of all.' (p. 210). Regarding the nature of these 'barbarians', they belong to many different tribes (p. 185). In the giant barbarian with blue eyes (p. 215), whom he faces in the decisive single combat, Odysseus recognizes a member of the 'evil race, that of old had smitten his ships and devoured his men—the Laestrygonians of the Land of the Midnight Sun, the Man-eaters' (p. 217). In the foreword to the 1894 edition, Lang and Haggard let us know that '[t]he Laestrygonian of the Last Battle is introduced as a pre-historic Norseman', based on the hypothesis of W. E. Gladstone that 'the Laestrygonians of the Odyssey [...] were probably derived from travellers' tales of the North' (p. II).

In Kazantzakis' poem, the similarly blond barbarians also fight against the Pharaoh in Egypt. But we encounter them even before that: when Odysseus comes to Sparta, the barbarians are constantly pouring in from the North (*Oδ.* 3.720–45; 4.170–8) and mixing with the local population (*Oδ.* 4.620–31). When they ask permission to settle the land, the frightened Menelaus does not dare refuse them. Odysseus realizes that they will soon take over power as they are obviously the stronger ones. The barbarians, who are culturally underdeveloped but physically superior, here stand for the vital, primitive

force in contrast to the weak and decadent aristocratic elite, which Odysseus despises (*Oδ.* 4.649–798).⁴⁶⁵ He is thus on the side of the barbarians from the very beginning, even though he is connected in friendship with Menelaus, who is still king in Sparta. In Crete, Odysseus then fights on the side of the barbarians against the ruling class. Together with other conspirators and rebels, he overthrows King Idomeneus, causing a massacre and acting without any consideration for the losses of innocent lives (*Oδ.* 7.1149–76). He considers the overthrow of the decadent nobility, which marks the beginning of a new era, to be a necessary and positive development. In Egypt, he fights alongside barbarians and revolutionaries, yet the revolution and the slave revolt he instigates are ultimately crushed and he ends up imprisoned.⁴⁶⁶ While in *The World's Desire*, Odysseus is released from prison on the condition of defeating the barbarians for the Pharaoh, in Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* he is imprisoned for fighting with the barbarians and *against* the Pharaoh.⁴⁶⁷ As an eternal transgressor and rule breaker, Kazantzakis' Odysseus always sides with the outlaws and the strong, and never with the wealth-softened ruling class. As a radical innovator, he is the complete opposite of a traditionalist. To this Odysseus, tradition is just another barrier that needs to be torn down.

The emergence of the blond barbarians, who bring iron weapons,⁴⁶⁸ and who supersede the declining bronze civilizations, is obviously inspired by the old hypothesis of the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and the end of Mycenaean palace culture, as a result of the 'Doric migration'.⁴⁶⁹ Lang's and Haggard's 'pre-historic Norsemen', consisting of one of the nine tribes that make up the barbarian host, most

465 For a description of the barbarians in Egypt, see *Oδ.* 11.54–7.

466 In Knossos, where his overthrow was successful, slavery will later be reintroduced (*Oδ.* 24.706–713), implying a relapse to the very social patterns that Odysseus had destroyed.

467 In *The World's Desire*, Odysseus' imprisonment is due to Merianum. Since Odysseus does not return her love and instead wants to denounce her deed after he wakes up and realises how she tricked him with magic, she cries for help pretending to be harassed (pp. 159–63).

468 See, for example, *Oδ.* 6.1016–27, where Odysseus' companion Hardihood ('χαλκιάς') reports how he found a secret forge where a barbarian blacksmith was held captive by King Idomeneus in order to make iron weapons for him. Cf. *Oδ.* 3.1370–7.

469 See Eder 2006: 'Current research holds factors other than the D[oric]M[igration] responsible for the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces and the demise of the Mycenaean palace system c. 1200 BC (bibliography in [7; 8]). [...] Essentially, one must assume that various Doric tribal groups migrated into the former core areas of Mycenaean culture in the Peloponnese and settled there at various times, but only c. 150–300 years after the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces [8]. Subsequently, Dorians also settled on Crete and the Doric islands of the Aegean.' In his *Odyssey*, Kazantzakis attributes both the end of the Mycenaean and the earlier Minoan palace culture to this migration. In accordance with the historical sequence, he predicts the decline of the Mycenaean culture as a future event, whereas the end of the Minoan civilization in Crete is set at the time of the story.

probably owe their existence to the same outdated theory, for they also seem to be inspired by the Dorians. In order to connect the story with Heroic Greece and have Telegonus appear in the end, the ‘Aquaiusha’ who fight alongside the barbarians are identified with the ‘Achaeans’ (here, as in Homer, used as a synonym for ‘Greeks’) and thus Odysseus’ ‘own people’ (p. 213).⁴⁷⁰

Another common element of the two works is the biblical influence on the narrative. According to Lang and Haggard in the foreword to the 1894 edition, the story of their novel is set in a ‘twilight age’, which is characterized by the ‘intercourse between Heroic Greece, the Greece of the Achaeans, and the Egypt of the Rasseמידs’, but also the Exodus of the Israelites, which ‘was probably part of the great contemporary stir among the peoples’ (p. I). Hence, Odysseus’ sojourn in Egypt is set at the time of the biblical Exodus, here described from an Egyptian perspective, in which the Israelites are called ‘the Apura’.⁴⁷¹ During the banquet organized in Odysseus’ honour after his arrival, he becomes witness to Moses’ famous request to the Pharaoh to let his people go (p. 66). By contrast, in Kazantzakis’ poem Odysseus himself appears in the role of Moses. After the failed revolution, he leaves Egypt with his companions and a group of new followers, whom he leads into the desert. This group he has assembled from all sorts of criminals and other social misfits, such as murderers, thieves or prostitutes, or in short the ‘scum’ of society (*Oδ.* 12.26–40). They represent all the unadapted outlaws, the ‘free hearts that had no fear of demon, man, or god’ (*Oδ.* 12.35), and who are not deterred by the ‘grim face’ of his God, who promises nothing but ‘hunger and thirst’ (*Oδ.* 12.50–94). After they have found the source of the Nile in central Africa, he climbs a mountain nearby and stays there for seven days and nights to think about the ideal city that he wants to build (*Oδ.* 13.1374–14.1410). Later, when the building of the city is completed, Odysseus himself carves ten commandments on the city’s stone walls (*Oδ.*

⁴⁷⁰ Both the ‘Nine Bows’ and the ‘Aquaiusha’ (or, more commonly, ‘Ekwesh’) are actually ancient Egyptian names for foreign enemy peoples. The final battle is inspired by a historic battle between an alliance of Sea Peoples (the ‘Nine-Bows’) and Egypt during the reign of Merneptah or Merenptah (here ‘Meneptah’). See Kubisch 2017.

⁴⁷¹ While the Exodus plays only a minor role here, Haggard makes it the central theme in his novel *Moon of Israel: A Tale of The Exodus*. (1918). See Magus 2017, 488.

15.1149–76).⁴⁷² In Odysseus' decalogue, 'each law revolves about the idea of God as a struggling evolutionary growth of the spirit throughout all phenomena.'⁴⁷³

As already mentioned, another motif that is common to both *Odyssey* transformations is the search for the mouth of the Nile. According to Stanford, 'finding the sources of the Nile' was 'always an aim of exploration and speculation in antiquity'.⁴⁷⁴ In *The World's Desire*, Odysseus sets sail 'southwards for the mouths of the Nile' (p. 23) on the Sidonian ship, after he has freed himself and killed almost the whole crew. In both works, when Odysseus leaves Greece, he sails south for Egypt. While Lang's and Haggard's Odysseus must be somewhere between Ithaca and Egypt when he takes control of his captors' ship, Kazantzakis' Odysseus sails to Egypt from Crete. In both cases, this journey is explicitly marked as the point of no return at which Odysseus leaves Greece behind forever. While Kazantzakis' Odysseus does so consciously (*Od.* 8.1005–13), Lang's and Haggard's hero does not realize that 'the gates of his own world were closing behind [him] for ever', and that he will never see Greece again (p. 26).

In view of this abundance of common motifs in both works, one must wonder whether this is merely coincidence. A few similarities such as the Egyptian (and, in Kazantzakis' text, also Cretan) setting can be explained by the Homeric hypotext itself, that is Odysseus' lying tale in book 14 of the Homeric *Odyssey* (*Od.* 14.192–359). As we have seen Odysseus here pretends to be a Cretan who, after his return from Troy, feels the need to depart again and sets sail for Egypt. In their foreword of 1894, Lang and Haggard explicitly mention Odysseus' lying tale in support of the interaction between Greece and Egypt, as is also indicated by archaeological finds of the time.⁴⁷⁵

We can also be sure that the authors of both works were familiar with Dante's centrifugal Odysseus, who becomes an essential premise for both transformations. But what about all the other common elements? In particular, the characterization of the protagonist is strikingly similar in both works. Considering Odysseus' sublimity over desire (at least in comparison to other men, as far as Lang's and Haggard's Odysseus is

472 Stanford 1954, 231 here erroneously assigns the creation of Odysseus' decalogue to his previous sojourn on the mountain (book 14), which may be explained by the seductive parallel to Moses who receives the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Odysseus, however, does not formulate 'his own Decalogue' while he is on the mountain and before he 'prepares to build the city', as Stanford writes, but he does so only much later, on the eve of the finished city's inauguration.

473 See Friar's synopsis in Kazantzakis 1958, 799.

474 See Stanford 1954, 228.

475 'Homer himself shows us Odysseus telling a feigned, but obviously not improbable, tale of an Achaean raid on Egypt.' (p. I).

concerned), his particular strength and fighting ability, his impressive and awe-inspiring appearance, to the point that he is often mistaken for a god, Odysseus seems to be a better man in all respects. In combination with all the other common motifs (e.g. Helen as Odysseus' first destination, Odysseus' final departure from Greece, Odysseus in Egypt, blond barbarians who attack an ancient civilization, the rewriting of the Exodus-story, etc.), one could almost think that Kazantzakis took inspiration from Lang's and Haggard's adventure novel for his epic poem. It is not impossible that Kazantzakis knew *The World's Desire*, which was, after all, very popular and re-edited several times.⁴⁷⁶ In fact, it seems as if he had taken up a few elements, which in his poem, of course, he elaborated in accordance with his philosophical worldview and thus integrated into a much wider context.

5.6 Jules Lemaître's *Nausicaa* (1894)

The next *Odyssey* transformation with a focus on *Wanderlust* is Jules Lemaître's (1853–1914) *Nausicaa*⁴⁷⁷ from 1894, the same year that Cavafy's *Second Odyssey* was written, but following the French tradition of Fénelon (*Les aventures de Télémaque*, 1699), rather than Dante and Tennyson.⁴⁷⁸ Jules Lemaître was mostly known for his sharp literary criticism and drama writing. After attending the École Normale, he started his career as a schoolmaster, before he became a professor at the Faculty of Literature of the University of Grenoble.⁴⁷⁹ It was during his time as a schoolmaster that he published his first literary critique, which made him known to the public.⁴⁸⁰ Within naturalistic and anti-naturalistic literary movements such as decadence and symbolism emerging in the late nineteenth century in France, Lemaître can be assigned to the anti-naturalist camp, which in this context is a conservative nationalist one. In the polarizing conflict over the

476 See Stead 2009, 376.

477 I follow the edition of Lemaître 1894, 41–57.

478 See Stead 2009, 153–54. For the discussion of Cavafy's poem, see Chapter 5.11.

479 See "Jules Lemaître | French Critic and Dramatist" 2020; "Jules LEMAÎTRE" 2020. Apart from Stead's discussion of *Nausicaa* (Stead 2009, 153–62), modern bibliography on Jules Lemaître is hard to come by. A helpful overview of older works is provided by Baguley 1994, 701–2, as well as Stead 2009, 495–96. See also the proceedings of a conference held on the third of December 2010 at the University of Orléans (*Jules Lemaître: « un don d'ubiquité familière »*) which are available online ("Jules Lemaître: « un don d'ubiquité familière »" 2012).

480 See Grimm and Hartwig 2014, 292: 'Il était encore au Havre lorsqu'il fit ses débuts de publiciste et d'emblée il attira et fixa sur lui l'attention du public par une magistrale étude sur Flaubert parue dans la *Revue politique et littéraire* {octobre 1879}.'

artillery officer Alfred Dreyfus (the so-called *Dreyfus affair*) which sharply divided France into two, Lemaître adopted a right-wing, anti-Dreyfus stance and hence a position which was directed against that of Émile Zola.⁴⁸¹ Lemaître's literary treatment of ancient myth, such as in *Nausicaa*, can also be seen in the broader context of his anti-naturalistic tendencies. Yet, he did not content himself with writing this short transformation of the *Odyssey*, but between 1905 and 1907 he published two entire volumes of simple adaptations of ancient, biblical and historical themes, under the title *En marge des vieux livres (On the Margins of Old Books, vols. 1 and 2)*⁴⁸². The texts, which always follow the same principle, seem to be produced as if on an assembly line. The first part of the first volume (1905), which is inspired by the *Odyssey (En marge de l'Odyssee)*, contains an alternative version of the Nausicaa/Telemachus story, entitled *Le mariage de Télémaque (The Marriage of Telemachus)*.⁴⁸³

In *Nausicaa*, a parodistic prose sequel to the *Odyssey*, which takes up the ancient epic in an unconventional way by focusing on a minor character, Telemachus follows in his father's footsteps by embarking on a journey—this time not in search of Ithaca, but of the far away princess Nausicaa that he has heard so much about.⁴⁸⁴ *Nausicaa* thus explores the theme of a new journey after Odysseus' return with a hero struck by *Wanderlust*. Only that it is now Telemachus who takes Odysseus' place and who travels to the venues of Odysseus past adventures.⁴⁸⁵

The text begins with a description of Odysseus' peaceful life after his return and the defeat of the suitors. We learn that the returned hero now spends 'quiet days in his palace in Ithaca' and 'every night [...] he'd tell them [i.e. his family] about his travels' (p. 43):

481 In his famous article *J'accuse* (1898), Zola had passionately defended Dreyfus. See, for example, Grimm and Hartwig 2014, 292: '1898 veröffentlicht Émile Zola in der Zeitschrift *L'Aurore* seinen berühmten Artikel »J'accuse« und löst damit eine heftige Debatte zwischen zwei politischen Lagern aus, den antirassistischen, antimilitaristischen und antiklerikalen Republikanern einerseits und den antisemitischen, antiparlamentarischen und militaristischen konservativen Nationalisten andererseits. Dreyfus wird schließlich begnadigt und 1906 völlig rehabilitiert.' Lemaître was the first president of the anti-Dreyfus organisation *Ligue de la patrie française* (Conner 2014, 160), to which many other members of the *Académie Française* belonged (see Stackelberg 2007, 24), among them Émile Gebhart (see Charle 1985, 82).

482 Lemaître 1905 and Lemaître 1907.

483 Cf. Stead 2009, 157. For the text, see Lemaître 1905, 23–37. In this rather flat narrative, Odysseus himself sends Telemachus off to take Nausicaa as his bride. But Telemachus is not interested in the girl and instead falls in love with the beautiful and older Helen. Outsmarted by the latter, however, he eventually has to marry Nausicaa.

484 Cf. Stead 2009, 154.

485 Cf. again Lang and Pascoli.

NAUSICAA

Après qu'il eut percé de ses flèches les prétendants, l'ingénieux Ulysse, plein de sagesse et de souvenirs, coulait des jours tranquilles dans son palais d'Ithaque. Tout les soirs, assis entre sa femme Pénélope et son fils Télémaque, il leur racontait ses voyages et, quand il avait fini, il recommençait.

Lemaître's Odysseus is a contented and aged hero, who enjoys remembering his adventurous life in the circle of his family and who shows no signs of inner turmoil. He takes particular pleasure in retelling the story about the princess Nausicaa, that leaves a lasting impression on his son—much unlike Penelope, who gently tries to signal to her husband that he is repeating himself. Telemachus develops a strong desire for the young princess that is so ideally portrayed in his father's stories and, as a result, rejects all potential brides proposed to him by his mother (pp. 45–6). He is determined to visit the Phaeacians and ask for Nausicaa's hand in marriage (p. 46):

— Mon coeur veut, ô mon illustre père, que, fendant sur un navire la mer poissonneuse, je vogue vers l'île des Phéaciens, et que j'aie demandé au roi Alcinoüs la main de la belle Nausicaa. Car je me consume d'amour pour cette vierge que mes yeux n'ont jamais aperçue ; et, si vous vous opposez à mon dessein, je vieillirai seul dans votre palais et vous n'aurez point de petit-fils.

Odysseus endorses his son's plan, despite it being patently naive and presented with youthful stubbornness; 'like father like son' seems to be the message implied. However, Odysseus warns Telemachus of 'the dangers of the journey' ('les dangers du voyage', p. 47), because he does not want him to 'repeat [his] disastrous adventures' ('je ne veux point que tu recommences mes funestes aventures', p. 48). Telemachus is given the precise instruction not to stop at the island of the Cyclops (and to 'not try to see' Polyphemus, in case he is drifted there, but to flee), nor that of the Lotus-Eaters (whose flower he shall not eat under any circumstances) or Circe. In the eventuality that he ends up on Circe's island, Odysseus provides him with the herb *moly*, and indicates all the other dangers of the journey to him (pp. 47–8). Telemachus solemnly pledges to remember his father's words (p. 48):

— Je me souviendrai, dit Télémaque. Au reste, tout obstacle et même tout plaisir me sera ennemi qui pourrait retarder mon arrivée dans l'île du sage Alcinoüs.

From the very beginning of his journey, however, Telemachus does the exact opposite of what he promised. Driven off course by a storm, he reaches the island of the Cyclops first. Odysseus had warned him to go and see the Cyclops, for 'though blind, he is still dreadful' ('bien qu'aveugle, il est encore redoutable.', p. 47). Yet, as Odysseus was previously, Telemachus is 'curious to see the giant' ('il fut curieux de voir le géant', p. 48).⁴⁸⁶ Hence he does not only ignore his father's words, but twists them as it suits him: 'The danger is not great, for Polyphemus is blind' ('Le danger n'est pas grand, puisque Polyphème est aveugle.', p. 48). In particular, he goes off on a 'discovery' tour ('à la découverte', p. 48) and falls right into the Cyclops's hands. The latter is no longer blind, since his father has healed him, and wants to eat Telemachus in revenge for the harm done to him by another human (p. 49). Telemachus, however, manages to stay alive by entertaining the Cyclops with endless stories. Like the sultan in *One Thousand and One Nights*, who listens to Schehezerade's never-ending story, the Cyclops spares Telemachus day after day out of curiosity about how the story continues.⁴⁸⁷ Telemachus tells him about the Trojan War and the *nostoi* of the Greeks including Odysseus, without ever revealing that he is his son. When after three years he runs out of material with which to recite to him stories, he begins anew and another three years go by. Finally, he gives up and is ready to face his fate, but laments 'to have never seen the beautiful Nausicaa' (pp. 50–1):

— J'aime mieux que vous me mangiez. Je ne regretterai qu'une chose en mourant : c'est de n'avoir point vu la belle Nausicaa.

Il dit longuement son amour et sa douleur, et, soudain, il vit dans l'oeil du Cyclope une larme aussi grosse qu'une courge.

— Va, dit le Cyclope, va chercher celle que tu aimes. Que ne m'as-tu parlé plus tôt?...

Contrary to Telemachus' expectations, Polyphemus is moved to tears by his story and allows him to leave: '— Go, says the Cyclops, go find the one you love. Why didn't you

486 This sentence is a close echo of *Od.* 9.229 ('not until I could see him') where Odysseus describes his desire to 'see' the Cyclops.

487 Cf. Stead 2009, 155.

tell me earlier?...’ (p. 51). Ironically, Telemachus could have saved six years of his life if he had not conceived Polyphemus as the uncivilized monster of his father’s stories.

The same kind of irony is at work in the Circe episode. Again, a storm blows Telemachus off course, and he encounters Circe as soon as he sets foot on her island. Having lost the magical herb, he does not dare to resist the sorceress, fearing that she might transform him into an animal (pp. 51–2). He stays with her for three years until, one day, he realizes that he still loves Nausicaa. Yet, out of fear, he does nothing. What he does not know, however, is that Circe has grown weary of him anyway. When she finally tries to transform him one night, her attempt fails, because his heart is filled with love for Nausicaa (p. 53). He turns out to have been immune to her spell all along. As with the Cyclops, he could have left straight away and has lost time for nothing.

Driven off by a storm for the third time, Telemachus now arrives at the island of the Lotus-Eaters, who are described as an ideal people (p. 53). Again, he does exactly the opposite of what he promised. When the Lotus-Eaters offer him their flower, he withstands the temptation at first and feeds on his supplies. As these run out, he lives on mussels and fish, until he finally asks the Lotus-Eaters’ king, if ‘the Lotus flower makes men forget even what they desire or suffer the most?’ (*‘la fleur de lotus fait oublier aux hommes mêmes ce qu’ils désirent ou ce dont ils souffrent le plus?’*, p. 54). Even though the king gives the unambiguous response — ‘Definitely’ (*‘Assurément’*) — Telemachus ignores it, reassuring himself: ‘Oh!...it would never make me forget the beautiful Nausicaa’ (*‘Oh!...elle ne me ferait jamais oublier la belle Nausicaa.’*, p. 54). He eats the Lotus and henceforth leads a carefree life, of which he ‘awakens’ only twenty years later (p. 55).

Due to his curious nature⁴⁸⁸ and despite his father’s warnings, the journey drags on and on, while the first three adventures already stretched over a period of twenty-nine years (Cyclops: six, Circe: three, Lotus-Eaters: twenty). The remaining adventures are only briefly hinted at, but we can assume that they, as well, extend over a long period of time. For when Telemachus, who on his arrival on Circe’s island was still referred to as *‘[l]e jeune héros’* (*‘the young hero’*, p. 52), reaches Scheria at last, he is addressed as a *‘vénérable vieillard’* (*‘venerable old man’*, p. 57). Having been washed up by the sea,

488 See p. 55: *‘la curiosité de voir des chose nouvelles’* (*‘the curiosity to see new things’*).

fallen asleep and woken by female voices, precisely as his father once was when he arrived on Scheria, Telemachus approaches a noble looking elderly woman (pp. 56–7):

Il se leva, en ayant soin de voiler sa nudité d'une branche touffue, et s'approcha de cette femme. Elle avait la taille épaisse et lourde, et des mèches de cheveux gris s'échappaient de ses bandelettes. On voyait bien qu'elle avait été belle, mais elle ne l'était plus.

Télémaque lui demanda l'hospitalité. Elle lui répondit avec bienveillance et lui fit donner des vêtements par ses femmes :

— Et maintenant, mon hôte, je vais vous conduire dans la maison du Roi.

— Seriez-vous la Reine ? Demanda Télémaque.

— Vous l'avez dit, ô étranger.

Alors Télémaque, se réjouissant dans son coeur :

— Puissent les dieux accorder longue vie à la mère de la belle Nausicaa !

— Nausicaa, c'est moi, répondit la Reine... Mais qu'avez-vous, vénérable vieillard ?...

Telemachus must realise that Nausicaa, whom he mistook for her mother, is now old and that he is too. In the last sentence, which is spoken again by the narrator, Telemachus finally appears as the old man that he has become: 'Without looking back, the old Telemachus returned to the open sea on his hastily repaired canoe.' (p. 57)

Sur son canot réparé à la hâte, sans regarder derrière lui, le vieux Télémaque regagna la haute mer.

As in Lang's *Hesperothen*, the motif of ageing becomes important at the end of the story. The search (and, with it, the *Wanderlust* that motivates it), restlessly carried on despite all temptations,⁴⁸⁹ is rendered in an absurdist fashion by the age that catches up with Telemachus as well as the anonymous 'Seekers' while they are preoccupied with reaching their goal (Nausicaa/ Isles of the Blessed).

In his role as a new Odysseus, Telemachus appears as careless and at times even foolish, as he stumbles from one mishap to the next, even though his father has forewarned him of all the dangers lying ahead. The strong contrast between what Telemachus sets out (not) to do and what actually happens seems deliberate: a moment earlier, he assured his father that he would remember his advice and that no obstacle

⁴⁸⁹ In *Hesperothen*, the 'Seekers' neither stop to hear the Sirens nor do they stay in the ideal land of the Phaeacians. The Lotus-Eaters in *Nausicaa* fulfil the same function as Lang's Phaeacians, since they lead a happy life, 'enjoying the present and not worrying about anything' ('jouissant de l'heure présente et ne se souciant d'aucune chose', p. 55), which Telemachus forsakes in order to reach his final destination.

would stop him, yet shortly afterwards the exact opposite occurs. This imprudence, as well as the irony underlying some of Telemachus' decisions (Cyclops, Circe)—which are actually aimed at reaching Nausicaa, but effectively cause that goal to drift further and further away—leaves us with a quite unheroic and slightly ridiculous figure. Nausicaa, who is Telemachus' "Ithaca", is a target he follows with blind naivety and which serves as a projection-screen until the disillusionment of the very end. One could say that, in retrospect, the words of the Lotus-Eaters' king regarding Telemachus' twenty-year stay with them turn out to be true (p. 55):

— Ce sont les vingt meilleures années de votre vie, lui dit le Roi.
Mais Télémaque ne le crut pas.

This is the only genuine insight that one gains from this narrative, which attempts to deconstruct the epic by stripping it of its sublimity and unmasking it of its human weakness. Telemachus, the supposedly epic hero, shows no signs of Odyssean *polytropia* or heroic grandeur, but is presented as inexperienced and naive, as he makes a series of unfortunate choices. Furthermore, as Stead already noticed, in this *Odyssey* transformation there is no trace of the Dantean Odysseus, the bold transgressor burning in the infernal flame. Other elements typical of French *Odyssey* sequels, such as old age, disenchantment and irony, are prominent instead.⁴⁹⁰ In fact, in Lemaître's text, one can already detect the slightly mock-heroic tone, which in Gebhart's later narrative will turn into a biting, and almost malicious, sarcasm.⁴⁹¹

5.7 Arturo Graf's *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* (1897)

In 1897 the Italian poet and literary critic Arturo Graf (1848–1903) published the narrative poem *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse*⁴⁹² as a part of the verse collection *Le Danaidi*. Born to a German father and an Italian mother, Graf spent his childhood in Greece, Italy and Romania.⁴⁹³ After the premature death of his father in 1855, his mother sought help from a brother in Braila, Romania, where, together with his brother and only surviving

⁴⁹⁰ See Stead 2009, 161.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. p. 157.

⁴⁹² The text I will be referring to is the one printed by Stead 2009, 163–97. While she faithfully follows the edition of Chiantore/ Loescher (Graf 1922, see Stead 2009, 486), she has added a verse numbering to the text, which is of great benefit to us here.

⁴⁹³ See Bertelli 2007, 885–86; Anna Dolfi in Graf 1990, XXIII.

sibling Ottone, they spent the next seven years (1856–1863).⁴⁹⁴ Back in Italy, Graf studied Law in Naples, yet finally became a professor of Italian Literature at the University of Turin (1882–1907).⁴⁹⁵ In the following years he gained considerable renown as a scholar and poet.

Graf's poetic oeuvre reveals influences from both French symbolism and German romanticism.⁴⁹⁶ Moreover, his poetry is often pessimistic in tone, which is most commonly attributed to the influence of Giacomo Leopardi.⁴⁹⁷ This pessimism is also reflected in *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* which, as Stead shows, has received little attention and has been generally underestimated or misunderstood.⁴⁹⁸

The poem, which runs to 508 verses, consists of three parts (preceded by the Roman numbers I–III) and is a close reception of Dante's *Inferno* passage. Part I (vv. 1–223) resumes the story four years after Odysseus' return to Ithaca.

L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse

I.

Già quattr'anni passâr dappoi che Ulisse
In Itaca tornò. Quattr'anni ei visse
In compagnia della fedel consorte
E del caro figliuol: grato alla sorte
Che dall'ira de' venti e del vorace
Mar scampato l'avea; godendo in pace
De' sudati riposi e del sonoro

494 See Dolfi in Graf 1990, XXIII; Mainenti 1938, 9–10.

495 See Bertelli 2007, 886; cf. Dolfi in Graf 1990, XXIV for this and the following.

496 See Bertelli 2007, 885; cf. Dolfi in Graf 1990, XIV, who associates him with Romanticism rather than symbolism, as well as Defendi 2000, 26, stating that Graf's poetry 'reveals influences of European Romanticism and decadentism in general'.

497 See Bertelli 2007, 885; cf. Dolfi in Graf 1990, X. However, Dolfi points out that towards the end of his life Graf became religious, which released him from his pessimism, but also put an end to his poetic activity, which had been nourished by this very pessimism: 'La fede doveva liberare dal «determinismo fallace», dargli quella fiducia totale di essere libero [...], salvandolo da quel pessimismo su cui per quarant'anni si era mossa la sua ansia di sapere, la sua curiosità, la sua inquieta ricerca, la «piena e chiara coscienza dell'assurdità della vita, della stoltezza dell'opera, della disperata vanità di tutte le cose apparenti»; ma doveva segnare anche, fatalmente, l'arresto della sua attività poetica (se è vero che nel 1906, anno di *Per una fede*, uscirà l'ultima raccolta di versi: *Le rime della selva*) che proprio di quel pessimismo, di quella controllata inconciliabilità si era nutrita.'

498 See Stead 2009, 200–201. For the full discussion of Graf's poem, see Stead 2009, 163–208. Stanford 1954, 210; 275 refers to Graf's elaboration together with the ones by Andrew Lang and Émile Gebhart as minor *Odyssey* transformations. It is the so-called 'school of Dante', i.e. Tennyson, Pascoli and D'Annunzio (see the contents headings of chapter XIV. in Stanford 1954, ix.) which Stanford considers 'the three most significant Western writers on the fortunes of Ulysses after his return to Ithaca' while '[o]ther modern poets or novelists handled the same theme, but with less distinction.' (Stanford 1954, 210).

Applauso della Fama, e in coppe d'oro
 Bevendo il vin de' floridi vigneti
 Che dal padre eredì. [...] 10

While in these first four years the returned hero leads a happy and fulfilled life (vv. 1–30), and often tells the captivating story of his adventures (vv. 10–30), a change slowly sets in after another four years of the same (vv. 31–50). Although (or perhaps because) everything seems to be perfect (vv. 40–3), he is overcome by tedium ('tedio', v. 49):

Ma tranquilli, uniformi, in pace e in gioco
 Passâr altri quattr'anni: e a poco a poco
 D'Ulisse il labbro ammutolì, l'arguto
 Riso, onde gli atri già sonâr, fu muto,
 E una torbida nube il guardo acceso, 35
 L'ampia fronte oscurò.
 [...]
 Ma sottil come tossico un disdegno
 Di se stesso e d'altrui lento serpeva 45
 Nelle vene d'Ulisse; e qual si leva
 Da ree paludi accidiosa e tetra
 Nebbia che infosca il sole, occupa l'etra,
 Tale in Ulisse si levava il tedio
 E al cor poneagli ed alla mente assedio. 50

The following phase is marked by melancholy and an undefinable longing (vv. 51–76), in which Odysseus is often seen restlessly wandering around the island (vv. 58–63). His old companions, who are still alive here, apparently share a similar fate (vv. 70–6)⁴⁹⁹:

E il cor nel petto gli bolliva! Oh quanti 70
 Vide egli pur de' suoi compagni, in quello
 Stesso modo, inquieti, e di rovello
 Tacito pieni, errar lungo le sponde
 Cui sempre sferza il vento e batton l'onde!
 E l'un l'altro squadrava e negli strutti 75
 Volti un solo pensier leggeasi a tutti.

⁴⁹⁹ This element will be taken up by Pascoli. In his *L'Ultimo viaggio* (1904), Odysseus' companions, who have already readied the old ship seaworthy, are sitting by the sea every spring, waiting for Odysseus. Cf. p. 206.

Again, a long time goes by, ‘until one day that the immutable fate had destined to new fortunes, to a new and extraordinary wandering’ (vv. 77–80). Odysseus now summons his companions to the top of a hill overlooking the open sea, ‘up to the far edge of the east’ (vv. 81–7). His appearance, described in lofty words as particularly heroic and imposing, resembles an epiphany (vv. 87–103):

Ivi di lucid’oro
 Cinta la fronte augusta, in mezzo a loro
 Egli appari, tale nel maschio volto, 90
 Tal nel nobile incesso e nel raccolto
 Vigor marmoreo delle membra, quale
 Apparir già solea nel marziale
 Cimento, là sui verdi campi dove
 Fu Troja un dì. Ivi, com’uom di nuove
 Speranze lieto e di giocondi auspici, 95
 Ridente apparve e salutò gli amici:
 [...]
 Alfin, simile a un nume, e tra profondo 102
 Silenzio, a favellar prese in tal forma.

In a lengthy, pathos-laden speech (vv. 104–202)⁵⁰⁰ he convinces them to pursue a ‘daring undertaking’ (‘impresa audace’⁵⁰¹, v. 197), a journey beyond the Pillars of Hercules, never ventured by man before, in order to explore the mysterious, unknown world. His passionate words are met with fervent applause (vv. 203–23):

Ei tacque a tanto, e dagli ansanti petti
 Dei compagni, che insiem raccolti e stretti
 Ascoltato l’aveano, alto un clamore 205
 Proruppe allor, che il monte e le sonore
 Sponde empìe di rimbombo e sui veloci
 Flutti corse a dilungo: ed eran voci
 Di baldanza e d’applauso, eran frementi
 Grida di gioja e fervorosi accenti 210
 D’amor devoto e d’incrollabil fede.
 “Padre! Duce! Maestro! Il sol non vede
 Uomo che in senno ed in valor t’agguagli.
 Tu ne guida e ne reggi. A repentagli
 Nuovi le vite de’ tuoi fidi esponi. 215

⁵⁰⁰ In contrast, compare the Dantean Odysseus’s ‘orazion picciola’ (*Inf.* XXVI, 122).

⁵⁰¹ Cf. ‘il volo audace’ (‘his audacious flight’) in *Ger. lib.* XV, 26.

Tutti, tutti con te. Da questi proni
 Ozii obliosi e da sì vile stato
 Tu ne redimi alfin. Comunque il fato
 Sia per volgersi, o 'l ciel, sino all'estremo
 Nostro di saremo tuoi, teco saremo.” 220
 E stringeansi le destre, e in caldi abbracci
 Si stringevano i petti, e in nuovi lacci
 Di fraterna amistà l'anime invitte.

It is in this markedly optimistic mood that the first part of the poem closes. In the premonition of what is yet to come, the absolute devotion (vv. 211–20) and exalted enthusiasm of the companions, whose downfall is thereby sealed, as well as the subsequent cheerful preparations for the journey, bear a strongly ironic touch.⁵⁰²

In the second and shortest part of the poem (vv. 224–316), the preparations for the journey are carried out in joyful anticipation (vv. 224–50), ‘and the days pass happily with these works’ (‘e i giorni in queste / Opre consuman lieti.’ vv. 243–4). Finally, Odysseus, overconfident and self-involved, bids farewell to Penelope (vv. 255–66), ‘his crying wife’ (‘alla piangente sua consorte’, v. 254), and Telemachus (v. 269–84), who are left to comfort each other. While Odysseus’ words to Penelope are only apparently comforting, they actually serve to highlight his masculinity and supposed heroism. The male-female dichotomy here, i.e. the sentimental, obedient housewife who cries over her husband’s departure, in contrast to the daring adventurer who happily goes out into the world, could not be more clichéd (vv. 255–66):

[...] “Sposa, sorella, 255
 Cessa dal pianto desolato, e quella
 Sii che fosti mai sempre, e or più conviensi,
 D’alto cor donna e di virili sensi.
 Me chiama il fato a nuove audacie. Ancora
 Piena del nome mio tu la sonora 260
 Tromba udrai della Fama: ancor superba
 Sarai tu d’esser mia. Tale ti serba
 Qual fosti. Addio! Teco rimane il caro
 Nostro figliuolo. Or dunque addio! Se amaro

⁵⁰² Cf. Stead 2009, 205: ‘Le poème de Graf est donc bien le lieu d’une double vérité, ou plutôt une façade héroïque minée par le pressentiment de la fin et l’instinct du désastre.’

Flutti talor, da' paventosi abissi	400
Ignoto mostro scaturia repente,	
Balenava, spariva. E già la mente	
Di tutti e il core una inquieta cura	
Giva occupando, una secreta e scura	
Apprensione di quel mondo ascoso,	405
Di quel tacito andar senza riposo	
E senza fine. [...]	

Eventually the mood turns into fear: the men start remembering their homeland which is now far away ('la patria lontana', v. 415). When the winds come to a standstill (vv. 417–20) and 'heavy, dormant, mortal calm drown[s] the sky and the sea' (Greve, / *Sonnolenta, mortal calma affogava / Il cielo e il mare*', vv. 426–8), fear begins to spread (vv. 430–3):

[...] Allora	430
Una torbida angoscia, una crudele	
Ansia gli animi strinse, e le querele	
Alto sonâr. [...]	433

However, Odysseus succeeds in giving the men new courage by going from ship to ship (vv. 433–7), promising 'a soon and safe end to the journey' ('del viaggio / Prossimo e certo prometteva il fine.', vv. 436–7), which again appears in a highly ironic light, given the actual *end* of this journey. After the wind starts blowing again, their journey 'on the deserted path' ('la deserta via.', v. 444) goes on monotonously ('Nasceva il sol, moriva il sol [...]', vv. 445–54). When they first spot a colony of birds (vv. 455–8), and then a green branch floating in the water (vv. 459–462), they gain hope (vv. 463–4). Their new hope soon culminates into exalted joy (vv. 470–7) when a mountain appears in the west (vv. 465–9), just before the disaster takes its course. Similarly to Odysseus's companions in Dante's *Inferno*, who have sighted the 'montagna bruna' (*Inf.* XXVI, 133), they rejoice too soon (vv. 470–7), only to be swallowed by the sea shortly afterwards (vv. 478–503).⁵⁰³ The ship, which a moment ago was driven by a favourable

⁵⁰³ Vv. 478–508: After an initial state of complete silence, a thunderous sea storm breaks out and the sun darkens ('Il sol si spegne.', v. 490). There is seemingly no escape, and the fighting spirit and virtue of the men are broken (vv. 501–2). They are swallowed by the sea. As with the rest of the poem, this scene is described in much more detail than in Dante.

wind, suddenly comes to a halt (vv. 478–81). A mighty cloud now emerges from the west and ‘devours’ all light (vv. 481–8), and as such ‘[t]he sun goes out’ (‘[i]l sol si spegne.’, v. 490). In the ensuing storm, every attempt to escape is in vain:

[...] Incalza	490
Infuriando il turbine. Squarciato	
Insorge il mar ruggiando, e d’ogni lato,	
Bianchi di bava, a mostruosi agoni	
Corron confusamente i cavalloni.	
Rotà e si torce tenebrosa in cielo	495
La nube, e scissa da focoso telo,	
Stride, rintrona, e il mar bevendo, mesce	
A quei del mare i proprii gorghi. Cresce	
Il tumulto, il fragore e la ruina.	
Invan le navi alla mortal rapina	500
Tentan fuggir. Manca ogn’ingegno, è franta	
Ogni virtù. Strappa le vele, schianta	
Gli alberi il turbo, e con orrendo spiro	
Trae le carene in vorticoso giro.	
Ed ecco, sotto a lor, nell’onde crude	505
Una immensa voragine si schiude,	
E roteando e spumeggiando inghiotte	
Carene e vite nella eterna notte.	

As we have seen, the sudden shift from exalted joy to doom and death in Dante’s *Inferno* was taken up before by Baudelaire in *Le Voyage II*, 9–12. Graf’s and Baudelaire’s *Odyssey* transformations further resemble each other in that in their course the over-optimism and euphoria of the beginning is deconstructed in different ways. In both texts everything inevitably leads to death. In *Le voyage*, however, both on closer examination of the passage mentioned above (II, 9–12) and in relation to the entire plot of the poem, the shift is internal and so psychologically motivated,⁵⁰⁴ whereas in Graf’s work the exalted heroism of the beginning is (again in close imitation of Dante) brought to an abrupt end by the outbreak of a storm. Death by shipwreck is here (in Graf, as well as in Dante) a compulsion which emerges from an external force (even if it is the psychological state of *Wanderlust* that ultimately causes it and brings it about), while in

⁵⁰⁴ Regarding the aforementioned passage (*Le Voyage II*, 9–12) that echoes the respective passage in Dante’s *Inferno* (i.e. the abrupt shift from joy to doom), it is made clear at the beginning that the scene takes place inside the human soul: ‘Notre âme est un trois-mâts cherchant son Icarie [...]’

Baudelaire's text death is recognized as the only remedy of *ennui* through an inner change and is consequently actively longed for.

Up to a certain point of the narrative, the Dantean Odysseus' transgression, as taken up by Graf, could be seen as indicative of the nineteenth-century pioneering spirit of scientific progress. On the other hand, the bitterly ironic aftertaste of the pathos-charged enterprise and unbridled enthusiasm in light of the negative outcome of this venture,⁵⁰⁵ must be associated with the crisis of positivism and the resulting decadence of the *fin de siècle* in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁶ Indeed, Graf, whose scientific interests were wide-ranging,⁵⁰⁷ in both his poetic and his critical writings, combines positivistic elements with (cultural) pessimism.⁵⁰⁸ In his account of Odysseus' last voyage, one thing inevitably leads to another: Odysseus' initial *taedium vitae*, that makes his life at home unbearable, leads to his high spirited determination to embark on a new journey, which can (and will) not end well.⁵⁰⁹ The tension between the emphatically optimistic mood, with the grandiloquent heroism of the first—and, as far as Odysseus is concerned, also second—part of the poem, and its abrupt, apocalyptic ending, can be regarded as symptomatic of the late nineteenth century, where anxiety and euphoria regarding the future go hand in hand. Thus, the restless Odysseus, who is struck by an existential *Wanderlust*, is virtually predestined to express the uncertainties of the *fin de siècle*:

It was in this moment of existential and social crisis that Italian poets belonging to all these different movements began to manipulate the myth of Ulysses' last voyage to express the angsts of the period ranging from a post-Romantic *Wanderlust* to a decadent *ennui*. It is in fact Dante's recasting of Ulysses as an unsatisfied and unsettled hero that makes him so appealing to these authors, despite producing completely different results.⁵¹⁰

505 Cf. Stead 2009, 204–5 on the irony of the crew's demise at the end of the poem.

506 Cf. Sormani 1975, 227: 'Nella figura di Arturo Graf (Atene 1848-Torino 1913) la crisi del positivismo si esprime nella maniera più sottilmente acuta e dolorosa [...].'

507 See Mainenti 1938, 161, note 1.

508 See Bertelli 2007, 885; Moroni and Somigli 2004, 72; Petronio 1991, 826; Lonardi 1988, 43–44.

509 Cf. Stead 2009, 204: 'L'état de l'âme prévoit, rédit, fixe l'issue de l'aventure.'

510 See Schironi 2015, 346.

What already announced itself in the inescapability of Baudelairean *ennui*⁵¹¹ is at work here as well. For when Graf's Odysseus, dashing forward with unwavering confidence, attempts to escape the *taedium vitae* that has befallen him, he shows himself to be already doomed to failure. Although Graf is not hostile to positivism like Baudelaire, his answer regarding the possibility of escaping the *ennui* is also negative.

5.8 Émile Gebhart's *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902)

The first relevant transformation of the *Odyssey* to appear in the beginning of the twentieth century is the 147-page-long prose narrative, *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902), by the French writer and scholar Émile Gebhart (1839–1908). The text was published as part of the collection *D'Ulysse à Panurge: contes héroï-comiques* and was re-edited several times.⁵¹² In this story, which is told with a sinister wink of the eye, Odysseus leaves Ithaca again out of *Wanderlust*. The new journey of this strong and resolute Odysseus, 'the last of the great heroes' ('le dernier des grands héros', p. 147), leads to many different places. As a result of his (negative) experiences on this journey, he plans on going back to Ithaca, this time for good. But it does not come to that, as he is destined for an ironically tragic ending—to be killed by Telegonus, his son by Circe, on the very spot where he murdered the little Astyanax, son of Hector, and where he hoped to cleanse himself of his crime. In the light of the mostly positive qualities attributed to Odysseus throughout the narrative, the killing of the protagonist by his sadistic son appears all the more cruel and gives the narrative a bitter aftertaste. No less characteristic of this narrative, however, is the poetic language, as is found especially in the descriptions of idyllic scenery and nature.

Gebhart's early career was shaped by classical studies: he spent the years from 1861 to 1863 at the *École française d'Athènes*, and in 1860 obtained his doctorate with a French dissertation titled *Histoire du sentiment poétique de la nature dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine* as well as a supplementary Latin dissertation titled *De varia Ulyssis apud veteres poetas persona* that same year.⁵¹³ Later, he held a university chair of Foreign Literature and, from 1880 onwards, a chair of Southern European Literature that was specifically created for him at the Sorbonne.⁵¹⁴ A considerable amount of his

511 Cf. p. 101.

512 See Stead 2009, 373. I will be quoting from the third edition; Gebhart 1908.

513 See Benoist 1925, 327.

514 See Passini 2008.

life time he spent travelling or abroad.⁵¹⁵ Although his first works were concerned with antiquity, he was primarily a historian, who became particularly known for his later scholarly work on the Italian Renaissance, which ‘was at the heart of his work and thought’.⁵¹⁶ For his literary works, which were often lavishly illustrated, Gebhart drew on historical and mythical material from antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Among other things, he wrote two collections of stories: *Au son des cloches. Contes et légendes* (1898) and *D’Ulysse à Panurge. Contes héroï-comiques* (1902), both published with Hachette.

With his successful narrative *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse*, Gebhart finally returned to the figure of Odysseus, to whom he had dedicated one of his earliest works, his Latin dissertation. Despite its late publication date of 1902, the narrative displays many romantic characteristics.⁵¹⁷ Among these can be noted the sensuality and aestheticism of the language, the hero’s retreat into nature, his *ennui* und melancholy, and, last but not least, the mock-epic style, with a melange of comic and tragic elements, which contributes to the ‘dethroning’ of the classical hero and his traditionally epic values.⁵¹⁸ As with Lemaître’s *Nausicaa* (1894), Dante’s Odysseus is irrelevant for this French *Odyssey* transformation.⁵¹⁹

The story begins on Ithaca not long after the killing of the suitors, when Odysseus is already beginning ‘to sink into a deep ennui’ (pp. 1–2):

515 He visited Italy on a regular basis and lived in Athens, Egypt, Spain and Constantinople. See “Émile GEBHART | Académie Française” 2019.

516 See Passini 2008: ‘La Renaissance fut au cœur de ses travaux et de sa pensée’ [...]. See ibidem on the influence that his work on classical art and culture had on his later work as a historian: ‘Imbus d’un fervent classicisme et pénétrés d’une conception esthétisante de l’Antiquité, ces premiers travaux annoncent néanmoins la démarche de ses ouvrages majeurs: celle d’une historiographie attentive surtout aux expressions artistiques et littéraires permettant de remonter aux formes diffuses de la sensibilité d’une époque.’

517 Cf. Hannoosh 2011, 459: ‘Nostalgia, and the feelings associated with it, indeed figure among the more prominent themes of Romantic art: the emphasis on melancholy and ennui, on memory and the past, on absence and death, on crumbling ruins and bygone glory certainly suggests a regret for something that can never be recovered.’

518 With Odysseus’ death, ‘le dernier des grands héros’ (p. 147), the time of heroes has officially come to an end. Cf. Hannoosh 2011, 455: ‘Romanticism represented not only a rejection of Classical values, but an inversion of them. The commonplace and trivial became sources of the beautiful and worthy subjects of art, which was no longer limited to the exploits of gods and heroes.’

519 Cf. p. 148.

LES
DERNIÈRES AVENTURES
DU DIVIN ULYSSE

1

Quand le divin Ulysse eut retrouvé sa maison, sa femme et son sceptre, quand il eut compté les bœufs que les prétendants de Pénélope n'avaient point mis à la broche, les poiriers, les pommiers et les figuiers plantés par son père Laërte et les porcs engraisés par le fidèle Eumée, il se sentit peu à peu tomber en un profond ennui.

Cet homme qui, tant de fois, au cours de ses aventures, avait souhaité de revoir la fumée bleuâtre monter lentement, à l'heure du crépuscule, des toits de la rocheuse Ithaque, languissait dans l'ombre de son foyer domestique.

The returnee's former nostalgia for his home, which was still in line with the Homeric hypotext, is explicitly contrasted with his present state, where he 'languished in the shadow of his home' ('languissait dans l'ombre de son foyer domestique', pp. 1–2), and will soon turn into a longing for a new departure (pp. 10–11). Hence, it is only after Odysseus' return to Ithaca that Gebhart's text detaches itself from its Homeric model—a fact, that the text self-consciously reflects.⁵²⁰ After his return, Odysseus feels no emotional connection to his wife or son (pp. 2–5). Telemachus is a 'chaste young man', who, in being 'too virtuous [...], burdened his father with austere maxims and good advice'.⁵²¹

Télémaque, trop candide et trop pur, lassait et irritait Ulysse. L'adolescent triste qu'Athéna avait formé à la sagesse semblait vraiment trop vertueux. Le fils accablait son père de maximes austères et de bons conseils. Ulysse, un jour, voulut

520 To describe Odysseus' state of mind and longing for home previous to his return, the text makes use of the unmistakably Homeric image of the smoke rising up from his land. In this passage Gebhart's text shows a striking similarity to the second stanza of Heyse's poem *Odysseus* (vv. 7–12), where Odysseus' former nostalgia for his homeland is equally contrasted to his present nostalgia for departure by recurring to the same Homeric motif: 'Wie wandert' er lang durch die Wellenflur! / O sah' er den Rauch seiner Insel nur! / So seufzte sein Herz voll Schwere. / Nun blickt er ins Weite vom Heimathstrand / Und seufzt und birgt das Haupt in die Hand — / Kühl weht der Wind vom Meere.'

521 For the motif of the father-son-contrast in D'Annunzio and other authors, see p. 178. Franz Blei skilfully adopts this element from Gebhart. In Blei's text, the meticulous Telemachus points out 'repetitions and doublets' is his father's (invented) adventure stories: 'Mit einem trüben Lächeln blickte da Odysseus auf den Jüngling, der unter der Obhut seiner Gattin und des andern Weibervolkes im Hause sich zu einem abscheulichen Musterknaben entwickelt hatte, der keine Geschichte des Vaters passieren ließ, ohne eine moralische Nutzenwendung daraus abzuleiten und mit Wichtigkeit vorzutragen. Was ich zu viel habe, der hat's zu wenig, dachte Odysseus und erhob sich, denn es ward ihm übel, und trat vor das Haus unter den Himmel voller Sterne.' (Blei 1960, 352).

le marier à Nausicaa.⁵²² Il espérait que la jeune femme éclairerait de son sourire le petit royaume. Mais le chaste jeune homme, tout rou gissant, les yeux baissés, répondit:

— Non, Athéna ne me permettra point d'épouser une fille que mon père a rencontrée, un matin d'été, nue et la chevelure dénouée, jouant à la balle dans les prairies de Corcyra!

Odysseus' relationship with Penelope, who has grown old and highly distrustful of her vagabond husband, is even worse. In the following description, Penelope appears as passively aggressive, reproachful and extremely jealous—of course, not entirely without good reason (pp. 2–3):

A l'égard de Pénélope, Ulysse passa bientôt d'une hostilité impatiente à la plus sincère aversion. Vingt années de veuvage, d'anxiétés et d'orgueil, avaient flétri la beauté l'héroïque épouse. Pénélope avait vieilli. Les imprudentes confidences du voyageur allumèrent en son coeur une jalousie farouche. Tous les jours elle l'obligeait à lui parler d'Andromaque, de Déidamie, d'Hélène, de Cassandre, de Briséis, de Nausicaa. Elle l'écoutait alors avec une froideur inquiétante; puis, subitement, d'une voix aigre, elle l'interrogeait sur Circé et Calypso, et, de ses grands yeux noirs, fixés à la trame de son éternelle tapisserie, sortaient des éclairs. Ulysse courbait le front et se mordait les lèvres. [...] Elle jugeait ridicule l'invention du cheval de Troie et haussait les épaules quand son mari rappelait ses exploits dans l'ancre du Cyclope. Elle calculait fiévreusement l'emploi de ces dix années de vagabondage après la chute de Priam. Il avait beau mentir, imaginer des accidents sans nombre et de mauvais tours de Poseidon pour expliquer l'inexplicable retard,⁵²³ Pénélope l'interrompait brusquement:

522 It is not unlikely that this detail was inspired by one of Lemaître's narratives (most probably *Le mariage de Télémaque*), which featured different variations of the Telemachus/Nausicaa theme. Cf. p. 143.

523 Gebhart's Odysseus thus lies about his journey home and invents various episodes to justify his late return in front of the jealous Penelope, although it is not said which exactly of his adventures are a lie. The motif of the invented adventures is later adopted and expanded by Franz Blei in his only few pages of long narrative. As already mentioned, Blei's *Des Odysseus letzte Ausfahrt* (1923) is heavily based on Gebhart's text (Stead 2009, 373–78 compares both texts in detail; however, she is wrong to attribute to Blei the first use of the motif of the invented adventures as a reaction to Penelope's jealousy; see Stead 2009, 377). In Blei's narrative, none of Odysseus' adventures are true but lies that he tells Penelope to fill the years that in fact he spent with Calypso. Another text, that draws on the motif of the invented adventures, is Jean Giono's novel *Naissance de l'Odyssee* (1930) (cf. Stead 2009, 377; 380). Here, the lying tales of Odysseus lead to the creation of the *Odyssey*. However, in contrast to the heroic stories he himself circulated, this Odysseus constantly plagued by fears and worries. Giono's ironic text, however, does not describe an Odysseus struck by *Wanderlust*, but rather focuses on the failed homecoming of a weak and insecure man who does not live up to his reputation.

« Dix ans, c'est neuf années de trop pour une route que, la première fois, les Grecs avaient parcourue en trois mois. »

As a result of his emotional isolation, Odysseus' *Wanderlust* keeps growing as he wallows in nostalgic memories of his travels and envies travellers who are sailing by (p. 9–10). While he frequently indulges in a sad resignation and retreats into nature (pp. 7–8) or seeks out the hut of the old swineherd Eumaeos, 'his only friend that he had in Ithaca' ('l'unique ami qu'il eût dans Ithaque', p. 7), Menelaus arrives from Sparta (p. 11). He is obsessed with the idea of finding Helen, who has disappeared again with Paris by the end of the Trojan war, ten years previously. Softened by wealth and emotionally unstable, Menelaus puts all his hope in the 'the wily, resourceful Odysseus' ('le rusé, l'ingénieux Ulysse', p. 16) in order to find his 'unfaithful' wife, who, as it will turn out, has no interest whatsoever in returning to him. Without further notice or farewells, Odysseus' second departure is carried out the next day, together with Menelaus and his faithful servant Eumaeos (pp. 17–18).⁵²⁴ This new journey is mainly motivated by Odysseus' disillusion after his return home and his lack of emotional connection with his family, and especially Penelope.⁵²⁵ In the end, the declared purpose of his journey will be to reconcile Nemesis for a war-crime he committed in Troy: the murder of the little Astyanax, that is still haunting him (pp. 5–6).⁵²⁶

After leaving Ithaca, the first part of the narrative describes the joint journey of Menelaus and Odysseus (pp. 1–73), whose declared purpose is to find Helen.⁵²⁷ At the moment of departure, however, Odysseus' thoughts are with Calypso (p. 18). On their often arduous journey, Menelaus and Odysseus first visit the Oracle of Apollo at Mount Parnassus (pp. 18–28), in order to inquire about their further voyage. They then travel to the river Styx to drink from it and obtain purification (pp. 30–40), before they consult the Trojan priestess Cassandra in Mycenae (pp. 41–7), who—according to the Pythia—

524 When Odysseus looks back to Ithaca one last time, it is only for a short moment that his thoughts stay with it ('Un nuage rapide passa sur le front du roi fugitif.', p. 18), before 'the mystery of distant lands' ('le mystère des contrées lointaines', p. 18) captures his attention once and for all.

525 Odysseus himself puts it in a nutshell, when, in response to Menelaus' statement, 'Toi seul sauras m'aider à ressaisir ma femme', he says: 'Et toi, mon frère, tu m'aideras à quitter la mienne.' (p. 16).

526 'Il revivait l'effroyable scène du dernier jour d'Illion le petit Astyanax, éperdu, se débattait entre ses bras, et lui, le Grec sans pitié, prenant le pauvre enfant par les pieds, le faisait tourner, à la manière d'une fronde, et lui brisait la tête sur la pierre des remparts. Andromaque et la vieille Hécube avaient vu cette horreur. Il essuya son front aux plis de sa chlamyde, comme pour effacer le sang de la victime, qui jaillit alors jusqu'à sa face. Et, dans le tumulte des flots et des vents, sous les grands pins que la tempête balançait d'une façon terrible, il crut reconnaître la clameur qui, des rangs des deux armées, de l'âme des deux peuples, éclata pour maudire l'œuvre impie.' (p. 6).

527 See also Menelaus to Cassandra on p. 47.

knows Helen's whereabouts. Before they finally head to Egypt in search of Helen (pp. 54–73), they also visit Calypso's island (pp. 48–53), since Odysseus secretly changes course over night while Menelaus is asleep (p. 49). Later, with Menelaus back in Sparta, Odysseus visits the island of Circe (pp. 84–105) and finally the ruins of Troy (pp. 126–47). Telegonus, who at first travels on Odysseus' ship as a stowaway, will finally kill his father who cannot bring himself to kill the boy (p. 116), although he senses his dark, sinister aura and the danger emanating from him.⁵²⁸

Throughout the journey, Odysseus acts with great self-confidence and certainty about the future. As opposed to the humorously depicted fearful and weak Menelaus, Odysseus appears as the strong, resolute leader, endowed with several (though not exclusively)⁵²⁹ positive attributes: he is brave, optimistic and determined, but nevertheless human, with mistakes and regrets. Similar to the Homeric Odysseus, he knows how to assert himself in difficult situations.⁵³⁰ Furthermore, his heroism is only rarely ridiculed or ironically broken,⁵³¹ as in Menelaus' case.⁵³² But his bravery and heroism do not save Odysseus from meeting a harsh and miserable end.

In the Calypso episode (pp. 48–53), Odysseus' emphasized self-confidence and conviction that he will find everything unaltered and as he remembers it is skilfully deconstructed.⁵³³ On this island, where once there ruled 'an eternal spring' (p. 51), the disillusion already begins in the decayed forest (pp. 51–2). The travellers soon meet a

528 In addition to his ominous, mysterious nature, Telegonus, being the son of a sorceress, is gifted with magical powers. See p. 125, where he heals Odysseus' wounds after an eagle attack.

529 He is not exactly described as a good husband, since he has been unfaithful and still prefers Calypso and Circe to his aged wife, while his views on women (as expressed on various occasions, see especially his elaborate speech 'sur la perfidie des femmes', pp. 39–40) are considerably misogynistic. Also, he is often shown as ignorant towards other peoples and customs (cf. p. 164 of this study) and occasionally as unrealistically confident (see, for example, pp. 26–7: 'Ulysse, à sa vue, conçut une pensée ingénieuse. [...]'; p. 51; pp. 105–96).

530 For example, he saves himself and his companions from the life-threatening situation in Egypt (actually caused by his curiosity to see the Pyramids) by killing the holy crocodile with a litter.

531 An effective exception, however, is Odysseus' breakdown when he discovers Telegonus hiding on his ship. See p. 165 for more details.

532 Apart from the fact that he often bursts into tears, one can think of many exemplary passages, e.g. where he dresses up for Helen in order to look like Paris (p. 17) or where he runs away scared by the Python in Delphi (p. 27). For further details on the motif of a debilitated Menelaus in Gebhart's and other texts, see p. 130.

533 See p. 51: 'Ulysse éclata de rire. [...]' and p. 52: 'Ulysse ne riait plus.' for his behaviour before and after the disillusion.

very fragile old woman who, as it turns out, is the 100-year-old Calypso, who is about to die that same evening (p. 52):

Les rois s'approchèrent. A la vue d'Ulysse, la femme ouvrit les bras et jeta un cri grêle, pareil à celui d'un oiseau mourant. Le bonhomme Eumée lâcha le fagot et soutint la pauvre vieille qui tombait à la renverse sur un tas de feuilles sèches. Elle tremblait, telle qu'une fleur fanée au bout d'une branche. Elle était si chétive, si cassée, si croulante, avec un visage tout en rides profondes et des mèches de cheveux blancs autour de son front d'ivoire jauni!

She then relates how the departure of Odysseus, her first and only love, had robbed her of her immortality and caused her to age abruptly (pp. 52–3):

« Tu reviens trop tard, gémissait Calypso. Une fois le soleil couché, au premier soir de ta fuite, j'étais perdue. Hélas! Ulysse, pourquoi ne t'avais-je point dévoilé le secret des Nymphes? Notre jeunesse immortelle est un don des Dieux tant que nous demeurons vierges et pures; mais l'amour, notre premier, notre unique amour, par la grâce de ces Dieux indulgents, laisse encore fleurir notre beauté tant qu'il demeure fidèle. Je fus ton amante et tu trahis notre amour. En quelques heures, j'ai vieilli de toutes les années vécues; tous les printemps de ma jeunesse ont compté comme autant d'hivers sur ma tête flétrie. Aujourd'hui, j'ai cent ans. Ce soir, je mourrai. Mais je t'ai revu et je suis heureuse! »

Both the reunion with the nymph and the following farewell are seemingly difficult for Odysseus and marked by an intense sadness (pp. 53–4):

Ulysse vint à Calypso, lui prit le front s'entre ses mains tremblantes, et, sans une seule parole, avec des larmes dans les yeux, mit un suprême baiser sur la chevelure blanche.

Puis, en grand silence, les trois voyageurs s'éloignèrent. Au premier coude du sentier, Ulysse se retourna. Courbée sur son bâton, toute cassée, toute chétive, Calypso le suivait d'un long regard d'amour, et les yeux bleus de la Nymphé, les yeux divinement jeunes et tendres éclairaient la tristesse de la forêt sacrée.⁵³⁴

534 Cf. Blei's close adaptation of Gebhart's text (Blei 1960, 355): 'Aber da stand gekrümmt ein braunes im Wege, ein altes Weiblein, ganz gering und hutzelig, und mühte sich vergeblich, ein Bündel Reisig über den verbogenen Rücken zu bekommen. Trat Odysseus zu der Alten und half. Die blickte sich um, sah auf zu ihm, ein Paar strahlende junge, blaue Augen blickten auf zu ihm, daß er wankte. „Ja, Geliebter, ich bin es. Da du bei mir warst, hielt deine Liebe die Jahre auf, und ich war in deiner Liebe die ewig junge Kalypso. Aber an dem Tage, da du gingst, da kamen die verdrängten, an der Türe wartenden Jahre alle auf einmal über mich, und in einem Lidschlag wurde ich alt, nun uralt, an die neunzig wohl. Aber ich danke dir, daß du kamst. Und nun – dort liegt wartend dein Boot. Leb' wohl, Odysseus! Ich danke dir, daß du kamst.“ Das große Leuchten dieser jungen Augen umfaßte ihn noch einmal. Dann stürzte Odysseus zum Strand. Blickte zurück. Kalypso winkte mit einer armen, kleinen, schwachen Geste der Hand Abschied.'

When they later arrive in Egypt, they follow the tracks of the mysterious ‘Lady of Asia’ (‘Dame d’Asie’, p. 58), ‘the mistress of the high priest of Serapis’ (p. 57), whom they correctly suspect to be Helen. On the way, they experience an adventure featuring many Homeric characteristics. As in the Homeric Cyclops episode, Odysseus wants to go and see the Pyramids out of curiosity,⁵³⁵ thus endangering his own life and that of his companions. On their way there he thoughtlessly crushes some crocodile eggs, after which they are pursued by a crowd of crocodiles and have to climb onto the Sphinx to save themselves.⁵³⁶ As in the Homeric hypotext, Odysseus is both the one to blame for the situation and the one who rescues the party through his intelligence and bravery.⁵³⁷

When they return to safety, they approach what they believe to be a fair, but what is in truth a procession for the dead crocodile. In the end they are rescued from the angry mob by the ‘Dame d’Asie’, the ‘mysterious woman’ (‘femme mystérieuse’ p. 67–8), who then reveals herself to them as Helen (p. 68).⁵³⁸ After Menelaus’ unsuccessful and self-humiliating attempts to win back his wife (pp. 69–70), who prefers to be worshipped by the Egyptians than be despised by the Greeks (p. 71), the sad king returns to Sparta (pp. 72–3).

From here on, the narrative is focused on Odysseus alone, who departs with Eumaeos in a well-equipped ship, courtesy of his friend Menelaus, to the island of Circe. Beautiful as ever, but not responsive to Odysseus’ clumsy advances⁵³⁹, Circe is openly

Even though Blei adopts the main elements of Gebhart’s scene, he takes the tragic gravity out of it. The words of this Calypso are not reproachful at all, but she even thanks Odysseus for coming and seems quite content, despite her abrupt ageing. Furthermore, there is no mention of her awaiting death.

535 ‘J’aimerais, dit Ulysse, à contempler de plus près ces tombeaux, monuments d’une folie barbare.’ (p. 59). A noteworthy aspect of this Odyssey transformation is the emphasized ignorance of Odysseus towards foreign people and their customs, as it is shown here and elsewhere. Thus he shrugs with his shoulders, when he first sees the Pyramids (p. 57) and clearly feels culturally superior (p. 66; see also his encounter with Cassandra, p. 43). With regard to the more imperialist side of the Homeric hero, in which (especially from a post-colonial perspective) Odysseus is also seen as an aggressor, such ironic side-blows against his close-mindedness in Gebhart’s narrative appear as highly effective and ahead of their time.

536 Similarly, in the Cyclops episode, Odysseus and his comrades show a careless and invasive behaviour when they enter the Cyclops’ cave (*Od.* 9.216–18) and help themselves to his food (*Od.* 9.231–2).

537 He deliberately throws his pointed stick into the eye of the leader crocodile and kills it. The reference to the Homeric *Odyssey* is further established here on the story level itself, since Odysseus reassures himself by thinking of his successful defeat of the cyclops and the suitors (p. 63).

538 For the Egypt episode, Gebhart draws on Lang’s and Haggard’s novel *The World’s Desire* (1890). On the similarities between the latter and Gebhart’s text, see p. 129.

539 ‘Tu es belle, dit-il, aussi belle qu’Aphrodite. Je t’aime.’ (p. 89).

hostile and seeks revenge on him for leaving her (p. 90). Her later courtesy and her offer of hospitality (p. 93) is therefore highly suspicious. Meanwhile, Telegonus enters the scene, whom Circe presents as her teenage son, leaving Odysseus speechless (pp. 94–5).

Il était grand, robuste, de taille élancée et d'allure très leste. Il avait le profil régulier, les traits délicats de la race grecque; mais les yeux noirs trop mobiles, inquiets, louchaient légèrement, et la mâchoire, trop forte, faisait penser à quelque jeune carnassier. [...] Le regard accusait à la fois la malice et la duplicité. Dès le premier moment, le personnage parut au roi d'Ithaque une jeune vipère assez dangereuse.

« Mon fils Télégone », dit froidement Circé.

In the following, Telegonus displays unsettling behaviour since he enjoys torturing his mother's prisoners, who have been transformed into animals (pp. 97–8). It is in this very episode that Odysseus, whose thoughts a moment ago were still with potential sensual pleasures (p. 89), undergoes an inner change for the second time. In fact, only when he faces the menacing situation as a hostage on Circe's island, in which he is confronted with 'the terrible sorceress' ('la terrible enchanteresse', p. 99) and her son, does Odysseus suddenly appreciate his wife and son back at home. As a result, he experiences a reverse turn from *Wanderlust* back to nostalgia (p. 99):

Combien il estimait à présent le vertueux Télémaque, les maximes de sagesse et les filiales remontrances du chaste jeune homme! A son tour, la terrible enchanteresse lui faisait regretter Pénélope, assise à l'antique foyer, le fuseau à la main, voilée et très grave, divinité conjugale dont l'âme austère enfermait peut-être plus d'indulgence encore que de sévérité. Là-bas, sur son rocher, dans sa maison, l'attendait un port de refuge, terme heureux de ses longues aventures. Là-bas seulement, protégé par, les Dieux amis, il pourrait échapper à la vengeance de Circé, aux attentats impies de Télégone, déjouer les coups de Némésis. Et le vœu qu'il avait formé si souvent jadis, dans l'île riante de Calypso, renaissait au cœur du héros voir de loin, une fois encore, la fumée bleuâtre monter en tremblant sur les toits de la pauvre Ithaque.⁵⁴⁰

Finally, Odysseus and Eumaeus are able to escape from Circe's island. However, it remains unclear if their escape is not part of Circe's revenge plan after all, especially in light of Telegonus' secret boarding of the ship. It is also worth drawing attention to the

540 Cf. pp. 129–30. This reverse-turn from *Wanderlust* back to nostalgia is effectively described with the same Homeric image that was used in the beginning to describe his first turn, namely the move from nostalgia to *Wanderlust* (cf. p. 159).

scene where Odysseus finds Telegonus hiding under deck, as the otherwise strong and optimistic hero here experiences a true breakdown: 'For the first time, he felt the courage and joy withdraw from his soul.' ('Pour la première fois, il sentait la vaillance et l'allégresse se retirer de son âme.' p. 108). In this passage, Odysseus' heroism, built up to this crucial moment, is deliberately deconstructed. The text goes on (p. 108):

Cet homme contre qui s'étaient ligués en vain l'Olympe et l'Océan, toutes les amours et toutes les haines, les vivants et les morts, qui jamais n'avait fléchi sous les coups de la mauvaise fortune et riait encore héroïquement, au plus fort de la tempête, debout sur les ruines de son vaisseau, pliait maintenant, terrassé par une force invincible, opiniâtre, plus divine que la méchanceté des Immortels, la rage des Érynnies, les tortures de l'Enfer.

Later, however, Odysseus will return to his former confidence and repress any negative feelings and doubts he has about the boy, with fatal consequences.

The last stop of the journey is Troy. Before Odysseus leaves the ship with Eumaeus and Telegonus, he declares that he will only stay two days and leave for Ithaca on the third, to end his travels for good (pp. 129–30):

Dès l'aurore, Ulysse se préparait à débarquer. Il appelait Eumée près de lui et donnait ses derniers ordres. Son absence ne durerait que deux journées. Au matin du troisième jour, il naviguerait vers Ithaque. Il rentrerait en sa maison au moment même où, sur les coteaux de l'île natale, à l'abri des rochers, la vigne fleurirait. Et ce serait la dernière étape de ses voyages, la fin de ses longues aventures, le crépuscule de sa vie héroïque.

This adds a tragic irony to the scene, given that the reader already cognises the different outcome. The tragic effect is further strengthened by the pilot's last desperate attempt to convince Odysseus of leaving Telegonus behind (pp. 130–1). He sees the disaster coming and is yet unable to avoid it. In fact, the tragic irony permeates the entire last section of the story.⁵⁴¹ However, when Odysseus leaves his ship with Telegonus despite the pilot's warnings, he appears as calm and at peace with his life. He is ready to deal with his fate. After nightfall, he enters the Trojan city alone and instructs Eumaeus to watch over Telegonus (p. 136). As he walks through the ruins of the city and ancient

⁵⁴¹ See, for example, where Odysseus asks himself: 'Quant à moi, dont la destinée est peut-être proche, qui sait où sera mon tombeau?' (p. 133).

battle scenes, he processes the past events (p. 140). When he finally reaches the spot where he smashed the head of little Astyanax against the stone (p. 144), the dreadful memory comes back to him (p. 145):

Ulysse, attiré par un charme farouche, invincible, marcha vers la pierre. Il tentait alors un effort inouï pour chasser de sa mémoire l'affreuse image, l'enfant saisi et balancé par les pieds, le rapide mouvement de fronde, la tête fracassée, cette petite tête blonde, amour d'Ilion, espoir de l'Asie. Mais le cri d'Astyanax, le cri désespéré de l'orphelin qui, près de mourir, appelait à son aide Hector déjà descendu à Hadès:

« Père, père! »

ce cri déchirant qui, si souvent, depuis la nuit maudite, avait effrayé sa veille et gémi dans ses songes, n'allait-il pas résonner une fois encore à ses oreilles ?

