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Talking to Strangers:

The Use of Stories as Guides to Intercultural Encounters by the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree

by

Carla Osborne

A THESIS

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Abstract

The Archaic Greeks and Hudson's Bay Cree alike lived in a world without writing, sharing and maintaining social memory through oral storytelling. Since both were enterprising, well-travelled peoples, they became involved in meetings with other groups of completely unfamiliar language and culture: strange others. To manage these intercultural encounters, the Archaic Greeks and Hudson's Bay Cree each used their own ideas of appropriate behaviour between guests and hosts, drawing on stories shared within their communities. They used the level of conformity with their own hospitality protocols that they observed in the strange other as an index of "us-ness," a measure of the possibility of ongoing social relationship with them. Despite this common measure of "us-ness," the Hudson's Bay Cree and Archaic Greeks differed in how they used it, as shown by the lessons encoded in their traditional stories about the unfamiliar other.

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Last but far from least, I am thankful to my two younger brothers, who have both been bemusedly asking for years where my thesis was because they were quite sure I must have already written it, and my Mum and Dad who agreed with them.

Dedication

To Dr. Barbara Wilkes and Ms. Joyce Pelletier, the best writing and research instructors a student could ever ask for.

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INTRODUCTION

> The truth about stories is… that's all that we are.
>
> - Thomas King (2003: 2)

Thomas King made this statement near the beginning of the first of his 2003 Massey Lectures. Throughout the series he argued that not only stories deemed sacred and part of a cultural canon have power and meaning in a society. Secular stories, often with tellings expected to be ephemeral, may have just as much power and meaning, maybe more, and maybe in spite of anyone's plans. He noted how the different stories Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples brought to their earliest meetings in the Americas have affected their past and ongoing relationships. Those stories carry lessons in what to expect of unknown peoples, how to act towards them, and how to interpret their behaviour.

European experience with stories carrying information and guidance of this kind did not begin in the Americas. In fact, it began at least as early as the Greek Archaic Period (~750-480 BCE) when the Greeks began to pursue colonial ventures after the Greek Dark Age.

The Archaic Greek and seventeenth-century European cases differ in a key detail: oral versus written common stories. Where seventeenth-century Europeans had access to a body of stories in written and printed form, the Archaic Greeks did not. Writing had been reintroduced to Greece in the Archaic Period, but there had not been enough time to establish a corpus of written works that were frequently copied and widely disseminated. The Archaic Greeks and Hudson's Bay Cree alike lived in a story world without writing, sharing and maintaining social memory through oral storytelling. The lessons of the mainly biblical stories seventeenth-century Europeans brought to their encounters with

Indigenous Americans have been well explored since they also informed missionary and trade documents. A corresponding exploration of lessons from oral traditions has barely begun. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to that exploration by comparing and contrasting the lessons found in the oral traditions of the Archaic Greeks and Hudson's Bay Cree.

The corpus of traditional stories available in transcription for the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree is significant. On one hand, there are the Homeric epics, Hesiod's poems, and at least a number of the Homeric Hymns and other lyric poems. On the other, there are at minimum two major Cree story cycles (of Wīsahkēcāhk and Cha-Cha-Bek respectively) and story sequences with either human or non-human protagonists of generic status (i.e. "everyman" or "everywolf" figures). Taking a focus on stories describing meetings with unknown peoples (or animals in the Cree case) narrows the possibilities to four episodes from the *Odyssey* and three from the Cree story corpus. As already noted, the feasibility of studying these stories together is not only based on their oral traditional nature or their topic. The Hudson's Bay Cree and the Archaic Greeks occupied similar like socio-economic positions, and both were at times meeting peoples completely unknown to them during their own travels.

Both the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree were enterprising, well-travelled peoples who became involved in meetings with other peoples of completely unfamiliar languages and cultures. They then had to somehow integrate those new people into their understanding of the world. When compared and contrasted to each other, their examples can help in understanding how societies use shared stories, be they oral or

written[1], to manage intercultural encounters. More specifically, their examples can help us grasp how such stories are used to smooth encounters with other societies so different as to seem to share few, or even no cultural values. At first stories may be used to make sense of or keep unfamiliar new people separate. Later they may be used when the new people are no longer strangers but are not necessarily considered congeners.

Studies that place the language and content of the Homeric epics in conversation with oral narratives and language from non-Indo-European cultures are not unprecedented. On the linguistic side, Leonard Bloomfield studied Algonquian languages in North America side by side with Ancient Greek, seeking markers of an older animate-inanimate noun category system in Indo-European. Moving from linguistics towards poetics, there is Teffelteller's 2001 paper "Greek Syntax: Theoretical Approaches From Meillet to Devine and Stevens".[2] Shifting further into poetic content and diction, scholars such as Opland have studied Indo-European poetry and then turned their attention to a non-Indo-European example. In Opland's case, he began with a study of Anglo-Saxon oral poetry, then worked with Xhosa oral poetry.[3]

Although the earliest Greek literature has been intensely studied for its literary, linguistic, historical, and material culture content, much remains to be learned from it. Scholars of oral poetry are certainly aware of its role as a guide to behaviour, and how the Homeric epics became guides *par excellence*. However, this has gone hand in hand with a tendency to seek understanding mainly of how they were used to educate Greek

---

[1] It should be noted stories travel along a continuum between written and oral as opposed to living exclusively in one state or the other.
[2] See especially pages 269-278.
[3] *Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetry: A Study of the Traditions* (1980) and *Xhosa Oral Poetry: Aspects of a Black South African Tradition* (1983) respectively.

aristocrats, that is to say, of individuals who could be expected to share an overriding concern with κλέος, τιμή, and ἀρετή with the Homeric heroes. Taking up the question of what an Archaic Greek could learn from the *Odyssey* about dealing with unknown foreigners begins to reveal what non-aristocratic Greek men learned from the Homeric epics or any other early Greek literature.

In contrast, Cree oral tradition has not been much studied outside Indigenous circles for its social relevance or applications for Cree communities or individuals. To the contrary, it has been caught up in a quest for "archetypal narratives" beginning in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Anthropologists sincerely expected them to form part of a unilineal progression from the "primitive" to European-valued science and religion. As a result, despite later rejection of this expectation once its inherent racism and oversimplification were recognized, Cree literature is still usually studied outside of its proper socio-cultural context. The challenge contextualized studies represent is well worth meeting. When Cree stories such as the three discussed in this thesis are returned to their right context, not only do we gain a better understanding of the stories and their relevance, we also gain a new perspective that is useful beyond the Cree example.

A Preview of This Study's Findings

This study uses seven stories to explore the lessons available for use to the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree when meeting people of utterly unfamiliar cultures. They are drawn from oral traditional stories later set down in writing within the *Odyssey* and three collections of Cree stories collected by anthropologists. The comparison and contrast of the stories and their lessons revealed surprising parallels and divergences between the Archaic Greek and Hudson's Bay Cree ideas of how to deal with alien peoples.

In their oral stories, the Archaic Greeks and Hudson's Bay Cree alike approached their encounters with unknown people using their respective protocols of guest-host interaction. They met strangers with an expectation of being treated as guests, people whom the newly met strangers would welcome into their homes. Despite this expectation the Hudson's Bay Cree and the Archaic Greeks still had stories of encounters with strange others who turned out to be man-eating terrors from whom the story protagonists escape with difficulty. Such stories are often interpreted as illustrations of what is human behaviour versus inhuman behaviour. A human host follows the protocols of guest-host interaction, while a non-human anti-host ignores them in favour of consuming his guests. When placed back into the full context of guest-host protocols however, matters turn out to be more complex.

The utterly unfamiliar beings the story protagonists meet are not being gauged in terms of their humanness, or at least, not *only* in terms of their humanness. Instead, they are being considered in terms of their level of "us-ness," the potential for having an ongoing social relationship with them. It is reasonable to think the question is solely one of humanness if the only examples considered are ones most likely to be available to the Archaic Greeks, the stories from Odysseus' years of wanderings in what Cook refers to as "the World of Poseidon" (1995: 54). Consideration of those stories alongside the Cree examples helps make the role of "us-ness" visible, in part because some of the ongoing social relationships in them are explicitly with non-human characters.

In terms of specific lessons in dealing with beings they had never met before and had no information about, the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree recorded some of the same ones in their stories. Those lessons reflect social, cultural, and economic

similarities between the two groups. Conversely, where their lessons differed, these reflected differences in their perspectives and histories. The lessons are summarized in Table 1 below, and will be illustrated and explained in the following chapters.

Shared Overarching Assumption: Hospitality Protocols are universal, though strange others may not always follow them.		
Lessons Unique to the Archaic Greeks	**Lessons Shared by Both the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree**	**Lessons Unique to the Hudson's Bay Cree**
• do not eat strange food • strange others out of context are dangerous • strange others are inherently threatening, no matter how friendly they are • strange others need to be taught how to behave like Greeks • the lower classes are rude everywhere	• language is no barrier • avoid encounters when you would be at a disadvantage • strange others can be good hosts – sometimes too good • keep your true name to yourself if you can • familiar elements in an unfamiliar land do not guarantee safety	• do not be too proud to ask for help • treat helpful strange others well • strange others may perceive things differently • strange others have knowledge to share • if it is not possible to understand strange others, it is acceptable to move on

Table 1: Summary table of the lessons in dealing with the strange other from the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree.

Thesis Overview

This thesis includes six chapters. Chapter One sets out the definition of narrative and the model of social memory applied throughout this thesis. Chapters Two and Three focus on the Archaic Greeks and the four exemplar stories drawn from Books 6, 9, and 10 of the *Odyssey*. Chapters Four and Five turn to the Hudson's Bay Cree and their three exemplar stories. The exemplars include an episode from the Wīsahkēcāhk cycle, a story telling the origins of the first couple on Earth, and an instalment from the adventures of wolverine. The overall comparison and contrast of the lessons in dealing with the "strange other" (a

term which will be formally defined in Chapter Two) is carried out in Chapter Six. There are also appendices to Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter One lays out the theory that will guide the interpretation, comparison, and contrast of the exemplar stories. It begins by defining narrative, the socially embedded narratives better known as stories, and the typical usage of the concept of social memory in classical studies. Then it turns to the more complex task of explaining the model of social memory used in this thesis, clarifying issues of terminology and register. It closes by showing how the model can be used to explore uses of social memory beyond those made by elite individuals pursuing political ends.

Chapter Two carries out the task of contextualizing storytelling as a social tool in Archaic Greece in three steps. First, the model of narrative and social memory presented in the next section is applied to the Archaic Greek context. Then the documented uses of Homeric epic specifically are laid out, followed by an examination of where and when oral narratives were shared. Finally, the Archaic Greek approaches to dealing with strangers are explained. Chapter Three discusses the "World of Poseidon" where Odysseus encounters four different versions of the "strange other." Each encounter is analyzed in terms of what may be expected of the strange other in light of Odysseus' experiences and the requirements of ξενία.

Moving now to the second branch of the thesis, Chapter Four carries out two tasks. It begins by introducing the Hudson's Bay Cree and their socio-cultural role prior to the arrival of Europeans as described in oral histories and derived from archaeological data. Then it gives a brief history of their first encounters with Europeans and a more detailed explanation of what makes them comparable to the Archaic Greeks. Second, the

model of narrative and social memory is applied to the Hudson's Bay Cree case in parallel with its application to the Archaic Greeks in Chapter Two. Since Cree storytelling protocols differ significantly from those of Indo-European cultures such as that of the Archaic Greeks, this chapter briefly describes them as well. The chapter closes with a presentation of Cree approaches to dealing with strangers, and then is followed by an appendix considering the differences and similarities in storytelling protocols between the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree.

Again, parallel to the examination in the Archaic Greek case, Chapter Five takes up the lessons in dealing with the strange other from the Cree exemplar stories. Before diving into the discussion proper, it provides one more needed contextual element, a summary of the Cree worldview. Then it analyses each of the three encounter stories, identifying what may be expected of the strange other based on the lessons encoded in each one. This chapter is followed directly by an appendix, which summarizes all of the Cree stories referenced in this thesis, including those informing the description of Cree hospitality protocols in Chapter Four.

By Chapter Six, a significant amount of encoded information has been identified in the Archaic Greek and Cree stories, and it is time to bring the two branches of the thesis back together. There is still more to be learned, as comparison and contrast of the different lessons in dealing with the strange other demonstrates. By chapter's end, the potential for learning even more from these stories via improved contextual information and additional comparison and contrast is clear.

Having completed the main discussion, this thesis closes with a conclusion in three parts. Part one is a summary of the results of the comparison and contrast, including

a table laying out the shared and differing elements in the lessons in dealing with the strange other. The second part briefly describes how the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree actually applied those lessons. In closing, it considers how this information is useful more generally, including the power of stories to shape and reshape human interactions, and in turn the power of humans to reshape those stories.

CHAPTER 1: NARRATIVE AND SOCIAL MEMORY

"Social memory" and "narrative" are key concepts used in this study that have recently come into explicit use by classical scholars. In other words, classical scholars have taken up the questions of how social memory and narrative are created, used, maintained, and passed down as topics of study in their own right. This is especially true of social memory, which began its path to explicit definition at least as early as 1997 with Jan Bremmer's paper "Myth as Propaganda: Athens and Sparta." Despite its age, Bremmer's paper remains a good example of the typical context for explorations of social memory by classicists: historical studies examining the links between social memory and social control by central authorities and/or the men seeking to influence them. Steinbock's 2012 publication *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse* is one of the most recent studies of this kind. Steinbock's book is also another good example of narrative's path to explicitness, since he begins by setting Attic orators' references to shared narratives into social context (2012: 4). His approach illustrates the relationship between social memory and narrative: social memory is made up of shared narratives, this is what makes it "social" as opposed to "individual" or even "official." It is important to keep this relationship in mind while reading the definitions of "narrative" and "social memory" provided below.

Narrative

"Narrative is a general term for 'a spoken or written account of connected events' " (Stevenson and Lindberg 2010: narrative), with no preconceptions about who the

audience is or whether there is one beyond the narrator. Schiffrin and De Fina note that "[n]arratives are fundamental to our lives" (2010: 1), and although they are talking about what is called *story* here, this is still true of bare-bones narrative, narrative that simply provides information in a coherent way. Directions, requests, even physics experiments are narratives in this minimal sense. What are in question here, however, are the socially embedded ones, "stories [that] connect people in collectivities... coordinate actions among people who share the expectation that life will unfold according to certain plots" (Frank 2010: 15). Socially embedded stories reflect what those who share them expect to be possible, to potentially happen in the real world. Furthermore, the people who share those stories often expect those stories to illustrate not merely what *could* happen, but what *should* happen in particular circumstances.

In the case of the Homeric epics, the shared stories were originally oral poetry that helped both an immediate and a larger social audience make sense of their world (Dougherty 2003: 188). Cree traditional stories performed the same task prior to contact with Europeans, and despite ongoing disruption by assimilationist pressures, still perform that task today (Denton 2010: 1-2). Therefore, stories are not just received by a passive audience anymore than they are just transmitted by a passive narrator. Narrator and audience interact with each other and act back on the story, even as the story acts on them.

Lakoff and Johnson famously concluded that "human thought processes are largely metaphorical" (1980: 6), an insight key to understanding how narratives can be made into socially embedded stories. Far from being merely pretty or interesting, metaphors are ways of partially structuring one experience in terms of another (*Ibid*: 77).

They may be invoked when someone uses categories from her or his known experience to interpret new experiences (*Ibid*: 160). However, this alone does not make a narrative socially embedded, though it certainly makes it more complex. For example, by the 1940s, physicists had already been arguing for nearly a century over how to model the origins of the universe. For society at large, the debate was often at best esoteric and difficult to understand. This changed in 1949, when Fred Hoyle coined the term "big bang" for one of those models. In that moment Hoyle did not just escape technical jargon. He also subtly called on a powerful metaphor from the first chapter of Genesis in the Christian Bible, and on common knowledge of how explosions behaved. In the naming, he accidentally made the big bang narrative socially embedded. The big bang was no longer just what physicists argued about; it was now something everyone could talk about.

This brief example suggests how narrator and audience alike may use stories to make sense of new information. They may also use stories to make or break social connections. Several great examples of making social connections with stories are given by Steinbock in the epigraphs to the introduction of *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse* (2012: 3). Each one was spoken by a politician seeking to form social bonds with his audience. Taking an ancient example, Thucydides' account of the Melian debate includes a whole series of speeches in which the Melians strive to preserve a social connection the Athenians seek to break.

Stories provide a script, or to pick a more neutral and flexible term, a pattern for interaction and interpretation. Yet a narrative still does not become a full-spectrum story of this kind until it has become part of the social memory of a community, though it may

be held in different versions by smaller groups within it (Scodel 2008: 118). So what, then, is social memory?

Social Memory

The conceptualization of social memory used here derives from Fentress and Wickham (1992), Linke (2001), Prager (2001), Bruner (2010), and Steinbock (2012). The ancient Greek nuances integrated into the model are drawn from Nagy (1996), while the Cree nuances come from Bird and Gray (2007) and Brightman (2002).

Many terms are used to refer to social memory as a whole, and to what Jan and Aleida Assman identify as its two "registers" or levels of usage (Erll 2011: 28). Steinbock uses "collective memory" and "social memory" almost interchangeably and identifies seven additional synonyms for it (2012: 8). "Collective memory" is Maurice Halbwach's original term in his posthumously published book, *On Collective Memory* (1950 (1992)). It is also the label that predominates in psychological and sociological publications. However, in this thesis "social memory" will be used throughout for the communicated expression of the collective experience that identifies a group (Fentress and Wickham 1992: ix-x, 25-26). As Steinbock notes, "...both *social relevance* and *communication* are indispensable elements of this concept. For a memory to be shared, it first has to be articulated and thus depends on shared cultural forms and conventions of language." (2012: 12). The communication of social memory can be by speech, but need not be exclusively spoken and may carry meaning in other ways, such as in imagery (Fentress and Wickham 1992: 17-18, 47). Other means of sharing social memory can include almost any aspect of material culture, from paintings and cloth to sculpture and architecture.

The purpose and benefit of using “social memory” rather than other terms begins with its stronger connotations of relationship between individuals who together make up a larger community. As a structure created and maintained by diverse people, social memory cannot absolutely determine a person’s behaviour, nor can it remain static (Steinbock 2012: 12). It includes stable shared meanings and remembered images that serve as a source of knowledge and perspective on the present and the future (Fentress and Wickham 1992: 26, 51, 59). These shared views of the past create the collective identity of the community (Steinbock 2012: 7) and involve the use of narrative to smooth the joins between the remembered parts and the present (Bruner 2010: 49).

At first glance, it may seem contradictory to refer to a singular social memory subsuming multiple versions of the past and numerous perspectives on those versions. However, it is not a marker of contradiction so much as a marker of complexity. Larger social groups rapidly develop sub-communities holding alternate shared versions of specific memories while still sharing other memories with the greater community. This can be observed in Cree groups across Canada, who all share the social memory of a great flood survived by Wīsahkēcāhk and the water animals, who together restore the Earth. Yet these groups also have other different, though similar stories of Wīsahkēcāhk’s adventures. The differences may be just in the names of the actors in the story, or reflect the specific environment and location of the Cree subgroup (Bird and Gray 2007: 7).

Practically speaking, maintaining conformity in social memory is a non-trivial task that historically only highly centralized societies have attempted. For example, the emperor Augustus focussed considerable resources in the early Roman Empire on manipulating and unifying aspects of social memory through writing and literacy in the process of

consolidating his power (see Miles 2000: 35-44). Augustus' program social memory shaping seems to have had its greatest success with elite individuals interested in cooperating with imperial officials and/or educated according to Roman custom (*Ibid*: 48). Yet the persistence of local languages, the sheer size of the empire even at this early stage, and resistance to Roman power prevented the imposition of a simplified social memory.

