

## SCHIERA

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This chapter concerns the Homeric utopia. It is the last stop on the Journey of Odysseus. It is the place where Odysseus acts as a bard or scop and tells his own tale. As far as the foreground action is concerned, Odysseus travels from Calypso's isle to Schiera and then to Ithica. The rest of his journey takes place within the tale he tells in Schiera. We do not know quite whether to believe Odysseus about the rest of the tale. From the many lies that Odysseus is seen making up to impress various hosts, the whole thing could just as well be a complete fantasy made up for the Schierians. But what happens in Schiera, the ultra-city, is in the foreground and coming directly from the bard who tells the whole story, it is more concrete. However, Schiera itself is not very believable. It is a place near the gods. Its citizens have power over the sea which they pass over without trouble. It is a place where the gods visit without disguises. It is far away from all the other inhabited lands, so the Schierians know no war. They moved hence to avoid the Cyclopes which Odysseus met at the beginning of his journeys. As has

been noted, these two peoples represent the ends of the spectrum which defines the polis. It represents a city that knows no war. Its isolation, the extreme urbaneness of its people, the mastery of the sea, the mastery of agriculture, the fineness of its architecture -- all these are the things that make it a utopia. But everything with Schiera is predicated on the avoidance of war -- and war is the fundamental assumption of both the higher and lower utopias of Plato. So if we wish too look for a contrast to Plato's imaginary cities, then Homer has already produced it for us. Schiera is a city that epitomizes what every Greek city would like to realize -- direct intercourse with the gods, mastery of technology, mastery of nature, and absence of the pain of war. This absence of pain puts them in direct contrast with Odysseus who is the man of pain. The entry of the man of pain into their land is for the people of Schiera a defining event which precipitates their fate.

Schiera in many ways stands opposite of Troy. It is the polis of the Odyssey in the way that Troy is the city of the Iliad. Troy was accessible to attack from the sea, whereas Schiera is too far away to ever be attacked from other cities. This accessibility to the sea is the key point of vulnerability. For from the sea, armies can come from ships to destroy a city. But Schiera is so far away that even being close to the sea holds no danger. But like

Troy, Schiera is a sacred city. It has the complete form with its well, farmlands, wall, astu, assembly, and acropolis. It has a gracious king and queen with untold riches which have piled up from years of peace. No war has ever emptied the coffers of this city.

One might think that beyond the idyllic setting and the wonders of wealth and technology there was little to say about Schiera. However, this is not true. The interaction of Odysseus has a very important lesson for us to unfold. The entry of the man of pain into the city free of pain is equivalent to an emergent event. So, as we trace the stages of the epiphany of Odysseus, we have a lot we can glean from the structure of the archetypal polis as it is entered by the sacker of cities. Odysseus starts his journey from the isle of Calypso. Poseidon attempts to destroy him with a storm that rends asunder his small craft. A nymph rescues Odysseus and helps him with a magic scarf. With the scarf Odysseus makes his way to the Phaeacian coast. He rides astride the broken beam of his ship. Upon arrival, he has a problem of approaching a rocky shore. The waves drive him in, and he is kept from destruction by holding tightly to a rock until the wave recoils from the cliff and takes him back out to sea. Eventually, he sees a river to which he finally makes his way, and that allows him to reach the shore in one piece. He returns the veil to the nymph Ino. Then he makes his

way up the slope to where a tame olive and a wild olive grow out of the same stem. He crawls under the dead leaves and sleeps. This is contrast to Odysseus' entry to Ithica asleep. His treasures were unloaded and he was left by the Phaeacians without being awakened. What a difference between the entry to the polis and the island of his oikos.

In this way, Odysseus gained the shore close to the city of Schiera. Naked, alone, lost, wounded, and all but forgotten. While he slept, Athena put into the head of a princess of the city to wash clothes by the spring near where Odysseus slept. Nausicaa was the princess, and she and her fellow maidens made their way out of the city in a cart full of clothes to be washed. Odysseus awoke to the sound of the voices of the girls at playing ball after their washing.

“Alas!” he sighed. “What country have I come to now? What people are there here? Some brutal tribe of lawless savages, or kindly and god-fearing folk? And what is this shrill echo in my ears, as though some girls were shrieking? Nymphs, I suppose -- who haunt the steep hill-tops, the springs of rivers, and the grassy meadows. Or am I within hail, by any chance, of human beings who can talk as I do? Well, I must go and use my own eyes to find out.”

So the gallant Odysseus crept out from under the bushes, after breaking off with his great hand a leafy bough from the thicket to conceal his naked manhood. Then he advanced on them like a mountain lion who sallies out, defying wind and rain in the pride of his power, with fire in his eyes, to hunt the oxen or the sheep, to stalk the roaming deer, or to be forced by hunger to besiege the very walls of the homestead and attack the pens. The same urgent need now constrained Odysseus, naked as he was, to bear down upon these gentle girls. Begrimed with salt, he made a gruesome sight, and one look at him sent them scuttling in every direction along the jutting spits of sand. Alcinous' daughter was the only one to stand firm. Emboldened by Athena, who stopped her limbs from trembling, she checked herself and confronted him, while Odysseus considered whether he should throw his arms round the beautiful girl's knees and so make his prayer, or be content to keep his distance and beg her with all courtesy to give him clothing and direct him to the city. After some hesitation, he decided to that as the lady might take offense if he embraced her knees. It would be better to keep his distance and politely plead his case. In the end, his address was not only disarming, but full of subtlety:

“Mistress, I throw myself on your mercy. But are you some goddess or a mortal woman? If you are one of the gods who live in the sky, it is of Artemis, the Daughter of almighty Zeus, that your beauty, grace, and stature most remind me. But if you are one of us mortals who live on earth, then lucky indeed are your father and your gentle mother; lucky your brothers too. How their hearts must glow with pleasure every time they see their darling join the dance! But he is the happiest of them all who, with his wedding gifts, can win you for his home. For never have I set eyes on such perfection in man or woman. I worship as I look. Only in Delos have I seen the like, a fresh young palm-tree [pheonix] shooting up from the alter of Apollo, when my travel took me there -- with a fine army at my back, that time, thought the expedition was doomed to end so fatally for me. I remember how long I stood spellbound at the sight, for no lovelier sapling ever sprang from the ground. And it is with just the same wonder and veneration that I look at you, my lady; with such awe, indeed. that I dare not clasp your knees, though my troubles are serious enough. Only yesterday, after nineteen days of it, I made my escape from the wine-dark sea. It took all that time for the waves and the tempestuous winds to carry me here from the island of Ogygia. And

now some god had flung me on this shore, no doubt to suffer more disasters here. For I have no hope that my troubles are coming to an end; the gods have plenty in store for me before that can be. Pity me, my queen. You are the first person I have met after all I have been through, and I do not know a soul in this city or this land. I beg you to direct me to the town and to give me some rag to put round myself, if only the wrapper you may have brought for your linen when you came. And in return, may the gods grant you your heart's desire; may they give you a husband and a home, and the harmony that is so much desired, since there is nothing nobler or more admirable than when two people who see eye to eye keep house as man and wife, confounding their enemies and delighting their friends, as they themselves know better than anyone."

"Sir," said the white armed Nausicaa, "your manners prove that you are no rascal and no fool; and as for these ordeals of yours, they must have been sent you by Olympian Zeus, who follows his own will in dispensing happiness to people whatever their merits. You have no choice but to endure. But since you have come to our country and our city here, you certainly shall not want for clothing or anything else that an unfortunate outcast has the right to expect from those he

approaches. I will show you to the town and tell you who we are. This country and the city you will see belong to the Phaecians. I myself am the daughter of King Alcinous, who is the head and mainstay of our state.”<sup>1</sup>

This meeting with women at the spring marks the boundary between wilderness and civilization. Odysseus fittingly arrives naked from the wilderness which is identified with the wildness of the sea. The boundary was also marked by the wild and the tame olive sharing the same stem over where he slept. Odysseus must impress upon the woman his civil character with only his words. He covers his private parts. Thus, he is simultaneously concealing and revealing. In his speech, the phallic palm tree shoot rising at Delos that was a matter of awe indicates that his concealing may be more than a formality. Revelation of the instant goes in both directions as he sees her as a perfect example of the female form. She sees him as inwardly civilized but outwardly naked. He is described as a lion bearing down upon a fawn. Thus, the civilized exterior put forth in speech covers over his true nature -- the destroyer of cities. Nausicaa's perfection is our first hint that we have entered a utopia. Everything in Schiera is a perfect example. This meeting is highlighted as crucial in the story by the presence of so many references to Nausicaa's

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1. ODYSSEY Book VI page 106 140-213



future husband and home, and Odysseus' wish for harmony to her. He says that harmony between husband and wife is much desired. There is nothing nobler than "when two people who see eye to eye keep house as man and wife." Here is the definition of the oikos. The ideal of the oikos is harmony of male and female -- between that which is from the dark and that which is from the light. Odysseus mentions this harmony when he sees a perfect example of womanhood. The harmony of man and wife benefits friends and confounds their common enemy. Justice, at the beginning of the Republic, was defined as what benefited one's self and hurt one's enemy. Justice begins by being defined selfishly. So, to the oikos, is defined selfishly against those who would do it ill and for those who do it good. Later Nausicaa hints that she is available for marriage. But Odysseus turns away toward home, turns away from the perfect example like he turned away from immortality. Odysseus wants his own home and wife; his own source of harmony with Penelope. Odysseus rejects the perfect example for a real wife who is oscillating and indecisive. What Odysseus has found with his real wife is better than what immortality or perfection can give. It can only be explained as an unseen bond that, through marriage, establishes unseen distinctions that take Odysseus beyond the nihilism he has become totally immersed in throughout his journey. Nothing will take the place of

this unseen bond between mortals who belong together -- who have been made the Same though marriage. That Sameness is the foundation of the oikos.

Here the wilderness reminds us of Wild Being. The tame and wild olives grow out of the same stem. This reminds us of what Merleau Ponty calls the Chiasm. The point of reversibility of touch touching. Odysseus was like an ember buried in the leaves; his body was covered with the dead leaves beneath the chiasmic olive tree. As an ember, he was between the wildness of the sea and the wildness of the land. His naked flesh was fatigued until he was almost nothing but his body; his spirit was subdued within the body. In Wild Being, it is the intelligence of the body itself when bodily reason beyond the province of purely intellectual reason is manifest. We are embedded in the direct experience of our body, without the veil of conceptual structures projected on that experience. In that experience, we see the reflexivity of perception itself -- which hears its own words -- but that reflexivity has a moment of opacity that is irreducible. For Odysseus, naked in the wilds, his cunning mind is but an ember. He has a blanket of leaves which gives him warmth and makes his skin directly interface with the wild. There is no barrier between nature and culture; only a direct experience of the otherness of nature. No clothes, no shelter, no city wall.

Meeting Nausicaa, there is a two-way spectacle. Odysseus sees the perfect example of womanhood. Nausicaa sees a man at his most primitive and natural state. The only sign of civilization at first is that he covers his private parts. Then it is his speech that beguiles her with flattery attempting to appropriate her image of her self to make her want to have mercy on his plight. The covering of the male display is a sign of civilization. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone in The Roots Of Thinking<sup>2</sup> points out, perhaps for the first time, that not enough thought has been given to the role of male sexual signaling in the development of our race. The erection is the clear sign of desire -- the presence of eros. By covering the private parts, this signaling is curtailed. We think of this as the bare minimum of civilization. The first thing missionaries try to do is get the natives to cover themselves, regardless of climate. Ironical, since the height of bourgeois culture is to go naked at the beach. But by establishing this sign and by giving an eloquent speech, Odysseus proves he is “no rascal and no fool.” But the sign of civilization is upon a destroyer of cities. Part of civilization is the anti-production of warfare, rape and destruction of cities. Thus, the apparent awkwardness of the man covering himself is in stark contrast to the image of a lion going out defying the wind and rain in the pride of his power. Odysseus is hiding more than his

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2. (Philadelphia; Temple U.P. 1990)

nakedness -- he is hiding his true nature. His nakedness is a disguise for his inner reality based on his experience and daring.