Suddenly, Telegonus attacks him from behind, 'with a burst of laughter' ('A travers un éclat de rire', p. 145), and, much to Odysseus' horror, calls out 'Father, father!' ('Père, père!', pp. 145–6), the very words that Astyanax had called out back then. As we learned previously, the kindhearted Eumaeus had already taught Telegonus these words, unsuspectingly treating the boy like a son and rejoicing in his progress (p. 136). Only now do we, the readers, discover the dark significance of these (otherwise innocent) words for Odysseus, that had always persecuted him (p. 145). Hence, his fateful death is given a nasty ironic twist. Odysseus, who is described as the last true hero, has to pay dearly for a deed he deeply regrets. There is no happy ending for him. In this sense, Gebhart's narrative is absolutely unforgiving.

The end of Franz Blei's narrative, which otherwise adopts numerous elements of Gebhart's text with only minor changes, is completely different. In particular, in contrast to Gebhart, Blei grants Odysseus a second homecoming. Here, Odysseus, after vainly attempting to convince Helen to come home from Egypt with Menelaus, returns to Ithaca and lives happily ever after with Penelope. As a result, the narrator of the story concludes that Odysseus 'had learned the secret of love with the old Calypso'.⁵⁴² For, now 'he overwhelmed her [i.e. Penelope] with great emotion, thus enchanting her so that there was nothing left in her but beauty, youth and the loving maid of the good and

542 '[hatte] bei der alten Kalypso das Geheimnis der Liebe erfahren' (Blei 1960, 355).

strong master'.⁵⁴³ Instead of the grim ending of Gebhart's narrative, Blei thus gives the story a conciliatory, gentle conclusion, from which he derives a simple, benign moral:⁵⁴⁴

Denn was, nicht wahr? was denn soll bleiben, was denn leben an dem armen, eh geliebten Weibe, nimmt ihr der Mann den guten Mantel seiner Liebe von den Schultern, sie in ihrer alleinigen Blöße kühlen Auges zu sehen? Er muß die Arme in seine mächtigste Flamme hüllen, damit sie erglühe.

Evidently Blei was not enticed by the sinister end of Gebhart's story. There is nothing left here of Odysseus being cruelly murdered by his own son. As we have already seen,⁵⁴⁵ the sardonic tone and bitterness of Gebhart's text was already anticipated in Lemaître's *Nausicaa*. The age motif, which is present in Gebhart's Calypso episode, was already explored by Lemaître, who let his Telemachus encounter an aged Nausicaa.⁵⁴⁶ With the gruesome, disturbing murder of Odysseus, however, Gebhart goes much further than Lemaître, who sufficed to include the disillusionment of the naive Telemachus.

5.9 Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Maia* (or *Laus Vitae*, 1903)

Only one year later in 1903, the Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938) published *Maia* (or *Laus Vitae* [*Praise of Life*]), the first book of his unfinished lyrical collection, *Laudi del cielo, del mare, della terra, e degli eroi* (*Praises of the Sky, of the Sea, of the Earth, and of the Heroes*, 1903–1912).⁵⁴⁷ The poem is a mythologized version of a journey to Greece that D'Annunzio himself undertook with friends on a yacht in 1895.⁵⁴⁸ In *Maia*, the poet himself plays the role of the main protagonist who

543 '[er] überströmte sie mit dem großen Gefühle, verzauberte sie damit also, daß nichts sonst in ihr blieb als Schönheit, Jugend und liebende Magd des guten und starken Herrn.' (Blei 1960, 355–56).

544 Cf. Stead 2009, 374: 'Grâce au retournement, *Le Dernier Voyage d'Ulysse* de Blei est une histoire réellement (et non ironiquement) morale, comme le postule le sous-titre du recueil où elle paraît, *Le Gamin Ganymède, histoires morales* [Der Knabe Ganymed, moralische Erzählungen]. On est loin du cycle de la fatalité et d'Ulysse abattu sur le lieu de son ancien crime de Gebhart.'

545 Cf. p. 148.

546 Cf. Stead 2009, 161.

547 'Originally he had planned seven books of *Laudi*, each taking a title from the name of one of the seven stars that form the Pleiades in the constellation of Taurus. However, he only wrote five: *Maia* (1903), *Elettra* (1904), and *Alcyone* over the period 1899–1903, then *Merope* (1912) and *Asterope* (*Canti della guerra latina*) (*Songs of the Latin War*, 1933).' See Meda 2007, 544.

548 See, for example, Zampese 2003, 93, as well as the diary that D'Annunzio kept during the cruise in D'Annunzio 1995, 347–71. According to Nava 1997, 106, D'Annunzio's literary reworking of his journey was not an isolated incident, since, at the end of the nineteenth century, 'the journey to Greece

embarks on a new journey, in which he identifies himself with an Odysseus modelled after the Nietzschean *Übermensch*.⁵⁴⁹ The figure of Odysseus, the navigator hero, proves to be of central importance for the whole poem. Like so many of his literary predecessors, this Odysseus is also an avatar of the Dantean Odysseus, who is evoked at the very beginning of the work. In fact, the whole prefatory poem *Alle Pleiadi e ai Fati* (originally titled *Il rogo di Odisseo*⁵⁵⁰ [*The Pyre of Odysseus*]), is an elaborate invocation of Dante's Odysseus, packed with direct quotations from *Inferno* XXVI. Already in the first verses the theme is set for *Maia* in a programmatic way (*Alle Pleiadi e ai Fati*, vv. 1–3):⁵⁵¹

Gloria al Latin che disse: «Navigare
è necessario; non è necessario
vivere.» [...] ⁵⁵² 3

Glory to the Latin who said: 'To sail
Is necessary; it is not necessary
To live' [...]. 3

This statement, which Plutarch⁵⁵³ attributed to the Roman general ('al Latin', v. 1) Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and which here appears in its common Latin translation, will be repeated with a slight syntactic variation at the very end of *Maia* (XXI, 125–6). The statement of Pompeius, whose aim it was to persuade the ship-captains, who were to transport grain for him, to set sail despite the outbreak of a storm,⁵⁵⁴ is here taken out of its original context and re-interpreted as a general imperative of the journey. As such, it provides the thematic framework for the entire book.

The further course of the prefatory poem, titled *To the Pleiades and the Fates*, leads to an invocation of the Dantean Odysseus, who, at this point, is not yet present. The poet/protagonist announces that he wants to incite a fire with the remains of his own

and its subsequent literary processing become a real cultural fashion'. Cf. Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, XL–XLI.

549 Cf. Brand and Pertile 2008, 474.

550 See Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, 255; Zampese 2003, 94.

551 Cf. Schironi 2015, 349.

552 I quote the edition of Annamaria Andreoli D'Annunzio 1995. I am not aware of a complete English translation of *Maia*. The translation of this passage is by Francesca Schironi (Schironi 2015, 349). As for the rest of the translations, they are my own, unless otherwise noted.

553 Plutarch, *Pompeius* 50.2: «Πλεῖν ἀνάγκη, ζῆν οὐκ ἀνάγκη.»

554 See Plutarch, *Pompeius* 50.1.

Questo vigile fuoco ti nutrica
il mio vóto, e il timone e la polèna 50
del vascel cui Fortuna fu nimica,

o tu che col tuo cor la tua carena
contra i perigli spignere fosti uso
dietro l'anima tua fatta Sirena,

infìn che il Mar fu sopra te richiuso! 55

The poet responds that it is ‘not a god’ who is invoked by the fire, ‘but the son of Laertes [...] whom the pilgrim of the Inferno [i.e. Dante] saw [...] inside the horned flame’ (vv. 25–29). These verses already contain a series of verbatim quotations from Dante’s *Inferno*.⁵⁵⁶ The next verse (v. 31) continues this blatant invocation of Dante’s Odysseus, who is now also called by his name: ‘re d’Itaca Odisseo’ (v. 33). Now, however, the addressee is Jesus (‘O Galileo ...’, v. 31). He is compared with Odysseus, beside whom he is said to be ‘worth less’ (‘men vali [...]’, v. 32) and his actions are described as ‘weak’ (‘debile’, v. 35). Thus, D’Annunzio distances himself from Dante’s Christian world view,⁵⁵⁷ due to which the pagan *Ulisse* was ultimately doomed to failure in the *Commedia*. In this context, it is significant to note that D’Annunzio calls his restless hero, ‘whom the Latins call Ulisse’ (‘colui che i Latini chiamano Ulisse’, *Maia* VI, 22–3), by his Greek name, *Odisseo*. Consequently, D’Annunzio does not align himself with the Latin tradition, but but seemingly follows the Greek one. Giuseppe Nava attributes the origin of D’Annunzio’s Odysseus figure to the relentless Homeric hero of *Od.* 22 and *Il.* 10, who ‘knows only the rule of blood’⁵⁵⁸:

[...] D’Annunzio riprende l’immagine più arcaica del personaggio, quella dell’ «eversore di mura» e sterminatore dei Proci, dell’ eroe spietato che conosce solo la legge del sangue e brandisce ‘l’arco dell’ allegra vendetta’, come è rappresentato nell’ episodio di Dolone nell’ *Iliade* e nell’ ultima parte dell’ *Odissea* [...].⁵⁵⁹

556 Compare vv. 28–9 ‘crollarsi per l’interno / della fiamma cornuta’ with ‘la fiamma cornuta’, *Inf.* XXVI, v. 68, and ‘crollarsi’, *Inf.* XXVI, v. 86. The preceding Dantean verse ‘Lo maggior corno de la fiamma antica’ (*Inf.* XXVI, 85) is quoted in its entirety a little later, in v. 47 (‘nel maggior corno della fiamma antica’).

557 Messineo 1995, 47; Schironi 2015, 350. This does not diminish the respect he pays to ‘sacro Dante’ (v. 44).

558 My translation. For the original see the following citation.

559 See Nava 1997, 106.

This description could equally apply to Kazantzakis' Odysseus, 'the pitiless (man-)killer' (ὁ ἀνέσπλαχνος (άντρο)φονιάς, e.g. *Oδ.* 7.1045; 8.362; 8.382). It is characteristic that, at its very beginning, Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* depicts the blood-soaked, calm Odysseus after the murder of the suitors, who inspires fear even in his own people.⁵⁶⁰ In the further course of the story, this hero does not shy away from violence, but explicitly advocates it as the means of choice.

The prefatory poem continues with the characterization of Odysseus as a 'restless spirit' ('spirito insonne'), who 'sails to unknown lands' ('naviga alle terre sconosciute', vv. 40–1), as well as with further *Inferno* references. The following verses 44–5 take up the flight metaphor of the Dantean Odysseus' 'folle volo' ('mad flight'),⁵⁶¹ while Dante is now explicitly referred to by name. In the remainder of the poem, Odysseus is addressed in a ceremonial fashion: in the following stanza the protagonist/poet calls on Odysseus as 'king of the mediterranean' to speak to him out of the flame (vv. 46–8). His Dantean journey, which ended with death,⁵⁶² here appears as an admirable enterprise and Odysseus as the daring hero par excellence, who carries on against all dangers ('contra i perigli', v. 58).

After Odysseus' programmatic invocation in the prefatory poem, in the fourth Canto of *Maia*, a subsection titled *L'incontro d'Ulisse* (*The Encounter of Odysseus, Maia IV*, 22–147) describes how the poet/protagonist meets Odysseus for the first time during his journey at sea:

Incontrammo colui	22
che i Latini chiamano Ulisse,	
nelle acque di Leucade, sotto	<i>L'incontro</i>
le rogge e bianche rupi	<i>d'Ulisse</i>
che incombono al gorgo vorace,	
presso l'isola macra	27
come corpo di rudi	
ossa incrollabili estrutto	
e sol d'argentea cintura	
precinto. Lui vedemmo	

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. p. 132 for a more detailed discussion.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, 257.

⁵⁶² See v. 55, which closes the prefatory poem, and is an almost literal adaptation of *Inf.* XXVI, 142, the last verse of Odysseus' account in Dante's *Inferno*.

su la nave incavata. E reggeva	32
ei nel pugno la scotta	
spiando i volubili venti,	
silenzioso; e il pileo	
tèstile dei marinai	
coprivagli il capo canuto,	37
la tunica breve il ginocchio	
ferreo, la palpebra alquanto	
l'occhio aguzzo; e vigile in ogni	
muscolo era l'infaticata	
possa del magnanimo cuore.	42

In the previous section of the Canto, titled *Verso l'Ellade santa* (*Maia* IV, 1–21), the poet/protagonist narrates how he and his companions ('compagni', v. 9) set sail 'towards the sculpted Hellas' ('verso l'Ellade sculta', v. 15). It is in Greek waters, close to Ithaca ('l'isola macra', v. 27), where they now catch sight of Odysseus. Odysseus' appearance (vv. 28–42) as wiry yet robust is described (vv. 28–9, 38–9), along with his skilful navigation of the sea in silence (vv. 32–5). Although he has white hair ('il capo canuto', v. 37), he appears strong and vital (vv. 28–9, 38–9, 40–1). While he wears his characteristic pointed cap ('pileo', v. 35),⁵⁶³ his 'piercing gaze' ('l'occhio aguzzo', v. 41) is focused on the sea, 'and vigilantly his tirelessness ran through his every muscle, empowered by his generous heart' (vv. 40–2). The grandiose diction here underlines that this navigator hero is doing what he was made to do.

The next verses reveal that this Odysseus did indeed return to Ithaca before he embarked on his new journey (*Maia* IV, 43–63):

E non i tripodi massicci,	
non i lebeti rotondi	
sotto i banchi del legno	
luceano, i bei doni	
d'Alcinoo re dei Feaci,	47
né la veste né il manto	
distesi ove colcarsi	
e dormir potesse l'Eroe;	
ma solo ei tolto s'avea l'arco	
dell'allegra vendetta, l'arco	52
di vaste corna e di nervo	

⁵⁶³ Cf. Zampese 2003, 98.

duro che teso stridette
 come la rondine nunzia
 del dì, quando ei scelse il quadrello
 a fieder la strozza del proco. 57
 Sol con quell'arco e con la nera
 sua nave, lungi dalla casa
 d'alto colmigno sonora
 d'industri telai, proseguiva
 il suo necessario travaglio 62
 contra l'implacabile Mare.

What Odysseus carries with him on his journey are not the wealthy gifts of the Phaeacian king Alcinous (vv. 43–7), or something else that he acquired on his travels (vv. 48–50). The only thing that he took with him was ‘the bow of the happy revenge’ (‘l’arco dell’allegra vendetta’, vv. 51–2), which served him well in his murder of the suitors (‘proco’, v. 57, i.e. Antinous, serving as *pars pro toto* for all suitors) in Ithaca. The mention of Odysseus’ bow as his only apparent equipment, evokes the retelling of the events in Ithaca (vv. 51–7). By having Odysseus depart again *after* his return home (vv. 57–63), D’Annunzio deviates from Dante’s version, whose Odysseus reports that he sailed on directly from Circe and never returned home. Instead, D’Annunzio follows the Homeric account down to the killing of the suitors. The Dannunzian Odysseus seems to have set out for his journey not so long ago, since he is still in Greek waters, not far from his home. The fact that his hair has already turned white suggests that he spent several years in Ithaca before deciding to set off again. As Luciano Zampese already observed, Odysseus’ age here primarily serves to emphasize his determination and the intensity of his *Wanderlust*, which he follows against all odds and which even age does not affect:

La vecchiaia dell’Ulisse dannunziano testimonia piuttosto l’inesauribile ansia e volontà del agire eroico, il superamento, l’indifferenza ai limiti e ai mutamenti imposti al nostro essere dalla natura umana, dal trascorrere del tempo.⁵⁶⁴

The last sentence of Odysseus’ description further reinforces this impression of the unwavering hero following his destiny: ‘Only with that bow and his black ship, far from

564 See Zampese 2003, 98.

home [...], he continued his necessary labor against the relentless sea' ('Sol con quell' arco [...]', vv. 58–3).

The poet/protagonist and his crew, who had hitherto only been watching Odysseus, now call out to him from afar (vv. 64–83):

« O Laertiade » gridammo,
e il cuor ci balzava nel petto
come ai Coribanti dell'Ida
per una virtù furibonda 67
e il fegato acerrimo ardeva
« o Re degli Uomini, eversore
di mura, pilota di tutte
le sirti, ove navighi? A quali
meravigliosi perigli 72
conduci il legno tuo nero?
Liberi uomini siamo
e come tu la tua scotta
noi la vita nostra nel pugno
tegnamo, pronti a lasciarla 77
in bando o a tenderla ancóra.
Ma, se un re volessimo avere,
te solo vorremmo
per re, te che sai mille vie.
Prendici nella tua nave 82
tuoi fedeli insino alla morte! »
Non pur degnò volgere il capo.

In a state of great excitement ('and our hearts leapt in our chests ...', vv. 65–8), they reverently address Odysseus as 'King of Men, destroyer of walls, pilot of all perils' (vv. 69–71) and ask where he is headed ('ove navighi?', v. 71). Declaring that they are 'free men' ('Liberi uomini siamo', v. 74) and ready to risk their lives (vv. 75–8, 83), they ask him to let them join him on his ship (v. 82). For him alone, if anyone, they would want to have as their King (vv. 79–81). But their lofty pathos is met by his complete indifference, which provides an effective contrast here. He does not even care to look at them (v. 84). The following verses (vv. 85–109) describe the last part of their encounter:

Come a schiamazzo di vani
fanciulli, non volse egli il capo
canuto; e l'aletta vermiglia 87

del pileo gli palpitava
 al vento su l'arida gota
 che il tempo e il dolore
 solcato aveano di solchi
 venerandi. « Odimi » io gridai 92
 sul clamor dei cari compagni
 « odimi, o Re di tempeste!
 Tra costoro io sono il più forte.
 Mettimi alla prova. E, se tendo
 l'arco tuo grande, 97
 qual tuo pari prendimi teco.
 Ma, s'io nol tendo, ignudo
 tu configgimi alla tua prua. »
 Si volse egli men disdegnoso
 a quel giovine orgoglio 102
 chiarosonante nel vento;
 e il fólgore degli occhi suoi
 mi ferì per mezzo alla fronte.
 Poi tese la scotta allo sforzo
 del vento; e la vela regale 107
 lontanar pel Ionio raggiante
 guardammo in silenzio adunati.

As if they were a bunch of noisy, 'frivolous boys' ('vani fanciulli', vv. 85–7), the seasoned hero pays no attention to them at all. The pointed cap in the wind ('al vento', v. 89), his face furrowed by 'time and hardships' ('il tempo e il dolore', v. 90), he now appears even more venerable (vv. 87–92). His unflappable determination adds only more emphasis to his sublimity. The poet/protagonist seizes his last chance and calls out to him again, screaming: 'Hear me, King of storms!' (vv. 92–4). He claims to be the strongest among his men and asks Odysseus to test him (vv. 95–6). He wants to prove himself by attempting to string Odysseus' bow. If he succeeds, Odysseus shall let him join him as his equal ('tuo pari', v. 98); if not, he shall die by being attached naked to the prow of Odysseus' ship (vv. 96–100). At these words Odysseus, now 'less contemptuous' ('men disdegnoso', v. 101), turns around and looks directly at him for a brief, but all the more intense, moment (vv. 101–5), before he takes off and continues

his journey (vv. 106–9). Meanwhile, his penetrating gaze has left a deep and lasting impression on the poet/protagonist (vv. 110–26):

Ma il cuor mio dai cari compagni
partito era per sempre;
ed eglino ergevano il capo 112
quasi dubitando che un giogo
fosse per scender su loro
intollerabile. E io tacqui
in disparte, e fui solo;
per sempre fui solo sul Mare. 117
E in me solo credetti.
Uomo, io non credetti ad altra
virtù se non a quella
inesorabile d'un cuore
possente. E a me solo fedele 122
io fui, al mio solo disegno.
O pensieri, scintille
dell'Atto, faville del ferro
percosso, beltà dell'incude!

Although Odysseus did not respond to the poet/protagonist's request and continued his journey alone, he brought about an inner change in him. The reason why he could not take him aboard is that, as a navigator hero, his existence is bound to solitude. Odysseus' chosen path precludes any form of companionship. And yet the fact that he, as the superman par excellence, looks at the poet/protagonist functions as a confirmation of the latter's previously self-postulated superiority (which is also reflected in the submissive behaviour of his companions, vv. 112–6), and thus as a heroic accolade that now enables the poet/protagonist to understand himself as a superman and identify with Odysseus.⁵⁶⁵ For him, though, this superiority only comes at the price of loneliness ('e fui solo...', vv. 116–7). From now on, he will only rely on himself (vv. 118–23). As Zampese points out, it is quite lonely at the top:

La grandezza eroica entra in contrasto con la condivisione cameratesca, amicale. Le altezze raggiunte impediscono di trovare degli appoggi al di fuori del proprio animo, del proprio cuore: gli amici rimangono a terra, la loro umanità non può offrire alcun sostegno.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. Zampese 2003, 99; Schironi 2015, 351.

⁵⁶⁶ See Zampese 2003, 100.

At a later stage of the poem, after the completion of his journey and in a weak moment of solitude, the poet/protagonist will have a vision of Odysseus as seen on his ship in Greece (*Riapparizione di Ulisse*, in *Maia* XVII, 1047–50).⁵⁶⁷ That vision will take away all doubts and strengthen his heroic self-understanding once and for all (*Maia* XVII, 1051–71).

In the following verses of the fourth Canto, we now meet with a glimpse of ‘the narrow homeland’ (‘la patria angusta’, *Maia* IV, 131) that Odysseus chose to leave, as the poet/protagonist and his crew sail along Ithaca’s coast (*Maia* IV, 127–238). The world of Ithaca and its inhabitants, which they now see from afar, with its ‘secure roof’ and ‘polished threshold’ (‘il tetto sicuro, la soglia polita’, vv. 133–4), stands for the orderly, philistine world of everyday things, that forms a strong contrast to the heroic existence of the superhuman Odysseus.⁵⁶⁸ Telemachus and Penelope are both separately described in detail. The intertitles *Il rimpianto di Penelope* (*The regret of Penelope*, *Maia* IV, 148–89) and *Telemaco re dei porcari* (*Telemachus, king of the swineherds*, *Maia* IV, 190–210) already give us an indication of what to expect. In accordance with Homer, D’Annunzio’s Penelope is the faithful wife who waited for over twenty years for her husband to return (v. 175). Now the long wait gives way ‘to her devastating resentment’ (vv. 174–6). The old marital bed, which was so essential to the *anagnorisis* of Penelope and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, has here been abandoned by Odysseus forever (vv. 155–66), ‘to whom the only welcome bed is the deck’ of his ship (‘cui solo è talamo grato la tolda’, vv. 187–8). In her frustration and loneliness, Penelope now wishes that she had married one of the suitors and started a new family with him (vv. 180–9). The Dannunzian Telemachus, on the other hand, deviates even more from his Homeric model (*Maia* IV, 190–210):

E il savio Ulisside	
Telemaco dal suo seggio	<i>Telemaco</i>
coperto di velli manosi	<i>re dei porcari</i>
governava i porcari.	
E il pallido adipe, onde un disco	
recato avea Melanzio ai Proci	195

⁵⁶⁷ See Schironi 2015, 352 for a more detailed description of this scene.

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Schironi 2015, 351.

con la panca e la pelle
 e la brace perché si scaldasse
 e ugnesse e ammollisse il nervo
 dell'arco nel di della strage,
 l'adipe grave su l'epa 200
 cresceva e pe' lombi e nel collo
 del savio Ulisside.
 E partiva il suo letto
 di belle coltrici adorno
 con una florida fante 205
 ei che, ospite imberbe, mirato
 avea splendere Elena a Sparta
 e ricevuto il bel peplo
 da Elena e bevuto il nepente
 di Elena alla mensa ospitale. 210

'And the wise son of Odysseus, Telemachus, from his seat covered with soft skins ruled over the swineherds.' (vv. 190–3). This Telemachus is the exact opposite of his father, since he does not care about comfort and pleasure and left Ithaca with no other belongings than his bow. Telemachus' characterization as a phlegmatic ruler, who indulges in luxury, is framed by the ironical description 'savio Ulisside' ('the wise son of Odysseus', vv. 190, 202). The fat that is 'growing heavy on [his] loins and neck' (vv. 200–2) is compared to the animal fat that the disloyal⁵⁶⁹ goatherd 'Melanzio' (Melanthius) served to the suitors, in order to 'grease and soften' ('ugnesse e ammollisse') Odysseus' bow during the archery-contest that was established by Penelope 'on the day of the massacre' (vv. 194–99; cf. *Od.* 175–85).⁵⁷⁰ As another indication of Telemachus' opulent lifestyle, the bed on which he sleeps is lavishly decorated (vv. 103–5). This is why, as Schironi rightly notes, the Dannunzian poet/protagonist does not consider Telemachus, but himself and his companions, to be 'the "real" and worthy descendants of Ulysses'⁵⁷¹, whom he calls *Ulissidi*.

569 In the *Odyssey*, the goatherd Melanthius does not belong to Odysseus' loyal servants but sides with the suitors. He serves them his best meat (*Od.* 17.212–4) and humiliates Odysseus when he is disguised as a beggar (*Od.* 17.215–235). Even after Odysseus has revealed himself, he helps the suitors in battle by constantly providing them with weapons from Odysseus' store room (*Od.* 22.135–46; 161–2). As a punishment, he is tortured and executed in a particularly cruel way (*Od.* 22.187–202; 474–9).

570 Cf. Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, 267.

571 See Schironi 2015, 351–52. The relevant passages are all to be found in Canto XV: *L'Ulisside* and *A Guido Boggiani*, *Maia* XV, 301–472; *L'altro Ulisside*, *Maia* XV, 473–504. The first two intertitles both refer to D'Annunzio's deceased friend Guido Boggiani (cf. Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, 321), who in 1895 participated in the journey to Greece on board of 'the yacht *Fantasia* of Edoardo Scarfoglio (a writer and journalist; see Schironi 2015, 350).

The motif of the father-son contrast, where Telemachus appears as a sort of Anti-Odysseus, can be found in other *Odyssey* transformations as well. In the re-workings of Tennyson, Gebhart⁵⁷² and Kazantzakis, it is the virtuous, well-behaved son who, unlike his father, willingly fulfils his duty on Ithaca.⁵⁷³ This motif is also elaborated by Franz Blei, who is inspired by Gebhart.⁵⁷⁴ D'Annunzio's portrayal of Telemachus as a decadent, obese ruler also recalls the character of Menelaus in the transformations of Gebhart and Kazantzakis, who likewise serves as a counterpart to Odysseus.⁵⁷⁵

Having considered the passages of *Maia* that are relevant to the figure of Odysseus, the question remains as to what we can actually say about the Dannunzian Odysseus, who left Ithaca for a new journey. For all the heroic elevation of his persona, we do not know where this Odysseus is actually headed, or what motivated his departure. The destination of his journey is not defined, and notably nothing is said about his motives. He is simply the fierce, determined hero who resolutely follows his path. Where this path leads to does not seem to matter here; his striving is not filled with meaning.⁵⁷⁶ As has often been pointed out, this hero's journey is not motivated by the pursuit of 'virtue and knowledge' ('virtute e canoscenza', *Inj.* XXVI, 120), like that of Dante's Odysseus.⁵⁷⁷ Nor does it represent an existential search for the meaning of life.⁵⁷⁸ As Daniela Messineo so aptly puts it, 'his journey [...] is lived not as a quest, but as a challenge':

[...]; il suo viaggio è dettato dal bisogno di avventura ed è vissuto non come ricerca, ma come sfida. L'Ulisse raffigurato in *Maia* incarna la forza dell'istinto, la volontà di potenza e di dominio: è, di fatto, l'emblema del superuomo dannunziano.

The sole objective of the journey seems to be the self-realization of the superhuman hero, to whom the journey gives a space to exist and unfold. The *Wanderlust* of

572 See p. 159 for a discussion of Gebhart's and Blei's Telemachus.

573 Cf. p. 94 on the motif of the well-behaved son in Tennyson and Kazantzakis.

574 Lemaître's *Nausicaa*, on the other hand, is the only modern transformation considered here that, by contrast, relies on the strong similarity between father and son, and has Telemachus assume the role of a second Odysseus. Cf. p. 142 (chapter 5.3.5).

575 Cf. p. 130.

576 In this respect, Stanford, speaks of 'the hollow heroics of d'Annunzio's Navigator Hero'. See Stanford 1954, 233.

577 See Stanford 1954, 209–10, Messineo 1995, 46–47, Gibellini 2007, 627, Schironi 2015, 352.

578 See Messineo 1995, 47.

D'Annunzio's Odysseus exists merely in order to allow for the manifestation of the hero's grandeur. In the course of his negative evaluation, Stanford ascribes to the Dannunzian Odysseus 'a grandiose solipsism aiming at vague self-exaltation'. 'The magnificent diction', he says with regard to the poem, 'does not entirely conceal the flatulence of the substance'.⁵⁷⁹ 'D'Annunzio', Stanford concludes, 'sounds the loudest and brassiest note in the whole tradition in solemn conviction that this is the true essence of heroism.' Finally, he speaks of the hazardous historical influence of D'Annunzio's poetry, as reflected in 'the sequel of this kind of heroics in modern Italy', in the following way⁵⁸⁰:

As is well known, d'Annunzio's gospel of aggressive heroism both predicted and helped to create the Fascist régime, with its screaming rodomontade, its colossal railway-stations, and the glorious conquest of Abyssinia.

Due to his political and military activities during the First World War, as well as his influence on Italian Fascism and his later proximity⁵⁸¹ to the Fascist regime under Benito Mussolini, D'Annunzio indeed remains a highly controversial figure in the history of Italian literature. 'He was not only a renowned lyrical poet, dramatist and novelist, but also a notorious playboy and dandy, as well as a politician and war hero.'⁵⁸² For his illegal occupation of Fiume (now Rijeka, Croatia) in 1919, carried out without the consent of the Italian Government, he was celebrated as a war hero by Italian nationalists, members of the Fascist movement that was forming at the time. The later Fascist appropriation of many of his ideas, such as his ethics of violence, as well as particular practices and techniques (e.g. the *duce* cult or the 'Roman salute'⁵⁸³) led to his being labelled as one of the most important forerunners to Italian Fascism. In light of D'Annunzio's conception of the Odyssean superman, it almost seems as if the poet tried

⁵⁷⁹ See Stanford 1954, 209.

⁵⁸⁰ For this and the following, see Stanford 1954, 210.

⁵⁸¹ As a matter of fact, upon Mussolini's accession to power in 1922, the regime financed D'Annunzio's extravagant lifestyle until his death in 1938. These financial and other benefits which he received (including an aristocratic title bestowed upon him by Mussolini in 1924), are often understood as a means of political immobilisation of the famous and charismatic D'Annunzio, who as such was a potential rival for Mussolini. See Paxton 2004, 59–60. For a more detailed biographical account of this last phase of D'Annunzio's life, see Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, CXXIII–CXXX.

⁵⁸² See Esposito 2015, 80, who also notes further bibliography on the biography of D'Annunzio.

⁵⁸³ Cf. Paxton 2004, 59: 'Declaring Fiume the "Republic of Carnaro," D'Annunzio invented the public theatricality that Mussolini was later to make his own: daily harangues by the *Comandante* from a balcony, lots of uniforms and parades, the "Roman salute" with arm outstretched, the meaningless war cry "*Eia, eia, alalà.*"' Cf. Esposito 2015, 83–84.

to emulate his martial hero, the ‘destroyer of walls’ (‘eversore di mura’), in real life—even though his ‘extravagant lifestyle and amorous adventures, which turned him into a media icon during his lifetime’,⁵⁸⁴ did not really match the austere journey of his lonesome navigator hero.

As for the literary and historical context, D’Annunzio’s poem can be assigned to a phase at the end of the nineteenth century, which was characterised by a return to antiquity, and which, in Italy, produced interpretations of the Odysseus myth as different as those of D’Annunzio and Pascoli.⁵⁸⁵ Nava explains how, during this period, ‘a rediscovery and reinterpretation of the ancient world’ (‘una riscoperta e una rilettura del mondo antico’) took place not only in Italy but also in other countries.⁵⁸⁶ This revival of antiquity represented an intellectual movement that affected many areas and, for example, led to the emergence of scientific disciplines such as psychoanalysis. It was the time of the archaeological discoveries by Schliemann and others, which seemed to move the Homeric epics out of the literary sphere and into historical reality, making antiquity physically tangible:

Il mondo antico pareva uscire dall’ambito della tradizione per tornare a rivivere nella sua materialità, fatta di mura, tombe, tesori, fregi, e accessibile anche all’uomo borghese attraverso i musei archeologici, che sul esempio di Londra e Berlino si andavano moltiplicando ed estendendo un po’ dappertutto, e le riproduzioni fotografiche.⁵⁸⁷

Both D’Annunzio’s and Pascoli’s elaborations of Odysseus’ last journey emerged during this period. As different as the two authors (as well as their texts) were, they both belonged to the Italian decadent movement (*decadentismo*), which had its origins in the French *décadence*.⁵⁸⁸ For the poets of the *decadentismo*, the ancient myth represented an escape from reality, which was to be understood as a reaction against the scientific

584 See Esposito 2015, 80.

585 See Nava 1997, 104: ‘[...] D’Annunzio, e ancora più Pascoli, partecipano pienamente di quel grande movimento culturale, che è il Ritorno all’ Antico nell’ultimo trentennio dell’Ottocento’. On Pascoli’s and D’Annunzio’s fundamentally different treatment of the Odysseus myth despite the same influences to which they were exposed, see Messineo 1995, 46; Nava 1997, 106.

586 For this and the following, see Nava 1997, 104.

587 See Nava 1997, 105.

588 See Michael Silk 2004, 591–3 on the use of the term in France and its consequent ‘shift of value—from pejorative to neutral’ (2004, 592). Cf. Petronio 1991, 798–99.

positivism of the early nineteenth century and the realist art movements that developed as a result in the middle and later nineteenth century, such as literary realism and naturalism.⁵⁸⁹

In addition to this obvious classification of D'Annunzio in an Italian literary context, a comparison with another author suggests itself, whose treatment of the Odysseus theme was just as strongly influenced by Nietzsche's concept of the superman, and which otherwise shows some remarkable similarities to D'Annunzio's text: Nikos Kazantzakis.

Before we proceed to a comparison of the two authors, however, a distinction must be noted between the concept of the superman (*Übermensch*) in Nietzsche's works and its subsequent reception, especially with regard to D'Annunzio and Kazantzakis. For, in fact, it is very controversial how Nietzsche's remarks on the superman, which mostly appear in his fictional work *Thus spoke Zarathustra (Also sprach Zarathustra, 1883–5⁹⁰)*, should really be understood and what relevance they have for Nietzsche's philosophical thought.⁵⁹¹ We can hardly discuss this question here, which is much debated among Nietzsche scholars, without going beyond the scope of this work, and so we will limit ourselves to the reception of this concept by D'Annunzio and Kazantzakis.

Before discussing this, however, it is first necessary to make a few introductory remarks about Kazantzakis that will place Nietzsche's significance for him within a larger intellectual context. Already at a young age, Kazantzakis (1883–1957) was intensively occupied with Nietzsche: in 1909, at the age of 26, he finished his doctoral dissertation in Paris under the title, *Ὁ Φρειδερίκος Νίτσε ἐν τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τῆς πολιτείας (Friedrich Nietzsche on the Philosophy of Right and the State)*,⁵⁹² in

589 Cf. Sozzi Casanova 1982, 8; Brand and Pertile 2008, 473; De Rienzo 1997, 195.

Since Pascoli's poetry is often focused on the "small things", with ordinary domestic life and nature being recurrent topics, it could initially be mistaken for naturalistic poetry. However, it is precisely from this kind of poetry that Pascoli wishes to distinguish himself. He is not interested in depicting reality, but rather in describing a "secret reality" that is hidden behind simple things. For Pascoli, life is a mystery, which is revealed not by the scientist, but only by the (child-like) poet who approaches the world intuitively and whose archetypal embodiment is Homer (see Pascoli 2017, 4; Brand and Pertile 2008, 477; Fornaro 2011, 349). For Pascoli's concept of the child-like poet and the poetics based on it, see his work *Il fanciullino (The Little Child, 1897)*, which has been widely discussed (see, for example, Salinari 1960, 107–183).

590 On the work's successive publication, see Magnus and Higgins 1996a, 44.

591 See Magnus and Higgins 1996b, 2; Magnus and Higgins 1996a, 40–43.

592 See Bien 1971, 245–46; Levitt 1977, 364. Kazantzakis' dissertation was first translated into English by Odysseus Makridis in 2006 (Kazantzakis 2006).

order to submit it at the Faculty of Law of the University of Athens.⁵⁹³ One year later, ‘in 1910, he translated *Zarathustra* and *The Birth of Tragedy* [*Die Geburt der Tragödie*] [from French] into demotic Greek [i.e. the Greek vernacular]’.⁵⁹⁴ However, this intense occupation with Nietzsche was preceded by what Peter Bien calls a ‘crucial change in attitude’ towards the German philosopher, whom Kazantzakis did not always hold in such high esteem.⁵⁹⁵ This is testified by his essay *Ἡ ἀρρώστια τοῦ αἰῶνος* (*The Sickness of the Century; Le mal de siècle*), published in 1906:

Nietzsche was invoked by Kazantzakis in 1906 in his very first published work, the essay “Ἴ Αρρόστεία του αἰόνος” (*Le mal de siècle*). Here, Kazantzakis examined European decadence, seeing it as a fall from the joyful paganism of the ancients. It is crucial to note that Nietzsche was viewed here as part of this decadence and not as its antidote.⁵⁹⁶

Only during his time in Paris did Kazantzakis’ attitude towards Nietzsche change. According to Bien, this was a consequence of his ‘exposure to rightist thinking in Paris’, which went hand in hand with his increasing inclination towards ‘the political right’.⁵⁹⁷ But Kazantzakis’ essay, which testifies to his early aversion to the decadent movement as well as Nietzsche, whom, at the time, he still considered one of its representatives,⁵⁹⁸ is especially interesting to us here for another reason. Gabriele D’Annunzio counted among the poets of precisely the era and movement which Kazantzakis so disdained. Yet, in the same year that he published his essay, Kazantzakis himself made his literary debut, with a novella titled *Ὅφις καὶ κρίνο* (*Serpent and Lily*, 1906) written in the very decadent and aestheticizing style of ‘D’Annunzio and the French Parnassians’⁵⁹⁹. Now, even though Kazantzakis, at the beginning of his career, also engages in (what appears

593 Kazantzakis first studied Law in Athens until 1906. In October 1907 he went to Paris (Bien 1989, 1:xix), where he devoted himself to the study of literature and philosophy with Henri Bergson, one of the major influences on his thinking besides Nietzsche (see Friar’s introduction in Kazantzakis 1958, xvi–xvii; cf. Poulakidas 1971; Bien 1989, 1:36–53). It was in 1909, at the end of his stay in Paris (1907–1909, although he was effectively there for only twelve months, Bien 1989, 1:11; 242), that he completed his dissertation, and published it upon his return to Greece in that same year (Bien 1989, 1:xix).

594 See Levitt 1977, 364; cf. Bien 1989, 1:246; Petropoulou 2013, 40.

595 See Bien 1971, 247.

596 See Bien 1971, 248.

597 See Bien 1971, 249.

598 See Bien 1971, 248 for more details.

599 See the whole sentence in Bien 1989, 1:8: ‘Aping the manner of Gabriele D’Annunzio and the French Parnassians, it represents a protagonist who is a hero of sensitivity, devotee of the imagination, and worshiper of beauty.’ Cf. Bien 1972, 116; 120; 150.

to be) decadent, *fin de siècle* writing, his almost simultaneously published essay makes his novella appear as a parody of exactly this kind of literature and the cultural sickness that, in his eyes, it stands for.⁶⁰⁰ Even though D'Annunzio was also a part of the literary movement which Kazantzakis rejected, D'Annunzio's poetry is essentially life-affirming and not characterized by melancholy and pessimistic *ennui*. In the tradition of Italian *decadentismo*, we can distinguish between two dimensions: the one affirms the morbid and wallows in it, while the other decisively rejects it and responds with a life-affirming vitalism:

Da qui, negli scrittori che interpretano lo smarrimento della società borghese, vengono due atteggiamenti. O gli intellettuali si crogiolano nel clima della decadenza: e allora portano alle estreme conseguenze gli aspetti irrazionalistici che erano già presenti nella letteratura romantica europea, idolatrano la corruzione, la morbosità, la morte. Oppure puntano a un'artificiosa reazione. Predicano un vitalismo che non conosce inibizioni morali, mettono in campo la loro gioia di vita, che non si riconosce limiti, celebrano un godimento ebbro, coltivano il mito di una forza barbara e ferina, che vorrebbe imporre il suo dominio per rigenerare un mondo esausto.⁶⁰¹

Without a doubt, D'Annunzio bears the latter—vitalist—dimension of Italian *decadentismo*. He thus rejects much of what Kazantzakis criticizes about European decadence as the symptom of a cultural sickness that must be combated.⁶⁰² D'Annunzio, for his part, counteracts the glorification of decay and the aestheticization of the morbid with his life-affirming poetry of the vigorous superman, for whom there exist no boundaries or even morals. This hero corresponds to the Odysseus figure both in D'Annunzio's *Maia* and in Kazantzakis' much later *Odyssey*. In Nietzsche's philosophical writings, Kazantzakis ultimately found a suitable model that would

600 See Bien 1989, 1:9: 'Whereas the text in vacuo might delude us into thinking that Kazantzakis sympathized wholeheartedly with his hero, the essay 'H ἀρρώστια τοῦ αἰῶνος (The Sickness of the Century; Le Mal de siècle) shows him capable of standing outside his own decadent romanticism and seeing it ambivalently. Indeed, the essay suggests that he meant his young aesthete to exemplify a cultural illness diagnosed as romantic melancholy.'

601 See De Rienzo 1997, 194–95; cf. Sozzi Casanova 1982, 10.

602 For more details on the *mal de siècle*, which Kazantzakis considered to be a disease resulting from a 'transitional age', 'trapped between' paganism and Christianity, see Bien 1989, 1:9: 'The *mal de siècle*, says Kazantzakis, arises because we are caught in the middle. We can never return to paganism on account of Christianity's decisive influence on our culture; yet we can no longer be Christians because science has destroyed our belief in heaven, the basis of Christian hope. We are trapped between loss of spontaneous appreciation of this world and loss of faith in the world to come. Apollo is dead and so is Jesus. Melancholy victims of a transitional age, we vent our aesthetic instincts in the decadent, self-frustrating ways exemplified by the protagonist of *Serpent and Lily*'.

counter his aversion of the decline of decadence. In contrast to D'Annunzio, who is often accused of only superficially adopting Nietzsche's thoughts,⁶⁰³ to Kazantzakis Nietzsche meant much more. Not only his *Odyssey*, which he began to write in 1925⁶⁰⁴ (and published only in 1938), permeated by Nietzsche's philosophy, but his entire corpus of writings. This is by no means a coincidence. As we can see from a letter addressed to a friend in 1908, he had been consciously searching for a philosophical model, after whom he could systematically shape his work, and had eventually found it in Nietzsche.⁶⁰⁵ But the German philosopher's influence on Kazantzakis went even further: as Bien emphasizes, not only did he plot his literary works in relation to Nietzsche's philosophy, but he also identified himself personally with Nietzsche to the highest degree.⁶⁰⁶ Nietzsche's influence on Kazantzakis should therefore not be underestimated, as it affects both his work and the cultivation of his personality.

As for Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, it seems to have been particularly the Nietzschean ideas that he analysed in his early doctoral dissertation, which flowed into it, including the ones which he apparently rejected.⁶⁰⁷ For when one reads Kazantzakis' reflections on Nietzsche's thoughts, various elements and leitmotifs of his *Odyssey* inevitably come to mind. Which ones these are exactly we shall analyse in a moment. Before we do so, however, it should be noted that in his dissertation Kazantzakis divides Nietzsche's thoughts into negative and positive aspects, and structures his analysis accordingly, focusing first on the negative aspects:⁶⁰⁸

603 See Petronio 1991, 807; De Rienzo 1997, 201; Russo Καραλή 2003, 172; 174.

604 See Bien 1989, 1:191.

605 See Bien 1971, 246–47.

606 See Bien's detailed account in Bien 1971, 249–252.

607 See Bien 1989, 1:215. The Greek scholar and close friend of Kazantzakis, Pantelis Prevelakis, in his seminal study of Kazantzakis and his *Odyssey* (Πρεβελάκης 1958, 19–20, also available in translation, Prevelakis 1961), was perhaps the first to point out the major importance of the Nietzschean themes which influenced Kazantzakis' thinking and consequently his most important literary works (including his *Odyssey*): 'Στις 93 σελίδες της διατριβής αυτής, ο Καζαντζάκης έχει συνοψίσει ό, τι από τη φιλοσοφία του Nietzsche πέρασε μέσα του –ιδέες, παραγγέλματα, ουτοπίες, που θα τις ανταμώσουμε, αξιοσημείωτα απαρασάλευτες, μέσα στην κατοπινή παραγωγή του, και μάλιστα στην *Ασκητική* και στην *Ὀδύσσεια*. Τὰ δυὸ-τρία μεγάλα θέματα που θα τὸν ἀπασχολήσουν σ' ὅλη του τὴ ζωὴ καὶ που θὰ κατευθύνουν τὴ μυθοπλασία του –ὁ «αἰσιόδοξος ἢ διονυσιακὸς μηδενισμὸς», ἡ θεωρία τοῦ υπεράνθρωπου, ἡ χρεοκοπία τοῦ δυτικῶ πολιτισμοῦ κ.ἄ. –ἔχουν ἀπὸ τώρα ξεκαθαριστεῖ στὸ πνεῦμα του χάρις στὴ φιλοσοφία τοῦ Νίτσε¹⁰'. (Πρεβελάκης 1958, 20). Cf. Πρεβελάκης 1958, 286, endnote 10: 'Εἶναι περριτὸ νὰ ἐξάρω περισσότερο τὴ σημασία τῆς διατριβῆς αὐτῆς τοῦ Κ. Ἐκεῖ μέσα βρίσκεται ὁ πυρήνας τῆς κοσμοθεωρίας του. [...]'

608 Cf. Bien 1971, 153.

[...] Nietzsche's philosophy is subdivided into two aspects:

- (a) a negative aspect, by means of which Nietzsche overturns the reigning table of values;
- (b) and a positive one, according to which he erects another table with a new ranking of values and new ideals of humanity, society, and state.⁶⁰⁹

According to Kazantzakis, the bottom line of these 'negative aspects' in Nietzsche's thought is that all contemporary values must be abolished:

[...] the values of today's Decalogue—as the latter applies to the nature and destiny of humanity, the family, society, morality, right and the state—are manifestations of decadence, inevitably, and of necessity leading to nihilism, and they must be discarded. And after he has demolished such values, Nietzsche naturally guides us to the second part of his teaching, the positive part, in which he raises the new, his very own table of values, on which a new understanding of humanity and the universe are enshrined.⁶¹⁰

As a matter of fact, the first part of Kazantzakis' dissertation, which analyses the negative aspects of Nietzsche's thought, turned out to be four times as long as the second part (forty six vs. eleven pages).⁶¹¹ As Bien notes, it was the negative aspects that made the greater impression on Kazantzakis and that he consequently adopted from Nietzsche. Conversely, to locate a positive model of thought that was to take the place of the old, he oriented himself towards another mentor, Bergson.⁶¹²

One of the major aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy which Kazantzakis addresses in his dissertation, and later adopts in his *Odyssey*, is the triumph over conventional morality, including the categories of good and evil, which leads, for example, to the endorsement of violence and war over compassion and peace.⁶¹³ Kazantzakis' *Odysseus*

609 See Kazantzakis 2006, 20.

610 See Kazantzakis' outlook on his following analysis, in Kazantzakis 2006, 20.

611 See Bien 1971, 260–61.

612 See Bien 1971, 249: 'Nietzsche's chief usefulness to Kazantzakis was as a destroyer of the old. For the basic structure of a new, positive world-view Kazantzakis turned elsewhere, primarily to Bergson. Nietzsche was a negative force, an ally in Kazantzakis' conviction that the old order must be evaluated, challenged and overturned in the interests of developing a new and more viable civilization.'

613 See Kazantzakis 2006, 12: 'There is no general and certain rule that defines and demarcates good and evil. Morality is nothing but the impositions of the weak and the decadent.'; also Kazantzakis 2006, 58: 'This Übermensch is in no way bringing to humanity glad tidings of peace: rather he tends constantly to assume higher and superior forms, never resting on his occasional conquests and ever ready to risk life and happiness for the sake of his elevation.' For Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, see, for example, *Oδ.* 8.519–69, where, after the destruction of Knossos, a few people approach Odysseus, believing that he might be a god. They bring him gifts and ask for peace (8.556). Yet, their wish is met with nothing but contempt by Odysseus (*Oδ.* 8.558–65): "I'm not a god of comfort, friendship, or good cheer, / (...) Peace is the daily

does not follow rules anywhere, but only his instincts: unable to fit in, he leaves Ithaca as soon as he can, robs his friend Menelaus in Sparta of his wife, and sympathises with the blond barbarians who invade Greece. He incites riots and mercilessly enforces the law of the strong against the weak, because he believes that this is the natural, or “healthy”, order of things.⁶¹⁴ Kazantzakis’ Odysseus also completely rejects the traditional categories of family and marriage as part of the old value system,⁶¹⁵ whilst Nietzsche still advocated marriage with a woman, on the condition that the man occupied the dominant role and did not engage in it out of emotional necessity, but only when he was in full command of his senses, and for the purposes of reproduction. Yet, the underlying view of women is the same in both cases. For Kazantzakis’ hero, marriage and the family, or any relationship with a woman, are only obstructive and are, therefore, to be avoided. Everything is subordinate to the male hero’s urge for freedom and his striving for higher things—something that women, by their nature, are incapable of understanding. The way in which women are portrayed in Kazantzakis’ *Odyssey*—their only purpose, indeed their only desire, being to serve men, to bring children into the world,⁶¹⁶ while they are not seldom compared to animals—is clearly in keeping with Kazantzakis’ reading of Nietzsche’s thoughts about the role of women and the relationship between the sexes⁶¹⁷:

food with which our holds brim over, / the stench of home, of honor, life, of farms and vineyards ... / Oho! You make me sick! Pounce on them, leopard soul!”.

614 When he sees the foreign barbarian tribes streaming in from the North, he thinks to himself: “New salty blood comes pouring into withered veins, / our homes have fallen in ruin, our towns have lost their men, / for see, these blond-haired roundheads burst from the far North! / (...) Their undistilled and turgid blood still seethes like must, / firm lands and islands boil and burst, the world’s renewed;” (*Oδ.* 3.729–36). He finally exclaims: “Blessed be that hour that gave me birth between two eras!” (*Oδ.* 3.742; see *Oδ.* 3.720–49 for the whole scene). The motif of a transitional age, which is highly important for Kazantzakis’ work and thought as a whole, and which was first elaborated in his essay *The Sickness of the Century* (cf. p. 184), permeates the whole *Odyssey*.

615 In his ideal city in the heart of Africa, there are no separate households or permanent romantic relationships. Instead, unregulated sexual intercourse, as well as a mating ritual for the masses, fulfil the purpose of reproduction. To prevent them from becoming effeminate, boys are no longer raised by their parents, but grow up together in a communal space (*Oδ.* 15.550–64).

616 See, for example, *Oδ.* 15.151–5: ‘far off a maiden sang with longing as she knelt / and milked her pregnant cow and filled her milkpail full; / her virgin breasts hung heavily now and swelled with pain, / she also longed to be a mother, to swell with milk, / until a strong and greedy son should milk her too.’

617 Exemplary of the numerous passages that convey a sexist image of women in Kazantzakis’ *Odyssey* is *Oδ.* 5.718–21: ‘The knowing man laughed wryly but did not reply; / there was but one short phallic bridge between the sexes, / and then deep Chaos where even a bird’s wing might not pass, / for man’s soul perched, an eagle’s nest, high in the head, / and woman’s soul lay brooding deep between two breasts.’ As Bien 2007, 2:547 correctly observes, even the female characters, who at first seem to be an

Nietzsche considers the inequality between man and woman to be a law of nature, which stems from the two genders' differing physiological and mental makeup: In the man, the dominant instinct is a passion to prevail, the need to impose his ego as widely as possible all around him. His purpose is to wage battle against the forces of nature and the wills that stand opposed to him. Eros is nothing other than a single incident in his life; were he to dedicate his life to a woman, he would be cowardly and degenerate—unworthy to be called a man.

In the woman, on the contrary, eros is of the greatest significance; it fills her entire life, either destroying or restoring her. For the woman, husband and child constitute the end in life as well as her perpetual avocation and happiness. "Everything in woman is a riddle. The solution of the riddle is pregnancy." Man is for woman the means whose end is the offspring. But is woman to man? "The true man," says Nietzsche, "desires two things: danger and game. This is why he desires woman—the most dangerous game. A man must train for war, a woman for the warrior's repose; Man's happiness is called 'I want,' woman's happiness 'he wants.'"

Such are the natures of man and woman. [...]

From the perspective of today, Nietzsche's thoughts on the role of women and the relationship between the sexes as presented by Kazantzakis are, of course, extremely sexist and offensive in nature. What is much more striking, however, is that Kazantzakis leaves his summary of Nietzsche's thoughts almost free from comment, creating the impression that he fully subscribes to them.⁶¹⁸ There is no question that these views coincide almost one-to-one with the image of women and the relationship between the sexes of men and women in his *Odyssey*. What is more, they not only shape his *Odyssey*, but run throughout Kazantzakis' entire body of work. As is documented by statements that he made during his lifetime, his portrayal of women was not merely a literary device, but actually reflected his personal views.⁶¹⁹

According to Kazantzakis' dissertation, just as Nietzsche negates the equality of man and woman, so too is there no natural equality among other individuals.⁶²⁰ Moreover, man's rightful position in family, society and the state is reducible to to his natural

exception by displaying so-called "male" behaviour, ultimately return to their supposed "female" nature, and thus only serve to confirm the rule.

618 Cf. Makridis in Kazantzakis 2006, 95.

619 See Bien 2007, 2:547–49 on *Kazantzakis and Women*.

620 For this and the following, the section '*On Human Equality*' (in Kazantzakis 2006, 31) is illustrative: 'Here is, according to Nietzsche, another value of our contemporary table of values—one that fatefully and calamitously leads to nihilism and that must be elided from our table of values without mercy. According to Nietzsche, there is no more poisonous poison than the principle of equality.'

instinct to dominate. All forms of equality, be it the equality of the sexes, social classes, or the citizens of a state, are therefore regarded as an “unnatural” condition, which leads humanity to a nihilistic pessimism and hinders superior men from developing. The same applies to morality, which only benefits the weak but is an obstacle for the strong, and must therefore also be abolished.⁶²¹ Only the superman is able to find joy in the liberation from the old table of values and not fall into despair. Unlike the masses, he reacts with ‘a heroic and joyous acceptance of life’ and an ‘[o]ptimistic, or Dionysian, Nihilism’.⁶²² Such a holistic acceptance of life can be observed in Kazantzakis’ *Odysseus* as well.⁶²³

Although Kazantzakis develops his conception of the superman in accordance with his understanding of Nietzsche, a fundamental difference is noticeable as well, in that, for Kazantzakis, the superman too is something that must ultimately be overcome.⁶²⁴ In Kazantzakis’ view, the superman merely takes the place of the values to which people’s hope has previously clung: ‘But the Superman is just another paradise, another mirage to deceive poor unfortunate man and enable him to endure life and death.’⁶²⁵ One could argue that the overcoming of the superman in Kazantzakis’ *Odyssey* occurs in the second part of the work (after the destruction of the ideal city), in which Odysseus undergoes a fundamental change.⁶²⁶

The depth of Kazantzakis’ preoccupation with Nietzsche and the importance it assumes for his *Odyssey* has naturally allowed it to feature prominently in our analysis as well. Even if D’Annunzio’s reception of Nietzsche does not extend to such depths, we will briefly list the most important features of D’Annunzio’s hero, which also appear

621 See Kazantzakis 2006, 32: ‘Nowhere in nature is equality to be seen. Equality is the sophistry used by the weak in order to hoodwink and surmount the strong.’ The fact that this principle of a natural right of the strongest seems to have entered Kazantzakis’ *Odyssey* unfiltered can be seen particularly well in *Oδ.* 15.574–604. While thinking about the basic law for his ‘superhuman’ city (τὸ περανθρώπινο κάστρο, 15.576), Odysseus encounters a swarm of winged ants during the nuptial flight. He observes how the male ants try to mate with the queen, and only the strongest prevail (ὁ πῖο τρανὸς ἄρσενικὸς, 15.582), before they all fall to the ground and die. It is ‘the just, fierce law’ (τὸν ἄγριο δίκιο νόμο, 15.599), the principle of the *survival of the fittest*, that rules in the animal world, and which he now also wants to apply to his city (15.591–2).

622 See Kazantzakis 2006, 17 in the chapter on *Nihilism*.

623 See, for example, *Oδ.* 8.770–2: ‘Alas for him who seeks salvation in good only! / Balanced on God’s strong shoulders, Good and Evil flap together like two mighty wings and lift him high.’

624 Cf. Bien 1971, 263.

625 See Kazantzakis 2001, 339. For the Greek original, see Καζαντζάκης 1965, 406.

626 Cf. p. 133.

to be derived from Nietzsche.⁶²⁷ Like Kazantzakis' Odysseus, D'Annunzio's hero chooses freedom and loneliness over the importance of his family and home. The motif of freedom is also present in the poet/protagonist, Odysseus' equivalent in the non-mythical world, who shouts, for example, 'we are free men' ('Liberi uomini siamo', *Maia* IV, 74) when he wants to join Odysseus and his crew. Furthermore, for both D'Annunzio's and Kazantzakis' Odysseus figures, the path of perpetual strife⁶²⁸ is one that can only be walked alone. In both situations, Penelope is unable to understand the ambitions of her estranged husband, who rejects bourgeois virtues and morals and the limits they impose. This Odysseus is the transgressor of boundaries par excellence, 'the castle-wrecker' (ὁ καστρορημαχτής, *Oδ.* 5.1343) and 'destroyer of walls' ('eversore di mura', *Maia* XVII, 1049). His vitalism and strength is another characteristic that Odysseus shows in both works. In D'Annunzio's poem, whose alternative title is *Laus vitae* (*Praise of Life*), vitalism is a central motif, and, as we have seen, features prominently in the description of the hero. Another shared characteristic is their heroic self-exaltation: both figures are superior to others and aware of their superiority, as a result of which they naturally dominate. In the Dannunzian scene in particular, there is no social equality. Instead, the strongest prevails, as does the poet/protagonist who dominates the weaker members of his crew. Finally, the aforementioned glorification of war and violence in Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* is also central to D'Annunzio's conception of the Odyssean superman.⁶²⁹ As Annamaria Andreoli points out, 'the ideology of the superman' ('l'ideologia superomistica') is especially dominant 'in the second book of the *Laudi*, *Elettra*'. According to Andreoli, it is here where this ideology, as introduced in *Maia*, 'openly develops its political implications':

Nei componimenti di ispirazione patriottica, il motivo nietzschiano arriva addirittura a conclusioni imperialiste e colonialiste (...) Anche quando i suoi versi

627 On the concept of the Nietzschean superman in D'Annunzio's works, see Sozzi Casanova 1982, 76–79; De Rienzo 1997, 200–202. On the 'tematica superomistica' in D'Annunzio's *Laudi* in particular, see Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, XCIX–CI.

628 However, this impulse in Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* seems to derive more strongly from Bergson and his concept of the *élan vital* than from Nietzsche. See Friar in Kazantzakis 1958, xvi: 'At the core of Kazantzakis' thought and his Dionysian method lies Bergson's concept of life as the expression of an *élan vital*, a vital or creative impulse, a fluid and persistent creation that flows eternally and manifests itself in ever-changing eruptive phenomena. "According to Bergson," Kazantzakis wrote in his treatise on his former teacher, "life is an unceasing creation, a leap upwards, a vital outburst, an *élan vital* [...]"

629 Cf. Petronio 1991, 807, who speaks of 'the cult of power, violence, war' ('il culto della forza, della violenza, della guerra') as elements of the myth of the superman which is central to D'Annunzio's entire work.

predicano la pace e l'ordine sociale, d'Annunzio auspica un ordine fondato sulla forza e sul dominio e una pace finalizzata alla guerra, irredentistica magari, ma sempre guerra.⁶³⁰

The heroes of D'Annunzio and Kazantzakis thus share a range of key characteristics. Yet, there is also a crucial difference between them. In contrast to Kazantzakis' Odysseus, D'Annunzio's navigator hero, who during his short encounter does not say a single word, is not really brought to life, but remains an empty shell. He merely serves to give the poem impetus and direction. Moreover, as we have already noted, his striving lacks an ultimate purpose. Kazantzakis' Odysseus, on the other hand, undergoes a complicated and multiply-layered development during the course of his journey.⁶³¹ It is a constant ascent, a continuously upward movement, whose ultimate goal is 'the transmutation of matter into spirit'.⁶³² We will examine this development in more detail in a chapter below devoted to Kazantzakis. For the present discussion, it is only important to note that, behind this development of Odysseus, lies the whole of Kazantzakis' philosophical world view, which he has developed and refined over the course of his long life.⁶³³ His presentation is far removed from the 'hollow heroics of d'Annunzio's Navigator hero', as Stanford so aptly put it.⁶³⁴

630 See Andreoli in D'Annunzio 1995, C.

631 The different stages of Odysseus' development are symbolically condensed in a single scene in book 5 (*Oδ.* 5.588–640). Here, a small ivory statue of a god with seven heads (positioned one above the other) falls into the hands of Odysseus. In the seven heads, which represent 'the demon's seven souls' (5.630), Odysseus recognizes the seven stages of his own ideal development. Accordingly, he is often called ὁ ἐπτάψυχος ('the seven-souled man' or 'the man of seven souls'; see, for example, *Oδ.* 2.397, 6.103, 16.29, 21.424 etc.).

632 See Bien 1989, 1:193–94, Makridis' introduction in Kazantzakis 2006, xii, as well as the following footnote for Kazantzakis' own understanding on this concept.

633 See Kazantzakis' own summarizing statement about his life and work, where he traces back his own, lifelong 'struggle', that finally led him to the 'transmutation of matter into spirit' (Kazantzakis 1958, xxii–xxiii).

634 Cf. p. 180.

5.10 Giovanni Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio* (1904)

Only one year after the publication of D'Annunzio's *Laudi*,⁶³⁵ Giovanni Pascoli (1855–1912) published his *L'ultimo viaggio* (*The Last Voyage*) as part of the poetic cycle *Poemi Conviviali* (*Convivial Poems*). Pascoli represented, in a sense, the other face of Italian *decadentismo* to that of D'Annunzio.⁶³⁶ Consisting of seventeen poems that cover themes from antiquity to Christianity in a chronological manner, the cycle can be read as a 'poetic history of humanity'⁶³⁷.

Pascoli was a pupil of the influential Italian poet Giosuè Carducci (1835–1907), whom he succeeded to the chair of Italian literature in Bologna in 1905. As a matter of fact, the poetry of Carducci, who for a short period even taught Greek and Latin at a high school in Pistoia,⁶³⁸ was strongly oriented towards classical literature.⁶³⁹ This classical influence can also be seen in Pascoli's work, who was himself a renowned classical scholar, and, as we have seen, lived in a time in which the enthusiasm for antiquity in Europe was experiencing another revival. At the same time, however, Pascoli was very strongly influenced by the end-of-the-century *décadence* and, although he often chose classical themes, he endowed to them an entirely new function and significance. Unlike Carducci, he did not aim at applying classical ideals to modern poetry; rather, he resorted to classical literature to express 'his own decadent sensibilities'⁶⁴⁰. Yet, for all the innovative power of Pascoli's poetry, his works consistently bear witness to his great familiarity and precise knowledge of the ancient texts. Accordingly, his reception of the Homeric epics is grounded in a profound knowledge of the original texts.

One of the classical themes that Pascoli repeatedly explored in his poetry is the myth of Odysseus, which is not only central to *L'ultimo viaggio*, but also to *Il sonno di*

635 Strangely, Stanford 1954, 208 describes D'Annunzio as 'one of Pascoli's immediate successors [...], who reacted most violently from Pascoli's mood.' This has to be a mistake, at least on the basis of the publication years 1903 for D'Annunzio's text and 1904 for Pascoli's. This order is, amongst others, confirmed by Piero Boitani (Boitani 1992, 155) who says: 'L'Odisseo di Pascoli è una risposta a quello di D'Annunzio.'

636 Cf. p. 182.

637 'una storia poetica dell'umanità'. See Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 11, who also explains the name of the cycle, which derives from Adolfo de Bosis' literary journal *Il Convito* (*The Banquet*), dedicatee of the *Poemi Conviviali*, but at the same time alludes to the ancient Greek banquet and the poetry performed there. The journal *Il Convito* (1895–1907), whose contributors included D'Annunzio and Pascoli, was ideologically opposed to the established culture of the contemporary industrialized bourgeois society and showed favour towards a new decadent aestheticism. See Borelli 2017, 6.

638 See Bickersteth 1913, 2; 6.

639 See, for example, Brand and Pertile 2008, 461–62 on *Carducci and classicism*.

640 See Brand and Pertile 2008, 478; cf. Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 13; Mainenti 1938, 156.

Odisseo (*The Sleep of Odysseus*, first published in 1899, and in 1904 as part of the *Poemi Conviviali*)⁶⁴¹ and *Il ritorno* (*The Return*, written in 1901, and published in 1906 in *Odi e Inni*). While the shorter poem *Il sonno di Odisseo* (126 vv.) is focused on Odysseus' homecoming, drawing on the sleep motif from the Aeolus episode in *Odyssey* 10,⁶⁴² *Il ritorno* (280 vv.) describes the situation immediately after his return, and thus succeeds *Il sonno di Odisseo* thematically as well as chronologically.⁶⁴³

Even though *Il ritorno* is closely based on the Homeric text, it displays a number of significant departures from it. The poem begins by setting himself in the original Homeric scene where the Phaeacians drop off the sleeping Odysseus on the shore of Ithaca (*Od.* 13.116–25). As in the *Odyssey*, when he wakes up, he does not recognize his homeland and believes to be somewhere else. Here, however, it is not Athena who is responsible by having poured a mist over the land (*Od.* 13.187–96), but Odysseus' own memories, which do not correspond with the reality he encounters.⁶⁴⁴ There is no goddess here, but only a simple girl, who talks to him in his desperation. When he learns from her that he is actually in Ithaca, he refuses to believe that the desolate place he sees before him should be his beloved native land. In contrast to the Homeric Odysseus, who, after Athena lifted the mist, at last joyfully recognized his homeland and kissed the earth (*Od.* 13.344–60), Pascoli's Odysseus continues not to recognize anything. Finally, he sees his own aged reflection in the water of the old Arethusa spring and realizes not only that his youth is gone but also that, even though he has returned, he cannot bring back his past (*Il ritorno*, 231–52):

Al fonte arguto s'appressò l'eroe,
e vide sè nel puro fior dell'acque.

641 In the *Poemi Conviviali*, *Il sonno di Ulisse* (Pascoli 1905, 43–49) is placed immediately before *L'Ultimo viaggio* (Pascoli 1905, 51–94). All quotations and text references refer to the second edition of the *Poemi Conviviali* from 1905. For the sake of clarity, I have added quotation marks for direct speech where needed.

642 In the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 10.1–79), while Odysseus is asleep, his companions open the bag of the winds, which was given to him by Aeolus. As a result, their ship is driven off again shortly before reaching Ithaca. In *Il sonno di Odisseo* (Pascoli 1906, 81–90), having tirelessly tried to reach Ithaca for nine days and nine nights, Odysseus falls asleep at the very moment that it is finally in sight. When he wakes up, it is already too late. The sleep here becomes a symbol of Odysseus' blindness to reality. He is incapable of seeing the actual Ithaca laid before him. To him, Ithaca exists only in the past or in the future. Cf. Messineo 1995, 38.

643 Cf. Gibellini 2007, 14; Zampese 2003, 35.

644 *Il ritorno*, vv. 79–109 (Pascoli 1906, 83–84).

Arida vide la sua cute, vide
 grigi i capelli, e pieni d'ombra gli occhi;
 e la fronte solcata era di rughe, 235
 curvo il dosso, nè più molli le membra.
 Vide; e rivide ciò che più non era:
 sè biondo e snello, coi grandi occhi aperti.
 Rivide nella stessa onda, e compianse,
 la sua lontana fanciullezza estinta. 240
 Ma la fanciulla già nell'acqua pura
 ponea le vesti e le tergea; cantando,
 ma d'ora in ora; poi ch'il dì pensoso
 delle sue nozze le pendea nel cuore.
 E presso la sonante opera accorta 245
 della fanciulla, il reduce Odisseo
 tutto conobbe, poi che sè conobbe;
 ed alla patria protendea le braccia:

OD. Io era, io era mutato!
 Tu, patria, sei come a quei giorni! 250
 Io sì, mio soave passato,
 ritorno; ma tu non ritorni [...]

Odysseus' feeling of alienation from his homeland at the same time marks the prelude to his inner restlessness (*Wanderlust*), which proceeds to unfold in *L'ultimo viaggio*. Yet, while all three poems in which Pascoli deals with the Odysseus theme explore the impossibility of a return to the past, *Il sonno di Odisseo* and *Il ritorno* deny the possibility of a return home, *L'ultimo viaggio* that of a return to the heroic past.⁶⁴⁵ A return in space, as it turns out, does not entail a return in time.⁶⁴⁶

645 The impossibility of a (successful) return to the past features prominently in Milan Kundera's novel *L'ignorance*. This novel tells the story of Irena and Josef, two Czech émigrés, who like Odysseus return to their home country after an absence of twenty years or more. By revealing the émigrés' alienation from their homeland, to which their long absence has led, Kundera denies the possibility of a return to the Same, which he calls 'le Grand Retour'. (cf. p. 280).

The impossibility of a return to the past is also explored in Cesare Pavese's *L'isola (Dialoghi con Leucò, 1947)*, which is a dialogue between Odysseus and Calypso, where the latter tries to persuade him to stay: '[...] Odisseo, voi uomini dite che ritrovare quel che si è perduto è sempre un male. Il passato non torna. Nulla regge all'andare del tempo. Tu che hai visto l'Oceano, i mostri e l'Eliso, potrai ancora riconoscere le case, le tue case?'. Calypso predicts Odysseus' alienation from his home and eternal unrest. Odysseus, on the other hand, does not say a word about Penelope, but rather appears as a man who cannot stop moving, even though his original motivation has faded away. For the complete dialogue, see Pavese, Cesare 1947, 113–18.