A given community's social memory may be challenged by other communities or even its own sub-communities. Cree communities have experienced challenges to their social memory from non-Native communities from a very early date. For instance, many non-Natives have learned that the Blackfoot and Plains Cree were traditional enemies, as shown by warfare between the two groups during the late nineteenth-century. However, this enmity was a short-term phenomenon triggered by fierce competition for access to horses (Milloy 1988(1990): 31-32, 34-35). A great example of sub-community disagreement about the content of social memory comes from the varying ancient Greek views of Helen's role in the Trojan War. The Homeric epics portray Helen as deserving blame, while alternative views exonerating her are recorded by Herodotus and sung by lyric poets such as Stesichorus. On the other hand, preservation of alternate perspectives on and versions of the past can help a community adjust its social memory in response to the experience of internal or external conflict (Steinbock 2012: 4-5, 11; Prager 2001: 2224; Linke 2001: 2222).

These features imply several important correlates about the audience for a presentation of information held in social memory. At any given time, the majority of the audience already knows the story they are hearing or otherwise expecting (Fentress and Wickham 1992: 55). The audience determines which version of the story is acceptable to

it, and if a narrator tells the story "wrong," audience members may act to override and "correct" the narrator (*Ibid*: 74). As Scodel notes in her own summary of Fentress and Wickham, "Different groups within a society constitute different memory communities, and they have their own versions of the past, which may contradict each other or compete for attention" (2008: 118). Different groups may differ both in their specific memories of a story and in their interpretation of it. Bohannan encountered this phenomenon during her fieldwork with the West African Tiv. In the course of her efforts to retell the basic plot of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, she learned that it could be interpreted in other ways by people of other cultures, and this is the primary conclusion of her account of the experience, "Shakespeare in the Bush" (1966). Bohannon's narrative also reveals how her hosts were ready to interrupt and ask why certain things were happening in her story. When her explanations did not satisfy them, they did not hesitate to provide what they considered the correct ones.

To sum up, social memory is not a type of mental straitjacket but an adjustable garment that acts on its wearers and is acted on by them. Still, it is important to state that it is not arbitrary either. To extend the clothing metaphor a little further, social memory for a given group may vary to some degree, but it will always be a jacket, not pants or socks. The Athenians of the Classical period understood their tribe to be the origin of all Ionian Greeks (*Histories* 1.147). While some of them may have believed themselves to be literally autochthonous, others may have seen themselves as the most ancient inhabitants of Attica. Neither variant opposes the broader social memory of the Athenians and other Attic Greeks that the Ionian Greeks were all of Athenian origin.

Currently two broad frameworks for understanding the psychology of social memory and how a community views and uses its past are in wide use: the Neo-Freudian and the Neo-Durkheimian (Prager 2001: 2223). The former insists on the primacy of ruptures with the past created by traumatic events. The past events are then not fully woven into the wider social memory, and become repressed memories that interfere with life in the present (*Ibid*). The latter insists on the primacy of continuity with the past, and sees the past as a positive source of information for the community on how to understand and cope with the present and future (*Ibid*). Whereas an absolute Neo-Freudian might expect repressed social memory to disrupt or even end the cohesion of a community, an absolute Neo-Durkheimian might expect past social memory to always maintain or improve social cohesion. In practice, of course no scholar is an absolutist user of either framework, instead favouring one or the other depending on the context of the social memory in question. Steinbock sets particular importance on the Neo-Freudian framework as a corrective to a mainly Neo-Durkheimian approach in his study, due to traumatic events before and during the period he studies. Even as the Athenian orators attempt to elide those events from memory, they still affect Athenian society (2012: 18).

Before going on, it is worth making explicit an aspect of both these frameworks. They are not intended to suggest that social memory somehow works apart from the people who create and maintain it. "Social memory" is not a separate autonomous creature that acts of its own accord. Rather, when certain social memories are disruptive because an unsuccessful attempt is made to repress them, the reason for this is the decision of members of the community to remember and insist on that remembrance. When certain social memories are helpful for overcoming or resisting social disruption, it

is because members of the community have chosen to remember, or forget, for this purpose (Erll 2011: 100-101). Centralizing elite groups have regularly clashed and colluded with non-elite groups over who controls social memory and what it contains. It is important not to allow the use of either the Neo-Freudian or the Neo-Durkheimian frameworks to elide this competition for control of social memory between social groups. Such an elision would route the scholar into social determinism.

In the case of this study, the Neo-Freudian framework is less important for several reasons. In the Archaic Greek case, while there had been past traumatic events, these had in fact been absorbed into the greater framework of social memory. The end of Mycenaean Greek power was understood as the result of the return of the Heraclids. Even if this in itself does not reduce the importance of the Neo-Freudian framework, the source of Archaic Greek social memory used does, that being Homeric epic, especially the *Odyssey*. Gregory Nagy explains in *Homeric Questions* that the Homeric epics were diffused throughout the Greek world relatively early (1996: 39), and argued "The wider the diffusion... the fewer opportunities for recomposition, so that the widest possible reception entails, teleologically, the strictest possible degree of adherence to a normative and unified version." (1996:39-40). By the Archaic period this process of diffusion is substantially complete, and the Archaic Greek world has stabilized enough for social memory to guide colonizing ventures. Those colonizing ventures were themselves intended to help relieve the social tensions created by an expanding population. This study considers a time just before the traumatic moment of encounter between Archaic Greek colonists with peoples of southern Italy.

Simon Price reasonably describes the Classical and later Greek understanding of the past as not including a Dark Age or other periodizations now used by classical historians to interpret early Greek history. "Instead, they believed in a continuous link between the present day and the remote past." (2012: 16). However, since so much of the written evidence for ancient Greek social memory of any kind derives from Athens, the applicability of both psychological frameworks needs to be considered against the known events of the time. Despite their belief in a present continuous with the past, the Classical and later Athenians were coping with traumatic events including the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. Depending on contemporary events of the moment, those larger traumatic events were reinterpreted to support or oppose particular Athenian political and military choices by their orators, as Steinbock's study illustrates. Neither the Persian or Peloponnesian Wars had been recast into something like the return of the Heraclids, and it may be that they could no longer be integrated into social memory by that type of story. Despite being closer in time to the "Dark Age"[4] from a modern perspective, the Archaic Greeks likely also viewed their link to the remote past as continuous.

The Hudson's Bay Cree just prior to contact with Europeans were in an analogous position to that of the Archaic Greeks. While it is true that they suffered raids from more distant First Nations such as the Iroquois (Lytwyn 2002: 5), they lived within a stable "continuum of culturally and linguistically related native people" (Brightman 2002: 4).

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[4] The Greek "Dark Age" was named by analogy to the later "Dark Ages" in Europe, both characterized by a loss of literacy due to widespread social disruption. Historians have begun using alternate terms for the latter period due to evidence that literacy did not completely vanish with the central authority of the Holy Roman Empire and there was a level of cultural continuity. Similarly classical scholars have begun challenging the concept of a Greek Dark Age considering the information encoded in Homeric epic and other lyric poetry together with archaeological data. Or to recast it in the terminology of this thesis: social memory was gravely challenged in both "Dark" ages, yet persisted.

The trauma of the great flood was integrated into social memory, and there were no other traditions of mass migrations under duress or the guidance of a prophetic vision, as can be found among the Dakota or Anishinabeg, for example. Revered Cree storyteller Louis Bird comments on the contemporary continuity of Cree social memory across Canada (Bird and Gray 2007: 7). This is borne out by the stories collected by anthropologists ranging from Leonard Bloomfield in the 1930s, Robert Brightman in the 1990 to 2000s, and references in the journals of European traders and travellers in Cree territory. In this case too a time is being considered just before the traumatic moment of encounter while endeavouring to appreciate the resources Hudson's Bay Cree could bring from their social memory to that encounter.

Finally, there remains the question of the Assmans' use of two differentiated "registers" or "memory frameworks." They refer to these registers as "communicative memory" and "cultural memory," names implying an independence the Assmans did not intend. The two registers inform one another (Erll 2011: 28, 31). Communicative memory is made of experiences that contemporaries are equally competent to remember and use to interpret the past. In contrast, cultural memory is ceremonialized memory handled and interpreted only by specialists. Communicative memory may be widely known and used, but is not expected to remain more or less static. Cultural memory, since it is judged foundational to the community, is expected to remain basically the same (*Ibid*: 28-29).

In conversation with the Assmans' formulation is that of Jeffrey Olick, who speaks instead of collected and collective memory. "Collected memory" is "the socially and culturally formed individual memory. We remember with the aid of culturally

specific schemata...” (*Ibid*: 97). Prager reiterates this idea in noting how “individual memory relies upon available cultural narratives to provide context and meaning to what otherwise would be relatively meaningless and random events in an individual’s life.” (Prager 2001: 2225). “Collective memory” could be loosely referred to as objectified memory since it includes “the symbols, media, social institutions, and practices which are used to construct, maintain, and represent versions of a shared past.” (*Ibid*: 98).

These formulations all highlight how individual memory both references and contributes to social memory. Social memory has an overarching role, spanning individual memories, and a bifurcated role with tendrils stretching to and from different sub-communities of rememberers. However, it is Olick’s collected and collective memories that best describe the model applied in this study. The Archaic Greeks and the Hudson’s Bay Cree are going to face situations that lack the structure and meaning their own communities provide. In order to make sense of those situations and determine how to act within them, individuals must rely on the schemata provided within their cultures and passed on through social memory. Although the registers named by the Assmans are not intended to imply that ordinary members of a community are powerless to affect ceremonialized social memory, this implication is difficult to avoid due to its specific definition as something managed by specialists. Olick’s approach is helpful for keeping in mind that collective memory is created through social practice, which may or may not involve some sort of ritual or other specialist. That said, his terminology must be taken with care so as not to ignore human action and thereby treat objects such as archives or statues as literal actors, paraphrasing Kerwin Lee Klein (Erll 2011: 100).

Application of the Model of Social Memory in This Study

At the beginning of this chapter, the typical context for explorations of ancient Greek social memory by classicists was described as the exploration of links between it and social control by central authorities and/or the men seeking to influence them. This makes good sense for studies focussed on the Classical period and later when writing is firmly established and much of the material available was written by and for an elite male audience. That audience had an active interest in maintaining or acquiring wider social control of Athens and/or its allies in relation to the events of their time. It makes rather less sense for a study like this one, which is concerned with non-elite, non-specialist responses to new conditions. In order to get closer to the social memory being invoked and applied by those individuals, this study uses oral tradition as reflected by the Homeric epics and Cree traditional stories, because these narratives were produced as much for them and by them as for and by elites.

Courtesy of the studies carried out by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, the existence and endurance of verbal formulae in Homeric epic is widely understood and accepted. It is undeniable that the central characters in the Homeric epics are kings, from Agamemnon to Odysseus. This does not deny them a more direct connection to the needs and concerns of non-elite Archaic Greeks, though it certainly obscures it. In his study of Indo-European poetics, *How to Kill a Dragon*, Calvert Watkins takes up the question of verbal formulae and makes a key point:

> We noted earlier in connection with the verbal formula that formulas are the vehicles of themes, and that in the totality of these we find the doctrine, ideology, and culture of the

> Indo-Europeans. These formulas are collectively the verbal expression of the whole traditional culture of the Indo-Europeans. (1995: 68)

Even if the original Homer was retainer to a king and sang each night on command, his audience was still everyone who could hear. This is not true of much of the preserved ancient Greek corpus that follows the Homeric epics, especially orator's speeches.

The Hudson's Bay Cree are not Indo-European language speakers, and to date no one has studied their story cycles to identify verbal formulae. That Cree oral traditions genuinely reflect contemporary social memory has not always been accepted by anthropologists. It was all but axiomatic in anthropological practice and theory that North American Indigenous cultures were utterly cut off from their pasts and future viability by contact with Europeans. More recent work by non-Native scholars including Brightman (2002, 2007), Preston (1999) and Cruikshank (1998) have shown these once unquestioned ideas are at best over-extended. In their turn, Native scholars including McLeod (2007), Campbell (1995), and Archibald (2008) have located and republished older documents and worked with Elders to re-establish Indigenous control over Indigenous social memory. Their discoveries have revealed continuity in storytelling traditions including those of the Hudson's Bay Cree. Furthermore, they proved the traditional cultural information embedded in those stories was and is used by all Native persons, whatever their social rank or role.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALIZING STORYTELLING AS A SOCIAL TOOL IN ANCIENT GREECE

Archaic Greek Social Memory

Research on the Homeric epics has often focused on questions of historical content, transmission, authorship, or language. As a result they are usually contextualized via archaeology, philology, ethnography, or some combination of these. As evidenced by the model presented above, this study is taking a somewhat different line that considers the Homeric epics as stories, *socially embedded narratives held and used in the social memory of one or more communities*. For that reason this line relies on the direct historical approach (Trigger 1996: 510-511), applying the model of the social uses of narrative and social memory laid out above directly to the ancient Greeks of the Archaic Period. The application is based on a combination of ethnographic data from contemporary cultures and Greek historical records (but not the internal historical information of the epics themselves for fear of circularity). Overall this section uses what could be called the inverse of the ethnographic reading approaches of Dougherty in *The Raft of Odysseus* (2003) or Hartog in *Memories of Odysseus* (2001). For the moment the concern is not with reading either Homeric epic as an ethnographic text, but with applying ethnographic data external to them in order to understand them better as stories.

One of the most obvious features of Archaic Greek social memory is that it was not mediated through writing. Tyrants and aristocrats, and in time early demagogues, attempted to influence and centralize social memory for greater numbers of people beyond their own cronies. They could attempt this by force, driving out or otherwise

silencing those with dissenting stories, or by persuasion, manipulating religious festivals or commissioning public artworks.

Eventually writing would make possible another means to influence social meaning at least in principle: privatizing oral poetry, especially the Homeric epics, by writing them down. Nagy identifies an example of such an attempt in Herodotus[5] in *Homeric Questions*, where he briefly describes Herodotus' discussion of a tyrant's written copy "as if it were an usurpation of the public possession of poetry" (Nagy 1996: 66).

Writing was not available to the Archaic Greeks, but Herodotus' story illustrates the continuing importance of social memory and the ongoing struggle of different ancient Greek social groups to use and control it. This is not the same point as that being made by Steiner in *The Tyrant's Writ* (1994). She is arguing for a specific political interpretation, that there existed in ancient Greece a polarity of tyranny-writing opposed to (proto)democracy-speaking (1994: 166). The point being made here is simply that the phenomenon of powerful political figures in ancient Greek society attempting to shape and control social memory was not new, and neither was resistance to those attempts.

In the changing and expanding Greek world of the Archaic Period, competition between communities over which stories to keep retelling and how to modify them for new circumstances would have been sharper. We can see evidence for this in the alternate narratives depicted on Archaic pottery, which could vary for reasons of both medium and market (Lowenstam 1992: 167-172) or differences in local social memory (Harrison 1978: 29).

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[5] I will explain why Herodotus, who is dated to the Classical Period, can nonetheless inform us about Archaic Greek thought about stories in the next section.

Finally, in his study of memory in Homeric epic, Bakker provides a helpful snapshot description of the difference between Archaic Greek and contemporary mainstream[6], North American social memory:

> ...the collective mentality of a society that places fundamental authority in the remote past and considers the κλέα ἀνδρῶν, the record of the achievements of the ancestors that is codified in epic tradition, to be the model for excellence in the present (Bakker 2008: 66).

In contrast, the collective mentality reflected by mainstream North American social memory places little or no fundamental authority in the remote past. Fundamental authority rests instead in the relatively near past of only two to three hundred years ago, represented by the glorious acts of a few specific men. These men are not codified as literal ancestors, but as founders of the modern states making up North America (i.e. George Washington, Agustin de Iturbide, John A. MacDonald). The codification itself is done through officially sanctioned prose histories.

Finally, before diving into the various uses Archaic Greeks could make of the Homeric epics, it is important to consider whether they were in fact available to them to use. The question of when the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written down remains contentious, although the current consensus dates this event to the eighth century BCE (Morris 1986: 81, 129; Powell 1997: 3; Graziosi 2002: 91-92). Finley and other scholars

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[6] "Mainstream" here refers to the general consensus among people in North America of European descent who are at least second-generation immigrants as to what is "correct behaviour" and a constellation of critical definitions of terms including civilization, agriculture, and religion.

have argued for a time up to two centuries earlier or later (Finley 1978: 47-48; 1981: 232; Morris 1986: 91-93). Setting aside the question of writing, Graziosi argues that an eighth-century dating of the Homeric poems has less to do with the evidence available than it does with a western scholarly insistence on the primacy of Homer over all other poets (2002: 35).

Graziosi's cautions about how contemporary biases may inflect how the Homeric epics are dated and understood as narratives are well taken. Fortunately, what "availability" means for the purpose of this thesis, which is focussed on oral tradition, does not depend on Homer being first of all poets, or the Homeric epics having been written down in the Archaic period. Instead, it means available as a widespread, orally shared corpus of poems that was ultimately enshrined in the written versions handed down to the present. These oral narratives were then entrenched as carriers of idealized examples and widely accepted views of gods and heroes. The archaeological evidence is also consistent with what Nagy refers to as a more "pan-hellenic" outlook around the beginning of the Archaic period, which he suggests would also be when the diffusion of the Homeric epics would have been complete (Nagy 1996: 39-40).

The earliest citations of Homer include variants on lines known from the written tradition as well as lines never seen in it (Lamberton 1997: 33). Rhapsodes and poets both travelled from festival to festival to perform (Graziosi 2002: 20-21). Homer himself, Graziosi notes, "seems to have been everywhere already at birth" (*Ibid*: 31, 35). Furthermore, in sixth-century Ionia, philosophers could inveigh against Homer's depiction of the gods (Lamberton 1997: 35-36). All of these things indicate an oral tradition that was widespread and well-known before it was ever written down. Even

though the Ionian philosopher example is relatively late, it still indicates that Greeks in general did argue from examples in Homeric epics as a matter of course. It was a set habit that may have been difficult to take real issue with any sooner, especially considering the regular association of philosophers with non-traditional religiosity in ancient Greek sources.

Some Social Uses of Homeric Epic

With the communal, complex nature of social memory and its dependence on shared stories in mind, we can turn to the question of how the Archaic Greeks used their stories. This will allow us to develop a picture of what a socially embedded narrative does. As Bruner writes,

> ...cultures rely upon narrative conventions to maintain their coherence and shape their members to their requirements. Indeed, commonplace stories and narrative genres even provide a powerful means whereby cultures pass on their norms to successive generations (2010: 45).

For “culture” we can reasonably substitute “community” as a reminder that the former is a metonymy for the people who share and articulate stories, accepting, resisting, and sometimes successfully changing them.

A tour of the literature on the “uses of Homer” (the title of Lind 1989) shows a primary focus on the Classical Period and later, no doubt due to their historical basis. Since they grew out of Archaic antecedents, Classical social uses of Homer can still tell us about earlier practices. Lind mentions uses of the Homeric epics by school masters as

textbooks, source material by rhetoricians and dramatists, and patriotic centrepieces in the Panathenaea by Athenian politicians (Lind 1989:8-10). The public recitations and rhapsode contests may have been the least "literary," if Nagy's reconstruction of rhapsodists using a form of "relay mnemonics" holds true. The rhapsodes would still have done without written texts in that case (Nagy 2002: 16-18). The users of greatest interest happen to be those Lind did not include in this list, although he does mention them later on: the ancient Greek historians, particularly Herodotus and Thucydides.