Every emergent event arrives from the wilderness as both a revealing and a concealing. Its first sighting is a spectacle. The spectacle is reversible, like that between Nausicaa and Odysseus. In this case, it is the innocent perfect example meeting wily experience. But the emergent event is always a spectacle. It is a meeting of seer and seen. The event is twofold. It is itself a chiasm. Nausicaa has rejected all the men of her land, but is looking nonetheless for a husband. She sees a possible husband completely different from those she has rejected. Odysseus projects that Nausicaa has manhunting on her mind, and takes this as the center of his opening conversation with her. Odysseus attempts to align with what he thinks Nausicaa might be thinking about in order to be recognized by her. Odysseus does not attack her as a rascal might do. Nor does he act dumb and uncivilized as some fool. Odysseus, with his speech, puts on all the trappings of their common pan-Hellenic civilization so as to draw attention away from his own lack of the signs of civilization. Thus, as an emergent event, he projects normalcy. For Nausicaa it is strange to see any man not of her own people so the strangeness of the meeting is covered over by the gloss of civility. This veil of

normalcy is exactly why the first stage of emergence has the nature of a foreboding. There is something out there, but we do not know what it is. We see the spectacle, but it fits with what we are looking for so well that we cannot see the differences. We feel uncomfortable by the subliminal messages, but cannot put together what is bothering us because we are hiding it from ourselves. Nausicaa would have scattered like the others if she had known she was like a fawn confronting a lion. But she could not see the lion. She saw the naked and vulnerable man feigning civilization. She saw a candidate husband. She saw a helpless traveler. She did not see the cunning destroyer.

When he had thoroughly washed and rubbed himself with oil, and had put on the clothes which the young girl had given him, Athena, Daughter of Zeus, made him seem taller and sturdier than ever and caused the bushy locks to hang from his head thick as the petals of the hyacinth in bloom. Just as a craftsman trained by Hephaestus and herself in the secrets of his art takes pains to put a graceful finish to his work by overlaying silverware with gold, she finished now by endowing his head and shoulders with an added beauty. When Odysseus retired to sit down by himself on the seashore, he was radiant with comeliness and

grace. Nausicaa gazed at him in admiration and said to her fair attendants:

“Listen, my white-armed maids, while I tell you what I have been thinking. This man’s arrival among the Phaeacians, who are so near the gods themselves, was not unpremeditated by the Olympian powers. For when first we met, I thought he cut a sorry figure, but now he looks like the gods who live in heaven. That is the kind of man whom I could fancy for a husband, if he would settle here. I only hope that he will choose to stay. But come, girls, give the stranger something to eat and drink.”<sup>3</sup>

Nausicaa gives Odysseus clothes and food, then leads the way toward town and explains to him the way he should enter the city. The first encounter with the emergent entity leaves it clothed in what the city expects to see. Now he is no longer natural, no longer able to signal sexually, no longer hungry and ignorant. Odysseus knows how to approach the city, and Nausicaa goes ahead to prepare the way for him. Outside the city a connection has been made between the perfect example and the outcast moving inward. If we see this in terms of the emergent event, we see it as the casting the veil over the noumena by the perceptive system. That system acts

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3. *Odyssey* page 108 verses 214-28

as a filter on what can be seen. It goes out beyond what is actually seen and casts a veil over it, taking it out of a state of Wild Being which chiasmically relates the wild and the tame. Crisp delineation of the phenomena is made by clothing it in the familiar categories of things in the world, even before it is seen in the city.

On his return to Ithica, Odysseus has treasure which must be hid. He first meets Athena to whom he directly begins to lie about who he is. To Nausicaa, his speech has been unaccustomedly truthful. Athena, on that later occasion, makes him look broken down and distorts his figure instead of enhancing it. He first seeks asylum at the hut of a slave instead of the Palace of a King. The entry into the oikos is almost exactly the opposite at every point from the entry into the polis of Schiera.

“Our city is surrounded by high battlements; it has an excellent harbor on each side and is approached by a narrow causeway, where the curved ships are drawn up to the road and each owner has his separate slip. Here is the people’s meeting place, built up on either side of the fine temple of Poseidon with blocks of quarried stone bedded deeply in the ground. It is here, too, that the sailors attend to the rigging of the black ships, to their cables and their sails, and the smoothing of their oars. For the Phaeacians have no use for

the bow and quiver, but spend their energy on masts and oars and on the graceful craft they love to sail the foam-flecked seas.”

Nausicaa and Odysseus part ways and, he next comes to a grove of Athena’s outside the city. There he was enveloped by a thick mist, and he meets Athena as a young girl carrying a pitcher. Athena, as the girl, leads Odysseus to the house of Alcinous, the king, through the city. She gives him advice on how to approach the King and tells him that it is the favor of the Queen that he must win. Nausicaa had given him that advice before Athena. It seems that the center of power in Schiera, the city that has no need for the implements of war, belongs to a woman. Here we get some inkling that Schiera represents some other possible world where the Chalice dominates over the Blade<sup>4</sup>. Where women rule, we hypothesize peace, forgetting the war like Inanna and Aster and Athena. The name of the queen is Arete.

With this, Pallas Athene led the way at a quick pace, and Odysseus followed in the goddess’ steps. The Phaeacians, those famous seamen, failed to observe him as he passed them by on his way through the town. For the Lady Athene used her formidable powers to prevent, shedding a magic mist round her favorite in her concern for

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4. See [The Chalice and the Blade](#)



his safety. As he walked, Odysseus marveled at the harbors with their well-founded ships, at the meeting place of the sea lords and at the long and lofty walls, which were surmounted by palisades and presented a wonderful sight.