646 Cf. Zampese 2003, 102.

In *L'ultimo viaggio*, in which Pascoli's Odysseus goes on his *last journey*, the author consciously places himself in the tradition of Dante and Tennyson.⁶⁴⁷ Yet, Pascoli does not include the information about his literary sources in the poem itself. It is rather in the 'remarks to the first edition' ('Note alla prima edizione') of his *Poemi Conviviali* that Pascoli points out that, in *L'ultimo viaggio*, he tried to combine the Homeric prophecy of Tiresias with the myth narrated by Dante and Tennyson:

In quest ultimo [i.e. *L'Ultimo viaggio*] mi sono ingegnato di metter d'accordo l' *Od. XI 121-137* col mito narrato da Dante e dal Tennyson. Odisseo sarebbe, secondo la mia finzione, partito per l' ultimo viaggio dopo che s'era adempito, salvo che per l'ultimo punto, l' oracolo di Tiresia.⁶⁴⁸

Pascoli puts this claim (to reconcile Dante's and Tennyson's versions with Tiresias' prophecy) into practice by letting Odysseus return home first (like Tennyson's 'Ulysses'), before sending him on his final journey which ends with death (like that of Dante's 'Ulisse'). At the same time, the return to Ithaca brings *L'ultimo viaggio*, whose protagonist is referred to by his Greek name 'Odisseo', closer to the Homeric text. At the beginning of Pascoli's poem, Tiresias' prophecy has already been fulfilled with the exception of Odysseus' gentle death, which is to come ἐξ ἁλὸς (*Od.* 11.134–5).⁶⁴⁹ The poem deliberately plays with the ambiguity of the prophecy by maintaining uncertainty until the end (V, 5–7; VIII, 2–4).⁶⁵⁰ Through its ending, however, *L'ultimo viaggio* ultimately offers an interpretation of the prophecy, since Odysseus' death does indeed come *from* the sea (XXIII, 55).⁶⁵¹

Pascoli's poem is very different from all previous adaptations of the Odysseus theme, including not only those of Dante and Tennyson, but also those of his Italian predecessors Graf and D'Annunzio. As a matter of fact, Pascoli was well acquainted with all these texts:

Pascoli actually translated Tennyson's Ulysses and included it—together with selections from Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's Canto xxvi of the *Inferno*—in a

647 Cf. p. 231 on Cavafy's *Second Odyssey*, where Cavafy also leaves no doubt as to the texts which he draws on.

648 See Pascoli 1905, 213–14.

649 Cf. p. 122.

650 Cf. Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 77; Stead 2009, 18; 289.

651 Cf. Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 16; Stead 2009, 289.

school anthology he edited (*Sul limitare. Prose e poesie scelte per la scuola italiana*, Palermo 1900). In the second edition of the *Convivial Poems* (1905) Pascoli also acknowledged Arturo Graf's poem on the last voyage, even though one can find barely a trace of the latter in Pascoli's longer poem.⁶⁵²

In *L'ultimo viaggio*, Odysseus' third and final journey is not motivated by the curiosity and longing for new experiences, as it often was before (Dante, Tennyson, Graf),⁶⁵³ but instead represents the search of an unsettled, doubting man for his own identity.⁶⁵⁴ As in the adaptations of Lang, Lemaître and Gebhart, it is a backward journey taken to the venues of Odysseus' past adventures,⁶⁵⁵ which is at the same time entirely different from them. This journey serves the purpose of confirming Odysseus' heroic identity, even though he is no longer sure whether what he remembers is really true. Thus we have an Odysseus who stands in total contrast to D'Annunzio's overconfident superman,⁶⁵⁶ or even Graf's self-involved hero, who showed an unshakable—but all the more fatal—optimism until the very end.⁶⁵⁷ In contrast, in Pascoli's poem we encounter a troubled human being, a “hero” who is characteristic of the aestheticism of the *fin de siècle*, and whose search for his own self and the meaning of his existence must inevitably fail in its discovery of a (positive) answer.

The poem is divided in twenty-four Cantos with Roman numbering, each of which has its own title. It has often been observed that this arrangement corresponds to the twenty-four books of the Homeric *Odyssey*, in which its division into two sections of twelve Cantos each stand in an inverted relationship to the course of the *Odyssey*.⁶⁵⁸ Specifically, while the first twelve books of the *Odyssey* (books 1–12), are set during Odysseus return journey (at sea) and the *Odyssey's* second half (books 13–24) takes place in Ithaca (on land), in Pascoli's poem it is the other way around: the first twelve

652 See Schironi 2015, 356–57; cf. Stead 2009, 289–90 for more details as well as Stead 2009, 52 for Pascoli's translation of Tennyson's *Ulysses*.

653 Cf. Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 18–19.

654 Cf. Stanford 1954, 205: ‘... plainly he has lost almost all his heroic confidence and energy’.

655 Such a backwards journey is also described in the *Odyssey* transformations of Blei, Feuchtwanger and Mason (cf. 135; 224). Yet, in all these cases Odysseus finally returns to Ithaca.

656 See Schironi 2015, 356.

657 Cf. my discussion of Graf's text in chapter 5.4.

658 For this and the following see Tönnemann 1979, as well as Willi Hirdt's introduction in Pascoli 1989, 9–10; Stead 2009, 291; Schironi 2015, 357. The poem's numerical correspondence to the *Odyssey* goes even further, and appears to have been deliberately created by Pascoli (Tönnemann 1979, 40): *L'Ultimo viaggio*, which originally counted 1212 verses, was shortened by one verse for the poem's third edition in 1910, resulting in 1211 verses and thus exactly one tenth of the 12110 verses of the Homeric *Odyssey*.

cantos (I–XII) describe the time spent in Ithaca after Odysseus’ return, while the second half (XIII–XXIV) describes his new journey to the venues of his past adventures.

The poem opens with Odysseus’ arrival in Ithaca after his second journey:

I

La pala

Ed il timone al focolar sospese 1
in Itaca l’Eroe navigatore.
Stanco giungeva da un error terreno,
grave ai garretti, ch’egli avea compiuto
reggendo sopra il grande omero un remo.
Quelli cercava che non sanno il mare 5
nè navi nere dalle rosse prore,
e non miste di sale hanno vivande.

While other authors (e.g. Tennyson and Cavafy) psychologically reinterpret the journey prophesied by Tiresias as a journey motivated by *Wanderlust*, Pascoli orientates himself more closely to Homer by characterizing the second journey as the involuntary journey imposed by fate before sending Odysseus on a third journey. The fateful journey from which Odysseus has just returned is now told retrospectively in a manner that encompasses both Cantos I and II.⁶⁵⁹ The theme of Cantos I and II is already hinted at in their titles *La Pala (The Shovel)* and *L’ala (The Oar/The Wing)*, which are united by paronomasia as well as by their reference to the prophecy that Odysseus would meet a wanderer who would mistake his oar for a winnowing shovel (cf. ἀθηρηλοισγόν, *Od.* 11.128). The fulfilment of this latter prediction is already narrated in Canto I, where a wanderer says to Odysseus:

»Uomo straniero, al re tu muovi? Oh! tardo!
Al re, già mondo è nel granaio il grano.
Un dio mandò quest’alito, che soffia 20
anc’oggi, e ieri ventilò la lolla.

⁶⁵⁹ The retrospective narration is arranged as a ring composition: it begins after Odysseus has hung his rudder on the wall (I, 1–2) and ends exactly when the narration has reached this very moment again at the end of Canto II, closing with a variation of I, 1–2: ‘Dove il timone al focolar sospese’ (II, 48). Cf. p. 200.

Oggi, o tarda opra, vana è la tua pala.«
 Disse; ma il cuore tutto rise accorto
 all'Eroe che pensava le parole
 del morto, cieco, dallo scettro d'oro. 25
 Chè cieco ei vede, e tutto sa pur morto:
 tra gli alti pioppi e i salici infecondi,
 nella caligo, egli, bevuto al botro
 il sangue, disse: Misero, avrai pace
 quando il ben fatto remo della nave 30
 ti sia chiamato un distruttur di paglie.
 Ed ora il cuore, a quel pensier, gli rise
 E disse: »Uomo terrestre, ala! non pala!

In this passage, the wanderer mistakenly calls Odysseus' 'oar' ('ala', I, 33) a 'shovel' ('pala', I, 22). The prophecy of Tiresias, who is here only referred to as 'the old, blind man' ('morto, cieco', I, 25) is explicitly mentioned (I, 23–32), as Odysseus recalls it in his memory. It is significant that Pascoli here does not use the word 'remo' for rudder as he did in I, 5, but 'ala', a word which also means 'wing'. Later, when Odysseus describes seafaring to the wanderer in the next Canto (II, 3–20) and compares it with the flight of birds (II, 3–9), it becomes clear that this double meaning is also intended.⁶⁶⁰

»Tutto ti narro senza giri il vero.
 Sono, a voi sconosciuti, uomini, anch'essi
 mortali sì, ma, come dei, celesti,
 che non coi piedi, come i lenti bovi, 5
 vanno, e con la vicenda dei ginocchi,
 ma con la spinta delle aeree braccia,
 come gli uccelli, ed hanno il color d'aria
 sotto sé, vasto. Io vidi viaggiando
 sbocciar le stelle fuor del cielo infranto, 10
 sotto questi occhi, e il guidator del Carro
 venir con me fischiando ai buoi lontano,
 e l'auree rote lievi sbalzar sulla
 tremola ghiaia della strada azzurra.
 Né sempre l'ali noi tra cielo e cielo 15
 battiamo: spesso noi prendiamo il vento:
 a mezzo un ringhio acuto, per le froge
 larghe prendiamo il vano vento folle,

⁶⁶⁰ The metaphor is continued in II, 15–20, where he explicitly refers to oars as 'wings' ('l'ali', II, 15).

che ci conduca, e con la forte mano
le briglie io reggo per frenarlo al passo.⁶⁶¹

20

The metaphorical designation of oars as wings is found in both Tiresias' prophecy in *Odyssey* 11 (οὐδ' ἐνήρε' ἐρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται, *Od.* 11.125) and in the speech of Dante's Odysseus ('de' remi facemmo ali al folle volo', *Inferno* XXVI, 12).⁶⁶² But the choice of words here serves a broader purpose than a mere intertextual allusion to the Homeric⁶⁶³ and Dantean hypotexts. Indeed, the flight of birds associated with seafaring becomes important in the next Cantos in yet another way, for it is the birds that will awaken Odysseus' longing for the sea.⁶⁶⁴ As in Cantos I and II, the next two Cantos III (*Le gru nocchiere, The Pilot Cranes*) and IV (*Le gru guerriere, The Warlike Cranes*)⁶⁶⁵ again correspond with each other, forming another unit. Apart from their common theme, they both share a formal symmetry and stylistic design.⁶⁶⁶ In both Cantos Odysseus, who is now back in Ithaca, hears the song of the cranes flying above him (III, 3–26; IV, 3–26). In Canto III, they announce the approaching winter and tell Odysseus to 'hang' his 'rudder by the fire, and sleep' (III, 3; 12–14), as well as to secure his ship (which he no longer needs) and prepare it for the winter (III, 6–14):

»Sospendi al fumo ora il timone, e dormi.
Le Gallinelle fuggono lo strale
già d'Orione, e son cadute in mare. 5
Rincalza su la spiaggia ora la nave
nera con pietre, che al ventar non tremi,
Eroe; ché sono per soffiare i venti.
L'alleggio della stiva apri, che l'acqua
scoli e non faccia poi funghir le doghe, 10
Eroe; ché sono per cader le piogge.

661 After his conversation with the wanderer, Odysseus finally plants his oar in the ground and performs the sacrifice for Poseidon (II, 30–5). He then takes up the journey back to his ship, on which he returns to Ithaca (II, 36–48), 'where he hang the rudder by the hearth' (II, 48). Cf. 198.

662 Cf. Piras-Rüegg on II, 33 in Pascoli 1974, 68.

663 Pascoli's poem contains a plethora of allusions to the Homeric text, which Piras-Rüegg has already commented on in detail (Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 63–145). Therefore, I will content myself with addressing such intertextual references only when they are important for our analysis.

664 An early indication of Odysseus' later *Wanderlust* can already be seen in Odysseus' description of his journey in II, 9–14, which does not at all suggest a sorrowful experience.

665 I am taking the titles' translation from Pascoli 2010.

666 For their 'struttura simmetrica' examined in detail, see Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 73.

Sospendi al fumo ora il timone, e in casa
 tieni all'asciutto i canapi ritorti,
 ogni arma, ogni ala della nave, e dormi.
 Ché viene il verno, viene il freddo acuto 15
 che fa nei boschi bubbolar le fiere
 che fuggono irte con la coda al ventre;
 [...]
 Navigatore di cent'arti, dormi
 nell'alta casa, o, se ti piace, solca 25
 ora la terra, dopo arata l'onda.«

'This was the song that gnawed at the heart of the helmsman' (III, 27–8), for, instead of the sea, he shall now plough the land (III, 24–6; IV, 15). Although the cranes repeatedly call him 'Eroe' (III, 8; 11) and 'Navigatore di cent'arti' (III, 24), the sphere of heroic deeds which this address evokes stands in stark contrast to the settled and every-day life that he is now expected to lead on land. This is the life of a 'farmer' ('villano', IV, 1), as the next Canto shows:

IV

Le gru guerriere

Dicean, Dormi, al nocchiero, Ara, al villano, 1
 di su le nubi, le raminghe gru.
 »Ara: la stanga dell'aratro al giogo
 lega dei bovi; ché tu n'hai, ben d'erbe
 sazi, in capanna, o figlio di Laerte. 5
 Fatti col cuoio d'un di loro, ucciso,
 un paio d'uose, che difenda il freddo,
 ma prima il dentro addenserai di feltro;
 e cucirai coi tendini del bove
 pelli de' primi nati dalle capre, 10
 che a te dall'acqua parino le spalle;
 e su la testa ti porrai la testa
 d'un vecchio lupo, che ti scaldi, e i denti
 bianchi digrigni tra il nevischio e i venti.
 Arare il campo, non il mare, è tempo, 15
 da che nel cielo non si fa vedere
 più quel branchetto delle sette stelle.

To the ‘farmer’ that Odysseus must become, the cranes now say ‘Plow’ (‘Ara’, IV, 1), to the ‘helmsman’ (‘nocchiero’, IV, 1) he once was ‘sleep’ (‘Dormi’, IV, 1). While the cranes will themselves leave ‘toward the ocean, to war’ (IV, 33–5), Odysseus is told to cultivate the earth and prepare for the winter with animal skins and what his herds offer (IV, 6–14), for ‘[i]t is time to plow the field, not the sea’⁶⁶⁷ (IV, 15). Again, the song is said to have ‘gnawed’ at Odysseus’ heart (III, 27–8; IV, 27–8). The cranes, who tell him to ‘plow’ and ‘sleep’, basically do what he no longer can do. This is especially highlighted by their attributes ‘nocchiere’ and ‘guerriere’, which allude to seafaring and war respectively. Odysseus, the former ‘helmsman’ (‘timoniere’, III, 38; ‘nocchiero’, IV, 1), is now to put away his rudder forever.

The next Cantos describe Odysseus’ life on land as the years go by. Canto V, entitled *Il remo confitto* (*The Tethered Oar*), shows how ‘the navigator hero’ (V, 2) leads a sedentary life for nine years in hearth and home (V, 1–2):

V

Il remo confitto

E per nove anni al focolar sedeva, di sua casa, l’Eroe navigatore: ché più non gli era alcuno error marino dal fato ingiunto e alcuno error terrestre.	1
Sì, la vecchiaia gli ammolliava le membra a poco a poco. Ora dovea la morte fuori del mare giungergli, soave, molto soave, e né coi dolci strali dovea ferirlo, ma fiatar leggiera sopra la face cui già l’uragano frustò, ma fece divampar più forte.	5 10

Now the fated journeys by land and sea are altogether fulfilled. Odysseus ages and only waits for his death ‘to come to him outside the sea, gentle, very gentle’ (V, 6–8). Meanwhile, the situation on Ithaca could not be more welcoming: peace and prosperity

⁶⁶⁷ This translation is taken from Pascoli 2010, 109.

prevail, and everything thrives and flourishes (V, 12–22).⁶⁶⁸ Yet no more banquets are held in Odysseus' house (V, 23–5), for 'the old man' ('il vecchio', V, 25) no longer desires the food he used to eat, but only 'the sweet lotus' (V, 26–30).

E il Laertiade ora vivea solingo	35
fuori del mare, come il vecchio remo	
scabro di salsa gromma, che piantato	
lungi avea dalle salse aure nel suolo,	
e strettolo, ala, tra le glebe gravi.	
E il grigio capo dell'Eroe tremava,	40
avanti al mormorare della fiamma,	
come là, nella valle solitaria,	
quel remo al soffio della tramontana.	

Here, the comparison of Odysseus with the oar 'that he had planted in the ground far from the salty breezes' (V, 36–8), which adds a new dimension to the title of the Canto, poetically expresses the hero's sorrowful loss, since he, like his oar, was not made for an existence 'outside the sea' ('fuori del mare', V, 36). Furthermore, 'the murmur of the flame' ('il mormorare della fiamma', V, 42) that makes Odysseus tremble here represents a clear allusion to the 'murmuring' flame out of which Odysseus speaks in Dante's *Inferno* ('Lo maggior corno de la fiamma antica / cominciò a crollarsi mormorando, ...', *Inferno* XXVI, 85–6). In accordance with his own statement in the 'remarks to the first edition',⁶⁶⁹ Pascoli skilfully combines Tiresias' prophecy with a reference to Dante's *Inferno*.

The following symmetrically⁶⁷⁰ arranged Cantos VI (*Il fuso al fuoco, The Spindle by the Fire*) and VII (*La zattera, The Raft*) both depict scenes with Odysseus and Penelope, where Odysseus is mentally absent and absorbed in memories of his journeys. The beginning of Canto VI takes up the motif of the crane song, which has now been gnawing at Odysseus for the past nine years (VI, 1–10). Odysseus is sitting by the fire with 'his old wife' ('sua vecchia moglie', VI, 11). Lost in thought, he stares at 'the sparks on the rotten back of the black cauldrons' (VI, 16–17) and loses himself in a daydream that takes up almost the rest of the Canto (VI, 20–40), while Penelope, the

⁶⁶⁸ V. 12 'E I popoli felici erano intorno' is a literal translation of Tiresias' words ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ / ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται in *Od.* 11.136–7.

⁶⁶⁹ Cf. p. 196.

⁶⁷⁰ See Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 20.

exemplary house-wife, operates the spindle (VI, 41–2). In his mind, Odysseus is at sea with his companions, just as he was during his journey home, and which is evoked by literal translations and allusions to Homeric passages.⁶⁷¹

In Canto VII, Penelope tries to remind her absent-minded husband of how happy he was on the day of his return: ‘Tired you were of the sea, divine Odysseus, sated of blood!’ (‘Stanco eri di mare, eri, divo Odisseo, sazio di sangue!’, VII, 5–6). But Odysseus does not answer. Once again lost in thoughts of his time at sea, instead of the dry firewood he believes that he hears the crackling sound of his self-built raft (VII, 11–15). In his imagination he is alone on his raft, where he has to prove himself against the mighty Poseidon (VII, 16–42). The spectacular scene that he experiences in his mind testifies to his longing for heroic deeds and adventure.

The next Canto VIII (*Le rondini, The Swallows*) picks up the themes of the beginning of Canto V (V, 1–8):

VIII

Le rondini

E per nove anni egli aspettò la morte
che fuor del mare gli dovea soave
giungere; e sì, nel decimo, su l’alba,
giunsero a lui le rondini, dal mare.
Egli dormia sul letto traforato
cui sosteneva un ceppo d’oleastro
barbato a terra; e marinai sognava
parlare sparsi per il mare azzurro.

5

After having waited nine years for his death to come to him ‘outside the sea’ (‘fuor del mare’, VIII, 2), in the tenth year the swallows come ‘from the sea’ (‘dal mare’, VIII, 4). Significantly, while Odysseus sleeps ‘on the pierced bed [...] above the stump of an olive tree rooted deep in the earth’ (VIII, 5–7), he dreams of sailors and the sea. The tree’s roots, which once symbolised his own rootedness in his native land, have lost all positive meaning. If anything, they have now become shackles. Finally, Odysseus wakes up from the sound of the swallows (VIII, 9–10), which constitute the decisive

⁶⁷¹ See Piras-Rüegg on vv. 20–3 and 33–8 in Pascoli 1974, 81–82.

impulse: he dresses and quietly sneaks out of the bedroom, where Penelope sleeps as well (VIII, 13–20). Next: ‘And he took the smoky rudder from the hearth, and he grabbed a battleaxe.’ (‘E il timone staccò dal focolare, affumicato, e prese una bipenne.’, VIII, 21–2; cf. I, 1). Then Odysseus goes to the sea by way of detours, cunningly concealing his intention to all those he meets along the way, and taking pleasure in slipping into his old role of the wily hero (VIII, 23–34).

E già l’Eroe sentiva sotto i piedi
 non più le foglie ma scrosciar la sabbia;
 né più pruni fioriti, ma vedeva
 i giunchi scabri per i bianchi nicchi;
 e infine apparve avanti al mare azzurro 45
 l’Eroe vegliardo col timone in collo
 e la bipenne; e l’inquieto mare,
 mare infinito, fragoroso mare,
 su la duna lassù lo riconobbe
 col riso innumerevole dell’onde. 50

The frequency of the word ‘sea’ (‘mare’) in this section shows how important its symbolism is. The long suffering of Odysseus ‘far from the sea’ has come to an end. The sea in turn, which ‘recognizes him with the innumerable laughter of the waves’ (VIII, 49–50), appears in personified form, as a living being.

The next two Cantos IX and X, entitled *Il pescatore* (*The Fisherman*) and *La conchiglia* (*The Seashell*) respectively, describe Odysseus’ encounter with a man on the beach, who turns out to be his old singer (‘aedo’) Femio (Phemius).

In Canto IX, Odysseus approaches the man, who is dressed in rags, and who, to Odysseus’ astonishment, is trying to “fish” snails and crabs out of the wet sand with his bare hands (IX, 6–9; 28–33). It is remarkable that Odysseus, who in the Cantos set in Ithaca (III–VIII) did not utter a single word, now speaks in direct speech for the first time (IX, 10–33). He had only done so before his return in Cantos I–II, during the course of his second journey. Now that he has decided to leave again and his will for life has returned, he speaks again. To Odysseus’ astonishment at the scanty food the ragged man gathers for himself, the latter replies, in a quite disillusioned way, that he does not disdain any food that his ‘great host’ (‘il mio grande ospite’, IX, 39), the sea, offers to him. ‘For the good All has a sad child: Nothingness.’ (‘Ché il Tutto, buono, ha tristo

figlio: il Niente.’, XI, 38). Odysseus does not reveal his identity to the man (IX, 44–52), but as it turns out surprisingly in the following Canto, the man knows very well who he is and thus exposes Odysseus’ cover (X, 5–6). He is his old singer, whom Odysseus himself had sent away because he had apparently grown tired of his singing. Odysseus is thus responsible for the misery of the former ‘singing hero’ (‘canoro Eroe’, X, 7–8), who threw away his lyre and now leads this dreary and lonesome existence. Finally, Odysseus recognizes his old bard (X, 24–39):

Or all’Aedo il vecchio Eroe rispose:
 »Terpiade Femio, e me vecchiezza offese 25
 e te: chè tolse ad ambedue piacere
 ciò che già piacque. Ma non mai che nuova
 non mi paresse la canzon più nuova
 di Femio, o Femio; più nuova e più bella:
 m’erano vecchie d’Odisseo le gesta. 30
 Sonno è la vita quando è già vissuta:
 sonno; chè ciò che non è tutto, è nulla.
 Io, desto alfine nella patria terra,
 ero com’uomo che nella novella
 alba sognò, nè sa qual sogno, e pensa 35
 che molto è dolce a ripensar qual era.
 Or io mi voglio rituffar nel sonno,
 s’io trovi in fondo dell’oblio quel sogno.
 Tu verrai meco. [...]

It was not Femio’s singing that Odysseus was tired of, but his own outdated deeds (X, 29). To Odysseus, ‘[l]ife is sleep when it is already lived’, and thus threatens to dissolve into nothing (X, 31–2). Before he forgets everything and the past slips away from him like a dream that he cannot remember (X, 33–6), he wants to ‘sink into sleep once more’ and to see if he can find ‘that dream in the depths of oblivion’ (X, 37–8). He also instructs that Femio shall come with him (X, 39).

In Cantos XI (*La nave in secco, The Beached Ship*⁶⁷²) and XII (*Il timone, The Rudder*), Odysseus finds his ship and his companions on the beach and asks them to set out with him again, in order to retrace his past adventures. At the beginning of Canto

⁶⁷² This translation is taken from Pascoli 2010, 137.

XI, Odysseus walks along the beach accompanied by his old singer Femio (XI, 1–3), and is happy to find his ship again, which seems to be ready for departure (XI, 4–18). He finds his companions sitting at the bow of the ship, their gazes ‘turned towards the sea’ (XI, 21–4). Like Odysseus and his singer (‘il vecchio Aedo e il vecchio Eroe’, XI, 1), they too have aged (XI, 26), and they too are consumed with longing for the sea. In fact, they have been waiting for Odysseus every spring for the last ten years, each time ready for their departure (XI, 27–48):

[...] Poi su la rena assisi stavano, sotto la purpurea prora, con gli occhi rossi a numerar l’ondate, ad ascoltarsi il vento nelle barbe, ad ascoltare striduli gabbiani, cantare in mare marinai lontani.	40
Poi quando il sole si tuffava e quando sopra venia l’oscurità, ciascuno prendevo il remo, ed alle sparse case tornavan muti per le strade ombrate.	45

Each time that Odysseus did not arrive, they returned ‘silently to their scattered houses’ (XI, 47–8); but now and finally he has joined them. Consequently, not much persuasion is needed to convince them, as they are the ones who have already prepared the ship for departure (XI, 44–51). Instead of grandiloquent words, Odysseus in his speech to his companions (XI, 14–54) presents an insight into his own feelings:

»Compagni, udite ciò che il cuor mi chiede sino da quando ritornai per sempre.	15
Per sempre? chiese, e, No, rispose il cuore. Tornare, ei volle; terminar, non vuole. Si desse, giunti alla lor selva, ai remi barbare in terra e verzicare abeti!	
Ma no! Nè può la nera nave al fischio del vento dar la tonda ombra di pino. E pur non vuole il rosichio del tarlo, ma l’ondata, ma il vento e l’uragano.	20
Anch’io la nube voglio, e non il fumo, il vento, e non il sibilo del fuso, non l’ozioso fuoco che sornacchia, ma il cielo e il mare che risplende e canta.	25

Compagni, come il nostro mare io sono,
 ch'è bianco all'orlo, ma cilestro in fondo.
 Io non so che, lasciai, quando alla fune 30
 diedi, lo stolto che pur fui, la scure;
 nell'antro a mare ombrato da un gran lauro,
 nei prati molli di viola e d'appio,
 o dove erano cani d'oro a guardia,
 immortalmente, della grande casa, 35
 e dove uomini in forma di leoni
 battean le lunghe code in veder noi,
 o non so dove. E vi ritorno. Io vedo
 che ciò che feci è già minor del vero.
 Voi lo sapete, che portaste al lido 40
 negli otri l'orzo triturato, e il vino
 color di fiamma nel ben chiuso doglio,
 che l'uno è sangue e l'altro a noi midollo.
 E spalmaste la pece alla carena,
 ch'è come l'olio per l'ignudo atleta; 45
 e portaste le gomene che serpi
 dormono in groppo o sibilano ai venti;
 e toglieste le pietre, anche portaste
 l'aerea vela; alla dormente nave,
 che sempre sogna nel giacere in secco, 50
 portaste ognun la vostra ala di remo;
 e ora dunque alla ben fatta nave
 che manca più, vecchi compagni? Al mare
 la vecchia nave: amici, ecco il timone.«

Odysseus' heart cannot accept that everything has come to an end, and that he is not the same man anymore. Just as the rudder and the ship cannot change back into the tree they once were, take root or provide shade, but now long for 'wave, wind, and storm' (XII, 18–23), so too Odysseus' transformation is irreversible. His vocation is now the sea (XII, 23–7), whom he resembles in its changing nature (XII, 28–9). However, he has doubts about what he experienced on his journey (XII, 30–8). Already the fact that he does not explicitly name his various adventures, but only briefly evokes the scenery and natural surroundings, gives them the feeling of a distant dream. Thus, the 'cave by the sea shaded with laurel' (XII, 32) refers to Polyphemus' cave, 'the gentle fields of violet

and anise' (XII, 33) to the island of Calypso, and the place 'where the golden dogs, immortal, stood guard over the great house [...]' (XII, 34–7) to Circe's island.⁶⁷³ It is to these places, already fading from his memory, that he now wishes to return, for '[he] see[s] that what [he] did is already less true' (XII, 38–9). He then ends this speech with an invocation, 'Out to sea with the old ship! Here is the rudder, my friends!' (XII, 53–4). The first half of the poem thus concludes with the rudder motif with which it opened, as a symbolic mark of Odysseus' arrival and departure.

The second half of the poem, which describes the titular phrase 'final journey', is structured as follows: two introductory Cantos (XIII–XIV) describe the departure (*La partenza*) of the crew and the discovery of a stowaway (*Il pitocco*). Then, three Cantos are dedicated to each of the three main adventures (Circe: XV–XVII, Cyclops: XVIII–XX, Sirens: XXI–XXIII), while the last Canto is set on Calypso's island (XIV).⁶⁷⁴ The nostalgic mood reflected in Odysseus' speech instantly infects his companions (XIII, 1–8):

XIII

La partenza

Ed ecco a tutti colorirsi il cuore
dell'azzurro color di lontananza;
e vi scorsero l'ombra del Ciclope
e v'udirono il canto della Maga:
l'uno parava sufolando al monte
pecore tante, quante sono l'onde;
l'altra tessea cantando l'immortale
sua tela così grande come il mare.

5

'And there all their hearts became tinged with the azure colour of distance.' (XIII, 1–2). The companions too now think of Circe and the Cyclops, but in their imaginations these mythical figures seem even further away than they were in Odysseus' dreamy memories. For they only see 'the shadow of the Cyclops' and only hear 'the singing of the sorceress' (XIII, 3–4), so that even in their imagination these figures appear as an illusion.

⁶⁷³ Cf. Piras-Rüegg on vv. 32–7 in Pascoli 1974, 99. The translations here are taken from Pascoli 2010, 143.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 20; Stead 2009, 290.

Immediately afterwards, they release the ship into the water and everyone climbs on board. Odysseus sets up the rudder and the journey begins (XIII, 9–19). Untouched by this event is the morning bustle of man and beast on Ithaca, who are depicted in an idyllic state (XIII, 20–7). While the men are already rowing, Femio discovers his old zither, ‘the zither he once threw away’ (XIII, 32), which one of the others seems to have brought aboard (XIII, 28–39). As he sets the rhythm, ‘the shrill sound awaken[s] long-slumbered songs in the forgetful hearts of the old men’ (XIII, 40–4), and they all begin to sing (XIII, 44–57).

In the following Canto XIV, *Il pitocco (The Beggar)*, the ‘youthful song’ of the old men (XIV, 1–2) awakens a stowaway who is still sleeping unknowingly below deck. It is Iro the beggar (XIV, 3–9), who ‘in winter used to sleep in Odysseus’ ship’ (XIV, 9–10). This figure, who is characterized negatively in the *Odyssey*,⁶⁷⁵ here serves as a human counter-type for the rest of the crew. Iro is also old (XIV, 15), but instead of indulging in illusions and the dreamy idea of mythical worlds, he lives in a harsh reality.⁶⁷⁶ When Iro hears the music resounding from deck, he does not immediately understand where it comes from (XIV, 18–33). When he then staggers up onto deck and the others see him, they suddenly stop rowing, so that he falls and hurts himself (XIV, 34–47). The others now recognize him and start laughing at him (XIV, 48–9). Iro, however, cries because he realizes that he will never see Ithaca again (XIV, 50–2). Generous as he is, Odysseus makes him the ‘steward of food’ (XIV, 53–6). What the companions and Odysseus, who now feel young and confident, do not know is that Iro will be the only one of them to survive this journey. As it was in the Homeric Irus scene, the crew’s laughter here is a bad omen. In the *Odyssey*, it was the suitors who laughed at Irus, when he was defeated by the foreign ‘beggar’ (i.e. Odysseus; *Od.* 18.95–100). In her narratological commentary, Irene de Jong already pointed to the ‘many instances of

⁶⁷⁵ In the Homeric Irus scene (*Od.* 18.1–158), which is evoked in the following by Iro’s reflections (XIV, 18–33), Irus is described as a greedy glutton and drunkard (*Od.* 18.1–2), who behaves in a particularly rough manner towards Odysseus, in which he resembles the suitors (see de Jong 2001, 438). In particular, when Odysseus appears in disguise of an old beggar at the threshold of his own house, Irus tries to chase him away by threatening him with violence and, although Odysseus tries to avoid a confrontation, he does not leave him alone. However, Irus loses the ensuing fight, which constitutes an amusing entertainment for the suitors.

⁶⁷⁶ Cf. Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 16, who more specifically sees him as ‘the counter-figure of the singer’ (‘la contrafigura dell’aedo’).

laughter of the Suitors or maids' that occur 'until their death in Book 22' and thus prove to be a bad omen: '[t]he Suitors' laughter is a symbol of their blindness, their false sense of security.'⁶⁷⁷ A similar function is now assumed by the motif of laughter in Pascoli's text, where it is Odysseus and his companions who laugh at the injured Iro and who in the end will not survive the journey.

In Canto XV, entitled *La procella (The Storm)*, the fleet are at sea for three times nine days and nights before they see land for the first time. During the first nine days, they move on merely by rowing (XV, 1–5). 'On the tenth day', a favorable wind blows and the rowers can rest (XV, 6–21). Then, a storm appears which lasts for the last nine days (XV, 22–9). As Piras-Rüegg already noted, this 'long journey' represents 'the mythical distance between the lived reality in Ithaca and the youthful dreams of Odysseus'.⁶⁷⁸ Finally, they manage to reach land and, exhausted, instantly fall asleep on the shore (XV, 32–5). Only Odysseus remains awake. Convinced that this is the island of Circe, 'like in a dream' ('come in un sogno', XV, 40), he sees her house and the wild beast surrounding it and also hears her singing as if it is resounding from inside (XV, 36–44). In a state of excitement, he says to Femio:

»Terpiade Femio, dormi? Odimi: il sogno dolce e dimenticato ecco io risogno!	45
Era l'amore; ch'ora mi sommuove, come procella omai finita, il cuore.«	48

Odysseus believes that he is dreaming 'that sweet, forgotten dream' again, which 'was love'. It 'now makes [his] heart tremble like a storm that has already passed' (XV, 45–58). The identification of Odysseus' experience on Circe's island with 'love' already hints at what will subsequently be reflected in the titles of the Cantos. For each of the three adventure stations stands for an abstract value: Circe stands for love (XVII *L'amore*), the Cyclops for fame (XX *La gloria*), and the Sirens for truth (XXIII *Il vero*). In the course of Odysseus' journey, all these values will be nullified.

Canto XVI (*L'isola eea, The Aeaeian Isle*) describes the first day on Circe's island, in which we learn that it is really her island (XVI, 1–2). Odysseus thereupon decides to set

⁶⁷⁷ See de Jong 2001, 440.

⁶⁷⁸ See Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 16–17: 'Al viaggio vero e proprio verso il passato prelude una lunga navigazione di tre volte nove giorni e nove notti, a indicare la distanza mitica fra la realtà vissuta a Itaca e i sogni giovanili di Odisseo.'

out alone with Femio, ‘so that she may hear [his] mortal song and [he] may learn her eternal hymn’ (XVI, 3–6). Odysseus is very confident, if not convinced, that he will meet the sorceress (see also XVI, 7–11). Again, his smile here (XVI, 12) is a sign of his false confidence:

Così diceva sorridendo, e mosse
col dolce Aedo, per le macchie e i boschi,
e vide il passo donde l’alto cervo
d’arboree corna era disceso a bere: 15
Ma non vide la casa alta di Circe.
Or a lui disse il molto caro Aedo:
»C’è addietro. Una tempesta è il desiderio,
ch’agli occhi è nube quando ai piedi è vento.«
Ma il luogo egli conobbe, ove gli occorse 20
il dio che salva, e riconobbe il poggio
dove strappò la buona erba, che nera
ha la radice, e come latte il fiore.
E non vide la casa alta di Circe.
Or a lui disse il molto caro Aedo: 25
»C’è innanzi. La vecchiezza è una gran calma,
che molto stanca, ma non molto avanza.«
E proseguì pei monti e per le valli,
e selve e boschi, attento s’egli udisse
lunghi sbadigli di leoni, désti 30
al lor passaggio, o l’immortal canzone
di tessitrice, della dea vocale.
E nulla udì nell’isola deserta,
e nulla vide; e si tuffava il sole,
e la stellata oscurità discese. 35

Even though ‘he [sees] the path where [last time] the tall stag, with horns like branches, had come down the slope to drink’⁶⁷⁹ (‘e vide il passo [...]’, XVI, 14–5), and ‘he recognize[s] the place’ where Hermes had once provided him with the magic herb Moly (‘conobbe [...], XVI, 20–3), he ‘[does] not see the tall house of Circe’ (‘non vide [...], XVI, 16; 24). Each time, Femio is sure that they are close (‘C’è addietro [...]’; ‘C’è innanzi [...]’, XVI, 17; 26) and tries to explain their unsuccessful search with a

⁶⁷⁹ This translation is partly taken from Pascoli 2010, 157.

comforting aphorism (XVI, 18–19; 26–7). Neither of them wants to admit that what they are looking for might not exist. Both Odysseus and Femio hold fast to the belief that the sorceress Circe lives on the island. However, despite all of Odysseus’ confidence, the search remains unsuccessful, ‘and nothing did he hear on the deserted island, and nothing did he see’ (XVI, 33–4). When evening comes, Odysseus breaks off the search for the day (XVI, 36–40) and the two of them sleep (XVI, 41–6). As soon as Odysseus lies down to rest, however, he hears the lions roar again (XVI, 47–9) and tells himself that they must have been sleeping during the day, while ‘truly he heard the voice [...] of the goddess’ (XVI, 51–2).

Canto XVII (*L’amore, Love*) describes the crew’s next and last day on the island. As the sun rises, the roaring of the lions and the song of the goddess have faded away. Once again, Odysseus tells himself that the lions and the sorceress must be asleep (XVII, 1–7). Confident that he will find Circe this time (XVII, 17–18), he suggests that they search separately and agrees with Femio on giving a sign of recognition (XVII, 8–15). If he finds her first, Odysseus wants to raise ‘a war cry, the one which [he] raised, in the terrible battle, bronze-clad hero, over the naked dead’ (XVII, 11–15). Femio, on the other hand, is to give him a signal with his lyre (XVII, 9–10). Subsequently, however, all of Odysseus’ expectations are disappointed, as nothing of what he imagines appears to be real (XVII, 18–25). When the day draws to a close, he nevertheless cries out his war cry ‘to find the old singer, at least ’ (XVII, 28), and in fact hears his lyre in the distance:

e sì, l’udì; traendo a lei, l’udiva,
 sempre più mesta, sempre più soave,
 cantar l’amore che dormia nel cuore,
 e che destato solo allor ti muore.
 La udì più presso, e non la vide, e vide 35
 nel folto mucchio delle foglie secche
 morto l’Aedo; e forse ora, movendo
 pel cammino invisibile, tra i pioppi
 e i salici che gettano il lor frutto,
 toccava ancora con le morte dita 40
 l’eburnea cetra: così mesto il canto
 n’era, e così lontano e così vano.
 Ma era in alto, a un ramo della quercia,
 la cetra arguta, ove l’avea sospesa

Femio, morendo, a che l'Eroe chiamasse	45
brillando al sole o tintinnando al vento:	
al vento che scotea gli alberi, al vento	
che portava il singulto ermo del mare.	
E l'Eroe pianse, e s'avviò notturno	
alla sua nave, abbandonando morto	50
il dolce Aedo, sopra cui moveva	
le foglie secche e l'aurea cetra il vento.	

The emphasis of the positive statement 'and yes, he heard it [i.e. the sound of the lyre]' ('e sì, l'udi', XVII, 31), after the previously repeated negations ('and nothing did he hear [...]', XVII, 19–20; 'And he did not see [...], nor [...], nor [...]', XVII, 23–5), conveys a spark of hope in Odysseus. This makes the ensuing realisation all the more painful: Femio is dead. The song of the lyre, which Odysseus believed 'to sing of the love that slept in the heart and which, only dies when awakened' ('cantar l'amore [...]', XVII, 33–4) is merely the lyre that, hanging on a branch, moves in the wind (XVII, 44–8). With this disillusioning experience the inner change of Odysseus begins, whose confidence gives way to sadness for the first time.

The following three cantos are dedicated to the Cyclops episode, in which, as in the previous triad, the title of the first Canto indicates the mythical location of the adventure, the second names the mythical figure and the third the abstract value that the latter stands for: XVIII *L'isola dell capre* (*The Island of the Goats*), XIX *Il Ciclope* (*The Cyclops*), XX *La gloria* (*Fame*). In Canto XVIII, Odysseus continues his journey with the rest of the crew. After nine days they reach the Goat-Island close to the land of the Cyclopes (XVIII, 4–5). Just as they did after their arrival on Aea, they fall asleep on the shore (XVIII, 6–7; cf. XV, 34–5),⁶⁸⁰ while the following events develop in a similar way to those of the last episode: when the sun rises, Odysseus again "recognizes" the land (XVIII, 8–9; cf. XVI, 1–2). Remembering his past adventure, this time he vainly searches for Femio to tell him that he is dreaming again 'that sweet, forgotten dream' which 'was fame' (XVIII, 14–16; cf. XV, 45–58). Yet, again he is convinced that he will find what he expects (XVIII, 34–5). He specifically seeks a new confrontation with the

680 Through the literal repetition of verses in similar situations, Pascoli imitates the formulaic verses and type-scenes characteristic of the Homeric epic.

Cyclops, even though he already blinded him in the past (XVIII, 25–9). Odysseus wants to demonstrate his superiority by showing Polyphemus that he has succeeded despite his curse (XVIII, 29–33). This recalls Odysseus' careless behaviour in the Homeric Cyclops episode, where his curiosity and desire for gifts of hospitality had caused the death of many of his companions, and where his subsequent boasting provoked Polyphemus' curse and Poseidon's wrath.

In the remainder of this Canto, Pascoli continues to make intensive use of the Cyclops episode as a background foil. Thanks to the initially parallel development of the two episodes and their diametrically different outcomes, he achieves a more effective contrast which constitutes the innovative value of his poem. As Schironi⁶⁸¹ nicely shows, through the repeated literal translation of entire Homeric passages (as well as by many other means, listed by Piras-Rüegg⁶⁸²), Pascoli establishes several correspondences with the Homeric hypotext, only to disappoint the expectations that have been built up.

When Odysseus and his companions arrive on the island of the Cyclopes, the scenery, which is described in Homeric terms, is the same as it once was (XVIII, 46–50). At this point it seems that everything Odysseus remembers is real. Even the mountain without its peak, which Polyphemus once threw at Odysseus' ship, is still there (XVIII, 53–7). In the next Canto XIX (*Il Ciclope*), Odysseus now leaves the ship together with the beggar Iro. The latter asks for permission to go with Odysseus, in order 'to see that man, who eats so much, and [...] to carry away' some of his food (XVIII, 6–14). The character of Iro thus parodies the Homeric Odysseus, who also wanted to 'see' the Cyclops and receive gifts from him (*Od.* 9.229). When Odysseus and Iro arrive at the cave, the Cyclops is 'not inside'. The following description of the cave (XVIII, 17–23) is an almost exact reproduction of *Od.* 9.216–22, which prompts the surprising turn of the following events: 'a high-waisted woman, with the child at her breast' emerges from the animal fence and hospitably greets the two of them as 'guests'. She tells them that her husband is not at home and offers them food while they wait (XIX, 23–30). Odysseus does not seem confused by the woman's appearance. Instead, the knowing smile, which he now directs towards Iro, expresses his continuing confidence ('sorrise', XIX, 31; cf. XIX, 15; 46). As previously, it can be expected that this confidence is ill-

681 See Schironi 2015, 357–60.

682 See Piras-Rüegg in Pascoli 1974, 14 for *L'Ultimo viaggio* as a whole and Pascoli 1974, 114–22 for her commentary of the Cyclops episode in particular and its debt to the Homeric text.

judged. Though friendly, Odysseus' answer to the woman as well as the ensuing dialogue shows that he secretly still expects to meet the 'man-eating giant' whom he remembers from the last time ('mangiatore d'uomini gigante', XVIII, 12):

»Ospite donna, e pur con te sia gioia.
 Ma dunque l'uomo a venerare apprese
 gli dei beati, ed ora sa la legge,
 benché tuttora abiti le spelonche, 35
 come i suoi pari, per lo scabro monte?«
 E l'altocinta femmina rispose:
 »Ospite, ognuno alla sua casa è legge,
 e della moglie e de' suoi nati è re. 40
 Ma noi non deprediamo altri; ben altri,
 ch'errano in vano su le nere navi,
 come ladroni, a noi pecore o capre
 hanno predate. Altrui portando il male
 rischian essi la vita. Ma voi siete
 vecchi, e cercate un dono qui, non prede.« 45
 Verso Iro il vecchio anche ammiccò: poi disse:
 »Ospite donna, ben di lui conosco
 quale sia l'ospitale ultimo dono.«

With pointed irony Odysseus asks whether her husband 'has learned to honor the blessed gods and now knows the law', although he still lives in a cave (XIX, 32–6). Upon the honest answer of the woman (XIX, 38–45)—which is a variation of *Od.* 9.114–5; 252–5—and her assumption that the two of them, old as they are, cannot be pirates like the ones who robbed them in the past, but are certainly looking for a gift of hospitality,⁶⁸³ Odysseus replies, with an ironical wink to Iro, that he is well aware of her husband's 'last gift of hospitality' (XIX, 46–8). The difference between Odysseus' self-image and his perception by others is particularly apparent here. While he behaves like the cunning hero he believes himself to be, the woman simply sees an old man. The following verses prepare the reader for the arrival of the Cyclops (XIX, 49–57):

Ed ecco un grande tremulo belato

⁶⁸³ The observation of the woman is an effective reversal of Polyphemus' words, who had precisely suspected Odysseus of being one of these pirates who has come to rob him (*Od.* 9.252–5).

s'udi venire, e un suono di zampogna, 50
 e sufolare a pecore sbandate:
 e ne' lor chiusi si levò più forte
 il vagir degli agnelli e dei capretti.
 Ch'egli veniva, e con fragore immenso
 depose un grande carico di selva 55
 fuori dell'antro; e ne rintronò l'antro.
 E Iro in fondo s'appiattò tremando.

Vv. 54–7 represent an almost word-for-word translation of *Od.* 9.233–6⁶⁸⁴, but with one decisive difference: whereas the Cyclops in the Homeric scene threw the firewood on the floor ‘inside the cave’ (ἐντοσθεν δ’ ἄντροιο, *Od.* 9.235) *after* entering it, this time he does so while still ‘outside the cave’ (‘fuori dell’antro’, XIX, 55). This adds to the suspense as Odysseus and Iro can hear the noise, but do not yet see the Cyclops. While in the *Odyssey* they all flee to the farthest corner of the cave at the terrible sight of the Cyclops, here Iro flees into the latter at the mere noise of him from without.

At the beginning of the next Canto (*XX La gloria*), the tension that has built up so far is finally released: instead of a one-eyed giant, a ‘man’ (‘l’uomo’, XX, 1) enters the cave, followed by his many children as well as his animals (XX, 1–8). At the sight of the man, who is only a simple shepherd, Odysseus is deeply astonished (XX, 9–10). Contrary to Polyphemus, this man is actually very hospitable and offers him food (XX, 12), although Odysseus does not quite understand. Without actually telling him about his past adventure (XX, 14–16), he says to his host that he ‘knew of a huge giant man, who lived among endless white flocks, savagely, here in the mountains, alone like a great peak, with a round eye’ (XX, 17–20). The shepherd’s answer is unequivocal:

»Venni di dentro terra, io, da molt’anni;
 e nulla seppi d’uomini giganti«. 23

Yet, Odysseus continues as if he has not heard it:

E l’Eroe riprendeva, ed i fanciulli
 gli erano attorno, del pastore, attenti: 25
 »che aveva solo un occhio tondo, in fronte,
 come uno scudo bronzeo, come il sole,
 acceso, vuoto. Verga un pino gli era,

684 [...] φέρε δ’ ὄβριμον ἄχθος / ὕλης ἀζαλέης, ἵνα οἱ ποτιδόρπιον εἶη, / ἐντοσθεν δ’ ἄντροιο βαλὼν ὀρυμαγδὸν ἔθηκεν: / ἡμεῖς δὲ δεῖσαντες ἀπεσσύμεθ’ ἐς μυχὸν ἄντρου.

e gli era il sommo d'un gran monte, pietra
da fonda, e in mare li scagliava, e tutto 30
bombiva il mare al loro piombar giù...«
Ed il pastore, tra i suoi pastorelli,
pensava, e disse all'altocinta moglie:
»Non forse è questo che dicea tuo padre?
Che un savio c'era, uomo assai buono e grande 35
per qui, Telemo Eurymide, che vecchio
dicea che in mare piovea pietre, un tempo,
sì, da quel monte, che tra gli altri monti
era più grande; e che s'udian rimbombi
nell'alta notte, e che appariva un occhio 40
nella sua cima, un tondo occhio di fuoco...«
Ed al pastore chiese il moltaccorto:
»E l'occhio a lui chi trivellò notturno?«
Ed il pastore ad Odisseo rispose:
»Al monte? l'occhio? trivellò? Nessuno. 45
Ma nulla io vidi, e niente udii. Per nave
ci vien talvolta, e non altronde, il male.«

Odysseus holds onto his memory of the Cyclops, whom he continues to describe to the man (XX, 26–31). The mention of the giant's 'round eye, on the forehead, like a bronze shield, like the sun, burning, empty' (XX, 26–8), and of a mountain top which he threw into the sea with great force (XX, 29–31), reminds the shepherd of an old story. According to this story, it once rained stones into the sea from the highest mountain at the time, and, on the top of it, 'a round eye of fire' appeared accompanied by great noise (XX, 37–41). Odysseus does not appear anywhere in the story. He asks: 'And his eye, who pierced it in the night?' (XX, 43), to which the shepherd, not understanding the question, replies: 'Of the mountain? The eye? Pierced? No one.' (XX, 45).

For everything Odysseus remembers there seems to be a rational explanation. What in the Homeric scene was a saving 'ruse' to hide his identity (μητις, *Od.* 9.414)⁶⁸⁵ now appears as the prosaic truth. Whereas the other Cyclopes were originally supposed to believe that nothing had happened, and that 'No one' (Οὐτίς, *Od.* 9.408) had blinded

685 See *Od.* 9.964–7: Κύκλωψ, εἰρωτᾷς μ' ὄνομα κλυτόν, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοι / ἐξερέω: σὺ δέ μοι δὸς ξείνιον, ὡς περ ὑπέστης. / Οὐτίς ἐμοί γ' ὄνομα: Οὐτὶν δέ με κικλήσκουσι / μήτηρ ἠδὲ πατήρ ἠδ' ἄλλοι πάντες ἑταῖροι.

their aged sons from across the river Oceanus (XXII, 15–23), fade away as the ship glides by. They also pass by the Laestrygonians (XXII, 10–14), the island of the sun god Helios (XXII, 24–8), the floating island of Aeolus (XXII, 29–37), the Planctae (i.e. ‘Wandering [Rocks]’, *Od.* 12.61; XXII, 38–42), as well as Scylla and Charybdis (XXII, 43–51).

Canto XXIII (*Il vero, The Truth*) is the last Canto dedicated to the Sirens episode, in which Odysseus and his crew finally reach ‘the flowery meadow’ (‘il prato fiorito’, XXIII, 1) where the Sirens reside. Here, as so often, the narrator, who observes that it was not possible to hear the Sirens’ song because they were still too far away (XXIII, 2–4), reflects Odysseus’ own perceptions (*implicit embedded focalization*). Odysseus then believes that he feels a calm force driving the ship towards the Sirens, and calls the rowers to stop so that they can hear their song (XXIII, 5–12). With its wave-like rhythm, it is as if the following sentence (XXIII, 13–14), which recurs as a refrain on three further occasions (XXIII, 27–8; 39–40; 49–50), imitates the gentle movement of the ship, slowly swinging in the direction of the Sirens:

E la corrente tacita e soave
più sempre avanti sospingea la nave. 14

Finally, Odysseus catches sight of the Sirens (XXIII, 15–16). They have their heads resting on their elbows and are looking motionlessly at the sea (XXIII, 17–22). He calls out to them, and asks if they are still sleeping, since the sun has already risen (XXIII, 23–4). Trying to make himself known to them, he says: ‘Sirens, it is me again, the mortal, who listened to you, but could not stay’ (XXIII, 25–6), but they do not react. He calls out to them a second time, now with greater emphasis:

E su la calma immobile del mare,
alta e sicura egli inalzò la voce.
»Son io! Son io, che torno per sapere! 35
Ché molto io vidi, come voi vedete
me. Sì; ma tutto ch’io guardai nel mondo,
mi riguardò; mi domandò: Chi sono?«

Despite his repeated affirmation ‘It’s me! It’s me’ (XXIII, 35), again he receives no response, while the ship draws closer and closer to the Sirens (XXIII, 39–40). Odysseus,

who now discerns a pile of bones next to the Sirens, accepts that he is about to die (XXIII, 45–6)—there is no further mention of the companions—and asks the Sirens, who are still unmoved, ‘like two rocks’ (‘simili a due scogli’, XXIII, 44), to tell him at least ‘one truth, only one’ before he dies, so that he will have lived (XXIII, 46–9):

E la corrente rapida e soave
più sempre avanti sospingea la nave. 40
E il vecchio vide un grande mucchio d’ossa
d’uomini, e pelli raggrinzate intorno,
presso le due Sirene, immobilmente
stese sul lido, simili a due scogli.
»Vedo. Sia pure. Questo duro ossame 45
cresca quel mucchio. Ma, voi due, parlate!
Ma dite un vero, un solo a me, tra il tutto,
prima ch’io muoia, a ciò ch’io sia vissuto!«

But once again he receives no answer (XXIII, 49–52):

E la corrente rapida e soave
più sempre avanti sospingea la nave. 50
E s’ergean su la nave alte le fronti,
con gli occhi fissi, delle due Sirene.

Desperately he appeals to them one last time, begging them to tell him at least ‘who [he] is, who [he] was’ (XXIII, 54). But nothing:

»Solo mi resta un attimo. Vi prego!
Ditemi almeno chi sono io! chi ero!«
E tra i due scogli si spezzò la nave. 55

The shipwreck which immediately follows Odysseus’ last and desperate request only occupies one verse: ‘And the ship burst between the two cliffs’ (XXIII, 55). Significantly, this final verse, which no longer reflects Odysseus’ perception (in fact, it no longer can), makes no mention of Sirens, but only ‘cliffs’ (‘scogli’). As it turns out,

Non forse hanno veduto a fior dell'onda
 un qualche dio, che come un grande smergo
 viene sui gorghi sterili del mare?
 O muove già senz'orma come il vento, 25
 sui prati molli di viola e d'appio?
 Ma mi sia lungi dall'orecchio il detto!
 In odio hanno gli dei la solitaria
 Nasconditrice. E ben lo so, da quando
 l'uomo che amavo, rimandai sul mare 30
 al suo dolore. O che vedete, o gufi
 dagli occhi tondi, e garrule cornacchie?«

In the course of his journey, Odysseus had repeatedly sought the figures of his past with growing disillusionment. For apart from his familiar natural environment, which he recognized each time, he did not find anything, making it seem as if he had only imagined everything. Now that he is dead, a figure from his past actually appears. Even more, she remembers him as 'the man [she] loved' (XXIV, 30–1). This unexpected twist turns everything upside down. Whereas the story's previous development had created and gradually consolidated the impression that Odysseus' adventures were only imagined, the reader's expectations are now overturned once again. While the first few disillusionments exposed the un-reality of Odysseus' memories, this last twist seems to reverse this exposure in turn. As a result, it ultimately remains unclear whether Odysseus' adventures were real or imagined.⁶⁹⁰

690 This of course presupposes a very rationalistic approach to the text, which certainly does not do it full justice. Among the many interpretations of the end of Pascoli's poem, there are also those that understand Calypso symbolically. Stanford, for example, sees in her 'a symbol for Nirvana' (Stanford 1954, 208). For further interpretations of Calypso see Schironi 2015, 361.

Whether it was all real or just imagined is a question that the protagonist of Zachary Mason's *Last Islands*, the last episode of *The Lost Books of the Odyssey* (cf. p. 135), also asks himself. As a matter of fact, this short and rather light-footed narrative bears an undeniable resemblance to Pascoli's poem. In Mason's text, the aged Odysseus is also back in Ithaca. Unlike Pascoli's Odysseus, he is now famous and his fame attracts tourists to the island. Yet he also asks himself the question whether his adventures really took place in the way that they are remembered. He especially doubts whether he just imagined Pallas Athena, his protective goddess. So, he too sets off on a backwards journey, in order to retrace the venues of his old adventures. While visiting Phaeacia, Ogygia, Aeaea, the island of the Cyclops and Troy, he enjoys very similar experiences to Pascoli's Odysseus. His desire to feel like an adventurer and hero again is also disappointed, because, instead of dangerous situations and monsters, he only meets calm seas and hospitable people. Here too, it remains unclear until the very end whether what he remembers is real or not. In particular, Odysseus' disillusioned words at the end of his journey 'I am old and not far from nothing, and everything I knew has turned to smoke' (Mason 2011, 226) are strongly reminiscent of the words of Pascoli's Odysseus in Canto XXI: 'Il mio sogno non era altro che sogno; / e vento e fumo. (XXI, 15–16). Just like Calypso in Pascoli's poem, in the last scene of Mason's work a character from Odysseus'

Calypso now steps outside the cave to see what has upset the animals. She finds the dead Odysseus washed up by the sea (XXIV, 33–53):

Ed ecco usciva con la spola in mano,
d'oro, e guardò. Giaceva in terra, fuori
del mare, al piè della spelonca, un uomo, 35
sommosso ancor dall'ultima onda: e il bianco
capo accennava di saper quell'antro,
tremando un poco; e sopra l'uomo un tralcio
pendea con lunghi grappoli dell'uve.
Era Odisseo: lo riportava il mare 40
alla sua dea: lo riportava morto
alla Nasconditrice solitaria,
all'isola deserta che frondeggia
nell'ombelico dell'eterno mare.
Nudo tornava chi rigò di pianto 45
le vesti eterne che la dea gli dava;
bianco e tremante nella morte ancora,
chi l'immortale gioventù non volle.
Ed ella avvolse l'uomo nella nube
dei suoi capelli; ed ululò sul flutto 50
sterile, dove non l'udia nessuno:
— Non esser mai! non esser mai! più nulla,
ma meno morte, che non esser più! —

Odysseus, who had once refused immortality offered by Calypso, now returns to her already dead. Yet, his 'white head, nodded that he knew that cave, shaking a little' (XXIV, 36–7). This exposes the deep tragedy that the desired return to his past could not be accomplished while alive. The end of the poem sounds a tender and yet infinitely sad note: Calypso, the 'lonesome Concealer' (XXIV, 42), 'engulfed the man in the cloud of her hair' (XXIV, 49–50). The poem closes with her anguished cry, which 'resounded over the barren flood' (XXIV, 50–1): 'Never to be! Never to be! Nothing at all/ But less a death than [to be born and then] to be no more!' (XXIV, 52–3).⁶⁹¹

The negation of all values of human life as an illusion, with death as the only exception—and thus the recognition of the vanity of life itself—leads Pascoli to the

past appears, thus undermining the impression that everything was merely an illusion. For when Odysseus finally decides to go home again—unlike Pascoli's hero, he does not die far from home—the goddess Athena appears. She watches Odysseus from a distance and is relieved that he is going home, where he will die a quiet death in the same year.

691 The translation of these last two verses is taken from Schironi 2015, 361.

nihilistic conclusion that it is better never to be born than to live and die. For Kazantzakis, on the other hand, this negation of values, once accepted, can lead to a positive renewal of life, out of which the hero rises like a phoenix from the ashes. As we have seen, only when Kazantzakis' Odysseus has lost all hopes is he able to begin his new life.⁶⁹² Furthermore, the '[o]ptimistic, or Dionysian, Nihilism' with which Nietzsche's *Übermensch* overcomes the disappointment when facing the vanity of life, and which Kazantzakis consequently adopts for his Odysseus,⁶⁹³ is thus fundamentally different from Pascoli's decadent, melancholic pessimism, which here marks the ultimate end. Pascoli's protagonist is not the exceptional superman capable of overcoming his despair when confronting the empty abyss, like the heroes of Kazantzakis and D'Annunzio. Indeed, he is not a hero (even if he desires to be one), but a simple 'man' ('uomo'). Thus, Pascoli does not seek an escape of the *conditio humana* by elevation to an ideal superman. Instead, he accepts the vanity of human existence as it is. Pascoli's response to the annihilating effect arising from the *conditio humana*, although ultimately pessimistic, is therefore a deeply human one.

5.11 Constantine Cavafy's *Second Odyssey* (1894), *The End of Odysseus* (1894) and *Ithaca* (1911)

A few years after the publication of Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio*, the Greek Alexandrian poet Constantine Cavafy (1863–1933) wrote his poem *Ιθάκη* (*Ithaca*). While the latter would eventually rise to international fame,⁶⁹⁴ another poem, which was written much earlier and was highly relevant to the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust*, would still remain unknown for a long time. For in January 1894 Cavafy had already written a poem called *Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια* (*Second Odyssey*) in direct response to Tennyson's poem *Ulysses* as well as Dante's *Inferno*, which addressed the theme of Odysseus' voluntary journey.⁶⁹⁵ Further, in an essay titled *Τὸ τέλος τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως* (*The End of Odysseus*, April 1894) and written only a few months later, he had outlined the history of the literary motif of Odysseus' last journey, starting with Homer and the prophecy of Tiresias, continuing

692 Cf. pp. 133.

693 Cf. p. 190.

694 Cf. p. 239.

695 Stead 2009, 137 points out that Tennyson died only fourteen months (i.e. on the 6th of October 1892) before Cavafy composed his poem.

with the ancient *Telegony* and finally turning to Dante and Tennyson.⁶⁹⁶ Both Cavafy's poem and essay were practically unknown until they were found in the Cavafy Archive⁶⁹⁷ and published by G. P. Savidis⁶⁹⁸ almost a century later. It is all the more intriguing to find out that the young Cavafy placed himself in the very context of Dante and Tennyson. Since his early texts from 1884 are highly relevant to his later poem *Ithaca*, I shall deviate from the chronological order of our text corpus and consider all three texts in a joint chapter, following the order in which they were written. But first, let us situate Cavafy in the literary-historical context of his time and take a look at the particular circumstances of his life.

Cavafy, the last of nine children, was born into a wealthy Greek family in Alexandria which was originally from Constantinople. As part of one of the Greek communities still flourishing at that time in Egypt, which came to be effectively under British rule from 1882 to 1956,⁶⁹⁹ he lived on the periphery of the Greek world and was exposed to a variety of cultural influences. Although of Greek descent, French became his second

696 Cavafy does not explicitly name the *Telegony*, but instead refers to certain 'ancient authors'. It was G. P. Savidis, who discovered that the relevant paragraph is an unmarked, almost literal reproduction from a mythological lexicon (see G. P. Savidis in Καβάφης 1974, 18–19). In this outline Cavafy compares the versions of Dante and Tennyson, incorporating larger text passages into his own translation and commenting on them in detail.

697 The Cavafy Archive is a complete collection of Cavafy's documents, manuscripts, photographs etc. that was created and maintained by the poet himself during his lifetime (see Pappa 2019 as well as "C.P. Cavafy - The Cavafy Archive - History" 2019). In possession of the Onassis Foundation since 2012, it is by now fully digitized and openly accessible on <https://cavafy.onassis.org>.

698 The existence of the essay *The End of Odysseus* had been known since 1948 (see G. P. Savidis in Καβάφης 1974, 17 on the prehistory to the publication in the commentary to the essay's first edition from 1974). *Second Odyssey* was first published in 1985 (Σαββίδης 1985). Interestingly, in the first edition of the essay from 1974 (Καβάφης 1974, 20), Savidis still speculates about Cavafy's poem *Second Odyssey*, 'of which only the title is preserved' ('τοῦ ὁποῖου σώθηκε μονάχα ὁ τίτλος') thereby referring to a list of works found in the Cavafy Archive. At this stage, Savidis obviously does not know the poem yet. The poem *Ithaca* (1911), on the other hand, which will later often be seen as a further development of *Second Odyssey*'s theme, is described as 'defective' ('ἐλαττωματικό', Καβάφης 1974, 22). G. P. Savidis finally acquired the archive in 1969 from Cavafy's heir Alekos Singhopoulo (see "C.P. Cavafy - The Cavafy Archive - History" 2019). *Second Odyssey* is one of the 75 so-called "hidden" poems (Κρυμμένα) 'that were found finished in his papers' (see "C. P. Cavafy – The Poet, His Oeuvre and His Era" 2019; cf. p. 230 on Cavafy's unusual editorial practice). As Stead 2009, 136 explains the term "hidden" was first used in Italian (*Poesie nascoste*) by Filippo Maria Pontani in his Cavafy edition from 1974 (Cavafi, *Poesie nascoste*, Mondadori, 1974) and in 1993 picked up by Savidis in Greek after the poem *Κρυμμένα* from 1908 (Καβάφης 1993).

699 While in 1882 Egypt comes under the control of British forces, it officially remains a part of the Ottoman Empire (Vatikiotis 1991, 170–71; Daly 1998, 239). De facto, it will be a "veiled protectorate" of the British Empire until 1913 (Vatikiotis 1991, 171–72; Daly 1998, 240). Only in 1914, when the Ottoman Empire joins the Central Powers in the First World War against the Allied Powers (including Great Britain), will Britain officially declare a protectorate over Egypt (Daly 1998, 246). Even after officially recognizing Egyptian independence in 1922, Britain does not give up its privileges and practically stays in control of Egypt until 1956—now without the responsibilities arising from the protectorate (Daly 1998, 249–251).

language due to his French house-tutor in Alexandria,⁷⁰⁰ while his later education was mainly English, in turn leading to his great familiarity with English literature and fluent command of the English language.⁷⁰¹ In the course of his poetic activity, he was increasingly influenced by contemporary literary trends in Europe such as that of the French Parnassians, Baudelaire, with whom he shared ‘the rejection of modern notions of progress’, as well as the ensuing decadence and aestheticism.⁷⁰² At the same time, his work is characterized by a nostalgic relationship to the Greek past and especially the Hellenistic and Byzantine eras.⁷⁰³ Showing a preference for decay and decline (as opposed to progress), and with ‘a poetic gaze that would, for so much of his life, be backward-glancing’⁷⁰⁴, Cavafy ‘is the leading poet of the periphery, writing in Greek far from Greek lands’⁷⁰⁵. He only visited Athens for the first time in 1901, at the age of thirty-eight,⁷⁰⁶ ‘a city that was largely indifferent to him—as he, an Alexandrian, a devotee of the Hellenistic, the Late Antique peripheries, had always been indifferent to it, the great symbol of High Classicism.’⁷⁰⁷

Cavafy spent much of his youth and particularly his adolescence outside of Egypt. Due to the decline of the family fortune following his father’s death in 1870, who had run the successful trading company *Cavafy & Co.*, in 1872 Cavafy, his mother and six surviving brothers moved to England in order to seek help from his uncle, Georgios Cavafy. From 1872–1877, they lived in Liverpool and London. In 1877, the impoverished family returned to Alexandria, but they had to leave again in 1882

700 See Stead 2009, 135; McKinsey 2010, 79.

701 See McKinsey 2010, 78–81 on ‘the enduring impact of Cavafy’s early exposure to English culture’.

702 See Mendelsohn’s introduction in Cavafy 2013, xxx–xxxii; cf. my later remarks on Baudelaire p. 107. For a detailed study of Cavafy’s indebtedness to decadence, see Jeffreys 2015.

703 Since the Arab-Egyptian reality and culture are almost completely absent in his work, one might accuse Cavafy of being blind to his surroundings. Halim 2013, 70–71; 116–17, however, argues against the fact that Cavafy had no interest in the Arab-Egyptian world surrounding him, as, for example, is claimed by Marguerite Yourcenar and Athanase G. Politis (see Halim 2013, 69; 57–58 respectively), and proves his interest in ‘contemporary Egyptian Arabic literature’ as well as the latter’s promotion (Halim 2013, 117).

704 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xxxi.

705 See “C. P. Cavafy – The Poet, His Oeuvre and His Era” 2019.

706 For this and the following, see “C. P. Cavafy – By Dimitris Daskalopoulos, Poet, Bibliographer, Critic. Translated by Karen Emmerich” 2020.

707 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xxv.

because of military turmoils.⁷⁰⁸ In the following years (1882–1885), they stayed in Constantinople at the family home of his mother Charikleia, before finally returning to Alexandria in 1885. Egypt was then under British control and in 1892 Cavafy was finally given a permanent position as a civil servant at the Irrigation Department, which he would hold for the next thirty years. It was only late in his life that he achieved a certain international renown as a poet.⁷⁰⁹

In addition to the multiple cultural influences that have left a lasting mark on Cavafy's poetic work, other factors include the homosexuality⁷¹⁰ of Cavafy, of whose intimate relations not much is known,⁷¹¹ as well as his great interest in Greek history and meticulous attention to detail,⁷¹² which is adequately reflected in his description of himself as 'poet-historian'.⁷¹³ Recurring themes of his poetry are the Hellenic and Byzantine eras, which provide a (pseudo-)historical setting for many of his poems, as well as homoerotic desire, often intermingled with one another. In its mature form, his poetic language displays a unique blend of *katharevousa* (Καθαρεύουσα) and demotic Greek (Δημοτική), thereby contrasting with the complete rejection of the artificial *katharevousa* by most Athenian poets of the 1880s, during the long-lasting linguistic debate in Greece (το γλωσσικό ζήτημα).⁷¹⁴ Furthermore, Cavafy distinguishes himself

708 During 'the British bombardment of Alexandria (a response to Egyptian nationalist violence against some of the city's European inhabitants [...])', Cavafy's 'family home' was 'largely destroyed'. For this and the following, see Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xxiii–xxiv.

709 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xvii. Cf. Bien 1990, 198 on the importance of the 'British novelist E. M. Forster [who] must be given the credit for spreading Cavafy's fame to the English-speaking world, thus opening the door to wider appreciation throughout Europe and beyond.'

710 See Mendelsohn (Cavafy 2013, xxix–xxx) on Cavafy's 'homosexual sensuality' as a source of poetic inspiration.

711 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xvii; xxv; Jusdanis 2020.

712 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xviii.

713 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xxi.

714 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xlv–xlv and Halim 2013, 111–12 about Cavafy's style with regard to the linguistic debate in Greece.

by his unusual editorial methods, that is, the way in which he disseminates his poetry.⁷¹⁵ Thus, the first edition of his works appears only posthumously, in 1935.⁷¹⁶

Even if his early poem *Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια* is still written in a somewhat rigid *katharevousa* and does not yet display the qualities that will become characteristic of his mature work, it stands out in bringing together Homer, Dante and Tennyson. In it Cavafy also reflects on the act of reception, i.e. the act of rewriting Homer:

Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια ⁷¹⁷	Second Odyssey ⁷¹⁸
Dante, Inferno, Canto XXVI Tennyson, «Ulysses»	DANTE, Inferno, Canto XXVI TENNYSON, “Ulysses”
Ὀδύσσεια δευτέρα καὶ μεγάλη, τῆς πρώτης μείζων ἴσως. Ἀλλὰ φεῶ ἄνευ Ὀμήρου, ἄνευ ἑξαμέτρων.	A second Odyssey and a great one, too, greater than the first perhaps. But alas, without a Homer, without hexameters.
Ἦτο μικρὸν τὸ πατρικόν του δῶμα, ἦτο μικρὸν τὸ πατρικόν του ἄστου, 5 καὶ ὅλη του ἡ Ἰθάκη ἦτο μικρά.	Small was his ancestral house, small was his ancestral town, and all his Ithaca was small.
Τοῦ Τηλεμάχου ἡ στοργή, ἡ πίστις τῆς Πηνελόπης, τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ γῆρας, οἱ παλαιοὶ του φίλοι, τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἀφοσιωμένου ἡ ἀγάπη, 10 ἡ εὐτυχῆς ἀνάπαυσις τοῦ οἴκου	Telemachus’s affection, the faithfulness of Penelope, the years of his father’s old age, his old companions, the people’s unswerving love, the blessed repose of the house

715 On his unusual editorial methods, see “C. P. Cavafy – By Dimitris Daskalopoulos, Poet, Bibliographer, Critic. Translated by Karen Emmerich” 2020 ‘[...] he collected offprints of poems that had appeared in various journals, or had individual poems printed, and formed packets of poems, which scholars retrospectively organized into two categories: two “volumes” (1904 and 1910) and ten “collections,” which contained poems from the years 1910-1932. These quasi-books never circulated commercially; rather, the poet himself sent or gave them to friends and admirers of his work, maintaining fastidious distribution lists. This novel publication method rendered his equally novel poetry elusive and highly sought after. His entire poetic production was later grouped by G. P. Savvidis into four categories: the 154 poems of the “canon,” comprising the poems Cavafy himself put into circulation in his two “volumes” and ten “collections” plus one that was unpublished, but assumed to be ready for printing on his death; the “Repudiated” poems of his early period; the “Hidden” (which Savvidis originally called the “Unpublished”), which were not published in Cavafy’s lifetime; and the “Unfinished,” drafts of poems which the poet never completed.’