Being the earlier of the two and writing barely thirty years after the end of the Archaic Period (Pomeroy et al. 2008: xx), Herodotus gives a veritable clinic by example on how to make social use of the Homeric epics. It is easy to forget that while Herodotus' history has survived as a written work, he would have recited it to an audience first, so this is a clinic on social uses by a performer for the purpose of holding an audience. Here then, is a summary of it:

1.) *(In)directly*[7] *invoke Homer as an authority.*

Herodotus uses praise poetry (Marincola 2006: 16), folktales (Griffiths 2006: 137-144), and ethnography (Marincola 2007: 13-15), yet there is never a doubt that Homer is *the* authority for him. Homer is not necessarily an authority of facts, but an authority on which themes are important. At the very beginning of his work Herodotus effectively paraphrases introductory elements of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as he sets up his "authorial persona" (Friedman 2006: 166). That persona is most reminiscent of Odysseus,

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[7] Many (if not all) of Herodotus' invocations may have been direct ones for his original audience.

less so the overarching Homeric narrator[8]. Interestingly, neither Herodotus nor Odysseus call on the Muses before they begin to tell their stories. Herodotus' themes are human deeds (he tells more stories – even positive ones – about women than almost any historian afterwards for centuries), the cities and minds of non-Greeks, and the many ways Greeks in foreign lands find a way home (*Ibid*: 2006: 166-174).

2.) *Use Homeric storytelling techniques to present information.*

Those techniques include multi-threaded storytelling and ring composition (Griffiths 2006: 135), set speeches and discourse (Lang 1984), and a focus on personal motivations. This last technique is not often highlighted despite the clear examples at the beginning of each Homeric epic: the wrath of Achilles and the homesickness of Odysseus. Herodotus starts in just the same way, first with tongue in cheek as the Persians and Greeks indulge in revenge raids triggered by wife-stealing (*Histories* 1.1-6), more seriously with the foolish pride of Candaules and the humiliated anger of his (somehow nameless) wife in *Histories* 1.8-12.

3.) *Ground the unfamiliar in the familiar.*

Herodotus presents at least eleven ethnographies plus overviews of the Ionians, Athenians, and Spartans. He has both Greek "others" relative to his probably Athenian audience (the Ionians and Spartans), familiar others (such as the Egyptians, Persians, and Lydians), and unknown others (probably the Ethiopians and Indians at minimum). His

[8] Since Odysseus is arguably not always a reliable narrator, this was a double-edged choice that may have contributed to the varying views of Herodotus' accuracy and honesty as a historian over time.

handling of these others may itself be a ring composition since the most strange others are nested in layers of stories of successively less strange others. This is suggested by their order, with level of familiarity decreasing with level of indent:

- Lydians (regularly encountered by Ionian Greeks)
    - Persians
        - Babylonians
            - Massagetae
    - Egyptians
        - Ethiopians
            - Indians
            - Scythians
        - Scythian Neighbours
    - Libyans
- Thrakians (regularly encountered by Athenian and Corinthian Greeks)

The *Odyssey's* structure around Books 9-12 is analogous. The *Iliad* takes a different approach, minimizing differences between the Greeks, Trojans, and Trojan allies (they are differentiated primarily by where they are from and what side they are fighting on).

4.) *Pick up where the last historian left off, like a rhapsodist at the Panathenaea.*
This is an invocation of social authority derived from previous performers (and writers) in the same genre. As mentioned above, Nagy argues for rhapsodists using relay mnemonics at the Panathenaea in order to recite the Homeric epics, identifying

prototypical examples in the epics themselves (Nagy 2002: 16-18). Classical Greek historians at least seem to have taken the same approach, starting from Herodotus, followed by Thucydides and Xenophon, at least based on the histories that have been preserved to the present.[9]

All of these techniques can be used independently of writing or a formal setting. The original of a mnemonic relay lies probably in an impromptu storytelling session at a festival, for example.

Once we get to Thucydides, however, the insights into social use outside of a literate and moneyed, if not aristocratic, elite fade away. Thucydides is in rebellion against the "pervasive influence of Homer" (Hunter 2004: 237) even as he succumbs to it. On one hand, he systematically challenges Homeric claims about the past. On the other, his account of the Sicilian expedition is redolent of Homeric epic from the destruction of the Athenian forces (Frangoulidis 1993) to his depiction of the Athenian general Nicias (Zadorojnyi 1998). Even Plato, who also questions Homer and would expel poets from his ideal republic, has a dialogue based on an encounter between Socrates and a professional rhapsode. All of which demonstrates a more obviously social use: the use of Homeric epic to question contemporary social values.

Moving away from Classical Greek authors, who were often speaking to an audience that could not speak back in their works, there are at least four more social uses centred on more interactive forms of storytelling. They trend from a more intimate to a

[9] Marincola (2007) refers to ancient historians following each other, although he does not suggest there is a Homeric precedent or take up Nagy's suggestion.

potentially pan-hellenic scale, and involve communities in conversation, using and revising a shared version of the past. At this point we can take up the Homeric epics in detail because they provide so many examples.

1.) *Teach proper behaviour.*

The sophistication of this way of using stories in abliterate[10] contexts is easy to underestimate because the technique can be so subtle. The Homeric epics include many examples of this technique, some of which may seem less subtle to a contemporary reader because they are studied so often, such as at *Iliad* 6.119-141. In this snippet Diomedes finds time in the middle of a battle to tell the story of Lycurgus, son of Druantus, who met a bad end because he frightened (and likely humiliated) the god Dionysus. There is no small irony in his choice of story at that moment, as he has just been attacking deities in a berserker fury, and it leaves a sense that he will eventually come to an unfortunate end even though his μῆνις is god-given. In the *Odyssey* we have the overarching meta-story of the cursed house of Atreus, illustrating all the ways *not* to behave in a family.

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[10] This ugly coinage is my attempt to come up with a way to say "away from writing" without implying that state is negative, exists only in the past, or is somehow inevitably (and rightfully) destroyed by literacy. As Fentress and Wickham confirm formally and any teenager can confirm informally, literate societies remain oral societies. The two "states" are not exclusive insofar as they can be considered states at all.

2.) *Show how to persuade others to do what you want.*

If personal motivations like rage or homesickness are the ignition points for Homeric epics, the use of persuasive stories help fuel, smother, and guide the resulting action. Achilles in Book 1 of the *Iliad* calls on his mother Thetis to persuade her to demand a favour of Zeus with her own story of being Zeus' saviour during a divine rebellion (*Iliad*: 1.396-406). Then at the end of the epic, Achilles tells Priam the story of Niobe in order to convince him to eat and rest, winding down the action further after the release of Hector's body (*Iliad* 24.599-620). Not every effort to persuade with a story was successful in the *Iliad*, however. Achilles himself is unmoved by Phoenix' telling of Meleager's story (*Iliad* 9.524-605), a story Nagy describes as "...an epic exemplum... set before Achilles so that he may be persuaded to lay aside his anger..." (Nagy 1979: 103).

On the other hand, true to its focus on crafty and clever characters (Odysseus, Athena, Penelope, and Helen can all be so described), the *Odyssey* shows the double-edged nature of persuasive stories. Stories can persuade people to act even if the teller did not intend that result. Zeus' irritated speech at 1.32-43 on how mortals blame deities unfairly for what happens to them because of their own foolishness leads Athena to decide then is a good time to speak up for Odysseus. His family is to be the contrastive opposite to Agamemnon's throughout the epic, after all. Conversely, persuasive stories may be used on an unaware audience. Odysseus, ever quick to cadge gifts and free meals, uses the stories of his wanderings to wring the hearts of the Phaeacians and gain sympathy booty besides. Helen uses a carefully worded story as well as a drug to keep Telemachus unsure of Menelaus' accuracy, if not of his truthfulness (*Odyssey* 4.219-264).

So far the story uses have been ones that would be used on a smaller scale, as shown by their illustrations. They also focus on what the Homeric epics can be used to illustrate and teach within themselves. Passing to story uses by wider Archaic Greek society, we encounter reconstructed uses of the Homeric epics as whole entities.

3.) *Facilitate and encourage acceptance of cultural change.*

A glance at the "Political and Social Events" column for the Archaic period in Pomeroy et al.'s annotated timeline of Greek history (2008: xviii-xix) shows just how fraught this time was in Greece. Five elements that will become central to Classical Greek culture come together in these roughly two centuries: city-states, colonization in southern Italy and around the Black Sea, tyrannies, political reform in Athens, and the conflict with the Persian Empire. Considering these circumstances, Dougherty argues that the *Odyssey* provided a means to support the cultural changes the Archaic Greeks needed to make (Dougherty 2003: 5). Her discussion of how the *Odyssey* and other *nostoi* tales were used to handle questions and needs raised by expanded colonization and trade are of direct relevance here. She explains how *nostoi* tales were appropriated to supply putative city founders for the new colonies, and draws out resonances between Odysseus' adventures and the challenges and risks inherent in meeting strange others (*Ibid*: 126-128). On this basis it is no surprise to learn that the late Archaic writer Hecataeus wrote a work called Περίοδος γῆς and was called a much-wandering man (Marincola 2007: 8). His interests in foreign places and peoples is structured around the questions the *Odyssey* asks about the nature and colonization potential of foreign places (Marincola 2007:9).

4.) *Compensate for lost access to ancestral tombs in new colonies.*

This use of Homeric epic, already suggested by the use of *nostoi* tales noted above, is a logical correlate to the model for the evolution of the Homeric epics proposed by Bertolín Cebrián in *Singing the Dead* (2006). She argues that the Ionian Greeks developed Homeric epic in response to their loss of access to the tombs where they would ordinarily perform rituals for heroized ancestors. Cut off from those ancestors, and needing both a different basis for the funerary rituals and a narrative line to maintain cultural continuity, the Ionians created heroic epic (Bertolín Cebrián 2006: 38-42). The Archaic Greeks who moved to Italy and the Black Sea region would be in much the same circumstances as the earlier Ionian colonists, even though they had easier and safer means of travel available to them. One key detail was different: the Homeric epics now existed and a precedent for their use in hero cult was made and established.

Archaic Greek Approaches to Dealing With Strangers

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were socially embedded narratives for the Archaic Greeks, though probably not in homogeneous ways. Differences in group membership, social class, age, and gender are a few of the factors internal to a society that can favour or block particular social uses of stories like the Homeric epics. External circumstances like wider travel and trade contacts altered which of these epics were deemed to have information in them applicable to real life. In the Classical Period for example, Thucydides argues that *Iliad*-type heroic behaviour is no longer timely in his own age (Zadorojnyi 1998). That the *Odyssey* was deemed more useful in the Archaic Period can be seen in both the literary evidence of poetic travel reporting (Marincola 2007: 6-9) and

in contemporary social circumstances. During his wanderings Odysseus deals with people who may or may not share his cultural mores, so he needs bravery, self-control, and quick-thinking to survive. Archaic Greeks of all descriptions would be facing similar challenges on trade and colonization missions, as Dougherty also points out.

Varied among themselves as the Archaic Greeks were, their ideas about how to deal with strangers, be they Greek or *familiar others*, were consistent. Familiar others included Egyptians and Phoenicians, people who were certainly non-Greek, but nonetheless known through trade and travel connections. Their ideas were also challenged by encounters with the *strange other*, as reflected in the *Odyssey*, the later of the two Homeric epics. The strange other was a person of special concern, because he or she was not merely “other” like a Phrygian or even a Persian, but utterly strange, unknown. When it came to such extraordinary beings, the *Odyssey* was the instructive Homeric epic *par excellence*. This section will summarize those ideas as they can be understood from the Homeric epics both by direct example and through the work of Walter Donlan. This will then lead into the next chapter, which explores possible Odyssean lessons about how to deal with the strange other.

Ancient Greek Hospitality Protocols

To begin with, there were two basic forms of hospitality between strangers, one involving no continuing relationship or obligation, the other creating quasi-kinship bonds that could last for generations (Donlan 1982: 148). The second form is better known as guest-friendship, involved primarily aristocrats, and in time was extended to aristocratic familiar others.

Non-binding hospitality was the most general form of guest-host interaction. It required that a host provide food and a safe place to sleep for any unexpected stranger who requested it (Donlan 1982: 148; 1989:7). A failure to meet this requirement could lead to social sanction of the potential host, and it was fully expected that shirkers would be divinely punished as well. Donlan refers to the willingness to practice hospitality as an index of humanness (1982: 148), and that may have been true. However, as will be argued below, it may be better interpreted as a measure of "us-ness," a marker of the very possibility of an ongoing social relationship even if it is not made real. Not all humans were considered real candidates for ongoing relationships in the *Odyssey*, even if their humanness was not in question.

Despite the temporary nature of the relationship between guest and host in a generic hospitality situation, there were still defined protocols for how to initiate and eventually close the encounter. Those protocols feature prominently in the early stages of Odysseus' arrival on Ithaca, and his redeveloped ability to follow those protocols even among people he may not like or respect is an important aspect of his character development in the epic.

After receiving directions from Athena, Odysseus walks up to the swineherd Eumaeus' house, were Eumaeus is sitting on his porch working (*Odyssey* 14.1-5). The dogs catch sight of him, and Odysseus quickly drops his stick and sits down to wait for Eumaeus, who scatters the dogs and invites him in (*Odyssey* 14.29-36, 45-48). Eumaeus' invite is instructive:

ἀλλ' ἕπεο, κλισίηνδ' ἴομεν, γέρον, ὄφρα καὶ αὐτός,

σίτου καὶ οἴνοιο κορεσσάμενος κατὰ θυμόν,

εἴπῃς, ὁππόθεν ἐσσὶ καὶ ὁππόσα κήδε' ἀνέτλης.[11]

But follow me, let us go to my home, old man, so that you,

having been satisfied with food and wine according to

your spirit,

you may speak, about where you are from and

whatever sorrows

you have endured. (*Odyssey* 14.45-48)

The guest is not even expected to give his name, let alone his story, until he has had something to eat and drink. Having been invited in and shown the generosity of his host, the guest is well-advised to offer a blessing and a compliment, as Odysseus does:

Ζεύς τοι δοίη, ξεῖνε, καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι,

ὅττι μάλιστ' ἐθέλεις, ὅτι με πρόφρων ὑπέδεξο.

May Zeus give to you, stranger, and the other

immortal gods,

whatever you wish for most, because you received

me kindly.

(*Odyssey* 14.53-54)

After his meal, Odysseus (who is in disguise) gives Eumaeus a false name and cover story, and regales the rest of the household with stories for the rest of the evening. The next day when he goes with Eumaeus in order to test the suitors, again he approaches and

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[11] All Greek excerpts are drawn from the text of the *Odyssey* in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

waits to be seen and invited in by the host (Telemachus) before entering (*Odyssey* 18.339-345).

Telemachus is still the host even though the suitors are running wild, so he invites Odysseus in from where he is waiting at the door. He sends two arms-full of food and directions to beg from all the suitors via Eumaeus. This appears to reflect what would be expected in the case of a guest who is destitute. The guest may need to beg alms apart from whatever they have already received, but they can not do so in the household without permission from the host. Once permission is given, the rest of the household and whoever else is present is expected to give, as indeed all the suitors do, except Antinous whom Telemachus upbraids for being ungenerous and rude (*Odyssey* 18.396-413).

Keeping to examples in the *Odyssey*, it is tempting to conflate a person who is a suppliant with someone who hopes to be offered hospitality, especially since these two roles are blended in Books 6 and 7 for Odysseus. However, the example of Thetis supplicating Zeus on behalf of her son in the *Iliad* suggests that these are two different practices, and that the usual initiation protocols for the guest may be waived if their circumstances have been made desperate by terrible luck. Of all the strange others Odysseus meets on his wanderings, the Phaeacians are the most "Greek-like" and are not unlikely to be behaving in a manner that ancient Greeks would expect in their response to a suppliant. That it takes Echeneus the elder hero speaking up to get the wheels of hospitality rolling is understandable considering Odysseus has just appeared out of nowhere with his arms clasped around Arete's knees (*Odyssey* 7.142-166).

At Eumaeus' house, the close of the encounter is marked by Odysseus going to bed at the same time as the rest of the household, after he has announced his intention to

leave and beg from the suitors in the morning. This is another well-advised bit of tact, as it gently reassures Eumaeus that he will not stay past his welcome, and allows space for Eumaeus to invite him to stay on if he wants to.

There may yet be a limit to hospitality, however, if Odysseus' Aeolian adventure gives us a glimpse of a practical reality again attributed to a strange other rather than the idealized form of Greek culture featured in the Homeric epics. Odysseus and his companions arrive at Aeolus' island, where they are given completely satisfying hospitality, including the bag that holds back all contrary winds so that the Achaeans can easily sail home. But Odysseus falls asleep, and members of his crew open the bag, causing them to be blown all the way back to Aeolus' floating island. The greeting they receive the second time around is not what Odysseus could have hoped.

> ὣς ἐφάμην μαλακοῖσι καθαπτόμενος ἐπέεσσιν·
> οἱ δ' ἄνεω ἐγένοντο· πατὴρ δ' ἠμείβετο μύθῳ·
> 'ἔρρ' ἐκ νήσου θᾶσσον, ἐλέγχιστε ζωόντων·
> οὐ γάρ μοι θέμις ἐστὶ κομιζέμεν οὐδ' ἀποπέμπειν
> ἄνδρα τόν, ὅς τε θεοῖσιν ἀπέχθηται μακάρεσσιν.
> ἔρρ', ἐπεὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπεχθόμενος τόδ' ἱκάνεις.'
> Thus I spoke addressing them with soft words;
> and they became silent; then their father was answering
> with this speech;
> "Go away quickly from our island, most disgraceful of
> the living;

> for there is no established custom for me to entertain a man
>
> nor to
>
> send him away, who is hated even by the blessed gods.
>
> Go, since you come here being a man hateful to
>
> the immortals." (*Odyssey* 10.70-75)

If a guest was so unlucky as to be "hateful to the immortals," no mere mortal could be expected to risk opposing them.

Guest-friendship establishes a formal and ongoing relationship and is initiated formally. It may flow from an unexpected visit, but need not. To start the relationship, the two parties exchange gifts in front of witnesses (Donlan 1982: 150; 1989: 7). This initial exchange could be a delicate event in its own right, as it would demonstrate for the bystanders and the participants alike what the social status of the participants is relative to one another (Donlan 1989: 4). In effect, it altered the anomalous status of a stranger or enemy by creating a place for them to fit in the host's society. New guest-friendships could also be created to celebrate or reassert alliances between different groups (Donlan 1982: 148).

The greater formality and expected tenure of these relationships extended the obligations under them as well. Each participant, when serving as host, had to provide more than bare hospitality. In addition, they were required to provide political favours and a parting gift of appropriate value the guest was expected to eventually match (Donlan 1982: 148). These obligations were only invoked during actual visits, which had no required schedule, so the level of actual reciprocity could vary (Donlan 1989: 7-8). Women as well as men could participate in guest-friendships, although it is not clear if

they could initiate them independently among themselves. The famous example of Alkandre giving gifts to Helen while her husband gives gifts to Menelaus comes immediately to mind (*Odyssey* 4.125-132).