When they reached the king's palace, the bright eyed goddess Athena turned to him and said:

“Here, sir, you see the house that you asked me to show you. You will find high born princes feasting here, but go straight in and have no qualms. For it is the bold man who every time does best, at home or abroad. Once in the palace, make straight for the Queen. Her name is Arete, and she comes from the same family as Alcinous the King. Nausithous, first of the line, was the son of Poseidon the Earthshaker and of Periboea, the loveliest woman of her time. She was the youngest daughter of the great Eurymedon, who was once king of that haughty race, the Giants, but led his headstrong people to destruction, and himself came to an untimely end. Poseidon made Periboea his mistress and by her had a son, Nausithous the Magnificent, who was king of the Phaecians. And Nausithous had two sons, Rhexenor and Alcinous. Rhexenor had not long been married, and had as yet no son when he was killed by Apollo with his silver bow. But he left

one daughter, Arete, in his palace. Alcinous made her his wife and gave her such homage as no other woman receives who keeps house for her husband in the world today. Such is the extraordinary and heartfelt devotion which she has enjoyed in the past and still enjoys, both from her children and Alcinous himself, and from the people, who worship her, and greet her when she walks through the town. For she is not only the Queen, but a wise woman too, and when her sympathies are enlisted she settles even men's disputes. So if only you can secure her friendly interest, you may well hope to return to your native land, to step under the high roof of your own house and to see your friends once more.”<sup>5</sup>

In the next leg of his journey into the city, Odysseus is hidden in a cloud of mist. This cloud allows him to walk through the city like Gyges' ancestor, unseen by the inhabitants. He sees the different parts of the city and mentions several key features that caught his eye. In fact, everything but the acropolis was mentioned. The mist is parallel to his disguise on the return to Ithica. In both cases, he is not recognized for what he is. In the case of the mist, he is not seen at all. It is a mist like that which Aphrodite wraps around Paris in the Iliad. The mist reminds us of the essence of manifestation which is pure

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5. ODYSSEY page 113-4 verses 60-70

immanence, that which is never seen. That is a special attribute of Hyper Being, the next type of Being that any emergent event must pass through on the way to the manifestation within the city -- intersubjective unity. Odysseus passes right through all the normal filters to arrive right at the center of power. This is apropos because the filters of the socio-technical system cannot catch the emergent event. It passes right through the nets because they were designed to catch already known dangers, not utterly unknown dangers. Odysseus has moved out of Wild Being into the realm of Hyper Being. He is moving through the filters of the system without being detected. Like invisible planes today which cannot be seen on radar, he has a magical technology which allows him to move undetected right to the entrance to the palace of the King. Also, his intelligence is very good because before he meets them, he knows something about them, whereas they know nothing of him. The emergent event is always at an advantage, as the system being attacked does not know what hit it, while by rendering itself visible, it has disturbed the environment enough to make its own nature plain.

Schiera is to some extent ruled by a woman; the king defers to his wife. Thus, here is a case where no revolt of the women is necessary. Women are respected and have a say in things. The king married the daughter of his

brother. They are both sprung from Poseidon via their father. Poseidon impregnated the most beautiful woman of the time. A perfect example giving rise to Nausithous the magnificent. She is a wise woman. Thus, we see here an example of the harmony between husband and wife that Odysseus spoke of on meeting their daughter. This couple, standing opposite the marriages of Agamemnon and Menelaus, shows the harmony that those kings lacked. Here the women rule by becoming respected and by their wisdom being made evident that settles the disputes even of men. This is the best of all possible worlds where men and women are harmonious in marriage, and women exert power that does not unseat men from their rightful place in ancient Greek eyes. Schiera, like the Atlantis, is a powerful nation sprung from Poseidon. This explains their dominance of the seas. Being in harmony with the seas, it is closer to the feminine than to the masculine energies. But here those dark feminine energies represented by the negative fourfold that have much in common with the sea and Hades are brought to culmination in an alternative vision of society based on the “correct” rule of women as the power behind the throne. Outward order set up and preserved by men is enhanced by harmonious feminine energy. This for the Greeks could only happen in an ideal city -- a utopia where the city is ruled by a harmonious oikos. When the harmonious oikos is made the center of

the city, then the whole is infused with harmony and peace as well as high technical achievement and wealth. When there is dissension in the oikos of the king, then there is trouble at the heart of the city.

Meanwhile, Odysseus approached Alcionous' splendid dwelling. His heart was filled with misgivings, and he hesitated before setting foot on the bronze threshold. For a kind of radiance, like that of the sun or moon, lit up the high-roofed halls of the great king. Walls of bronze, topped with blue enamel tiles, ran round to the left and right from the threshold to the back of the court. The interior of the well-built mansion was guarded by golden doors hung on posts of silver which spang from the bronze threshold. The lintel they supported was of silver too, and the door-handle of gold. On either side stood gold and silver dogs, which Hephaestus had made with consummate skill, to keep watch over the palace of the great-hearted Alcionous and serve him as immortal sentries never doomed to age. Inside the hall, high chairs were ranged along the walls on either side, right round from the threshold to the chamber and back, and each was draped with a delicately woven cover that the women had worked. Here the Phaecian chieftains sat and enjoyed the food and wind which were always forthcoming, while youths of gold, fixed on stout

pedestals, held flaming torches in their hands to light the banqueters in the hall by night.

The house keeps fifty maids employed. Some grind the apple-golden corn in the handmill, some weave at the loom, or sit and twist the yarn, their hands fluttering like the tall poplar's leaves while the soft olive-oil drips from the close woven fabrics they have finished. For the Phaeacians' extraordinary skill in handling ships at sea is revealed by the dexterity of their women folk at the loom, so expert has Athena made them in the finer crafts, and so intelligent.