716 See Stead 2009, 136.

717 For the Greek text, see Καβάφης 1993, 48–49.

718 The translation cited is the one by Daniel Mendelsohn (Cavafy 2013, 275–76).

<p>εἰσήλθον ὡς ἀκτίνες τῆς χαρᾶς εἰς τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ θαλασσοπόρου. Καὶ ὡς ἀκτίνες ἔδυσαν.</p>		<p>entered like rays of joy into the heart of the seafarer. And like rays they sank.</p>
<p>Ἡ δίψα 15 ἐξύπνησεν ἐντὸς τοῦ τῆς θαλάσσης. Ἐμίσει τὸν ἀέρα τῆς ξηρᾶς. Τὸν ὕπνον τοῦ ἐτάραττον τὴν νύκτα τῆς Ἑσπερίας τὰ φαντάσματα.</p>		<p>Inside of him there awakened the thirst for the sea. He hated the air of dry land. Phantasms of the West disturbed his sleep at night.</p>
<p>Ἡ νοσταλγία τὸν κατέλαβε 20 τῶν ταξιδίων, καὶ τῶν πρωινῶν ἀφίξεων εἰς τοὺς λιμένας ὅπου, μὲ τί χαράν, πρώτην φοράν ἐμβαίνειεις.</p>		<p>Nostalgia took hold of him: for voyages, and early-morning arrivals in harbors which, with what joy, you enter for the first time.</p>
<p>Τοῦ Τηλεμάχου τὴν στοργήν, τὴν πίστιν τῆς Πηνελόπης, τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ γῆρας, τοὺς παλαιούς του φίλους, τοῦ λαοῦ 25 τοῦ ἀφοσιωμένου τὴν ἀγάπην, καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν τοῦ οἴκου ἐβαρύνθη.</p>		<p>Telemachus's affection, the faithfulness of Penelope, the years of his father's old age, his old companions, the people's unswerving love, and the peace and repose of the house—they all bored him.</p>
<p>Κ' ἔφυγεν.</p>		<p>And he left.</p>
<p>Ὅτε δὲ τῆς Ἰθάκης αἱ ἀκταὶ ἐλιποθύμουν βαθμηδὸν ἐμπρὸς του 30 κ' ἔπλεε πρὸς δυσμὰς πλησίστιος, πρὸς Ἴβηρας, πρὸς Ἡρακλείους στήλας, —μακρὰν παντὸς Ἀχαικοῦ πελάγους,— ἦσθάνθη ὅτι ἔζη πάλιν, ὅτι ἀπέβαλλε τὰ ἐπαχθῆ δεσμὰ 35 γνωστῶν πραγμάτων καὶ οἰκιακῶν. Καὶ ἡ τυχοδιώκτις του καρδιά ἠὺφραίνετο ψυχρῶς, κενὴ ἀγάπης.</p>		<p>When Ithaca's headlands slipped away bit by bit before him and he voyaged westward at full sail, towards Iberia, towards the Heracleian pillars, —far from every Achaean sea,— he felt that he lived once again, that he'd slipped the burdensome bonds of things that were known and familiar. And his heart, adventuress, exulted coldly, empty of love.</p>

Together with the title *Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια* (*Second Odyssey*), the epigraph presented in two separate lines preceding the poem's text already establishes a clear reference to three authors and three specific texts: Homer (for now, only through the word 'Odyssey'; his name will be mentioned in line three), Dante, and Tennyson, as well as their respective treatments of the Odysseus theme.⁷¹⁹

719 Just as Cavafy here leaves no doubt regarding the texts which he draws on, twenty years later Pascoli also informs the reader about his literary sources. Yet unlike Cavafy, who cites the intertexts by Dante and Tennyson in the epigraph after the poem's title, Pascoli does not include this information in the

The first three lines are programmatic. The author does not seem to lack self-confidence here, as he suggests that this ‘second *Odyssey*’ may even exceed the original one—as such, a truly audacious announcement. However, it remains unclear, if he here refers to his own adaptation, those of his predecessors Dante and Tennyson, or to a continuation of the *Odyssey* in general.

In the second stanza, the story of the poem begins to unfold. In a third person-narrative, the poem—i.e. through the narrator, who is unspecified—speaks of a male person, who is easily identified as Odysseus. But the hero described in the following lines is not at all satisfied by the delights of his return outlined in the third stanza, or at least not for a long time. The epithet τοῦ θαλασσοπόρου (‘of the seafarer’, v. 13) that is used here, instead of Odysseus’ name, is purposefully chosen, as it is significant for the change that he has undergone and indicative of what will follow in the next line: Καὶ ὡς ἀκτίνες ἔδυσαν. (‘And like rays they sank.’ v. 14). Odysseus is no longer who he was, nor are his desires, as are described in stanza number four; instead, ‘the thirst for the sea’ (Ἡ δίψα [...] τῆς θαλάσσης, vv. 15–16) and ‘the nostalgia for voyages’ (Ἡ νοσταλγία [...] τῶν ταξιδίων, vv. 20–1) have taken hold of him, and he yearns for a new adventure—just like the restless hero described by Dante and Tennyson.

The fifth stanza is a variation on the third: Odysseus’ return, which he had so eagerly longed for in the Homeric *Odyssey*, and his once beloved home, do not bring him the expected happiness and satisfaction, but simply bore him now. His weariness and unrest have a simple consequence, his departure. This is summarised in a short, simple phrase with no further explanations about possible consequences for his family and kingdom in Ithaca: Κ’ ἔφυγεν (‘And he left.’, v. 29). And just like that, Ithaca lies almost behind him again. In the next scene, Odysseus already finds himself on his ship sailing towards the Heracleian Pillars, the end of the known world, just like the Dantean Odysseus did, with the only difference being that this journey is preceded by his return home and that now he is alone. Especially noteworthy are the last verses (vv. 34–8): ‘he felt that he lived once again, / that he’d slipped the burdensome bonds / of things that were known and familiar. / And his heart, adventuress, / exulted coldly, empty of love.’ The seemingly paradoxical feeling of a “happy emptiness” expressed in these last verses

poem itself (cf. p. 196).

could also be described as a kind of “positive nihilism”, a notion that will later become especially characteristic of Nikos Kazantzakis’ *Odysseus*, who also frees himself from all bonds and leaves his native land for a new journey.

We can conclude that in *Δευτέρα Οδύσσεια* Cavafy combines elements of the Homeric *Odyssey* as well as Dante’s and Tennyson’s adaptations of the Odysseus theme. So, just as in the Homeric *Odyssey*, and also in Tennyson’s *Ulysses*, this Odysseus *has* returned to Ithaca. But now, the fated last journey once prophesied by Tiresias in the Homeric *Nekuia* is a voluntary one resulting from the hero’s inner restlessness.⁷²⁰ At the end of the poem, Cavafy’s Odysseus has accomplished what Tennyson’s *Ulysses* had only longed for, when he was standing at the port and looking at the wide sea, as we here actually see Odysseus depart. Odysseus’ journey in *Second Odyssey*, which also bears clear verbal allusions to Dante’s *Inferno* passage,⁷²¹ does not result in the hero’s tragic death, but is instead left with an open end. However, the fact that Cavafy takes up the literary motif of Odysseus’ last journey strongly indicates that this journey, too—no matter how long it may last—will finally be concluded with Odysseus’ death.⁷²²

In his essay Cavafy states that ‘[w]hen Dante describes Odysseus in Hades, he is obliged to recount his death, but not Tennyson’ and expresses his preference for the ‘ambiguity of the verses’⁷²³ in Tennyson’s poem (referring in particular to vv. 59–64) and its open end. After the presentation of Dante’s and Tennyson’s transformations of the *Odyssey*, he rightly points out that an adventurous and curious Odysseus is something that ‘psychologically emanates from the *Odyssey*’ itself:

This final voyage which he [i.e. the Dantean Odysseus] undertakes when in a particular state of mind, and in his old age, independent of any external

720 See the beginning of Cavafy’s essay (Καβάφης 1974, 9–10), where he points out the voluntary nature of Odysseus’ last journey as an innovation introduced by Dante and taken up by Tennyson.

721 Vv. 7–8 (‘Telemachus’s affection, the faithfulness of Penelope, the years of his father’s old age,’) as well as the repetition in the accusative, vv. 23–4, are a clear echo of *Inj.* XXVI, 95–7 (‘né dolcezza di figlio, né la pietà del vecchio padre, né l’debito amore, lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta [...]’). Here, Cavafy apparently preferred to keep it with Dante. For Cavafy himself writes in his essay that Tennyson’s Odysseus speaks of Penelope ‘with indifference’ (my translation) and of his son with ‘a certain irony’, while, on the contrary, in the *Inferno*, he [i.e. Odysseus] speaks with veritable remorse [...]’ (Cavafy 2010, 110. Here and in the following I quote Peter Jeffreys’ translation of the essay who renders the latter’s title as *The Last Days of Odysseus*. For the Greek see Καβάφης 1974, 16.

722 Cf. Stead 2009, 141 who therefore renders the Greek ‘δευτέρα’ in the poem’s title with the French ‘seconde’ instead of ‘deuxième’: ‘Si on lit le poème dans le contexte intertextuel qui est le sien, on ne peut hésiter. La fin désastreuse du voyage d’Ulysse chez Dante, les titres de Graf (*Le Dernier Voyage d’Ulysse*) et de Pascoli (*Le Dernier Voyage*) ne laissent pas de doute. Il s’agit bien d’une *seconde Odyssee*, ni d’une autre, ni d’une deuxième: il ne peut en effet y avoir de troisième.’

723 See Cavafy 2010, 110–11. For the original passage see Καβάφης 1974, 16.

contributing factors, confirms his character's inclination to seek adventure and travel. In the voyage of *The Odyssey*, he is pursued by the ire of the gods, and his aim is ever the return to his homeland. But after becoming a wanderer and seeing different cities and various peoples which at once feed and provoke his curiosity, he is overtaken by the magic of his travels and the occasional quest for new lands; and when he eventually reaches his homeland, he finds that it neither pleases nor satisfies him; that his homeland is no longer there but rather in the great expanses with which his vision is filled. This is the conclusion that emanates psychologically from *The Odyssey*. [...] ⁷²⁴

Our analysis of the *Odyssey* in chapter two showed that *Wanderlust* was in fact a central element of the Homeric Odysseus' rich and complex characterization. Cavafy seems to be well aware of this and thereby demonstrates a great familiarity with the Homeric hypotext. The Greek scholar D. M. Maronitis ⁷²⁵ once also suggested that the lying tale in *Od.* 14.192–359 was a possible source of inspiration for Cavafy's *Second Odyssey*. As already noted, in this tale which Odysseus tells to the swineherd Eumaeos, he assumes the false identity of a Cretan. The alternative homecoming story of the Cretan, who appears as a centrifugal hero dominated by *Wanderlust*, provides a strong contrast to the primarily homeward-oriented Odysseus, and thus displays his characterization *ex negativo*. From today's perspective, the Cretan shows an astonishing similarity to the outward bound adventurer that dominates many modern transformations of the *Odyssey*. It is therefore not too far-fetched to assume that Cavafy may also have been inspired by this Homeric passage. We shall see further on that, at least for Kazantzakis' *Οδύσσεια*, this is undoubtedly the case.

At the end of his essay, Cavafy states:

Ἐκεῖ ὅπου ὁ Ὅμηρος ἀπεφάσισε νὰ σταματήσῃ καὶ ἔθεσε τελεῖαν, εἶναι δύσκολον καὶ ἐπικίνδυνον πρᾶγμα νὰ θελήσῃ ἄλλος νὰ ἐξακολουθήσῃ τὴν φράσιν. Ἄλλ' εἶναι εἰς τὰ δύσκολα καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐπικίνδυνα ἔργα ὅπου ἐπιτυγχάνουσιν οἱ μεγάλοι τεχνῖται· πιστεύω δὲ ὅτι ἐκ τῶν περικοπῶν καὶ τῆς συνόψεως τὰς ὁποίας ἔδωκα – ὅσον καὶ ἂν τὰς ἀσχήμισαν ἢ μετὰφρασις καὶ ἡ διήγησίς μου – ὁ ἀναγνώστης θὰ

⁷²⁴ This is the translation by Peter Jeffreys, Cavafy 2010, 107. For the Greek original see Καβάφης 1974, 13–14.

⁷²⁵ Μαρωνίτης 2007, 130 who in this brief analysis titled «Δευτέρα Οδύσσεια» – «Ιθάκη» (first published in Μαρωνίτης 1997) suggests the two poems *Second Odyssey* and *Ithaca* for comparison, 'the one famous, to the point of exaggeration, rather unknown and very slightly studied the other' ('διάσημο, μέχρι υπερβολής, το ένα· άσημο μάλλον και ελάχιστα μελετημένο το άλλο.' Μαρωνίτης 2007, 123).

συμφωνήση ὅτι τοῦ Δάντου ἡ φαντασία διέπλασεν εἰκόνα οὐχὶ ἀναξίαν τοῦ «sovrano poeta».

Furthering the sentence from the place where Homer decided to end it by placing a period is a difficult and risky thing for another poet to undertake. But it is with difficult and risky tasks that great artists achieve success; indeed, I believe that from the excerpts and synopses that I have presented—even though my translation and narration have rendered them less beautiful—the reader will agree that Dante’s imagination has fashioned an image not unworthy of the ‘sovrano poeta’.⁷²⁶

The ‘difficult and risky’ task described here is one that not only Tennyson and Dante, but also Cavafy himself, undertook in his writing of *Second Odyssey*. At least as far as Dante’s adaptation is concerned, his evaluation is highly positive. For, according to Cavafy, Dante has not only succeeded in this task, but has also proven himself worthy of Homer. Of course, Cavafy can not say these things about himself, and so he leaves it up to the reader to decide if his poem, too, is worthy of praise.⁷²⁷

On a closer look on this passage, the use of the specific Greek word *τελεῖα* for *full stop* (or *period*, as above) catches the eye, because it resonates with *To τέλος* in the essay’s title *To τέλος του Οδυσσέως*.⁷²⁸ While *τελεῖα* (as the ‘point’ marking the end of Homer’s story) refers to the extradiegetic act of Homeric writing, *τέλος* refers to the end of Odysseus’ life on the diegetic level of the *Odyssey*’s later continuations (Dante, Tennyson, Cavafy). At the same time, *τέλος* can mean *goal or purpose*, thus implying that the continuations eventually all lead to Odysseus’ death. This means that, even though the continuations of Dante, Tennyson and Cavafy trespass on the ‘period’ (*τελεῖα*) set by Homer, they do not do so in the sense of an endless continuity, but with Odysseus’ certain death on the horizon. An indication of Cavafy’s deliberate choice of the word *τελεῖα* at the end of his essay may also be the fact that he is known for paying a lot of attention to typographic detail,⁷²⁹ including actions such as ‘placing a period’. A biographical detail from the very *end* (*τέλος*) of Cavafy’s life comes to reinforce that impression. In the introduction of his collection of Cavafy’s complete poems, Daniel Mendelsohn reports:

⁷²⁶ See Cavafy 2010, 111. For the Greek original, see Καβάφης 1974, 16.

⁷²⁷ Cf. Stead 2009, 460.

⁷²⁸ I want to express my gratitude to Constanze Güthenke (Corpus Christi College, Oxford) for drawing my attention to this detail during the discussion following my talk at the International Cavafy Summer School 2018 (*Cavafy and Antiquity*) in Athens organised by the Cavafy Archive and the Onassis Foundation.

⁷²⁹ See, for example, Smith 2008, 11.

[...] what is said to have been his [i.e. Cavafy's] last act. For we are told that on one of the pieces of paper that had become his sole mode of communication⁷³⁰ he drew a circle; and then placed a small dot in the middle of that circle. Whatever he may have meant by that glyph, certain people will recognize in it an apt symbol. It is the conventional notation, used by authors when correcting printer's proofs, for the insertion of a period, a full stop.⁷³¹

Thus, at the end of his own life, Cavafy literally places a period in a circle. In view of this, his choice of words at the end of his essay will hardly have been due to chance.

A further ambiguity pertains to the use of the term *τέλος* by Cavafy in both the title of his essay and the text itself. According to two Alexandrian scholia on the *Odyssey*, which have been disputed since antiquity, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus described verse 296 of *Od.* 23 as the *πέρας* or *τέλος* of the *Odyssey* ('πέρας / τέλος τῆς Ὀδυσσεΐας').⁷³² If we take *πέρας* / *τέλος* to simply signify the 'end', this would mean that, according to these commentators, the original end of the text was to be located at *Od.* 23.296, while the rest of the text (i.e. from *Od.* 23.297 onwards) was to be condemned as inauthentic. Yet, it is possible to understand these words quite differently.⁷³³ For instance, they could be understood to designate the end of the essential plot, but not the termination of the text itself. In this case, *τέλος* / *πέρας* would be used in the sense of the main 'goal' of the narrative that has been achieved at this point, since Odysseus has returned home and is reunited with his wife. The discussion about the exact meaning of the scholia to *Od.* 23.296, which has been ongoing since antiquity, could hardly have been unknown to the erudite Cavafy. Not only does he call his essay *Τὸ τέλος τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως*, which alone could be read as an echo of 'τέλος τῆς

730 'In 1932, Cavafy, a lifelong smoker, was diagnosed with cancer of the larynx. That summer he traveled to Athens for the tracheotomy that would deprive him forever of the famous voice; from that point on, he was forced to communicate in a distorted whisper and, later on, by means of penciled notes.' See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xxvii–xxviii.

731 See Mendelsohn in Cavafy 2013, xxviii.

732 See the scholia in Dindorf 1962, 722: '296. ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο] ἀσπαστῶς καὶ ἐπιθυμητικῶς ὑπεμνήσθησαν τοῦ πάλαι τῆς συνουσίας νόμου. Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος πέρας τῆς Ὀδυσσεΐας τοῦτο ποιοῦνται. M. V. Vind. 133. 20. ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἴκοντο] τοῦτο τέλος τῆς Ὀδυσσεΐας φησὶν Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης. H. M. Q.' ('With happiness and desire they remembered the ancient practice of intercourse. Aristophanes and Aristarchus consider this to be the *πέρας* of the *Odyssey*. M. V. Vind. 133.20 [...] Aristophanes and Aristarchus say that this is the *τέλος* of the *Odyssey*. H. M. Q.').

733 Cf. Stead 2009, 121; Heubeck (Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck 1992, 3: Books XVII–XXIV:342–45) summarizes the long lasting discussion about the meaning of the scholia, presents the most important arguments for the different views, and concludes: 'All this suggests that the Alexandrians must have understood by *τελος/πέρας* something other than simply 'the end'.

‘Οδυσσεΐας’ in one of the scholia, but he also uses the words *τέλος*, *περατώω*, and *πέρας* in his text, in which he contrasts the Homeric *Odyssey* with its later transformations. Thus, he states at the beginning of his essay:

‘Ο Ὅμηρος περατοῖ τὴν Ὀδύσσειάν του ἐπαναφέρον τὸν Ὀδυσσεύα εἰς τὴν Ἰθάκην καὶ ἀποδίδων εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οἶκον του καὶ οἰκείους. Μᾶς πληροφοροεῖ ὁμως ὅτι τὴν διαμονὴν του ἐν Ἰθάκῃ ὀφείλει ὁ Ὀδυσσεὺς νὰ διακόψῃ δι’ ἐνὸς ἔτι ταξειδίου ἐπιβληθέντος αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ Ἄδῃ ὑπὸ τοῦ Τειρεσίου. [...]
Ὅριστικωτέρας πληροφορίας περὶ τοῦ τέλους τοῦ Ὀδυσσεύος ἔχομεν ἐξ ἄλλων ἀρχαίων συγγραφέων. [...]⁷³⁴

[Homer brings his *Odyssey* to an end by bringing] Odysseus back to Ithaca and restor[ing] to him his home and family.⁷³⁵ He informs us however that Odysseus must interrupt his stay in Ithaca once again by making a journey that was imposed on him by Tiresias when they met in Hades. [...]

We have more specific details regarding the end of Odysseus from other ancient authors. [...]

On this evidence, one might say with Cavafy, that—in contrast to Dante and Tennyson’s adaptations, where it is not Odysseus’ greatest desire to return home—the goal of the story (and perhaps also the end of the text⁷³⁶) in the Homeric *Odyssey* is reached where Odysseus has returned home and is united with his loved ones. However, Cavafy does not actually say whether this is the case at *Od.* 23.296 or later. Thus, he preserves the ambiguity of the scholia, although he does not mention them explicitly at any point.

Now, it has been suggested that the essay is not a comparative masterpiece.⁷³⁷ As Évanghélia Stead points out, it was never intended for publication by Cavafy, and he did not claim it to be anything special or a work of great quality, but once in a letter

⁷³⁴ See Καβάφης 1974, 9,

⁷³⁵ The brackets here mark my adaptation of Jeffrey’s translation that serves to render the ambiguity of the text, and especially the verb *περατώω* which can mean ‘bring to an end’ in both the sense of ‘to terminate’ and ‘to accomplish’.

⁷³⁶ In the passage cited above, Cavafy mentions the prophecy of the last journey (23.247–87), which is in fact closely followed by the controversial verse (23.296), together with the statement that Homer brings his *Odyssey* ‘to an end’ (*περατοῖ*). It is thus not impossible that Cavafy is here implicitly suggesting that 23.296 was the actual ‘end’ of the *Odyssey*, positioning himself in the debate.

⁷³⁷ Cf. Stead 2009, 457 who actually does not consider it a comparative work at all (‘Ce n’est pas une étude comparée de Dante et de Tennyson, même s’il en a l’allure [...]’). Cf. Savidis in Καβάφης 1974, 17 (= Σαββίδης 1987, 2:183): ‘Γιὰ τὴν κριτικὴ ἀξιολόγηση τοῦ ἄρθρου νομίζω πὼς ἰσχύει καὶ σήμερα ἡ γνώμη τοῦ Καβάφη, τὴν ὁποία διαβάσαμε στὴν ἀρχή: βασικὰ πρόκειται γιὰ μιὰ «curiosity of literature» προφανῶς γραμμένη γιὰ νὰ δημοσιευτεῖ σὲ κάποια ἐφημερίδα ἢ περιοδικὸ ποικίλης ὕλης [...]’ (‘Regarding the critical evaluation of the article I think that Cavafy’s opinion, as we read it at the beginning, is still valid today: it is basically a ‘curiosity of literature’ apparently written to be published in a newspaper or a journal of varied content’). For Cavafy’s own statement, see the following footnote.

described it as ‘simply a “curiosity of literature”’⁷³⁸. However, the importance of this essay should not be underestimated. For, it reveals the entire background against which *Second Odyssey* (1894) and later *Ithaca* (1911)⁷³⁹ were written, and thus considerably contributes to the understanding of these two poems. Furthermore, together with *Second Odyssey*, the essay retrospectively identifies Cavafy as one of the first poets⁷⁴⁰ to address the theme of Odysseus’ voluntary journey by bringing together the Homeric account with the literary transformations of the Odysseus theme by Dante and Tennyson. What is striking here is that he treats Dante and Tennyson as equals to Homer, and assigns to their literary versions an independent value of his own.⁷⁴¹ In other words, Cavafy does not prioritise the meaning that the *Odyssey* possibly had in its original context above the meaning it has in a new context. He allows modern texts, in this case the mythical re-workings of Dante and Tennyson, to illuminate the ancient text. This metapoetic aspect is treated both in his poem and his theoretical essay, where he acts as a literary critic. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, Cavafy was already anticipating what should later become the basic principle of Hans Robert Jauss’s *Rezeptionsästhetik* and which is today taken up again by classical reception studies. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that, through these texts, Cavafy appears as an early precursor of modern reception studies, who challenges canonicity and legitimizes reception.

It was not until sixteen years later that Cavafy turned to the Odysseus theme for one last time, when, in 1910, he wrote his famous poem *Ιθάκη* (*Ithaca*). In contrast to its predecessor poem *Second Odyssey* (1894, publ. 1985), which remained unpublished for more than a century, Cavafy published *Ithaca* in two Alexandrian literary reviews: first,

738 See Stead 2009, 457: ‘« My article on “The End of Ulysses” is simply a “curiosity of literature” and I only hope it isn’t tedious and that the translations are not too bad. »’. The citation is taken from Peridis, Michalis. 1948. *Ο Βίος Και Το Έργο Του Κωνστ. Καβάφη* [*The Life and Work of Const. Cavafy*]. Αθήνα [Athens]: Ίκαρος [Ikaros], 311. Michalis Peridis first attested the existence of Cavafy’s essay by printing the English letter of Cavafy where he mentions his essay to a friend. Peridis also ‘attested the existence of the archive in his book “The Life and Work of Constantine Cavafy”’. See “The Cavafy Archive Initiative – An Archive Open to All” 2020.

739 See my discussion of the poem in chapter 5.8.

740 Cf. the elaborations of Andrew Lang and Paul Heyse that were most probably unknown to Cavafy.

741 Cf. Stead 2009, 137: ‘[...] En nommant de plus le poème *Seconde Odyssée* dans ce contexte, il fait de Dante (et de Tennyson) des « autorités classiques », des égaux d’Homère. Il reconnaît aux poètes plus récent, placés dans l’épigraphie, le coup de maître, le prolongement formidable de l’histoire ancienne, qu’il nomme d’emblée *Seconde Odyssée*, « plus grande que la première peut-être ». Et c’est à bon droit qu’il nomme le corpus réuni dans ce livre.’

in the September/ October 1911 issue of *Γράμματα (Letters)*, and, some months later, in the March 1912 issue of *Νέα Ζωή (New Life)*.⁷⁴² Today, *Ithaca* is undoubtedly one of the most cited and translated⁷⁴³ Greek poems of the twentieth century. In more recent times, when it was publicly read at Jackie Kennedy’s memorial service in 1994, it became internationally known.⁷⁴⁴ The poem, which every Greek pupil has endlessly analysed in class, and whose verses now feature as a slogan on t-shirts⁷⁴⁵ and notepads⁷⁴⁶, is of fairly little interest to recent scholarship, which prefers to turn to lesser known poems off the beaten track. It is certainly the simplicity of *Ithaca*, which makes no secret of its didactic message (‘it’s the journey, not the destination’), that has contributed to its success:

Ἰθάκη⁷⁴⁷

Σὰ βγεῖς στὸν πηγαμιὸ γιὰ τὴν Ἰθάκη,
 νὰ εὐχεσαι νᾶναι μακρὺς ὁ δρόμος,
 γεμάτος περιπέτειες, γεμάτος γνώσεις.
 Τοὺς Λαιστρυγόνας καὶ τοὺς Κύκλωπας,
 τὸν θυμωμένο Ποσειδῶνα μὴ φοβᾶσαι, 5
 τέτοια στὸν δρόμο σου ποτέ σου δὲν θὰ βρεῖς,
 ἂν μὲν’ ἢ σκέψις σου ὑψηλὴ, ἂν ἐκλεκτὴ
 συγκίνησις τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ σῶμα σου ἀγγίζει.
 Τοὺς Λαιστρυγόνας καὶ τοὺς Κύκλωπας,
 τὸν ἄγριο Ποσειδῶνα δὲν θὰ συναντήσεις, 10
 ἂν δὲν τοὺς κουβανεῖς μὲς στὴν ψυχὴ σου,
 ἂν ἢ ψυχὴ σου δὲν τοὺς στήνει ἐμπρὸς σου.

Νὰ εὐχεσαι νᾶναι μακρὺς ὁ δρόμος.
 Πολλὰ τὰ καλοκαιρινὰ πρωῖα νὰ εἶναι
 ποὺ μὲ τί εὐχαρίστησι, μὲ τί χαρὰ 15
 θὰ μπαίνεις σὲ λιμένας πρωτοειδωμένους·
 νὰ σταματήσεις σ’ ἐμπορεῖα Φοινικικά,
 καὶ τὲς καλὲς πραγμάτειες ν’ ἀποκτήσεις,

742 See Stead 2009, 358-9.

743 See Stead 2009, 359–60 on its many translations.

744 See Stead 2009, 358.

745 See, for example, “‘Ithaka’ T-Shirt von IschemicNeuron” 2020

746 A notebook issued by the Cavafy Archive (Onassis Foundation), features the poem’s first three verses in Greek on its cover.

747 For the Greek text, see Καβάφης 1963, 23–24.

σεντέφια καὶ κοράλλια, κεχριμπάρια κ' ἔβενους,
καὶ ἡδονικὰ μυρωδικὰ κάθε λογῆς, 20
ὅσο μπορεῖς πιὸ ἄφθονα ἡδονικὰ μυρωδικά.
σὲ πόλεις Αἰγυπτιακὲς πολλὰς νὰ πᾶς,
νὰ μάθεις καὶ νὰ μάθεις ἀπ' τοὺς σπουδασμένους.

Πάντα στὸ νοῦ σου νᾶχεις τὴν Ἰθάκη.
Τὸ φθάσιμον ἐκεῖ εἶν' ὁ προορισμός σου. 25
Ἀλλὰ μὴ βιάζῃς τὸ ταξεῖδι διόλου.
Καλλίτερα χρόνια πολλὰ νὰ διαρκέσει ·
καὶ γέρος πιά ν' ἀράξεις στὸ νησί,
πλούσιος μὲ ὅσα κέρδισες στὸν δρόμο,
μὴ προσδοκῶντας πλούτη νὰ σὲ δώσῃ ἡ Ἰθάκη. 30

Ἡ Ἰθάκη σ' ἔδωσε τ' ὠραῖο ταξεῖδι.
Χωρὶς αὐτὴν δὲν θᾶβγαινες στὸν δρόμο.
Ἄλλα δὲν ἔχει νὰ σὲ δώσῃ πιά.

Κι ἂν πτωχικὴ τὴν βρεῖς, ἡ Ἰθάκη δὲν σὲ γέλασε.
Ἔτσι σοφὸς ποὺ ἐγίνες, μὲ τόση πείρα, 35
ἤδη θὰ τὸ κατάλαβες ἡ Ἰθάκες τί σημαίνουν.

Ithaca⁷⁴⁸

As you set out on the way to Ithaca
hope that the road is a long one,
filled with adventures, filled with discoveries.
The Laestrygonians and the Cyclopes,
Poseidon in his anger: do not fear them, 5
you won't find such things on your way
so long as your thoughts remain lofty, and a choice
emotion touches your spirit and your body.
The Laestrygonians and the Cyclopes,
savage Poseidon; you won't encounter them 10
unless you stow them away inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up before you.

748 This is Mendelsohn's translation, Cavafy 2013, 13–14.

Hope that the road is a long one.
 Many may the summer mornings be
 when—with what pleasure, with what joy— 15
 you first put in to harbors new to your eyes;
 may you stop at Phoenician trading posts
 and there acquire the finest wares:
 mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
 and heady perfumes of every kind: 20
 as many heady perfumes as you can.
 Many Egyptian cities may you visit
 that you may learn, and go on learning, from their sages.

Always in your mind keep Ithaca.
 To arrive there is your destiny. 25
 But do not hurry your trip in any way.
 Better that it last for many years;
 that you drop anchor at the island an old man,
 rich with all you've gotten on the way,
 not expecting Ithaca to make you rich. 30

Ithaca gave you the beautiful journey;
 without her you wouldn't have set upon the road.
 But now she has nothing left to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca didn't deceive you.
 As wise as you will have become, with so much experience, 35
 you will understand, by then, these Ithacas; what they mean.

From the very first verse, the poem shows itself to be a paraenetic speech in the second person ('βγεῖς', v. 1). The addressee, who is not further identified, is advised not to hurry on his way to Ithaca and instead to make the most of the journey. The destination of the Homeric Odysseus, as well as the mythological creatures he encountered on his journey, here become an allegory for the journey of life.

The first of the poem's five stanzas (vv. 1–12) is divided into the announcement of the main theme (vv. 1–3) and two parallel sections (vv. 4–8, 9–12) which describe the journey in negative terms, enumerating what the traveller is likely not to encounter on his journey, as long as he does not fear it ('Τοὺς Λαιστρυγόνας καὶ τοὺς Κύκλωπας, / τὸν θυμωμένο [= v. 5; cf. v. 10: ἄγριο] Ποσειδῶνα [...]'). The second stanza, which is of almost equal length to the first (vv. 13–23), takes up the main theme from vv. 1–3 (—

v. 13 is an exact repetition of the advice in verse 2, ‘hope that the road is a long one’—), and then describes the journey in positive terms, listing everything the traveller *should* do during the journey, in order to savour the trip as much as possible and gain experiences.⁷⁴⁹ While in the first stanza the mythical world of the Homeric *Odyssey* still dominates the scenery, the second stanza is permeated by an oriental-sensual richness, which characterizes so many of Cavafy’s poems.⁷⁵⁰ The last three stanzas all centre on Ithaca and its meaning for the traveller. While the addressee shall keep it in mind as his destiny, he shall not ‘hurry the journey’ either (vv. 24–6), but try to prolong it, because, unlike Ithaca, it will enrich him (vv. 27–30). Through the plural use of Ithaca in the poem’s last verse (‘ἡ Ἰθάκῃς’, v. 36), the symbolism of Ithaca (as a mere pretext for the journey), which had already become apparent in the course of the poem, is made unmistakably clear.

In the past, *Ithaca* has often been interpreted as a further development of *Second Odyssey*, although opinions differ widely as to which of the poems is the “superior” one. In Maronitis’ view, for instance, *Second Odyssey* constituted the less mature work. He believed, that *Ithaca*, in describing an almost lifelong voyage, ‘absorb[ed]’ the earlier poem by making the new departure described in *Second Odyssey* ‘superfluous’, and thus subjected the poems to a rigid logic.⁷⁵¹ As we have seen earlier, Savidis regards *Ithaca* in a different vein as ‘defective’.⁷⁵² Stead, for her part, writes that *Ithaca* ‘borders on the commonplace’ and considers the non-didactic *Second Odyssey* the ‘far superior poem’.⁷⁵³ Without wanting to pronounce any judgement here as to whether one or the other poem is “superior”, let us briefly look at both poems alongside each other.

749 The particular thematic and verbal resemblance of vv. 14–16 of *Ithaca* (‘Πολλὰ τὰ καλοκαιρινὰ πρωῒα νὰ εἶναι / ποῦ μὲ τί εὐχαρίστησι, μὲ τί χαρὰ / θὰ μπαίνεισ σε λιμένας πρωτοειδωμένους.’) with vv. 20–4 of *Second Odyssey* (‘Ἡ νοσταλγία τὸν κατέλαβε / τῶν ταξιδίων, καὶ τῶν πρωινῶν / ἀφίξεων εἰς τοὺς λιμένας ὅπου, / μὲ τί χαράν, πρώτην φοράν ἐμβαίνεισ.’) has often been pointed out. See, for example, Maronitis 2007, 133; Stead 2009, 357.

750 At the same time, both the Phoenician and Egyptian elements can be inspired by Odysseus’ lying tales. For the Phoenicians, see *Od.* 13.272–5; 14.287–98; for Egypt, see *Od.* 14.245–86; 17.424–43.

751 See Maronitis 2007, 126: ‘το ὄψιμο ποίημα (ἡ «Ἰθάκη») απορροφά τελικῶς το πρῶιμο (τῆ «Δευτέρα Οδύσσεια») καὶ το καθιστᾶ ἐξ αποτελεσμάτος περιττό.’

752 Cf. p. 227.

753 See Stead 2009, 357: ‘Lu rapidement, et privé de sa dimension esthétique, *Ithaque* frise pendant le poncif (*carpe diem*), le truisme philosophique sur le sens de la vie, ou la généralisation idéalisante [...] On peut regretter, avec G. P. Savidis, que le poète n’ait pas préféré à son didactisme *Seconde Odyssée*, poème bien supérieur.’

As Maronitis already pointed out, *Ithaca* is not describing a *nostos* (return journey), but rather the opposite, an outbound trip. In Cavafy's poem, the Homeric nostalgia for the homeland has been replaced by the recommendation of nostalgia for the journey, while Ithaca has been reduced to a mere pretext that justifies this journey. Maronitis rightly emphasized that the word 'πηγαμὸς' (v. 1) points at a departure, and not a return.⁷⁵⁴ Thus, *Ithaca* stands in the same literary tradition as *Second Odyssey*, to which it is related in many ways. Moreover, it is worth noting that these two poems constitute the only Cavafian poems that are inspired by the Homeric *Odyssey*.⁷⁵⁵ The first thing one might notice when looking at both poems is the difference between them in language. While in *Second Odyssey* Cavafy still used the *katharevousa*, *Ithaca* is written in demotic Greek, except for a few classicizing elements ('Λαιστρυγόνας', 'Κύκλωπας', vv. 4; 9, 'λιμένας', v. 16, 'πρωχική', v. 34).⁷⁵⁶ The narrative point of view is also different: while *Second Odyssey* still spoke of Odysseus as the clear protagonist in the third person (although, as in *Ithaca*, he is not mentioned by name), in *Ithaca* a generalising second-person is used which elevates the whole poem to a universal human level. Thematically, *Ithaca* is certainly more detached from its literary models, which featured in the epigraph of *Second Odyssey*. All that which, in *Second Odyssey*, arose from an inner change in Odysseus (especially his longing for the journey and his escape from domestic life), and which had made Dante's and Tennyson's Odysseus diametrically opposed to his Homeric model, is now the ideal which the narrator advises his addressee to follow. What Dante's Odysseus had once been the first to reject no longer needs to be rejected here. Instead of filling in this negative space, *Ithaca*, the once longed-for homeland of the Homeric hero, now fits harmoniously into the whole as a blurred, distant (pseudo-)destination. Hence, in his second poem based on the premise of Odyssean *Wanderlust*, Cavafy no longer feels the need to emphasize the contrast between the Homeric Odysseus' nostalgia and the formerly unconventional *Wanderlust*. *Wanderlust* now appears as something natural, which as such requires no justification. On the contrary, one must be wise enough to embrace it.

754 S. Μαρωνίτης 2007, 132 (= Μαρωνίτης 1997, 21): 'Είναι όμως πράγματι η καθαφική «Ιθάκη» ποίημα νόστου; Προσωπικώς αμφιβάλλω. Γιατί μια τέτοια εκδοχή την υπονομεύει ήδη ο πρώτος στίχος της ώριμης σύνθεσης: Σὰ βγεῖς στὸν πηγαμὸ γιὰ τὴν Ἰθάκη. Το ρήμα «βγαίνω» και το ουσιαστικό «πηγαμὸς» δύσκολα ταιριάζουν με το μέγαθεμα του νόστου. Βεβαίως και εδώ προγραμματίζεται ένα ταξίδι, με στόχο το πασίγνωστο συμβολικό νησί του οδυσσειακού νόστου, στο οποίο όμως κάποιος πηγαίνει, και πάντως δεν επιστρέφει.'

755 Cf. Μαρωνίτης 2007, 127.

756 Cf. Μαρωνίτης 2007, 129. Cf. p. 229 on the development of Cavafy's poetic language.

5.12 Nikos Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* (1938)

Arguably the most significant modern transformation of the *Odyssey* to elaborate the theme of *Wanderlust* is Nikos Kazantzakis' (1883–1957) *Οδύσσεια* (*Odyssey*). Though better known internationally for his late novel⁷⁵⁷ *Alexis Zorbas* (*Βίος και πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, 1946), the Cretan author produced a very large oeuvre that spanned all genres. His *magnum opus*, however, was undoubtedly his *Odyssey*,⁷⁵⁸ on which he began work in 1924,⁷⁵⁹ and which he finally published in 1938. The *Odyssey* occupies a central position in Kazantzakis' life, for in this epic poem the author processes his philosophical thoughts based on his own experiences.⁷⁶⁰ In narrative form, the epic contains his entire philosophical world view,⁷⁶¹ his philosophical credo, as it were, which his *Askitiki* (*Ασκητική. Salvatores Dei*, 1927¹, 1945²) provides in abstract form.⁷⁶² This makes it all the more important in Kazantzakis' case (and perhaps more so than for the other authors considered here) to take into account the biographical, historical and literary circumstances in which his *Odyssey* was written.

In 1883, Kazantzakis was born in Crete, which had been occupied by the Ottoman Empire since 1669. In 1897, during the final Cretan rebellion of 1896–8, leading to the end of the Ottoman rule over Crete, his family fled to Naxos⁷⁶³ and the fourteen-year-old

757 In fact, Kazantzakis turned to this genre at a very late stage in order to appeal to a wider audience and for pleasure, when he considered his main 'work' (simply 'έργο', by which he meant his *Odyssey*) complete. See Πολίτης 2004, 276.

758 See Prevelakis in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 17; cf. Bien 1972, 192.

759 He started planning it in 1924 and in 1925 wrote down the first six cantos (which were later revised several times). See Bien 1989, 1:xxi; 191–92. A chronology of Kazantzakis' life can be found (in English) in Bien 1989, 1:xix–xxvi, and in greater detail in Prevelakis' biographical summaries in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 3–16, 19–22, 125–27, 383–89, 531–41, on which Bien's chronology is largely based (see Bien 1989, 1:xix). See also Prevelakis' previously published chronography Πρεβελάκης 1959, which largely overlaps with his later publication.

760 See, for example, Bien 1972, 205: 'But from 1925 onward, everything took second place to the *Odyssey*. The epic became Kazantzakis' repository not only for demotic, but for all the political and religious experience of the decade during which it was composed.'

761 Cf. p. 192.

762 See Prevelakis in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 17–18 (being the revised version of his earlier, almost identical statements in Πρεβελάκης 1958, 123–24): 'Ο Καζαντζάκης έχει πράγματι αποθέσει στο ποίημα τὰ σπουδαιότερα βιώματα τῆς ζωῆς του καὶ τὰ τραύματα τῆς ψυχῆς του [...] Ἐδῶ προσπάθησε νὰ ταξινομήσει τὴν πνευματικὴ πείρα του καὶ νὰ φανερώσει τὶς πεποιθήσεις του γιὰ τὰ μεγάλα θέματα τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου στοχασμοῦ. Ἡ *Οδύσσεια* εἶναι ἓνα Summum. [...] Ὁ τύπος τοῦ Ὀδυσσεῦ, ἀπὸ τ' ἄλλο μέρος, χωρὶς βέβαια νὰ ταυτίζεται μὲ τὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ ποιητῆ, ἀποτελεῖ ἓναν «παράλληλο» πρὸς τὸ χαρακτῆρα ποὺ περιγράφουμε: ἀρκεῖ νὰ σημειωθεῖ πὼς ἡ κοσμοθεωρία τοῦ Ὀδυσσεῦ περιέχεται ὁλόκληρη στὴν *Ασκητικὴ* τοῦ Καζαντζάκη, στο ἔργο δηλαδὴ ὅπου ἔχει διατυπώσει τὸ Πιστεύω του.'

763 The family had already fled to Athens for six months during the last Cretan revolution of 1889. See Prevelakis in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 3.

Nikos was enrolled in a French school for the next two years.⁷⁶⁴ Crete's liberation from Ottoman rule marked the first of many historical upheavals that Kazantzakis experienced during his life and that will shape himself and his work: he bore witness to the Balkan Wars (1912–3), World War I, the so-called “Asia Minor catastrophe” (Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή, 1922),⁷⁶⁵ the Metaxas Regime (1936–41), the Axis-occupation of Greece (1941–4) during World War II, and finally the Greek Civil War (1946–9).⁷⁶⁶ In the course of his life, Kazantzakis traveled extensively, to which his travelogues are the best testimony.⁷⁶⁷ As a newspaper correspondent⁷⁶⁸ alone, he travelled to the Soviet Union (1925; 1927–9), Palestine and Cyprus (1926), Spain and Italy (1926), Egypt and Sinai (1927), Japan and China (1935; 1957), as well as England (1939). In 1926, he interviewed Primo de Rivera in Spain and Benito Mussolini in Italy, and, back in Spain in 1936, Francisco Franco as well as the Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno.⁷⁶⁹

Like the *Odyssey* itself, the eventful life of its author is almost impossible to summarize. After completing his secondary education in Iralion, Crete, as well as his Law studies in Athens and Paris,⁷⁷⁰ Kazantzakis embarked on a period of wandering, during which he never stayed for long in one place. He lived not only in Greece, but also Austria, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Spain and England. It is

⁷⁶⁴ See Prevelakis in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 3; Bien 1989, 1:xix.

⁷⁶⁵ This term, used mainly in Greek historiography, refers to Greece's unsuccessful attempt to annex territories in Asia Minor, Turkey, during the Greco-Turkish War (1919–22), which resulted in the forced exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey according to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. On the Greek side alone, this brought about the uprooting of 1.300.000 Greeks of Asia Minor. See Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010, 93–94. For more details on the *The Asia Minor Debacle (1922–3)*, see the whole chapter in Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010, 89–100; for a short summary of this historical event, see Beaton 1994, 66–67.

⁷⁶⁶ See Katsanakis 2008, 3–4; Bien's introduction in Kazantzakis 2012, ix. For the mentioned periods of Modern Greek history, cf. the respective chapters in Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010.

⁷⁶⁷ His travelogues, mainly based on his previously published newspaper articles (see Bien 2007, 2:16), are the following: *Ταξιδεύοντας: Ισπανία, Ιταλία, Αίγυπτος, Σινά* (*Traveling: Spain – Italy – Egypt – Sinai*, 1927; post mortem supplemented to include his journey to Jerusalem, Cyprus and the Peloponnese: *Ταξιδεύοντας: Ιταλία – Αίγυπτος – Σινά – Ιερουσαλήμ – Κύπρος – Ο Μοριάς*, 1961), *Ταξιδεύοντας: Ρουσία* (*Traveling: Russia*, 1928), *Ταξιδεύοντας: Ισπανία* (*Traveling: Spain*, 1937), *Ταξιδεύοντας: Ιαπωνία – Κίνα* (*Traveling: Japan – China*, 1938), *Ταξιδεύοντας: Αγγλία* (*Traveling: England*, 1941). After Kazantzakis' death, which occurred shortly after his last trip to China in October 1957 in Freiburg, his travelogue *Traveling in Japan – China* was supplemented by his wife Eleni to include their second trip to Japan and China, and published in this form in 1958.

⁷⁶⁸ See Bien 2007, 2:16: ‘Although he loved to travel, his motivation was often money. Being a foreign correspondent for a newspaper was a realistic source of income for him, along with writing school textbooks or encyclopedia articles, and translating foreign works into Greek.’

⁷⁶⁹ For this overview, see Bien 2007, 2:16. For more details, see the corresponding entries in the chronology by Prevelakis included in Καζαντζάκης 1984.

⁷⁷⁰ Cf. 184.

not until 1936, when he bought some land on the island of Aegina, that he settles in one place for the first time.⁷⁷¹ There he finished the eighth and final draft of the *Odyssey* in 1938.⁷⁷² During the German Occupation in World War II, he was not allowed to leave Aegina (except for a few days in Athens). After the withdrawal of German troops from Greece in 1944, he immediately travelled to Athens in order to resume his political activity. Finally, in 1948 he moved to Antibes in France with his wife Eleni, yet even then continued to travel a lot.

Apart from his many travels, another point worthy of special mention is Kazantzakis' continuous political involvement,⁷⁷³ which he sometimes, albeit briefly, exercised even in official posts.⁷⁷⁴ Over the years, his political attitude changed repeatedly, ranging from his endorsement of communism and socialism to his attraction to nationalism and fascism.⁷⁷⁵ Indeed, 'he betrayed a continued attraction to opposite extremes of the political spectrum.'⁷⁷⁶ A synoptic evaluation of Kazantzakis' shifting political stance is provided by Peter Bien:

If he adhered exclusively to anything at all, it was to Bergsonian vitalism, not to any political party or ideology. Valuing passion and energy above all else, he was apt to equate communism with fascism because both, in his opinion, displayed vitalistic virtues.⁷⁷⁷

There is no doubt that the many important encounters and turbulent political events during Kazantzakis' life had a direct influence on his literary work, in which he always sought to process and convey his current view of the world. This is also reflected in the several drafts of his *Odyssey*, the first fundamental revision of which takes place after a

771 On Aegina, see Bien 1989, 1:xxiii; on the exceptionally international orientation of Kazantzakis' life and work when compared to other Greek authors of the time, and the various stages of his 'peripatetic' life, see Bien in Kazantzakis 2012, ix).

772 See Bien 1989, 1:xxiii.

773 Cf. Bien in Kazantzakis 2012, ix.

774 During his life, he switched many different job positions, which he usually gave up after—in his eyes—they have served their purpose: 'When the first Balkan War breaks out, he volunteers for the army and is assigned to Prime Minister Venizélos' private office.' It is the latter who in 1919 'appoints Kazantzakis Director General of Ministry of Welfare, with the specific mission of repatriating 150,000 Greeks who are being persecuted by the Bolsheviks in the Caucasus.' (Bien 1989, 1:xx). After Venizelos' electoral defeat in 1920, however, Kazantzakis resigns his post. Later in his life (1945–6), he is briefly a Cabinet Minister, a position which he also gives up voluntarily.

775 On *Kazantzakis's Attraction to Fascism and Nazism in the 1930s* see Bien 2007, 2:1–15.

776 See Bien 2007, 2:2.

777 See Bien 2007, 2:3.

long journey through the Soviet Union, ‘in order to reflect his changed view’ of the latter.⁷⁷⁸ With his works, some of which were banned from publication in Greece for a long time, as well as his political activities, Kazantzakis caused a furore many times.⁷⁷⁹ While he enjoys a high reputation for his literary works with many intellectuals and writers,⁷⁸⁰ he nevertheless finds himself repeatedly criticised and persecuted. For example, in 1930, he was threatened by the Greek authorities with a lawsuit for the alleged atheism of his philosophical work *Askitiki* (*Ασκητική*, 1927¹, 1945²).⁷⁸¹ In 1953, ‘the Orthodox Church seeks to prosecute Kazantzakis for sacrilege owing to several pages of *Kapetan Mihális* and the whole of *The Last Temptation*, even though the latter has not yet been published in Greece.’⁷⁸² In 1954, his book *The Last Temptation* (*Ο τελευταίος πειρασμός*, 1951) was placed on the Roman Catholic Index of Forbidden Books (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*) by the Pope.⁷⁸³ Finally, after Kazantzakis’ death in Freiburg 1957 and the transfer of his body to Athens, ‘[t]he Greek Orthodox Church refuses to allow it to lie in state’, and it is consequently transferred to Crete.⁷⁸⁴

In order to place Kazantzakis in the Greek and European literary context of his time, we can agree with Peter Bien that ‘it is important to remember that he was part of a generalized literary revival’:

Two remarkable literary renaissances occurred roughly in the first half of the twentieth century at the two edges of Europe: Ireland and Greece. Ireland, with a population then of fewer than four million, produced Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, Wilde, and Shaw; Greece, with a population then of fewer than eleven million (compare Ohio, with just over eleven million), produced Cavafy, Palamas, Seferis, Elytis, Kazantzakis, and Ritsos, plus a dozen other remarkable writers of both poetry and prose.⁷⁸⁵

778 See Bien 1989, 1:xxii.

779 In 1925, because of his communist activities, the young Kazantzakis is briefly arrested and spends twenty-four hours in prison (Bien 1989, 1:87–90). In 1928, speeches praising the Soviet Union delivered by Kazantzakis and his friend Panait Istrati at the Alhambra movie theatre in Athens, ‘lead to a [communist] demonstration in the streets’. This gives rise to a heated public debate in which Kazantzakis is threatened with legal proceedings and ‘Istrati with deportation’ (Bien 1989, 1:xxii). Although the trial is never actually pursued, both he and Istrati leave Greece again (see Bien 1989, 1:xxii and, in more detail, Bien 1989, 1:124–29).

780 Among his closest friends during his life were the Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos and the writer and scholar Pandelis Prevelakis, who becomes his ‘disciple, literary agent, confidant, and biographer’ (see Bien 1989, 1:xxi). At the same time, Kazantzakis was in contact with many foreign intellectuals of his day.

781 See Bien 1989, 1:xxii.

782 See Bien 1989, 1:xxv.

783 See Bien 1989, 1:xxv.

784 See Bien 1989, 1:xxvi.

785 See Bien in Kazantzakis 2012, ix.

Nevertheless, Kazantzakis' work, which itself is already highly diverse, cannot easily be compared with that of his Greek or (other) European contemporaries.⁷⁸⁶ However, we shall briefly retrace Kazantzakis' early development within the Greek literary environment. When Kazantzakis first came to Athens as a young man, he was strongly influenced by the poet Kostis Palamas (1859–1943) and the so-called New School of Athens (Νέα Αθηναϊκή Σχολή).⁷⁸⁷ As the leader of the demotic movement, Palamas stood at the zenith of his success as a dominant figure in the Athenian literary scene, helping the still unknown Kazantzakis to establish himself.⁷⁸⁸ In the 1920s, however, Kazantzakis was already beginning to detach himself from Palamas and his influence. Roderick Beaton, who in his *Introduction to Modern Greek Literature* attempts to place Kazantzakis in the Greek literary context, nevertheless sees Kazantzakis essentially as a successor to Palamas, whose ideas he later developed.⁷⁸⁹ His *Odyssey* would hence be, according to Beaton, the last, over-saturated offshoot of Palamas' legacy,⁷⁹⁰ and rather an intellectual product of the 1920s than of the following decade, in which it is ultimately published.⁷⁹¹

As in the Greek context, so too elsewhere in Europe Kazantzakis' oeuvre (and his *Odyssey* in particular) is difficult to assign to any particular school or movement of his time. A few such attempts have nevertheless been made by various scholars, with different results, which have most recently been examined by Helena González Vaquerizo.⁷⁹² She herself argues that Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* is best regarded as a modernist work, contrary to the opinion expressed by Beaton and others, according to which the epos adheres to past times and is hence viewed as a dead end, which is 'obsolete from the beginning'. However, such attributions (which label Kazantzakis'

786 Cf. Πολίτης 2004, 269.

787 For Palamas' influence on Kazantzakis here and in the following, see Bien 1972, 116–17. The signature of Palamas, who was general secretary of the University of Athens, also appears on Kazantzakis' law diploma (Bien 1972, 117).

788 According to Bien 1972, 116, 'it was partly through Palamas' example that Kazantzakis veered at first toward the modes of the Parnassians, D'Annunzio, Hauptmann.' On Palamas and his general importance for the Greek literary scene, see also Πολίτης 2004, 192.

789 See the whole passage dedicated to Kazantzakis, Beaton 1994, 117–22.

790 See Beaton 1994, 122: 'The legacy of Palamas has finally ended in hypertrophy.'

791 See Beaton 1994, 121. In the following, Beaton also stresses the influence of the poets Sikelianos and Varnalis on Kazantzakis.

792 See her 2017 paper (González Vaquerizo 2017, 103–4), which is based on her 2013 doctoral thesis 'La *Odisea* cretense y modernista de Nikos Kazantzakis' (González Vaquerizo 2013).

Odyssey as modernist or otherwise) do not help us if they do not serve to better understand a work by embedding it in its intellectual context, but are done for their own sake (or, as in this case, are designed to enhance its reputation). Since both the inspiration and the intentions of Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* are more philosophical than literary in nature,⁷⁹³ the already discussed influence of Nietzsche⁷⁹⁴ and others thinkers such as Bergson is far more important in this case.

However, instead of pursuing this question, let us instead take a look at the other Greek author of this corpus: Cavafy, who was Kazantzakis' elder contemporary and whose work, as we have seen, developed under its very own conditions and therefore differs from the literature produced in Greece by its unique style and content.⁷⁹⁵ In 1927, on his journey through Egypt, Kazantzakis visited Cavafy, who was about twenty years his senior, in his apartment in Alexandria. It is after this journey, that Kazantzakis completed the first draft of his *Odyssey* in Aegina.⁷⁹⁶ Of course, he can only have known Cavafy's poem *Ithaca*,⁷⁹⁷ but not his unpublished *Second Odyssey*, nor the essay from the same year (1894) in which Cavafy had first elaborated the theme of Odysseus' (voluntary) last journey and discussed Tennyson and Dante, two major influences for Kazantzakis' epic poem. Yet in his travel diary, Kazantzakis records his impressions of the Alexandrian poet, whom he meets here for the first and last time, in the following way:⁷⁹⁸

I discern his countenance in the dark, on the divan — at times his expression is Mephistophelian and ironic and his beautiful black eyes sparkle suddenly when a tiny flicker of light from the candle hits them. Then again he shifts, full of finesse, decline and weariness.

[...]

Cavafy is among the last remaining flowers of a civilization. With double, faded leaves, with a long, sickly stem, without seed.

⁷⁹³ For Kazantzakis, literature represents a means to an end, that serves to transport his philosophical views. Cf. Bien 1989, 1:272, note 3.

⁷⁹⁴ Cf. p. 183.

⁷⁹⁵ Cf. pp. 227–230.

⁷⁹⁶ See Bien 1989, 1:xxi.

⁷⁹⁷ In Kazantzakis 2012, 148, Bien suspects that Kazantzakis did not know the poem, at least not in 1923, and possibly not even in 1927.

⁷⁹⁸ I will be quoting the text from the English translation. For the following quotation, see Kazantzakis 1975, 74–75. For the whole section devoted to Cavafy in Kazantzakis' travel journal, see Kazantzakis 1975, 74–79. This passage on Cavafy is based on Kazantzakis' newspaper article from 1927, titled *The Intellectual Movement in Egypt: the Alexandrian Poet Cavafy, One of the Last Flowers of a Civilization* (*Ο Αλεξανδρινός ποιητής Καβάφης. Από τα τελευταία άνθη ενός πολιτισμού*) and published in the newspaper *Eleftheros Logos* (15.04.1927). See Arampatzidou 2011, 172.

Cavafy has all the typical characteristics of an exceptional man in an age of decline — wise, ironic, sensual, charming and brimming with memory. He lives *as if indifferent, as if courageous*. Reclining on a soft couch he gazes out of his window and waits for the *barbarians* to appear. He holds a parchment with delicate, finely scripted praises. He is dressed in his holiday finery, painted with care, and he waits. But the barbarians don't come, and toward nightfall he sighs softly and smiles ironically at the naïveté of his soul in hoping.⁷⁹⁹

Tonight I look at him and rejoice at this courageous soul that passively, without strength and without discouragement, belatedly bids farewell to the Alexandria he is losing.

Kazantzakis here characterizes Cavafy as a man of 'decline' (or 'decadence', the Greek word being 'παρακμή'). While he highly praises Cavafy,⁸⁰⁰ we know only too well that—at best—Kazantzakis took an ambivalent position towards decadence, if not a completely negative one.⁸⁰¹ One might therefore be inclined to think that Kazantzakis' observations here are somewhat ironic and derogatory. Yet, this does not fit his generally positive description of Cavafy. In fact, in this highly poetic portrait, Kazantzakis attributes to Cavafy not only decadence but also a 'courageous soul' that encounters the vanity of life with dignity, 'without discouragement'. This attitude actually comes very close to the 'heroic and joyous acceptance of life' of the Nietzschean superman, which Kazantzakis adopts for his Odysseus.⁸⁰²

Having placed Kazantzakis in his intellectual context, we may now turn to his epic poem. Throughout this study, I have already said a lot about Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, since, unlike the other texts in the corpus, it is too complex to be dealt with in a single chapter. Let us now turn specifically to the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust*, which plays a central role in Kazantzakis' epic. To do so, I will refer back to what has already been said where necessary.

Just before we turn to the *Wanderlust* motif, a few introductory remarks about the language and linguistic context of the work are necessary. Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* was

799 It has been pointed out by Arampatzidou 2011, 185–86, that Kazantzakis' text echoes the Cavafian poem *Waiting for the Barbarians* (*Περιμένοντας τους βαρβάρους*, written in 1898, published in 1904).

800 The section begins with the sentence: 'Without a doubt, the poet Cavafy is the most exceptional intellectual figure of Egypt.' See Kazantzakis 1975, 75.

801 Cf. p. 184.

802 Cf. p. 190.

written in demotic Greek, and originally in an ahistorical spelling based on pronunciation.⁸⁰³ This means that Kazantzakis, in writing it, abandoned not only the polytonic system (discarding all spiritus and accents, except for the acute on non-oxytona), but also all double consonants except for double gamma (γγ).⁸⁰⁴ Although the monotonic system was officially adopted in Greece in 1982, Kazantzakis' idiosyncratic orthography never caught on. For the second edition (published only posthumously in 1957), however, Kazantzakis himself authorized a revised version of the text supervised by Emmanuel Kasdaglis, so that the work then appeared in the polytonic system and with the orthography according to the standards of the time.⁸⁰⁵

By the time Kazantzakis began writing his *Odyssey* in 1925, he had long become a declared demoticist. Like Cavafy, who in the course of his life made increasing use of vernacular language, but retained many classicising and other older linguistic elements, Kazantzakis also underwent a linguistic evolution.⁸⁰⁶ In his early years, he used a mixed language, which could be compared with the (mixed) language of the late Cavafy.⁸⁰⁷ The fact that Kazantzakis already used *katharevousa* and demotic Greek in his earlier works is due to the latter's already more established use at that time.⁸⁰⁸ While in the beginning Kazantzakis is still a moderate demoticist, under the influence of Palamas in Athens he soon became a fervent and uncompromising proponent of demoticism. As such, he published a series of pro-demotic manifestoes in which he advocated linguistic reform, the first of these in 1907. Finally, the *Odyssey* offers him the suitable valve to unload 'all his linguistic zeal'.⁸⁰⁹ Among other things, Kazantzakis systematically incorporates a large number of rare, unknown words from the vernacular into the poem, which he

803 Cf. Bien 1972, 213: 'In advocating a simplified and phonetic orthography, Kazantzakis was following in the footsteps of Psiharis, Pallis, and Vlastos; in other words, his "carefully researched system" was not entirely his own.'

804 See Bien 1972, 213–14. This is also the reason why the work's title was originally written with only one sigma (*Οδύσεια*).

805 This is the common edition today, which—in its reprinted form of 2011—we also use here for the sake of readability.

806 On Kazantzakis' linguistic development in general, see the entire Part II *The Demoticism of Kazantzakis* of Bien's book *Kazantzakis and the Linguistic Revolution in Greek Literature* (Bien 1972, 147–261). The historical background to Kazantzakis' development, i.e. the history of the linguistic debate in Greece, is provided in the first part of Bien's book, *The Historical Background* (Bien 1972, 11–146).

807 On Cavafy's poetic language, cf. p. 229. See also Bien 1972, 221–22, who compares Cavafy's language to that of Kazantzakis, considering it appropriate for Cavafy's purposes, but not for those of Kazantzakis.

808 On this initial 'bilingualism' of Kazantzakis, see Bien 1972, 149–52.

809 See Bien 1972, 205.

had previously collected over many years on his travels through Greece.⁸¹⁰ He also kept lists of words, and made sure that every word was used at least once.⁸¹¹ Thus, '[h]e would make his *magnum opus*, the *Odyssey*, a textbook of demotic, a thesaurus, a dictionary.'⁸¹² From a linguistic point of view alone, the *Odyssey* represented a gigantic undertaking, which, however, was not particularly well received. In response to the difficulties that the many unknown words alone (apart from all the other peculiarities of his work, starting with the unwieldy, pompous first edition, printed in extra-large letters at Kazantzakis' request)⁸¹³ presented to readers of his recently published work, Kazantzakis subsequently added 'a glossary of about 2,000 difficult words, assuring skeptics in a headnote that the terms were "taken from all regions of Greece and inserted after a lengthy and difficult process of selection."⁸¹⁴ Needless to say, the linguistic idiosyncrasies described above nevertheless led to much negative criticism of his epic poem.⁸¹⁵ Even though the question of the linguistic quality of the work is a very interesting one, it would go beyond the scope of the present study to properly discuss it. Therefore, it shall not concern us here any further.

The significance of Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* for this study generally cannot be stressed enough. It undoubtedly represents the most elaborate *Odyssey* adaptation with a focus on *Wanderlust*. Hence, without exaggerating, one can say that *Wanderlust* is the central motif of this modern epic. As such, it comprises numerous sub-motifs and thus manifests itself in many ways. As we already know, Kazantzakis' work belongs to the *Odyssey* transformations in which Odysseus first returns home and then leaves Ithaca behind to embark on a new, voluntary journey. The homecoming motif, which is so central to the Homeric *Odyssey*, is completely reversed: for the new home of this

810 See Bien 1972, 8; 205–7; cf. Friar 1971, 221.

811 See Bien 1972, 205.

812 See Bien 1972, 202.

813 Cf. Πολίτης 2004, 274.

814 See Bien 1972, 210–11; cf. Bien in Kazantzakis 2012, 545.

815 Even Peter Bien speaks of the *Odyssey* as 'a linguistic failure' (Bien 1972, 220). In particular, he criticizes that the content of the 'poem that has nothing essentially to do with Greece or the Greek people' and therefore does not match the (vernacular) language which is 'meant to be true to the spirit of the Greek people' (Bien 1972, 222). In his opinion, this is different in Kazantzakis' later novels, whose realistic content provides an appropriate medium for Kazantzakis' demoticism (Bien 1972, 213; 229; 261). Elsewhere, Bien speaks of Kazantzakis as 'a man with a greater natural talent for prose than for verse, yet tragically denying this talent because prose was considered an inferior medium' (see Bien's introduction in Keeley and Bien 1972, 20).

Wanderlust-torn Odysseus is the sea and the foreign, the self-chosen exile and the journey. According to this new definition of home, the journey is reinterpreted as the new homecoming.⁸¹⁶ Innumerable passages can be cited as evidence of Odysseus' *Wanderlust* in the text. I will, however, discuss by way of example some of the most relevant passages which illustrate the various aspects of *Wanderlust* in Kazantzakis' work. This includes passages that attest Kazantzakis' adaptation of two key texts: the Homeric Tiresias' prophecy of Odysseus' last journey and the scene of Odysseus in Dante's *Inferno*. Before we discuss these adaptations in particular, we shall first review a few passages that generally demonstrate Odysseus' *Wanderlust*, in the order in which they appear.

In Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, not long passes after Odysseus' return home, until he begins to see his homeland in a negative light and to feel trapped. At the same time he feels strongly drawn to the sea, to which his thoughts drift more and more frequently. On one of his first exploratory walks across the island after his return, he goes up to a high point to look over the island (*Oδ.* 1.784–821). During the ascent he rejoices in his surroundings, and when he reaches the top he is, at first, moved to see his rocky island from above (*Oδ.* 1.800–4):

κι ὡς πῖὰ ἀκροπάτησε τὴ φалаκρὴ βουνοκορφὴ, κι ὡς πέρα
 τὸ ἀχνὸ λιγνὸ κορμάκι χάρηκε τοῦ φτωχικοῦ νησιοῦ του,
 τρεμόπαιξαν τ' ἄδρὰ ματόφυλλα, τὸ κλάμα ν' ἀναγείρουν. 802
 “Τοῦτη τὴν πέτρα, τὴν ξερόπετρα, λαχτάριζα· μοῦ ἀρέσει!”
 μουρμούρισε, καὶ στάλες γυάλισαν στὰ χοντροτσίνουρά του.

and when he stepped at length on the bald mountain's peak
 and saw his poor isle's slender body far below,
 he blinked his eyelids to hold back his brimming tears.
 “This is the rock, the bare dry rock I've loved and longed for,”
 he murmured then, and teardrops on his lashes gleamed.⁸¹⁷

While he initially enjoys the sight of houses, cattle and fertile land (*Oδ.* 1.805–8), this feeling does not last long. For it is not the land but the sea that now captivates him again (*Oδ.* 1.809–12):

816 A similar redefinition of the concept of home takes place in Kundera's *L'ignorance* as well as in Suarez's *La viajera*.

817 See Kazantzakis 1958, 19–20.

Μὰ ξάφνου γῆς, γιάλως κουνήθηκαν, χωριά, δεντρά διανέψαν,
κι ανέβηκε ὄλο τὸ νησι ἀψηλά, τρεμάμενο σὰν πάχνη, 810
καὶ χάθη ὡς χάνεται τὸ νέφαλο σύντας τοῦ δώσει ὁ γῆλιος.
Δροσέρεψαν, γιομῶσαν θάλασσα τὰ σπλάχνα τοῦ Ὀδυσσεά·

But suddenly the earth and seashores shook, farms swayed,
and the whole island, trembling like a mist, rose high
and vanished like a cloud dispersed by the sun's stroke.
Odysseus felt his heart fill up with freshening sea;⁸¹⁸

As Odysseus walks down again a few hours later, he is accompanied by ‘a bitter sea-chant [that] rose and throbbed, beyond his will, and beat between his towering temples like resounding waves’⁸¹⁹ (‘κι ἕνας σκοπὸς πικρὸς θαλασσινὸς σπαρτάριζε ἄθελά του / καταμεσὸς στ’ ἀδρὰ μουστάκια του καὶ στὰ ψαρά του γένια.’, *Οδ.* 1.820–1).

Previous scenes also show Odysseus’ attraction by the sea. Earlier, when he and Telemachus were on their way to break up an uprising among the relatives of the killed suitors (as well as widows and war-victims from the Trojan War), and were approaching the beach, Odysseus’ mind was already drifting away (*Οδ.* 1.373–5):

Μὰ τώρα αὐτὸς ἀνάπνεε θάλασσα, δροσολογοῦντα ὁ νοῦς του,
κοντοζυγῶναν πιά τὸ ἀκρόγιαλο, κι ὄλο σπαρτάρια ἀσκώθη 373
στὰ σωθικά του γλάρος πέργιαλος καὶ φτερουγοκοποῦσε.

but as Odysseus neared the shore and breathed the sea,
his mind grew cool, and soon within his pulsing heart
a white gull soared from far-off seas and flapped its wings.

Odysseus’ homeland is now seen to become increasingly confining to him. At a great feast, which he holds to celebrate his return and to which he invites the whole community (*Οδ.* 1.655–64), it becomes evident that he is no longer at ease in his native environment. For when the returned king appears and takes a seat, he looks more like a wild beast, ‘a huge hungry dragon that sniffed human flesh’, than ‘a shepherd of his people’ (*Οδ.* 1.1062–3).⁸²⁰ In stark contrast is the description of his mild-tempered son

818 See Kazantzakis 1958, 20.

819 See Kazantzakis 1958, 20.

820 See Kazantzakis 1958, 26.

(*Oδ.* 1.1064–9). Significantly, it is Telemachus who is followed to the feast by two faithful dogs (*Oδ.* 1.1067–9). The Homeric motif of Odysseus’ faithful dog Argus, who recognized his master after twenty years, is thereby skilfully reversed. In fact, the dogs’ characteristic fidelity and devotion to their master are exactly those qualities that are most repugnant to this fierce, freedom-loving Odysseus. In accordance with his own nature, he will later have a wild leopardess as his companion.⁸²¹ During the feast, the chief rhapsode finally performs a song (*Oδ.* 1.1196–283) that reminds Odysseus of his restless nature and rekindles his dormant *Wanderlust*. The song tells of Odysseus’ childhood: first, of his grandfather who—unlike his father Laertes—wanted the child to become an adventurer; then, of how one night the three Fates, Tantalus, Prometheus and Heracles, came to the cradle of the child and each one endowed him with a gift: Tantalus, ‘forefather of despairing mankind’ (‘ὁ πρόγονος τοῦ ἀπελπισμένου ἀνθρώπου’, *Oδ.* 1.1257), with his ‘abysmal heavy heart’, ‘Prometheus, the mind’s master,’ with ‘the seed of a great light’, and Heracles, with fire.⁸²² All in all, the song tells of the things that supposedly laid the foundation for Odysseus’ restless character. Odysseus reacts to the song with an outburst of discontent and anger (*Oδ.* 1.1284–97):

Βουβός, σκυφτός, γρικοῦσε ὁ δοξαρὰς καὶ δάγκανε τὰ χεῖλια,
 κι ἦταν ἀλάργα σ’ ἔρμες θάλασσεσ καὶ σὲ σπηλιὲς ὁ νοῦς του. 1285
 Κι εὐτὺς ὡς κλεῖσαν τὰ πλατιά, πιτήδεια χεῖλια τοῦ λυράρη,
 τινάχτη ἀχνίζοντας, καρφώθηκαν τὰ νύχια του στὸ θρόνο
 καὶ γεῖραν οἱ κρασόκουπεσ στίς τάβλεσ καὶ χυθῆκαν.
 Κι ὄλο βαρὺ περγέλιο καὶ θυμὸ καταβροντάει ἡ φωνή του:
 «Ντροπή μου, ἀσπρίσαν κιόλασ τὰ μαλλιά, τὰ δόντια μου σαλέψαν, 1290
 κι ἀκόμα σ’ ἔργατα ἀχαμνὰ καταξοδιάζω τὴν ψυχὴ μου!
 Πάσα τὴ γῆς, μαθέσ, τὴν κούρσεψα κι οἱ φοῦχτεσ μου χορτάσαν,
 δὲν ἔχει πιά πελάη νὰ τὰ διαβῶ κι ἀνθρώπουσ νὰ συντύχω,

821 In fact, one of his comrades finds her as a cub and brings her to him (*Oδ.* 13.372–81), since she matches his ‘savage heart’ (*Oδ.* 13.379). Odysseus welcomes the gift and accepts the leopard cub ‘as though it were his daughter’ (*Oδ.* 13.382; Kazantzakis 1958, 395; cf. *Oδ.* 13.835–9, where he says that he has more paternal feelings for the leopardess than for his own son). In the leopardess he sees represented everything that he cherishes in life: ‘beast, fire, and gallant heart’ (*Oδ.* 13.389; Kazantzakis 1958, 395). When the adult animal later becomes restless and is noticeably drawn to the wild, Odysseus releases her with a heavy heart (*Oδ.* 15.783–800).