By at least the Archaic Period, the general rules of hospitality had been modified slightly for *dēmiourgoi*, travelling specialists in various fields who could effectively pay their own way. At first they likely stuck with aristocratic houses, but with the development of the city-state and the rise of a merchant class, there were more opportunities for *dēmiourgoi* than the next citadel or palace. The *dēmiourgoi* was provided hospitality based on the expectation that he would proceed to make himself useful or entertaining, which again can be seen in the *Odyssey* in Book 17.380-391. Herodotus would later recount the (folk)story of a Greek *dēmiourgoi* who makes good in and then has to struggle to escape from the Persian court. Uncomfortable behaviour towards a *dēmiourgoi* is imputed to the familiar other in this story (Friedman 2006: 168), but the risk of being held against his will faced a *dēmiourgoi* among other Greeks, too. Certain specialists could be highly valuable slaves in the newly expanding Greek trade sphere, and there is no reason to expect that this was not taken advantage of.

So there were ways to handle Greek strangers, non-Greek familiar strangers, and even anomalous people like *dēmiourgoi*. In all these cases, the strangers in question arrived at the door. What was a travelling Greek, far from other Greeks or familiar others, to do or expect on meeting the strange other at *their* door? The *Odyssey* could have been a key source of information.

CHAPTER 3: LESSONS IN DEALING WITH THE STRANGE OTHER FROM THE *ODYSSEY*

Five sections of the *Odyssey* are dealt with here, those concerning: the Lotus-Eaters, Cyclopes, Laestrygonians, Phaeacians, and the hinge episode at the house of Aeolus. All of them fall within what Cook refers to as "the World of Poseidon." He argues that this place of Odysseus' wanderings is an "enchanted realm" where Olympian values are absent and the Golden Age is still the present (Cook 1995: 54). Behaviours forbidden in Greece, like cannibalism and incestuous marriage are still possible, and the tests Odysseus and his companions face are in fact the "temptations of Paradise" (*Ibid*: 56). This adds a persistent subtext of unease to the overtext of unease represented by the fate of Agamemnon. On one hand, these Golden Age behaviours are associated with and the purview of the gods, but on the other, in humans they are entirely negative, acts a human perpetrator would at least be exiled for. It is unsurprising then, that Cook, Dougherty, and Donlan, among many others interpret Odysseus' adventures in this realm using polarities like human-nonhuman (Donlan), civilized-uncivilized (Cook), and presence or absence of hospitality (Dougherty 2003: 126).

This strange Golden Age in the now is even more than this; the World of Poseidon is the World of the Strange Other. The question of hospitality is as crucial there as it is in the real world of the rest of the epic, both Homeric epics, in fact. The cause of the Trojan War is fundamentally the breach of Menelaus' hospitality, and Odysseus struggles his way home to rid his house of obnoxious guests and reestablish himself as king. In the World of Poseidon, mortal strange others may enact varying levels of

hospitality in Greek terms, while immortals alone may attempt to make their guests' stay permanent as Circe and Calypso do.

As a result, the polarities of human-nonhuman, and so on, do not stand alone. Cook says of the peoples Odysseus meets: "they are related to one another largely in terms of their relative affinity to Greek culture" (*Ibid*: 70). Cook goes on to say that:

> The ongoing contrast among the Phaiakes, the Laistrygones, and the Cyclopes contributes to the ethnographic program of the Apologoi by representing Greek civilization as the goal of this evolutionary process. (*Ibid*: 72)

There is certainly a contrast being made between the different peoples Odysseus meets, and the ethnocentricity involved is just as undeniable. But the *de facto* assumption that the Archaic Greeks subscribed to nineteenth-century western European ideas of unilineal evolution cannot be justified from the content of the *Odyssey*. Nor can it be justified using other information from around the same period as the *Odyssey* was composed. The peoples Odysseus meets are all coexisting in time, and there is no evidence for evolution in the triumphalist Victorian narrative sense. Certain peoples may become hubristic and be destroyed or otherwise punished by the gods, but that reflects a change in their relationship to the gods, not cultural evolution. Polarities can confuse us because they carry so much cultural freight from mainstream, western European-sourced cultures.

A different starting point may help us avoid bringing in erroneous cultural freight while still taking advantage of what hospitality and the *Odyssey's* lessons on the strange

other offer. Instead of starting with a present day conceptual polarity, let us begin by trying to imagine the viewpoint of an Archaic Greek colonist, about to leave for mysterious Italy. Our colonist is probably male, poor, and even outcast, steeped in the mores of hospitality and guest-friendship. He understands the past as what is remembered through heroic epic and the source of a model of excellence in the present (*pace* Bakker quoted above). Odysseus is the epic hero who successfully confronts the strange other, so he is the specific model of excellence for such encounters for our colonist.

The Lotus-Eaters

In Book 9, after the bungled raid on the Ciconians, Odysseus and his remaining companions are blown by another storm out of the known world. The first strange others they encounter are the Lotus-Eaters, who are described with the least detail of all the mortal communities or families featured in Books 6, 9, and 10. Odysseus makes no comment about the presence or absence of cities, agriculture, or social organization as he will in other cases. His actions, once the ships have made land and the crews have eaten implies there were at least no signs one way or the other:

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σίτοιό τ' ἐπασσάμεθ' ἠδὲ ποτῆτος,
> δὴ τότ' ἐγὼν ἑτάρους προΐην πεύθεσθαι ἰόντας,
> οἵ τινες ἀνέρες εἶεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ σῖτον ἔδοντες...
> But after we tasted food and drink,
> then I was sending companions ahead, going to learn
> what sort of men eating bread might be on this land...
> (*Odyssey* 9.87-89)

It would be easy to assume the Lotus-Eaters eat nothing but lotus, and so could be considered some sort of animal. Odysseus has just defined men as "eaters of bread," and Cook contends that the crew members who eat the lotus are reduced to sub-human status based on the reference to them as wanting to remain behind grazing on this unusual food (Cook 1995: 57). Odysseus does not provide enough detail to be certain. The Lotus-Eaters are quite hospitable, and in themselves utterly harmless. Unlike the Cyclopes Odysseus and his men will meet next, they have no connection to Poseidon, who is no friend of Odysseus. On the other hand, nor do they have any evident connection to Zeus Xenios, patron of guests. Still, that marks the Lotus-Eaters as no worse than neutral. The trouble lies with their possibly addictive and apparently mind-altering food.

> οἱ δ' αἶψ' οἰχόμενοι μίγεν ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισιν·
> οὐδ' ἄρα Λωτοφάγοι μήδονθ' ἑτάροισιν ὄλεθρον
> ἡμετέροισ', ἀλλά σφι δόσαν λωτοῖο πάσασθαι.
> τῶν δ' ὅς τις λωτοῖο φάγοι μελιηδέα καρπόν,
> οὐκέτ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι πάλιν ἤθελεν οὐδὲ νέεσθαι,
> ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ βούλοντο μετ' ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισι
> λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν νόστου τε λαθέσθαι.
> And the men were proceeding at once to mix with the
> Lotus-Eating men;
> and the Lotus-Eaters were intending no harm to our
> companions, but gave food to them to eat of the lotus.
> And whoever of those men who might eat the honey-sweet
> fruit of the lotus,

no longer was he willing to report back nor to return home,

but they were wishing to remain with the Lotus-Eating men

munching lotus and to forget his return home.

(*Odyssey* 9.91-97)

There are interesting lessons here. Strange others seem to speak Greek, and they can be willing and good hosts, providing a meal immediately to newcomers. But if their food is completely unfamiliar or something Greeks would ordinarily never eat, it is best to avoid eating it somehow. No matter how innocent strange others may be, no matter how far hurting their guests is from their minds, they may still be dangerous.

The Cyclopes

Perhaps feeling that his previous exploration team came to harm because he was not with them, Odysseus decides to lead the next team himself. While announcing his plans to his companions in assembly, he pronounces what may be five of the most infamous lines of the epic:

ἄλλοι μὲν νῦν μίμνετ', ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἑταῖροι·

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν νηΐ τ' ἐμῇ καὶ ἐμοῖσ' ἑτάροισιν

ἐλθὼν τῶνδ' ἀνδρῶν πειρήσομαι, οἵ τινές εἰσιν,

ἤ ῥ' οἵ γ' ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,

ἦε φιλόξεινοι, καί σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής.

Now, you others wait here, my trusty companions;

while I with my ship and my companions on it

having gone I will test these men here, what sort of men

they are,

whether they are insolent and fierce, not acting according

to custom,

or hospitable to strangers, and if their mind is godlike.

(*Odyssey* 9.172-176)

So far as can be determined from the epic, Odysseus does not know that the Phaeacians once lived near the Cyclopes and were driven away by them when he tells this story. His description of Polyphemus, though retrospective, is still telling:

ἔνθα δ' ἀνὴρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος, ὅς ῥα τὰ μῆλα

οἶος ποιμαίνεσκεν ἀπόπροθεν· οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους

πωλεῖτ', ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ᾔδη.

καὶ γὰρ θαῦμ' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, οὐδὲ ἐῴκει

ἀνδρί γε σιτοφάγῳ, ἀλλὰ ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι

ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὅ τε φαίνεται οἶον ἀπ' ἄλλων.

But then a giant man was sleeping inside, who then was

tending his

sheep alone far away; and he did not go often with others,

but going far away he knew uncustomary things.

For also wonder had produced a giant, and one not like a

bread-eating man, but like a forested peak

of the lofty mountains, which appears apart from others.

(*Odyssey* 9.187-192)

The decision to visit the one Cyclops who stands so distinctly aloof seems an odd one. Perhaps this very story is a major contributor to the folk wisdom that hermits are not generally welcoming of visitors. According to Cook, Odysseus has a premonition that this person could be a monster, because the Cyclopes have no cities, agriculture, or political system (Cook 1995: 99). So maybe avoiding several Cyclopes together makes sense. Yet what Odysseus does to get ready for meeting Polyphemus, and his behaviour once his party reaches Polyphemus' cave (always called a cave, never a home) belies his claim to a premonition.

The party makes its way to Polyphemus' cave, and instead of waiting patiently outside, they walk right in to look around. Odysseus refuses to just steal and run, because he wants to see the Cyclops and try to get gifts out of him. He apparently also refuses to wait outside:

> ἔνθα δὲ πῦρ κήαντες ἐθύσαμεν ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
> τυρῶν αἰνύμενοι φάγομεν, μένομέν τέ μιν ἔνδον
> ἥμενοι, εἷος ἐπῆλθε νέμων.
> And then kindling fire we offered sacrifice and also we
> took for ourselves from the cheeses and we ate, and were
> waiting *inside* for him
> having sat down, until he came driving his flocks.
> (*Odyssey* 9.231-233)

Odysseus may be expecting hospitality, but not only have he and his men already acted contrary to its protocol, he rejects the possibility of rectifying that failure. Worse yet,

when Polyphemus finally notices them after blocking the entrance to his home to keep his sheep in, he asks an uncomfortably pointed sequence of questions.

> ὦ ξεῖνοι, τίνες ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθ' ὑγρὰ κέλευθα;
>
> ἤ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἦ μαψιδίως ἀλάλησθε
>
> οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ὑπεὶρ ἅλα, τοί τ' ἀλόωνται
>
> ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι, κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες;
>
> Oh strangers, who are you? From where did you sail on
>
> watery roads?
>
> Do you wander with a purpose or idly like
>
> pirates over so many seas, who rove about
>
> hazarding their lives, carrying evil to foreigners?
>
> (*Odyssey* 9.252-255)

These questions come barely eleven days after the ill-fated raid on the Ciconians. Furthermore, on being pressed by Odysseus to behave himself towards strangers, Polyphemus answers:

> νήπιός εἰς, ὦ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,
>
> ὅς με θεοὺς κέλεαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι.
>
> οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν
>
> οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων...
>
> You are foolish, oh stranger, or you have come from
>
> far away,
>
> who bids me either to fear or to shun the gods.
>
> For Cyclopes do not concern themselves with Zeus
>
> or the blessed gods... (*Odyssey* 9.273-275)

This is a very strong hint to Odysseus and his men that they are in even worse trouble than they thought on seeing Polyphemus in the flesh. But Odysseus, attempting to be clever, is about to make matters worse while trying to avoid telling where his ships are.

> νέα μέν μοι κατέαξε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,
> πρὸς πέτρῃσι βαλὼν ὑμῆς ἐπὶ πείρασι γαίης,
> ἄκρῃ προσπελάσας· ἄνεμος δ' ἐκ πόντου ἔνεικεν·
> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν τοῖσδε ὑπέκφυγον αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον.
> Poseidon Earth-Shaker shattered my ship,
> having thrown it on the piercing rocks of your land,
> having brought it close by greatest force; and a wind
> carried it out to sea;
> but I with these men here escaped sheer destruction.
> (*Odyssey* 9.283-286)

Odysseus has just told Polyphemus, man-eating son of Poseidon, that his father has cursed them and cast them away on his island. Shocking as it is when Polyphemus eats some of his putative guests, they are in the World of Poseidon, he is the son of Poseidon, and he may not be so unreasonable in thinking he can do what he likes with them.

Following the gruesome deaths of four of his companions and the blinding of Polyphemus, Odysseus and the others escape. But even as he flees away, Odysseus can not resist a bragging rant (*Odyssey* 9.475-479) followed up by an invidious wish that he could kill Polyphemus as certainly as Poseidon will be unable to heal his eye (*Odyssey* 9.522-525). Both Strauss Clay (1983: 121) and Friedrich (1991: 26) argue that this amounts to Odysseus claiming to be a divine avenger, an ordained punisher of those who

infringe the laws of hospitality. This is a dangerous claim for a man who entered his potential host's home uninvited. Friedrich suggests that this claim, with its elements of arrogance, aggrandizement, and hypocrisy angers Zeus (Friedrich 1991: 26). His reasoning makes sense of Zeus' lack of interest in Odysseus' thank offerings after his escape (*Odyssey* 9.550-555).

Odysseus is enormously proud of his actions in this encounter. He refers to it again and again in other dangerous situations during his wanderings, and he goes into great detail – more detail than for any other meeting with the strange other – when he retells the story in Alcinous' court. Strauss Clay points out in *The Wrath of Athena* that Odysseus has no divine help in his dealings with Polyphemus, a key feature of his pride in them. He has no help because Athena is angry with the Achaeans after the sack of Troy due to their thoughtless and unjust behaviour (*Odyssey* 3.130-135). Strauss Clay goes on to suggest that Odysseus angers Athena not by being thoughtless and unjust, but by being too smart, demonstrating a sort of superiority that challenges that of the gods (Strauss Clay 1983: 209). This is an interesting point, because Athena is Odysseus' own patron, and also in light of Polyphemus' response to Odysseus' impromptu lecture on how to be hospitable:

> οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν
> οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰμεν·
> οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος πεφιδοίμην
> οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ' ἑτάρων...
> For Cyclopes do not concern themselves with Zeus
> or the blessed gods, since indeed we are much mightier
> than them;

and myself not shunning the enmity of Zeus, I would
not spare
you or your companions... (*Odyssey* 9.275-277)

In other words, Odysseus is proud of overcoming an adversary who claims to be better than the gods, which can only mean he is even better still. If he thought that his behaviour would be approved by Athena because of the hostility between her and her uncle, he was certainly mistaken.

Here we have an encounter filled with the difficult lessons that Odysseus himself does not learn until he has lost all of his companions, all of his loot, and even the clothes off his back. Probably the biggest is that familiar elements in a foreign land do not guarantee a pleasant reception by the locals or allow a foreigner to be on any but their best behaviour. Whether or not the locals share Greek ideas about hospitality, it is a bad idea to go inside their home uninvited to wait for them to show up. A hermit-like strange other is not likely to be easy to intimidate if they are unfriendly or actively dangerous. If Cook is right in viewing the skin of wine Odysseus takes with him as part of an attempt to secure a guest-friendship with Polyphemus[12] (Cook 1995: 12), we have a powerful reminder that guest-friendship can only be between two willing parties. It can not be forced, especially with strange others. Finally, no matter how clever and proud a man is, he is wisest to avoid angering the gods – any gods – when he is far from home.

[12] As I have already argued however, this claim does not wash – and of course, if it does not, it begs the question whether Odysseus really had such a wineskin with him at all.

An Aeolian Interlude

After the prideful *tour de force* of the *Cyclopeia*, it should be no surprise that Odysseus recounts his experiences at the house of Aeolus as briefly as possible. This is not because in the course of that experience Odysseus has his homecoming snatched away at the last second, however. To be sure, if his homecoming had been blocked in spite of his feats of cunning, strength, and leadership, this episode would be at least as long as the *Cyclopeia*. No, Odysseus stints this story because he is the one who made the crucial mistake. Even worse for him, the mistake Odysseus makes sends him back to another *Cyclopeia*-like encounter with man-eating giants. Few episodes argue so clearly for a captain to better manage his crew and for both crew and captain to stay focussed on getting to their destination, including getting off the ships there. Odysseus also learns the limits of a generous host: a god-hated man will not get to stay with the same host twice.

Leaving once again from Aeolus' floating island, Odysseus will begin repeating his lessons in dealing with the strange other. Alas for his companions, he remains a struggling student until none of them are left. No doubt the fear of being stranded alone in the land of the strange other without any obvious way back home was among our model Archaic Greek colonist's greatest fears.

The Laestrygonians

That this episode is related to the *Cyclopeia* at least in theme (terrifying giant strange others who eat humans and can hurl man-sized boulders) is marked by more than its place after Odysseus' stay at the house of Aeolos. His description of the land once he has climbed a height to see better makes the relationship clear straight away:

> ἔνθα μὲν οὔτε βοῶν οὔτ' ἀνδρῶν φαίνετο ἔργα,
>
> καπνὸν δ' οἶον ὁρῶμεν ἀπὸ χθονὸς ἀΐσσοντα.
>
> Then no works of cattle or men were coming into view,
>
> and we were seeing only smoke rising from the ground.
>
> (*Odyssey* 10.98-99)

During his first look at the land of the Cyclopes this is also all he sees, although he also hears bleating sheep (*Odyssey* 9.167-168).

Starting over as he is, Odysseus sends out two men and a herald to look around and find the locals as he did in the land of the Lotus-Eaters. He does not mention if the Lotus-Eaters had any roads or houses, but Odysseus has already told us that the Cyclopes did not[13]. The exploration team finds an excellent road to walk on, and a spring where a woman is presumably filling water jars that will be carried back to the city. There is pottery, evidence of wider scale social organization, and a local who turns out to be the king's daughter and happy to point the way to her father's house. It must all seem so familiar. The epic makes no mention of any temples or shrines to Poseidon along the way, and the king's daughter had two eyes – if it had been otherwise, it would certainly have been mentioned. If the men in the exploration team are also survivors of the *Cyclopeia*, that, plus what would have been reassuring familiarity, explains their horrified response to the discovery that the princess is the daughter of giants. The Laestrygonian social organization is Odysseus' companions' undoing as the Laestrygonians quickly range themselves along the cliffs to wreak havoc.

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[13] Although it is a wonder how he can know. From the text we have, he never actually sees this, and Polyphemus with his aloof ways would not have anything to encourage other Cyclopes to visit him.

This time the protocols of hospitality were all in place on both sides, until it turns out the host is a monstrous giant. Still, we learn that the most familiar-seeming strange others are among the most dangerous because the familiarity can put us off our guard. The lesson of the lone strange other is reiterated from a different perspective: alone as the giant princess was, the exploration team had no way to tell that she was other than an ordinary adult.