Outside in the courtyard but stretching close up to the gates, and with a hedge running down on either side, lies a large orchard of four acres, where trees hand their greenery on high, the pear and the pomegranate, the apple with its glossy burden, the fig and luxuriant olive. Their fruit never fails nor runs short, winter and summer alike. It comes at all seasons of the year, and there is never a time when the West Wind's breath is not assisting, here the bud, and here the ripening fruit; so that pear after pear, apple after apple, cluster on cluster of grapes, and fig upon fig are always coming to perfection. In the same enclosure there is a fruitful vineyard, in one part of which is a warm patch of level ground, where

some of the grapes are drying in the sun, while others are gathered or being trodden, and on the foremost rows hang unripe bunches that have just cast their blossom or show the faint tinge of purple. Vegetable beds of various kinds are neatly laid out beyond the farthest row and make a smiling patch of never failing green. The garden is served by two springs, one led in rills to all parts of the enclosure, while its fellow opposite, after providing a watering-place for the townsfolk, runs under the courtyard gate towards the great house itself. Such were the beauties which the gods had adorned Alcionous' home.

This picture of plenty grows directly out of the presence of harmony. The ideal of never-ending plenty in food and wine is something any human who has experienced need can relate to as the most perfect conditions -- the best of all possible worlds in which the food ripens at the door step and never ceases to produce. In this kingdom, the reproductive powers are clearly under control and well tended. This garden lies just outside the palace and is tended by fifty women. It is divided into two parts, one dedicated to fruits, and the other dedicated to wine. The fruits are all ripening at different rates so that something is always coming to fruition. This shows us a land without seasons. A place where time has in some sense stood still. This lets us know that we are not in normal

time that has seasons. It also tells us that the people of Schiera do not have to plan ahead. It is not only the experience of strife that they lack, but want in general. The door to the palace itself is impressive, being made of bronze, gold and silver. And outside this threshold stand two dogs made by Hephaestus, who are immortal guards. It is unclear if they are animate, but that is certainly implied as Hephaestus was famed for making animate women who helped him in his smithy. The guard dogs and the torch-bearing youths within the palace lend an aura of the strange and uncanny to the palace. The strangeness and the unfailing plenty go far to prove that the Phaeacians are “close to the gods.”

Odysseus enters and goes straight to the Queen and embraces her knees to plead his case, then withdraws to the ashes of the hearth. He is accepted by the King after being reminded by one of his councilors. The sudden appearance of Odysseus out of nowhere was a shock to everyone. The King had been left speechless by it. After recovering, he makes Odysseus welcome and feeds him. Then he dismisses everyone and invites them back tomorrow for a sacrifice to the gods. In passing, he notes that the gods never disguise themselves around the Phaeacians. Odysseus makes some short explanation in answer to the Queen’s questions of where he has come from and why he is wearing clothes from that very place.



This question from the Queen shows that she is sharp witted and clear sighted. Odysseus, sensing danger, tells the truth. But this point is interesting in relation to the appearance of the emergent event. It has gone directly to the heart of the socio-technical system undetected by the filters that would normally detect the passing of foreign objects. This is accomplished because Odysseus is a new kind of thing which the nets have not been constructed to catch, and so it misses him. This allows the emergent entity to go straight to the nucleus of the socio-technical system. Once there, the emergent entity appears as a shocking spectacle to those who normally expect a warning or at least an escort. Odysseus wants to make sure everyone knows he is no threat, so after clasping the Queen's knees, a ritual gesture asking for mercy, he goes and squats in the hearth, showing submission. He could have just as easily killed anyone there because of the factor of surprise. But he knows the way to get what he wants is to win these people over to his cause. They have the power to take him home which he could not do himself. But his intelligence and daring do not change the fact that the entry of Odysseus is a complete surprise. But that surprise, once overcome, leads to attempts to classify Odysseus by asking him who he is, where he is from, and where he got their very own clothes? The emergent entity comes dressed in the familiar. It is uncanny, but not completely strange. This gives the

impression that the emergent event can appear as something ordinary at first. It is sometimes something familiar seen in a different way. It gains entrance because it was met at the periphery and given the clothing of the place to be entered. The emergent event is a combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar. It wears the veil of the ordinary and common. But under that veil lurks what is completely unknown.

We knew that when Odysseus returns to Ithica, he is searching for clothes. He takes handouts of clothes from the farmer he takes refuge with, and from Penelope. He gets the clothes at the center, not the periphery. He does not travel unobserved. In fact, the dog almost kills him. If the watchdog had not been called off, he would have been killed. Whereas the watchdogs of Alcinous do not utter a peep so that we are even unclear whether they are animate or not.

This whole episode has served to elucidate the stage of emergence associated with Hyper-Being. The emergent eventuality passes unnoticed. It has an affinity with the immanent part of the socio-technical system, so it can walk through it without being detected. It walks through the blind spots, within the capability of the socio-technical system to render visible what is in the environment. Thus, when the emergent eventuality finally

does appear, it is already at the core of the socio-technical system, and this is a shocking experience. Yet, once the shock is over, it is realized that the emergent event has certain familiar aspects. The initial response is to try to classify the emergent event and accommodate it.

The next day is a feast where a bard tells tales of Troy and causes Odysseus to weep. So Alcinous suggested games, instead, to entertain the guest. In the games, Odysseus is challenged and throws the discus, giving vent to his anger when slighted. So Alcinous again changes the venue and suggests they watch dancing instead of competing. Here we move to a new stage of Being associated with Processes and the temporal gestalt. From the shock of first appearance and the attempts to classify the emergent event, we have moved to the realm of action. In action, we are dealing with probabilities. Each discus throw is an actualization of a possibility. Odysseus, when challenged, states that he is willing to take on anyone except the King, his host. He is, after all, a man of action. The actions of the games are showcase processes. Even one throw of the discus is a whole series of different intertwined movements, highly coordinated and orchestrated. Like any act, we only know the whole in retrospect. In mid-stream it is a moving gestalt, tending toward completion in which all the accidents of real life come into play. A stumble could result in a bad throw.