822 See Kazantzakis 1958, 30. This part of the song is also remarkable because it can be seen as an allusion to Dante’s *Inferno* passage, where Odysseus speaks out of the flame. Here (*Oδ.* 1.1267–81), Heracles actually throws the child into a blazing fire: ‘the dragon seized your infant form, Sung it in flames, / and you flushed crimson, rose like flickering tongues and leapt / to the gilt beams and fluted with the singing blaze. / The whole night through you laughed and played, refreshed in fire, / and we, struck dumb, rejoiced in your salvation’s wonder,’ (*Oδ.* 1.1276–80; Kazantzakis 1958, 31).

κι ὄλο καμάρι ἀραξοβόλησα νὰ πατριδοσαπίσω!»
Εἶπε, καὶ κάθισε στρουφίζοντας κύκλου κυκλοῦ τὰ μάτια,
σὰ νὰ ’ταν ὄνειρο κακό, βραχνάς, ἢ σύναξη ὅλη ἐτούτη.

1295

Silent and stooped, Odysseus listened and bit his lips;
his mind was far away on desolate seas and caves,
and when the bard had closed his skilful lips,
at once the archer leapt up, dug his nails into his seat
till the gold goblets on the table tipped and spilled.
His voice roared out with heavy mockery and hot rage:
“To my great shame my hair has whitened, my teeth loosened,
but I still squander my soul’s strength on worthless works!
You’d think I’d plundered the whole world with sated fists,
nor knew of further seas to cross or men to meet,
and, full of pride, moored in my native land to rot!”
He spoke, sat down, then cast his baleful eyes about
as though the whole crowd were a nightmare, a bad dream.⁸²³

The incident causes the frightened people to become paralysed for a moment before the feast resumes its course and continues until the next morning (*Oδ.* 1.1297–319). Afterwards, as Telemachus walks up to the castle, he inwardly curses the hour at which his seditious father returned (*Oδ.* 1.1346–56). Odysseus, on the other hand, is immediately drawn back down to the ‘salty sea’, where his mind temporarily comes to be at rest.⁸²⁴

Another key experience that contributes to Odysseus’ final departure occurs on the following night, when he recounts his adventures to his family by the fireside.⁸²⁵ There he tells how, on his travels, Death had appeared to him in ‘[t]hree [...] deadly forms [...] to strip [him] of his weapons and uncoil [his] brains’ (*Oδ.* 2.75–6), specifically as Calypso, Circe and Nausicaa,⁸²⁶ although he eventually detached himself from each of

823 See Kazantzakis 1958, 31.

824 See Kazantzakis 1958, 32

825 For the whole scene that makes up about one third of the Canto, see *Oδ.* 2.1–464.

826 Despite initial reservations (*Oδ.* 2.71–5), he also tells of his amorous encounters unabashedly and without regard for his wife’s feelings (see especially *Oδ.* 2.78–106; 301–30). Following his story, the latter bursts into tears (*Oδ.* 2.449–52); Odysseus, however, does not bother and walks out into the night (*Oδ.* 2.457–8).

them and left again. When Odysseus has finished telling the story, he suddenly realizes that his native land is just another such manifestation of Death (*Od.* 2.429–46).⁸²⁷

Τὰ πικραχεΐλια του σφαλνάει καὶ πιά δὲν ξεπειρίζει λόγος.
Θωροῦσε τὴ φωτιά πού χώνευε, τὴ φλόγα πού μαράθη, 430
πῶς πασπαλίζονταν καὶ στρώνονταν στ' ἀποκανίδια ἢ στάχτη·
γυρνάει, κοχεύει τὴ γυναίκα του, τηράει τὸ γιό, τὸν κύρη,
καὶ ξάφνου τρόμαξε, ἀναστέναξε καὶ φούχτωσε τὸ στόμα:
τώρα νογήθη, πρόσωπο γλυκό θανάτου κι ἡ πατρίδα!
Σὰν τὸ θεριὸ πού ἐπιάστη στὸ βροχό, τὰ μάτια του στρουφίζουν 435
κι ἀνακυλοῦν φλογάτα, κίτρινα, μὲς στὶς βαθιές του κόχες.
Στενό, σὰ φτωχοτσέλιγκα μαντρί, τὸ γονικὸ παλάτι,
μαραγκιασμένη πιά νοικοκερὰ κι ἡ γυναικούλα ἐτούτη·
κι ὁ γιὸς σὰν ὀγδοντάρης γέροντας φλωροζυγιάζει μ' ἔγνοια
τὸ δίκιο, τὸ ἄδικο νὰ βρεῖ, τὸ τίμιο, τὸ ἄτιμο, καὶ τρέμει 440
σὰν τάχα νά 'ταν φρόνιμη ἢ ζωή, σὰ νά 'ταν δίκια ἢ φλόγα
καὶ τὸ μυαλό, τό πιὸ ἀψηλὸ ἀγαθὸ τοῦ αἰτοβούλη ἀνθρώπου!
Ὁ καρδιομάχος γέλασε ἀθλητῆς κι ἀνατινάχτη ἀπάνω·
καὶ μονομιᾶς ἢ γλύκα τοῦ σπιτιοῦ κι ἡ ποθητὴ πατρίδα
κι οἱ δώδεκα θεοὶ κι ἡ γριὰ ἀρετὴ στὸ τιμημένα τζάκι 445
κι ὁ γιὸς τοῦ φάνταξαν ἐνάντια πιά στὴν ἀψηλὴ του φύτρα.

Odysseus sealed his bitter lips and spoke no more,
but watched the glowering fire fade, the withering flames, 430
the ash that spread like powder on the dying coals,
then turned, glanced at his wife, gazed on his son and father,
and suddenly shook with fear, and sighed, for now he knew
that even his native land was a sweet mask of Death.
Like a wild beast snared in a net, his eyes rolled round 435
and tumbled down his deep eye-sockets, green and bloodshot.
His tribal palace seemed a narrow shepherd's pen,
his wife a small and wrinkled old housekeeping crone,
his son an eighty-year-old drudge who, trembling, weighed
with care to find what's just, unjust, dishonest, honest, 440
as though all life were prudence, as though fire were just,
and logic the highest good of eagle-mounting man!
The heart-embattled athlete laughed, dashed to his feet,
and his home's sweetness, suddenly, his longed-for land,
the twelve gods, ancient virtue by his honored hearth, 445
his son—all seemed opposed now to his high descent.

827 Cf. Friar's synopsis in Kazantzakis 1958, 779–80.

The only logical consequence is that he has to free himself from this final and greatest confinement. So, Odysseus decides to leave Ithaca again, this time for good. Yet, before he does so, he wants to await the wedding of his son Telemachus and Nausicaa (*Od.* 2.1126–30):

“[...]
Ἴνυτε, για κάμε ὑπομονή, κι ἐγὼ μιὰ νύχτα, ὄντας σὲ κλείσω
μὲς στὸν παστὸ γιὰ νὰ μοῦ σπείρεις γιό, νὰ μὴ χαθεῖ τὸ σόι,
θ’ ἀνοίξω τὰ πανιὰ στὸν ἄνεμο καὶ μιὰ θ’ ἀρπάξω πέτρα
χουγιαζοντας πὰ στὸ κουβέρτι μου καὶ θὰ τὴ ρίξω πίσω·
πατρίδα μου εἶναι ἐμένα ἢ ξενιτιά, κι ἓνας ἀφρὸς ὁ γιός μου!” 1130

“[...]
Be patient! On that night when I shall lock you fast
within your nuptial chamber that our race may flourish,
I shall unfurl my sails to windward, grasp a stone,
and chortling on the deck, throw it across my shoulder.
Exile’s my country, and my son but froth on foaming sea.” 1130

When the day of Telemachus’ wedding has come and the wedding party is expecting the arrival of the bridal ship, Odysseus cannot wait to leave (*Od.* 2.1152–7):

Μὰ αὐτός, τὰ μάτια στὸ ἄλικο πανί, κλεφτοχαμογελοῦσε—
πέρα στὸ ἀκρόγιαλο, μὲς στὰ σκαριὰ σφιγτομανταλωμένη,
τριζοκοποῦσε λαχταρίζοντας νὰ φύγει ἢ τρεχαντήρα·
νὰ φύγει κι ἡ ψυχὴ του ἀπ’ τὰ σκαριὰ γυναίκα, γιοῦ, πατρίδας! 1155
Ὅρθός, στὸ νυφοκάραβο ἔριχνε μὲ ὀρμὴ τὰ δυὸ του μάτια,
τὸ συντραβοῦσε λὲς γοργὰ νὰ’ ρθεῖ, νὰ πάρει ἢ πίκρα τέλος.

But he, his eyes on the red sail, smiled secretly,

for there, fast in her scaffold locked, far up the beach,
his new-built vessel creaked and longed to sail—so might
his soul one day flee scaffolds of wife, son, and country! 1155
Standing erect, he glued his eyes on the bride’s ship
to lure it swiftly, that his bitterness might end.

Odysseus’ bitter suffering (ἢ πίκρα, *Od.* 2.1157), whose end he longs for, is not eternal wandering but the native land itself, which has become his worst nightmare. Just like

Dante's Odysseus, who found that 'neither the sweetness of a son, nor compassion for [his] old father, nor the love owed to Penelope' (Dante, *Inferno* XXVI, 94–6) could bring him back home, this Odysseus similarly wants to 'flee scaffolds of wife, son and country!' (*Od.* 2.1155). In order to shake off these old ties, he finally sets sail southwards with a small, newly assembled crew. As they leave Ithaca forever, he says to his companions (*Od.* 2.1436–40):

«Νὰ φαλαγγῶστε τὴν πλωτὴ, παιδιὰ, πριχοῦ νὰ φέξει ἡ μέρα·
ποχαιρετῆχτε τὸ νησι καὶ ξεριζῶστε τὴν πατρίδα·
κι ὅποιος μπορεῖ, στὸ κύμα πίσω του σὰν πέτρα ἄς τὴν πετάξει·
κι ὅποιος δὲν τὴν ποχόρτασε ἀπὸ σᾶς, ἄς τὴν κρεμάσει γκόλφι,
τί αὐγὴ κινοῦμε πιά γιὰ τὸ στερνό, τὸ ἀγύριστο ταξίδι!» 1440

“Before day breaks, let’s place our ship on rollers, lads,
uproot our country from our hearts, and say farewell;
let those who can, throw her behind them like a stone,
let those who can’t, hang her about them like a charm;
at dawn we sail for the last voyage of no return.” 1440

This ‘last voyage of no return’, which has no proper destination, will take the crew to many different places. Later, after they have already been to Sparta (books 3–4), robbed the beautiful Helen of Menelaus a second time as well as contributed to the destruction of Knossos on Crete (books 5–8), the crew will find itself back on the ship. As they sail away from Crete, one of the men then notices that now even their last native land is out of sight. Odysseus, however, happily answers that the umbilical cord to Greece has finally been cut and that they are free at last (*Od.* 8.1003–13):

«Ποῦ πᾶμε;» φώναξε τρομάζοντας τὸ ἀγκυλωτὸ κεφάλι·
«πίσω μας πιά ἀμολοῦμε τὰ νησιά, κάθε πατρίδα ἐχάθη!»
Ὁ ἐφτάψυχος ἀναγαλλιάζοντας ἀνάριζε τὸ σκοῦφο: 1005
«Πᾶει τὸ λουρί, παιδιὰ, τὸ κόβουμε, γλιτώνουμε ἀπ’τὴ μάνα·
ἔχετε γειά, μικρὲς γλυκὲς χαρὲς καὶ πίκρες τῆς Ἑλλάδας,
ἄσπρα χωριά, γαλάζια ἀχνὰ βουνὰ καὶ πεῦκα καὶ θυμάρι!
Ἔχετε γειά, ἀρετὲς σοζυγιαστὲς καὶ νοικοκυροσύνες
καὶ νοῦ ποῦ στέκει καρποφύλακας κι ὀρίζεις μὲ σταλίκια 1010
θεοῦ κι ἀνθρώπου ἀμπελοχώραφα καὶ πνίγεις τὴν καρδιά μας!
Κατανοτιᾶς πλαταίνει, ἀδέρφια, ἡ γῆς, ὁ νοῦς περνάει μιὰ βιόλα
στὴ βογκερὴ πλατιὰν αὐτούκλα του καὶ τὸ τραγοῦδι ἀρχίζει!»

“Where are we headed?” Orpheus cried, and quaked with fear.
 “We’ve left all islands now, our native land has vanished.”
 But then Odysseus tossed his cap with fervent joy: 1005
 “There goes the navel cord, lads! Cut! We’re free of mother!
 Farewell, O Greece, with all your small sweet joys and griefs,
 white towns and hamlets, azure mountains, heather, pine.
 Farewell, O balanced virtues and housekeeping cares,
 and mind, guardian of fruits, who raises tall stone walls 1010
 between the vineyards of God and man and chokes our hearts.
 Earth spreads out southward, lads, and the mind plucks a rose,
 then hangs it down his echoing ear and bursts in song!”

Many more passages could be listed to this effect. I will mention only two, before turning to focus on the passages which echo the Homeric Tiresias’ prophecy as well as Dante’s *Inferno*.

About halfway through the story, when Odysseus and his entourage have already built the ideal city in the desert, he announces his ten commandments to the city’s inhabitants by which they are to abide.⁸²⁸ The ninth commandment says (*Oδ.* 15.1171–2):

“Δὲν εἶναι ἡ πιὸ τρανὴ ἀρετὴ στὴ γῆς ἐλεύτερος νὰ γίνεις,
 παρὰ ἄσπλαχνα, ἄγρυπνα, ἀκατάλυτα νὰ θῆς ἐλευτερία!” 1172

“The greatest virtue on earth is not to become free
 but to seek freedom in a ruthless, sleepless strife.” 1172

As in Cavafy’s *Ithaca*, here in the *Odyssey* ‘it’s the journey, not the destination’. In this seeming banality the eternal search and restless striving of man expresses itself as an ideal state. This ideal is also reflected in the fact that Odysseus is not faithful to anything or anyone in his life. This unfaithfulness, which causes him always to leave again and break free of all emotional and social ties, is his only lasting commitment. When Odysseus, following the destruction of his ideal city and his ensuing inner transformation, looks back on his life so far, he reflects (*Oδ.* 16.955–62):

“[...]”

828 Cf. 140.

Ἄς εἶσαι βλογημένη, ζήση μου, πὸν δὲν τὸ καταδέχτης 955
 νὰ μείνεις σὺ στὸν κάθε γάμο σου πιστὴ σὰ γυναικούλα·
 τὸ ταξιδόψωμό 'ναι νόστιμο κι ἡ ξενιτιά 'ναι μέλι,
 μὴν ἀστραπὴ χωροῦσες, χαίρουσουν τὴν καθεμιὰ σου ἀγάπη,
 μὰ γρήγορα πλαντοῦσες, κι ἔχε γειά! στὴν ἀγαπῶ διαλάλαες.
 Γειά σου, ψυχὴ μου, πὸν εἶχες πάντα σου πατρίδα τὸ ταξίδι! 960
 Τὴν πιὸ στὸν κόσμον καρπερὴ ἀρετὴ, τὴν ἄγιαν ἀπιστία,
 με γέλια καὶ μὲ κλάματα ἀκλουθᾶς πιστὴ κι ἀνηφορίζεις!”

“[...] 955
 May you be blessed, my life, for you disdained to stay
 faithful to but one marriage, like a silly girl;
 the bread of travel is sweet, and foreign lands are honey;
 for a brief moment you rejoiced in each new love,
 but stifled soon and bade farewell to each fond lover.
 My soul, your voyages have been your native land! 960
 With tears and smiles you've climbed and followed faithfully
 the world's most fruitful virtue—holy false unfaithfulness!”

Due to Odysseus' constant restlessness, his conception of his native land undergoes a fundamental redefinition. For it is not Ithaca but his travels that Odysseus considers to 'have been [his] native land'. Such a reinterpretation of the concept of home is something that we will also encounter in Karla Suárez's *Viajera*. In fact, the protagonist of Suárez's novel is also characterized by a constant restlessness and has left her (conventional) home behind.

In addition to the many passages that illustrate Odysseus' *Wanderlust* and inner unrest, numerous descriptive epithets come to underline this fundamentally 'Odyssean' characteristic:⁸²⁹

Epithet	Translation	Examples of Occurrence
ὁ ἀνεμοσάλετος	the windswept man	16.611
ὁ ἀνύπνωτος	the sleepless archer	4.419
ὁ ασύχαστος	the restless man ⁸³⁰	4.237

⁸²⁹ The following alphabetical list makes no claims to be complete, but covers most of the *Wanderlust*-centred epithets in the nominative (sometimes listed together with a corresponding noun) with only a few examples of their occurrence in the text. The translations are taken from Friar (Kazantzakis 1958). Note that Friar is not entirely consistent in his translations, since he does not always translate the same word in the same way, and sometimes uses the same translation for different words.

⁸³⁰ My translation. Friar does not translate this epithet, but uses Odysseus' name instead.

ὁ ἀχόρταγος πλωρίτης	the unsated pilot	9.347
ὁ θαλασσαῖτός	the sea-eagle	3.1409; 21.844
ὁ θαλασσόλυκος	the sea-wolf	2.642; 23.1265
ὁ θαλασσομάχος	the sea-battler	1.184; 5.933
ὁ θαλασσόχαρος	the sea-battler	2.717
ὁ καπετάνιος	the captain	2.1473
ὁ караβάς	the boat-man ⁸³¹	2.794; 13.427
ὁ κοσμογύρης	the world-wanderer/ -roamer	5.149; 11.1168; 13.1175
ὁ κοσμογυριστής	the much-traveled man	2.870
ὁ κοσμογύριστος	the world-wanderer	21.583
ὁ κοσμοπλάνητος	the world-traveler	2.210; 21.157; 21.319
ὁ κοσμοτάξιδος	the world-traveler	23.70
ὁ κοσμοτρυγητής	the world-wanderer	5.274; 7.510; 14.109
ὁ λαγοκοίμητος	the light sleeper ⁸³²	5.939
ὁ μακροτάξιδος	the world-traveler	1.673
ὁ μεγάλαρμενος	the bold captain	4.410
ὁ μέγας γυριστής	the [great] ⁸³³ traveler	1.699
ὁ μέγας πεζολάτης	the great traveler	18.342
ὁ μέγας ταξιδευτής	the great voyager	3.322–3
ὁ μυριοπλάνητος	the [infinite] ⁸³⁴ traveler	14.121
ὁ νοῦς ὁ δαίμονοδαρτος	the demon-driven man	4.394
ὁ πελαγόστηθος	the sea-chested	21.57
ὁ πολυβάσανος τῆς θάλασσας καὶ τοῦ μυαλοῦ κουρσάρου	the suffering man, the pirate of the sea and brain	3.1458
ὁ πολυδρομονούσης	the much-traveled man	20.416
ὁ πολυπλάνητος	the world-wanderer	5.101; 11.1113; 14.781
ὁ πολυτάξιδος	the world-wanderer	21.329
ὁ ταξιδιάς	the great traveler	10.504

831 My translation. Again, Friar uses Odysseus' name here.

832 The literal translation would be 'the rabbit-sleeper'.

833 My addition.

834 My addition.

ὁ τραχὺς ταξιδευτής	the harsh voyager	3.1126
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In characterizing Odysseus as a restless adventurer, Kazantzakis, like many of his literary predecessors, deliberately builds on Homer and Dante. This is true for not only the general inspiration of the work, but also specific passages in which he alludes to both the prophecy of Tiresias in the Homeric *Nekuia* and Dante's *Inferno*. At least one direct allusion to the Homeric passage can be identified in Kazantzakis' epic. In addition, the oar (as a symbol of seafaring and the sea), like the oar carried on the shoulder (see, e.g., *Oδ.* 3.348; 4.362), is a recurring motif in the text. In book 21, when Odysseus is in the South of Africa, he encounters a young woman on the beach who carries an oar on her shoulder (*Oδ.* 21.117–29):

Ὁ κατάσπρος χαμογελάει ἀθλητής, τὴ στράτα πάλε παίρνει
καὶ χύνεται κατὰ τῆς μάνας του τὸν κόρφο ὡς μωρουδάκι.
Μιὰ κίτρινη διαβαίνει κοπελιά, μικρούλα λοξομάτα,
μακρὸν στὸν ὄμο της κρατάει κουπὶ θαλασσοφαγωμένο. 120
«Ὡρα καλή σου, κοπελιά, ποῦ πᾶς τὸ μέγα λιχνιστήρι;»
Κι ἡ νιά, θαρρεῖς καὶ γαργαλιάστηκε, ξεχείλισε ὁ λαιμός της:
«Ὡχου, κι ἀθάλασσος κι ἀκόλυμπος μοῦ φαίνεσαι, κι ἀκόμα
δὲν εἶδες καὶ δὲν ἄγγιξες κουπὶ ποῦ λάμνουν τὰ καράβια!»
Ὁ πονηρὸς τὴ χέρα του ἄπλωσε καὶ τὸ κουπὶ χεδεύει: 125
«Γειά σου, μακρὺ μου θαλασσόχερο, γειά σου, σπαθὶ τοῦ νοῦ μου,
σκύβω καὶ προσκυνῶ σε, φτέρουγα τῆς λευτεριάς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου!»
εἶπε, καὶ κόλλησε τὸ στόμα του στὸ ἀρμυρισμένο ξύλο·
κι ἡ κοπελιά φοβήθη κι ἔκοψε γιαλοῦ μεριὰ πιλάλα.

The white-haired athlete smiled, took up the road once more,
and as he dashed down toward the sea, his mother's breast,
he met a yellow-skinned and slant-eyed maiden there
who on her shoulder carried a long sea-ravaged oar. 120
"Maiden, where are you taking that great winnowing van?"
As though she felt coarse tickling hands, the maiden laughed:
"Oho, it seems you've never swum or seen the sea
nor seen or touched an oar by which all ships are rowed!"
The cunning man stretched out his hand and stroked the blade: 125
"Your health, O my long sea-hand and the mind's sharp sword,
I bow and worship man's swift wing of liberty!"
He spoke, then pressed his mouth against the salt-bleached wood, and the maid,
startled, broke and ran down the long beach in fright.

Odysseus, by pretending not to know what an oar is and to mistake it for a ‘winnowing van’ (*Od.* 21.121), clearly echoes *Od.* 11.119–37 (and especially 11.128: ἀθηρηλοῖγόν). In the Homeric prophecy, Odysseus is the one who walks inland, away from the sea. His journey is said to come to an end when he meets the wanderer who does not recognize an oar. Thus, it seems hardly accidental that, in Kazantzakis’ poem, Odysseus is the one who moves *away* from the land and *towards* the sea. Neither is the journey supposed to end for him here; it rather always continues. The fact that the girl considers him to be unknowing (*Od.* 21.123–4) is ironic, as he is probably the most sea-experienced of all men. When he reveals himself as such, he respectfully greets the oar and worships it as the wing of man’s freedom. Thus, the original meaning of the fateful encounter prophesied by Tiresias, namely to appease Poseidon by establishing his cult, is here reversed. For Kazantzakis’ Odysseus, the oar symbolizes no such compulsion, no subordination to higher powers, but the absolute freedom of man.⁸³⁵

Kazantzakis’ Odysseus, the restless wanderer and eternal seeker carried to the extreme in the form of the Nietzschean superman, does actually not have much in common with his Homeric archetype. Indeed, the core of his inspiration has always been Dante’s Odysseus. On December 18th, 1914, during a forty-day journey through the monasteries of Mount Athos together with the author Angelos Sikelianos, Kazantzakis recorded in his diary: ‘I read Dante (c. 26) on Odys[s]eus]. Then Bhudda, and the tears filled my eyes.’ (‘Διάβασα Dante (c. 26) για Ὀδυσ[s]έα]. Ἐπειτα Βούδα, καὶ τὰ δάκρυα γέμισαν τὰ μάτια μου.’).⁸³⁶ This entry, which was recorded ten years before he began working on his *Odyssey*, documents the first spark that would later develop into a great (Dantean) flame.⁸³⁷ In another diary entry from sometime in 1915, Kazantzakis notes: ‘My three great teachers: Homer, Dante, Bergson.’ (‘Οἱ τρεῖς

835 There is, however, a situation where Odysseus has truly forgotten what an oar is. This is the case on Calypso’s island. As he told his family in book 2, after living for a short time together with the goddess, he had completely forgotten the human world, including his native land (*Od.* 2.125–36). One day, while walking along the beach, he finds an old oar, and only slowly recognizes it as such (*Od.* 2.137–43). The recognizing of the oar has an “awakening”, revitalizing effect on him (*Od.* 2.144–160), reminding him of who he was and where he wanted to go.

836 The diary entry is made when in Vatopedi Monastery (Βατοπέδι). See Prevelakis in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 7.

837 See Prevelakis in Καζαντζάκης 1984, 7, footnote 2: ‘Ἐδῶ μποροῦμε, νομίζω, νὰ δοῦμε τὴν πρώτη-πρώτη σπῖθα ποὺ ἀναψε τὴν πυρκαγιά.’ Cf. Πρεβελάκης 1958, 99.

μεγάλοι μου δάσκαλοι: Όμηρος – Dante – Bergson’.).⁸³⁸ Finally, in 1934 he published a complete translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* into the Greek vernacular.⁸³⁹ Next we shall see how the reception of Dante’s *Odysseus* manifests itself concretely in Kazantzakis’ epic poem.

The passages showing the influence of Dante’s *Inferno* passage are so numerous that it would be possible to fill an entire book by studying them alone. A few essential Dantean themes that can be found in Kazantzakis’ epic poem are ‘the sweetness of a son’ (ironically interpreted by Kazantzakis as the especially mild-tempered nature of Telemachus), ‘the [lack of] compassion for [his] old father’ (cf. *Oδ.* 1.570–7; 1070–80) and ‘the [non existent] love owed to Penelope’ (Dante, *Inferno* XXVI 94–6). Moreover, the journey of Kazantzakis’ *Odysseus* is also a journey to the south, the end of the world (not the Heracleian Pillars, but the source of the Nile) and towards the sun (*Oδ.* 11.1320–2). The most important features, however, are the flame and fire symbolism, the sun/light motif as well as the motif of the bold transgressor, all of which are both central to Dante’s text and which permeate Kazantzakis’ entire *Odyssey*.⁸⁴⁰ In Kazantzakis’ poem, flame or fire is always positively connoted and stands for *Odysseus*’ unyielding and restless character. As a result, *Odysseus* also associates kindred (i.e. rebellious) souls with fire and flame. For Kazantzakis’ hero, the flame is not an infernal punishment, but the ultimate goal and ideal of life, the beginning and end of all (*Oδ.* 23.935).

Specifically, many passages describe *Odysseus* himself, and often his soul in particular, as (a tongue of) fire or flame or as surrounded by the latter. For the sake of clarity, the numerous relevant passages are listed in the following table.⁸⁴¹ While this list is by no means exhaustive, it fulfils the purpose of demonstrating the relevance of Dantean imagery to Kazantzakis’ text.

838 See Bien 1989, 1:xx.

839 See Δάντης 1934. On Kazantzakis’ translation, see Πρεβελάκης 1958, 245–46.

840 Cf. Friar in Kazantzakis 1958, xxxii: ‘The sun, flame, fire, and light compose the chief imagery of the *Odyssey*, flowing in a dazzling current throughout the poem.’

841 Note that a passage may be listed several times if it contains more than one motif simultaneously.

<i>Inferno</i> -inspired Motif	Appearance in Kazantzakis' <i>Odyssey</i>
Odysseus as/ inside a flame/ fire	1.1267–81 ⁸⁴² ; 3.805–8; 24.1333
Odysseus' soul as a flame/ fire (tongue)	3.805–8; 3.969; 7.254; 9.786–92; 16.1340–2
Odysseus' head in flames	2.400–4 ⁸⁴³ ; 6.725–6; 11.932–3
Tongue of fire/ two-tongued flame	1.1277; 6.725–6; 12.1270–72; 16.1340–2; 24.1333
Flame/ fire as the goal or ideal of life	5.622–32; 6.720–1; 1220–1; 10.434–57; 11.141–50; 835–43; 1130–1; 12.1270–2; 23.861–941
Transgression of boundaries	14.421–5; 22.272–95
Sun as the goal of life/ the journey	15.1173–6; 16.999–1002; 22.1100–1

The essential importance of fire and flame for Odysseus' characterization is also evident in the following epithets:⁸⁴⁴

Epithet	Translation	Appearance
ὁ μέγας ἄντρας τῆς φωτιάς	the great man of fire; the fiery man	6.987; 1230
ὁ φλογομάτης (καραβάς)	the flame-eyed leader/ boatman	12.300; 444; 21.920
ὁ φλογονούσης	the flame-brained archer; the flame-minded man	6.1237; 11.1314; 13.522; 15.1316
ὁ φλογοσάλευτος	the flame-flickering leader	12.1276
ὁ φλογοσπάρτης	the flame-sower	5.1294
ὁ φλογοφουντωμένος	the flame-swollen leader	16.1206
ὁ φωτονούς	the sun-mind	16.791

We shall now take a closer look at some of the above-listed passages that are particularly relevant for Odysseus' characterization.

⁸⁴² Cf. p. 255.

⁸⁴³ In this case, it is not exactly Odysseus' head that is ablaze, but the tip of a wood branch which appears in personified form and can be taken to represent Odysseus himself. Odysseus is actually observing how 'the flame' (ἡ φλόγα) slowly 'creeps up to the [branch's] dark head' (στὸ σκοτεινὸ κεφάλι), caressing it and embracing it tightly, while the branch continues to burn 'uncaring, standing upright' (my translation).

⁸⁴⁴ Again, the following list makes no claim to completeness.

In book 3, on their way to the Spartan castle, Odysseus and one of his companions pass a shrine of Aphrodite and want to refresh themselves in the nearby river. When they are both in the water and Odysseus' companion looks over to him, Odysseus seems to blaze like a fire (*Od.* 3.805–8):

[...]
 τὸ δοξαρὰ θωράει νὰ κείτεται σὰν τὴ φωτιά, νὰ λάμπουν 805
 γύρα τρογύρα του τὰ χώματα φωτομαργελωμένα.
 Κι ἡ καλοσύβαστη θεά, σκυφτή, στὸ φλογερὸ κεφάλι
 σὰν ταπεινὴ μικρὴ διακονιὰ τοῦ ἄπλωνε τὰ χεράκια

[...]
 he saw the archer sprawled like flame so that around him, 805
 far round about him, all the ground was rimmed with fire.
 Then the compliant goddess like a humble beggar
 stooped down and spread her hands above his blazing head;

Not only does Odysseus here appear as a burning fire, as is so often the case in the poem, but the flame motif is also paired with the superman motif. The fact that Aphrodite, a goddess, reverently bows before Odysseus, as if before a god, once more underlines the protagonist's superhuman nature. This marks a fundamental difference from Dante's Odysseus, who burns in Christian hell. In Dante's Christian world-view, for all the vigour and stature of the daring explorer, God had the final word. This is certainly not the case for Kazantzakis' poem, where the superman confidently defies all divine authority until the very end. Instead of a god, Odysseus follows only himself, or, as he once puts it, the untamed, 'inhuman flame' within him. It is after the failed revolution in Egypt, when Odysseus is held in captivity together with a group of Egyptian rebels, that he confidently states (*Od.* 11.835–43):

«Τοῦτοι θαρροῦν πὼς μόνο μὲ ψωμί χορταίνει ὁ νοῦς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, 835
 κι ὀλοζωῆς, ψωμί, φαί, φτωχοὺς καὶ πλούσιους τσαμπουνᾶνε·
 κι ἡ φλόγα πὸν πετιέται ἀπ' τὸ μυαλὸ καὶ χάνεται σαγίτα—
 νοικοκερὰ τὴν κάνουν τοῦτοι ἐδῶ, στριγμώνουν τὴ στό τζάκι,
 νὰ βάλει ἡ μάνα τὸ τσουκάλι τῆς κι ὁ γέρος τὰ κανιά του!
 Μισῶ τὴν ἀρετὴ πὸν φάει καὶ πιεῖ καὶ βαριοστομαχιάσει· 840
 καλὸ' ναι τὸ ψωμί καὶ τὸ φαί, μὰ πὸ καλὰ χορταίνει
 μιὰ φλόγα ἀπάνθρωπη πὸν ἀσκώνεται στὰ μαῦρα σωθικά μας·
 κι ἀρέσει μου τὴ φλόγα ἐντὸς μου αὐτὴ Θεὸ νὰ ὀνοματίζω!»

“Many here think man’s soul is slaked by bread alone 835
 and gab lifelong of rich and poor, of bread and food;
 those savage flames which speed like arrows from the brain
 they turn into a poor housekeeper’s humble hearth
 where old crones place their pots, old men their spindly legs.
 I hate all virtues based on food and bloated bellies; 840
 though food and drink are good, I’m better slaked and fed
 by that inhuman flame which burns in our black bowels.
 I like to name that flame which burns within me God!”

Again, the fire symbolism takes on an important role for Odysseus’ identity and goes hand in hand with his superhuman nature. Specifically, Odysseus speaks out against a complacent, conformist life, which would amount to a taming of his savage inner flame.

The great importance of fire and flame as the ideal and ultimate goal of Odysseus’ life is also evident in the scene where he holds the small, seven-headed statue of a god in his hand.⁸⁴⁵ While the statue’s seven heads for Odysseus represent the seven stages of an ideal development, the highest head also represents the highest stage. Significantly, it is this final head that has no more human (or “fleshly”) features at all but resembles an ‘unmoving flame’ (*Od.* 5.622–34):

[...]

κι ἀπ’ τὸ σπανὸ τοῦ ἀπανωκαύκαλο, ποὺ γυάλιζε σὰν πέτρα
 ποὺ τὴ βαριοσυγκλύσαν θάλασσεσ καὶ τὴν ἀγλεῖψαν ἔγνοιεσ,
 τινάζουνταν σὰ φλόγα ἀσάλευτη τ’ ὄλοστερνὸ κεφάλι·
 σὰ νά’ ταν, λές, ἢ κόκκινη κλωνιὰ καὶ πέρναε κομπολόι 625
 ἀρμάθα τὰ κεφάλια, κι ἀραδῖσ τὰ κρέμαε στὸν ἀγέρα.
 Φῶσ ἄδειο, διάφανο, ἑφτακάθαρο, χωρῖσ αὐτιὰ καὶ μάτια,
 ρουθούνια, στόμα, μέτωπο, ἔλαμπε τὸ ἱερὸ κορφοκεφάλι·
 ὄλη του ἢ σάρκα πνέμα γίνηκε κι ὄλο τὸ πνέμα ἀγέρας!
 Ὅ δοξαράσ τὸ ἑφτάψυχο στοιχειὸ χάδεψε μεὲσ στὴ φούχτα, 630
 ἀχόρταγα, ὡσ ποτὲ δὲ χάδεψε γυναῖκα, γιό, πατρίδα:
 “Ἀχ, νά’ ταν, Θέ μου, καὶ ν’ ἀνέβαινε κι ἡ σκοτεινὴ ψυχὴ μου
 σκαλι σκαλι τὰ ἑφτὰ πατώματα καὶ νὰ χαθεῖ σὰ φλόγα!
 μά’ μαι γιομάτοσ λάσπη καὶ μυαλό, κι ὁ βούβαλοσ μεὲ τρώει.”

845 Cf. p. 192.

[...]

and from its balding crown, that shone like a smooth stone
battered by many flooding seas and licked by cares,
there leapt up like unmoving flame the final head,
as if it were a crimson thread that strung the heads 625
like amber beads in rows and hung them high in air.

The final head shone, crystal-clear, translucent, light,
and had no ears or eyes, no nostrils, mouth, or brow,
for all its flesh had turned to soul, and soul to air!
Odysseus fondled all the demon's seven souls 630

as he had never fondled woman, son, or native land.
“Ah, my dear God, if only my dark soul could mount
the seven stories step by step and fade in flame,
but I'm devoured by beasts and filled with mud and brain!”

The idol captivates Odysseus in such a way that ‘wife, son or native land’ (*Oδ.* 5.631) were never able to. While contemplating the statue, he wishes to follow this upward spiritual path, which ends in the spiritualization of all matter and thus in liberation from all bodily things.⁸⁴⁶ Moreover, it is not only the dominant flame motif in this passage, as well as Odysseus’ rejection of ‘wife, son or native land’, that are reminiscent of Dante’s Odysseus. The lamented attachment to the fleshly and animalistic (5.632–4) brings to mind the appeal that Dante’s Odysseus had addressed to his comrades: ‘Consider your sowing: / you were not made to live like brutes, / but to follow virtue and knowledge.’ (*Inferno* XXVI, 118–20).

One last scene should be mentioned here, in which the Dantean flame imagery is particularly prominent. Towards the end of his life, Odysseus blesses the five elements of his body, addressing each one in a detailed speech (*Oδ.* 23.772–1068). The third element that he blesses is fire (*Oδ.* 23.861–941). Odysseus’ speech to fire, which he addresses as both ‘mother and daughter’ (*Oδ.* 23.866), is an elaborate homage to the element which has remained the most faithful to him (*Oδ.* 23.871). The only goal that he pursued in life, and that he chose to follow among all other things, was always fire (*Oδ.* 23.879–910):

[...]

μὰ ἐγώ, φωτιά μου, ἐσένα διάλεξα μὲ τὸ ἀψηλὸ σκουφί σου!

846 Cf. p. 192.

Πῶς παίξαμε μαζί, λιοπάρδαλη, πῶς μπήκαμε στὰ κάστρα, 880
 πῶς μπήκαμε, φωτιά, καὶ στὶς καρδιές καὶ ρίξαμε τὴ σπίθα,
 κι ὅλα, πέτρες καὶ ξύλα καὶ καρδιές, ἐδῶκαν τὸν ἀνθό τους!
 Κατέχεις το, φωτιά, τὸ μυστικὸ ποῦ μοῦ ἔκαιγε τὰ σπλάγχνα:
 “Δὲν ἀγαπῶ τὸν ἄνθρωπο, ἀγαπῶ τὴ φλόγα ποῦ τὸν τρώει!”
 Κι ὄντας σὰ λιόντας ἐμπαινόβγαινα στὰ σπίτια τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 885
 μήτε ψυχές ἐγὼ μήτε κορμιὰ χιμοῦσα νὰ λυτρώσω—
 ὅλα’ ναι στάχτη κι ἀποστάχτι σου καὶ δὲν τα θέλει ὁ νοῦς μου,
 μονάχα ἐσένα, φλόγα μυστικιά, μὲ τρόμο κυνηγοῦσα!
 Σκισμένο φλάμπουρο κυμάτιζες στὴν κεφαλή μου ἀπάνω,
 ἐφώναζες, ἐφώναζα κι ἐγὼ, καὶ χύνουνταν οἱ φλόγες, 890
 [...]

γι’ αὐτὸ καὶ σὲ ἀγαποῦσα, λιοπαρδη μὲ τὴν οὐρὰν ὀλόρθη.
 Πῶς ἔπαιζα μαζί σου ὀλοζωῆς, πῶς καίγουσαν μὲ σένα,
 τὰ νύχια σου αἱματῶναν τὸ κορμί, χαράζαν τὸ μυαλό μου 905
 κι ὀλονυχτοῦ στὸν ὕπνο μου ἄκουγα τὴ γλώσσα σου ν’ ἀγλείφει,
 νὰ ξεδερμάει τραχιὰ τὴ χέρα μου, νὰ ξεδερμάει τὸ νοῦ μου.
 Περπάτουσαν στὶς βροχές, στὰ λιόβωρα τῆς μαύρης γῆς μονάχος,
 χωρὶς παιδιὰ, σκυλιὰ καὶ σύντροφοι, χωρὶς θεοὺς κι ἐλπίδες—
 μὲ σένα μόνο, καὶ παράβγαινα, φωτιά, νὰ σὲ περάσω. 910
 [...]

but I choose only you, O Fire, with your tall cap!
 Ah, leopard-spotted, we’ve played well together, pierced 880
 through castles, stormed through hearts and cast fierce sparks
 till all—stones, wood, and hearts—gave up their final bloom!
 O Fire, you know the secret that has burned my heart:
 ‘I don’t love man, I only love the flame that eats him!’
 When as a lion I prowled through the low homes of men, 885
 I did not rush to save a single body or soul
 for my mind scorns the ash and dross you leave behind you
 and with dread fear hunts only you, O mystic flame!
 You flapped above my bold head like a tattered flag,
 you shouted and I shouted too, and your tongues leapt; 890
 [...]

That’s why I’ve loved you, leopard, with your upright tail!
 Well have we played and burned together our lives long
 when your claws made my body bleed or cracked my mind, 905
 when all night in my sleep I heard your cackling tongues

lick my hands clean of skin and strip my brains of meat.
I walked in rains and sun-blasts of the wretched earth
alone, with no dog, children, friends, no gods, no hopes,
and strove with you alone, O Fire, to outstrip you only; 910

Finally, Odysseus calls upon fire to devour him (*Od.* 23.914–16):

σήκω, φωτιά, τὸν κύρη σου νὰ φᾶς καὶ νὰ χαθεῖς μαζί του!
Σπλάχνος κι ὀργὴ πλακῶσαν τὴν καρδιά, δὲ θέλω πιά νὰ παίζω·
σὰν πνέμα πύρινο ἢ ψυχὴ μου ὀρμάει κλαρὶ κλαρὶ καὶ πάει,

Rise, eat your father, Fire, that we may die together
Wrath and compassion choke my heart, I won't play now, 915
my soul leaps like a fiery breath from bough to bough,

Odysseus' answer to the perennial question about the meaning of life, its origin and destination ('From whence, and why, and where?', *Od.* 23.929), is unequivocal (*Od.* 23.932–6):

Θὰ' ρθεῖ μιὰ μέρα σίγουρα ἢ φωτιά τὴ γῆς νὰ καθαρίσει,
θὰ' ρθεῖ μιὰ μέρα σίγουρα ἢ φωτιά τὸ νοῦ νὰ κάμει στάχτη·
μιὰ γλώσσα ἢ μοίρα πύρινη, χιμάει γῆς κι οὐρανοῦ, καὶ τρώει.
Φωτιά 'ναι ἢ μήτρα τῆς ζωῆς, φωτιά καὶ τὸ στερνὸ μνημούρι· 935
ἀνάμεσα σὲ δυὸ ἀψηλές φωτιές χορεύουμε καὶ κλαῖμε·

'Fire will surely come one day to cleanse the earth,
fire will surely come one day to make mind ash,
fate is a fiery tongue that eats up earth and sky!'
The womb of life is fire, and fire the last tomb,
and there between two lofty flames we dance and weep; 935

A closely related point to emphasize in the context of Dantean flame imagery is the central role that the sun assumes in Kazantzakis' poem, a feature which is also essentially drawn from Dante's *Inferno*. Yet, the Dantean Odysseus' journey 'following the sun' ('di retro al sol', *Inferno* XXVI, 117) in Kazantzakis' poem takes on a deeply philosophical dimension. Odysseus' journey to the sun becomes a metaphor for his enduring spiritual struggle and striving towards an absolute spiritualization. This is also reflected in the tenth commandment that Odysseus proclaims to the inhabitants of his

ideal city. In fact, this final commandment no longer contains any text, but simply depicts ‘an upright arrow’ which points, suitably, ‘toward the sun’ (*Od.* 15.1173–6):

Καὶ τὸ στερνὸ τὸ βράχο ἀρπάει καὶ μιὰ χαράζει ὀρθὴ σαγίτα
μὲ διψασμένο τὸ ραμφὶ νὰ ὀρμάει ψηλὰ κατὰ τὸν ἥλιο·
βουβὴ ἢ στερνὴ ἐντολὴ τινάζουνταν μέσα στὴν ἄδεια πέτρα, 1175
κι ὁ δοξαράς ἐχάρη ὡς νὰ ῥιχνε στὸν ἥλιο τὴν ψυχὴ του.

He seized the last rock then and carved an upright arrow
speeding high toward the sun with pointed thirsty beak;
the last command leapt mutely on the empty stone 1175
to the archer’s joy, as though he’d shot his soul into the sun.

In the synopsis following his monumental translation, Kimon Friar pointedly underlines the metaphorical meaning of the sun: ‘the poem begins and ends with the sun, itself a long metaphor of the transmutation of all matter into flame, into light, into spirit.’⁸⁴⁷

In addition to the central Dantean motif of flame and fire, sun and light, the motif of transgression, which in Dante’s work manifests itself in the passing of the Pillars of Hercules, is also a key motif of Kazantzakis’ poem. While Odysseus is often portrayed as a ruthless transgressor who does not stop at crossing any human or divine boundaries, there are two passages which specifically evoke the transgression imagery of Dante’s *Inferno*.

Firstly, during Odysseus’ sojourn in the mountains in the desert,⁸⁴⁸ his three ancestral Fates Tantalus, Heracles and Prometheus⁸⁴⁹ appear to him in a dream (*Od.* 14.284–445).

847 See Friar in Kazantzakis 1958, 813. For a much more detailed account tracing the sun’s importance for the poem, cf. Friar’s introduction in Kazantzakis 1958, xxxii–xxxiv: ‘According to the occasion, the mental or emotional condition of the observer, and the geography (whether, for instance, on the sands of the Sahara or on the horizon of the Antarctic icefields), the sun revolves around the *Odyssey* in a protean metamorphosis. [...] The entire Prologue is an invocation to the Sun as the fecund principle, as the ultimate symbolic goal of a time when “stones, water, fire, and earth shall be transformed to spirit, / and the mud-winged and heavy soul, freed of its flesh, / shall like a flame serene ascend and fade in sun.” The Epilogue is a depiction of the sun as a great Eastern prince sinking to his palace in the West, lamenting the death of Odysseus and refusing, in his sorrow, the food, wine, and women his mother, Earth, had prepared him for consolation. Thus the poem begins and ends with the Sun as image and symbol of the entire narrative. Throughout Book XXIII the Sun becomes one of the protagonists, hovering above Odysseus’ head in constant apprehension and lament during the long Antarctic summer, and the climax of Kazantzakis’ dialectical use of metaphor is marshaled in the opening of this book where the Sun is apostrophized as a Holy Trinity’.

848 Cf. p. 140.

849 Cf. p. 255.

In this scene, which is modelled on the Homeric *Nekuia*, Odysseus rejects his real ancestors, including his father, whom he pushes away pitilessly, and only accepts the three Fates to drink of his blood as his true forefathers. Heracles, who in the song of the Ithacan minstrel was the one who threw Odysseus into the fire as a child, now tells him about the Heracleian Pillars and calls on Odysseus to perform ‘the final labor’, which he himself could not achieve (*Oδ.* 14.421–5):

«[...]
 Ἐγὼ πελάγου γῆς ἐμόχτησα, λαχτάρησα νὰ γίνω
 θεὸς ἀθάνατος στὰ χόματα, μὰ ἐκόπη ἡ δύναμή μου
 κι ἀσκώνω δυὸ μεσόστρατα ἀψηλές κολόνες σηματοῦρες—
 νὰ δεῖς τὴν ἄκρα πὸν ἔφτασα, ἀγγονέ, νὰ πᾶς ἐς τὸ πέρα·
 ἄθλος πομένει ἀκόμα ὁ πὶὸ στερνὸς, γονάτισε καὶ ρίξε!» 425

“[...]
 I’ve battled both on land and sea, I’ve longed to be
 a deathless god on earth, but my strength broke, and now
 I’ve raised two topless pillars in mid-road for signs
 that you may see how far I’ve gone, and go still further.
 The final labor still remains—kneel, aim, and shoot!” 425

The Heracleian Pillars here do not denote the end of the world, but a milestone that Odysseus is called to cross by Heracles himself. Heracles thus exhorts Odysseus to commit the very transgression that was the Dantean Odysseus’ undoing. For Kazantzakis’ Odysseus, however, this transgression will have no negative consequences. Before Odysseus wakes up from his dream, Heracles embraces him so that their bodies merge into one and they can perform the final task together (*Oδ.* 14.438–43).

Secondly in book 22, when Odysseus sails towards the South Pole on his small coffin-boat,⁸⁵⁰ we are told that this represents his last journey to a ‘world without people’ (‘*mondo senza gente*’, *Inferno* XXVI, 117). It is here that Odysseus (symbolically) crosses the limits of the world in a scene that is strongly reminiscent of the Dantean Odysseus’ passing of the Heracleian Pillars (*Oδ.* 22.272–343). However, instead of Dante’s ‘*montagna bruna*’ (*Inf.* XXVI, 133), Odysseus catches sight of two clashing mountains (*Oδ.* 22.272–95):

850 Cf. p. 135.

Μιά νύχτα φύσηξε δριμόχολο, στοιβάχτηκαν τὰ νέφη,
 συσμίξαν οὐρανὸς καὶ θάλασσα καὶ στέναξε ἡ καρένα·
 ἀνύπνωτος ὄλονυχτοῦ ὁ μονιὰς τ' ἀγερικὰ παλεύει,
 καὶ τὸ πουρνὸ ξεχώρισε ἀγανὰ στὴ μανιασμένη ἀντάρα 275
 νὰ στέκουν δράκοι ὀλόρθοι δυὸ κορφές βροντόλαλες μπροστά του·
 κι ὡς ζύγωνε, νογáει τὰ κράκουρα νὰ κρουφανατριχιάζουν.
 Τὰ στήθια του φουσκῶσαν, ἔσφιξε περήφανα τὸ δοιάκι·
 στὸ Ναὶ καὶ στ' Ὅχι μάντεψε ἔφτασε, τὰ Χαροκορφοβούνια,
 ποὺ ὀλόρθα στέκουν στὴν οὐρὰ τῆς Γῆς, ἀνοιγοκλειοῦν καὶ σπάζουν 280
 τὰ ὅσα τολμητερὰ πλεούμενα τὰ σύνορα διαβαίνουν.
 Γρικáει κραξιές, λιμάρικα πουλιὰ τὰ πνέματα ρεκάζουν
 κι ἔχουν τραχιὰ τὰ στήθη γυναικὸς καὶ γερακιοῦ τὰ νύχια.
 Γονατιστός, τὸ δοιάκι σφίγγοντας μὲ τὴ δεξιά του χέρα
 καὶ τὴ χοντρή τὴ σκότα στὴ ζερβή, προχώραε ὁ πρωτολάτης· 285
 τὰ σύνορα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀγέλαστος, μὲ ἀνοιχτομάτα ἀντρεία
 μαχόταν τούτη τὴ φριχτὴ στιγμή σιργουλεντὰ νὰ πιάσει.
 “Ὅχι!” γρικοῦσε τὸ βουερὸ βουνὸ μὲ ὀργή νὰ τοῦ βρουχᾶται·
 μὰ ἀντίκρα “Ναί!” τὸ ἄλλο βουνὸ χωρὶς θυμὸ τοῦ ἀπηλογιόταν.
 Πιτήδεια πιά σὲ κόρφο ἀπάνεμο δρομίζει τὴν πλεούσα, 290
 κι ὡς ἔμπαινε τὸ κόκκινο πανὶ στὰ κρεμαστὰ ἀκροβράχια,
 πήχτρα κοπάδια σάλεψαν πουλιὰ καὶ τ' ὀρθοβούνη ἐσείστη.
 Ὁ ἀγριμολὸς ἀκρίτας γέλασε καὶ βρόντηξε τὸ κύμα:
 «Γιούχα! τὸ γαῦρο σκιάχτρο ποὺ φρουράει τὰ σύνορα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
 κοντάθε γαληνὸ βουνὸ 'ναι αὐγὰ κι ἄσπρα θαλασσοπούλια!» 295

One night a strong wind blew, the clouds piled in great heaps,
 the sea and sky merged into one, and the keel sighed.
 Unsleeping all night long, the lone man fought the winds
 until at dawn he barely saw through frenzied storm 275
 two dragons loom before him, two rough roaring peaks
 whose ridges he felt quake and crack as he drew close.
 He gripped his tiller proudly, and his brave chest swelled,
 for he knew these were Yes and No, Death's mountain peaks
 that loomed at the world's end, that gaped and closed and smashed 280
 all ships which dared to pass beyond the world's last bounds.
 He heard shrill cries, spirits that croaked like greedy birds
 and had a hawk's cruel claws and scabrous female dugs.
 Kneeling, he seized the tiller tight in his right hand,
 pulled at the sail's rough rope with his left hand and fought 285

with silent courage, open-eyed, to reach and pass
 safely at this dread moment mankind's last confines.
 He heard one shrieking mountain rage and roar out "No!"
 but "Yes!" the other answered in a tranquil hush.
 At last he skimmed his craft along a windless peak, 290
 and as his red sail passed beneath rough hanging crags
 the mountains swayed with massive flocks of swirling birds.
 The wild-game hunter laughed until the waves resounded:
 "Oho! the dread scarecrow that guards man's last confines
 is but a tranquil mountain of white eggs and birds!" 295

Odysseus here arrives at the two mountains of Death at the end of the world ('Yes and No' representing the opposites of life), smashing all ships that dare to cross this last frontier of the world (*Oδ.* 22.279–81).⁸⁵¹ Then he moves courageously on in order to pass 'mankind's last confines' (*Oδ.* 22.284–7). When large flocks of birds rise above him (*Oδ.* 22.290–2), Odysseus finally realizes that the huge mountains guarding the end of the world are really only the quiet nesting-place of innumerable seabirds (*Oδ.* 22.294–5).⁸⁵² Odysseus thus passes the limits of the world, exposing them as a border that is only apparently impassable. Finally, he goes ashore without difficulty and ascends to one of the peaks (*Oδ.* 22.296–304). At the top, 'he sees before him an endless sterile sea from which cold winds blow.'⁸⁵³ (*Oδ.* 22.305–8).⁸⁵³ As was to be expected, Odysseus does not die after his bold transgression. In fact, he even encounters a last human settlement on his journey south, before he reaches the utter Arctic wasteland where, according to his own plan, he will finally die.

The above analysis of selected passages from Kazantzakis' *Odyssey* has shown that the motif of existential *Wanderlust* is central to the poem's understanding and that Kazantzakis clearly developed his protagonist on the basis of Dante's Odysseus. Many of the *Wanderlust*-related motifs that feature in Kazantzakis' text will also prove important for the following, more recent adaptations of the Homeric *Odyssey*. These motifs include, among other things, Odysseus' anti-nostalgia, his denial of return (or

851 These clashing mountains may also be inspired by the Homeric Planctae.

852 Cf. Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio* (p. 222), where the Sirens turn out to be two simple rocks. Here, however, Odysseus dies because he is unable to see them for what they really are and holds on to his memory until the very end.

853 See Friar's synopsis in Kazantzakis 1958, 813.

any backward movement), the reinterpretation of home, and especially his receptiveness to the foreign and new.

5.13 Milan Kundera's *L'ignorance* (2000)

The centrifugally driven Odysseus continues to figure as a mythical prototype even in contemporary literature, where manifold experiences of migration are especially common. One of the more recent works that we shall discuss in this context is the novel *L'ignorance* (*Ignorance*, 2000) by the French-Czech writer Milan Kundera (born 1929). The link to the *Odyssey* is explicitly established in the text, as the narrator compares the (negative) experiences of two Czech émigrés, who return to their home country after an absence of over twenty years, with Odysseus' successful homecoming.

Born into a middle-class family in what was then Czechoslovakia, Kundera first studied musicology, followed by literature and aesthetics, and in 1952 became a lecturer for World Literature at the Film Academy in Prague. His first literary works, all of which he disowns today, were clearly committed to Marxist thought.⁸⁵⁴ He was, however, repeatedly expelled from the Communist Party and after 1968 his works were officially banned in Czechoslovakia. Consequently, Kundera went on to adapt his earlier novels, which are now only published abroad and in translation, for a non-Czech audience.⁸⁵⁵ In 1975 he finally emigrated to France and assumed French citizenship in 1981 after he had been stripped of his Czech citizenship in 1979. While he continued to write in Czech until 1988, all of his subsequent works were written in French, which has been the original language of his writings ever since.

Kundera's (non-Marxist) literary oeuvre, which he did not discard, is characterized, among other things, by its indebtedness to Nietzsche,⁸⁵⁶ as well as Russian Formalism and French Existentialism.⁸⁵⁷ A typical characteristic of his novels are philosophical digressions that are interspersed with the story's narrative and that dwell on an abstract concept that is usually reflected in the novel's title.⁸⁵⁸ Among his non-fictional works are

854 See Frank 2008, 80–81; cf. Schmitt 2013, 183.

855 For this and the following, see Frank 2008, 82–83.

856 This applies especially to his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984).

857 See Chitnis 2012, 410.

858 For example, this is the case in *Immortality* (*Nesmrtelnost*, 1990), *Slowness* (*La lenteur*, 1995), *Identity* (*L'identité*, 1998) and *Ignorance* (*L'ignorance*, 2000). See Chitnis 2012, 410; cf. Schmitt 2013, 185; Kunes 2019, 84.

The Art of the Novel (L'art du roman, 1986), a theoretical approach to the European novel, and the essay collection *Testaments Betrayed (Les testaments trahis, 1993)*, where Kundera argues that many important works of twentieth-century music or literature have been distorted or misinterpreted against the wishes of their creators. Regarding the interpretation of his own literary work, Kundera, who does not like to reveal much about himself, has often made it unmistakably clear that he prefers his writings to be viewed independently of his biography.⁸⁵⁹ Accordingly, the sparse biographical information that precedes all the more recent editions of his novels reads:

Milan Kundera est né en Tchécoslovaquie. En 1975, il s'installe en France.

The French-Czech novelist Milan Kundera was born in the Czech Republic and has lived in France since 1975.

It is quite legitimate to ask, with Søren Frank:

[...] how does the increasing presence of an “autobiographical” voice in Kundera’s novels accord with his aversion to readings that legitimize themselves through the use of biographical data? Why does Kundera insist on the impermeable opposition between life and work while at the same time seeming to “pollute” his works with his biography?⁸⁶⁰

The answer that Frank provides is equally plausible:

Arguably, the increasing presence of an “autobiographical” voice can, to a certain extent, be regarded as Kundera’s attempt to control both the image of his past and his public self-image. Hence, the narrative voices in Kundera’s novels are remarkable examples of *performative biografism*.⁸⁶¹

One aspect that Kundera seems keen to disseminate about himself as part of this deliberate stylization of his self-image (and despite his paradoxical insistence on a strict separation between his literary work and life) is that his own exile was not a misfortune, but a liberation. So Søren Frank explains:

Kundera has time and again declared that his emigration was liberating and that it brought him much relief: “In France, I have experienced the unforgettable feeling of being born again. After a six year break, I returned, timidly, to literature. My

859 See Frank 2008, 79; Schmitt 2013, 183.

860 See Frank 2008, 79.

861 See Frank 2008, 79–80.

wife kept repeating to me: ‘France is your second homeland.’” Sometimes Kundera even denies being an emigrant: “I [...] have no hope whatever of returning. My stay in France is final, and, therefore, I am not an émigré. France is my only real homeland now. Nor do I feel uprooted. For a thousand years, Czechoslovakia was part of the West. Today, it is part of the empire to the east. I would feel a great deal more uprooted in Prague than in Paris.”⁸⁶²

Emigration, in the form of detachment from one’s homeland, and understood as a conscious and liberating choice also happens to be one of the major themes of Kundera’s novel *L’ignorance*. Here, the positive way in which the émigrés, who experience their emigration as liberating, perceive their own situation, is contrasted with their perceptions by their society. In the following analysis, we shall see how Kundera relates these questions of (non)-belonging and home to the Homeric *Odyssey*.

L’ignorance, although originally written in French, was first published in translation in several other languages (2000 in Spanish, 2001 in Portuguese and Italian, and 2002 in English), before it was finally published in French in 2003.⁸⁶³ It tells the story of two Czech émigrés, Irena and Josef, who after the fall of communism in 1989 return to their home country for the first time. Both of them emigrated in 1969—Irena to Paris, Josef to Denmark. One day, when Josef returns to Prague for the first time after his emigration, they both meet by chance at an airport in Paris. During the course of the story, neither Irena’s nor Josef’s return proves to be particularly successful, since they do not feel at home in their country of origin. The protagonists’ alienation from their former home is reflected in their encounters with old friends and family as well as other experiences upon their return. At the same time, a parallel narrative strand is devoted to the Homeric Odysseus and his homecoming. Odysseus’ story thus serves as a background foil for the entire plot of the novel, being recounted repeatedly and closely interwoven with the other plot-lines. At the beginning of the novel, Odysseus, as presented by Kundera, still corresponds to the Homeric, primarily centripetal, hero; but the further that the novel’s storylines progress and the more Irena and Joseph have to

⁸⁶² See Frank 2008, 82–83.

⁸⁶³ See Pimenta Gonçalves 2009, 236–37. In quotation I follow a new French edition from 2005 (Kundera 2005), which is based on the original text from 2003; the English quotations are taken from Linda Asher’s translation, Kundera 2003.

struggle with the difficulties of their return and the consequences of their long absence, the more Kundera also rewrites Odysseus' story.

The novel is divided into 53 numbered chapters. While the first part of the book tells the story of Irena (chapters 1–11), the next chapters are focused on Joseph's story (chapters 13–21, 23–25), which is first introduced in chapter 12. The first brief mention of Odysseus occurs at the end of chapter 1, when Irena—still in Paris—is thinking about returning to Prague. At the beginning of the novel, which opens *in medias res*, we find ourselves in the middle of a conversation that Irena is having with her French friend Sylvie in Paris. Kundera does not lose any time and in the opening pages already introduces the reader to one of the novel's major themes: the return home. The conversation takes place in 1989, during the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. At this point, it is exactly twenty years since Irena has emigrated. Sylvie apparently wants to persuade her to return to her home country, as the political situation there has now changed.⁸⁶⁴ Yet, Irena does not seem to share her friend's enthusiasm:⁸⁶⁵

«Qu'est-ce que tu fais encore ici!» Sa voix n'était pas méchante, mais elle n'était pas gentille non plus; Sylvie se fâchait.

«Et où devrais-je être? demanda Irena.

— Chez toi!

— Tu veux dire qu'ici je ne suis plus chez moi?»

“What are you still doing here?” Her tone wasn't harsh, but it wasn't kindly, either; Sylvie was indignant.

“Where should I be?” Irena asked.

“Home!”

“You mean this isn't my home anymore?”

Here it is significant that Sylvie simply refers to Irena's home country by using the words ‘Chez toi’ (‘home’). Even though she reassures Irena so that she does not feel like ‘an undesirable alien’, Irena thinks that one's home is always synonymous with one's country of origin, no matter the actual circumstances. In seeking to defend herself for

864 As in many other European countries, many protests had taken place in France in 1968 on the occasion of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, in which people showed solidarity with the country's population. The Velvet Revolution, which ended the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1989, was received all the more positively in France. For a list of the widespread protests of 1968, see the chronology in Klimke, Pekelder, and Scharloth 2011, 283–306 that ‘gives an overview of major protest events in nineteen different European countries in 1968’ (Klimke, Pekelder, and Scharloth 2011, 306).

865 For the following quotations from the first chapter, see the French edition, Kundera 2005, 7–9 as well as the English edition, Kundera 2003, 3–5.

not wanting to go back, Irena points at her work, house and family, which are all in France (p. 7) and finally states “‘I’ve been living here for twenty years now. My life is here!’” (‘Je vis ici depuis vingt ans. Ma vie est ici!’). Yet, all of Irena’s efforts to make her friend understand are in vain. With ‘tears of emotion’ in her eyes, Sylvie touches Irena’s hand and benevolently announces to her:

«Ce sera ton grand retour.» Et encore une fois: «Ton grand retour.»

Répétés, les mots acquirent une telle force que, dans son for intérieur, Irena les vit écrits avec des majuscules : Grand Retour. Elle ne se rebiffa plus : elle fut envoûtée par les images qui soudain émergèrent de vieilles lectures, de films, de sa propre mémoire et de celle peut-être de ses ancêtres : le fils perdu qui retrouve sa vieille mère ; l’homme qui revient vers sa bien-aimée à laquelle le sort féroce l’a jadis arraché ; [...] Ulysse qui revoit son île après des années d’errance ; le retour, le retour, la grande magie du retour.

“It will be your great return.” And again: “Your great return.”

Repeated, the words took on such power that deep inside her, Irena saw them written out with capital initials. She dropped her resistance: she was captivated by images suddenly welling up from books read long ago, from films, from her own memory, and maybe from her ancestral memory: the lost son home again with his aged mother; the man returning to his beloved from whom cruel destiny had torn him away; [...] Odysseus sighting his island after years of wandering; the return, the return, the great magic of the return.

The first chapter ends with these reflections on homecoming. It already draws our attention to the beliefs and expectations of society, here represented by Sylvie, concerning exile and émigrés, home and belonging. By being contrasted with the feelings of an actual émigré (Irena), these societal beliefs are questioned from the very start.

The second chapter, which contains an interjecting reflection on the themes of return and nostalgia, lays a further foundation-stone for the novel’s understanding. Kundera here provides his very own interpretation of the word ‘nostalgia’, which is also the basis for the novel’s title.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶⁶ For the following French and English quotations from chapter 2, see, respectively, Kundera 2005, 9–14 and Kundera 2003, 5–9.

Le retour, en grec, se dit *nostos*. *Algos* signifie souffrance. La nostalgie est donc la souffrance causée par le désir inassouvi de retourner. [...] *añoranza*, disent les Espagnols ; *saudade*, disent les Portugais. [...] En espagnol, *añoranza* vient du verbe *añorar* (avoir de la nostalgie) qui vient du catalan *enyorar*, dérivé, lui, du mot latin *ignorare* (ignorer). Sous cet éclairage étymologique, la nostalgie apparaît comme la souffrance de l'ignorance. Tu es loin, et je ne sais pas ce que tu deviens. Mon pays est loin, et je ne sais pas ce qui s'y passe.“

The Greek word for “return” is *nostos*. *Algos* means “suffering.” So nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return. [...] *añoranza*, say the Spaniards; *saudade*, say the Portuguese. [...] In Spanish *añoranza* comes from the verb *añorar* (to feel nostalgia), which comes from the Catalan *enyorar*, itself derived from the Latin word *ignorare* (to be unaware of, not know, not experience; to lack or miss). In that etymological light nostalgia seems something like the pain of ignorance, of not knowing. You are far away, and I don't know what has become of you. My country is far away, and I don't know what is happening there.

By taking many a detour to derive *nostalgia* from the Latin word ‘*ignorare*’, the narrator defines it loosely as ‘the pain of ignorance’. The conclusion is simple: if one feels nostalgic or homesick, it is only because one no longer knows what it was like at home. The less one knows, the stronger the nostalgia.⁸⁶⁷

It is in this context that the narrator comes to speak of the *Odyssey* as ‘the founding epic of nostalgia’ (‘l'épopée fondatrice de la nostalgie’). After Odysseus had already been mentioned in passing at the end of the first chapter, he now becomes the centre of attention:

Soulignons-le: Ulysse, le plus grand aventurier de tous les temps, est aussi le plus grand nostalgique. Il alla (sans grand plaisir) à la guerre de Troie où il resta dix ans. Puis il se hâta de retourner à son Ithaque natale mais les intrigues des dieux prolongèrent son périple [...].

Let us emphasize: Odysseus, the greatest adventurer of all time, is also the greatest nostalgic. He went off (not very happily) to the Trojan War and stayed for

⁸⁶⁷ When Kundera derives nostalgia from ‘*ignorare*’, he might also have in mind the Homeric Sirens. For in the *Odyssey* they claim to know everything that happens on earth (*Od.* 12.191). Through their bewitching song they rob their victims of their *nostos*, as, under their spell, one goes to certain death (*Od.* 12.39–46). Kundera's unconventional definition of *nostalgia* could thus also be read as a hidden ironic commentary on the Homeric Sirens episode, implying that it is because of the knowledge one has acquired, i.e. because one is no longer unaware about the reality at home, that after hearing the Sirens' song one also loses the desire to return.

ten years. Then he tried to return to his native Ithaca, but the gods' intrigues prolonged his journey [...].

In line with the Homeric *Odyssey*, Odysseus is described as the hero who aspires to return home and whom even the pleasures he enjoys with the nymph Calypso cannot deter from his goal of returning home.⁸⁶⁸ Thereupon, his situation is contrasted with the one of Irena:

Rien de comparable à la vie de la pauvre émigrée qu'avait été Irena pendant longtemps. Ulysse vécut chez Calypso une vraie *dolce vita*, vie aisée, vie de joies. Pourtant, entre la *dolce vita* à l'étranger et le retour risqué à la maison, il choisit le retour. À l'exploration passionnée de l'inconnu (l'aventure), il préféra l'apothéose du connu (le retour). À l'infini (car l'aventure ne prétend jamais finir), il préféra la fin (car le retour est la réconciliation avec la finitude de la vie).

A far cry from the life of the poor émigré that Irena had been for a long while now. Odysseus lived a real *dolce vita* there in Calypso's land, a life of ease, a life of delights. And yet, between the *dolce vita* in a foreign place and the risky return to his home, he chose the return. Rather than ardent exploration of the unknown (adventure), he chose the apotheosis of the known (return). Rather than the infinite (for adventure never intends to finish), he chose the finite (for the return is a reconciliation with the finitude of life).

This Odysseus is by no means the *Wanderlust*-beaten discoverer whom we have so often encountered in modern transformations of the *Odyssey*. Not only is he clearly centripetal in nature, but he is also explicitly set apart from his centrifugal counterpart. The unknown and known, the infinite and finite, adventure and return are the key oppositions here. Even if the Odysseus described here is still in line with the Homeric hero, by evoking his centrifugal counterpart Kundera also draws attention to what the Homeric Odysseus did *not* choose (and thus, by implication, what he *could* have chosen). Thus, a different type of Odysseus is already implicit in this description, preparing the ground for the later re-writing of his story. At this point of the novel, however, Odysseus still appears in contrast to Irena, who does not want to return to her homeland.

⁸⁶⁸ Kundera even quotes *Od.* 5.215–20 (in translation), where Odysseus expresses his wish to go home and to see the day of his return ([...] οἴκαδ' ἐτ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἡμᾶρ ἰδέσθαι. *Od.* 5.220).

After this we are presented with the scene of Odysseus' actual return to Ithaca:

Sans le réveiller, les marin de Phéacie déposèrent Ulysse dans les draps sur la rive d'Ithaque, au pied d'un olivier, et partirent. Telle fut la fin du voyage. Il dormait, épuisé. Quand il se réveilla, il ne savait pas où il était. Puis Athéna écarta la brume de ses yeux et ce fut l'ivresse ; l'ivresse du Grand Retour ; l'extase du connu ; la musique qui fit vibrer l'air entre la terre et le ciel : il vit la rade qu'il connaissait depuis son enfance, la montagne qui la surplombait, et il caressa il le vieil olivier pour s'assurer qu'il était resté tel qu'il était vingt ans plut tôt.

Without waking him, the Phaeacian seamen laid Odysseus, still wrapped in his bedding, near an olive tree on Ithaca's shore, and then departed. Such was his journey's end. He slept on, exhausted. When he awoke, he could not tell where he was. Then Athena wiped the mist from his eyes and it was rapture; the rapture of the Great Return; the ecstasy of the known; the music that sets the air vibrating between earth and heaven: he saw the harbor he had known since childhood, the mountain overlooking it, and he fondled the old olive tree to confirm that it was still the same as it had been twenty years earlier.

Broadly this description is consistent with the Homeric homecoming scene, albeit in a highly simplified form.⁸⁶⁹ For Kundera deliberately places the emphasis on 'the ecstasy' of recognition, rather than on its repeated retardation, which is essential to the Homeric narrative.⁸⁷⁰ The Homeric return scene is thus presented as the founding myth of 'the Great Return', which led to a general romanticisation of homecoming. As we shall see, one consequence which follows from this romanticisation is the assumption, still commonplace today, that emigrants always want to return to their home country.