The Phaeacians

Skipping over Odysseus' dalliances with Calypso and Circe and his visit to the underworld, we come at last to the Phaeacians. Right at the start, Odysseus' plight could hardly be worse. He is utterly destitute and he has no idea where he is relative to Ithaca and no means to get there. It may be that the arrogance and quick violence those things enabled ensured his earlier encounters with the strange other would be disastrous. Although his κλέος comes in handy later in this episode, it only does so because he does not bring it up himself and he is able to reassure his hosts he is the very man in the stories of Troy Demodocus tells. So this incident reiterates the necessity for control, not acting recklessly according to the Iliadic dictates of κλέος, τῖμή, and ἀρετή but with restraint according to the dictates of μήτις, τύχη, and παρμονίμα.

When the noise of Nausicaa and her handmaidens wakes Odysseus, for a change he does not act rashly according to his curiosity, and he does not rush to meet them. Sensibly he picks up an olive branch to cover himself, and apparently tidies his hair and beard. Contrary to all his previous experiences with strange others, Odysseus frightens them, except for Nausicaa herself. This time he makes no lectures about hospitality and

opts immediately for flattery, hedging his bets at least verbally in case he has just run into a goddess rather than a mortal. For her part, Nausicaa is an impeccable follower of the protocols of hospitality, and identifies herself as such by her speech:

> ἀλλ' ὅδε τις δύστηνος ἀλώμενος ἐνθάδ' ἱκάνει,
>
> τὸν νῦν χρὴ κομέειν· πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες
>
> ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε, δόσις δ' ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε.
>
> ἀλλὰ δότ', ἀμφίπολοι, ξείνῳ βρῶσίν τε πόσιν τε,
>
> λούσατέ τ' ἐν ποταμῷ, ὅθ' ἐπὶ σκέπας ἔστ' ἀνέμοιο.
>
> But this here is someone wretched and wandering who
>
> comes to us,
>
> and now it is necessary to care for him; for all strangers are
>
> from Zeus and beggars too, to whom even a small gift
>
> is dear.
>
> But give, servants, both food and drink to the stranger,
>
> and bathe him in the river, where there is shelter from
>
> the wind.
>
> (*Odyssey* 6.206-210)

Just as we have come to expect from a good host, Nausicaa does not ask for Odysseus' name or story, and like the giant's daughter she gives directions to her father's house. Unlike that princess, Nausicaa explains how to beg her parents for a passage home.

It seems the Phaeacians are not very friendly to strangers, though they are at least not violent since

> οὐκ ἔσθ' οὗτος ἀνὴρ διερὸς βροτὸς οὐδὲ γένηται,
>
> ὅς κεν Φαιήκων ἀνδρῶν ἐς γαῖαν ἵκηται

δηϊοτῆτα φέρων· μάλα γὰρ φίλοι ἀθανάτοισιν.

οἰκέομεν δ' ἀπάνευθε πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ,

ἔσχατοι, οὐδέ τις ἄμμι βροτῶν ἐπιμίσγεται ἄλλος.

This sort of man does not exist, not a living mortal nor one

who may be born,

who may come to the land of the Phaeacian men

bearing violent death; for we are truly friends to

the immortals.

And we live far away on the surging sea,

furthest away, and no one else of mortal men has dealings

with us.

(*Odyssey* 6.201-205)

Or perhaps the more accurate way to put it is that non-aristocratic Phaeacians can be unfriendly, the sailors in particular. Nausicaa fears their opprobrium if she is seen with a strange man because she is unmarried. Athene is concerned about rude-mouthed Phaeacians as well, because when Odysseus gets up to walk to the city she

πολλὴν ἠέρα χεῦε φίλα φρονέουσ' Ὀδυσῆϊ,

μή τις Φαιήκων μεγαθύμων ἀντιβολήσας

κερτομέοι τ' ἐπέεσσι καὶ ἐξερέοιθ' ὅτις εἴη.

Thinking kindly towards Odysseus, spread out a great mist,

lest someone of the great-hearted Phaeacians having

met him

might ask who he was with jeering words.

(*Odyssey* 7.15-17)

Now that he is reasonably sure the Phaeacians are not giants of some kind, Odysseus does not hesitate to ask the first pitcher-bearing girl he meets for directions. The girl is Athene in disguise, and before leaving him Athene reiterates Nausicaa's advice, and as Nausicaa promised, that advice holds good. Despite apparently appearing out of thin air at Arete's knees when Athene removes her invisibility glamour from him, Odysseus is showered with hospitality by Alcinous and granted passage home. Then Alcinous (wittingly or unwittingly) presents a powerful temptation to Odysseus, the temptation to claim he is a god or at least very close, maybe even influential, with the gods:

> εἰ δέ τις ἀθανάτων γε κατ' οὐρανοῦ εἰλήλουθεν,
> ἄλλο τι δὴ τόδ' ἔπειτα θεοὶ περιμηχανόωνται.
> αἰεὶ γὰρ τὸ πάρος γε θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς
> ἡμῖν, εὖθ' ἕρδωμεν ἀγακλειτὰς ἑκατόμβας,
> δαίνυνταί τε παρ' ἄμμι καθήμενοι ἔνθα περ ἡμεῖς.
> εἰ δ' ἄρα τις καὶ μοῦνος ἰὼν ξύμβληται ὁδίτης,
> οὔ τι κατακρύπτουσιν, ἐπεί σφισιν ἐγγύθεν εἰμέν,
> ὥς περ Κύκλωπές τε καὶ ἄγρια φῦλα Γιγάντων.
> But if someone from the immortals had come down from
> the sky,
> something else indeed here the gods are cleverly
> devising then.
> For always before this the gods appear plainly
> to us, when we offer renowned sacrifices,
> and they feast sitting down beside us, indeed here where
> we are.

And indeed if one going alone as a traveller meets with us,

nothing do they hide away, since we are close to them,

as the Cyclopes and also the fierce tribes of the Giants are.

(*Odyssey* 7.199-205)

With his answer, Odysseus could presume all over again to be on a divine mission, this time to test the hospitality of the Phaeacians, to see if they follow the laws of Zeus. They would be forced to be even more generous and pour yet more hospitality on him, plus gifts besides if he could pull off the ruse. However, Odysseus has learned the lessons of the *Cyclopeia* at last:

Ἀλκίνο', ἄλλο τί τοι μελέτω φρεσίν· οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γε

ἀθανάτοισιν ἔοικα, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν,

οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, ἀλλὰ θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.

Alcinous, take thought of something else with your mind;

for I am not

like to the immortals, the ones who hold wide heaven,

not in bodily frame or stature, but to dying mortal men.

(*Odyssey* 7.208-210)

Only after the rest of the court has been sent to bed and Odysseus is done eating does Arete ask directly who he is and where he is from, since she made the clothing he is wearing. There again Odysseus is careful not to give offence or put himself in a bad position by explaining honestly how he met Nausicaa and taking care to defend her honour. Then a second time, wittingly or unwittingly, Alcinous presents a temptation that opens the possibility of guest-friendship if Odysseus handles it well:

αἲ γάρ, Ζεῦ τε πάτερ καὶ Ἀθηναίη καὶ Ἄπολλον,

τοῖος ἐών, οἶός ἐσσι, τά τε φρονέων ἅ τ' ἐγώ περ,

παῖδά τ' ἐμὴν ἐχέμεν καὶ ἐμὸς γαμβρὸς καλέεσθαι,

αὖθι μένων· οἶκον δέ κ' ἐγὼ καὶ κτήματα δοίην,

εἴ κ' ἐθέλων γε μένοις· ἀέκοντα δέ σ' οὔ τις ἐρύξει

Φαιήκων· μὴ τοῦτο φίλον Διὶ πατρὶ γένοιτο.

πομπὴν δ' ἐς τόδ' ἐγὼ τεκμαίρομαι, ὄφρ' ἐὺ εἰδῇς,

αὔριον ἔς...

Oh father Zeus, Athene, and Apollo,

being this sort of man, the kind you are, truly I was
    thinking these very things,

that you would have my daughter and be called my
    son-in-law,

remaining here; I would give you both a home and wealth,

if willingly you would remain here; but an unwilling man
    no one

of the Phaeacians will keep; this would not be pleasing to
    father Zeus.

And I am arranging your departure in this way, so that you
    may know well,

on tomorrow... (*Odyssey* 7.311-318)

The Phaeacians are very Greek-like, but maybe they have different ideas about marriage; maybe since his ship home is still going to be made ready, the potential son-in-law could still leave and take Nauscaa with him. If that was the case, Odysseus could

agree to marry Nausicaa, declare he is still going home, and offer a consolation prize by means of guest-friendship. Or he could demur, admit he is already married and suggest guest-friendship as an alternative. Instead, Odysseus curbs his greed and again hedges his bets.

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, αἴθ', ὅσα εἶπε, τελευτήσειεν ἅπαντα
> Ἀλκίνοος· τοῦ μέν κεν ἐπὶ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν
> ἄσβεστον κλέος εἴη, ἐγὼ δέ κε πατρίδ' ἱκοίμην.
> Father Zeus, let it be that as many things as he said,
> Alcinousmto accomplish
> every one; and for him on grain-growing land
> may there be unquenchable fame, and for me, may I come
> to my homeland. (*Odyssey* 7.331-333)

The other tests Odysseus undergoes among the Phaeacians relate less to the lessons of hospitality and restraint and more to restraint proper, so they will not be discussed here.

All of Odysseus' hedging pays off, not least because he and the Phaeacians have something in common: a poor relationship with Poseidon. After Odysseus has been dropped off home and the Phaeacian ship has been turned to stone offshore of Scheria, Alcinous says:

> ὢ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δή με παλαίφατα θέσφαθ' ἱκάνει
> πατρὸς ἐμοῦ, ὃς ἔφασκε Ποσειδάων' ἀγάσασθαι
> ἡμῖν, οὕνεκα πομποὶ ἀπήμονές εἰμεν ἁπάντων.
> Oh, see now, truly the ordained words spoken long ago
> by my father come true, he often asserted that Poseidon
> would be offended

> by us, because we are safe escorts home for everyone.
>
> (*Odyssey* 13.172-175)

Acting as a neutral passenger line seems a puzzling reason for Poseidon to keep an unremitting grudge against them, a grudge first expressed by sending the Cyclopes to drive them from their former homeland. To a contemporary North American, it may seem that being closer to the gods should be a more blessed state. However, it is clear that the ancient Greeks considered such proximity a mixed blessing at best. It seems to be easier to offend some god the closer a person or community is to the gods. The gods are in their own way, after all, the ultimate strange other.

While most of the lessons in these episodes are ones we have seen already, there are a few new ones. One of them may be that the best intermediary between strange others and a travelling hero is a young girl or woman, since their omnipresence in this role in the *Odyssey* is widely recognized (Allwine 2009: 328). However, it is not clear whether this should be seen as other than a folktale motif based on the information available about Archaic Greek encounters with the strange other (there is very little for this level of detail). Luckily, the others are less ambiguous. It seems that the lower classes are rude everywhere, especially if they are sailors or shipwrights.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXTUALIZING STORYTELLING AS A SOCIAL TOOL IN CREE CULTURE

The Cree live in the boreal forest spanning Canada from northeast British Columbia to northern Québec (Brightman 2002:4), as well as much of the parkland (Russell 1991: 10-11), and the northern fringes of the great plains to the south (Baillagener and Tepper 1998: 10-11). This region is illustrated in Figure 1 below. French traders clipped the name "Cree" from a longer local ethonym, and it was later extended to refer to all Indigenous peoples they encountered who spoke dialects of the same language (Brightman 2002: 4-5). They were formerly gatherer-hunters who lived in extended family groups or bands and travelled in a regular seasonal round within hunting territories defined by river basins (Lytwtn 2002: 9). Although this is no longer the primary mode of subsistence for many Cree communities, they remain in place throughout their original territories, and they remain "distinctively Cree" (Brightman 2002: 18).

The Cree in the pre-contact period seem to have little in common with the Archaic Greeks based on this material alone. With the addition of information on the socio-economic connections between Cree and other Indigenous communities, the cultural features shared by the Cree and the Archaic Greeks becomes more apparent.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Indigenous peoples of the Americas were far from isolated, whether they were part of the Inca and Aztec empires or the more loosely organized subarctic. Trade in goods ranging from food to tools to religious paraphernalia is evident in the archaeological record (Thistle 1986: 4; also see Wood 1998). The Cree in particular were vigorous participants in the northern segment of a continent-long,

north-south trade axis. In fact, much of that northern segment was defined by the very territories in which they lived (Combet 2001: 23, 39).

Figure 1: The approximate Cree dialect region. Modified from Brock University Map Library and Wikimedia Commons 2004.

The river basins that contributed to the definition of Cree group identities designated territorial boundaries for both subsistence and trade-related production. Cree groups, including those whose territories bordered on the southern end of Hudson's Bay – hereafter called the Hudson's Bay Cree[14] – already had a long-standing trade in goods

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[14] To be clear, this is purely a geographic designation. It includes several Cree communities, such as those who use the ethonyms Rock Cree and Omushkego. The contributors to the *Handbook of North American*

that only they could provide when they first encountered Europeans (Russell 1991: 109). They engaged in their own wide-ranging trade forays by canoe, as shown by the ease with which they travelled independent of European resources to Michillimackinac (in present day Michigan) and Montréal (in present day Québec) in the late 1600s (Thistle 1986: 8). This was a logical extension of their participation in a local trade network including the Ojibway, who speak dialects of a language closely related to Cree, and the members of the Wendat Confederacy, who did not (Carter 1999: 41).

The English and French soon learned that the Cree had no interest in remaining mere fur producers. Barely ten years after trade with the Europeans was established, the Hudson's Bay Cree had manoeuvred themselves into a middleman role (Russell 1991: 109). But their trade successes both pre- and post-contact did not come without cost. Inuit and Mohawk raiders came more often (Denton 2001: 33, 39), and they suffered the advent of socially disruptive persons (i.e. missionaries, colonists) and substances (i.e. alcohol, flour). In time the Mohawks would compete directly with the Cree throughout their territory, founding expatriate Mohawk communities in a chain through the southern boreal forest from Montréal to Rocky Mountain House, Alberta (Anderson 1985: 57-61).[15]

The earliest documented Cree encounter with Europeans is dated circa 1611, and comes from a statement made by a survivor from the explorer Henry Hudson's final and ill-fated expedition, Abacuck Pricket (Brightman 2002: 3; Denton 2001: 12). A single Cree hunter visited Hudson's camp, where he traded with the sailors (Brightman 2002:

Indians, Volume 6: The Subarctic refer to the East Main (Preston 1981: 196) and West Main Cree (Honigman 1981: 217).

[15] Over time the Cree and Mohawk communities have intermarried, and now the expatriate Mohawk communities are Cree-speaking and identify as Cree.

4). This transaction with people who did not speak the same language or wear familiar clothing gave the hunter no problems (*Ibid*). The encounter ended peacefully, and nearly sixty years later Hudson's Bay Cree were familiar enough with European ships to guide the English ship Nonsuch to a safe berth (Brightman 2002: 10). It is likely that the Hudson's Bay Cree could gather additional second-hand information about Europeans from their relatives in northeast Québec and southern Labrador. In that region Cree and Innu[16] communities had been trading with Basque and French fishers since the 1500s.

Equipped now with a (very) basic understanding of the Hudson's Bay Cree in terms of their way of life and interconnections with their neighbours, their shared features with the Archaic Greeks can be identified as follows.

The Cree continue to live across an important geographic region in which they speak a group of related dialects (Wolfart and Carroll 1981: xv, xvii). This chain of dialects is often called a "continuum" (Brightman 2002: 4), although it had already been somewhat disrupted in the Hudson's Bay area pre-contact due to the previously mentioned raids (Denton 2001: 39-41; Lytwyn 2002: 5). The Archaic Greeks were in analogous linguistic circumstances, but with a more disrupted dialect continuum due to the entry of West Greek dialect speakers into mainland Greece (Finkelberg 2005: 143-144). Both the Archaic Greeks and Cree were widely travelled and enterprising traders whose signature goods were desired commodities. They each had a history of encounters with familiar others before they encountered strange others, and a corpus of stories from oral tradition to guide and interpret their meetings with both.

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[16] The Innu speak a language that is part of the "Cree dialect continuum" (see below) but are still generally referred to separately. "Innu" is a variant on the basic Cree term for "person".

Cree Social Memory

In some ways, the customary treatment of Cree stories relative to that of the Homeric epics could not be more different. Even the efflorescence of studies on the Homeric epics as products of oral tradition after the pioneering work of Parry (1930, 1932) and Lord (1960) made no real impact on approaches to other known oral traditions at first. This is understandable, since the Homeric epics were already known to reflect, albeit obliquely, real events and elements of earlier Greek culture. Stories from Indigenous traditions, especially types including speaking animals and lacking human actors, were not expected to do the same. They did not carry historical information in the mainstream sense, and scholars tended to expect that they contained no genuine cultural information either. Furthermore, the paradigm of "salvage archaeology" encouraged scholars to believe these stories would only record static snapshots at best. Carl Jung (1954) and others read the stories not for specific information but for what they identified as cultural universals.

Fortunately, scholars have noticed these problems in interpreting stories, and Indigenous oral traditions are now understood as consisting of complex, multi-dimensional narratives, that taken out of context or only in translation may seem like snapshots. Earlier collections of stories may be better understood as a selection of still frames from interrelated movies. However, like the Homeric epics, oral traditional narratives are still often treated as an antithesis of what are defined as stories in this

thesis[17]. This is surprising, especially in the Cree case, where, as respected Elder and Cree storyteller Louis Bird states:

> Our legends are similar to the coast region [of Hudson's Bay]. And in fact, our legends in this area are similar across the country of Canada. We have the characters that plays the roles in legends, who are very similar to ours. Although they have a very slightly different names. But the ground and the land they involve is different. (Bird and Gray 2007: 7)

Louis Bird is talking about stories being told today that can be traced back almost to the beginning of the contact period just in the written sources. Based on this evidence, they can be considered and studied as socially embedded narratives.

Just as in Chapter Two, the model of the social uses of narrative and social memory already presented will be applied first, using ethnographic data and historical records. The ethnographic data includes story collections made by Brightman (2007) and Bloomfield (1930), and the historical information comes from the early fur trade. Unlike in Chapter Two, this chapter includes a discussion of the basics of Cree storytelling protocol[18], which are key to understanding Cree social memory. Being a Métis of Cree

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[17] For the reader's convenience, here is the definition of "story" from Chapter Two: *socially embedded narratives held and used in the social memory of one or more communities.*

[18] These protocols are not Cree-specific, but are at minimum shared by all Algonquian-language communities. They appear to be an Indigenous universal in a broad sense, with variations depending on the land where the story-holders and owners live.

heritage and a storyteller myself, I am able to provide some additional details from personal experience about these protocols as well[19].

While it is a commonplace that the Cree had no writing systems prior to contact with Europeans, the deliberately decentralized nature of Cree social memory is less well-known. At any given time prior to European contact, Cree were living across diverse lands in bands numbering from the low tens to several hundreds, if local conditions allowed. They managed the social and practical stresses experienced by their communities by a combination of adjustments to band size, sharing or changing land use areas, and cyclic travels within their lands that could span one or more years. Under these conditions, Cree social memory needed to adjust to different lands and remain mutually intelligible. Both contemporary evidence (e.g. Bird and Gray 2007 referenced above) and older anthropological collections illustrate this flexibility (e.g. Bloomfield 1930). Nevertheless, this flexibility was and is constrained by the cultural values Cree social memory is intended to preserve. The resulting resilience of Cree social memory still surprises many non-Indigenous people, since the strength of mainstream social memory is often equated with its persistence in the same form.