But of course, Odysseus makes a splendid throw, and in order not to be shown up by this man of experience and pain, the King suggests they watch a spectacle of entertaining dance. When they do this, they switch from the ready-to-hand of action to the present-at-hand of observation. So during the games, Odysseus traverses the last two stages of Being necessary for every emergent event to cross. Having achieved this, and based on Odysseus' compliments on the dancing, he is rewarded by Alcinous with many gifts. In fact so many gifts that the Queen suggests he tie them up which he does, using a magical knot he learned from Circe. This binding essentially undoes the unbinding done by his crew when they opened the bag of winds. This puts Odysseus back into control of his destiny again.

In the dance, the bard tells the tale of Aphrodite and Ares being caught in the net of Hephaestus. Here we are reminded that Hephaestus has provided the watchdogs for the palace. The net has been constructed to catch the two gods in their illicit affair. We may interpret this as the building of a new set of filters which will trap new emergent events like that which has just arrived. The trapping makes it available for everyone to see. Odysseus himself has been caught out in his rivalry on the playing field. It was easy to rouse him to drop the pretense and display his violent nature. This nature is

akin to Ares. Odysseus is attempting to win the favor of Aerte, the wife of the King. Although there is no sexual affair, there is still a play for her interest and goodwill. The bard may be hinting at this in his choice of tale to sing. But Alcinous, like Hephaestus, thinks he understands Odysseus now that he has seen his reaction to the challenge of his guests and by the fact that he offered to take on everyone but Alcinous. Thus, Odysseus is not considered a threat to Alcinous and so deserves to be put on his way before he can become a challenge. In the net of Hephaestus, we see the new filters being built by reason which now take into account the new information made available by the emergent event that was not available before, and makes it necessary to rewrite history. After being caught, Ares and Aprodite can no longer sneak around as if Hephaestus did not know what was going on. Their whole affair was out in the open, and the history that had excluded that fact had to be rewritten, which of course, shifts the significance of all the aspects of history, calling into being a new history.

Hermes claims that he would take the place of Ares in being bound to Aphrodite in the net, regardless of all the gods watching. This interesting facet of the story reminds us that this binding is like marriage. In marriage, there is an invisible bond which forges a connection

between man and woman which causes them to lay together in private. The net over the bed is an inversion of marriage where the act of intercourse is made public, and the binding is visible instead of invisible. In marriage, there is no possibility of substitution which exists in the situation that ridicules the breaking of the bonds of marriage in adultery. The invisible bonds cannot be released. With the invisible bonds, whoever is bound always remains bound. The bonds of marriage is a non-nihilistic distinction which adultery destroys outright. It is the foundation of social life which makes trust possible between men and women, and which allows men to work together when it is observed because competition over women does not lead to the self-destruction of the society. This is part of civilization that goes hand in hand with the covering of the male sexual signaling.

That evening, there was another feast, and the bard again sung of Troy; this time the story of the wooden horse by which Troy was destroyed. This is of interest because the wooden horse by the story being told is brought to the center of Schiera as well. The wooden horse is the epitome of the emergent event. The Trojans saw this giant wooden horse, and themselves dragged it into their citadel after the Acheans had been seen to withdraw in their ships. They argued what to do with it: pierce the

frame with spears, throw it over a cliff, make it an offering to the gods. They finally decided to make it an offering to the gods. We already know that Odysseus had gotten into Troy by disguise before, and was found out by Helen. Also, we know Helen attempted to get the men in the horse to reveal themselves by calling to them by the voices of their own wives. The Trojans were destroyed because they did not destroy the horse, and the Achaeans inside were strong enough to stand up to the siren's song of Helen. Odysseus covered their mouths lest they speak similar to the way he filled the ears of his crew when they approached the Sirens. He alone did not fall for this ruse. He alone did not need his mouth covered to prevent revealing himself to Helen who speaks with the voice of all women. So just like Odysseus entered Schiera in a mist unseen, so he entered Troy in a disguise and entered again on a Trojan horse. The Trojan horse is the symbol of the emergent event that completely overturns the regime of the city system. It is like the horse that Gyges' ancestor finds in the earth with the corpse with a ring. The horse made it possible to get beyond the walls without being seen. It made the army invisible by substituting for them another image which covered them. So too, Odysseus has managed to come into Schiera and win wealth and a passage home without revealing who he is. But his tears betray him, and he is asked to tell his story. Up to the point that he begins to reveal the story of

his journey, the Queen has not accepted him. It is only through revealing himself that he gains that acceptance. In that tale, the Trojan horse that is Odysseus in Schiera is opened, and he takes the city's heart instead of its body, as he did with the wooden horse at Troy. Troy was famous for its wild horses, and this pride in horses led them to not see the danger that the wooden horse represented. Schiera is famous for its travels across the ocean which are painless, so its heart was won by the story of painful travels.

Finally, when the story is over, Odysseus is taken on his way and sleeps throughout the journey. This sleep is the opposite of his other sleeps in that it does not result in disaster, but instead, in the most painless of journeys home. This painlessness angers Poseidon who asks Zeus permission to wreak vengeance on the people of Schiera. He turns the ship to stone on its way back from the trip to Ithica and prepares to ring the City with mountains shutting off their access to the sea. That ring of mountains is for us the manifestation of the autopoietic ring. The emergent event of the arrival of Odysseus has changed the whole gestalt of the city of Schiera, masters of the sea. Their access to the sea being cut off will change everything completely for them. The man of pain has brought them pain, in the form of the anger of the gods. Their ship that sailed so lightly on the seas have



been turned to stone. They have gone from one extreme opposite condition to the other. From masters of the sea to being land bound. Swift ships turned to frozen rock. The whole gestalt has turned over because of the emergent event. That event passed through each of the stage's different kinds of Being and so proved itself genuine. Once it has shown itself to be a genuine emergence instead of an artificial emergence, then it spun out its tale of pain which began the unraveling of the world of the people of Schiera and their beginning to experience pain themselves. Their isolation when it is complete, if their sacrifices are not accepted, puts them in a city which has turned completely in on itself. It is bound up like the jar that Odysseus ties with a magic knot. It is turned in on itself like an autopoietic system by the ring of mountains.