From Odysseus' return home the narrator now makes a leap to a contemporary event that is intended to show the negative consequences of Homer's idealization of homecoming. The example recounts how a journalist once asked Arnold Schoenberg, a composer of Jewish-Austrian origin who had emigrated to the USA seventeen years earlier because of the Nazis, whether his emigration and the loss of his 'native land' were causing his creativity to wither. The narrator presents this incident as another

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. Munteanu 2009, 7.

⁸⁷⁰ The moment between Odysseus waking from his sleep on Ithaca to his actual recognition of his homeland takes up 170 Homeric verses (*Od.* 13.187–358; see de Jong 2001, 321–22 on this 'special instance of the *'delayed recognition' story-pattern'). Moreover, the return of Odysseus and his successful reintegration is far from being achieved at this point, since this first scene on Ithaca represents only the beginning of a long and difficult process to which the entire second half of the *Odyssey* (books 13–24) is dedicated. Kundera, however, is interested in simplifying the Odyssean homecoming so that he can deconstruct it all the more effectively later on.

example of how émigrés are always expected to want to return home, even if they have strong reasons against it (as, in Schoenberg's case, the Holocaust). The cause of such a lack of understanding, shown in the journalist's question, is attributed to Homer's glorification of nostalgia:

[...] Mais rien à faire. Homère glorifia la nostalgie par une couronne de laurier et stipula ainsi une hiérarchie morale des sentiments. Pénélope en occupe le sommet, très haut au-dessus de Calypso.

Calypso, ah Calypso ! Je pense souvent à elle. Elle a aimé Ulysse. Ils ont vécu ensemble sept ans durant. On ne sait pas pendant combien de temps Ulysse avait partagé le lit de Pénélope, mais certainement pas aussi longtemps. Pourtant on exalte la douleur de Pénélope et on se moque des pleurs de Calypso.

[...] But it's a lost cause. Homer glorified nostalgia with a laurel wreath and thereby laid out a moral hierarchy of emotions. Penelope stands at its summit, very high above Calypso.

Calypso, ah, Calypso! I often think about her. She loved Odysseus. They lived together for seven years. We do not know how long Odysseus shared Penelope's bed, but certainly not so long as that. And yet we extol Penelope's pain and sneer at Calypso's tears.

Homer's presumed glorification of nostalgia thus serves as an explanation for the way in which émigrés are treated by society—retrospectively, for the behavior of Irena's friend Sylvie, and, proleptically, the other situations still to come. The notion that what happens during one's absence from the native land is of no importance, no matter how long it may last, will also prove relevant further on in the novel. For, as we shall see, nobody at home is interested in what the returnees (be it Irena, Josef or even Odysseus) have experienced during their time of absence.

The following chapters (3–8) centre on the situation of Czech émigrés in general and Irena in particular. The émigrés' perceptions in the eyes of their society, both in their country of residence (chapter 3) and their country of origin (chapter 5), is thus juxtaposed with their own feelings (chapters 4 and 6). It becomes apparent that society generally views emigration negatively, including as a tragedy for the émigré or their betrayal of their native land. In chapter 3, we learn that in France, even before the fall of communism in 1989, Czech émigrés were tolerated but never fully understood for

having left their country. Thus, Irena and her (now-deceased) husband Martin often felt the need to justify themselves for having emigrated.⁸⁷¹ Chapter 5, on the other hand, reveals how émigrés from communist countries were seen in their own country, being regarded as traitors to their country, so that ‘[e]veryone who stayed abroad was convicted in absentia’.⁸⁷²

At the same time, for the émigrés themselves and especially Irena, emigration is by no means something negative. Instead, it is ‘the horror of [the] return to their native land’ (‘l’horreur de leur retour au pays natal’)⁸⁷³ that haunts Irena and her husband in their recurring nightmares (chapter 4). In fact, Irena discovers that this kind of ‘emigration-dream’, where the dreamer experiences the horror of the return to his home country, is a general phenomenon among all émigrés. Yet Irena finally realizes that her emigration, unlike what society would have her believe, presaged an essentially positive turn of events:⁸⁷⁴

[...] elle se rendit compte combien elle était heureuse dans cette ville. Elle avait toujours considéré comme une évidence que son émigration était un malheur. Mais, se demande-t-elle en cet instant, n’était-ce pas plutôt une illusion de malheur, une illusion suggérée par la façon dont tout le monde perçoit un émigré? Ne lisait-elle pas sa propre vie d’après un mode d’emploi que les autres lui avaient glissé entre les mains? Et elle se dit que son émigration, bien qu’imposée de l’extérieur, contre sa volonté, était peut-être, à son insu, la meilleure issue à sa vie. Les forces implacables de l’Histoire qui avaient attenté sa liberté l’avaient rendue libre.

[...] she realized how happy she was in this city. She had always taken it as a given that emigrating was a misfortune. But, now she wonders, wasn’t it instead an illusion of misfortune, an illusion suggested by the way people perceive an emigre? Wasn’t she interpreting her own life according to the operating instructions other people had handed her? And she thought that even though it had been imposed from the outside and against her will, her emigration was perhaps, without her knowing it, the best outcome for her life. The implacable forces of history that had attacked her freedom had set her free.

Not even her companion Gustaf seems to understand Irena and instead pities her for the loss of her beloved homeland. Despite her resistance, he insists on setting up a branch of

871 See Kundera 2005, 16–17.

872 See Kundera 2003, 17; Kundera 2005, 23.

873 See Kundera 2003, 15; Kundera 2005, 21.

874 For the following quotation, see Kundera 2005, 30; Kundera 2003, 22–23.

his company in Prague, declaring that he will happily serve as the ‘link to [her] lost country’.⁸⁷⁵

The émigré, as stated in the conclusion in chapter 8, is hence stigmatized by his or her society as either a traitor or a victim.⁸⁷⁶

Le communisme en Europe s'éteignit exactement deux cents ans après que se fut enflammée la Révolution française. [...] la première date a fait naître un grand personnage européen, l'Émigré (le Grand Traître ou le Grand Souffrant, comme on veut); la seconde a fait sortir l'Émigré de la scène de l'histoire des Européens [...]

Europe's Communism burned out exactly two hundred years after the French Revolution took fire. [...] the first date gave birth to a great European character, the Émigré (either the Great Traitor or the Great Victim, according to one's outlook); the second date took the Émigré off the set of The History of the Europeans [...]

Having been presented with these diametrically opposed views towards emigration by one's society as well as by the émigrés themselves, we now witness how Irena actually returns to Prague after twenty years, if only ‘for a few days’⁸⁷⁷. Now, in the first days of her stay, Irena experiences a situation in broad daylight that reminds her of her former nightmares. Due to an unexpected heatwave she is forced to buy a dress in a local store. The dress seems to belong to another time, given that Western fashion has not yet arrived in Prague. When she happens to see herself in a big mirror, she suffers a panic-attack in which the dress suddenly becomes a ‘straightjacket’.⁸⁷⁸ Although this is only a short intermezzo, we can conclude that on her first return to Prague Irena truly experiences ‘the horror of the return’ (‘l’horreur du retour’).⁸⁷⁹ This is quite the opposite of ‘the rapture of the Great Return; the ecstasy of the known’ (‘l’ivresse du Grand Retour; l’extase du connu’)⁸⁸⁰ that Odysseus is noted to have experienced. In the

875 See Kundera 2003, 24; Kundera 2005, 32.

876 For the following quotation, see Kundera 2005, 37–38; Kundera 2003, 29–30.

877 See Kundera 2003, 30. The reason for her return is revealed only a little later; Gustaf has realized his plans and meanwhile established a second seat of his company in Prague (see Kundera 2005, 40; Kundera 2003, 32).

878 See Kundera 2003, 32.

879 See Kundera 2003, 32; Kundera 2005, 40.

880 See Kundera 2003, 8; Kundera 2005, 13.

following chapters (10–11) we learn about the further difficulties of Irena's (failed) return. Before that, however, the story of Odysseus is picked up again (chapter 9), this time taking an unexpected turn.⁸⁸¹

Pendant les vingt ans de son absence, les Ithaquois gardaient beaucoup de souvenirs d'Ulysse, mais ne ressentait pour lui aucune nostalgie. Tandis qu'Ulysse souffrait de nostalgie et ne se souvenait de presque rien. [...] Plus Ulysse languissait, plus il oubliait. Car la nostalgie n'intensifie pas l'activité de la mémoire, elle n'éveille pas de souvenirs, elle se suffit à elle-même, à sa propre émotion, tout absorbée qu'elle est par sa seule souffrance.

During the twenty years of Odysseus' absence, the people of Ithaca retained many recollections of him but never felt nostalgia for him. Whereas Odysseus did suffer nostalgia, and remembered almost nothing. [...] The more Odysseus languished, the more he forgot. For nostalgia does not heighten memory's activity, it does not awaken recollections; it suffices unto itself, unto its own feelings, so fully absorbed is it by its suffering and nothing else.

The description of Odysseus' loss of memory and his resultant nostalgia prepares the ground for his following disillusion:

Après avoir tué les téméraires qui voulaient épouser Pénélope et régner sur Ithaque, Ulysse fut obligé de vivre avec des gens dont il ne savait rien. Eux, pour le flatter, lui rabâchaient tout ce qu'ils se rappelaient de lui avant son départ pour la guerre. Et, convaincus que rien d'autre que son Ithaque ne l'intéressait (comment auraient-ils pu ne pas le penser puisqu'il avait parcouru l'immensité des mers pour y revenir?), ils lui serinaient ce qui s'était passé pendant son absence, avides de répondre à toutes ses questions. Rien ne l'ennuyait plus que cela. Il n'attendait qu'une seule chose: qu'ils lui disent enfin: Raconte! Et c'est le seul mot qu'ils ne lui disent jamais.

Pendant vingt ans il n'avait pensé qu'à son retour. Mais une fois rentré, il comprit, étonné, que sa vie, l'essence même de sa vie, son centre, son trésor, se trouvait hors d'Ithaque, dans les vingt ans de son errance. Et ce trésor, il l'avait perdu et n'aurait pu le retrouver qu'en racontant.

After killing off the brazen fellows who hoped to marry Penelope and rule Ithaca, Odysseus was obliged to live with people he knew nothing about. To flatter him they would go over and over everything they could recall about him before he left for the war. And because they believed that all he was interested in was his Ithaca (how could they think otherwise, since he had journeyed over the

881 For the following quotations from chapter 9, see Kundera 2003, 33–35; Kundera 2005, 41–43.

immensity of the seas to get back to the place?), they nattered on about things that had happened during his absence, eager to answer any question he might have. Nothing bored him more. He was waiting for just one thing: for them finally to say “Tell us!” And that is the one thing they never said.

For twenty years he had thought about nothing but his return. But once he was back, he was amazed to realize that his life, the very essence of his life, its center, its treasure, lay outside Ithaca, in the twenty years of his wanderings. And this treasure he had lost, and could retrieve only by telling about it.

The reality of Odysseus’ life after his return is far removed from the rapture that he had felt in the very beginning. As it turns out, nobody is interested in what he experienced during his long wanderings. And on this realisation, Odysseus’ nostalgia for his homeland is immediately replaced by the nostalgia for his wanderings, which he now treasures above everything else. The fact that at home nobody wants to listen to his stories is especially ironic as, in the course of the *Odyssey*, he has proven to be a particularly gifted storyteller.⁸⁸²

After the description of Odysseus’ failed return and the lack of interest in his stories at Ithaca, in chapters 10–11 we see how Irena experiences a quite similar situation. For, when she arranges a reunion with her old friends in a restaurant in Prague, she also encounters a lack of interest in her story. While Irena ‘hopes finally to figure out whether she can live there, feel at home, have friends’,⁸⁸³ the gathering bodes ill from the very start. In hope for a pleasant evening she brings French wine to offer to her old friends. However, what Irena intends as a nice gesture immediately opens up the huge gulf between herself and these women, her new life and the world she once left behind. For, instead of trying the wine, the women prefer to get drunk on beer and during the whole evening do not show the slightest interest in Irena’s life abroad. While at the beginning Irena still blames herself for having committed a faux-pas and excuses the women’s rude behavior as a ‘pleasing directness’,⁸⁸⁴ in the course of the evening she retreats from their company more and more. While the shouting and laughing women carry on undisturbed and toast to the health of ‘the daughter who’s returned’,⁸⁸⁵ each

882 See Kundera 2005, 43 on Odysseus’ long adventure-narration (*Apologue*) at the court of the Phaeacians.

883 See Kundera 2003, 36.

884 See Kundera 2003, 36.

885 See Kundera 2003, 37.

with a half-litre mug of beer in their hand, Irena comes to the conclusion that '[r]ejecting the wine was rejecting her. Her as the person she is now, coming back after so many years.'⁸⁸⁶ All her attempts to start a conversation about her life abroad and make herself 'heard', to be accepted 'with her experiences of the past twenty years, with her convictions, her ideas', are in vain. Only Milada, an old work colleague, takes a little interest in her. When the drunk women suddenly approach Irena later in the evening, she once again feels reminded of one of her emigration nightmares. It is at this moment that one of the women addresses Irena:⁸⁸⁷

[...] puis l'une d'elles, rayonnante, lui dit: «Tu te rappelles? Je t'ai écrit qu'il est grand temps, grand temps que tu reviennes!» Qui est cette femme? Toute la soirée, elle n'a cessé de parler de la maladie de son mari, s'attardant, excitée, sur tous les détails morbides. Enfin, Irena la reconnaît: la semaine même où le communisme est tombé, lui a écrit: «Oh, ma chère, nous sommes déjà vieilles! Il est grand temps que tu reviennes!» Encore une fois, elle répète cette phrase et, dans son visage épaissi, un grand sourire dévoile un dentier.

[...] then one of them, beaming, says to her: "You remember? I wrote you that it was high time, high time you came back!" Who is that woman? The whole evening she's been talking about her husband's sickness, lingering excitedly over all the morbid details. Finally Irena recognizes her: the high-school classmate who wrote her the very week Communism fell: "Oh, my dear, we're old already! It's high time you came back!" Again, now, she repeats that line, and in her thickened face a broad grin reveals dentures.

Of particular note here is the exalted, pathos-laden tone of the woman's words, which manifests itself in the use of the adjective 'grand' and its solemn repetition in the expression 'grand temps' in the woman's letter, as well as in their present situation. As in the very first scene of the novel, where Sylvie pronounced the words 'Grand Retour' in a similarly enthusiastic way, Irena does not share the emotions of the speaker. In both cases, the repetition of the words explicitly hinted at, becomes an effective narrative device.⁸⁸⁸ Here, the intended solemnity of the words contrasts with the drunkenness of the speaker and the woman's repellent appearance through the eyes of Irena, culminating in the image of her dentures being revealed as she speaks.

886 For this and the following quotations, see Kundera 2003, 37.

887 For the following quotation, see Kundera 2005, 51–52; Kundera 2003, 42.

888 Cf. p. 280.

When the other women now start asking Irena a series of questions, all of which relate to the time before she left and completely ignoring the twenty years that have passed, Irena is captured by the following idea:⁸⁸⁹

D'abord, par leur désintérêt total envers ce qu'elle a vécu à l'étranger, elles l'ont amputée d'une vingtaine d'années de vie. Maintenant, par cet interrogatoire, elles essaient de recoudre son passé ancien et sa vie présente. Comme si elles l'amputaient de son avant-bras et fixaient la main directement au coude; comme si elles l'amputaient des mollets et joignaient ses pieds aux genoux.

Earlier, by their total uninterest in her experience abroad, they amputated twenty years from her life. Now, with this interrogation, they are trying to stitch her old past onto her present life. As if they were amputating her forearm and attaching the hand directly to the elbow; as if they were amputating her calves and joining her feet to her knees.

The amputation metaphor is an effective means of expressing Irena's feelings. The twenty years that she spent in France are an indispensable part of her, and ignoring them or wanting to discard them would, metaphorically speaking, constitute the violent act of ripping her apart, dismembering her person. What is originally a mental condition is here transferred to the physical level, so that the bodily metaphor serves to illustrate the drastic effect which the women's behavior has on her.

Following the novel's first eleven chapters, which described Irena's and Odysseus' failed returns to their homelands, chapter 12 introduces Joseph, another central character. When they meet at Paris airport, a few years have passed since Irena's first visit to Prague. Although they had once met in a bar prior to their emigration, it later turns out that Josef, unlike Irena, does not remember it. Nevertheless, their present encounter, which soon reveals that they share similar views on emigration, represents a pleasant change from the way in which they are usually misunderstood by their environment. In the following chapters (13–21, 23–5), Josef experiences a similarly troubled return to his native country as Irena's and Odysseus'. While the narrative switches back and forth between the present in Prague and the repressed memories of

⁸⁸⁹ For the following quotation, see Kundera 2005, 52–53; Kundera 2003, 43.

Joseph's past, evoked by his reading of an old diary, a few other minor characters are also introduced.⁸⁹⁰

Upon his arrival, Joseph directly heads for the cemetery where his mother is buried (chapter 13). Yet, because of the changed landscape he is unable to find it. His alienation is further intensified when he asks some passers-by for directions and communication in Czech proves almost impossible.⁸⁹¹ When he finally arrives at the tomb, he realizes that a number of other relatives must also have passed away and that nobody ever informed him about it. In his hotel room, Josef reflects on the transforming effects of time:⁸⁹²

Pendant son absence, un balai invisible était passé sur le paysage de sa jeunesse, effaçant tout ce qui lui était familier ; le face-à-face auquel il s'était attendu n'avait pas eu lieu.

During his absence, an invisible broom had swept across the landscape of his childhood wiping away everything familiar; the encounter he had expected never took place.

Shortly afterwards, the narrator, who is particularly prominent here, continues Josef's thoughts:⁸⁹³

Le gigantesque balai invisible qui transforme, défigure, efface des paysages est au travail depuis des millénaires, mais ses mouvements, jadis lents, à peine perceptibles, se sont tellement accélérés que je me demande: *L'Odyssee*, aujourd'hui, serait-elle concevable? L'épopée du retour appartient-elle encore à notre époque? Le matin, quand il se réveilla sur la rive d'Ithaque, Ulysse aurait-il pu entendre en extase la musique du Grand Retour si le vieil olivier avait été abattu et s'il n'avait rien pu reconnaître autour de lui?

The gigantic invisible broom that transforms, disfigures, erases landscapes has been at the job for millennia now, but its movements, which used to be slow, just barely perceptible, have sped up so much that I wonder: Would an *Odyssey* even be conceivable today? Is the epic of the return still pertinent to our time? When

890 Chapters 22, 28–9, 33, 46, and 52 are focalized by a girl from Josef's teenage years who turns out to be Milada, Irena's former colleague. Another minor story-line is dedicated to Gustaf, Irena's companion (chapters 7, 26, 48 and 50). These additional story-lines, which I will not dwell on in detail, mainly serve as further examples for dealing with nostalgia, time and memory.

891 Likewise, when he later dines at the hotel restaurant, hearing his mother tongue is like 'listening to an unknown language whose every word he understood' (Kundera 2003, 55).

892 See Kundera 2005, 63; Kundera 2003, 52.

893 See Kundera 2005, 65; Kundera 2003, 54.

Odysseus woke on Ithaca's shore that morning, could he have listened in ecstasy to the music of the Great Return if the old olive tree had been felled and he recognized nothing around him?

The accentuated intervention of the narrator, which manifests itself in the latter's explicit focalization ('I wonder'), overtly attracts the reader's attention. In light of Irena's and Josef's combined experiences of the changing effects of time, the narrator questions the possibility of a Great Return à la Homer and prepares for the retroactive transformation of the *Odyssey*. The last time that Odysseus was mentioned in chapter 9, he was unhappy, despite the ecstasy that he had felt immediately after recognizing his native land. Now, even the possibility of such an ecstasy is thrown into question. Kundera has delayed this conclusion until he had introduced Josef, the second home-comer, whose difficulties add to Irena's and make a successful return seem even more improbable. What in Odysseus' case first appeared to be the classic Homeric *nostos*, when seen in the light of the émigrés' troubled return, now seems difficult to imagine and thus results in a backward deconstruction of the *Odyssey*. Especially in the narrator's last question, which assumes the felling of the old olive tree, today's fast-paced world seems to invade the ancient idyllic scenery, which so far lay protected at a mythical distance. After this intermezzo, Odysseus is not mentioned again until chapter 47, which constitutes the climax of the novel.

The following chapters describe Josef's visits to his brother's house (chapters 15–19; 30) as well as the confrontation with his step-daughter (chapter 25). The first encounter that he shares with his brother is marked by rigid politeness and uncomfortable moments of silence, lacking all natural warmth. The conversations during the visit only marginally touch on the subject of Josef's life abroad. The fact that his family does not show any further interest in his life is actually convenient to him. All in all, the visit evokes only negative feelings, creating an uncomfortable situation for both Josef and his brother. On his way home, Josef blames his deceased wife for having pushed him to return to his country, while he 'had no desire for this return' ('aucune envie de ce retour').⁸⁹⁴ This is comparable to Irena's situation, as her companion Gustaf also insisted

⁸⁹⁴ See Kundera 2003, 71; Kundera 2005, 84.

on her return. Neither Irena nor Josef desired a return to their country, although not even the people closest to them were capable of understanding.

In addition to the confrontation with his family, Josef also finds himself confronted with his forgotten past, as he begins to read an old high-school diary that falls into his hands (chapters 20–1, 23–4). Yet, he still does not remember anything, and his old self appears as a perfect stranger to him. Since Josef feels no nostalgia whatsoever for his past, the narrator, whose voice again intervenes prominently, makes the following diagnosis:⁸⁹⁵

[...] il n'éprouve aucune affection pour ce passé qui, impuissamment, transparait ; aucune envie de retour ; rien que légère réserve ; détachement.

Si j'étais médecin, j'établirais, sur son cas, ce diagnostic : « Le malade souffre d'une insuffisance de nostalgie. »

[...] he feels no affection for that dimly visible, feeble past; no desire to return; nothing but a slight reserve; detachment.

If I were a doctor, I would diagnose his condition thus: "The patient is suffering from nostalgic insufficiency."

A certain irony can be ascribed to the narrator's comment here assuming the role of a doctor making a medical diagnosis. For it reverses the belief according to which nostalgia was originally treated as a curable disease in the seventeenth century,⁸⁹⁶ suggesting that, on the contrary, it is the lack of one's nostalgia that ought to be medically alarming. In doing so, the narrator here adopts the common view of society as described in the novel, which stands in contrast to the émigrés' own perception.⁸⁹⁷ Shortly afterwards, however, the narrator corrects himself, revising his first diagnosis:

⁸⁹⁵ For the two following sets of quotations, see Kundera 2005, 87–89; Kundera 2003, 74–75.

⁸⁹⁶ As a matter of fact, the word 'nostalgia' itself is actually a neologism created by the Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer in his 1688 dissertation *DISSERTATIO MEDICA De NOΣTALΓIA, Oder Heimwehe* (Hoferus 1688; on Hofer's dissertation see also Gerschmann 1975. For an English translation of Hofer's text see Kiser Anspach 1934, 379–91). Hofer actually created the word NOΣTALΓIA through a combination of the Greek words νόστος (homecoming) and ἄλγος (pain), and used it as a medical term to describe homesickness that affected especially younger people (Hoferus 1688, § II). Although Kundera explains the composition of the word 'nostalgia' correctly (cf. p. 281), he conceals the fact that it was not actually coined in antiquity, but created much later, in order to describe a disease. At the time of the *Odyssey*, which Kundera describes as 'the founding epic of nostalgia' and holds responsible for the latter's glorification, the word as such did not even exist. Even though the term has long lost its medical connotation and is mostly used in everyday speech today, we can assume that Kundera is well aware of the term's history.

⁸⁹⁷ As we will see in the next chapter, the lack of nostalgia for one's native land is also a major concern in Suárez's novel.

Mais Josef ne se croit pas malade. Il se croit lucide. L'insuffisance de nostalgie est pour lui la preuve du peu de valeur de sa vie passée. Je corrige donc mon diagnostic: « Le malade souffre de la déformation masochiste de sa mémoire. » En effet, il ne se souvient que des situations qui le rendent mécontent de lui-même. [...]

Il savait très bien que sa mémoire le détestait, qu'elle ne faisait que le calomnier ; il s'était donc efforcé de ne pas se fier à ce qu'elle lui racontait et d'être plus indulgent envers sa propre vie. Peine perdue : Il n'éprouvait aucun plaisir à regarder en arrière et le faisait le moins souvent possible.

But Josef does not feel sick. He feels clearheaded. To his mind the nostalgic insufficiency proves the paltry value of his former life. So I revise my diagnosis: "The patient is suffering from masochistic distortion of memory." Indeed, all he remembers are situations that make him displeased with himself. [...]

He knew very well that his memory detested him, that it did nothing but slander him; therefore he tried not to believe it and to be more lenient toward his own life. But that didn't help: he took no pleasure in looking back, and he did it as seldom as possible.

Hence Josef has not forgotten everything (otherwise, according to what we have learned so far, his ignorance would have to lead to nostalgia), but he retains only distorted negative memories of the past. As Josef continues to read in his diary (chapters 23–4), he feels only aversion for his younger self and finally destroys the diary in an act of denial.

A narrative technique typical to Kundera and which becomes especially prominent in the second half of the novel is the retelling of the same event from the perspective of different characters (*repeating/ completing analepsis*⁸⁹⁸). This strategy of multiple focalization reveals significant differences between the characters, of which the latter are mostly unaware.⁸⁹⁹ In *Ignorance*, this technique is used to depict the encounters between Josef and Irena, but also the events of Josef's teenage years, which are alternately focalized by Josef (20–1; 23–5) and Milada (22; 28–9; 33).⁹⁰⁰ In both these

898 See de Jong 2001, xi, who defines '*repeating* analepses' as 'narrating events also narrated elsewhere, producing a mirror-story' and '*completing* analepses' as 'narrating events which are not narrated elsewhere'.

899 See Frank 2008, 101.

900 Cf. p. 291.

instances, the perspectives of the parties involved turn out to be diametrically opposed to each other (Josef vs. Irena; Josef vs. Milada).

While the main plot from chapter 37 onwards revolves around a rendezvous between Irena and Josef, the second half of the novel is also characterised by an increased number of philosophical digressions. The possibility of a ‘Great Return’ is additionally questioned in an excursus on Jónas Hallgrímsson, an Icelandic poet who died in 1845 and was buried in Denmark (chapter 31). This chapter, which is only loosely connected to the main plot, tells the story of the failed transportation of the poet’s remains back to his birthplace in 1946 by a ‘patriotic industrialist’⁹⁰¹ from Iceland. Chapters 34–5 represent a similar excursus, centring on the themes of time, return and memory. In particular, Chapter 34 explores the idea that the meanings of values such as homeland, homecoming, or even love ultimately stems from our limited life-span, implying that they would lose their importance if life were to be much longer. Chapter 35, on the other hand, centres on the fragmentary nature of human memory and the impossibility of a return to the past as a basic human condition.⁹⁰² With the exception of chapter 39, which represents another excursus, chapters 37–43 describe the experiences of Irena and Josef the day before their rendezvous. Despite isolated moments of happiness, which both experience in their former homelands, they decide to leave Prague again. Irena wants to free herself from a life she does not want, which includes both her companion Gustaf and Prague, and so decides to have an affair with Josef (chapter 37). Josef, for his part, decides to return to Denmark (chapter 38). While his decision is based on a lack of nostalgia towards his homeland, he feels all the more nostalgic for his dead wife and his home in Denmark. Thus, during his stay, he suffers repeated visions of their house in Denmark, which clearly emerges as his true home.⁹⁰³

In their built-up rendezvous, Irena and Josef finally share their similar experiences following their return (chapter 44–5). Even though they have the same views on emigration, they have very different expectations of each other. This, and the fact that

901 See Kundera 2003, 112.

902 See Kundera 2005, 142: ‘On ne comprendra rien à la vie humaine si on persiste à escamoter la première de toutes les évidences : une réalité telle qu’elle était quand elle était n’est plus ; sa restitution est impossible’ (‘We won’t understand a thing about human life if we persist in avoiding the most obvious fact: that a reality no longer is what it was when it was; it cannot be reconstructed.’ Kundera 2003, 124).

903 For Josef’s visions of his home in Denmark, see Kundera 2005, 164; 213; 224 (Kundera 2003, 142–43, 186, 195). For explicit references to Denmark as Josef’s ‘home’, see Kundera 2005, 164; 182–83 (Kundera 2003, 143, 158–59).

Irena only realizes that Josef cannot remember her after they made love, will later lead to a negative turn of events.⁹⁰⁴

When they arrive in Josef's hotel room, the link to Odysseus' homecoming is established once again (chapter 47).⁹⁰⁵

[...] Elle y [i.e. sur le table de nuit] a aperçu un livre en danois : *L'Odyssee*.

«Moi aussi, j'ai pensé à Ulysse, dit-elle à Josef qui revient.

— Il a été absent du pays comme toi. Pendant vingt ans, dit Josef.

— Vingt ans ?

— Oui, vingt ans, exactement.

— Lui au moins était heureux de revenir.

— Ce n'est pas sûr. Il a vu que ses compatriotes l'avaient trahi et il en a tué beaucoup. Je ne crois pas qu'il ait pu être aimé.

— Pourtant, Pénélope l'aimait.

— Peut-être.

— Tu n'en es pas sûr ?

— J'ai lu et relu le passage de leurs retrouvailles. D'abord, elle ne le reconnaît pas. Ensuite, quant tout est déjà clair pour tout le monde, que les prétendants sont tués, les traîtres punis, elle lui fait toujours subir de nouvelles épreuves pour être sûre que c'est vraiment lui. Ou plutôt pour retarder le moment où il se retrouveront au lit.

— Ce qui se peut comprendre, non ?

On doit être paralysé après vingt ans. Est-ce qu'elle lui a été fidèle pendant tout ce temps ?

— Elle ne pouvait pas ne pas l'être. Surveillée par tous. Vingt ans de chasteté. Leur nuit d'amour a dû être difficile. J'imagine que pendant ces vingt ans, le sexe de Pénélope s'était resserré, rétréci.

— Elle était comme moi.

— Comment !

— Non, n'aie pas peur ! s'écrie-t-elle en riant. Je ne parle pas de mon sexe ! Il ne c'est pas rétréci ! »

[...] There [i.e. on the night table] she noticed a book in Danish: *The Odyssey*.

"I thought about Odysseus too," she tells Josef when he returns.

"He was away from his country like you. For twenty years."

904 While Irena betrays Gustaf with Josef, Gustaf is in turn seduced by Irena's mother. The narrative switches back and forth between these two scenes of betrayal, effectively contrasting the two encounters (Irena and Josef: 47, 49, 51; Gustaf and Irena's mother: 48, 50). The rapidly alternating chapters 47–51 thus represent the climax of the novel.

905 For the following quotation, see Kundera 2005, 203–4; Kundera 2003, 176–78.

“Twenty years?”

“Yes, twenty years exactly.”

“But at least he was pleased to be back.”

“That’s not certain. He saw that his countrymen had betrayed him, and he killed a lot of them. I don’t think he can have been much loved.”

“Penelope loved him, though.”

“Maybe.”

“You’re not sure?”

“I’ve read and reread the passage on their reunion. At first she didn’t recognize him. Then, when things were already clear to everyone else, when the suitors were killed and the traitors punished, she put him through new tests to be sure it really was he. Or rather to delay the moment when they would be back in bed together.”

“That’s understandable, don’t you think? A person must be paralyzed after twenty years. Was she faithful to him all that time?”

“She couldn’t help but be. All eyes on her. Twenty years of chastity. Their night of lovemaking must have been difficult. I imagine that over those twenty years, Penelope’s organs would have tightened, shrunk.”

“She was like me!”

“What?”

“No, don’t worry!” she exclaims, laughing. “I’m not talking about mine! They haven’t shrunk!”

In this conversation, which immediately precedes their sexual intercourse, Josef compares Irena to Odysseus, who also returned to his homeland after twenty years. Josef, who is currently reading the *Odyssey*, expresses his doubts about Odysseus’ happy return and his successful reunion with his wife. Significantly, the comparison with the Homeric homecoming is not part of an extra-diegetic excursus of the narrator, but takes place on the diegetic level, being part of the characters’ speech. By identifying themselves with Odysseus, (without being aware of it) the characters refer to the novel’s hypotext (i.e the *Odyssey*) and adopt the view point of the extra-diegetic narrator. An element that was not part of the character’s (diegetic) universe until now is thus introduced into it, resulting in an effective transgression of diegetic levels (*narrative metalepsis*⁹⁰⁶). This *metalepsis* thus gives additional emphasis to the present chapter, which in many ways marks the high point of the novel. Thus the scene not only

906 The term *narrative metalepsis* (*métalepse narrative*) was coined by Genette, who defined it as ‘any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.) or the inverse’ (‘toute intrusion du narrateur ou du narrataire extradiegétique dans l’univers diégétique (ou de personnages diégétiques dans un univers métadiégétique, etc.), ou inversement’. See Genette 1972, 244; Genette 1980, 234–5).

constitutes the climax of Irena's and Josef's relationship (in both the figurative and literal senses), but their conversation about the *Odyssey* also represents the final reference to the Homeric hypotext. While the 'Great Return' of the nostalgic Odysseus who had been introduced in chapter 2 was already re-evaluated by the narrator in chapters 9 and 14, the possibility of a successful return is now questioned again, this time by Josef.

A comparison of Irena's and Josef's situation with the *Odyssey* also suggests itself in the way that the failed recognition-scene between Irena and Josef (chapter 49) can be read against the background of the aforementioned recognition-scene between Odysseus and Penelope. Given the further development of the story, it is significant that Josef has his doubts about Odysseus' happy return and especially about Penelope's feelings towards him. In Irena's and Josef's case, the token of recognition is an ashtray from the bar where they first met, which Irena has kept over the years and now presents to Josef. When Josef fails to recognize it, she realizes that he has actually never addressed her by name and does not know who she is. In a subsequent outburst of rage, she accuses him of having taken advantage of her, bursts into tears and eventually falls asleep exhausted. A little later, Josef leaves the hotel room while Irena is still asleep (chapter 53). He heads directly to the airport. The last scene shows him alone on the plane to Denmark, where he first looks into a dark sky. Yet, as the sky opens up he has another vision of his home. What is described in these last words of the novel is nothing other than Josef's 'Ithaca', his home that kept appearing to him during his stay:⁹⁰⁷

En regardant par le hublot, il vit, au fond du ciel, une clôture basse en bois et, devant, une maison en brique, un sapin svelte tel un bras levé.

Through the porthole he saw, far off in the sky, a low wooden fence and a brick house with a slender fir tree like a lifted arm before it.

Kundera's novel thus deconstructs the conventional concept of 'home', narrowly defined as one's native land, and questions the existential necessity of a homely return. This goes hand in hand with the belief that a return to the past is impossible, although this does not necessarily have to be unfortunate. As we saw earlier, the possibility of a

⁹⁰⁷ For the following quotation, see Kundera 2005, 224; Kundera 2003, 195.

return to the past was also denied by Giovanni Pascoli, both in his *L'ultimo viaggio* (1904) and in *Il sonno di Odisseo* (1899) and *Il ritorno* (1906).⁹⁰⁸ Moreover, the notion that a return to the Same—a ‘Great Return’, as Kundera calls it—is actually impossible is also central to *L'irréversible et la nostalgie* (*Irreversibility and Nostalgia*, 1983), a detailed study of the phenomenon of nostalgia by the French philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903–1985). For Jankélévitch, a successful return to the past is also unthinkable. Although he considers a return in space, i.e. a purely physical return, to be possible, this does not apply to a return in time. In connection with time’s irreversible nature, Jankélévitch also thinks about Odysseus’ homecoming:

Le retour est physiquement et logiquement possible dans l’espace, et cette possibilité autorise toutes les espérances ; le lointain pensa à la lointaine, l’émigré pense à sa patrie, où il croit qu’il reviendra un jour ; Ulysse pense à son île ionienne [...]. Nous disions : le retour, dans l’espace, défait ce qu’a fait l’aller ; mais dans le temps il lui succède et le prolonge ; le retour est l’avenir de l’aller et retour. Ulysse revient dans l’espace, mais, en raison de la secondarité du retour, il va tout droit et sans se retourner dans le temps.⁹⁰⁹

According to Jankélévitch a return in time is impossible even for Odysseus. Instead of the impossibility of return, in Kazantzakis’ *Odyssey* and Suárez’s novel *La viajera*, we encounter its complete denial. Here, the protagonists are already free of nostalgia and the social obligations attached to it. However, not only do they have no desire to return home, they also explicitly deny any backward movement. Their journey is one of no return, at least in the conventional sense, as both Kazantzakis’ Odysseus and Suárez’s Circe redefine ‘home’ (and thus also the return to it) in their own way. In Suárez’s novel, the narrowly conventional definition of ‘home’, which is advocated by Circe’s social environment, meets with a new and more open definition by the protagonist. Yet, Circe, in contrast with Kundera’s Irena and Josef, clearly represents a reincarnation of the restless, exploratory Odysseus. In Kundera’s *Odyssey* transformation, *Wanderlust*, being a psychological disposition of inner unrest, does not manifest as an urge of discovery, but as the alienation from one’s native land. In the case of Odysseus, who is described as an initially centripetal hero who becomes disillusioned with his return home, we are not told whether his disillusionment will actually lead to a new departure,

⁹⁰⁸ Cf. p. 193.

⁹⁰⁹ See Jankélévitch 1974, 384–85.

as it does in the case of Irena and Josef. Both his turn from nostalgia to dissatisfaction and the open end of the story are something that Kundera's *Odyssey* transformation shares with Paul Heyse's poem *Odysseus*, written more than a century earlier. Here too, the final fate of the formerly nostalgic hero remained open.⁹¹⁰ It is in the context of contemporary (e)migration that the story of Odysseus, and in particular the problematic nature of his homecoming, become open to re-examination again.

5.14 Karla Suárez's *La viajera* (2005)

The last *Odyssey* transformation that we will discuss is the novel *La viajera* (*The Traveller*, 2005) by the Cuban writer Karla Suárez. Born in Havana, Cuba in 1969, where she studied Classical Guitar and Electronic Engineering, Suárez emigrated from Cuba in 1998. After her emigration, she lived in Rome, Paris and Lisbon, where she still resides today.⁹¹¹ It was after leaving Cuba that she made her literary debut with the short story collection *Espuma* (*Foam*, 1999). In the same year, her first novel *Silencios* (*Silences*, 1999) was awarded the *Lengua de Trapo* prize. Even though Suárez's literary career mainly has developed outside Cuba, she belongs to a generation of Cuban writers often referred to as *los Novísimos*, who were born and brought up after the Cuban Revolution, and who experienced the profound economic and socio-political crisis of the 1990s that afflicted Cuba after the collapse of Communism in Europe.⁹¹² As a result, this new generation of writers often seeks emancipation from traditional revolutionary norms. The diversity and plurality of thought that, as we will see, is a basic concern of *La viajera* and that goes hand in hand with an overcoming of nationality and ethnic origins as defining markers of identity, represents such a form of emancipation. By renegotiating identity and transforming the Homeric *Odyssey* in this pluralistic spirit, Suárez formulates values that are different from those advocated by the country's political leaders. In referring back to Homer, she also engages with other Latin American authors whose works drew on Greco-Roman antiquity, such as the Cuban

⁹¹⁰ Cf. p. 120.

⁹¹¹ In Lisbon, she currently co-ordinates the reading club of the *Instituto Cervantes* and teaches creative writing at the *Escuela de Escritores de Madrid*. See "Club de Lectura. Instituto Cervantes de Lisboa." 2020; "Karla Suárez" 2020.

⁹¹² See Valencia 2017, 125–26; on the *Novísimos*, see also Uxó 2010.

author Virgilio Piñera⁹¹³ (1912–1979), as well as his Argentine contemporary Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), both of whom are mentioned *en passant* in *La viajera*.

La viajera is Suárez's second novel and has so far been translated into French (2005), Italian (2006) and Portuguese (2007). Although it can be read without an actual knowledge of the Homeric text, it gains new perspectives when we look at it against the background of the *Odyssey*, which serves as a foil for the entire text. Seen from this perspective, *La viajera* represents a transformation of the *Odyssey* from a modern female point of view. For in it, we find the main protagonist Circe as the female embodiment of a centrifugally driven Odysseus, who is enriched with the elements of femininity inherent in the character of the Homeric Circe. In addition to the Homeric *Odyssey*, Dante's *Inferno* can also be read as a hypotext of the novel. However, the intertextual references here are not as unambiguous as in the case of Homer's *Odyssey*.

La viajera tells the story of Circe and Lucía, two women who could not be more different. Circe, who identifies with 'the traveller' mentioned in the novel's title, is a vagabond par excellence.⁹¹⁴ Having emigrated from Cuba and in search of (what she calls) 'her' city, she restlessly moves from one country to the other. Unlike other Cuban emigrants whom she meets on her way, she does not dream of returning to Cuba one day. Her friend Lucía, who is Circe's counterpart in the novel, does not understand her. Although Lucía also left Cuba and remained abroad, she always looks back to her home country with a certain feeling of nostalgia.⁹¹⁵ Nostalgia of returning to one's home country—or the lack of it, in Circe's case—is one of the main themes of the novel. Through the story of Circe's and Lucía's friendship, Suárez presents two different female perspectives on emigration and life in general.

The *fabula* of the novel begins in 1990, with the coincidental encounter of Circe and Lucía, who went to school together many years ago, at the airport in Havana. As it turns out, they are both travelling to São Paulo on the same day, yet for entirely different reasons: while Circe decided to leave Cuba, Lucía was invited to attend a photography course and plans on returning one day. Yet, once in Brazil, Lucía follows Circe's advice and decides to let her visa expire and stay. When she no longer has place to stay, she

913 See, for example, his play *Electra Garrigó* (1943).

914 See, for example, Suárez 2005, 198, where this characteristic is explicitly emphasized by the repeated use of the verb 'vagar' ('to wander, roam'). In the rest of this chapter, references to *La viajera* will be made by the simple indication of the page.

915 See, for example, p. 330.

moves in with Circe and they live together for almost a year. Meanwhile, Lucía meets the Italian Bruno, whom she later follows to Italy. Circe leaves Brazil even before that. In contrast to Lucía, who settles in Rome, she does not stay long in one place. She first lives in Mexico City for about half a year, then three years in Madrid, where she also has a child, and finally two years in Paris, before she travels to see Lucía in Rome in 1997. During the following year, Circe and her little son Ulises live together with Lucía and her husband Bruno, before Circe leaves again, this time for Greece.

However, on the level of the novel's *story*, these events are presented in a different order: for they are told through a flashback (*analepsis*) in which Lucía, who has just received a postcard from Circe, remembers the visit of her friend about a year ago. This first-level narrative, which is entitled *Piensa Lucía (Lucía thinks)*, is taken up again in the epilogue and thus provides the narrative framework for the main story. The following *analepsis*, in which Lucía thinks back, will last only twenty-two minutes, which corresponds exactly to the duration of a particular guitar concert that Lucía listens to while she lets her thoughts drift away. In the main narrative, which is thus presented as part of Lucía's memories,⁹¹⁶ a storyline dedicated to Circe's visit in Rome alternates with the past described in a travel diary written by Circe. Since she unexpectedly appeared in Rome with a child, this diary, which Circe hands to Lucía to read during her stay, is supposed to provide answers to all of Lucía's questions. Circe herself, however, does not refer to it as a diary but as a 'Cuaderno de Bitácora' ('logbook'), thus making use of a term from the world of seafaring. It is through Lucía's reading of the 'Cuaderno de Bitácora' in Rome that we both get to know Circe and at the same time experience Lucía's immediate reactions to her friend's writings. Simultaneously, the stops of Circe's journey as described in her 'logbook' form the basis for the novel's division into Parts I to IV: although the table of contents does not indicate it, *Parte I* cover Circe's time in Brazil, *Parte II* the time spent in Mexico, *Parte III* her time in Spain and *Parte IV* her years in France.

This division is particularly important with regard to the connection that the novel establishes with the Homeric *Odyssey*. For the novel's references to the latter can be found both in the paratext and in the text itself. In the former case, each of the four parts

⁹¹⁶ Making it a *diegetic second-level narrative*.

as well as the prologue and epilogue (*Piensa Lucía*) of the novel is preceded by a quotation of the *Odyssey*. The following table illustrates the *Odyssey* verses quoted in the novel's paratext, as well as their strategic position:

<i>Odyssey</i> quotations in the Paratext of <i>La viajera</i>			
<i>La viajera</i>	Verses quoted	Position	Content
p. 11	<i>Od.</i> 10.501	Preceding the Prologue	Odysseus about the forthcoming journey
p. 19	<i>Od.</i> 10.490–2	Preceding Part I (Brazil)	Circe's instructions: Tiresias (<i>katabasis</i>)
p. 119	<i>Od.</i> 12.73; 85; 87–8; 103–4	Preceding Part II (Mexico)	Circe's instructions: Scylla and Charybdis
p. 178	<i>Od.</i> 12.325; 329; 330; 332; 333–4	Preceding Part III (Spain)	The hunger of Odysseus and his crew while trapped on the island of Helius
p. 263	<i>Od.</i> 7.244–8	Preceding Part IV (France)	Odysseus about Calypso
p. 339	<i>Od.</i> 10.483–4	Preceding the Epilogue	Odysseus' wish to return home

As the table already suggests, each stop of Circe's journey (Brazil, Mexico, Spain, France) corresponds to one of Odysseus' adventure stations, with the novel's prologue and epilogue designating the beginning and the (provisional) end of Circe's travels. In this context, the paratextual quotations preceding the chapters already provide an indication of the Homeric episode which is alluded to in the following stage of the novel. In this way, the Homeric references in the text and paratext complement each other effectively. With regard to the paratextual quotations, it is striking that they are all taken from the books which describe Odysseus' stay with the Phaeacians and especially form part of his adventure narration.⁹¹⁷ Furthermore, we notice that the first three paratext quotes as well as the last one are taken from conversations between Circe and Odysseus. This selection is particularly significant, since in this *Odyssey* transformation Circe and Odysseus merge into one character. Accordingly, Suárez omits all the male epithets and descriptions that actually denote the Homeric Odysseus.

⁹¹⁷ Only the penultimate paratextual quotation (*Od.* 7.244–8) is not taken from the *Apologue*, which is due to the early position of the Calypso adventure in the *story* of the *Odyssey*. Here, upon his arrival, Odysseus first tells the Phaeacians about Calypso and later omits this part in the *Apologue*. Thus, Suárez follows the order of the *Odyssey's fabula*.

Based on these observations, important similarities can be noted with regard to the narrative structure of *La viajera* and the *Odyssey*: Circe's stay at Lucía's house in Rome can be compared to Odysseus' sojourn at the court of the Phaeacians. In both the *Odyssey* and *La viajera* we do not witness the protagonist's travelling experiences directly, but through an *analepsis*, which is intended to satisfy the curiosity of the protagonist's hosts, Lucía and the Phaeacians respectively (*actorial motivation*). In *La viajera*, this *analepsis* takes the form of Circe's 'Cuaderno the Bitácora', while in the *Odyssey* it constitutes the *Apologue* (*Od.* 9–12), the story of Odysseus' wanderings. Both *analepses* are also situated at the point of the narrative where the protagonist has arrived at the last stop of his or her journey: Odysseus narrates his adventures in Phaeacia, his last stop before Ithaca, while Circe hands out to Lucía her 'Cuaderno de Bitácora' in Rome, her last stop before Naxos. While only four of Odysseus' adventures have an equivalent in the 'Cuaderno de Bitácora', the stages of Circe's journey are arranged in the same order as the Homeric ones. The following analysis will show how these references to the various stops of Odysseus' journey, as are signalled by the paratext quotations, manifest in the individual chapters.

At the beginning of the novel, the first *Odyssey* quotation is presented together with a quotation of Italo Calvino (p. 11):

«Si te digo que la ciudad a la cual tiende mi viaje
es discontinua en el espacio y en el tiempo,
ya más rala, ya más densa,
no has de creer que se puede dejar de buscarla.»

ITALO CALVINO

«¡Oh, Circe!
¿Quién nos guiará en ese viaje?...»⁹¹⁸

HOMERO

In both cases, the citation is followed by the mere indication of the author's name. In Calvino's case, it is taken from *Le città invisibili* (1972). In addition to the *Odyssey*, the

⁹¹⁸ All Homeric quotations in the novel are taken from the *Odyssey* translation of Luis Segalá y Estalella (1927). In an interview that I conducted with Karla Suárez in Lisbon, she stated that she had only read the *Odyssey* in Spanish translation.

novel thus also enters into a dialogue with Calvino's work.⁹¹⁹ For the purposes of our study, it suffices to say that Calvino's 'city' ('la ciudad') supports an idea central to *La viajera*, which is the notion of an indefinite "Ithaca" as the destination of Circe's journey. The present *Odyssey* quotation, however, does not refer to a city, but only to a forthcoming journey. Originally, this was a question that Odysseus asked Circe (ὦ Κίρκη, τίς γὰρ ταύτην ὁδὸν ἡγεμονεύσει; *Od.* 10.501), after the latter had prophesied his following visit to the Underworld. But here, one is led to think that it is also Circe who is going on that journey. Suárez's subversion of the Homeric text is carried a step further, when Circe later presents to Lucía the 'Cuaderno de Bitácora' and declares: 'I am the Circe who escaped from her island to set sail, and without a logbook there's no journey.'⁹²⁰ ('Soy la Circe escapada de su isla para echarse a navegar, y sin bitácora no hay viaje', p. 32). The protagonist thus identifies with a 'Circe, who escaped her island' and assumes the role of the wandering Odysseus. This reversal of roles will be taken up at a later stage of the novel, for when Circe discovers that she is pregnant, she writes into her 'Cuaderno de Bitácora' (p. 231):

Ulises, se llamará Ulises, el hijo de Circe no puede tener otro nombre, cambiaremos la historia, recomenzaremos a contarla: ella llegó de una isla lejana buscando su ciudad, se detuvo, tenía tanta hambre, y entonces sintió un canto. Era la isla donde moraba el magnífico Odiseo, deidad poderosa, que se apropió de su vientre. Ulises, te llamarás Ulises.

The name that Circe decides to give her son is 'Ulises'.⁹²¹ At the same time, she programmatically announces to write the old story anew. In addition to the *Odyssey*, this might also be read as an allusion to the ancient *Telegony*, in which Circe's son from Odysseus is called Telegonus. According to her new version of the myth, Circe is now the one in search of her city, while Odysseus is 'a powerful deity' living on an island, 'who took possession of her womb'. As a result, this new Circe stands for everything that defines both the Homeric Circe and the wandering Odysseus. As we will see, her son Ulises will be a further embodiment of the latter.

919 For further references to Calvino's text, see pp. 189, 331, 339.

920 All translations of the novel's text are my own.

921 Circe and her son had already been introduced in the first part of the novel, when they were welcomed at the train station by Lucía and Bruno (pp. 27–8). Their Homeric names, which first appeared in the table of contents as titles for several subchapters (pp. 7–8), served as the first indication of the novel's relationship to the *Odyssey*.

The next paratext-quotation, which precedes the first part of the novel, runs as follows (p. 19):

PARTE I

«Ante todas las cosas, habéis de emprender un viaje
a la morada de Hades y de la venerada Perséfone
para consultar el alma del tebano Tiresias, adivino ciego...»

HOMERO, *La Odisea*

In this case the work's title is also indicated. The Homeric verses quoted are *Od.* 10.490–3,⁹²² which belong to the same conversation between Circe and Odysseus as the previous quotation. In particular, they represent Circe's instructions regarding Odysseus' visit to the Underworld and his consultation of Tiresias. As we will see in the following, the quote heralds the first stop of Circe's journey, Brazil, which is the novel's equivalent to the Homeric Underworld. But before we learn about this stage through Circe's journal, a subchapter entitled *Estación Termini. Roma, 1997* describes the first encounter of Circe and Lucía after six years. While Lucía and her husband Bruno are still waiting for Circe to arrive, Bruno feels uncomfortable at the thought of his wife's friend moving in with them for an indefinite period. For he only knows Circe as 'the adventurer friend' or 'the wandering friend' ('Circe, la amiga the aventuras', 'la amiga vagabunda', pp. 21–2) from Lucía's stories. But Lucía is thankful that Circe took her in when they were still in Brazil (p. 27). For Sonia, the acquaintance who had invited Lucía to the photo course, had received her decision not to return to Cuba with great displeasure. She declared that Lucía should be proud to come from a place like Cuba and called her a traitor to her country ('vendepatrias', p. 66). When Lucía finally decided to stay, she threw her out. As it turned out, Sonia, who was a member of an association of solidarity with Cuba, was provided with free plane tickets by the association, a privilege she now feared to lose (p. 67). Lucía, who was initially unaware of this agreement, had a hard time making a decision, tormenting herself with self-reproach and fearing what her family and friends might say if she did not return (pp. 60,

⁹²² ἀλλ' ἄλλην χρῆ πρῶτον ὁδὸν τελέσαι καὶ ἰκέσθαι / εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης / ψυχῆ χρησομένους Θηβαίου Τειρεσίαο, / μάντιος ἀλαοῦ [...].

62, 67). As a stranger to such fears, Circe advised her to stay. In her journal Circe, who had just accepted a job as a cosmetics saleswoman, comments on Sonia's accusation as follows (p. 66):

[...] ella la cree una «vendepatria». Nunca he entendido muy bien esa palabra, ahora me convertiré en una “vendeproductosdebelleza”, pero patrias nunca he vendido, quizás Sonia, sí, habrá que preguntarle.

In other situations too, Circe exposes the conventional expectations and beliefs of society in a similarly humorous way. In Spain, she comments on the statement of her Cuban friend Gastón (p. 201):

Dice mi amigo Gastón que es un problema de identificación, porque a España la llevamos en la sangre, pero no, yo en la sangre lo único que tengo son glóbulos rojos y blancos y algunas plaquetas.⁹²³

In contrast to many other Latin American emigrants, who either want to go back to their (idealized) home country or even search for their roots in Spain, the supposed land of their ancestors, Circe does not give much truck to conventional concepts of home and belonging. Instead, she has her very own definition of term, which is not bound to national or ethnic origins. Thus, when she is asked why she left Cuba, her response is always the same (p. 73):

[...] es mi única verdad. Tengo que buscar a mi ciudad. Tu ciudad no es por fuerza donde tú naces y mi ciudad no es La Habana, eso lo sé desde hace tiempo.⁹²⁴

As a result of her conviction that the city where she truly belongs has still to be found, Circe does not feel any nostalgia for her birthplace Cuba (p. 330). 'Her' city, on the other hand, she likes to call 'Ítaca'.⁹²⁵ It is the driving force of her search and what motivates her to always leave again ('partir').⁹²⁶ In this context, Ithaca has become a symbol for an indefinite arrival point, a vague term which in fact only serves to

923 Cf. p. 59: '¿Cuáles son tus raíces, Circe? Una pregunta divertida. Quizás cuando esté bajo tierra y las encuentre, podré contestarte, Circe. ¡Ja!'

924 Cf. p. 59: '[...] no quiero vivir en La Habana, porque sencillamente no es mi ciudad, aunque allí se hayan formado mis raíces.'

925 See p. 154; 164.

926 See p. 258: '¿Acaso no es el sueño que alimenta el camino? ¿Qué quiere decir buscar una ciudad? Ya no sé quién soy, de dónde vengo, adónde voy. Sólo tengo la certeza de lo que estoy buscando y éste es el punto de partida. Yo estoy buscando una ciudad.'

motivate Circe's next departure.⁹²⁷ By this means, the text adopts the Cavafian attitude expressed in the poem *Ithaca* (1911), which places emphasis on the journey instead of the destination. Yet the word 'Ítaca' here still implies a notion of home and homecoming; it is only that in Circe's case this home still has to be found. She believes that it is a place where she has been before in a previous life, and which she would therefore recognize.⁹²⁸ Thus, in a way, she defines her search for 'Ítaca' as a return journey as well.⁹²⁹ Lucía, for her part, strongly disagrees with Circe's concept of home and refuses to accept it (p. 330):

Se lo había dicho mil veces, era cierto, pero ella no podía entenderla, no quería, le parecía absurda toda esa explicación de las ciudades, aunque con las otras podía hasta entender. São Paulo, México, Madrid, París, Roma, ¿qué podían significar para alguien que no hubiera nacido en ellas? Pero La Habana era otra cosa, era el nacimiento, la Ítaca de Odiseo, la raíz.

Lucía thus understands 'Ithaca' in the classical Homeric way as the place of birth and Odyssean return.⁹³⁰ More than anything, this view stems from her own feeling of displacement (p. 274):

[...] Bruno estaba en su país, con su gente, mientras ella era una desarraigada, improvisadora, pez fuera del agua, extranjera y claro, por supuesto que para ella las cosas no eran tan fáciles, pero si estuviera en La Habana, ahí todo cambiaba, porque La Habana era su medio, su lugar, su historia.⁹³¹

927 This is exactly what Lucía (p. 327) and other people (p. 307) criticize about her search. On several occasions, even Circe herself admits that the place she is searching for may only serve as a symbolic point of arrival, which indicates that she is not actually planning to settle down. See p. 325: 'A veces no importan las vueltas que des para encontrar lo que buscas, Lucy, e incluso muchas veces ni siquiera es importante que lo encuentres, lo que vale es la búsqueda.' and p. 331: 'Quién sabe si lo que busco no es más que La Habana que conformó mi concepto de ciudad, Lucy, La Habana que ya no existe, la ilusoria, la de los sueños.'

928 Thus, when she rejects a city she argues that she has never been there before. See, for example, p. 140, where she speaks with Mexico-City: 'Ss, México, ¿me escuchas? [...] ¿Alguna vez estuve aquí? Dime si tú me reconoces.' and specially p. 145, where, after having spent three months in Mexico, she states: 'no me llegan señales, yo nunca antes estuve aquí.'

929 See p. 252, where she speaks about 'returning to Ithaca' ('regresar a Ítaca').

930 Cf. p. 192, where they are talking about Mexico-City: '[...] Claro que no era tu ciudad, Cir, porque tu ciudad se llama La Habana, aunque te empeñes a negarlo.'

931 Cf. p. 74: '¡Tu ciudad, una mierda! —Lucía se detuvo—. ¡Coño, Cir! Estamos condenadas a vivir desarraigadas, fuera de nuestros códigos y de nuestra cultura.'

As a result, Lucía does not know how to react when she is asked why she left Cuba. The eternal question ‘¿Por qué te fuiste?’ only makes her feel uncomfortable (p. 72).⁹³² Yet, as it turns out, the true reason for Lucía’s nostalgia is her general dissatisfaction with her life, while the emigration only serves as a pretext to justify her unhappiness.⁹³³

Much like in Kundera’s *L’ignorance*, where nostalgia was attributed to the ignorance (or forgetting) of the realities at home, a common phenomenon among the emigrants in *La viajera* is that they tend to idealize their home country, while their memories of it are rather nebulous. This is especially the case when they find themselves in a difficult life situation, so that the idealized home serves as a mental refuge. As a result of clinging to something that does not exist,⁹³⁴ they enter a reality of their own, or, as Lucía describes it in a conversation with Circe, a ‘no man’s land’ (p. 72–3):

[...] lo que me duele realmente, lo peor, es que a veces me siento en tierra de nadie, aquí no tengo pasado y en Cuba no tengo presente. [...]
— Si se trata de tiempos...Entonces ¿por qué no piensas simplemente en el futuro?
— ¡Ah! El futuro...no es tan fácil, Circe [...].

In psychology, this mental process which results in a feeling of displacement is also known as ‘a nostalgic reaction’. It was Charles Zwingmann, who in his 1959 dissertation “*Heimweh*” or “*nostalgic reaction*”: *A Conceptual Analysis and Interpretation of a Medico-psychological Phenomenon* coined the term ‘nostalgic reaction’ in the context of labour migration. In his article *Das nostalgische Phänomen* he points out that, to a certain degree, the ‘nostalgic reaction’ can serve a psychologically stabilizing factor,⁹³⁵ but that it can also become pathological. He states:

Entgegengesetzt der häufig angetroffenen Vermutung [...] ist es nicht die intensive Liebe zu den Wunschobjekten (Eltern, Ehegatte, Heimatland etc.), die zu abnormem nostalgischem Verhalten Anlaß gibt, sondern primär die Unsicherheit und die Angst vor der neuen Umgebung, an die man sich affektiv nicht binden kann. [...] Was daher oft als „Heimwehkrankheit“ bezeichnet wird, ist eigentlich ein Pseudo-Heimweh, d. h., es ist als Heimweh projiziert, nur weil das Elternhaus die einzige Zufluchtsalternative darstellt; das elterliche Heim oder

932 See also p. 73: ‘Cada vez que me preguntan por qué me fui, me quedo sin palabras.’

933 This is what Circe suggests in a conversation which she has with Lucía in Rome.

934 Cf. p. 74, where Circe says to Lucía: ‘—Tú estas detenida en un tiempo que ya no existe, Lucía. Es como las madres que piensan eternamente que a sus hijos hay que cambiarles el culero. [...]’

935 Zwingmann 1962, 327. Cf. Morone 1994, 147: ‘Beim Heimweh bzw. der „nostalgischen Reaktion“ (ZWINGMANN 1961: 187) wird die Befriedigungsbetonung von der Gegenwart und von der Zukunft in die Vergangenheit verlagert (vgl. ZWINGMANN 1962).’ and p. 148: ‘Eine nostalgische Reaktion ist als Teil einer Akklimatisierungskrise zu bewerten. [...] (vgl. ZWINGMANN 1962: 314).’

die Heimat erscheint schön unter dem Druck des Unbehagens im affektiven Niemandsland der neuen Umgebung.⁹³⁶

Circe seems to be well aware of this phenomenon. By asking Lucía how she really felt when she last returned to Havana, she tries to confront her with the reality that she refuses to see.⁹³⁷ This conversation takes place in Rome, where, shortly after Circe's arrival, Lucía starts reading the 'Cuaderno de Bitácora', beginning with the diary entries from Brazil. As already mentioned, the Brazil episode constitutes the novel's equivalent to the Homeric Underworld episode (*Nekuia*). In the following we can see how exactly this connection is established.

After arriving in São Paulo and staying with her friends, a gay couple named Elis and Rey, for the first four months, Circe moves into a shabby one-room apartment in a run-down building (pp. 36–7). Nevertheless, she is in good spirits and enjoys her newly won independence. Through her friends, she also finds work in a dry-cleaning shop (p. 40). In her new apartment building, Circe soon befriends her Colombian neighbour, an elderly man called Santiago Tirelli (pp. 38–9; 42–3). She is fascinated by the lively spirit of the much-travelled man who 'is full of stories he tells with sparkling eyes, while stroking his white beard' ('está lleno de historias que cuenta con los ojos chispeantes, mientras se acaricia la barba blanca' p. 43). This man, who is endowed with a rich life experience, appears to have a philosophy of life similar to Circe's own. It therefore does not come as a surprise that Lucía, Circe's centripetal counterpart in the novel, does not like Santiago (p. 75). Just like Circe follows her instincts in order to find the city she calls home, another character Santiago relies on 'his advisor: the I-Ching' ('Su consejero: el I-Ching', p. 43).⁹³⁸ This Chinese book serves as a divination manual if used in a specific way (p. 82). Circe repeatedly refers to it as 'the oracle' ('el oráculo', pp. 82, 87) whose prophecies are pronounced by Santiago. However, the prophecies are more of an amusing pastime and not something that Santiago and Circe really believe

936 Zwingmann 1962, 329.

937 See p. 74: '—Yo no he vuelto a La Habana, Lucy, pero tú ¿no te sentiste fuera de los códigos cuando volviste? Seguramente la ciudad no era la misma que dejaste, porque las cosas cambian continuamente.'

938 For the 'I-Ching', cf. pp. 87–8, 94, 98, 109, 112, 116.

in. When Santiago once pretends to “read” from Circe’s eyes and theatrically delivers an invented prophecy to her, Circe comments in her diary (p. 87):

Santiago oráculo de la fantasmagoría, inventor de la risotada, trago que alimenta mis manías cerebrales de organizar el caos.

Considered in connection with the quotation at the start of this chapter, the funny and good-humoured Santiago with his divination device appears as a demythologized version of the Homeric Tiresias. This correspondence is already indicated by his name. For the first four letters of Santiago’s surname ‘Tirelli’ (‘Tire-’) correspond to the beginning of ‘Tiresias’, the Spanish version of the seer’s name, while ‘Santiago’ shares with it the letters ‘s’ and ‘-ia-’. Furthermore, the fact that Santiago is myopic and Circe points out the irony of speaking ‘about visions’ with someone who is ‘half blind’ can be seen as a specific hint at Tiresias’ blindness (pp. 81–2):

[...] descubri que Santiago es miope y usa lentes. Esta noche andaba con unos espejuelos gordísimos y eso de hablar de visiones con uno medio ciego tiene algo de sarcástico [...].

And yet the prophecies of Santiago, whom Circe calls an ‘oracle of phantasmagoria’, are not to be taken seriously. The Homeric Odysseus, by contrast, actually encounters Tiresias’ soul (ψυχή Θηβαίου Τειρεσίαο, *Od.* 11.90) in the Underworld. As a consequence of this demythologization it seems as if the I-Ching is the only thing that is left of the sphere of the supernatural which was so important in the *Odyssey*. Furthermore, given this correspondence between Santiago Tirelli and the Homeric Tiresias, the rundown building Circe and Santiago are living in, which Lucía describes as ‘horrible’ (‘horrendo’, p. 46),⁹³⁹ could be interpreted as a demythologized version of the Homeric Underworld.

By the end of *Parte I*, we learn that Circe will leave Brazil and go to Mexico-City, where a friend is already waiting for her (p. 118), while Lucía is staying in Brazil with her fiancé Bruno. The next chapter (*Parte II*) is introduced by the following quotation (p. 119):

«Hay dos escollos

⁹³⁹ Lucía even does not want her fiancé Bruno to see the building she was living in, which she later remembers as ‘[a]quel edificio de dudosa pintura, con el viejo ascensor y los pasillos impregnados de ese particular olor a cosas viejas, mezcla de orines y tiempo transcurrido.’ (p. 46).

Allí mora Escila, que aúlla terriblemente...
y es un monstruo perverso a quien nadie se alegrará de ver...
Hay allí un cabrahígo grande y frondoso,
y a su pie la divinal Caribdis sorbe la turbia agua...»

Homero, *La Odisea*

This quotation is taken from *Od.* 12 which is still part of the *Apologue*. But unlike in the previous chapter, Suárez presents the Homeric text only selectively, leaving out longer passages.⁹⁴⁰ In the original context, it is Circe who speaks to Odysseus on his second visit to her island, following his descent to the Underworld. Circe warns Odysseus of the dangers of the journey, and particularly of the sea monsters Scylla and Charybdis. Quoted out of context, these statements are in *La viajera* no longer attributed to a specific speaker. In fact, the conversational aspect moves into the background, while the attention focuses on the statement itself, announcing the following stage of the protagonist's journey. As we shall now see, the ensuing Mexico episode corresponds to the Homeric Scylla and Charybdis adventure.

In Mexico, Circe is hosted by her old friend Andrés in a house that he also rents to a Polish woman and a man from Venezuela (p. 122). Circe's first encounter with the Venezuelan man takes places in the bathroom on the first night after moving in. He suddenly appears out of the shower, while she sits on the toilet and with a smile presents himself as 'Carlos Carriedo, "monster of the night"' ('Carlos Carriedo, «monstruo de la noche»', p. 123).⁹⁴¹ Later he tells her about Elzbieta, the other room-mate, whom Circe has not yet met. Elzbieta is obsessed with her Cuban ex-boyfriend Ramón, who left her for another woman and whom she has since followed from one country to another. After passing the whole night on the streets searching for Ramón (p. 124), she returns in the morning and shouts his name three times out the window ('Ramooooooooón', p. 123).

940 Line 1 renders the first words of *Od.* 12.73 (οἱ δὲ δύο σκόπελοι), line 2 ('Allí mora Escila [...]') corresponds to *Od.* 12.85 (ἔνθα δ' ἐνὶ Σκύλλῃ ναίει δεινὸν λελακυῖα). Line 3 ('y es un monstruo [...]') includes the biggest part of *Od.* 12.87 and the first words of v. 88 (αὐτὴ δ' αὖτε πέλωρ κακόν: οὐδέ κέ τις μιν/ γηθήσειεν ἰδών). Lines 4 and 5 ('Hay allí [...]') correspond to *Od.* 12.103–4 (τῷ δ' ἐν ἔρινεός ἔστι μέγας, φύλλοισι τεθελώς· / τῷ δ' ὑπὸ δῖα Χάρυβδις ἀναρρυβδεῖ μέλαν ὕδωρ).

941 When they meet again in the morning he states: '«monstruo nocturno va a dormir al alba»' (p. 123).

When Carlos tells Circe about Elzbieta and her obsession, she imagines her like a monster:

Mientras escuchaba la historia, imaginé a la polaca como un monstruo terrible, lleno de tentáculos en la cabeza, pero al rato, cuando se apareció en la cocina, descubrí que era normal, delgada, de pelo corto y sin tentáculos.

Yet when she actually meets Elzbieta, there is nothing terrifying or monstrous about her (p. 124). In light of the paratext-quotation at the start of this chapter, Circe's roommates, who are both described as "monsters" in one way or another, appear as a demythologized version of Scylla and Charybdis. Tiny details come to reenforce this impression. Again, the spelling and sound of the characters' names resemble their Homeric counterparts: the first name of Circe's male roommate 'Carlos' shares the first three letters with 'Caribdis' ('Car-'), while the beginning of his surname 'Carriedo' corresponds to the first four letters of the Homeric name ('Ca[r]ri-'). 'Elzbieta' and 'Escila' also resemble each other, in that they share the main vocals ('E-i-a') as well as other letters. On the thematic level too, a few points suggest the intended parallel to the *Odyssey*. In particular, Elzbieta's character seems to allude to the fact that the mythological Scylla was originally a young woman. According to different versions of the myth, 'Scylla was transformed by Circe, Amphitrite or Poseidon into a monster [...] out of jealousy when she was wooed by [the sea-god] Glaucus'.⁹⁴² The fact that the howling sea monster mentioned in the paratext ('Escila, que aúlla terriblemente...', p. 119) is now a young woman, who is described as 'the woman of screams' ('la mujer de los gritos', p. 127) because she desperately shouts from the window the name of her ex-boyfriend, adds a tragicomic dimension to the whole situation. Similarly, the mythological Scylla, who only became a monster as a consequence of a man's desire, is now a lonely young woman, who at first glance appears to be an insane and particularly hateful person (p. 125), but in reality is only searching for affection (p. 166). In a way, the Homeric monster is thus transformed back into its human form, adding a new resonance to the correspondence. The parallel between Carlos and Charybdis, by contrast, is more humorous than tragic, as the Homeric sea monster has become the 'monster of the bath tub'.⁹⁴³ We can see that, as in the case of Tiresias, this

⁹⁴² See Harder 2006b.

⁹⁴³ When Circe writes about her first encounter with Carlos in the bathroom and how he presented himself as 'monstruo de la noche', she adds: 'De la noche y de la bañera, diría yo.' (p. 123).

demythologization goes hand-in-hand with humour, which takes the gravity out of the story. While in the *Odyssey* the sea monsters are simply obstacles to Odysseus and have a clearly negative connotation—forming part of the ominous Other and therefore representing a threat—in *La viajera* they are not one-dimensional, but are shown to be in reality harmless. Unlike the Homeric Odysseus, Circe does not approach the “monsters” defensively, but befriends them. Although living together proves difficult in the beginning and conflicts with Elzbieta arise from time to time,⁹⁴⁴ they all gradually become closer to one another. At some point, Circe even relates to Elzbieta, since in her manic search for Ramón she is ultimately pursuing ‘a fixed idea, a motive’ (‘una idea fija, un motivo’, p. 126) that is comparable to Circe’s own search for her city. Together with Carlos, they form a community of hope and suffering, which functions for a while as a surrogate family (pp. 150–1, 167). Soon, however, Circe feels the need to depart again. When Carlos tells her that the lead singer of his band has left them at short notice, throwing into doubt a planned trip to Spain, she seizes the opportunity and travels to Madrid as their new lead singer (pp. 172–7).

While Carlos always wanted to go to Europe, Circe does not show any preferences for the destination of her journey. In this respect Circe is also an exception, as she does not consider herself similar to those Latin Americans who idealize Europe and have made it their goal to get there.⁹⁴⁵ When she first meets Carlos, she writes in her diary (p. 123):

Vive aquí desde hace más que un año, esperando encontrar la orquesta que se lo lleve a Europa, porque éste será el Nuevo Mundo, dice, pero él prefiere los orígenes y sus orígenes están en las islas Canarias.