Constraints on social memory could and can be overtly forceful, including silencing or pushing out dissenting stories along with their tellers. However, such methods are the exception rather than the rule, due to the damage this can do to the social cohesion of close-knit Cree communities. When there was no contemporary

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[19] Since these stories and protocols are still current practice, this discussion will not be couched in the "ethnographic present". While it would be easier to write in the ethnographic present, it would also tend to isolate Cree communities from their history and interconnections, which would impede understanding here.

transportation infrastructure or emergency services, social cohesion was a vital defence against starvation and catastrophe. Instead, the Cree use a system of storytelling protocols based on two key principles:

> 1.) the broad division of stories into two types, *ācimōwina* and *ācaðōhkīwina* (Brightman 2002: 37-38) and
>
> 2.) the belief that "...the words used to express stories are sacred and must be used with great respect." (Michell 1999).

1.) *Ācimōwina and Ācaðōhkīwina*[20]

Ācimōwina are what could be loosely called "everyday stories." Their actors are human beings with more or less direct ties to the storyteller and the storyhearers. They deal with matters held directly in human social memory, as reflected by additional social context like place names, family connections, and hallmark events like migrations or natural disasters (Brightman 2002: 37-38; for an example see Goulet 1976: 60-62). The range of narratives falling into this category is broad, and Brightman notes they need not be literally true in mainstream terms. It is quite possible for them to include actions by spirit beings or spiritual experiences.

Ācaðōhkīwina extend social memory back to the earliest times, before humans existed, when spirit beings acted directly in the world and animals were much like people (Brightman 2002: 37). In these stories the world is still malleable, physically, socially,

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[20] C. Douglas Ellis (1995) has further subdivided each of these broad divisions again based on criteria such as type of character, or whether the stories are episodic or cyclical. However, these are not Cree-based divisions.

and perhaps temporally. Ācaðōhkīwina are true in Cree terms. However, as in the case of their close relatives the Anishinaabeg, the terms are not rigid and absolute. Rather, "...the speaker is exercising the highest degree of accuracy possible given what he or she knows" (Johnston 2007: x).

It is important to bear in mind the division described here is broad. There are many examples of stories with ambiguous status, showing these categories are guidelines rather than rigid boxes.

2.) *Words Are Sacred*

Since the words of a story are sacred, a story told by one person cannot be retold by another without explicit permission, though permission may be given freely once requested. Therefore while individual Cree traditionally own no physical property exclusively, "soft" or "cultural" property can be owned personally, including stories (Wheeler 2005: 203; Campbell 1995: 2). Whatever level of Cree copyright (*pace* Wheeler 2005) may be engaged, the original storyteller must be acknowledged.

The right to retell any story may be given through more or less elaborate means, from verbal permission after acceptance of a tobacco offering (Brightman 2002: 23; Michell 1999) to providing goods or relearning a language (Campbell 1995: 2). The requirements for earning the right to retell ācaðōhkīwina may be even more rigorous, including years of service or training as a medicine person or ceremonial specialist.

Cree control of Cree social memory was severely disrupted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to the social, cultural, and economic havoc wrought by French, Spanish, and English efforts to colonize North America. Whether some of their actions

were intended to be disruptive is still contested, as in the case of the spread of small pox or the collection of stories, especially ācimōwina, by anthropologists. Others are acknowledged as deliberate disruptors, such as residential schools and forced relocation of all or parts of Cree communities.

Through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Cree Elders, scholars, and communities have reasserted and reestablished Cree control of Cree social memory (e.g. see accounts by Wheeler 2005, McLeod 2007, and Brightman 2002). They deny that Cree social memory is fossilized or cut off from its deep past, ideas still widely held about all Indigenous forms of social memory. They describe it as rooted in the deep past held in ācaðōhkīwina, informed and enriched by the more recent events of ācimōwina, which together help them function in a changing world as Cree people (McLeod 2007: 11; Denton 2001: 3-4). They have also come to a broad consensus about the stories already collected and republished by anthropologists before 1950: as those stories are out in the world now, they may be studied by scholars without requesting additional permissions. But as far as possible, scholars who use the stories should acknowledge the storyteller as specifically as they can, and treat the story itself with respect.

In the case of stories published after 1950, anthropologists and Cree communities have worked together to produce new texts that have been contextualized in terms of Cree culture, epistemology, and storytelling protocols (e.g. Brightman 2007, Bird and Gray 2007). Pre-1950, transcriptions of Cree stories were produced primarily for the use of non-Cree, especially anthropologists. Post-1950, anthropologists are expected to give back to the community as part of the process of making their transcriptions. What they give back may be materials to support Cree-language learning or anthologies explicitly

intended to share aspects of non-Cree culture with an interested non-Cree audience, for example. Storytellers are explicitly acknowledged, and where more than one version of the story has been given, as in Brightman 2007, differences in style and detail are described as well. If any sort of interpretation is offered, it draws from Cree culture and history rather than an alien interpretive framework. I will be following the consensus guidance on how to treat Cree stories outlined here rigorously below.[21]

Some Social Uses of Cree Narrative

The examination of the uses of Homeric epic in Chapter Two has already explained a great deal about what socially embedded memory does, and made the doing a matter of practice instead of just theory. The uses of Cree narrative illustrate how the same cultural needs can be met using similar tools, in ways both like and unlike. Yet a comparable search in standard anthropological and ethnographic journals for uses of Cree narrative turns up limited results. There is no study analogous to Lind's 1989 paper on 'the uses of Homer', and few scholars refer to narrative uses beyond teaching young children, likely because the importance of Cree narratives to Cree adults was not understood. The evidence for a wide range of social uses for Cree narrative is now extensive, and allows the identification of at least three main applications:

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[21] Despite the great distance in time and space between the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree circa 1750, the parallels and divergences between their storytelling practices are notable. They are briefly examined in the appendix to this chapter.

1.) *Avoid breaches of Cree verbal etiquette.*

Fur traders, European adventurers, and nineteenth century ethnographers all noted how quiet and polite the Cree individuals they met were in their speech and interactions with guests. Brightman may have been the first anthropologist to show how this is a reflection of Cree verbal etiquette. Without going into the complexities of speech protocols between different types of in-laws or other relatives, some highlights of Cree verbal etiquette are:

- it is impolite to ask personal or direct questions (Brightman 2002: 23-24);
- individuals or communities engaged in a positive reciprocal relationship with the speaker should not be referred to directly in negative terms (Scott 1992: 53-54);
- adults should not be spoken to in the same way as children, for fear of disrespecting their knowledge and experience.

The need to balance the demands of politeness with those of communication is often met by telling a well-chosen story.

2.) *Reiterate social relationships between human and other than human beings* (McLeod 2007: 14).

In Cree epistemology, animals and spirit beings precede human beings on earth. Furthermore, they are relatives, “reactive social others” (Brightman 2002: 2), some in what mainstream epistemology would call familial terms, others as providers of food or other needs, and still others as enemies. All positive relationships require attention to keep them healthy (Dickason 1997: 56; Thistle 1986: 18-19). Conversely, people must be

aware of negative relationships in order to ameliorate them if appropriate. Tuan writes in his article on language and placemaking, that "...storytelling converts mere objects 'out there' into real presences" (1991: 686). Cree narrative is used in this way to teach and remind individuals and communities of the existence and ongoing importance of relationships. It also speaks to the role of perception in those relationships, including, as Brightman writes "[...that] Beings or Selves of two different species or kind may have radically different perceptions of the same events in which both participate" (2002: 46).

3.) *Ground the familiar in the unfamiliar.*

The Cree stories discussed in the next section and Chapter Five are good examples of how Cree storytellers use narrative to set the unfamiliar into a comfortable background of familiarity, especially the strangeness of those who travel alone. One story features a lone traveller who joins an established community, where he misperceives objects pointed out to him and is corrected in a friendly manner by his new companions. The others feature Wīsahkēcāhk[22] who travels alone and is either experimenting with how to be a guest of beings he is familiar with, or visiting individuals more unusual than himself because they live alone. At times he is a bad guest to a good host, at others he falls into the hands of bad hosts who at best trick and embarrass him, at worst threaten his life. All of the strange happenings in these stories are mediated by normal events like moving camp and going visiting.

[22] Neal McLeod explains how *wîsahkêcâhk* is properly referred to as the elder brother rather than a trickster, a usage I have learned to follow in ceremony. I do not understand his capitalization however, and will keep to current western Métis practice, which is to capitalize both name and relationship designation of Spirit relatives. Roman alphabet transcriptions of Cree terms generally have long vowels marked by a circumflex as in the paraphrase of McLeod's words here, or by macrons as in the main text.

These uses of Cree narrative did not happen only in casual settings such as over a cup of tea. They are also a feature of feasts and social gatherings (Preston 1999: 54), where part of the audience's task is to encourage and challenge the storyteller. Expert negotiators and orators brought these same techniques to trade and treaty negotiations. Non-native traders often found the practice disorienting, because stories evoking suffering and the social obligations of traders as relatives made it more difficult to give short measure and inflated prices, a regular fur trade practice (Thistle 1986: 37). At treaty negotiations, French and English participants both disliked what they considered "outside promises"[23] and evocations of reciprocal obligations, attempting to recast them as "presents" (Neu and Therrien 2003: 32-33). Still, Cree negotiators' use of narrative made it difficult to avoid either.

Preston neatly summarizes the other major uses of Cree narrative as follows: "...transmitting traditional knowledge... teaching values, exchanging news, and entertaining" (1999: 54). She also discusses the questions of authority and credibility of the narrators. For an ethnographer, the ideal "informant" is someone with an excellent memory and recitation skills, and recognition by her or his community as an authority (1999: 56). This reflects a use Cree narrative cannot be put to: it cannot be invoked as a license to uphold an authorial persona. The stories are in themselves authoritative; but whether a putative storyteller can share their authority is determined by her or his community. With this in mind, it is easier to understand why presentations of transcribed

[23] "Outside promises" are best exemplified by the items in the numbered treaties that differentiate the standardized texts from one another, such as the "medicine chest" clause in Treaty 6.

Cree stories as more “accurate,” “authentic” or otherwise “authoritative” is so offensive to Cree communities and individuals.

Cree Approaches to Dealing With Strangers

Ācaðōhkīwina and ācimōwina are socially embedded narratives for the Hudson’s Bay Cree, their potency spanning pre- and post-contact times. They explicitly expect these narratives to impact different people in different ways. At an epistemic level, this is consistent with Cree understanding that what an individual understands to be the truth is affected by what they can know about it. At a storytelling level, this allows the same story to be told with variations by different storytellers or the same storyteller at different times. Preston (1999: 58-61) explores an instance of the same story told by two different James Bay Cree men, finding the meaning of the story remained constant although the details changed. She also noted how her understanding of the story was improved by hearing both versions (1999: 60). In other words, the core of the story is a theme that may be fleshed out by more than one type of action or actor. Cree stories are not so much set aside in the face of challenging circumstances as tilted or reshaped to reveal how their underlying meaning continues to apply.

The familiar others of the Hudson’s Bay Cree included a culturally and linguistically diverse group of peoples, just as in the case of the Archaic Greeks. There were their close relatives and trading partners, the Anishinaabeg and Innu, and their unrelated trading partners from the Wendat Confederacy. Not all their familiar others were friends, especially Inuit to their north and Mohawks to their southeast. Still, they have a consistent approach to strangers, whether they are familiar or not.

The discussion below draws on a combination of historical and more recent ethnographic studies, as well as personal knowledge. The historical materials derive from Thistle (1986), whose focus is trade relations, and MacDougall (2010), who focuses on how unfamiliar others were integrated into a nineteenth century Cree-Dene community. Brightman (2002) and Preston (1999) gathered information on Hudson's Bay Cree hospitality protocols in the course of their work. Finally, the stories collected by Leonard Bloomfield from the Sweetgrass Cree contribute important framework information.

Parallel to the Archaic Greeks, the Cree have kin-creating and non-kin-creating forms of hospitality. Both were (and are) practised by all members of a given Cree community. While it was easier for those experiencing greater economic success to provide hospitality in general, guest-friendship-like practices were not limited to them. Another key difference lies in the expectations of guests. When Telemachus visits Nestor, he is treated as a son by his host, but he is not considered a literal member of the family. He would not gain such status unless he married into Nestor's house. MacDougall notes that, "...Aboriginal communities across North America had additional categories of social relationships that mimicked blood and marriage ties in order to transform strangers – potential enemies – into relatives" (2010: 9-10). People integrated into these categories were rendered full members of their adoptive families and treated as such.

For a newly minted relative who was in origin a strange other, the social obligations of their new status could be a real surprise. Now they were not only expected to be recipients of generosity from their new relatives; they were expected to reciprocate in kind (Thistle 1986: 18-19). First and foremost, this meant sharing any food they had if their relatives did not have enough, even if this meant nobody had enough to be satisfied;

it was more important that everyone have something. They were expected to share their skills, such as facility with languages, or expertise in woodworking. Or even, as in the famous case of Samuel de Champlain, to fight with those new relatives against their enemies. To fail in upholding these obligations, especially the obligation to share food, could lead to revocation of "new relative" status and worse. Thistle discusses an incident of this kind between a group of James Bay Cree and a party of French traders. When the French traders did not share food in a time of starvation, their now former relatives did not hesitate to attack them (*Ibid*).

On the other hand, Cree non-binding hospitality is in principle the same as the Greek equivalent. Guests are honoured with the most prestigious food available as soon as they arrive (Brightman 2002: 10, 19). Their host is required to provide a safe place to sleep for as long as a guest needs to stay. A guest may even travel with the host and her or his family should they move camp or be going to the same destination (Brightman 2007: 125). A longer term guest is expected to make her or himself useful by working alongside the host (Brightman 2002: 22), and to learn proper behaviour by example and through stories if necessary.

The latter point is not explicitly made by any of the three ethnographers cited, so it bears examination. Ethnographers today typically engage communities by "participant observation": they endeavour to live and work as a regular, if less skillful, member of the community. Nevertheless, the stories ethnographers collect from Cree communities, from Bloomfield in the early twentieth century to Brightman and Preston in the late twentieth century, are remarkably consistent. Over and over again, community members tell stories

about people and other beings travelling alone and becoming guests to all sorts of hosts.[24] These are by no means the only stories they told, but the recurrence is telling. The "guest stories" explain how a good guest behaves, how a good host behaves, and the consequences of either failing in their duties. Once again, we have not so much a measure of humanness à la Donlan, but of us-ness, the potential for ongoing social relationship, and more, *an active training* in us-ness.

The evidence for Cree protocols guiding the interactions between guest and host are best illustrated by examining two Cree "guest stories."[25] They are episodes from the travels of Wīsahkēcāhk[26], part of whose job as older sibling is to try everything and learn which behaviours are beneficial and which harmful. Both episodes were originally narrated to Leonard Bloomfield by members of Sweetgrass First Nation, whose main reserve is located west of Battleford, Saskatchewan.

The first story is set in the winter, and Wīsahkēcāhk has been travelling all day, although the storyteller, Mrs. Adam Sakawew, does not mention why or his hoped for destination. He hears children playing, and follows their voices to a large camp. Like Odysseus, as soon as he arrives he is invited indoors and offered food before he even gives his name:

> When he arrived at the hill, the children said of him,
>
> "A visitor!"
>
> "Ho, let him come here; let him come here and eat!"

[24] Until Indigenous scholars began to train as anthropologists, anthropologists seemed unconscious of hospitality as an actual category of behaviour with definite protocols in Indigenous communities.
[25] Summaries of these two stories are provided in the appendix to Chapter Five.
[26] This spelling will be used throughout the main text; the transliterations in the story quotations will reflect the transcriptions chosen by the ethnographer.

So he went to the tent that stood in the centre. He entered.

"Hey, give my big brother something to eat, let him have
a meal."

He was given food. (Bloomfield 1930: 28)

The position of the tent Wīsahkēcāhk enters also shows how community leaders were expected to deal with total strangers. But it could happen there was no one, not even dogs, to notice a visitor's arrival. Coming Day's telling of another Wīsahkēcāhk story explains how this problem was solved:

Once upon a time, as Wisahketchahk was walking along, he saw
a tipi.

When he reached it, he said, "Hum! hum!"

As usual, he was hungry.

"Yes, yes, come in!" someone called to him.

(*Ibid*: 55)

The story Coming Day tells shows what happens after a guest has been welcomed in and fed by a good host. If there is time to hunt or carry out other tasks, the host may do these with the guest's help. After that,

Then, when night came, [Wisahketchahk] told [his
host] tales,

so as to make him sleepy, then they went to
bed. (*Ibid*)

Wīsahkēcāhk happens to be up to no good in this story; he intends to steal his host's medicine headdress. He attempts to steal it four times, each time finding himself back at his host's lodge. The host makes no comment on Wīsahkēcāhk's behaviour at all,

feeding him well and giving him a place to sleep, until the fourth attempt. Then the host speaks up, without berating him or kicking him out, but the next protocol step is very clear from Coming Day's closure of the story:

> At [his host's words], as soon as he had eaten, he
> went away. (*Ibid*: 57)

Even though Wīsahkēcāhk has failed to be a good guest, the host is still expected to make sure he is fed before he leaves, as no harm has been done.

If an especially prestigious guest or guests arrived, the next steps for the host were on a bigger scale. Such guests were not and are not only guests of the community leader or chief, but also of the whole community. The visit would begin with formal gift giving between the community leader and the leader of the guests, and then a feast overseen and provided mainly by the community leader. Storytelling would follow the feast (Preston 1999: 55), and if the visitors had other business in mind, such as trade or hunting expeditions, these would be carried out starting the next day.

Cree hospitality protocols are structured much like their oral traditional narratives. The main principles are constant, with their application adjusted according to the circumstances. This malleability made it easier to absorb the fur trade equivalent of *dēmiourgoi*, the *coureurs de bois*, men who traded without a license or fur trade company contract.

What is not clear from the available evidence is how or if these protocols were affected by sex. There is no evidence for or against a Cree parallel to Alkandre giving gifts to Helen while her husband gives gifts to Menelaus. This is an unfortunate effect of the producers of Cree ethnographic materials being primarily men who did not speak to

women until practically the twentieth century, reflecting expectations women would not have anything new to say, and Cree women's reluctance to speak with male outsiders. Starting in the twentieth century, Cree women began to be interviewed by ethnographers, but the ethnographers rarely take up hospitality protocol as a topic, even though they are perforce experiencing it.

At any rate, this is a reasonable overview of how Cree communities receive strangers, be they other Cree or familiar others. It is also clear how unfamiliar others would be received, once they had become just familiar enough to be potential new relatives. Now the same question can be asked as in the Archaic Greek case. What was a person from a Hudson's Bay Cree community, far from any familiar others or fellow Cree, to do or expect on meeting the strange other at *their* door?

Appendix: Ancient Greek Versus Cree Storytelling Practices

A common starting point for the discussion of a cultural practice like storytelling is to break it down into formal and informal instances. An instance of storytelling is understood to be formal when it is carried out at a designated place and time and is highly structured by consistent, ritualistic behaviour. Only a certain kind of story or specific versions of a story or stories may be told in such instances, and who tells the story may be more or less restricted. Furthermore, there is often an economic component to a formal storytelling event, in that the performer is explicitly paid. Informal instances may seem completely unstructured in comparison, but this is not quite true. For a story to make sense to listeners, the teller needs to signal what is coming in some way, often by the briefest marker phrases such as "I remember when..." Since an informal storytelling instance may be spontaneous in nature, any rewards following from the impromptu performance are equally informal, lacking the obligatory sense of a payment for services rendered.