Odysseus, on the surface of the tale, travels from the isle of Calypso across stormy seas to Schiera and then easily from there home to Ithica. He has traveled from the depths of forgetfulness and lostness to the ultra-polis, and from there to his home. So we see Odysseus traveling from the externally destroyed polis, to the polis that destroys itself through the seas of oblivion, to finally reach his own oikos and wife. There he again enters in disguise and overturns the situation, bringing a new gestalt at the dark of the moon when he kills the suitors.

Here he is not an emergent event. He is the opposite of that. He represents the artificial emergent entity which rises above the diacritical differences between the suitors to reassert his rightful place. His righting of the situation returns it to what it was before he left. His leaving and then returning is a movement of artificial emergence where the diacritical social order has been rearranged. The significance of Odysseus has been revealed by his differences with the suitors. His going away caused that significance to be revealed. The turmoil that resulted always occurs when any diachronic changes in diacritical relations occur. The reappearance of the signifier, much delayed, suppresses the turmoil of the ephemeron and reasserts the basic relations which held before his disappearance. The oikos is then the realm of diacritical stabilization, as opposed to the polis which is the realm of acceptance of emergent events.

This journey of Odysseus is not the last one. We know he will also journey in the lands to a place where they do not know the sea and cannot recognize an oar. There he will sacrifice to Poseidon, and when he returns, he will die in old age with his death coming from the sea. This other journey of Odysseus is interesting to speculate about. It must be the opposite of his journey across the seas. It is to the center of the lands as he went to the center of the seas. The oar he places there marks his making of a non-

nihilistic distinction because it is the place where the oar is not recognized and is seen as a farming implement. When the oar turns into what it is not in the eyes of the inhabitants, then he can make a sacrifice. That sacrifice is probably not accepted because we know that his death comes from the sea anyway. However, by finding the heart of the land, he has completed his journey from one opposite to the other. Land and Sea in the Greek isles are intermixed. Odysseus, in his initiation into nihilism, goes to the extreme of the Sea and later will go to the extreme of the Land. Experience and pain comes from the working out of the nihilistic opposites. The initiation in manhood uses all the knowledges gained from the initiation of boyhood. Odysseus learned in his first initiation to know pain, but it is only in his second initiation in manhood that he learns that the meaning of that pain is total immersion in nihilistic opposition. In the West, this immersion is a daily experience which we all share. The ancient Greeks knew it well. It is what escapes from Pandora's box. It is the direct consequence of the way the Western worldview is constructed. A worldview we need to understand more and more deeply as we move deeper toward the site of the former initiation attempting to understand its form and sequence from the remnants that are left us in myth. Understanding both these initiations will put us into a position of having a comprehensive understanding of the Western worldview.

There is a final image that stands between the Oikos and the Polis in the Odyssey. It is the same image that Porphyry discussed concerning the cave of the Nymphs. When Odysseus awakes, he looks around to see the harbor on which he had alighted while still asleep:

and at the head of the harbor is a slender-leaved  
olive

and near by it a lovely and murky cave  
sacred to the nymphs called Naiads.

Within are kraters and amphoras

of stone, where bees lay up stores of honey.

Inside, too, are massive stone looms and there the  
nymphs

weave sea-purple cloth, a wonder to see.

The water flows unceasingly. The cave has two  
gates,

one from the north, a path for men to descend,

while the other, toward the south, is divine. Men  
do not

enter by this one, but it is rather a path for  
immortals.

[Odyssey 13, 102-112 <sup>6</sup>]

Reading the explanation of Porphyry, we are set to wondering at his explanation of the import of this image. To us the meaning is clear. We are confronted here with a precise description of the primal scene of the Well and the Tree. We have already explored the import of this primal scene in depth. Here the tree is an olive, and the well becomes a cave. The Norns have been transformed into Naiads. The looms are where the Norns weave the fate of mortals and immortals alike. The water of life flows unceasingly through the cavern as it does through the Urth's well at the base of Yggdrasil. And we also understand the two gates. The gods used to come down to Urth's well to hold council as it is the place where the divine decrees manifest. Men also have a route there, through introspection and reflection, as that well corresponds to their hearts. In this image, there are a few differences that must be noted. First, the clay has been replaced by honey. Honey is stored up in the well; it is food for both the gods and men. It is a medicine for all ailments. It is gathered from the tree rather than being plastered on its trunk as the clay was placed. But it is something solid that may come from the well as well as the waters of life. The honey like the clay, is something gathered, the opposite of the water that is continually scattering. Here we have separation and gatheredness at the heart of the image of the primal scene. The other

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6. See Porphyry: *On the Cave of the Nymphs* translated by Lamberton, R. (Station Hill Press 1983)

point is that directions have been assigned to men and jinn. The jinn enter from the south, which is one of the directions of the sun. In fact, Porphyry assigns east, and west also, to the immortals. This we have seen are the directions associated with reality in Old English. On the other hand, men are assigned the north which is the land of nihilism and the cold North Wind. It is the place where days are too long and nights too long, where the opposites do not alternate properly. The land of the midnight sun. The north, with its bellicose winds, is the very embodiment of the ephemeron, where turbulence reigns supreme. The other directions take part in the correct alteration of eos and zophos reigned over and controlled by the immortals.

Thus, the image of the Well and the Tree appears exactly between the phase of entry into the utopian polis of Schiera and the Oikos at Ithica. The primal scene mediates between these two major Greek institutions which always are in tension. In Ithica we see the household has four major components that have held together all these years. There is the indecisive wife, the son, the keeper of the farm, and the keeper of the stores within the palace. These four elements have been faithful to Odysseus all this time in spite of giving up all hope of his return. These are the four key elements of the oikos. Of course, the servants are doing the work proper to the

man and woman. As long as the work continues properly divided between men and women, then the oikos is preserved. The indecisive wife like the Naiads weaves, but she unweaves what was woven by day at night. She remains faithful, though just barely, to her wedding vows. And finally, the son attempts to discover who his father was and where he is, thus becoming himself and a man, in his own right. The marriage bed of Odysseus is grown into the olive tree. This signifies a marriage that is written into reality itself, a marriage that is a non-nihilistic distinction, *par excellence*. Odysseus returns to gather up these pieces one by one and kill the suitors who are besieging the oikos, tempting his wife, threatening his son, and devouring his wares. The suitors are a monster representing the ephemeron. Odysseus kills them at the dark of the moon, at the beginning of the new year. Thus, a new epoch is inaugurated which will last until he must make his second journey across the lands.