This conception of Europe as the ‘New World’ that is waiting to be conquered is encountered once again when Circe and Carlos talk about their goals in life (p. 141):

⁹⁴⁴ See pp. 143, 165. The last conflict arises when Circe starts an affair with Carlos and Elzbieta finds out about it.

⁹⁴⁵ See p. 145, where Carlos says to Circe: ‘«(...) todos escapan, escapar es un viejo deporte latinoamericano, Circe, porque este continente está podrido, Venezuela, México, Cuba, todo está podrido.»’ Such an idealization of Europe is often related to high expectations that are in the end disappointed. This also explains Lucía’s disillusionment when she faces the traffic chaos in Rome. In fact, she concludes that the metro in Rome is ‘not a means of transport worthy of Europe’ (‘No era un medio de transporte digno de Europa, según Lucía’, p. 129).

Se levantó concluyendo que él seguiría el sueño de todo latinoamericano que se respete: «Conquistaría Europa».

Thus, although Europe is insignificant for Circe's own self-understanding and self-identity, the hopes and chances of other characters to identify with it are not completely ignored, but touched upon through their secondary viewpoints. Only once does Circe herself make a similar statement which points to a reversal of roles between colonizers and colonized, thereby drawing attention to the problematics of post-colonial identity: when she first sets foot in Spain, she does not kiss the ground like Carlos and the other band members, but instead takes a deep breath. In her diary, however, she writes about her first walk through the city: '[T]oday we have walked as conquerors of the Old Continent' ('hoy hemos caminado como conquistadores del Viejo Continente', p. 181). This phrase could indeed be read as a post-colonial reversion of the (former) colonizers' worldview, and hence as an act of "Writing Back"/ "Rewriting".⁹⁴⁶

More generally, the transformation of the *Odyssey* in *La viajera* can be interpreted as a post-colonial appropriation of a European myth, if we define post-colonial not as simply anti-imperialistic, but in a wider sense. For *La viajera* mainly addresses the problematics of post-colonial identity by describing the path of a Cuban woman, who sees herself as a descendant of a different Odysseus who will tell his famous story anew. What characterizes her most is her unceasing search for identity through place. Circe's identity is not constructed on the basis of alterity, which would only confirm the dichotomy between the (colonized) Self and the (colonizing) Other. If anything, it is rather defined by its indefinability, which questions (and deconstructs) conventional concepts of identity. In *La viajera*, the culture of the colonizers as represented by the ancient Greek heritage is not simply accepted or rejected, but reworked in a creative way and thus retroactively transformed. Perhaps here, where no explicit distancing from European colonial culture is to be found, we can finally speak of a true decolonization of the Classics. For there seems to be no need to justify that a Cuban woman can identify with Odysseus as a mythical predecessor. Instead, this appears as something completely natural and unproblematic for Circe as a character. Consequently, the dichotomy between colonized and colonizer seems passed over. The *Odyssey*, a classic

⁹⁴⁶ On "Writing Back" as a particular form of post-colonial reception of Classics, see Schliephake 2014, 21–3.

work of the Western canon, is detached from its one-sided and Eurocentric instrumentalisation and thereby placed in a universal and cross-cultural context.

As a matter of fact, Circe does not want to be a spokesperson for Cuban people, and vehemently resists being labeled as such. The way in which people from Cuba are treated in *La viajera* is comparable to the émigrés' stigmatization in *L'ignorance*, where they were perceived as either victims or traitors. While Cubans are welcomed with open arms in circles that show solidarity with Cuba, they are also expected to want to go back.⁹⁴⁷ Thus, at a party in Brazil, Circe is presented by Lucía as a student (p. 40):

Lucía me presentó como si yo estuviera estudiando en la universidad, dijo que era mejor así, porque a esta gente de la solidaridad con Cuba no le gusta mucho lo de los cubanos quedados. ¡Qué bobería! Yo no me quedé en ninguna parte, simplemente vine, me transferí.⁹⁴⁸

When Circe then refuses to speak about Cuba at a solidarity event, she is met with a lack of understanding and even anger. In her journal, she comments on the incident as follows (p. 41):

Ser cubano a veces se convierte en mucho más que un gentilicio cualquiera, pero yo no permito que nadie me convierta en marioneta. Qué absurdo!

Circe does not like to be pigeonholed. She neither defines herself by her home country nor by any other origin-based affiliation. In the context of post-colonial classical reception, the term which may come closest to Circe's concept of individual identity is "hybridity", in the sense of a new and mixed type of cultural identity which is always evolving and in a process of continuous change.⁹⁴⁹ This "hybrid" identity is renegotiated within a so-called 'third space' that emerges 'in-between' cultures. According to this

947 As a matter of fact, solidarity with Cuba has become common among left-wing circles across Western Europe since the 1960s, when the Cuban Revolution fuelled the phantasies of a socialist utopia, fostering a romanticised view of the situation on the island. See, for example, Klimke, Pekelder, and Scharloth 2011, 8: '[...] solidarity with Cuba [...] was integral to the left-wing protest cultures of the 1960s and 1970s, having both a political and cultural side. Castro's Cuba was seen as the realization of a third path in the 1960s, apart from Western capitalism and Soviet communism, a manifest utopia.'

948 Cf. p. 59, where Circe complains that her neighbour Santiago, who has no intention of going back to his home country, is treated differently because he is not from Cuba: 'Seguramente a Santiago no suelen preguntarle por qué abandonó su tierra, aunque esa respuesta no es un problema para él. Se fue de Colombia porque quiso y no regresará, así de simple. Sin embargo, cuando se trata de Cuba la gente no lo ve tan simple'.

949 For this and the following, see Schliephake 2014, 23–25, who comments on the use of this concept in post-colonial discussion and classical reception studies in particular.

concept, which was first theorized by Homi K. Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, 1994), cultures are not to be perceived as static units, but spaces of exchange which undergo continuous transformation.⁹⁵⁰ Through its transformation of the *Odyssey*, *La viajera* thus re-formulates cultural identity in a manner that departs from the old dichotomies. In fact, this detachment from the colonial context is not uncommon for Suárez's generation. In 2007, Suárez was selected as one of 39 most influential Latin American authors under 39 by the *Hay Festival* and the organizers of the *Bogotá World Book Capital*.⁹⁵¹ In a newspaper article on contemporary Latin American literature that appeared in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 2009 on the occasion of the bicentenary of many Latin American countries, the author Brigitte Kramer describes this group of authors as follows:

Viele von ihnen leben nicht in ihrer Heimat – einige schreiben gar auf Englisch, wie Junot Díaz oder Daniel Alarcón – und beschäftigen sich in ihren Texten weder mit lateinamerikanischem Kolonialerbe noch mit dessen Überwindung. 200 Jahre politischer Unabhängigkeit bedeuten der dritten Generation nach dem literarischen Boom nichts, denn sie ist in ihre persönlichen Befreiungskämpfe verwickelt. [...] Viele der Angehörigen dieser Blog-Generation pflegen eine Ich-Literatur, die unbeeinflusst von der politischen Geschichte ihres Landes entsteht und kaum mehr auf kulturelle Wurzeln verweist. Die Autoren verarbeiten ihre von Globalisierung und Internet geprägte Realität und geben damit ein vielfältiges Bild heutiger Befindlichkeit. [...] Lateinamerikas neue Stimmen fühlen sich der Vergangenheit weit weniger verpflichtet. Sie schreiben nicht mehr den alten Erwartungen hinterher, sondern suchen eine neue Identität, fern vom Klischee tropischer Nächte.⁹⁵²

In the context of post-colonial reception of antiquity and the Homeric epics in particular, Christoph Schliephake is right to point out that more recent post-colonial readings often take advantage of the ambiguity which pre-exist in these texts themselves:

Klassische Texte erhalten vor diesem Hintergrund eine neue kulturelle Relevanz, wobei sich jüngere postkoloniale Lektüren nicht nur auf koloniale

⁹⁵⁰ Bhabha was actually the first to apply the originally biological term of 'hybridity' in a cultural context. Other important representatives of post-colonial studies are Edward W. Said, who with his study *Orientalism* (1978) paved the way for the field's initial development, as well as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who coined the term of 'the subaltern' and especially dealt with the role of women in colonized societies.

⁹⁵¹ See Suárez's official website "Biografía" 2020.

⁹⁵² See Kramer 2020.

Instrumentalisierungen der Antike im Dienste imperialistischer Ideologien beziehen, sondern vielmehr, wie im Falle der homerischen Epen, die Heterogenität, Ambiguität und Vieldeutigkeit dieser Texte selbst zu Nutze machen.⁹⁵³

The fact that Circe bears several character traits, which can be traced back to both the mythical Circe—as the powerful sorceress and (former) representative of the Other—and a centrifugally driven Odysseus, indeed reflects the diversity already inherent to the Homeric *Odyssey* itself. In the following we shall see how this relationship is established in the second half of the novel.

After leaving for Europe with Carlos' band, Circe first finds herself in Madrid (*Parte III*) and later in Paris (*Parte IV*). The third chapter is preceded by another paratext-quotation (p. 178):

PARTE III

«Durante un mes entero sopló incesantemente el Noto,
pero tan pronto como, agotados todos los víveres,
nos vimos obligados a ir errantes porque el hambre nos
atormentaba,
yo me interné en la isla con el fin de orar a los dioses...»

Homero, *La Odisea*

Again, the citation is taken from *Od.* 12 and forms a part of the *Apologue*. As we have already seen, the 'Cuaderno de Bitácora', through which Lucía learns about Circe's journey, represents the equivalent to Odysseus' adventure narration at the court of the Phaeacians, while the stops made on Circe's journey follow the order of Odysseus' adventures.⁹⁵⁴ Here as there, Suárez has left out some Homeric text. In fact, the (present) paratext quotation is a partial rendering of the *Odyssey* verses 12.325 (= line 1), 329 (= line 2), 330 (= line 3), 332 (= line 3) and 333–4 (= line 4). In addition to these omissions, Suárez also changes the text of the Spanish *Odyssey* translation according to

⁹⁵³ See Schliephake 2014, 29.

⁹⁵⁴ See p. 303.

the needs of her story. The translation of *Od.* 12.329–30 (ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ νηὸς ἐξέφθιτο ἦϊα πάντα, / καὶ δὴ ἄγρην ἐφέπεσκον ἀλητεύοντες ἀνάγκη,) by Segalá y Estalella is ‘Pero tan pronto como, agotados todos los víveres de la nave, viéronse obligados a ir errantes tras de alguna presa’.⁹⁵⁵ Suárez leaves out ‘de la nave’ (the translation of the Greek νηὸς) because her protagonist Circe does not travel by ship, as well as ‘tras de alguna presa’ (καὶ δὴ ἄγρην) which refers to the companions’ hunt for food. Furthermore, Suárez omits *Od.* 12.326–8, 12.331 as well as the first half of 12.332, which also refer to Odysseus’ comrades. The latter are also the subject of the third-person plural ‘viéronse obligados’ in *Od.* 12.330, which Suárez changes into the first-person plural ‘nos vimos obligados’. These omissions and her active changes of the text can be attributed to the fact that Suárez’s protagonist Circe only has one comrade for the moment, which is Carlos. In the next paragraphs, we will see how exactly this *Odyssey* passage, which describes the hunger of Odysseus and his crew while they are trapped on the island of Helius (Thrinacia) due to unfavourable winds, corresponds to Circe’s and Carlo’s experiences in Madrid.

When Circe and her band arrive in Madrid they first stay in a hotel. Due to their numerous performances, days pass by quickly (pp. 181–2). During the day, when Circe is free, she takes long walks through the city, which repeatedly lead her to the Puerta del Sol, one of Madrid’s central plazas, which she simply calls ‘Sol’ (pp. 182, 186). ‘Sol’, and especially ‘Puerta del Sol’, strongly resonates with ‘Isla del Sol’, the Spanish name for the island of Helius, thus underlining the connection to the Homeric hypotext. But the repeated mentioning of ‘Sol’ is not the only detail pointing at a connection between Circe’s stay in Madrid and Odysseus’ sojourn on Thrinacia. One night, when Carlos is depressed because his search for his relatives living on Tenerife has not (yet) been successful, he speaks of Circe and himself as ‘two wandering souls, uprooted, adventurers without a compass’ (‘dos almas errantes, desarraigados, aventureros sin brújula’, p. 183). The use of the specific word ‘errantes’ points back to the paratext-quotation at the start of this chapter, where the same word also appeared. While there it described Odysseus’ and his comrades’ desperate wandering around the island, in this new context it refers to Carlos and Circe. The two situations are comparable, in that

⁹⁵⁵ See Homero 1927, 401–2.

both Odysseus and his crew as well as Circe and Carlos are foreigners in an unknown land, in search of ‘Ithaca’ in the sense of “home”.

While in the Homeric passage quoted in the paratext it was Odysseus who walked off alone to pray to the gods, now it is Circe who wanders alone in the city, since she does not like it when Carlos talks like that (p. 183). Another similarity reinforces the identification of Madrid with Helius’ island, since the motif of hunger assumes a particular importance for Circe. Shortly before the end of Circe’s contract with the band, she is offered the opportunity to stay in the apartment of a man named Paco, who, out of solidarity with Cubans, does not request her to pay rent (p. 183). Yet after their last performance, Carlos and Circe are denied their final payment by the producer, who insists on paying them at the airport of Mexico-City, knowing that they will not travel back with the band (p. 184).⁹⁵⁶ When the band finally leaves Madrid, Circe and Carlos also go their separate ways (p. 185). As a result of the missing payment Circe starts to lead a very frugal life (pp. 186, 196), while staying in Paco’s flat together with a group of other people. Trying to spend as little money as possible, she passes whole days without eating (p. 195). In her diary, she describes how she wanders around the city (p. 198):

Vago. Le sonrío a las plazas, observo los edificios, me pierdo entre callejones y sigo vagando. Me duelen los pies, tengo hambre, pero continúo. [...] como frutas y vago, sobre todo vago [...] yo vago, simplemente vago. [...] amanecí con dolor de la barriga y hoy no pude vagar. Estoy en casa.

Both the wandering-around and the famine are motifs that were already present in the preceding paratext-quotation, hence emphasizing the novel’s connection to the Homeric hypotext and the Thrinacia episode in particular. At the same time, references to other *Odyssey* episodes can be found in several other scenes too. One day, Circe is sitting by a

⁹⁵⁶ When the producer announces his plan to them, Circe calls him a thief. In her diary, she later imagines herself as the Homeric sorceress who transforms her enemies into pigs: ‘Circe transfigurada una vez más y deseándole desperdicios y bellotas, comida para quien después de ser tocado de mi dedo se metamorfoseará en puerco. Puerco, ladrón, ladrón, ladrón. [...] Yo me quedé repitiendo: te convertiré en puerco, ladrón; pero no funcionaron mis maleficios’ (p. 184). Unlike the Homeric Circe, however, Circe now appears as the helpless victim who tries to defend herself in vain. In another passage, Suárez’s Circe is identified with the Homeric Circe. Here Lucía, who is jealous of Circe, thinks of her friend as the powerful sorceress, endowed with the ability to enchant men including her husband Bruno: ‘Circe era una bruja, la maga Circe, la encantadora de hombres’ (p. 273; cf. pp. 277, 278, 281).

lake in a park while trying not to concentrate on her feeling of hunger. As she looks up into the sky thinking ““Send some manna to this woman with no territory”” (‘«Enviad un poco de maná a esta mujer sin territorio»’, p. 195), she hears a voice from behind which asks her: ““Foreigner?”” (‘«Extranjera?»’, p. 195). The voice, it turns out, belongs to Wasim, a friendly Frenchman of Syrian origin, who is a passionate collector of bonsai trees (p. 199). He invites Circe to have a drink and, when he notices that she is hungry, to have dinner with him (pp. 195, 199). The encounter with Wasim marks the end of a difficult period for Circe, since he helps her out of an almost hopeless situation and becomes a good friend (p. 196). Wasim is the most important character introduced in this chapter, since he also leads to Circe’s encounter with Muftaf, the future father of her child. Even though Circe’s sojourn in Madrid functions in parallel to Odysseus’ stop on Thrinacia, the particular scene with Wasim can also be seen as an allusion to the Homeric Calypso episode. For Circe, who sits by the lake also recalls Odysseus when he is yearning to go home sitting by the sea shore on the island of Ogygia. Wasim, on the other hand, who has no direct equivalent on Thrinacia (which is after all uninhabited), is repeatedly described as ‘the messenger of the gods’ (‘el enviado de los dioses’, pp. 195, 201). Thus, he appears as a modern equivalent to Hermes, who comes to help Odysseus in a desperate situation.

Yet, the scene with Wasim is not the only moment in *Parte III* containing an allusion to another Homeric episode besides the one on Thrinacia. The following scene, in which Circe meets Muftaf, is also clearly based on the Homeric Circe episode. This scene takes place in Wasim’s shop, where Circe works and ‘that sells a little bit of everything’ (‘donde se vende un poco de todo’, p. 202). She is completely overwhelmed by a stranger, who enters the shop and talks to Wasim in Arabic (pp. 202–3). For even though she does not understand a word, she immediately feels attracted to him. In Circe’s diary, two sentences written in Italics and randomly interspersed between her descriptions of the stranger, catch the eye (p. 203): ‘*¿Quién eres y de qué país procedes?*’ and shortly afterwards ‘*¿Dónde se hallan tu ciudad y tus padres?*’. At the end of her diary entry, she repeats these very questions, this time explicitly attributing them to ‘the mythological Circe’ (p. 203):

¿Quién eres tú, extranjero? Como dijo la mitológica Circe: ¿Quién eres y de qué país procedes? ¿Dónde se hallan tu ciudad y tus padres?

Both these questions are in fact a direct quotation of *Od.* 10.325 (τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;) in the Spanish translation of Segalá y Estalella. In the *Odyssey*, they are posed by Circe to Odysseus, who—to her great surprise—did not turn into an animal after drinking the magic potion she gave him and is now threatening to kill her. Thus, Suárez’s Circe is here cast in the role of the Homeric Circe, with the stranger assuming the role of Odysseus. Later on, when Circe thinks about him again, she compares him to the Homeric Sirens, while she resumes the role of Odysseus (p. 204):

Tú ignoras mi existencia, no eres un encantador, una sirena esperando en el borde de una roca, un vendedor de buena complacencia. Tú estabas ahí simplemente y yo escuché tu canto. Me detuve. Y ahora. Ahora quiero saber quién eres. ¿Quién eres tú, extranjero?

As we can see, Suárez has established a playful way of dealing with the Homeric hypotext, since she does not identify Circe with only one counterpart in the Homeric *Odyssey*. The fact that the same Homeric character (Odysseus) finds himself reflected in different characters of the novel (Circe, Muftaf, Ulises), while the latter is identified with more than one Homeric character at the same time (Circe and Odysseus, Odysseus and the Sirens, etc.), brings to mind the idea of immortality and eternal recurrence expressed in Borges’ short story *El Inmortal* (1947): ‘I knew that in an infinite time frame all things happen to every man’ (‘Sabía que en un plazo infinito le ocurren a todo hombre todas las cosas’).⁹⁵⁷ In Borges’ story, ‘[n]o one is anyone, one single immortal man is all men’ (‘Nadie es alguien, un sólo hombre inmortal es todos los hombres’)⁹⁵⁸. Here, the narrator Marcus Flaminius Rufus embarks on a westward journey in search of the City of the Immortals. Yet, after accidentally drinking from the stream of immortality, he leads a miserable amnesiac existence among the primitive Troglodytes, who turn out to be the Immortals. When he suddenly regains his memory, he remembers being Homer himself. Indeed, in Borges’ labyrinthine narrative the individual identity of the characters is blurred by the infinite temporal extension of life, so that Homer is embodied by different characters at the same time.⁹⁵⁹ The motif of a distant and previous

⁹⁵⁷ See Borges 1989, 1: 1923-1949:540.

⁹⁵⁸ See Borges 1989, 1: 1923-1949:541.

⁹⁵⁹ Cf. Stead 2009, 414.

life, which recurs throughout *La viajera*, is thus particularly important for Borges' narrative. In *La viajera*, Circe not only searches for a city where she had already been in a distant time, but also interprets her encounter with Muftaf as a reunion that is connected to a former life (p. 210):

¿Quién eres tú, extranjero? El domingo tuve que reconocerte. Sé que llegaste de un lejano lugar, pero antes, mucho antes, tu cuerpo ya estaba en mis manos, mi piel en la tuya [...], eso ocurrió mucho antes. Estos días de niebla sólo repitieron nuestros pasos. [...] Yo te amaba de hace tiempo, extranjero [...].⁹⁶⁰

Finally, Circe's explanation for her strong attraction to the sea also relies on the idea of a past lifetime.⁹⁶¹ In fact, she believes 'that every human being keeps within himself the history of the world. [...]' (p. 311):

Sigo sin definir si mi vocación por el mar deriva de la primera ciudad de la que tengo recuerdo consciente, aquella que está en la isla que está en el mar; o si es una remembranza más antigua, algo que vive en mi sangre, plasmado en alguna célula de mi organismo. Creo que cada ser humano guarda en sí mismo la historia del mundo. [...] yo, quién sabe si al final no soy más que una descendiente del original Ulises, el que regresó para partir nuevamente.

The idea, already found in Borges, that a single person can be anyone thus forms the basis for Circe's self-understanding as a centrifugal Odysseus. For Circe here explicitly defines herself as 'a descendant of the original Odysseus, the one who returned to leave again', and so as a reincarnation of Odysseus the eternal wanderer. Shortly after this passage, the allusion to Borges' narrative is further emphasized by a casual mention of Borges' name, when Circe visits a hotel in Paris where the author once stayed (p. 312).

Apart from its multiple and Borges-like connections to the Homeric hypotext, Circe's encounter with Muftaf is also significant for another reason. For in contrast to the Homeric Odysseus, Circe displays a remarkable openness towards the foreign as manifested in the person of this stranger. Even though she wants to know who he is, she is indifferent to his name (pp. 208–9). Proper verbal communication between them also proves impossible, because they do not speak a common language (pp. 207–8). Yet, none of this matters to Circe. On the contrary, in the *Odyssey's* first encounter between

⁹⁶⁰ On other occasions, we also encounter Circe's conviction that she knows Muftaf from a previous life (pp. 228, 245). As a result, she also considers her pregnancy as a fateful consequence of this encounter (p. 228).

⁹⁶¹ Throughout the novel, it is often emphasized how important the sea is for Circe (pp. 125, 293, 310). Her journey is often described with metaphors from the world of seafaring (e.g. pp. 32, 154).

Circe and Odysseus verbal communication is crucial, as Circe has to take an oath before Odysseus can trust her, and before non-verbal communication can follow. While Odysseus calls on to cultural codes such as the oath to secure a peaceful interaction and perceives the Other/ Otherness as a threat, Suárez's Circe does not resort to such common cultural practices in order to communicate. She does not feel threatened by Otherness, but on the contrary is strongly attracted to it. As we have seen, this general openness and curiosity towards the foreign and unknown is a recurrent characteristic of the centrifugally driven Odysseus of several *Odyssey* transformations examined in this study.

Parte III is the longest chapter of the novel. Here we only gradually find out that, after a single amorous encounter between Circe and Muftaf, he actually left Madrid and Circe never saw him again (pp. 219–20, 244–5). The way in which Circe deals with this event is remarkable, in that it reflects her free spirit and independence. Even though she is devastated after Muftaf's departure and soon finds out that she is pregnant (pp. 223–4), she accepts that he has to follow his path. For it is her belief that 'departure is always a good sign' ('Partir sempre es un buen signo', p. 244; cf. p. 251). Indeed, Circe sees in Muftaf's journey a search similar to her own. When she calls her mother in Cuba to inform her about her pregnancy, and the latter asks Circe who is the father of the child, she describes him as '[a] man who is no longer here, who left his fruit and went to seek something in the world. To search, like every responsible human who escapes quietude' ('Un hombre que ya no está, que dejó su fruto y partió a buscar algo en el mundo. Buscar, como todo humano responsable que escapa a la quietud.' p. 229). Here, 'quietude' stands in opposition to Circe's existential *Wanderlust*. Her acceptance of Muftaf's departure goes hand in hand with her general rejection of nostalgia⁹⁶² as well as any backwards movement. Later, when Circe is in Paris, she refuses the possibility of going back to Madrid, stating: 'The word "to return" sounds to me like halt, stop, the end. I don't like it.' ('La palabra «volver» me suena a alto, stop, the end. No me gusta' p. 318; cf. p. 320). Just like Dante's Odysseus after passing the Pillars of Hercules, by

⁹⁶² A good example of this rejection that is so characteristic of Circe is a conversation that she has with Lucía: 'Te parecerá extraño, Circe, pero a veces tengo cierta nostalgia de São Paulo. ¿Tú no? — ¿Nostalgia? Nostalgia es una película de Tarkovsky, Lucy. Lucía sonrió sin responder. Nunca había entendido esa desaprensión de Circe cuando se hablaba de nostalgias' (pp. 68–9).

leaving Cuba Circe has gone beyond the point of no return. Her association of return with finitude further recalls Kundera's *L'Ignorance*, where the return home was defined as 'a reconciliation with the finitude of life' (*L'Ignorance*, p. 13).⁹⁶³

During her pregnancy Circe receives great support from Wasim. He also gifts her 'el "Petit"', a small bonsai tree, whose early growth is intended to reflect the development of Circe's pregnancy (p. 227). Even after the birth of her son, little 'Sai' accompanies Circe and Ulises everywhere. The roots of the potted plant, which is carried around and treated as if it was human, symbolize the unusual attitude of Circe towards the concept of identity and home. Significantly, when Circe first visits Wasim's collection of bonsais, she describes him as 'a constructor of identities' ('un constructor de identidades', p. 206) who claims that '[e]very little tree has its own history' ('Cada arbolito tiene su historia.' p. 207). Circe and her son are comparable to this miniature tree, which has no need of firm ground to exist and develop. Lucía confirms this symbolic meaning of the bonsai tree, when she thinks of Circe as 'navigating in the nebula of the emigrant, the foreigner, the bonsai-man deprived of his roots' ('navegando en la nebulosa del emigrante, el extranjero, el hombre-bonsái privado de sus raíces', p. 299). The 'bonsai-man' Circe has no roots anchored in solid ground, but is subject to a constant transformation. The portable roots of the bonsai tree, which come to symbolize Circe's identity as a restless wanderer, are comparable to Odysseus' representation as a sea-turtle in Derek Walcott's *The Odyssey: A stage version* (1993), an image which, as Rachel D. Friedman points out, 'centers on an Odysseus who is ambivalent about returning home and still driven by the lures of wandering'⁹⁶⁴.

The most obvious manifestation of Walcott's shift in his treatment of Odysseus is the fact that he is figured in the play as a turtle who has internalized a sense of at-homeness and carries it with him wherever he goes. [...] While the poet in *Omeros* was plagued with feeling deracinated and struggled to achieve a sense of home not dependent on place, for this Odysseus it comes, so to speak, naturally; he is at home in the boundless space of the sea and carries his shelter with him on his back.⁹⁶⁵

Like the shell of the turtle, the portable roots of the bonsai tree allow Circe to experience a sense of being at home everywhere she goes, which is unrelated to national

963 Cf. p. 282 of this study.

964 See Friedman 2007, 455.

965 See Friedman 2007, 467–68.

or ethnic origins. The bonsai imagery thus serves as another way of describing a hybrid identity in a post-colonial context. Furthermore, the fact that Circe travels with a child adds to the novel's reinterpretation of home. While Odysseus' wife and son were once the primary motivation for him to return to Ithaca, in *La viajera* family is still a constituent factor of home, yet now it is also freed from its attachment to a fixed location.

With the birth of Circe's son, the novel simultaneously creates a further level of allusion to the Homeric hypotext. For like his mother, the young Ulises proves to be an embodiment of the eternal wanderer Odysseus. The curious child, who wants to explore everything around him, is repeatedly described as an adventurous discoverer. Before he is born, Circe writes into her diary: 'Tú ahora navegas ligero dentro de mi panza, eres un aventurero, un argonauta, un descubridor de nuevos territorios' (p. 234; cf. pp. 249, 251, 253). Thus, Circe's son appears as another centrifugally driven Odysseus, whose urge for discovery is expressed through the child's curiosity.

The novel's fourth and final part (*Parte IV*) describes Circe's time in Paris. When her son is about two years old, she is seized by the urge to leave Madrid and continue her journey (p. 257). Through the mediation of Wasim she is able to travel to Paris, where she stays at the house of Wasim's friend Bernal, another collector of bonsais. *Parte IV* is introduced by the following quotation (p. 263):

PARTE IV

«Hay en el mar una isla lejana, donde mora la dolosa Calipso,
de lindas trenzas, deidad poderosa que no se comunica con
ninguno de los dioses ni de los mortales hombres;
pero a mí me llevó a su hogar...»

Homero, *La Odisea*

The *Odyssey* verses quoted here are *Od.* 7.244–8. As previously, Suárez leaves out some of the text. In particular, she omits 'Ogigia' (Ὠγυγίη, 7.244), the apposition to 'isla lejana' in the Spanish translation, since Ogygia here becomes Paris. Other omitted details are the words 'hija de Atlante' (Ἄτλαντος θυγάτηρ, 7.245), which qualifies

Calypso, and ‘¡oh desdichado!’ (τὸν δούστηνον, 7.248) which originally refers to the centripetal Odysseus, whose role is here assumed by the female protagonist who undertakes her journey voluntarily. Furthermore, Suárez suppresses the subject of the last verse ‘algún numen’ (δαίμων, 7.248). This omission gives the impression that Calypso is still the subject. While this change reflects the following events in Paris, it also testifies to the disappearance of the sphere of the supernatural in *La viajera*.

In Paris, Circe works as a house-sitter for Wasim’s friend Bernal, who is out of town for two months. Still she has to find a new job before he returns, and so she starts working as a housekeeper for an old German lady called Karin (p. 285). When Karin is first introduced in a conversation between Lucía and Circe in Rome, Circe fondly calls her ‘my lady with the blonde braids’ (‘mi dama de trenzas rubias’, p. 159). Only later do we learn from Circe’s diary that this friendliness did not exist from the beginning. The former housemaid Magdalena had already described Karin as an ‘insufferable’ old woman (‘la vieja es insoportable’, p. 285), who ‘speaks only German and spends her time listening to boring music and playing the piano’ (‘habla sólo alemán y se la pasa escuchando músicas aburridísimas y tocando el piano’, p. 285). Initially Circe also feels uncomfortable living in this woman’s house, whose atmosphere she perceives as depressing (p. 288). When she is first introduced to Karin, she describes her as ‘a tall lady, blond braids and a haughty look’ (‘una gran señora, rubias trenzas y mirada altiva’, p. 286). After a while, however, the natural spontaneity of Circe’s little son causes this initial distance to give way to an affectionate relationship between them (pp. 289, 292–3). In the course of time and as their relationship develops, Circe is more and more fascinated by the old lady and often refers to her by adding to her description the words ‘de (las) trenzas rubias’ (‘with blond braids’, pp. 289, 311–12, 317, 320). In view of this chapter’s paratext-quotation, in which the epithet ‘de lindas trenzas’ (ἐὐπλόκαμος, 7.246) is used to describe Calypso, Karin emerges as her equivalent. As in the case of Santiago Tirelli, Carlos Carriedo, and Elzbieta, Karin’s name shows a similarity to that of her Homeric counterpart, here manifesting itself in the identical sound of the first two letters [ka] in Karin and Calypso.

Like Calypso, who in the *Odyssey* is described as singing (*Od.* 5.61–2), Karin sings to Circe’s son Ulyses (pp. 292, 293).⁹⁶⁶ This woman, who ‘is like a grand castle of solitude’, soon appears to Circe as ‘a singing goddess’ (p. 296):

Karin es como un gran castillo de soledades, pero quiere comunicarse con nosotros, lo sé. Hoy cuando le llevé la merienda, estaba enseñándole un libro de arte a Uly. Mi hijo miraba extasiado los cuadros mientras ella hablaba y lo curioso es que su alemán no me resultó distante, fue como una música, la música no necesita de fonemas, es puro estado de ánimo. Karin me parece una diosa que canta, eso. Yo me senté con ellos para escucharla [...]. Karin tiene la piel arrugada y las piernas cansadas. No sé quién es, por qué vive en París, dónde está su familia; pero ella tampoco sabe de nosotros y no parece importarle. Es como llegar a una isla y detenerse: este espacio de tiempo lo viviremos juntos, lo demás no importa.

Circe’s comparison of her life with Karin with a temporary stay on an island evokes the association of Calypso’s island Ogygia. As a matter of fact, both Karin and Calypso live in isolation from the rest of the world. Circe and Odysseus, who are Calypso’s and Karin’s only visitors respectively, are both connected to their host by an intimate relationship as well as by a mutual dependency. Circe is dependent on Karin, who is formally her employer. Similarly, Calypso as a goddess is naturally superordinate to the mortal Odysseus: she is the one who gives him shelter and who decides when he can leave. But both Calypso and Karin are in return dependent on their visitors, as they fulfil an important emotional need. The strict hierarchy of the relationship is thus undermined in both cases.

At the same time, the advanced age of Karin, who is said to have once been a beautiful woman (p. 309), stands in stark contrast to the eternal beauty of Calypso as an immortal nymph. During Circe’s stay, Karin’s health is said gradually to deteriorate (pp. 308–9, 312–13) until she is finally diagnosed with progressive sclerosis, for which there is no cure (p. 317). Karin, who appears as the demythologized version of Calypso, is thus brought to a more human level by Suárez. The amorous liaison of Odysseus and the nymph has now become a merely Platonic relationship between two women. In contrast

⁹⁶⁶ See p. 292, where Karin sings for the crying Ulyses (‘Entonces ella empezó a cantar, bajito...’) and p. 293, where she sings together with the child while Circe is working (‘Yo los escucho mientras cantan...’).

to Odysseus, whose initial attraction to the nymph fades as time goes by (οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νόμφη, *Od.* 5.153), Circe's affection for the old lady increases with every passing day (p. 309). Only when Karin starts needing medical care, which Circe herself cannot provide (p. 318), does she feel that it is time for her to go (p. 320). Circe's time in Paris is the last part of her journey which is described in her diary. Her diary record also already announces Rome as the next stop of her journey.

As we have seen, the novel establishes a multitude of references to its Homeric hypotext. Before we move on to the discussion of the epilogue, the following table shall illustrate the main correspondences of episodes and characters between *La viajera* and the Homeric *Odyssey*.⁹⁶⁷ In order to draw attention to the parallels at the verbal level, I have listed all the character names in their Spanish form.

⁹⁶⁷ The tabulation of these correspondences might bring to mind for some readers the tables of correspondences drawn between Joyce's Ulysses and the Homeric Odyssey, or the so-called Linati and Gilbert schemas which were circulated by Joyce among his friends after the publication of the novel. One can only speculate, however, whether Suárez's Odyssey elaboration is also inspired by Joyce's well-known work.

Main correspondences of episodes and characters

<i>La viajera</i>					<i>The Odyssey</i>				
	<i>narrative level</i>	<i>chapter</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>character</i>		<i>narrative level</i>	<i>book(s)</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>character</i>
Circe's centrifugal journey	2nd level narrative	Parte I-IV	Italy	Lucía	Odysseus' centripetal journey	1st level narrative	6-13	Phaeacia	Feacios
	Analepsis: <i>Quaderno de Bitácora</i>	Parte I	Brasil	Santiago Tirelli		Analepsis: <i>Apologue</i>	11	Underworld	Tiresias
		Parte II	Mexico	Carlos Carriedo y Elzbieta			12	Escila y Caribdis	
		Parte III	Spain	Carlos Wasim			12	Island of Helius Ogygia	Comrades Hermes
		Parte IV	France	Karin			7, 12	Ogygia	Calipso
	1st level narrative	Epílogo	Naxos	Circe		1st level narrative	13	Ithaca	Ulises

At the end of the novel, the epilogue (pp. 341–5) takes up the frame-story that was introduced in the prologue (*Piensa Lucía*), in which Lucía embarked on her memories of Circe’s visit while listening to a 22-minute-long guitar concert. Finally, we learn that Lucía, who had never understood Circe’s lack of nostalgia, is now happy and at peace with herself. After Circe’s visit she managed to put her fears aside and focus on the present and her life in Rome. It also turns out that she and Bruno are also expecting a child. In the end, they talk about visiting Circe in Naxos. Like the prologue, the epilogue is preceded by a set of quotations (p. 339):

EPÍLOGO

La ciudad existe y tiene un simple secreto:
conoce sólo partidas y no retornos.

ITALO CALVINO

¡Oh, Circe!
Cúmpleme la promesa que me hiciste
de mandarme a mi casa.
Ya mi ánimo me incita a partir...

HOMERO

‘The city’ (‘[l]a ciudad’), which was already mentioned in the Calvino quotation at the beginning of the novel,⁹⁶⁸ is again in focus here, with the emphasis now lying on the repeated ‘departures’ (‘partidas’) which the search for this city impels. The Homeric verses quoted below are *Od.* 10.483–4. Here, Odysseus tells Circe that he wants to go home. Read together with the Calvino quotation, the emphasis in this quotation, which breaks off after the word ‘partir’ (‘depart’), clearly lies on the departure. In this new context, homecoming is no longer to be understood conventionally, but as a return to Circe’s self-declared unknown home in the world. The word ‘partir’, which recurs throughout the novel, best denotes Circe’s *Wanderlust*. More than once, it is suggested that the restless search for her ‘city’ might never end. Thus, towards the end of the novel, Lucía is sure that Naxos will not be Circe’s final destination (p. 342):

968 Cf. p. 304.

[...] en Naxos sin dudas, no está La Ciudad; de estarlo, Lucía habría recibido la Bitácora. Las ciudades de Circe sólo existen para ser abandonadas, son puertos de paso de los cuales tomar algo antes de continuar viaje, aunque quién sabe si en realidad La Ciudad aún debe ser edificada

Circe's life is characterized by continuous movement ('cinética', pp. 191–2, 260). In her existential search she identifies herself with the eternal wanderer Odysseus, who only returned to depart again (p. 258):

Una ciudad. Yo estoy buscando una ciudad. [...] Mis raíces. ¿Dónde están? ¿Qué quiere decir buscar una ciudad? Odiseo demoró 20 años para regresar a Ítaca, era un regreso al punto de partida. Moisés demoró 40 años buscando la tierra a la que él nunca pudo llegar. Pero Odiseo luego partió, volvió sólo para recomenzar, no pudo permanecer, no podía.

As we have seen, Suárez's *Odyssey* transformation displays some important similarities with Kazantzakis' and Kundera's adaptations. In all of these texts, the existential *Wanderlust* of the protagonists leads to a fundamental reinterpretation of home and homecoming that diverges from conventional definitions and thus provides a nuanced picture of modern sensibilities. What distinguishes Suárez's and Kazantzakis' protagonists in particular is their freedom-loving spirit, as well as their categorical rejection of return, which is equated with existential standstill. This rejection was already evident in the very first text of our corpus, where Tennyson had his Ulysses say: 'How dull is it to pause, to make an end.' While Kundera and Suárez both transform the Homeric *Odyssey* to the contemporary context of migration, in Kazantzakis' adaptation nostalgia gives way to an existential *Wanderlust*. However, only *La viajera* tells Odysseus' story from a female perspective. This perspective is emphasized by the protagonist's experience of motherhood and is complemented throughout by an opposing female perspective in the form of Circe's centripetal counterpart Lucía. Lastly, by looking to the *Odyssey* as a hypotext Suárez describes a new type of hybrid identity in a post-colonial context. Without ever generalising, the novel thus touches on large contemporary themes such as the role of women, migration, home, and post-colonial identity.

6. Conclusion – The Cultural Implications of Odyssean *Wanderlust*

The reception of the figure and journey of Odysseus is undoubtedly without parallel—no other character of Greek mythology has been elaborated as often and in so many different ways as Odysseus. As our analysis of fifteen modern *Odyssey* transformations has shown, one aspect of the Odysseus myth exerted a particular fascination from the nineteenth century onwards, which remains unbroken to this day: Odysseus as a hero characterised by *Wanderlust*. The analysis of the Homeric text at the beginning of this study revealed that this aspect of existential *Wanderlust* arises from the cunning hero's thirst for knowledge and discovery, which, in addition to his longing for Ithaca, was characteristic of him from the very beginning. After Dante, many centuries later, elevated this aspect of the Homeric hero to his very central feature, it developed into a literary topos that came to dominate the reception of the Odysseus myth in Europe from the nineteenth century onwards, and is now to be found, appropriately, on a truly global scale. Many uncertainties and anxieties of human existence are addressed in modern times with recourse to the eternal wanderer Odysseus, as a result of which the hero manifests himself as a deeply modern character and phenomenon. The comparative examination of both those *Odyssey* adaptations which have been widely studied in the past, such as those by Tennyson, Pascoli and D'Annunzio, and those which have received little or no attention in such a context, such as those by Gebhart, Kazantzakis and Suárez, has shown that, especially in times of historical upheaval and transition, authors turned to the wanderer Odysseus for literary and philosophical orientation. As a matter of fact, many of these modern adaptations emerged in times when old values were losing their validity and being called into question. This re-evaluation of traditional norms and ties was, however, not only due to historical circumstances, but also conditioned by the personal experiences of each author.

The best way to illustrate these cultural implications of the *Wanderlust* motif is to take a brief look back at the texts examined in the course of this work. At the very beginning of the history of reception we have studied stands Dante's portrayal of Odysseus. As we have seen, Dante was the first to present Odysseus as a thoroughly centrifugal hero. The personal relationship of Dante—both as a character of the *Commedia* and as a historical author—to this Odysseus has been much discussed.⁹⁶⁹ In

⁹⁶⁹ Cf. p. 75.

particular, Odysseus and his final journey are often seen as a counter-example of the Christian-legitimated journey of the Dante character through the different realms of the afterlife, and, at a subordinate level, the daring literary undertaking that the author himself undertook by composing the *Commedia*. However, besides the personal factors that may have influenced Dante in his portrayal of Odysseus, we can safely say that the sharp shift of focus from nostalgia to *Wanderlust*, which Dante's *Commedia* represents for the Odysseus theme, already testifies to a change in attitude towards the world. For Dante's work was written in a time that preceded the European Age of Exploration and thus stood at the threshold of a new era. The strong ambiguity inherent in Dante's portrayal of Odysseus' character already bears witness to the cultural changes heralding the end of the Middle Ages a few centuries later.

The Odysseus of Renaissance adaptations shows a heightened awareness of his association with *Wanderlust*. While Dante's presentation of Odysseus oscillated between fascination and damnation, Odyssean *Wanderlust* was seen in a much more uniformly positive light during the Renaissance. In both Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516–32) and Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575) the journey of the centrifugal Odysseus no longer appears as a hopeless undertaking. Yet, whereas in the *Furioso* *Wanderlust* and exploration for its own sake has gained an interest on their own terms, for Tasso it still requires divine legitimation. Even in the *Gerusalemme*, Dante's 'mondo senza gente' (*Inferno* XXVI, 117) is already inhabited and its discovery by Columbus predicted for later centuries. Written in an era of European overseas exploration, which had seen expeditions like those of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus, both works thus testify to a new European spirit of discovery and imperialistic territorial expansion. Indeed, the limits of the imaginable are expanded along with geographical boundaries. It is this change in the perception of the world during the Renaissance that leads the way towards the later elaborations of the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* from the nineteenth century onwards.

In the nineteenth century, the comeback of Odysseus as a centrifugal hero driven by *Wanderlust* is ushered in by Tennyson's poem *Ulysses* (1833). This portrayal of Odysseus, which is equally inspired by Homer and Dante, shows both the influence of the Romantic period and anticipates the later *fin de siècle*. On the one hand, the heroic

and optimistic elements of the poem can be seen as a reflection of the climate of continuous progress in a politically expanding British Empire. Yet on the other hand, Tennyson's poetry already reveals the first signs of the *fin de siècle's* cultural crisis. Tennyson's 'Ulysses' exhibits an alienation from his homeland that to this day remains an important feature of Odysseus' characterization. As we know from statements of the poet himself, personal factors also contributed to the creation of his poem, which was written under the heavy loss in the form the death of Tennyson's close friend Arthur Hallam.

If Tennyson's (half-romantic) hero was still consumed by a longing for the journey, in Baudelaire's anti-progressive poem *Le voyage* (1859) this journey is already discarded as a naïve attempt to escape from reality. For, as it turns out, the traveller's predicted Eldorado does not exist. In the closing poem of *Les fleurs du Mal*, *Odyssean Wanderlust* is thus ironically deconstructed. With this poem, Baudelaire opposes the idea of infinite progress as well as the travel-"mania" of his time. Leading a tumultuous life on the margins of society in the industrialised Parisian metropolis, he rejects the (Odyssean) journey as being unable to disguise the banality and corruption of the world.

In Andrew Lang's poetic cycle *Hesperothen* (1872), the next text of our corpus, the anonymous protagonists—a group of sailors comparable to Baudelaire's 'travellers'—undertake a westward journey towards the Isles of the Blessed. Yet, here too the journey ends in disillusionment. For it does not bring the hoped-for liberation from all desires, but rather their infinite extension. As in the *Fourth Book (Quart Livre, 1552)* of François Rabelais' mock-heroic pentalogy about the giant Gargantua and his son Pantagruel, the island that is reached at the work's end is not the island of the blessed, but that of the eternally ageing. Yet in contrast to Rabelais' comic episode on the island of the 'Macraeons', the tone in *Hesperothen* is deeply melancholic. The sailors' disillusion and their eternal existence devoid of all meaning leads to the tragic conclusion that there is no such thing as rest for man in life. The deliverance from the suffering inherent to the human condition, which they believe that only death can provide, is precisely what *Hesperothen* denies. In reflecting such a profound existential anxiety, *Hesperothen* constitutes a rare example among Lang's poetic works.

In contrast to Lang's *Hesperothen*, Paul Heyse's *Odysseus* (1877) again builds more directly on Tennyson's *Ulysses*. This poem, which addresses the core elements of

Odyssean *Wanderlust*, bears witness both to the influence of Heyse's philological education and to his great enthusiasm for Italian literature. Furthermore, it can be seen as a foreboding of the melancholic mood that will become characteristic of Pascoli's *Odyssey* elaboration. We are unable to say what exactly motivated Heyse's elaboration of the *Wanderlust* motif, except that his poem obviously takes its inspiration from Tennyson. But even if it was only a literary exercise of the prolific author, it nevertheless represents a genuine expression of the existential restlessness that now becomes more and more characteristic of Odysseus.

In 1890, Andrew Lang published his second *Odyssey* transformation centring on *Wanderlust*, which, in contrast to his poetic cycle *Hesperothen*, belongs to the genre of fantastic literature. In the adventure novel *The World's Desire* (1890) composed by Andrew Lang and H. Rider Haggard, Odysseus sets off on a journey to Egypt after his return to an Ithaca destroyed by the plague. He is guided by the desire to find the beautiful Helen, who represents the personification of human longings. Despite Odysseus' emphatically heroic nature, he ends up dying at the hands of his son Telegonus. Thus even the godlike hero, who appears to excel in everything, cannot escape his fate. In contrast to Kazantzakis' later *Odyssey*, where numerous motifs of the novel recur, this Odysseus is not a superhuman hero. At the same time, the exploration of foreign worlds, which Dante and his direct successors still located beyond the Pillars of Hercules, continues to play a major role. The novel also reflects the fascination emanating from Egypt and Troy as a result of the archaeological discoveries of the nineteenth century.

In 1894, the first Modern Greek *Odyssey* transformation is written by the Alexandrian poet Constantine Cavafy. As in the elaborations of Tennyson and Heyse, in Cavafy's *Second Odyssey* Odysseus' long-awaited return to Ithaca is followed by disillusionment. While this Odysseus, like his Dantesque predecessor, sets off on a journey to the west and the Pillars of Hercules, the outcome of this journey remains open, as in Tennyson's *Ulysses*. The feeling of a liberating emptiness that fills Cavafy's Odysseus on his departure can in turn be seen as a foretaste of the "optimistic nihilism" that will become characteristic of Kazantzakis' Odysseus in the twentieth century. Kazantzakis' description of Cavafy as bearing 'all the typical characteristics of an exceptional man in

an age of decline' after their encounter in 1927 testifies in this respect to the transitional age that Kazantzakis believed that he was living in.

In the same year that Cavafy wrote his *Second Odyssey*, Jules Lemaître published his narrative *Nausicaa* (1894). In this short *Odyssey* sequel, Lemaître parodies the Odyssean journey by introducing Telemachus as the new protagonist, whose quest of the princess Nausicaa drags on for over thirty years only to end in disillusionment. In *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902), the next French elaboration of *Wanderlust*, Émile Gebhart takes this harmlessly mocking tone to the extreme. For no matter how honest Odysseus' attempt is to atone for his past war crimes, it does not spare him a cruel end. In these French texts, we thus see a reflection of the cultural pessimism that is often encountered in cultural attitudes spanning the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.

We also observe the influence of this end-of-the-century pessimism in Arturo Graf's *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* (1897). Here, Odysseus' last journey, which is closely modelled after that of his Dantean predecessor, also leads to his death. In particular, the atmosphere of enthusiasm and heroic pathos that prevails in the first part of the poem creates a stark contrast with its abrupt and apocalyptic ending, which retrospectively sheds an ironic light on the whole endeavor. The tension created by this contrast turns out to be symptomatic of the late nineteenth century, in which rapid social and technological changes cause anxiety and euphoria about the future in equal measure. Indeed, the existential worries and cultural pessimism that—alongside positivistic elements—characterized much of Graf's literary oeuvre only disappeared when he turned to religion towards the end of his life. Yet in his description of Odysseus' last voyage, all of Odysseus' attempts to escape the *taedium vitae* are doomed to failure from the very beginning. In this respect, Odysseus' journey as described by Graf can be compared to the futile quest of Baudelaire's travellers, whose attempts to escape *ennui* must also fail.

In Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Maia* (1903), the first Italian *Odyssey* elaboration to follow Graf's work, Odysseus is also presented as a strong and determined hero. In complete contrast to Graf's elaboration, however, the emphasized self-confidence of this Odysseus is by no means to be understood ironically, but rather represents a characteristic of D'Annunzio's superhuman depiction. D'Annunzio's poetry does not

despair over the existential uncertainties that the transition into the new century brings with it, but counters them with a life-affirming vitalism. Melancholy or cultural pessimism are thus completely absent in his elaboration of the *Wanderlust* motif.

While in some cases we were unable to say anything about the personal circumstances that accompanied the creation of a work, in other cases the reference to the personal life of an author was obvious from the very beginning. This is especially true for D'Annunzio and Kazantzakis, who both process their own experiences through the story of Odysseus, while D'Annunzio explicitly identifies with his superhuman hero. Although Odysseus here primarily functions as the embodiment of the ultimate hero in the service of D'Annunzio's megalomaniacal ideas, both D'Annunzio's self-identification with the restless Odysseus and Kazantzakis' many years of preoccupation with Odysseus' character attest to the great attraction that this aspect of the myth still exerted on modern authors.

Despite the great chronological and geographical proximity to D'Annunzio's poem, Giovanni Pascoli's *L'ultimo viaggio* (1904), which appears in the following year, has nothing in common with *Maia*. Pascoli's Odysseus, who goes on his last journey because he is filled with doubts about his heroic past, is far removed from D'Annunzio's over-confident superman. Instead, he is a troubled man, whose futile search for identity reflects the decadent sensibilities of the *fin de siècle*.

Seven years after Pascoli's poem, Cavafy publishes his second elaboration of Odyssean *Wanderlust*. In *Ithaca* (1911), which stems from the same source of inspiration as *Second Odyssey*, Cavafy now goes a step further. Here, Odysseus' homeland becomes a mere pretext that motivates departure—a motif that we encounter again in Suárez's *Odyssey* transformation about a century later. In Cavafy's poem, *Wanderlust* is thus declared the new positive ideal of life, in which the negative experience of the disappointing return home is no longer of any concern.

The next adaptation of the *Wanderlust* motif to appear, which is also the most comprehensive, is Kazantzakis' *Odyssey*, published in 1938. Through the long and eventful journey of his Odysseus, Kazantzakis processes the events of his own turbulent life and gives expression to his philosophical outlook in narrative form. At the same time, his Nietzschean superman is supposed to provide a way out of the impasse of the

old world. For Kazantzakis, the restless Odysseus was the embodiment of ‘the true modern man’. He regarded his own time as a ‘transitional age’,⁹⁷⁰ for which the epic genre was particularly suitable as a literary form of expression. Consequently, his own *Odyssey* was meant to reflect all the ‘contemporary anxieties’ of ‘the modern man’:

“[...] So far as I am concerned, there has been no age more epical than ours. It is in such ages which come between two cultures—when one Myth dissolves and another struggles to be born—that epic poems are created. For me, the *Odyssey* is a new epical-dramatic attempt of the modern man to find deliverance by passing through all the stages of contemporary anxieties and by pursuing the most daring hopes. What deliverance: He does not know as he starts out, but he creates it constantly with his joys and sorrows, with his successes and failures, with his disappointments, fighting always. This, I am certain, is the anguished struggle, whether conscious or subconscious, of the true modern man. In such intermediate periods, a spiritual endeavor can either look back to justify and judge the old civilization which is disintegrating, or it can look ahead and struggle to prophesy and formulate the new one. Odysseus struggles by looking ahead unceasingly, his neck stretched forward like the leader of birds migrating.”⁹⁷¹

In Kazantzakis’ epic poem, this continuous struggle is not a simple byproduct of the transitional age, but is rather presented as the ideal state of man.

In the twenty-first century, the motif of Odyssean *Wanderlust* becomes important once again in the context of contemporary global migration. In the case of Kundera and Suárez, two authors who both emigrated from their countries of origin, a connection between their own experiences and those of their protagonists also suggests itself. One of the central concerns of Kundera’s novel, who himself once declared that his home was France and that he did not feel uprooted, is to free emigration from its negative connotations. Like Kazantzakis and Suárez, Kundera in *L’ignorance* (2000) also deconstructs the conventional concept of ‘home’. He rejects the possibility of a true return to the past, while Kazantzakis’ Odysseus and Suárez’s Circe explicitly reject any backwards movement.

In Suárez’s *La viajera*, the problematics of homecoming which are still addressed in Kazantzakis’ and Kundera’s elaborations give way to the problematics of post-colonial identity. In alluding throughout her story of Circe’s travels to an Odysseus driven by

970 On Kazantzakis’ idea of a ‘transitional age’, cf. p. 185 as well as p. 188.

971 According to Kimon Friar, Kazantzakis wrote this in a letter ‘to a young Greek scholar’. See Friar’s introduction, in Kazantzakis 1958, xi–xii.

Wanderlust, Suarez formulates a new cultural identity that is characterized above all by its fluid and dynamic nature. Moreover, by presenting us with a female protagonist, she provides a feminine perspective on an existential search in the context of contemporary migration.

Naturally, the texts and their contexts presented here are highly diverse. They all, however, refer back to the restless wanderer and eternal seeker Odysseus, in order to find answers to fundamental questions of human existence. As can be seen in the Italian *decadentismo* with Pascoli and D'Annunzio, the answers to these questions may differ considerably. While some authors react with despair and disillusionment towards the gradual disintegration of the old values, others such as Kazantzakis and Suárez go beyond the mere negation of the old norms by replacing them with a new and positive set of values. Yet, besides the actual answers that the different texts provide, through their elaboration of Odyssean *Wanderlust* they all testify to cultural change in one way or another. Indeed, the wanderer Odysseus remains interesting as long as human beings seek knowledge and pose the question about the meaning of their own existence—even at the risk of not finding a satisfying answer. Given the great power of attraction, which still emanates from an Odysseus characterised by *Wanderlust*, we can assume that it will not cease to do so in the times to come. It thus remains to be seen to which unexplored shores the journey of Odysseus and the *Odyssey* will lead in the future, whether in literature or other spheres of creative human expression.

Appendix – Important Motifs in the Works Examined

Author	Text	Year	(Anti-) Nostalgia	Disillusion	Re-departure/ Continuation of the journey	Return to known places	Westward journey	Pillars of Hercules	Home	Age/ Time	The Other
Tennyson	<i>Ulysses</i>	1833		x			x		x	x	
Baudelaire	<i>Le voyage</i>	1859		x	x						
Lang	<i>Hesperothen</i>	1872		x	x		x			x	
Heyse	<i>Odyseus</i>	1877	x	x					x		
Lang/ Haggard	<i>The World's Desire</i>	1890			x						x
Lemaître	<i>Nausicaa</i>	1894		x	x	x				x	x
Cavafy	<i>Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια</i>	1894	x	x	x		x	x			
Graf	<i>L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse</i>	1897	x	x	x		x	x		x	
Gebhart	<i>Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse</i>	1902		x	x	x					x
D'Annunzio	<i>Maia</i>	1903	x		x						
Pascoli	<i>L'ultimo viaggio</i>	1904		x	x	x		x	x	x	
Cavafy	<i>Ἰθάκη</i>	1911	x		x				x		x
Kazantzakis	<i>Ὀδύσσεια</i>	1938	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Kundera	<i>L'ignorance</i>	2000	x	x	x				x	x	
Suárez	<i>La viajera</i>	2005	x		x				x		x

Résumé en français

L'*Odyssee* remet les voiles

La *Wanderlust* dans les transformations littéraires modernes de l'*Odyssee*

Le présent ouvrage traite du motif de la *Wanderlust* dans les transformations littéraires modernes de l'*Odyssee* homérique. Dans la plupart de ces textes, qui transforment délibérément l'idée de *Nostos* homérique en son contraire, la *Wanderlust* se manifeste dans un nouveau départ d'Ulysse pour un autre voyage (généralement son voyage final). Un tel voyage ne constitue cependant pas un critère discriminant pour la sélection des textes du présent travail. Ce qui caractérise ici la *Wanderlust*, en revanche, c'est avant tout l'état mental et la disposition psychologique d'une agitation intérieure. Ainsi, la *Wanderlust*, libérée de ses connotations romantiques, devient une catégorie existentielle. Ce qui relie les textes du corpus étudié est donc l'*inquietum* de l'existence humaine, qui se révèle un problème anthropologique central dans les multiples traitements du mythe d'Ulysse.

Je retrace ce motif de la *Wanderlust* d'Ulysse d'Homère à nos jours, en me concentrant principalement sur les réécritures de l'*Odyssee* à partir du XIX^{ème} siècle, qui constitue l'âge d'or du motif. Les langues des textes analysés sont l'italien, le français, l'allemand, l'espagnol, le grec moderne et l'anglais, bien que la sélection ne soit pas limitée au seul espace linguistique européen. La première partie de la recherche est consacrée d'abord à l'*Odyssee* homérique (chapitre 2), et, dans le chapitre suivant, à la *Divine Comédie* de Dante (chapitre 3). Ces deux textes constituent le fondement d'une réflexion ultérieure sur les réécritures modernes (chapitre 5). Celui-ci est précédé d'un autre chapitre qui porte sur deux textes de la Renaissance italienne (chapitre 4). En effet, l'âge d'or du motif de la *Wanderlust* ulysséenne, s'il n'a lieu qu'au XIX^{ème} siècle, est déjà préparé par la réinterprétation positive de la *curiositas* ulysséenne à la Renaissance.

L'Ulysse homérique, comme le montre l'enquête du chapitre deux, se refuse à une interprétation unilatérale. D'une part, il éprouve un fort désir de rentrer chez lui. D'autre part, de nombreux passages révèlent sa curiosité et son caractère aventureux. La *Wanderlust* d'Ulysse est soulignée à plusieurs reprises au cours de l'épopée et ne fait

généralement pas l'objet d'un quelconque jugement de valeur. L'état existentiel de la *Wanderlust*, qui devient plus tard central dans de nombreuses transformations modernes de l'*Odyssée*, n'est donc en rien une invention post-homérique, mais constitue déjà un élément important de l'*Odyssée* elle-même. La poursuite des voyages d'Ulysse est également explicitement annoncée dans la prophétie qu'il reçoit de Tirésias aux Enfers (*Od.* 11.119–37) et est aussi rappelée à la fin de l'*Odyssée* (*Od.* 23.248–53 ; 264–84). Enfin, l'histoire des mensonges d'Ulysse dans l'*Odyssée* (14.192–359) montre qu'un héros essentiellement centrifuge, dominé par sa *Wanderlust*, n'était nullement impensable pour Homère. Mais c'est justement ce type de héros qui est délibérément distingué d'Ulysse car celui-ci, malgré ses moments de *Wanderlust*, est avant tout orienté par son souci du retour. Le fait qu'Ulysse soit également curieux et qu'il succombe souvent à la tentation d'explorer son environnement ne fait que souligner son côté humain, à la lumière duquel sa détermination à rentrer chez lui et son succès final apparaissent comme une victoire plus éclatante encore. La *Wanderlust* fait donc déjà partie des traits finement brossés de l'Ulysse homérique et constitue en tant que telle un motif auquel l'auteur recourt à dessein.

Bien des siècles après Homère, Dante Alighieri, au XIV^{ème} siècle après J.-C., est le premier à dépeindre Ulysse en héros "centrifuge" de part en part : il n'est pas avant tout orienté par son souci du retour, mais est tourné vers l'extérieur. Dante, qui ne connaissait l'*Odyssée* que par des sources latines secondaires, fait apparaître Ulysse dans l'*Enfer* (XXVI, 52–142) de sa *Divine Comédie* et raconte comment, après son séjour chez Circé, il ne s'est pas rendu à Ithaque mais – poussé par l'envie d'explorer le monde – a persuadé ses compagnons d'entreprendre un voyage vers l'inconnu, au-delà des Colonnes d'Hercule, les limites du monde connu.

Cependant, lorsqu'ils voient une montagne souvent interprétée comme le *Monte Purgatorio*, le navire est englouti par la mer dans une violente tempête. Dans l'œuvre de Dante, Ulysse n'est donc plus le héros qui rentre chez lui en supportant les dangers, mais l'aventurier qui plonge volontairement dans l'inconnu. L'épisode de l'*Enfer* ne permet pas de juger si aux yeux de Dante, si Ulysse outrepassa les limites et si, par conséquent, c'est son orgueil qui cause sa perte, selon une interprétation fréquente dans la recherche. Mais que Dante ait considéré d'un bon ou mauvais œil la soif effrénée de

connaissance et de découverte, la *curiositas*, et qu'il ait condamné moralement ou non la quête d'Ulysse, la figure de l'Ulysse de Dante témoigne sans aucun doute d'une nouvelle prise de position du héros.

Dans son célèbre passage de l'*Enfer*, Dante déplace ainsi l'accent de la nostalgie à la *Wanderlust*, et par ce changement d'accent, il exerce une influence décisive sur la suite de la réception du personnage d'Ulysse. Cependant, diverses versions de la fin d'Ulysse ont également circulé dans l'Antiquité. Par exemple, l'ancienne *Télégonie* (Τηλεγονεία ou -ία), qui est principalement attribuée à Eugammon de Cyrène et qu'on peut très probablement dater du sixième siècle avant J.-C., décrit une continuation du voyage d'Ulysse. L'œuvre fait partie du "Cycle épique", un groupe d'épopées grecques en hexamètres écrites dans un style imitant Homère et relatant des événements qui n'ont pas été racontés dans l'*Iliade* et l'*Odyssée*.

Le titre *Télégonie* fait référence à Télégonos, "celui qui est né au loin" : fils de Circé et d'Ulysse, il finit par tuer à son insu son propre père. La *Télégonie*, qui n'a été conservée que dans quelques fragments, est donc la première œuvre connue qui décrive une continuation des voyages d'Ulysse. On ne peut cependant pas déterminer aujourd'hui si Dante connaissait la version alternative d'Eugammon à partir de sources latines et s'il s'en est inspiré.

Alors que la représentation par Dante d'un Ulysse animé de *Wanderlust* ne peut faire l'objet d'une interprétation univoque, positive ou négative, témoignant ainsi du passage du Moyen Âge au début de l'Époque moderne, la Renaissance adopte une position beaucoup plus claire. Car la *curiositas* d'Ulysse (ou plutôt sa quête de connaissances et d'expérience), qui est une manifestation (possible) de la *Wanderlust*, n'est plus un vice. Toutefois, cela ne signifie pas un simple passage d'une perspective négative à une perspective positive ; car cela impliquerait, d'une part, une condamnation de la quête d'Ulysse dans la *Comédie* de Dante et, d'autre part, une simplification excessive de la représentation souvent complexe de la *curiositas* dans les textes de la Renaissance. C'est plutôt l'indécision et l'ambiguïté de Dante envers Ulysse que réinterprète la Renaissance de manière unilatéralement positive par un recours délibéré à l'Antiquité classique.

Les événements historiques ont de toute évidence joué un grand rôle dans cette mutation littéraire. En effet, la (re)découverte de l'Amérique par les Européens en 1492

et le début de la colonisation ont repoussé les frontières du monde connu et ont conduit à un nouvel esprit de découverte européen et à une expansion motivée par l'impérialisme, qui ne sont plus compatibles avec l'idée des Colonnes d'Hercule, fin du monde et frontière infranchissable. Le voyage d'Ulysse décrit par Dante n'est plus considéré comme une entreprise absurde, mais gagne peu à peu en crédibilité. L'extension des frontières géographiques (réelles) conduit, en quelque sorte, à une expansion du possible et de l'imagination qui l'accompagne. C'est ce changement de perception du monde à l'époque dite "des découvertes" qui rend la Renaissance indispensable au développement littéraire ultérieur. Deux ouvrages italiens peuvent servir d'exemples : *Orlando furioso* de l'Arioste (1516–32) et *La Jérusalem libérée* de Torquato Tasso (1581). Les deux textes reflètent l'esprit de découverte de l'époque, en ce sens qu'ils constituent une réécriture de l'Ulysse homérique et dantesque sur fond de voyages de découverte européens. La Renaissance prépare ainsi le terrain pour la résurgence (plus tardive) et l'épanouissement du motif de la *Wanderlust* ulysseenne au XIX^{ème} siècle.

Au début de ce développement littéraire, qui est décrit dans la partie principale de ce travail, se trouve le poème *Ulysses* d'Alfred Lord Tennyson qui a eu une féconde postérité (1833). La réinterprétation positive de la *curiositas* à la Renaissance a préparé le retour d'Ulysse en éternel vagabond qui allait dominer la tradition ultérieure. Avec son poème *Ulysses*, Tennyson est le premier auteur moderne à suivre les traces d'Homère et de Dante à cet égard. Il présente un Ulysse envahi *Wanderlust*, comme nous l'avions vu précédemment dans l'*Enfer* de Dante, "désirant ardemment / suivre la connaissance comme une étoile filante / au-delà des limites ultimes de la pensée humaine" (*Ulysses*, v. 30–2). Mais entretemps, ce héros est revenu à Ithaque. Empli de désillusion et d'aversion envers son foyer et sa famille, il aspire à un nouveau départ. Dans un monologue énergique, il exprime son vif désir de connaissance et d'exploration. Le héros de Tennyson révèle un mélange de sentiments égoïstes et héroïques, ces derniers l'emportant finalement. Ce sont peut-être aussi les récits des explorations maritimes des marins anglais qui ont inspiré à Tennyson le portrait d'un Ulysse tourné vers l'extérieur. En plus des éléments optimistes du poème, commencent déjà à émerger des idées caractéristiques de la modernité, à l'instar de la désillusion et

de la fatigue du héros, de son déracinement et de son éloignement de sa patrie. L'œuvre poétique de Tennyson s'inscrit en grande partie dans l'ère post-romantique de l'Angleterre victorienne (1837–1901), où la vie et la société étaient fortement influencées par l'industrialisation et l'urbanisation. La défaite de Napoléon à la bataille de Waterloo (1815) avait renforcé la puissance de la Grande-Bretagne et jeté les bases d'une croissance économique et d'une expansion politique continues de l'Empire britannique. Du point de vue de l'histoire littéraire, Tennyson se situe entre le romantisme et la décadence de la fin du siècle. De nombreuses caractéristiques de cette dernière crise culturelle se reflètent déjà dans ses œuvres.

Tandis que le héros (semi-romantique) de Tennyson est toujours consumé par le désir du voyage, dans le poème anti-progressif de Baudelaire *Le voyage* (1859), celui-ci est déjà rejeté comme une fuite naïve de la réalité. Car l'Eldorado recherché par le voyageur n'existe pas ici. Dans le dernier poème des *Fleurs du Mal*, dont le lien avec l'hypotexte homérique et dantesque est beaucoup plus subtil que dans le poème de Tennyson, la *Wanderlust* ulysseenne est ainsi ironiquement déconstruite. Le poème est dominé dès les premiers vers par une note ironique qui se renforce à mesure que le poème progresse. Le début du poème laisse entendre que l'enthousiasme enfantin du voyageur sera déçu. A l'opposé de sa *Wanderlust* initiale, celui-ci se trouve en effet confronté l'expérience réelle d'un monde monotone, « Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui ! » (VII, 4). A la fin du voyage, l'ennui domine, et la seule chose "nouvelle" ou inconnue qui reste à découvrir est la mort. Par conséquent, le dernier voyage, la mort, est attendu avec impatience. A une époque où la fascination pour les voyages et l'exotisme ne cesse de croître, Baudelaire, ouvertement anti-progressif et anti-naturaliste, confronte dans *Le voyage* à la fois la fièvre du voyage de son époque et l'idée d'un progrès technique infini. Il rejette le voyage – et avec lui l'Ulysse de Dante qui l'incarne – comme une illusion qui ne peut dissimuler ni la monotonie et la banalité, ni la corruption du monde.

Le texte suivant de notre corpus sur la *Wanderlust* consiste en une œuvre de jeunesse d'un autre auteur victorien : Andrew Lang. Érudit pétri de classique, il montre une prédilection pour les thèmes littéraires inspirés de l'Antiquité grecque. Dans son cycle de poèmes *Hesperothen* (1872), les protagonistes anonymes – un groupe de marins comparable aux "voyageurs" de Baudelaire – font un voyage vers l'ouest, vers les îles

des Bienheureux. Mais là aussi, le voyage aboutit dans la désillusion. Car il apporte, plutôt que la libération espérée de tous les désirs, leur expansion infinie. Comme dans le *Quart Livre* (1552) de la pentalogie héroïcomique de François Rabelais sur le géant Gargantua et son fils Pantagruel, l'île atteinte à la fin n'est pas l'île des Bienheureux, mais celle des éternels vieillards. Mais contrairement à l'épisode de Rabelais sur l'île des Macraeons, qui constitue une parodie du passage de Dante dans l'Enfer, il n'y a rien d'amusant dans la recherche futile des marins dans les « Hesperothen ». Bien au contraire, il y a quelque chose de profondément dérangeant dans leur existence sans fin et morne dans une sphère de néant. Dans cette vision tragique, l'homme est condamné à une quête éternelle dont seule la mort peut le libérer. Or, c'est précisément cette rédemption que *Hesperothen* nie. Il en sera autrement plus tard avec Kazantzakis, où Ulysse, qui comme les marins de Lang s'efforce de se libérer de tout lien, atteint contrairement à eux finalement une liberté absolue dans la mort. Car de même que, pour Baudelaire, seule la mort pouvait libérer de la monotonie de l'existence humaine, pour Lang et Kazantzakis, la vraie paix ne peut se trouver que dans la mort.

Le cycle de poèmes de Lang est suivi d'un poème qui se réfère à nouveau plus fortement à l'Ulysse de Tennyson et qui est d'un auteur presque oublié aujourd'hui : c'est l'*Ulysse (Odysseus)* de Paul Heyse (1877). Ce poème allemand, qui contient les éléments essentiels de la *Wanderlust* ulysséenne témoigne d'une part de la formation philologique de Heyse et d'autre part de son grand enthousiasme pour la littérature italienne. Cela nous donne également un avant-goût de l'humeur mélancolique qui caractérisera l'élaboration de l'*Odyssee* de Pascoli quelques décennies plus tard. Après sa nomination précoce à la cour de Maximilien II de Bavière, Heyse devint l'un des plus importants représentants du *Münchner Dichterkreises*, qui, attaché aux idéaux du classicisme, se démarqua par conséquent de la littérature contemporaine du réalisme. Au début de sa vie, Heyse était l'un des auteurs préférés des Allemands. Des contemporains comme Theodor Fontane le considéraient comme un successeur important de Goethe, annonciateur du début d'une nouvelle ère. Vers la fin de sa vie, cependant, et bien qu'il ait reçu le prix Nobel en 1910, sa popularité déclina tant qu'il était déjà oublié à la fin du XX^{ème} siècle et reste largement inconnu à ce jour. L'accusation de superficialité et de perfection artificielle, qui a souvent été portée à l'encontre de sa vaste œuvre, ne s'avère

en aucun cas justifiée en ce qui concerne le poème *Odysseus*. Avec son portrait d'un Ulysse consumé par un désir indéterminé et "perdu" (d'une manière paradoxale) dans la sécurité du foyer, Heyse touche plutôt au cœur de la *Wanderlust* d'Ulysse. En effet, son court poème contient tous les éléments qui seront essentiels à la poursuite du développement littéraire d'Ulysse en éternel vagabond.