Such an approach applies well to the Archaic Greek case, based on the evidence considered in thesis. Within the *Odyssey*, there is no evidence of formalized storytelling protocols apart from a linguistic flag to indicate that a story was about to be told. There was no social requirement to acknowledge the original source of a repeated story. Words were not considered sacred in general so much as restricted and applied in certain ways during sacred acts such as sacrifices or libation pouring. The key issue was the act the words were intended to frame, as shown by the prayers spoken by Polyphemus at *Odyssey* 9.528-535 and Penelope at 4.762-766. They both begin with a formal demand, "Hear me!" marking the beginning of a special form of speech, which is sacred because

of whom it is addressed to and its purpose. For the performer of the Homeric epics, the starting declaration "Tell me, Muse..." also signals a different sort of action from ordinary speech is beginning. If that speech is sacred, it is because of the source of the words the performer repeats, the Muse.[27]

Archaic Greeks and Hudson's Bay Cree alike could share stories anywhere and anytime, as long as noise, work, or social barriers didn't stop them. A guest might swap stories with his or her host after eating and drinking, as Odysseus does with Eumaeus in *Odyssey* Book 14, or Wīsahkēcāhk does with the man with the medicine headdress. Each guest is choosing to express good-feeling towards his host, using the stories to strengthen the bond of friendship between them and demonstrate that they are good guests. Their respective hosts demonstrate their excellence in their role by listening to the stories, and at least in Eumaeus' case, telling his own. These examples help show why payment for storytelling is typically out of bounds for an informal storytelling instance. Informal storytelling is typically about helping social interactions run more smoothly on a day to day basis and governed by the choices of the parties to the interaction. Stories told under these conditions may be extremely short and require no special places or preparation for their telling.

There is another parallel in context between Cree and Archaic Greek storytelling practices as reflected in the Homeric epics, as noted by Preston in her 1999 thesis. In both, stories may be shared between host and guest or between friends as part of greetings and to provide information about obstacles or dangers ahead on a journey

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[27] The perceived sacredness of words likely changed significantly after the Archaic Period, when specific Greek dialects became associated with specific genres and the development of Greek drama.

(1999: 55). On the Cree side, this would be a medium formality storytelling instance while still being a low formality instance on the Archaic Greek side.

Formal storytelling may be applied to smoothing social interaction, but by definition it would be used under special conditions, and in designated places. Prior to the rise of the Greek city-state, the primary formal storytelling venue was the house of the local ruler. The exemplar for this comes from Book 8 of the *Odyssey*, on the day of Odysseus' departure from Phaeacia. The storyteller is not a constant fixture among the king's retainers; he waits for the king's summons.

> ...καλέσασθε δὲ θεῖον ἀοιδόν,
> Δημόδοκον· τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς περὶ δῶκεν ἀοιδὴν
> τέρπειν, ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν ἀείδειν.
> ...and call the god-inspired singer
> Demodocus, for truly god gave to him concerning song
> to give delight (to others), in whichever way his spirit may
> urge him to sing.
> (*Odyssey* 8.43-45)

Alcinous is holding a day of feasting and games in Odysseus' honour, and Demodocus is expected to perform after he has eaten. Demodocus sings three stories, one in the hall after the morning meal, the next outside while standing in the middle of a dancing area, and the third in the evening just after sundown. Apparently a storyteller once summoned was expected to perform at intervals, especially after meals and games, until sundown or until he was dismissed. His counterpart at Ithaca, Phemius, must perform for the suitors

even if he does not wish to (*Odyssey* 1.153-154), reinforcing the point that storytellers in their position could not refuse to perform.

After the rise of the Greek city-state, this venue for formal storytelling didn't vanish, since there were still kings (except in Sparta) and besides them tyrants, aristocrats, and wealthy merchants who could afford to hold feasts or finance games on their own account. In fact, formal storytelling opportunities increased. State-sponsored competitions proliferated, such as the rhapsode competitions discussed in Chapter One or the poetic contests at the Pythian games.

Division into formal and informal instances of storytelling is not so simple in the Hudson's Bay Cree case, because there are storytelling protocols, and they apply at all times. The amount of work or payment required to be allowed to retell a story may vary widely, as shown by Maria Campbell's experiences as she gathered material for her book *Stories of the Road Allowance People*. To earn the right to publish and retell the stories, the payments required included relearning Cree, one or more horses, and physical labour (Campbell 1995: 2). On the other hand, preparatory to telling a story, a person may offer tobacco or participate in a more elaborate ceremony. Nonetheless, a storyteller always begins by acknowledging the source of the story, whether it be another person, a dream, or from ceremony. They may also provide brief instruction in how the story should be treated after the performance. In general, storytellers may be accepted as appropriate performers of certain stories based on their experience, age, and training. So it is more

accurate to describe Cree storytelling instances as falling along a continuum of formality[28].

The high end of the formality continuum includes stories told only in the context of ceremony, such as during a sweatlodge or thirst dance. Medium to high formality storytelling may happen during testimony in mainstream legal proceedings or council meetings. After a community event such as a meal or games, storytelling may be at medium to low formality. Finally, the most casual instances of storytelling are usually one on one or in smaller groups whenever it is practical or desirable, the social smoothing mentioned above. Since the low end of the formality continuum was discussed above, it is time to consider a performance at the high end, one more comparable to those of Demodocus and Phemius. The closest situation for a Cree storyteller would be when he[29] sings at a feast or other social gathering, especially one with visiting guests present.

In March 1971, anthropologist Regna Darnell witnessed such a performance at Wabasca, Alberta (Darnell 1974 (1989)). The event was arranged specifically to illustrate a traditional storyteller at work and allow her to hear older stories many community members at that time feared would soon be lost at that time. The performance differed from ordinary practice in that it was being recorded, and a translator from the community provided running translation into English (*Ibid*: 325, 328). These differences acknowledged, the structure and protocol around the performance were otherwise

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[28] This is not intended to deny that the Archaic or later Greeks could have a continuum of formality in their storytelling at all, but so far the evidence available is not consistence with the existence of one at least in the Archaic Period.

[29] The evidence available to the author to date such as that recorded by the ethnographers Preston (1999) and Darnell (1974 (1989)) record only Cree men singing before an audience. It is not clear whether this reflects missionary influence or a wider practice of only men performing before mixed audiences.

unchanged. Event set up began with Darnell's host identifying a respected member of the community to tell the stories, and explaining that the Elder in question would have to be paid first (*Ibid*: 316). Darnell does not mention whether her host explained that a performer may refuse the payment, thereby refusing to perform. The audience sat in a loose circle with the storyteller at the centre, and after the performance began people continued to join the gathering to listen (*Ibid*: 322-323).

First, the storyteller prepared the audience by creating a bridge from everyday ways of thinking and listening to those called for by ācaðōhkīwina. He set out how he was qualified to tell the stories that would follow, even as he denied his competence and worried aloud that the audience may not believe him. Just as Preston would observe in Waskaganish, Québec (1999: 54), the audience reassured the storyteller of his ability and encouraged him to continue (Darnell 1974 (1989): 324-326). He then told several shorter stories, each story drawing closer to the ācaðōhkīwina he planned to tell, and the audience with them. On completing the central stories of his performance, the storyteller inverted this sequence, using a series of shorter stories to bring the audience back to the everyday world *(Ibid*: 324, 335).

The performer is expected to do his best, just as Demodocus and Phemius are, but the conditions of his performance are not the same. The Elder in Wabasca is unmistakably the centre of attention, the entire audience is oriented physically toward him, and this would generally be the case for a highly formal Cree performance. The only place in the *Odyssey* corresponding to this is when Demodocus sings at the centre of the dancing area on Phaeacia. Otherwise the audience is arranged around a table, since they have just finished eating. The expectations of a Cree audience are also different.

Audience members are expected to be active listeners who offer encouragement and positive feedback should the singer falter or express discomfort (Preston 1999:54). Furthermore, questions are expected during pauses and breaks between sections of narration (Darnell 1974 (1989): 330). In the *Odyssey* the audience keeps quiet, and Demodocus is not expected to struggle or need encouragement since he is divinely inspired. The same conditions seem to hold even in Book 1, when Phemius is performing unwillingly at Odysseus' house. Rowdy the suitors may be, yet they keep quiet while Phemius sings, and interrupting him seems to be the prerogative of the royal family, or at least the king.

With the sequence of bringing the audience into and out of a sacred storytelling space during a formal storytelling performance in mind, it begs the question whether Demodocus may have been doing something similar with his set of three stories. Unfortunately, there is not enough information provided in the *Odyssey* to be sure, though the overall answer does seem to be no. If there is an order of performance Demodocus is following independent of the demands of the audience, it is not a clear one. His first song tells of the argument between Odysseus and Achilles at Troy, which distresses Odysseus so much Alcinous calls a halt to it. Next Demodocus sings at the dancing that follows the games in Odysseus' honour, this time a lighter number about Aphrodite's affair with Ares. He actually finishes this song, and is requested to sing a third time by Odysseus himself. This time Demodocus tries to sing about the sack of Troy, and is again stopped by Alcinous at the sight of Odysseus' distress. It seems that the fall of Troy was such a major event that even ten years later the Phaeacian audience still wished to hear songs about it, so Demodocus reverts to the topic accordingly. There

is no hint of a sequence of shorter songs or stories leading to or from the Trojan tales or his second song.

CHAPTER 5: LESSONS IN DEALING WITH THE STRANGE OTHER FROM ĀCAĐŌHKĪWINA

The three stories selected for discussion here, *Wīhtikōw and the Weasel; Wolverine, Wolf, and Dog;* and *Where the First People Come From*, are like their counterparts in Chapter Four in that they are set in the World of the Strange Other. This too is an enchanted, other than ordinary world in human terms, where the question of hospitality is vital. Powerful spirit beings still move and act openly in this world, who may be generous and helpful even if also crafty and inclined to trickery like Wīsahkēcāhk, or terrifying and dangerous creatures crafty and deceitful in their own right like a wīhtikōw. In Brightman's well-turned phrase, "animals talked and behaved in other respects like iðiniwak 'human beings,' " (2002: 37-38), a key feature Cree Elders and storytellers stress. There are many reasons for this emphasis, but the one of greatest interest here is that it signals to the storyhearer that the very same behaviours are forbidden in this world as in the ordinary world. This should be no surprise, for as noted in the previous chapter, the World of the Strange Other in these stories is *this world*, this world in its earliest days, when it was still fluid. As a result, ācaðōhkīwina have a persistent subtext of wonder with an overtext of confidence founded in an understanding that quick thinking and good behaviour will see the protagonists through any dangers. "Wonder" has suffered near verbicide at the hands of the children's entertainment industry, yet it neatly encapsulates the qualities of surprise, admiration, awe, and fear intended here, in proper order of importance. The world in the time of the ācaðōhkīwina may certainly be frightening, but fear and anxiety are not at the forefront.

According to the Cree, the alteration of the World of the Strange Other into this one happened gradually (Brightman 2002: 38). There are no stories recording or implying an abrupt transition or an overall deterioration from an ideal state or golden age. The stories telling of the arrival of humans in the World of the Strange Other and their earliest experiences in it suggest nothing like a fall or loss either. The humans have merely moved to another place with similar rules of behaviour and different ways of making a living.

The three stories are also unlike their counterparts in Chapter Four, in that they are episodes from three different story cycles instead of five episodes from one story cycle. For example, Robert Brightman in his 2007 publication, *ācaðōhkīwina and ācimōwina: Traditional Narratives of the Rock Cree Indians*, presents material predominantly from the Wīsahkēcāhk story cycle. Meanwhile, Ellis in his 1995 publication *âtalôhkâna nêsta tipâcimôwina: Cree Legends and Narratives from the West Coast of James Bay*, presents material mainly from the Cha-cha-bek cycle. There are other stories recognizable as tantalizing hints of still more cycles, but so far Cree storytellers and Elders have not chosen to share them outside of Cree communities.

Scholars have attempted to interpret ācaðōhkīwina in terms of polarities, encouraged by the sharp contrast between man-eating wīhtikōws and generous, patient hosts like the man with the medicine headdress mentioned above. However, these efforts have been foiled by human-like animals on one hand and Wīsahkēcāhk on the other. The human-like behaviour of the animals is still constrained by their own nature: wolves and dogs live in packs, wolverines are by preference solitary, partridges live in busy, noisy groups. Nevertheless, they precede humans in the world, so they are elder siblings who

teach humans how to live in it. At one moment Wīsahkēcāhk may act like a buffoon or a hero, perform heroic deeds unheroically, and alter the world itself in non-trivial and irreversible ways. He does not behave as a god-like figure is expected to behave in mainstream terms: that is to say, consistently. In these conditions, it is difficult for mainstream polarities like animal-human, hero-villain, or civilized-uncivilized to get any purchase. In addition, the risk of bringing in inappropriate cultural baggage with any polarities has already been acknowledged in Chapter Three. Therefore, just as in that chapter, we'll begin from a different viewpoint.

This time, let us try to imagine the perspective of a young man from a Hudson's Bay Cree community in the late 1700s. He is old and skilled enough to hunt big game for extended periods on his own. His community has lived for several generations in the same general area, but the land there is showing signs of needing a rest from human occupation, so they are moving east, down into the Hudson's Bay lowlands. No one has been there before, least of all this young man. He understands the past is awake in memory[30] through ācimōwina and ācaðōhkīwina, and ācaðōhkīwina especially illustrate what it means to behave well. The protagonists from ācaðōhkīwina who successfully confront all manner of strange others are diverse in their own right. Our young hunter looks to their examples for different models of how to handle encounters with the strange other in a good way.

[30] This evocative phrase comes from Jo-Ann Archibald in her book *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit* (2008).

Where the First People Came From

Many Indigenous peoples hold that humans journeyed from another world to live in this one, and this story, told by Simeon Scott of Fort Albany First Nation in Ontario to C. Douglas Ellis, shares this understanding. The protagonists are a woman and a man, and the world they leave behind is a sky world above this one. There is no suggestion that they are leaving under duress; they are simply willing to go to the mysterious land far below, so far below it is not actually visible from the sky world. However, to actually get there they need the assistance of a familiar other, the spider who lives at the ends of the sky world. He will lower them down to this world in a bag suspended from a long rope of silk.

Prior to their descent, the woman and man are given two short descriptions of it. The first is given by the mysterious person who starts them on their journey:

> "That land," they were told, "is different, appears different
> from this one which we dwell in, which you dwell in now
> during your lifetime. But you will find it different there,
> should you go to see that land. It is cold yonder. And
> sometimes it is hot."(Ellis 1995: 3)

The second comes from the spider:

> That land which you want to go and see is cold and
> sometimes mild. But there will certainly be someone there
> who will teach you, where you will find a living once you

> have reached it. He, he will tell you every thing so you will
> get along well. (*Ibid*: 5)

If the two adventurers thought from the first description that the land below was empty, the spider has insured they know it is not. They already expected to live differently there due to its changing weather, and now they know the presence of other beings there may also lead to changes in their way of life. The spider's description also implies they will be received by someone in the land below.

The spider instructs the man and the woman not to look down at the world below until they have reached the ground, and they begin their descent. However, the excitement of seeing more and more details of the land below finally overcomes them, and they become trapped in a tree, still high above the ground. The situation is dire, for the spider has already told them:

> ...if they both look together, before they come to the land, they will go into the great eagle-nest and they will never be able to get out and climb down from there. (*Ibid*: 5)

Despite their situation and this grim warning, these two people do not give up. Instead, they look around and observe all the creatures of the earth, and each time one of them passes by the tree, they call down to it for help. Perhaps they expect to be helped immediately, but they are soon disabused of the notion. The caribou refuses to help on account of his hooves, which he shows them. The lynx dishonestly refuses to help and goes on his way. Luckily the bear and the wolverine arrive next, and promptly help them

by climbing up and carrying them down from the tree. The bear generously goes on to instruct them in how to live in this world.

This story has an overarching lesson for anyone meeting the strange other, and it is unambiguous: meeting the strange other while at a disadvantage is to be avoided if at all possible. Strange others may be unable or unwilling to help strangers who are in difficulties, especially if those difficulties appear self-inflicted. On the other hand, if starting from a disadvantage can not be helped, do not give up and do not be too shy or too proud to ask for help. Persistence will lead to encounters with strange others who are helpful and generous. Finally, language is no barrier to communication with the strange other. Interestingly, neither this story nor the others discussed in this chapter allow us to infer that strange others are expected to speak Cree as the episodes from the *Odyssey* allow us to infer they would be expected to speak Greek.

Odysseus and his companions also arrive at the land of the Laestrygonians after being driven helplessly far from Greece again. They are disheartened, probably short of fresh water and food, and likely not at their best in terms of clothes and personal hygiene. They are definitely at a disadvantage relative to the Laestrygonians, who are unfriendly in general even if the possibly naïve Laestrygonian girl they first meet is not. In the *Odyssey*, the strange other is, practically speaking, either friendly or unfriendly, without the range of reactions illustrated by the four animals the humans call on in this story. So while the Greek colonist is arguably being encouraged to see the strange other as monolithic, the young Cree hunter is being encouraged to expect diversity.

Wīhtikōw and the Weasel

Now we return to Wīsahkēcāhk in a story shared by Johnny Bighetty and Jean-Baptiste Merasty from the Rock Cree community around Granville Lake and Pukatawagan, Manitoba with anthropologist Robert Brightman. Wīsahkēcāhk is an ill-understood figure outside of Cree communities, partly due to translation difficulties, and partly due to overriding expectations of "heroic figures" in the minds of non-Native scholars. However, if we keep in mind that he is also called Elder Brother in ceremony, and that an elder sibling tries new things first and makes sure conditions are safe for younger siblings, we can better appreciate his behaviour and choices. It is not so surprising when an elder sibling is sometimes wise and sometimes foolish, sometimes selfish and other times generous.[31] Wīsahkēcāhk always has his own agenda, and since he is always hungry that agenda includes getting something to eat, preferably as someone else's guest. Consistent with this agenda, whenever Wīsahkēcāhk sees smoke from a campfire during his travels, he looks for its source in order to see what's cooking and if he can get some supper.

So it is that in this story Wīsahkēcāhk heads straight for the source of the smoke he sees, thinking:

> I bet you I'll get a meal if I go to that smoke. Maybe some
> hunter kill something that's cooking on the fireplace.
> (Brightman 2007: 33)

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[31] This is by no means a complete understanding or characterization of Wīsahkēcāhk, which can only be approached by hearing many more of his/her stories in the original Cree.

Unfortunately, it turns out that no less a creature than a wīhtikōw(man-eater) is the one making the fire. Wīsahkēcāhk is so frightened he forgets to run and he forgets his manners, asking the wīhtikōw's name even though he has not been spoken to. Then things get even worse for him, when the wīhtikōw finally speaks:

> "Oh it's you wīsahkīcāhk," he said. "Well I'll tell you what, wīsahkīcāhk," he said. "You... gather all the wood," he said... "Cause I'm going to roast you," he said. (*Ibid*: 33)

The prospect of literally being dinner is bad enough, and the wīhtikōw's knowledge of Wīsahkēcāhk's name makes its orders overtly irresistible. While Wīsahkēcāhk may have been expecting to meet someone with similar ideas about hospitality, he is sorely mistaken. Everything about this situation has turned guest and host behaviour upside down, starting from Wīsahkēcāhk rushing rashly to the campfire. Impatience and fear stopped him from announcing himself properly, and the wīhtikōw pointedly ignores him initially. At last, instead of offering food or shelter, the wīhtikōw puts his ostensible guest to work. Remember, in Cree protocol a guest may work alongside the host, but only after being fed and made welcome, when the host may also ask the guest's name.