Man can stand to go out into the world and be initiated into the nihilistic opposites he finds there, because at the center of his home he has a non-nihilistic distinction between his wife and all other women. That marriage is written into the nature of reality itself as the bed is bound to the living tree. As long as the major components of the oikos hold together, the faithful wife, the true son, and the separation of the work of women, in preserving, and the

work of men, sheparding, then this non-nihilistic distinction is preserved and a man can stand the most intense manifestations of nihilism like those that Odysseus suffered. This picture shows us that the oikos holds within it a precious jewel, like the setting on a wedding ring. The oikos is a bulwark against the manifestation of nihilism in the world. In this way it is opposite the polis which is a stage for the manifestation of nihilism, as an arena competition between men. The wedding ring is like the ring of the city wall. It is the autopoietic ring. In marriage the union of man and woman that Empedocles speaks of occurs on an unseen level of reality, in eternity. This is a manifestation of the inner secret of our humanness. Men and women are complementary opposites. Greek society, like many traditional societies, emphasized that complementarily by structuring society so that men and women performed duties which emphasized their complementary roles. It is in the fitting together of their differences that men and women realize that wholeness. As Odysseus said, that is the manifestation of harmony. The epitome of the oikos is the manifestation of this harmony. It is the site of harmony standing opposite the polis which is the site of disharmony and nihilistic suffering. Between these two poles of Greek society stands the primal scene of the Well and the Tree.



Within the external world, men get lost in the nihilistic landscape and forget their homes. That forgetfulness may come in many forms as a drug, sensual pleasure, or the striving for immortality. Those byways lead to the place of pure Zophos, Hades, which is the land of intense darkness beyond the seas. It is the place where the negative fourfold is manifest most strongly. Its opposite is the place of the manifestation of the positive fourfold which is the sunlit world of Eos itself. That world seems bright, but because it is always counterpoint to Hades and the Sea, it is clearly one horn of a nihilistic construct. These two nihilistic constructs themselves appear as the poles of manifestation within the world. Sea and Land. Zophos and Eos. Sunlight and Darkness under the earth after death. This is the clearing in Being which is always distinguished from the dark of the surrounding forrest. Within that clearing stands the intersubjective/interobjective structures of community. It lies on a spectrum between the most primitive and the ultra-sophisticated. Like sacred Troy, it is fragile. Men must come together to protect it, to protect the oikos within its walls. When the Trojan horse, the untamed, comes within those walls, the polis is destroyed. The city and its opposite hoplite warfare exist within the clearing in Being. Their structure is based on the differentiation of the kinds of Being. So there is a relationship between the dialectic between the positive and negative fourfold on

the one hand, and on the internal meta-leveled structure of Being on the other. That structure allows manifestation as a dynamic process, which is sometimes catastrophic, to occur. It is a structure that makes emergence a necessity as regimes of the city come and go, continually being reordered on many different levels. We see that emergence in the entry of Odysseus into Skiera. It is the opposite of his journey into his household. He comes to Schiera to destroy and bring a new catastrophic order like he brought to Troy. In both cases, it was the doing of the people of the city. In one case, it was the breaking of the laws of hospitality by stealing another man's wife. In the other case, it was the nihilistic opposite of being too hospitable and offending the gods by going too much in the other extreme. But Odysseus enters his oikos at Ithica to renew it. To return it to its proper order. To reestablish harmony between man and wife which is the center of the human world. Odysseus only destroys cities that have already internally destroyed themselves. His power to destroy so adeptly is based on the firm foundations of his marriage, strongly rooted in reality, embodying the non-nihilistic distinction at the root of the human situation. When the embodiment of the non-nihilistic distinction enters the utterly nihilistic landscape, the landscape reacts and turns over, presenting another completely different face. The emergent event is the sign of the non-nihilistic distinction.

Finally, we wished to find some hint of the other aspect of the roots of manifestation we picked up from Aristophanes. There is the small matter of the windegg that contains Aphrodite from which Eros breaks out and the birds that are the first creation. We have asserted that these are parallel to what Deleuze and Guattari call the Body without Organs and desiring machines. They represent that part of the roots of Being which manifest in Wild Being. We have posited that the autopoietic ring itself, of which Eros is a face, exists beyond Wild Being in projected in the Emptiness beyond being. It is a formation not effected by entropy, so clinging and craving is not necessary once this form which channels the neg-entropic solitons is achieved. Well, when we look into the cave, we see the Amphora and Kraters which hold the honey, and we see the bees themselves. Those stone vessels are like the windegg, and the bees are like the birds. Between these there lies something sweet that has an inherent appeal to men like Eros. With this link our image is complete. We can say that Aristophanes did not lead us astray with his strange parody on the Theogony. He did indeed teach us something of wisdom. He has taught us that the positive fourfold is only the tip of the iceberg. That the actual structure of manifestation has deep roots with the positive fourfold being balanced by the negative fourfold. The enframing, site of the manifestation of nihilistic opposites (the assembly of

men), is balanced by the sun of the good. The Windegg (amphoras and kraters) is balanced by the birds (bees). This metonymy makes sense of our talk of birds and bees as a euphemism for love. And this whole structure points toward the middle element which is the autopoietic ring of intersubjective/interobjective manifestation, called by Deleuze and Guattari the “socius.” It is “emergent society” that G.H. Mead discovered at the heart of things. We must come to see that Plato understood this strange autopoietic possibility at the heart of this deeper model of manifestation first and wrote it into his Laws.

The city only becomes unified when the wedding ring that embodies the non-nihilistic distinction of marriage becomes the basis for the polis, the site of the manifestation of nihilism, by approximating the autopoietic ring within the community.

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