Après le poème de Heyse, une autre réécriture de l'*Odyssee* est publiée en 1890 par Andrew Lang. Bien qu'elle se concentre également sur la *Wanderlust*, contrairement à son cycle de poèmes *Hesperothen*, elle appartient au genre de la littérature fantastique : dans le roman d'aventure *The World's Desire* (1890), qu'Andrew Lang a écrit en collaboration avec le célèbre romancier H. Rider Haggard, Ulysse part en voyage en Égypte après son retour dans une Ithaque qui avait été ravagée par la peste. Il est guidé par le désir de trouver la belle Hélène, qui est ici la figure personnifiée des désirs humains. Malgré le caractère résolument héroïque d'Ulysse, il finit par mourir des mains de son fils Télégonos. Le contenu du roman présente de nombreuses similitudes avec d'autres réécritures de l'*Odyssee* dont il est fait l'objet ici. Il se démarque en revanche consciemment de la *Comédie* de Dante. Alors qu'Ulysse, dans *The World's Desire*, est envoyé vers un "dernier voyage" d'une toute autre nature, la destination de l'Ulysse de Dante, le monde inconnu au-delà des Colonnes d'Hercule, est mentionnée presque par hasard. Cependant, il s'agit ici d'un monde habité dont l'exploration a déjà commencé. L'exploration des mondes étrangers, qui dans le cas de Dante et de ses successeurs directs se concentre toujours sur le monde au-delà des Colonnes d'Hercule, joue toujours un rôle majeur dans la littérature fantastique (et plus tard dans la littérature fantastique moderne). L'intérêt se déplace maintenant vers des régions géographiques du monde qui n'ont pas encore été entièrement explorées par les Européens. Au XIX^{ème} siècle, l'Égypte et Troie en particulier ont exercé une grande fascination suite aux découvertes archéologiques, ce qui se reflète également dans le roman de Lang et Haggard. En même temps, le roman qui est le modèle littéraire direct du récit d'Émile Gebhart, *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902), semblerait également avoir servi de source d'inspiration à Nikos Kazantzakis pour son *Οδύσσεια* (*Odyssee*, 1938), dans lequel on retrouve de nombreux éléments du roman.

Un autre auteur d'une réécriture de l'*Odyssee* mettant l'accent sur la *Wanderlust* dès la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle : Constantin Cavafy, originaire d'Alexandrie en Égypte. Son

poème *Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια* (*Deuxième Odyssée*), écrit en 1894, ainsi que l'essai *Τὸ τέλος τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως* (*La fin d'Ulysse*), écrit quelques mois plus tard, restent cependant longtemps confidentiels et ne sont révélés qu'environ un siècle plus tard. Ces textes découverts tardivement jettent non seulement un nouvel éclairage sur le très célèbre poème *Ἰθάκη* (*Ithaque*, 1911), mais identifient également Cavafy comme l'un des premiers auteurs à reprendre le motif de la *Wanderlust* d'Ulysse en faisant explicitement référence à Homère, Dante et Tennyson. Comme pour Tennyson et Heyse, au retour tant attendu d'Ulysse à Ithaque succède également, dans la *Δευτέρα Ὀδύσσεια* de Cavafy, la désillusion. Si Ulysse ici, comme son prédécesseur dantesque, part en voyage vers l'ouest et vers les Colonnes d'Hercule, l'issue de ce voyage reste ouverte, comme chez Tennyson. Le sentiment de vide libérateur que ressent l'Ulysse de Cavafy à son départ peut être interprété comme un signe avant-coureur du "nihilisme optimiste" qui caractérisera l'Ulysse de Kazantzakis au XX^{ème} siècle.

L'année où Cavafy rédige ces deux textes est également celle de la publication de *La nouvelle Nausicaa* de l'auteur français Jules Lemaître (1894). Contrairement à Cavafy, il ne s'oriente pas sur Dante et Tennyson, mais se place plutôt dans la tradition française des *Aventures de Télémaque* de Fénelon (1699). Dans *Nausicaa* de Lemaître, une suite en prose parodique de *L'Odyssée*, Télémaque suit les traces de son père en se lançant dans un voyage – cette fois-ci non pas à la recherche d'Ithaque, mais de la lointaine princesse Nausicaa, dont il a tant entendu parler. En raison de sa nature curieuse et malgré les avertissements de son père, le voyage, qui l'amène à passer par les étapes des aventures d'Ulysse, se poursuit sans relâche. Nausicaa, l'"Ithaque" de Télémaque, est une destination qu'il suit avec une naïveté aveugle et sur laquelle il projette ses désirs jusqu'à la fin du récit. Lorsqu'il arrive enfin à Scheria, il constate amèrement que non seulement Nausicaa est vieille à présent, tout comme lui-même a vieilli. *Nausicaa* reprend ainsi le motif d'un nouveau voyage après le retour d'Ulysse avec un héros en proie à la *Wanderlust*. Télémaque, héros épique déceptif, ne montre aucun signe de *polytropia* odysseenne ou de grandeur héroïque ; il est au contraire dépeint comme inexpérimenté et naïf. Dans cette transformation de *L'Odyssée*, il n'y a donc aucune trace de l'audacieux passeur de frontières dantesque. En lieu et place de ces éléments héroïques viennent au premier plan d'autres éléments traditionnels des continuations de

l'*Odyssée* en langue française, tels que l'âge, la désillusion et l'ironie. Par ailleurs, on peut entendre un ton légèrement moqueur dans le texte de Lemaître, qui dans le récit ultérieur de Gebhart, se transformera en un sarcasme mordant, presque malicieux.

Le poème de 508 vers *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* (1897) de l'écrivain italien Arturo Graf, est à nouveau plus fortement inspiré par Dante. Celui-ci reprend l'histoire d'Ulysse quatre ans après son retour à Ithaque. Lassé de sa patrie, Ulysse part pour un nouveau voyage avec ses anciens compagnons, dont la destination, comme pour Dante, est le monde inconnu au-delà des Colonnes d'Hercule. Ici aussi, la traversée des frontières par Ulysse le conduit inévitablement à sa mort. La tension entre l'euphorie initiale, le grand héroïsme de la première partie du poème et sa fin abrupte et apocalyptique peut être considérée comme symptomatique de la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle, où peur de l'avenir et euphorie sont étroitement liées. Ainsi, le tourmenté Ulysse est pour ainsi dire prédestiné à exprimer les incertitudes de la fin du siècle. Ce qui s'annonçait déjà dans l'inévitable *ennui* de Baudelaire est également à l'œuvre ici. Au moment où l'Ulysse de Graf, avançant avec une confiance inébranlable, entreprend d'échapper au *taedium vitae*, il est déjà condamné à l'échec. Si Graf n'est pas hostile au positivisme comme Baudelaire, il nie aussi résolument la possibilité d'échapper à l'ennui.

La première réécriture de l'*Odyssée* publiée au XX^{ème} siècle à mettre l'accent sur la *Wanderlust* ulysséenne est le roman en prose de 147 pages *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902) de l'auteur et érudit français Émile Gebhart. Dans récit au ton grimaçant, Ulysse, décrit comme le dernier grand héros, se lance dans un nouveau voyage avec son vieil ami Ménélas qui l'emmène dans de nombreux endroits différents. Cependant, en raison de ses expériences négatives au cours du voyage, il décide de retourner à Ithaque. Mais ce retour n'a pas lieu car il est assassiné par Télégonos, son fils, à l'endroit même où il avait lui-même tué le jeune Astyanax, fils d'Hector, et où il espérait, par remords, se purifier de son crime. Au vu des qualités largement positives attribuées à Ulysse dans le récit, le meurtre du protagoniste par son fils sadique semble d'autant plus cruel et donne à l'histoire un arrière-goût amer. Malgré sa date de publication tardive (1902), il présente de nombreux traits romantiques. Il s'agit notamment de la sensualité et de l'esthétique de la langue, de l'ennui du héros et, enfin et surtout, du style épique moqueur avec un mélange d'éléments comiques et tragiques qui contribue à la désacralisation du héros classique. A l'instar de la *Nausicaa* de

Lemaître (1894), l'Ulysse de Dante n'est pas pertinent dans cette réécriture de l'*Odyssee* en langue française. Cependant, alors que Lemaître se contentait encore de faire perdre ses illusions au naïf Télémaque, Gebhart confère une fin atroce à l'existence de son protagoniste.

Un an plus tard seulement, en 1903, le poète italien Gabriele D'Annunzio publie *Maia* (ou *Laus Vitae*) le premier livre de son recueil poétique inachevé *Laudi del cielo, del mare, della terra, e degli eroi* (1903–1912). Le poème est une version mythologisée d'un voyage en Grèce que D'Annunzio lui-même a entrepris avec des amis au bord d'un yacht en 1895. Dans *Maia*, le poète lui-même est le protagoniste. Il se lance dans un nouveau voyage et s'identifie à un Ulysse modelé sur l'*Übermensch* nietzschéen. La figure d'Ulysse en héros marin s'avère d'une importance capitale pour l'ensemble du poème. Comme tant de ses prédécesseurs littéraires, cet Ulysse est un avatar de l'Ulysse dantesque qui est évoqué dès le début de l'œuvre. Mais malgré toutes les exagérations héroïques, on ne sait pas où va réellement cet Ulysse ni ce qui a motivé son départ. Le seul but du voyage semble être l'accomplissement personnel du héros surhumain. D'Annunzio reste à ce jour une figure très controversée dans l'histoire de la littérature italienne en raison de ses activités politiques et militaires pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, de son influence sur le fascisme italien et de sa proximité ultérieure avec le régime fasciste de Benito Mussolini. En raison de son occupation illégale de Fiume (aujourd'hui Rijeka, Croatie) en 1919, qu'il a menée sans le consentement du gouvernement italien, il a été célébré par les nationalistes italiens, qui appartenaient au mouvement fasciste alors en voie de structuration, comme un héros de guerre. Au vu de l'interprétation par D'Annunzio de l'*Übermensch* nietzschéen, il semble presque que le poète ait voulu imiter son héros guerrier dans la vie réelle. Pour ce qui est du contexte littéraire du poème de D'Annunzio, il a été écrit à la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle, dans une phase marquée par un retour à l'Antiquité, qui a donné lieu en Italie à des interprétations du mythe d'Ulysse aussi différentes que celles de D'Annunzio et de Pascoli. Par ailleurs, la réécriture de l'*Odyssee* par D'Annunzio présente également de nombreuses similitudes avec, entre autres, l'*Odyssee* de Kazantzakis, pour laquelle le surhomme nietzschéen joue un rôle central. Certes, cet *Übermensch* énergique, qui ne connaît ni frontières ni morale, se retrouve dans les deux œuvres. Cependant, contrairement à ce

qu'on observe chez D'Annunzio, souvent accusé de n'avoir adopté que superficiellement la pensée de Nietzsche, celle-ci est bien plus structurante pour Kazantzakis. Car non seulement son *Odyssée* est imprégnée de la philosophie de Nietzsche, mais toute son œuvre. Ainsi, malgré leurs nombreuses similitudes, les héros de D'Annunzio et de Kazantzakis ont une divergence fondamentale. Contrairement à l'Ulysse de Kazantzakis, le héros marin de D'Annunzio, qui ne dit pas un mot pendant sa brève apparition, ne prend pas vraiment vie, mais reste une coquille vide. Il sert simplement à donner au poème un élan et une direction. De même, son effort n'a pas de but ultime. L'Ulysse de Kazantzakis, en revanche, connaît au cours de son voyage un développement complexe et à plusieurs niveaux, derrière lequel se révèle toute la vision philosophique du monde de l'auteur.

Un an seulement après la publication des *Laudi* de D'Annunzio, Giovanni Pascoli, qui incarne l'autre facette du *decadentismo* italien, a publié son *L'ultimo viaggio* (1904) dans le recueil *Poemi Conviviali*. L'œuvre de Pascoli, célèbre spécialiste de l'Antiquité qui vivait à une époque où l'enthousiasme pour l'Antiquité connaissait un nouvel essor en Europe, révèle une forte influence de l'Antiquité gréco-romaine. Cependant, Pascoli, très influencé par la décadence de la fin du siècle a donné à ces thèmes classiques un sens tout à fait nouveau. Contrairement à son professeur Carducci, il n'a pas cherché à appliquer les idéaux classiques à la poésie moderne ; il s'est plutôt inspiré de la littérature classique pour exprimer sa propre sensibilité décadente. L'un des thèmes classiques que Pascoli aborde à plusieurs reprises dans ses poèmes est le mythe d'Ulysse, qui joue un rôle central non seulement dans *L'ultimo viaggio* mais aussi dans *Il sonno di Odisseo* (publié pour la première fois en 1899 et paru de nouveau en 1904 dans le recueil *Poemi Conviviali*) et *Il ritorno* (écrit en 1901 et publié en 1906 dans *Odi e Inni*). Le sentiment d'aliénation d'Ulysse par rapport à sa patrie, déjà décrit dans *Il ritorno*, marque le prélude à son agitation intérieure (*Wanderlust*), qui se déploie dans *L'ultimo viaggio*. Avec *L'ultimo viaggio*, dans lequel Ulysse entreprend son dernier voyage, l'auteur se place délibérément dans la tradition de Dante et Tennyson. Par ailleurs, le poème de Pascoli est très différent de toutes les adaptations précédentes du thème d'Ulysse, celles notamment de ses prédécesseurs italiens, Graf et D'Annunzio. Dans le poème de Pascoli, le dernier voyage d'Ulysse n'est pas motivé par la curiosité et le désir de nouvelles expériences, comme c'était souvent le cas auparavant (Dante,

Tennyson, Graf), mais présente la recherche d'une personne anxieuse doutant de sa propre identité. Comme dans les adaptations de Lang, Lemaître et Gebhart, il s'agit d'un voyage rétrospectif vers les scènes des aventures passées d'Ulysse. Le but de ce voyage est de confirmer l'identité héroïque d'Ulysse, qui ne sait plus si ses souvenirs sont vrais ni si ce dont il se souvient de manière certaine s'est réellement produit. Nous avons donc ici un Ulysse qui contraste totalement avec le surhomme exubérant de D'Annunzio, ou même avec le héros narcissique de Graf, qui affiche jusqu'à la fin un optimisme inébranlable mais d'autant plus fatal. En revanche, dans le poème de Pascoli, nous rencontrons un personnage tourmenté, un "héros" caractéristique de l'esthétique de la fin de siècle et dont la recherche de son propre moi et du sens de son existence doit inévitablement échouer.

Sept ans après le poème de Pascoli, Cavafy publie dans une revue alexandrine son poème *Ιθάκη* (*Ithaca*, 1911), sans doute aujourd'hui l'un des poèmes grecs les plus cités et les plus traduits du XX^{ème} siècle. Le poème, que tous les écoliers grecs n'ont eu de cesse d'interpréter en classe et dont les vers sont désormais des slogans sur des T-shirts et des blocs-notes, intéresse relativement peu la recherche récente sur Cavafy, qui préfère se tourner vers des poèmes moins connus, hors des sentiers battus. C'est certainement la simplicité d'*Ithaque*, qui ne cache pas son message didactique (" C'est le chemin qui est le but"), qui a contribué à son succès. Dès le premier vers, le poème s'avère être une exhortation à la deuxième personne. A l'interlocuteur qui n'est pas précisé, il est conseillé de ne pas se dépêcher de se rendre à Ithaque et de profiter au mieux du voyage. La destination de l'Ulysse homérique et les figures mythologiques qu'il a rencontrées au cours de son voyage deviennent allégoriques du voyage de la vie. Par le passé, *Ithaque* a souvent été interprétée comme un développement de la deuxième *Odyssée*. En effet, *Ithaque* s'inscrit dans la même tradition littéraire que le poème de Cavafy écrit en 1894, avec lequel il est lié à bien des égards. Thématiquement, cependant, *Ithaque* est plus éloignée de ses modèles littéraires qui étaient encore explicitement mentionnés dans l'épigraphe de la *Seconde Odyssée*. La *Wanderlust*, qui dans la *Seconde Odyssée* était encore le résultat d'une transformation intérieure d'Ulysse, distinguant ainsi l'Ulysse de Dante et Tennyson de leur modèle homérique, est maintenant l'idéal que le narrateur conseille à son destinataire de suivre. Le retour

dans la patrie, que l'Ulysse de Dante avait été le premier à rejeter, ne nécessite plus ici un tel rejet. Au lieu de remplir cette fonction négative, Ithaque, la patrie tant désirée du héros homérique, s'intègre maintenant harmonieusement dans l'ensemble comme une (pseudo-)destination floue et lointaine. Dans son deuxième poème, qui repose sur le principe de la *Wanderlust* d'Ulysse, Cavafy ne juge plus nécessaire de souligner le contraste entre la nostalgie de l'Ulysse homérique et une *Wanderlust* autrefois peu conventionnelle. Au lieu de cela, la *Wanderlust* apparaît maintenant comme quelque chose de naturel qui ne nécessite plus de justification, mais décrit plutôt un état de fait idéal.

L'*Odyssée* de Nikos Kazantzakis est probablement la réécriture moderne la plus importante de l'*Odyssée*, qui se concentre sur le motif de la *Wanderlust*. L'auteur crétois, qui s'est surtout fait connaître au niveau international grâce à son dernier roman *Alexis Zorbas* (*Βίος και πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, 1946), a composé une œuvre très étendue qui englobe tous les genres. Mais son *opus magnum* est sans doute son *Odyssée*, sur laquelle il a commencé à travailler en 1924 et qu'il a finalement publiée en 1938. L'*Odyssée* occupe une place centrale dans la vie de Kazantzakis : car dans son épopée, l'auteur traite ses pensées philosophiques sur la base de ses propres expériences. Sous forme narrative, l'épopée contient toute sa vision philosophique du monde. Kazantzakis a provoqué du remous avec ses œuvres, dont certaines ont été interdites de publication en Grèce pendant longtemps, mais aussi avec ses activités politiques. Alors que d'une part, il était très apprécié par de nombreux intellectuels et écrivains pour ses œuvres littéraires, il était, par ailleurs, constamment critiqué et persécuté. Son *Odyssée*, qui compte plus de 30 000 versets, suscite également de nombreuses critiques lors de sa publication, tant pour son contenu que pour ses particularités linguistiques. L'approche holistique de l'ouvrage aboutit à un texte très dense et complexe qu'il est impossible de résumer en quelques lignes. L'*Odyssée* de Kazantzakis incarne la vitalité et la force et représente un nouveau type de surhomme nietzschéen qui professe une liberté absolue, ce qui conduit finalement à un "nihilisme optimiste". Sa recherche existentielle continue le mène à Sparte, en Crète, en Égypte, à travers toute l'Afrique et au pôle Sud. Au cours de son voyage, il joue un rôle important dans la chute de toute une civilisation et dans la création d'une nouvelle, il construit une ville idéale à la source du Nil, assiste à sa destruction et devient finalement un ermite. La *Wanderlust* est le motif central de cette

épopée moderne. En tant que telle, elle comporte de nombreux sous-motifs et se manifeste donc de nombreuses manières différentes. L'œuvre de Kazantzakis fait partie des réécritures de l'*Odyssée* dans lesquelles Ulysse retourne d'abord chez lui, puis quitte Ithaque pour entreprendre un nouveau voyage volontaire. Le motif du retour, si central dans l'*Odyssée* homérique, se transforme ici en son contraire : car la nouvelle demeure de cet Ulysse, emplies de la *Wanderlust*, sont la mer, l'étranger, l'exil choisi et le voyage. Selon cette nouvelle définition du foyer, le voyage est également interprété comme une nouvelle forme de retour chez soi. L'Ulysse de Kazantzakis, figure d'errant tourmenté éternellement en quête, qui est porté à l'extrême dans la figure du surhomme nietzschéen, n'a plus grand chose en commun avec son archétype homérique. Le cœur de son inspiration est cependant l'Ulysse de Dante, comme en témoignent d'innombrables passages. Les éléments les plus importants du texte de Kazantzakis sont les flammes et le feu qu'il contient, le motif du soleil ainsi que celui de l'audacieux explorateur, motifs qui parcourent toute l'*Odyssée* de Kazantzakis. Par ailleurs, de nombreux motifs seront également importants pour les adaptations ultérieures, plus récentes, de l'*Odyssée* homérique. Il s'agit notamment de l'anti-nostalgie d'Ulysse, de son refus de revenir (ou de faire marche arrière de quelque façon que ce soit), de la réinterprétation de la notion de foyer et, enfin et surtout, de son ouverture à l'étranger et à la nouveauté.

Dans la littérature contemporaine, Ulysse l'éternel vagabond fait également figure de précurseur mythique. Ce sont surtout les multiples expériences de migration de l'époque actuelle qui inspirent les adaptations modernes de l'*Odyssée*. L'une des œuvres les plus récentes que j'évoque dans ce contexte est le roman *L'ignorance* (2002) de l'écrivain franco-tchèque Milan Kundera. Le lien avec l'*Odyssée* est explicitement établi dans le texte, en ce sens que le narrateur compare les expériences (négatives) d'Irène et de Josef, deux émigrés tchèques qui retournent dans leur pays d'origine après une absence de vingt ans ou plus, avec le retour d'Ulysse. Au début du roman, Ulysse, tel que dépeint par Kundera, correspond toujours au héros homérique, principalement centripète ; mais au fur et à mesure que l'intrigue du roman progresse et qu'Irena et Joseph luttent contre les difficultés de leur retour et les conséquences de leur longue absence, Kundera réécrit l'histoire d'Ulysse. Le roman de Kundera déconstruit la notion

conventionnelle du foyer (au sens de patrie) et s'interroge sur la nécessité existentielle d'y retourner. Cela va de pair avec la conviction qu'un retour dans le passé est impossible, ce qui n'est pas nécessairement une mauvaise chose. Au lieu de l'impossibilité du retour, nous rencontrons dans l'*Odyssée* de Kazantzakis et le roman de Karla Suárez *La viajera* leur rejet total. Ici, les protagonistes sont déjà libérés de la nostalgie et des obligations sociales qui y sont associées. Mais non seulement ils ne ressentent aucun désir de retourner dans leur pays, mais ils rejettent aussi expressément tout mouvement de retour. Leur voyage est un voyage sans retour, du moins au sens classique du terme, car tant l'Ulysse de Kazantzakis que la Circé de Suárez redéfinissent à leur manière le foyer (et donc aussi le retour).

La dernière réécriture de l'*Odyssée* que je traite dans mon travail est le roman évoqué ci-dessus *La viajera* (*La voyageuse*, 2005) de l'écrivain cubaine Karla Suárez. Née en 1969 à La Havane à Cuba, où elle étudie la guitare classique et l'ingénierie électrique, Suarez a émigré de Cuba en 1998. Après son émigration, elle a vécu à Rome, à Paris et à Lisbonne, où elle vit encore aujourd'hui. Bien que la carrière littéraire de Suárez se soit principalement développée en dehors de Cuba, elle appartient à une génération d'écrivains cubains, souvent appelés *Los Novísimos*, qui sont nés et ont grandi après la révolution cubaine et ont vécu la profonde crise économique et sociopolitique des années 1990 qui a frappé Cuba après l'effondrement du communisme en Europe. Par conséquent, cette nouvelle génération d'écrivains s'efforce souvent de s'émanciper des normes révolutionnaires traditionnelles. La diversité et la pluralité de la pensée, qui est une préoccupation fondamentale de *La viajera* et qui va de pair avec le dépassement de la nationalité et de l'origine ethnique comme constituants déterminants de l'identité, représente une telle forme d'émancipation. En renégociant l'identité culturelle et en transformant l'*Odyssée* homérique dans cet esprit de pluralité, Suárez formule finalement des valeurs différentes de celles représentées par les dirigeants politiques du pays. Bien que le roman puisse être lu sans connaissance réelle du texte homérique, il gagne de nouvelles perspectives si on l'analyse sur fond d'*Odyssée*, qui sert bien de toile de fond à l'ensemble du texte. Vu sous cet angle, *La viajera* constitue une réécriture de l'*Odyssée* d'un point de vue féminin moderne. Car le protagoniste principal, Circé représente l'incarnation féminine d'un Ulysse entraîné par la force centrifuge, complétée par les éléments de féminité inhérents à la figure de Circé

homérique. *La viajera* raconte l'histoire de Circé et de Lucía, deux femmes qui ne pourraient pas être plus différentes. Circé, qui s'identifie à la "voyageuse" du titre du roman, est une vagabonde par excellence. Émigrée de Cuba et à la recherche de "sa" ville, elle passe sans cesse d'un pays à l'autre. Contrairement aux autres émigrés cubains qu'elle rencontre en chemin, elle ne rêve pas de retourner un jour à Cuba. Son amie Lucía, qui est l'homologue (centripète) de Circé dans le roman, ne la comprend pas. Car bien que Lucía ait également quitté Cuba et soit restée à l'étranger, elle regarde toujours en arrière avec une certaine nostalgie. La nostalgie du retour chez soi – ou, dans le cas de Circé, de son absence – est l'un des thèmes principaux du roman. La situation d'exil atypique d'une femme cubaine, qui a un rapport à l'émigration et à son pays loin des stéréotypes habituels, est décrite au moyen de la réécriture de l'*Odyssée* et sert ainsi à décrire une identité (hybride) de nature fluide et dynamique. En même temps, cette transformation de l'*Odyssée* peut être comprise comme une appropriation postcoloniale d'un mythe européen.

La façon dont toutes ces réécritures modernes de l'*Odyssée* dépeignent le héros homérique ne jette pas seulement une nouvelle lumière sur une histoire ancienne. Bien au contraire, la perception d'Ulysse en éternel vagabond en proie à des bouleversements intérieurs témoigne d'un changement culturel durable. Car c'est surtout aux incertitudes et aux angoisses de l'existence humaine que l'on s'adresse, à l'époque moderne, en recourant à l'éternel vagabond Ulysse. Ainsi, ce dernier se manifeste comme un phénomène essentiellement moderne. L'analyse comparative des adaptations de l'*Odyssée*, qui ont été largement étudiées dans le passé (Tennyson, Pascoli, D'Annunzio), et de celles qui n'ont reçu que peu ou pas d'attention dans un tel contexte (Gebhart, Kazantzakis, Suárez) a montré que c'est notamment en période de bouleversements et de transitions historiques que les auteurs se sont tournés vers l'Ulysse errant pour s'orienter. En fait, nombre de ces adaptations modernes sont apparues à des moments où les anciennes valeurs perdaient leur validité et étaient remises en question. Cette réévaluation des normes et des liens traditionnels n'était cependant pas seulement due à des circonstances historiques, mais aussi conditionnée par les expériences personnelles de chaque auteur.

Il est vrai que les réponses données par les différents auteurs au fil du temps à la quête existentielle du héros sont très variées, allant d'un tableau pessimiste de la vie humaine à une peinture optimiste et dynamique. Cependant, dans le contexte de *Wanderlust* existentielle, les thèmes récurrents sont la curiosité et l'(anti)nostalgie, la désillusion et le retour, le (nouveau) départ et l'autre/étranger ainsi que la signification du temps, du foyer et de l'appartenance. En effet, dans ces réécritures modernes, il ne peut plus être considéré comme acquis qu'Ulysse rentrera chez lui et se sentira chez lui car l'identité est de plus en plus difficile à définir.

Ainsi, en référence au mythe d'Ulysse, des questions d'une grande actualité telles que la migration et la signification sans cesse en mutation du foyer sont examinées et repensées. Le caractère changeant du héros homérique contribue ainsi au fait qu'Ulysse sert encore aujourd'hui de prédécesseur mythique, dont l'histoire permet de dépeindre en de puissantes images les conflits d'identité, l'absence de foyer et le mal du pays, l'étrangeté et la curiosité.

En effet, l'éternel vagabond Ulysse reste intéressant tant que les hommes recherchent la connaissance et se posent la question sur le sens de leur propre existence - au risque même de ne pas trouver de réponse satisfaisante. Étant donné le grand pouvoir d'attraction qui émane encore d'un Ulysse frappé par la *Wanderlust*, on peut supposer qu'il ne cessera pas de le faire dans les temps à venir. Il reste donc à discerner vers quelles rives inexplorées le voyage d'Ulysse, et de l'*Odyssee*, mènera dans le futur, que ce soit dans la littérature ou dans d'autres sphères d'expression créative de l'homme.

Riassunto in italiano

L'Odissea riparte

La *Wanderlust* nelle moderne trasformazioni letterarie dell'*Odissea*

Il presente lavoro esplora il motivo della *Wanderlust* nelle moderne trasformazioni letterarie dell'*Odissea* omerica. Nella maggior parte dei testi analizzati, che rovesciano consapevolmente l'idea del nostos omerico, la *Wanderlust* si manifesta attraverso un nuovo (e di solito ultimo) viaggio di Ulisse. Tuttavia, tale viaggio non costituisce un criterio di esclusione per la selezione dei testi. Ciò che invece contraddistingue la *Wanderlust* in questo lavoro è lo stato mentale di un'inquietudine interiore. La *Wanderlust*, liberata dalle sue connotazioni romantiche, diventa così una categoria esistenziale. Il *tertium comparationis* che unisce i testi del corpus studiato è quindi l'*inquietum* dell'esistenza umana, che si riflette come problema antropologico centrale nelle molteplici elaborazioni del mito di Ulisse.

Nel presente lavoro mi occupo del motivo della *Wanderlust* ulissiaca da Omero ai giorni nostri, concentrandomi soprattutto sulle trasformazioni dell'*Odissea* a partire dall'Ottocento, che rappresenta il periodo di massima fioritura del motivo. Le lingue dei testi trattati sono l'italiano, il francese, il tedesco, lo spagnolo, il greco moderno e l'inglese, senza che la selezione si limiti alla mera area geografica europea. Una prima parte del lavoro è dedicata all'*Odissea* omerica (capitolo 2) e, nel capitolo successivo, alla *Divina Commedia* di Dante Alighieri (capitolo 3). Insieme, questi due testi costituiscono il fondamento per la seguente analisi delle trasformazioni moderne (capitolo 5). Questa è preceduta da un altro capitolo che esamina due testi del Rinascimento italiano (capitolo 4). È infatti la positiva reinterpretazione della *curiositas* ulissiaca nel Rinascimento che prepara la rinascita del motivo della *Wanderlust* nell'Ottocento.

L'Ulisse omerico, come risulta dall'analisi dell'*Odissea* nel secondo capitolo, non si presta a una caratterizzazione unilaterale. Da un lato, egli ha un forte desiderio di tornare a casa. Dall'altro, ci sono numerosi passaggi che ne rivelano la curiosità e il lato

avventuroso. La *Wanderlust* di Ulisse viene sottolineata ripetutamente nel corso dell'epopea e nella maggior parte dei casi non viene sottoposta ad alcuna valutazione. Lo stato esistenziale della *Wanderlust*, che sarà al centro di molte elaborazioni moderne dell'*Odissea*, non è quindi un'invenzione puramente post-omerica, ma rappresenta già un elemento importante dell'*Odissea* stessa. Inoltre, una continuazione dei viaggi di Ulisse è esplicitamente annunciata nella profezia che egli riceve da Tiresia nell'Oltretomba (*Od.* 11.119–37) e viene anche richiamata alla fine dell'*Odissea* (*Od.* 23.248–53; 264–84). Infine, il racconto falso di Ulisse in *Od.* 14.192–359 mostra che un eroe prevalentemente “centrifugo”, dominato dalla *Wanderlust*, in realtà non era impensabile per Omero. Al contrario, è proprio questo tipo di eroe che si distingue volutamente da Ulisse, il quale, nonostante i momenti di *Wanderlust*, è essenzialmente orientato verso la patria. Il fatto che Ulisse sia anche curioso e spesso ceda alla tentazione di esplorare i dintorni non fa che sottolinearne il lato umano, alla luce del quale la ferrea determinazione a tornare a casa e il ritorno stesso emergono come un successo ancora più eccezionale. La *Wanderlust* fa quindi già parte della caratterizzazione altamente differenziata dell'Ulisse omerico e come tale rappresenta un motivo che l'autore impiega consapevolmente.

Molti secoli dopo Omero, nel Trecento, Dante Alighieri è il primo a presentare Ulisse come un eroe del tutto “centrifugo”, non più orientato verso la patria, ma verso l'esterno. Dante, che conosceva l'*Odissea* solo da fonti latine secondarie, fa apparire Ulisse nell'*Inferno* (XXVI, 52–142) della sua *Divina Commedia*. Qui Ulisse racconta come, dopo il suo soggiorno presso la dimora di Circe, non tornò a Itaca, ma – spinto dalla voglia di esplorare il mondo – convinse i suoi compagni a intraprendere un viaggio nell'ignoto, oltre le Colonne d'Ercole, i confini del mondo conosciuto. Quando in lontananza appare una “montagna bruna”, che in seguito è stata spesso interpretata come il Monte Purgatorio, si alza una violenta tempesta e la nave viene inghiottita dal mare insieme al suo equipaggio. Nell'opera di Dante, quindi, Ulisse non è più l'eroe “centripeto”, ma l'avventuriero che si immerge volontariamente nell'ignoto. Tuttavia, questo passaggio dell'*Inferno* non ci permette di giudicare se la trasgressione di Ulisse vada troppo lontano dal punto di vista di Dante e se, di conseguenza, sia la sua *hybris* ad essere la sua rovina, come viene spesso sostenuto. Ma a prescindere da un'attitudine

positiva o negativa di Dante riguardo alla *curiositas*, e dal fatto che moralmente condannasse o meno la ricerca di conoscenza di Ulisse, la figura dell'Ulisse dantesco testimonia indubbiamente un nuovo atteggiamento verso il mondo.

Così, nelle celebri terzine dell'*Inferno*, Dante sposta l'enfasi dalla nostalgia alla *Wanderlust*, e attraverso questo spostamento esercita un'influenza decisiva sulla ricezione successiva della figura di Ulisse. Ma anche nell'antichità circolavano già diverse versioni della fine di Ulisse. Così, l'antica *Telegonia* (*Τηλεγόνοια* o *-ία*), che viene generalmente attribuita a Eugammone di Cirene e che molto probabilmente può essere datata al sesto secolo a.C., descrive una continuazione del viaggio di Ulisse. L'opera fa parte del cosiddetto *Ciclo epico*, un gruppo di epiche esametriche dei primi tempi greci, che sono scritte in stile omerico e narrano di eventi non raccontati nell'*Iliade* e nell'*Odissea*. Il titolo *Telegonia* si riferisce a Telegono, “quello che è nato lontano”, che è il figlio di Circe e Ulisse e che alla fine ucciderà involontariamente il proprio padre. La *Telegonia*, che è sopravvissuta solo in pochi frammenti, è quindi la prima opera a noi nota che descrive una continuazione dei viaggi di Ulisse. Tuttavia, non è possibile stabilire oggi se Dante conoscesse questa versione alternativa dell'Eugammone dalle fonti latine e se ne fosse stato ispirato.

Mentre la rappresentazione dantesca di un Ulisse guidato dalla *Wanderlust* non può essere definita chiaramente positiva o negativa, testimoniando così il passaggio epocale dal Medioevo al primo periodo moderno, il successivo Rinascimento assume una posizione molto più chiara. Infatti, la *curiositas* di Ulisse, o meglio la sua voglia di conoscenza e di esperienza come possibile manifestazione della *Wanderlust*, adesso non viene più considerata un vizio. Non si tratta però di un semplice passaggio da una prospettiva negativa a una positiva, perché ciò implicherebbe, da un lato, una condanna del viaggio di Ulisse nella *Commedia* dantesca e, dall'altro, una semplificazione della complessa rappresentazione della *curiositas* nei testi rinascimentali. È piuttosto l'ambiguità di Dante riguardo a Ulisse che ora viene reinterpretata positivamente nel Rinascimento con il suo deliberato ricorso all'antichità classica.

Gli eventi storici hanno naturalmente contribuito in larga misura a questo cambiamento letterario. Infatti, la (ri)scoperta europea dell'America nel 1492 e la sua incipiente colonizzazione estendono i confini del mondo conosciuto e portano a un nuovo spirito europeo di scoperta e di espansione imperialista, che non è più

compatibile con l'idea delle Colonne d'Ercole come fine del mondo e frontiera impraticabile. Il viaggio di Ulisse descritto da Dante non è più considerato un'impresa assurda, ma sta guadagnando sempre più credibilità. L'estensione dei confini geografici porta, per così dire, a un'espansione del possibile e dell'immaginazione che ne deriva. È questa diversa percezione del mondo nella cosiddetta "Età delle scoperte" che rende il Rinascimento indispensabile per il successivo sviluppo letterario del motivo della *Wanderlust*. La reinterpretazione positiva della *curiositas* può essere illustrata tramite l'esempio di due opere italiane: *L'Orlando furioso* (1516–32) di Ludovico Ariosto e *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581) di Torquato Tasso. Entrambi i testi riflettono lo spirito di scoperta dell'epoca, in quanto recepiscono l'Ulisse omerico e dantesco nel contesto dei viaggi di scoperta europei. Così il Rinascimento prepara il terreno per la successiva fioritura del motivo della *Wanderlust* ulissiaca nell'Ottocento.

All'inizio dello sviluppo letterario, che viene delineato nel corpo principale di questo lavoro, si trova l'influente poema *Ulysses* (1833) di Alfred Lord Tennyson. La reinterpretazione positiva della *curiositas* nel Rinascimento prepara il ritorno di Ulisse come eterno vagabondo, che come tale avrebbe dominato la tradizione successiva. Con la sua poesia, Tennyson è il primo autore moderno a seguire le orme di Omero e Dante in questo senso. Egli presenta un Ulisse afflitto da una *Wanderlust* come l'avevamo visto l'ultima volta nell'*Inferno* dantesco, "con il desiderio / Di seguire il sapere come una stella cadente, / Oltre il massimo limite del pensiero umano." (*Ulysses*, vv. 30–2). Disilluso e pieno di avversione per la sua patria e la sua famiglia, egli anela a un nuovo viaggio. In un energico monologo esprime il suo forte desiderio di conoscenza e di esplorazione. L'eroe di Tennyson rivela un misto di sentimenti egoistici ed eroici, e alla fine sono questi ultimi a prevalere. Forse sono anche i racconti delle esplorazioni marittime dei marinai inglesi che hanno ispirato il ritratto di Tennyson di un Ulisse che prende il largo. Allo stesso tempo, oltre agli elementi di ottimismo del poema, cominciano già ad emergere idee caratteristiche del tardo modernismo, come la disillusione e la stanchezza dell'eroe, nonché lo sradicamento e l'alienazione dalla patria. L'opera poetica di Tennyson rientra in gran parte nell'epoca post-romantica dell'Inghilterra vittoriana (1837–1901), in cui la vita e la società furono fortemente influenzate dall'industrializzazione e dall'urbanizzazione. La sconfitta di Napoleone

nella battaglia di Waterloo (1815) aveva rafforzato il potere della Gran Bretagna e gettato le basi per una continua crescita economica e per l'espansione politica dell'Impero britannico. Dal punto di vista storico-letterario, Tennyson si pone tra il romanticismo e la decadenza del *fin de siècle*. Molte caratteristiche di quest'ultima crisi culturale vengono già riflesse nelle sue opere.

Mentre l'eroe (semi-romantico) di Tennyson è ancora consumato dalla nostalgia del viaggio, nel poema anti-progressivo *Le voyage* (1859) di Charles Baudelaire il viaggio viene rifiutato come un'ingenua fuga dalla realtà. Qui l'Eldorado cercato dal viaggiatore non esiste. Così, nella poesia finale dei *Fleurs du Mal*, il cui collegamento con l'ipertesto omerico e quello dantesco è molto più sottile che nel poema di Tennyson, la *Wanderlust* ulissiaca viene decostruita in modo ironico. Fin dall'inizio la poesia è dominata da un sottotondo ironico, che diventa sempre più forte con il progredire dell'opera. Già nei primi versi si preannuncia che l'entusiasmo infantile del viaggiatore verrà deluso. La sua *Wanderlust* iniziale si contrappone all'esperienza reale di un mondo monotono, "un'oasi di orrore in un deserto di noia!" (*Le voyage*, VII, 4). Alla fine del viaggio domina la noia (*ennui*) e l'unica cosa "nuova" o sconosciuta che rimane ancora da scoprire è la morte. Di conseguenza, l'ultimo viaggio, la morte, viene attesa con impazienza. In un'epoca di crescente fascino per i viaggi e l'esotismo, Baudelaire, apertamente anti-progressivo e anti-naturalista, si confronta sia con la mania di viaggiare del suo tempo sia con l'idea di un progresso tecnico infinito. Egli rifiuta il viaggio – e con esso l'Ulisse dantesco che lo incarna – come un'illusione che non può nascondere né la monotonia e la banalità del mondo né la sua corruzione.

Il seguente testo del nostro corpus dedicato alla *Wanderlust* è un'opera giovanile di un altro autore vittoriano: Andrew Lang. Studioso classico, mostra una predilezione per i temi letterari ispirati all'antichità greca. Nel suo ciclo di poesie *Hesperothen* (1872), gli anonimi protagonisti – un gruppo di marinai comparabile ai "viaggiatori" ("voyageurs") di Baudelaire – intraprendono un viaggio a occidente verso le isole dei Beati. Ma anche qui il viaggio finisce in disillusione, perché esso non porta l'auspicata liberazione da tutti i desideri ma la loro infinita espansione. Come nel *Quarto libro* (*Quart Livre*, 1552) della pentalogia eroicomica di François Rabelais sul gigante Gargantua e suo figlio Pantagruel, l'isola raggiunta alla fine non è l'isola dei Beati, ma quella degli eterni invecchiati. Ma in contrasto con l'episodio di Rabelais sull'isola dei

“Macraeons”, che è di per sé è una parodia del passaggio infernale di Dante, non c’è nulla di ridicolo nella futile ricerca dei marinai nell’*Hesperothen*. Piuttosto, la loro esistenza infinita e tetra ha qualcosa di profondamente inquietante. In questa tragica visione, l’uomo è condannato all’eterno sforzo, dal quale solo la morte può liberarlo. Ma è proprio questa liberazione che viene rifiutata nell’*Hesperothen*. L’opposto avverrà nell’epopea di Kazantzakis, dove Ulisse, che come i marinai di Lang cerca di liberarsi da tutti i legami, raggiunge finalmente la libertà assoluta nella morte. Perché se per Baudelaire soltanto la morte può liberare dalla monotonia dell’esistenza umana, per Lang e Kazantzakis la vera pace si può trovare solo nella morte.

Il ciclo poetico di Lang è seguito da un poema che rimanda ancora una volta più fortemente all’Ulisse di Tennyson ed è scritto da un autore oggi quasi dimenticato: l’*Odysseus* (1877) di Paul Heyse. Questo poema tedesco, che contiene gli elementi fondamentali della *Wanderlust* ulissiaca, testimonia da un lato la formazione filologica di Heyse e dall’altro il suo grande entusiasmo per la letteratura italiana. Inoltre, ci offre anche un presagio dell’umore malinconico che diventerà caratteristico della trasformazione dell’*Odisea* pascoliana alcuni decenni più tardi. Chiamato in giovane età alla corte di Massimiliano II di Baviera, Heyse divenne uno dei più importanti rappresentanti del circolo poetico “Münchener Dichterkreis”, che si ispirava agli ideali del classicismo distinguendosi così dalla letteratura contemporanea del realismo. Ben presto egli diventa uno degli autori preferiti dai tedeschi, e contemporanei come Theodor Fontane lo consideravano un successore di Goethe, che avrebbe annunciato una nuova epoca. Verso la fine della sua vita, però, e nonostante Heyse sia stato insignito del Premio Nobel nel 1910, la sua popolarità diminuì a tal punto da venire già dimenticato alla fine del Novecento e rimanere in gran parte sconosciuto fino ad oggi. L’accusa di superficialità e di perfezione artificiale, che spesso è stata mossa contro la sua vasta opera, non è affatto giustificata per quanto riguarda il poema *Odysseus*. Al contrario, la rappresentazione di Heyse di un Ulisse consumato da un desiderio indeterminato e paradossalmente “perso” nella sicurezza della sua patria colpisce il cuore della *Wanderlust* ulissiaca. In effetti, il suo breve poema contiene tutti gli elementi che saranno fondamentali per l’ulteriore sviluppo letterario di Ulisse come eterno vagabondo.

Dopo la poesia di Heyse, nel 1890 viene pubblicata una seconda elaborazione dell'*Odissea* di Andrew Lang, che, pur essendo anch'essa incentrata sulla *Wanderlust*, in contrasto con il suo ciclo di poesie *Hesperothen*, appartiene al genere della letteratura fantastica: nel romanzo d'avventura *The World's Desire* (1890), scritto da Andrew Lang insieme al noto romanziere H. Rider Haggard, Ulisse parte per un viaggio in Egitto dopo il ritorno a Itaca, la quale è stata devastata dalla peste. A guidarlo è il desiderio di trovare la bella Elena, che qui rappresenta la personificazione di tutte le brame umane. Nonostante la natura enfaticamente eroica di Ulisse, egli finisce per morire per mano di suo figlio Telegono. In termini di contenuto, il romanzo presenta molte analogie con altre elaborazioni dell'*Odissea* qui considerate. Allo stesso tempo si distingue consapevolmente dalla *Commedia* di Dante. Mentre Ulisse viene mandato in un "ultimo viaggio" completamente diverso, la destinazione dell'Ulisse dantesco, il mondo sconosciuto al di là delle Colonne d'Ercole, viene menzionata quasi casualmente. Tuttavia, qui si tratta di un mondo abitato la cui esplorazione è già iniziata. L'esplorazione di mondi sconosciuti, che nel caso di Dante e dei suoi diretti successori si concentra ancora sul mondo al di là delle Colonne d'Ercole, continua a svolgere un ruolo importante nella letteratura fantastica (e più tardi nella letteratura fantasy). Ora però l'interesse si sposta verso regioni geografiche del mondo che non sono ancora state pienamente esplorate dagli europei. Nell'Ottocento, grazie a nuove scoperte archeologiche, l'Egitto e Troia esercitavano un grande fascino, che si riflette anche nel romanzo di Lang e Haggard. Allo stesso tempo, *The World's Desire*, che costituisce il modello letterario diretto per il racconto di Émile Gebhart *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902), sembra sia servito anche a Nikos Kazantzakis come fonte d'ispirazione per la sua *Οδύσσεια* (*Odissea*, 1938), in cui si ritrovano numerosi elementi del romanzo.

Un'altra trasformazione greca dell'*Odissea* viene scritta ad Alessandria d'Egitto, alla fine dell'Ottocento, da Constantine Cavafy. Tuttavia, il suo poema *Δευτέρα Οδύσσεια* (*Seconda Odissea*), composto nel 1894, e il saggio *Τὸ τέλος τοῦ Ὀδυσσέως* (*La fine di Ulisse*), scritto pochi mesi dopo, rimangono inediti per molto tempo e vengono pubblicati solo un secolo dopo. Questi testi, scoperti solo tardivamente, non solo gettano nuova luce sul poema canonico *Ἰθάκη* (*Itaca*, 1911), ma identificano Cavafy come uno dei primi autori a riprendere il motivo della *Wanderlust* di Ulisse con esplicito

riferimento a Omero, Dante e Tennyson. Come in Tennyson e Heyse, anche qui il ritorno tanto atteso di Ulisse è seguito dalla disillusione. Anche se Ulisse, come il suo predecessore dantesco, parte per un viaggio in Occidente e verso le Colonne d'Ercole, il risultato di questo viaggio rimane aperto, come nel Tennyson. La sensazione di un vuoto liberatorio che l'Ulisse di Cavafy sperimenta alla partenza può a sua volta essere visto come un presagio di quel "nichilismo ottimista" che diventerà caratteristico dell'Ulisse di Kazantzakis nel Novecento.

Nello stesso anno in cui vengono scritti il poema e il saggio di Cavafy, l'autore francese Jules Lemaître pubblica il racconto *Nausicaa* (1894). A differenza di Cavafy, Lemaître non si orienta a Dante e Tennyson, ma va a collocarsi piuttosto nella tradizione francese di *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1699) di Fénelon. Nella *Nausicaa* di Lemaître, una continuazione parodistica dell'*Odissea* in prosa, Telemaco segue le orme del padre intraprendendo un viaggio – questa volta non alla ricerca di Itaca, ma della lontana principessa Nausicaa di cui ha sentito tanto parlare. A causa della sua natura curiosa e nonostante gli avvertimenti del padre, il viaggio, che riattraversa le tappe avventurose di Ulisse, continua a protrarsi. Nausicaa, l'"Itaca" di Telemaco, è un obiettivo che egli segue con cieca ingenuità e che serve da schermo di proiezione per i suoi desideri fino all'ultimo momento. Quando raggiunge finalmente Scheria, è deluso nello scoprire che non solo Nausicaa è ormai vecchia, ma che il tempo è passato anche per lui stesso. *Nausicaa* riprende così il motivo di un nuovo viaggio dopo il ritorno di Ulisse con un eroe tormentato dalla *Wanderlust*. Telemaco, il presunto eroe epico, non mostra segni di *politropia* ulissica o di grandezza eroica, ma è presentato come inesperto e ingenuo. In questa trasformazione dell'*Odissea* non c'è quindi traccia dell'audace trasgressione dantesca. In compenso, altri elementi tipici delle continuazioni francesi dell'*Odissea*, come l'età, la disillusione e l'ironia, passano in primo piano. Allo stesso tempo, nel testo di Lemaître si percepisce un tono leggermente satirico, che nell'opera successiva di Gebhart si trasformerà in un sarcasmo mordente, quasi malizioso.

La poesia *L'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse* (1897) dello scrittore italiano Arturo Graf, che comprende 508 versi, è ancora una volta più fortemente orientata verso Dante. Questa poesia riprende la storia di Ulisse quattro anni dopo il suo ritorno a Itaca. Stanco della sua patria, Ulisse parte con i suoi vecchi compagni per un nuovo viaggio, la cui

destinazione, come nell'opera di Dante, è l'ignoto mondo al di là delle Colonne d'Ercole. Anche qui, l'attraversamento dei confini di Ulisse porta inevitabilmente alla sua morte. La tensione tra l'euforia e l'eroismo della prima parte del poema e la sua brusca e apocalittica fine può essere vista come sintomatica della fine dell'Ottocento, in cui la paura del futuro e l'euforia per lo stesso vanno di pari passo. Così l'Ulisse inquieto è quasi predestinato ad esprimere le incertezze del *fin de siècle*. Ciò che era già stato preannunciato nell'inevitabilità dell'*ennui* baudelairian è all'opera anche qui. Nel momento in cui l'Ulisse di Graf, avanzando con incrollabile fiducia, si impegna a sfuggire al *taedium vitae*, è già condannato al fallimento. Anche se Graf non era ostile al positivismo come Baudelaire, anche lui nega risolutamente la possibilità di sfuggire alla noia (*ennui*).

La prima elaborazione dell'*Odissea* con un focus sulla *Wanderlust* ad apparire nel Novecento è il romanzo di 147 pagine *Les dernières aventures du divin Ulysse* (1902) dell'autore e studioso francese Émile Gebhart. Qui Ulisse, descritto come l'ultimo dei grandi eroi, intraprende un nuovo viaggio insieme al vecchio amico Menelao, che lo conduce in molti luoghi diversi. Tuttavia, a causa delle esperienze negative durante il viaggio, decide di tornare a Itaca. In seguito, però, viene ucciso subdolamente da Telegono, suo figlio, proprio nel luogo dove lui stesso aveva ucciso il piccolo Astianatte, il figlio di Ettore, e dove sperava di purificarsi dal suo crimine. Considerate le qualità prevalentemente positive attribuite a Ulisse nel corso del racconto, l'uccisione del protagonista da parte del figlio sadico appare tanto più crudele e conferisce alla storia un retrogusto amaro. Nonostante la data di pubblicazione tardiva nel 1902, il racconto di Gebhart mostra molti tratti romantici. Tra questi, la sensualità e l'estetica del linguaggio, l'*ennui* dell'eroe e, non ultimo, lo stile satirico-epico con un mélange di elementi comici e tragici che contribuisce alla "detronizzazione" dell'eroe classico. Come nella *Nausicaa* di Lemaître, l'Ulisse dantesco è irrilevante per questa trasformazione francese dell'*Odissea*. Tuttavia, mentre Lemaître si accontentava della delusione dell'ingenuo Telemaco, Gebhart porta il suo protagonista a una fine atroce.

Solo un anno dopo, nel 1903, il poeta italiano Gabriele D'Annunzio pubblica *Maia* (o *Laus Vitae*), il primo libro della sua incompiuta raccolta lirica *Laudi del cielo, del mare, della terra, e degli eroi* (1903–1912). Il poema è la versione mitologizzata di un viaggio in Grecia che lo stesso D'Annunzio intraprese con degli amici su una crociera nel 1895.

In *Maia*, il poeta stesso è il protagonista, che intraprende un nuovo viaggio e si identifica con un Ulisse modellato sul sovrumano nietzscheano. La figura di Ulisse come eroe navigatore si dimostra centrale in tutto il poema. Come molti dei suoi predecessori letterari, anche questo Ulisse è un avatar dell'Ulisse dantesco, il quale viene evocato già all'inizio dell'opera. Eppure, oltre all'esaltazione eroica, non conosciamo nulla né della destinazione del viaggio di Ulisse né della sua motivazione. L'unico obiettivo del viaggio sembra essere la realizzazione dell'eroe sovrumano. A causa della sua attività politica e militare durante la prima guerra mondiale, della sua influenza sul fascismo italiano e successiva vicinanza al regime fascista di Benito Mussolini, D'Annunzio rimane a tutt'oggi una figura molto controversa nella storia della letteratura italiana. In seguito all'Impresa di Fiume (oggi Rijeka in Croazia) nel 1919, effettuata senza il consenso del governo italiano, venne celebrato come un eroe di guerra dai nazionalisti italiani appartenenti al movimento fascista che proprio in quegli anni andava formandosi. Sembra quasi, alla luce della sua concezione di un Ulisse sovrumano, che il poeta volesse emulare l'eroe guerriero nella vita reale. Riguardo al contesto letterario del poema dannunziano, esso nasce alla fine dell'Ottocento, in una fase marcata dal ritorno all'antichità, che in Italia dà luogo a interpretazioni del mito di Ulisse tanto diverse tra loro come quelle di D'Annunzio e di Pascoli. Allo stesso tempo, l'elaborazione dannunziana dell'*Odissea* rivela anche numerose affinità con l'*Odissea* greca di Kazantzakis, per la quale, ad esempio, il sovrumano nietzscheano svolge un ruolo importante. Anche se questo energico *Übermensch*, che non conosce confini né morale, si ritrova in entrambe le opere, a differenza di D'Annunzio, spesso accusato di adottare solo superficialmente il pensiero di Nietzsche, quest'ultimo ebbe un'influenza formativa sul pensiero di Kazantzakis. Infatti, non solo la sua *Odissea* ma tutta l'opera è permeata dalla filosofia di Nietzsche. Così, nonostante le molte somiglianze, gli eroi di D'Annunzio e Kazantzakis mostrano una differenza sostanziale. A differenza dell'Ulisse di Kazantzakis, l'eroe navigatore dannunziano, che non pronuncia una sola parola durante la sua breve apparizione, non prende realmente vita, ma rimane un guscio vuoto che serve solo a dare slancio e direzione al poema. Allo stesso modo, la sua impresa manca di uno scopo finale. L'Ulisse di Kazantzakis, invece, nel corso del viaggio

subisce uno sviluppo complesso, dietro il quale si trova nascosta l'intera visione filosofica dell'autore.

Solo un anno dopo le *Laudi* di D'Annunzio, Giovanni Pascoli, che rappresenta l'altro grande esponente del *decadentismo* italiano, pubblica il poemetto *L'ultimo viaggio* (1904) nella raccolta di poesie *Poemi Conviviali*. L'opera del Pascoli, noto studioso dell'antichità e vissuto in un'epoca in cui l'entusiasmo per essa sperimentava una nuova rinascita in Europa, mostra una forte influenza dell'antichità greco-romana. Allo stesso tempo, però, Pascoli è anche fortemente influenzato della *décadence* di fine secolo e, pur scegliendo spesso temi classici, attribuisce a loro un significato completamente nuovo. A differenza del suo maestro Carducci, non si proponeva di applicare gli ideali classici alla poesia moderna; anzi, ricorreva a quest'ultima per esprimere le proprie sensibilità decadenti. Uno dei temi classici che Pascoli riprende ripetutamente nella sua opera è il mito di Ulisse, che occupa un ruolo centrale non solo nell'*Ultimo viaggio*, ma anche nel *Sonno di Odisseo* (pubblicato per la prima volta nel 1899 e, per seconda volta, nel 1904 come parte dei *Poemi Conviviali*) e ne *Il ritorno* (scritto nel 1901 e pubblicato nel 1906 in *Odi e Inni*). Il sentimento di alienazione dalla patria, già descritto nel *Ritorno*, segna gli albori dell'inquietudine interiore di Ulisse, che si dispiega nell'*Ultimo viaggio*. Con questo poemetto, in cui Ulisse intraprende il suo "ultimo viaggio", l'autore si colloca consapevolmente nella tradizione di Dante e Tennyson. Allo stesso tempo, la poesia di Pascoli si differenzia fortemente da tutte le precedenti elaborazioni del tema di Ulisse, incluse quelle dei suoi predecessori italiani Graf e D'Annunzio. Nella poesia di Pascoli, l'ultimo viaggio di Ulisse non è motivato dalla curiosità e dal desiderio di nuove esperienze come in Dante, Tennyson e Graf, ma rappresenta la ricerca di un uomo insicuro e dubbioso della propria identità. Come nelle elaborazioni di Lang, Lemaître e Gebhart, si tratta di un viaggio a ritroso verso i luoghi delle avventure passate. Lo scopo di questo viaggio è quello di confermare l'identità eroica di Ulisse, che non è più sicuro se quello che ricorda sia accaduto realmente. Così l'Ulisse pascoliano si contrappone nettamente al sovrumano agguerrito di D'Annunzio, ma anche all'eroe narcisista di Graf, che mostra un ottimismo incrollabile, ma tanto più fatale, fino all'ultimo momento. Nella poesia di Pascoli, invece, incontriamo un uomo inquieto, un "eroe" che è caratteristico dell'estetica del *fin de siècle*, la cui ricerca di se stesso e del senso della propria esistenza è inevitabilmente destinata a fallire.

Sette anni dopo la poesia di Pascoli, Cavafy pubblica il poema *Ιθάκη* (*Itaca*, 1911) su una rivista alessandrina. Ormai è senza dubbio una delle poesie greche più citate e tradotte del Novecento. Il poema, che ogni alunno greco di oggi ha discusso all'infinito in classe e i cui versi figurano come slogan su magliette e taccuini, è di poco interesse per gli studiosi di Cavafy, che invece preferiscono rivolgersi a poesie meno conosciute e fuori dai sentieri battuti. È certamente la semplicità di *Itaca*, che non fa mistero del suo messaggio didattico ("la via è la meta"), che ha contribuito al suo successo. Dal primo verso, il poema si rivela come un discorso parenetico in seconda persona. Al destinatario non specificato si consiglia di non affrettarsi a raggiungere Itaca e di godersi il viaggio il più possibile. La destinazione dell'Ulisse omerico e le figure mitologiche incontrate nel suo viaggio diventano un'allegoria per il viaggio della vita. In passato, *Itaca* è stata spesso interpretata come uno sviluppo della *Seconda Odissea*. In effetti, *Itaca* si iscrive nella stessa tradizione letteraria come quella poesia del 1894, alla quale è collegata in molti modi. A livello tematico, comunque, *Itaca* si distacca adesso più fortemente dai suoi modelli letterari, che figuravano ancora esplicitamente nell'epigrafe della *Seconda Odissea*. La *Wanderlust*, che nella *Seconda Odissea* era ancora il risultato di una trasformazione interiore di Ulisse, distinguendo così l'Ulisse di Dante e Tennyson dal loro modello omerico, è ormai l'ideale che il narratore consiglia al suo lettore di seguire. Il ritorno in patria, che l'Ulisse dantesco era stato il primo a rifiutare, non richiede più un tale respingimento. Invece di riempire questo spazio negativo, *Itaca*, l'agognata patria dell'eroe omerico, ora si inserisce armoniosamente nell'insieme come una (pseudo-)destinazione sfocata e lontana. Nel suo secondo poema basato sulla premessa della *Wanderlust*, Cavafy non ritiene più necessario sottolineare il contrasto tra la nostalgia del Ulisse omerico e una *Wanderlust* (una volta) trasgressiva. Al contrario, la *Wanderlust* appare ora come qualcosa di naturale che non richiede più giustificazioni, ma descrive piuttosto uno stato ideale.

Probabilmente, la trasformazione moderna più significativa dell'*Odissea* incentrata sul motivo della *Wanderlust* è l'*Odissea* di Nikos Kazantzakis. L'autore cretese, divenuto noto a livello internazionale soprattutto per il suo tardo romanzo *Alexis Zorbas* (*Βίος και πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, 1946), ha creato un corpus di opere molto vasto che abbraccia tutti i generi. Il suo *magnum opus*, tuttavia, è rappresentato senza dubbio

dall'*Odissea*, alla quale iniziò a lavorare nel 1924 e che pubblicò infine nel 1938. L'*Odissea* occupa una posizione centrale nella vita di Kazantzakis: infatti, nella sua epopea, l'autore elabora il suo pensiero filosofico sulla base delle proprie esperienze. In forma narrativa, l'epopea quindi contiene tutta la sua visione filosofica del mondo. Con le sue opere, alcune delle quali furono bandite per lungo tempo dalla circolazione in Grecia, ma anche con la sua attività politica, Kazantzakis ha spesso suscitato scalpore. Se da un lato godeva della stima di molti intellettuali e scrittori per le sue opere letterarie, dall'altro veniva ripetutamente criticato e perseguitato. Anche la sua *Odissea*, lunga oltre 30.000 versi, ha provocato molte critiche alla pubblicazione, sia per il contenuto sia per le peculiarità linguistiche. L'approccio olistico dell'opera si traduce in un testo molto denso e complesso, impossibile da riassumere in poche righe. L'Ulisse di Kazantzakis incarna la vitalità e la forza e rappresenta un nuovo tipo di sovrumano nietzscheano che professa la libertà assoluta e che alla fine porterà a un "nichilismo ottimista". La sua continua ricerca esistenziale lo conduce a Sparta, a Creta, in Egitto, attraverso tutta l'Africa e al Polo Sud. Nel corso del viaggio, svolge un ruolo importante sia nella caduta di un'intera civiltà, sia nella creazione di una nuova, costruisce una città ideale alle sorgenti del Nilo, ne testimonia la distruzione e infine diventa un eremita. La *Wanderlust* è il motivo centrale di questa epopea moderna. In quanto tale, essa comprende numerosi sottomotivi e si manifesta quindi in molti modi diversi. L'opera di Kazantzakis appartiene alle trasformazioni dell'*Odissea* in cui Ulisse torna a casa prima di lasciare Itaca per intraprendere un nuovo viaggio volontario. Il motivo del ritorno in patria, così centrale nell'*Odissea* omerica, è qui trasformato nel suo opposto: la nuova patria di questo Ulisse errante è il mare e l'estraneo, l'esilio volontario e il viaggio. Secondo questa originale definizione di patria, il viaggio viene reinterpretato come una nuova forma di ritorno. L'Ulisse di Kazantzakis, l'irrequieto vagabondo ed eterno cercatore che viene portato all'estremo nella forma del sovrumano nietzschiano, non ha più molto in comune con il suo archetipo omerico. Il nucleo della sua ispirazione, tuttavia, è l'Ulisse di Dante, come testimoniano innumerevoli passaggi. Le caratteristiche dantesche più importanti nell'epopea di Kazantzakis sono il simbolismo della fiamma e del fuoco, il motivo del sole e della luce e quello dell'audace trasgressore, che insieme permeano l'intera opera. Allo stesso tempo, molti dei motivi qui contenuti saranno importanti anche per i successivi e più recenti adattamenti

dell'*Odissea* omerica. Tra queste, l'antinostalgia di Ulisse, il suo rifiuto del ritorno in patria (o di qualsiasi movimento all'indietro), la reinterpretazione della patria, e infine la sua ricettività verso l'altro e il nuovo.

Anche nella letteratura contemporanea, l'eterno errante Ulisse funge da mitico precursore. Sono soprattutto le molteplici esperienze migratorie del presente che ispirano i moderni adattamenti dell'*Odissea*. Una delle opere più recenti in questo contesto è il romanzo *L'ignorance* (2002) dello scrittore franco-ceco Milan Kundera. Il rapporto con l'*Odissea* è reso esplicito nel testo, poiché il narratore mette a confronto le esperienze di Irena e Josef, due emigranti cechi che tornano nel loro paese d'origine dopo un'assenza di circa vent'anni, con il ritorno di Ulisse. All'inizio del romanzo, Ulisse, così come ritratto da Kundera, corrisponde ancora all'eroe omerico prevalentemente centripeto; ma più la trama del romanzo progredisce e più Irena e Josef affrontano le difficoltà del ritorno e le conseguenze della lunga assenza, più Kundera sembra riscrivere la storia di Ulisse. Il romanzo di Kundera decostruisce il concetto convenzionale di "patria" e mette in discussione la necessità esistenziale di ritornarvi. Questo va di pari passo con la convinzione che un ritorno al passato è impossibile, il che non è necessariamente un male. Invece dell'impossibilità di tornare indietro, nell'*Odissea* di Kazantzakis e nel romanzo *La viajera* di Karla Suárez incontriamo il suo totale rifiuto. Qui i protagonisti sono già liberi dalla nostalgia e dagli obblighi sociali che ne derivano. Non solo non provano alcun desiderio di tornare in patria, ma rifiutano espressamente qualsiasi movimento all'indietro. Il loro è un viaggio senza ritorno, almeno in senso convenzionale, perché sia l'Ulisse di Kazantzakis sia la protagonista Circe di Suárez ridefiniscono la "patria" (e quindi anche il ritorno) a modo loro.

L'ultima trasformazione dell'*Odissea* che discuto nel mio lavoro è il già menzionato romanzo *La viajera* (2005) della scrittrice cubana Karla Suárez. Nata nel 1969 a L'Avana, dove ha studiato chitarra classica e ingegneria elettrica, Suárez è emigrata da Cuba nel 1998. Dopo l'emigrazione ha vissuto a Roma, Parigi e Lisbona, dove abita ancora oggi. Sebbene la carriera letteraria di Suárez si sia sviluppata principalmente al di fuori del paese di origine, l'autrice appartiene a una generazione di scrittori cubani, spesso chiamati *los Novísimos*, nati e cresciuti dopo la Rivoluzione e che hanno vissuto

la profonda crisi economica e socio-politica degli anni Novanta che ha colpito l'isola dopo il crollo del comunismo in Europa. Di conseguenza, questa nuova generazione di scrittori cerca spesso di emanciparsi dalle tradizionali norme rivoluzionarie. La diversità e la pluralità di pensiero, che è una preoccupazione fondamentale nella *Viajera* e che va di pari passo con il superamento della nazionalità e dell'origine etnica come fattori determinanti dell'identità, rappresenta una tale forma di emancipazione. Rinegoziando l'identità culturale e trasformando l'*Odissea* omerica in questo spirito di pluralità, Suárez formula in definitiva valori diversi da quelli rappresentati dai leader politici del paese. Anche se *La viajera* può essere letta senza la conoscenza effettiva del testo omerico, essa acquista nuove prospettive se la guardiamo sullo sfondo dell'*Odissea*, che serve come punto di riferimento per l'intero romanzo. Da questo punto di vista, *La viajera* rappresenta una trasformazione dell'*Odissea* da una prospettiva femminile moderna. Ciò perché la protagonista principale Circe costituisce l'incarnazione femminile di un Ulisse centrifugo, completato con gli elementi del femminile inerenti alla figura omerica di Circe. *La viajera* racconta la storia di Circe e Lucía, due donne che non potrebbero essere più diverse. Circe, che dal titolo del romanzo si identifica con "la viaggiatrice", è una vagabonda per eccellenza. Emigrata da Cuba e alla ricerca della "sua" città, si sposta senza sosta da un paese all'altro. A differenza di altri emigranti cubani che incontra nel suo cammino, non sogna di tornare a Cuba. La sua amica Lucía, che nel romanzo è la controparte (centripeta) di Circe, non riesce a capirla. Infatti, sebbene anche Lucía abbia lasciato Cuba e sia rimasta all'estero, guarda sempre al passato con un certo senso di nostalgia. La nostalgia del ritorno in patria – o, nel caso di Circe, la sua assenza – è uno dei temi principali del romanzo. L'atipica situazione di esilio di una donna cubana, che mantiene un rapporto con l'emigrazione e la patria lontano dagli stereotipi abituali, viene descritta attraverso la trasformazione dell'*Odissea* e serve quindi a descrivere un'identità ibrida di natura fluida e dinamica. Al contempo, questa trasformazione dell'*Odissea* può essere intesa come un'appropriazione postcoloniale di un mito europeo.

Il modo in cui tutte queste moderne trasformazioni dell'*Odissea* ritraggono l'eroe omerico non solo getta nuova luce su una vecchia storia, ma, attraverso la tendenza a vedere Ulisse come l'eterno vagabondo tormentato dai tumulti interiori, indica un

cambiamento culturale nell'epoca in cui le elaborazioni vengono create. Infatti, sono soprattutto le incertezze e le ansie dell'esistenza umana che in tempi moderni vengono affrontate ricorrendo all'eterno errante Ulisse, e tramite le quali quest'ultimo si manifesta come un fenomeno prevalentemente moderno. L'analisi comparativa sia delle elaborazioni dell'*Odissea*, che sono state ampiamente studiate in passato, sia di quelle che hanno ricevuto poca o nessuna attenzione in un simile contesto, ha dimostrato che è stato soprattutto in tempi di sconvolgimenti storici e di transizione che gli autori si sono rivolti al vagabondo Ulisse per orientarsi. In effetti, molti di questi moderni adattamenti sono emersi in tempi in cui i vecchi valori stavano perdendo la loro validità e venivano messi in discussione. Questa rivalutazione delle norme e dei legami tradizionali non è però solo dovuta a circostanze storiche, ma anche condizionata e plasmata dalle esperienze personali di ogni autore.

È vero che le risposte date dai diversi autori nel tempo alla ricerca esistenziale dell'eroe variano molto, spaziando da un quadro pessimistico della vita umana a uno dinamico-ottimistico. Ma, allo stesso tempo, i temi che ricorrono nel contesto della *Wanderlust* esistenziale sono la curiosità e la (anti)nostalgia, la disillusione e il ritorno, la partenza e l'estraneo, così come il senso del tempo, della patria e dell'appartenenza. Infatti, in queste moderne trasformazioni non si può più dare per scontato che Ulisse torni a casa (e si senta a casa), dal momento che l'identità è sempre più difficile da definire. Così, in riferimento al mito di Ulisse, vengono ripresi e rinegoziati anche temi di grande attualità come la migrazione e il significato sempre diverso del concetto di "Heimat". La mutabilità dell'eroe omerico contribuisce a far sì che Ulisse resti un mitico predecessore, la cui storia permette di raffigurare in immagini forti i conflitti d'identità, la mancanza di una patria e la nostalgia di casa, il senso di estraneità e la curiosità.

L'eterno errante Ulisse rimane una figura interessante finché gli uomini cercano la conoscenza e si pongono domande sul significato della propria esistenza, anche a rischio di non trovare una risposta soddisfacente. Considerato il grande potere di attrazione che ancora oggi emana un Ulisse sconfitto dalla *Wanderlust*, possiamo supporre che quest'ultimo non cesserà di attrarre nei tempi a venire. Resta quindi da

vedere a quali sponde inesplorate porterà in futuro il viaggio di Ulisse e dell'*Odissea*, sia nella letteratura, sia in altre sfere della creatività umana.

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