Wīsahkēcāhk may behave foolishly at times, but he is never so foolish as not to ask for help when he needs it most. He sees a weasel and asks for its help, which the weasel is willing to give even against a wīhtikōw, because they are relatives. It turns out the wīhtikōw has no clothes on, and Wīsahkēcāhk has spotted a key weakness in his anti-host as a result. He and the weasel will exploit that weakness to kill the wīhtikōw and save Wīsahkēcāhk's life. The significance of the wīhtikōw'snakedness is how it reveals a

weakness, and is not a marker of wīhtikōw culture in general. In fact, other Cree stories portray wīhtikōwak fully clothed and living in houses with their families. Here, the wīhtikōw's individual bad behaviour is meaningful enough.

The contrasts between Wīsahkēcāhk's encounter with the wīhtikōw and Odysseus' with the Cyclops Polyphemus are striking. Unlike Odysseus, we know Wīsahkēcāhk has no presentiment of trouble, and why he heads straight for that dangerous campfire. Odysseus and his crew are not short of supplies just before their arrival at the Cyclopes' island, for they have recently raided and pillaged the Ciconians and made their escape from the over-friendly Lotus Eaters. Nor is Wīsahkēcāhk seeking to test his potential host to the same degree as Odysseus later claims to have intended to test the Cyclopes. He already expects a good host, maybe even a generous one who has been lucky hunting. Furthermore, Wīsahkēcāhk is travelling alone, which makes his circumstances all the more precarious unless he can find one or more allies quickly or otherwise trick or fight his way out. On the other hand, Wīsahkēcāhk is not subject to the fury of a powerful spirit-being either. He is travelling because that is part of what he does in his efforts to learn about the world.

However, the most striking difference between these two encounters may be the details pivoting on whether the anti-host knows the protagonist's true name. Many cultures share the notion that sharing one's true name is foolish, if not outright dangerous. This is certainly true in Cree culture, where even everyday names are used carefully and until very recently it was quite possible for a Cree individual to never address certain relatives directly by name. Instead, she or he would fall back on circumlocutions like "uncle" or "cousin." A person's true name is connected directly to their spirit, and can be

used to harm her or him should a malicious person learn it. On the other hand, knowing the true name of a dangerous foe could facilitate defeating them. This is a widespread theme, turning up not only in Indigenous stories but also in fairy tales like that of Rumplestiltskin or the religious literature of Ancient Egypt. Based on Odysseus' response to Polyphemus asking his name, Homer himself shared this belief about the significance of names. Odysseus not only gives a false name to Polyphemus when asked, he gives an ambiguous one that takes advantage of Polyphemus' poor command of Greek. Or at least, that's how it can be read in hindsight. It is unclear if Odysseus would have been taking a calculated risk trying this, because Polyphemus' speech is not depicted as substandard or strange. This matches Homeric practice in the *Iliad*, where the polyglot Trojans nonetheless always speak in the same Greek dialect as Achilles or Agamemnon.

As events show, when Odysseus fails to resist vaunting his victory over Polyphemus and revealing his true name at the last moment, at that moment of revelation he gives power over himself and his crew to Polyphemus. After explaining the prophecy of how he would be blinded which Odysseus has now fulfilled, Polyphemus calls out,

> ἀλλ' ἄγε δεῦρ', Ὀδυσεῦ, ἵνα τοι πὰρ ξείνια θείω,
> πομπήν τ' ὀτρύνω δόμεναι κλυτὸν ἐννοσίγαιον·
> τοῦ γὰρ ἐγὼ πάϊς εἰμί, πατὴρ δ' ἐμὸς εὔχεται εἶναι.
> But come here, Odysseus, so that I may set by you
> guest gifts,
> and I may quicken your departure that is to be given by the
> glorious earth-shaker;

for I am a son of his, and my father he declares himself

to be. (*Odyssey* 9.517-519)

Despite this not so subtle warning of what the Cyclops can do, Odysseus responds by mocking and insulting him further, cementing Polyphemus' decision to saddle him with the last guest-gift he could possibly want:

κλῦθι, Ποσείδαον γαιήοχε κυανοχαῖτα·

εἰ ἐτεόν γε σός εἰμι, πατὴρ δ' ἐμὸς εὔχεαι εἶναι,

δὸς μὴ Ὀδυσσῆα πτολιπόρθιον οἴκαδ' ἱκέσθαι,

[υἱὸν Λαέρτεω, Ἰθάκῃ ἔνι οἰκί' ἔχοντα.]

ἀλλ' εἴ οἱ μοῖρ' ἐστὶ φίλους τ' ἰδέειν καὶ ἱκέσθαι

οἶκον ἐϋκτίμενον καὶ ἑὴν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,

ὀψὲ κακῶς ἔλθοι, ὀλέσας ἄπο πάντας ἑταίρους,

νηὸς ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίης, εὕροι δ' ἐν πήματα οἴκῳ.

Hear me, dark-haired, earth-moving Poseidon;

if truly I am your son, and my father you declare yourself

to be,

give that Odysseus, sacker of cities is not to

come homeward,

that son of Laertes, having a home in Ithaca.

But if his lot is to see his friends and to come

to his well-built house and into his own ancestral land,

may he arrive after a long time, wretchedly, having

destroyed all his companions,

> on someone else's ship, and may he find calamities
>
> at home. (*Odyssey* 9.528-535)

Conversely, Wīsahkēcāhk's foe already knows his name, which puts him in grave danger as he is nearly powerless to resist the wīhtikōw as a result.

> So wīsahkīcāhk got scared when he heard that from wīhtikōw. So – so finally – wīsahkīcāhk did not like to do [what the wīhtikōw ordered]. So he started to cut sticks. While he had to do it for wīhtikōw, it's wīhtikōw's orders. (Brightman 2007: 33)

Like Odysseus, Wīsahkēcāhk has both the luck and the cleverness to avoid being eaten, and his helper is key to keeping him off the spit.

From a Native perspective, Wīsahkēcāhk's response to the death of the wīhtikōw is the major difference between him and Odysseus. He does not begin bragging and singing; he does not pretend he alone saved himself as Odysseus implies by omission in his bragging. Wīsahkēcāhk rushes to rescue the weasel from wīhtikōw's body, and finding his ally dead brings him back to life. Then, he humbly thanks the weasel for his help and transforms him so he has a fine white winter coat with a black-tipped tail, and honours him with a new name. Wīsahkēcāhk is simply and deeply grateful, and acts in a way that respects the weasel and avoids the perils of ingratitude. He is careful not to refer to the weasel by his true name until the wīhtikōw is dead, taking no chance of giving the creature power over his ally. Odysseus puts his crew in grave danger and behaves with ingratitude by appropriating credit for their bravery as his own. He may be their leader,

he may have had to rally them and come up with a plan, but he could not have escaped without them. They allow this to go on, however, and so they are as inexorably trapped by Polyphemus' curse as Odysseus is, even though the Cyclops knows none of their names.

Setting aside the Cyclops encounter in the Odyssey for now, we can see the story of wīhtikōw and the weasel is packed with information and warnings about dealing with the strange other. First and foremost, there is a reason Cree hospitality protocol recommends approaching a stranger's camp with care. It is possible to be mistaken about the friendliness of a potential host. This is particularly important if a person hoping to be well received is in any way famous with a name that travels ahead. No matter how strong and clever a person may be, it is better to have a less wide-flung name, and to treat those who help her or him escape danger and all good hosts with humbleness and gratitude. That Wīsahkēcāhk is able to escape the wīhtikōw in spite of the creature knowing his name is because he has strong medicine, demonstrated by his resurrection and transformation of the weasel. Few people indeed have such powers.

Wolverine, Wolf, and Dog

With this story we switch Cree story cycles again, this time to one detailing the adventures of wolverine. Cornelius Colombe, also a member of the Rock Cree community of Granville Lake and Pukatawagan told this story. Wolverines are related to weasels, although they look more like small bears, and are solitary animals of greater than expected strength for their size. Today their relationship with pack animals like wolves is at best antagonistic, but in the earliest days of the world this was not the case.

In this story from that time, wolverine has fallen in with a mixed pack of wolves and dogs, where he is as much a strange other to them as they are to him. Nevertheless, the wolves and dogs treat wolverine kindly, and he is a somewhat prickly, though not wholly unpleasant guest.

After giving wolverine advice so he does not accidentally spoil the efforts of the hunters, who are tracking a moose, pack members begin to point out valuable items to him. Regrettably, wolverine cannot see these items for what they are to the wolves and dogs until a pack member explains each one to him. The pack members correct him patiently, and wolverine himself is abashed, admitting he did not perceive the objects in the same way, as in this example:

> ...they seen this wolf tooth that got stuck on a tree. And again the dog say, "Pull that arrow, brother. Good bow and arrow. Oh, the moose wasn't too far. I guess the hunter miss it. Hit the tree." ...And wolverine say, "Oh it's just a wolf tooth, why should I be bothering with it?" And the guy behind him grab that – pull that bow and arrow.... and wolverine said, "Oh, I didn't know it was a bow and arrow. I thought it was just a wolf tooth." (Brightman 2007: 26)

This could have been an awkward moment, especially since this is the second time wolverine has demonstrated how different his perceptions are. No dog or wolf holds it against him though, as shown by their decision to share the moose the hunters have brought down with him.

At first wolverine believes he will get no moose meat at all, because he misinterprets the snow covered carcass for the bloody snow left behind after eating it. In fact, the hunters covered the carcass and ran to bring over the rest of the pack. The hunters ask what part of the moose he wants until at last he admits he wants the best part, which they give him freely. While the wolves set up their wigwams and preserve their shares of the meat, wolverine stuffs himself and goes to sleep. No one complains, even though he has not helped set up camp and he has taken no steps to preserve his meat. In the end, despite their mutual friendliness and respect, wolverine leaves the pack to live on his own.

As in the case of Odysseus' encounter with the Phaeacians, the strange others in this story are unambiguously friendly to one another. Neither wolverine nor Odysseus is endeavouring to test their hosts. Even so, the end result is still the same: the guest leaves behind his gracious hosts. Their reasons for doing so differ; Odysseus leaves behind people whose ways turn out to be so similar to his own that he could genuinely become part of Phaeacian society. He has much the same perception of the same things, the activities he observes people doing make sense to him. If he feels threatened or uncomfortable, it is because he feels caught between the desire to stay where he is, where a new and familiar kind of life is available to him, and the need to go home. This is far from the case for wolverine. The perception gap for him is too wide, and he gives up in frustration.

Compared to the message and lessons of the Phaeacian episode, those of wolverine's sojourn with the wolf and dog pack are more positive. Maybe the pack, like the Phaeacians, act as too good of a host by never expressing frustration or anger at the

wolverine's discordant perceptions and outright laziness, even surrendering the best part of their quarry without complaint. They are not punished for their kindness, and as a Cree audience would know, wolverines are good hunters, able to bring down moose on their own. Wolverine could have reciprocated their kindness. Brightman says in his own commentary on this story:

> The myth also makes use of the Cree philosophical premise that different classes of beings, because of their innate characteristics, differently perceive the same phenomenal objects. (2007: 127)

The outcome of wolverine's story follows this philosophy. The pack and wolverine do not fall to fighting, he is not driven away. He makes the choice to leave. The story certainly illustrates both the premise of perceptual difference and the ever-present option to walk away peacefully well.

Wolverine may have given up, yet the message to the audience still stands: the strange other has something to teach newcomers to their lands, if only they and their guests can find the right balance between tolerance and correction to share it. It is interesting how this lesson is shared with the story of the first couple, where the symbolic significance of humans learning from human-like animals is so great. Considered together, the two stories suggest the most successful encounters with strange others are between groups of two or more.

Appendix: Cree Story Summaries

A total of five Cree stories are directly cited in this thesis. Four of them are unambiguously ācaðōhkīwina, stories from the earliest times before humans existed. One of them falls between the broad categories of ācimōwina and ācaðōhkīwina because it explains how the first humans came into this world. All five were recorded and transcribed in collaboration with non-Native scholars, usually in Cree, then translated. Three of the stories come from the Wīsahkēcāhk cycle (*pace* Brightman 2007), a series of stories detailing his adventures as he explores and transforms the world. The older two stories come from independent cycles that do not seem to have been shared with non-Cree in general or scholars in particular.

Stories of the Familiar Other

As noted in Chapter Four, both of these episodes were narrated to Leonard Bloomfield by members of Sweetgrass First Nation, Saskatchewan. The storytellers, Mrs. Adam Sakawew and Coming Day, spoke in the Plains Cree dialect. Bloomfield translated their stories with some difficulty (1930:2).

• *Wisahketchahk Visits the Partridges, told by Mrs. Adam Sakewew (1930: 27-29)*

It is deep in winter and Wisahketchahk has been travelling all day when he hears children playing nearby. Following their voices, he comes to a large camp and is immediately invited in to eat. No sooner is Wisahketchahk handed food than he is invited to another lodge, a process that continues until he is sent to bed hungry. The morning finds him

laying in a snowbank as his hosts, who are partridges, fly away. Vowing not to be fooled again, Wisahketchahk goes on his way, only to fall in with the partridges and be fooled again. Frustrated that he has been tricked twice, he promises to pay the partridges back in kind.

• *Wisahketchahk and the Magic Headgear, told by Coming Day (1930: 53-57)*
Wisahketchahk is travelling again, and hoping for a meal when he happens on a tipi. Letting the person inside know he is there, Wisahketchahk is soon invited in. At first matters seem unpromising, because there is no food in evidence. Then his host takes up a sacred headdress, and uses it to summon a buffalo which he kills for their dinner. Impressed, Wisahketchahk resolves to steal the headdress. He tries to run away with it four times, each time finding himself back in his host's tipi in progressively more awkward positions. After his fourth attempt, Wisahketchahk's host explains that the headdress itself brings him back to the tipi, so he can never steal it. Wisahketchahk eats one last dinner, and leaves.

Stories of the Strange Other

The stories that describe the strange other come from further east than those summarized above. The first two were told to Robert Brightman by Johnny Bighetty, Jean-Baptiste Merasty, and Cornelius Colombe, Rocky Cree dialect speakers from northeast Manitoba (Brightman 2007: 1, 33, 35, 125). The Rocky Cree dialect and the historical record indicate that the Rocky Cree are descendants of people who moved inland from Hudson's Bay (2007: 2-3). The third story was told to C. Douglas Ellis by Simeon Scott, a Swampy

Cree dialect speaker from Fort Albany in northeastern Ontario (Ellis 1995: xiii, xviii, 2). Both Brightman and Ellis worked closely with the narrators to translate and annotate the stories (Brightman 2007: ix; Ellis 1995: xiv-xv).

• *Wīhtikōw and the Weasel, based on the story versions told by Johnny Bighetty and Jean-Baptiste Merasty (Brightman 2007: 33-36)*

One day wīsahkīcāhk was out walking when he saw smoke from a campfire. He decided to go see who was making the fire in hope of getting a meal. But when he reaches the fire, he discovers its maker is a wīhtikōw (man-eater), and it is too late for him to escape. The wīhtikōw addresses him by name and tells him to collect firewood and roasting sticks, because it is going to eat wīsahkīcāhk for dinner. While carrying out the wīhtikōw's instructions, wīsahkīcāhk sees a weasel, and asks the weasel to help him. The weasel agrees to help because they are relatives, so wīsahkīcāhk asks him to run up the wīhtikōw's anus and bite his heart, which will kill him. Wīsahkīcāhk tells the weasel what it will be like when he has mortally wounded the wīhtikōw, and promises to rescue him from its body. The weasel sets to work, and the wīhtikōw soon falls dead. Quickly wīsahkīcāhk cuts open the dead monster and pulls out the weasel, whom he revives and rewards with a new white coat with a black-tipped tail to commemorate his bravery.

• *Wolverine, Wolf, and Dog, told by Cornelius Colomb (2007: 125-126)*

Wolverine joins a pack of wolves and dogs. His new companions treat him kindly and try to teach him how to live comfortably in the pack. However, wolverine is unable to recognize valuable items as such when they are pointed out to him, even after the wolves

and dogs have explained what they are. Wolverine also misunderstands how the wolves store food and preserve it to supply them on their journeys. As a result, wolverine soon runs out of food. Between that and his smaller size relative to the dogs and wolves, wolverine leaves the pack, frustrated.

• *Where the First People Came From, told by Simeon Scott (Ellis 1995: 2-7)*[32]

The first people, a man and a woman, lived in a land high above this one. Eventually a person asked them if they wanted to move to this world, and they said they did. So that person sent them to the spider at the end of the land above, to ask for his help. The spider agreed to help them, and told them someone in this land would teach them how to live here. But he also told them they could not look at the land below at the same time during their trip down, only when they touched the earth could they both look at the same time. The closer they came to this land, however, the more excited they became, until at last they looked down at the same time, causing the vehicle to catch in a tree. They could see many animals below them, and called to them for help. Some animals refused to help, but the bear and the wolverine help them down from the tree, and the bear teaches them to live in this land.

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[32] Louis Bird tells a different, shorter version of this story in Bird and Gray 2002 (15-17).

CHAPTER 6: COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

The Hudson's Bay Cree and the Archaic Greeks encountered strange others under analogous cultural and socio-economic conditions. They brought corresponding motivations to their meetings with the strange other, including curiosity, interest in trade, sometimes sheer necessity, and at times hostility. The tools they brought to bear on the problems presented by those encounters were also similar: a body of orally shared stories that encoded information about what to expect and how to behave. The encounter stories summarized in Chapters Three and Five include a significant amount of such encoded information. We can learn still more from them by applying the tools of comparison and contrast to the lessons in dealing with the strange other identified in those chapters.

Strange Encounters: Facing the Strange Other

The behaviour and actions of Odysseus, the first couple, Wīsahkēcāhk, and wolverine reflect the wider social expectation among the Hudson's Bay Cree and Archaic Greeks that at minimum, strange others would be familiar with their hospitality practices. Odysseus may wish to test the strange others he meets, but he does not seriously expect them to be that different, or he would be more circumspect approaching them. The first couple are not warned against potential danger from strange others they may meet, and are reassured that one of these others will help them once they have arrived in this world. They do not hesitate to call on the animals they see for assistance in part due to that reassurance. With the story protagonists' expectations firmly grounded in what they and

the audience already know, the stories shift immediately to scenarios that challenge these expectations in complex ways.

The Greek and Cree stories agree that strange others can be good hosts, almost too good. The wolf and dog pack are so easy going with wolverine that he is unable to learn about how they live, unable to develop a translation between their understanding and his. The Phaeacians treat Odysseus so well and load him with such spectacular gifts, including free passage home, that he can not hope to reciprocate. In fact, it is even possible that Poseidon is acting according to Zeus' will by removing their ability to upend the balance of guest-friendship between mortals. The Lotus-Eaters are fine hosts whose hospitality is spoiled by their mind-altering food, and they seem unwilling or unable to provide something safe for outsiders to consume. It is also no coincidence that these good, or at least friendly, hosts are part of larger communities.

Lone strange others without the modulation of community ties and mores are definitely dangerous, especially if they are physically stronger or have more potent medicine than their potential visitors. Polyphemus turns out to be a man-eater, but it is not clear that the rest of the Cyclopes necessarily share his propensities. He may be alone for that very reason. Wīsahkēcāhk's experience with the wīhtikōw reiterates the point, especially for Cree audiences who know wīhtikōws are the spirits of people twisted by the experience of starving to death alone in the bush. On the other hand, Odysseus and his men fall into danger in the land of the Laestrygonians through speaking with a lone strange other who is alone and merely out of context, as opposed to socially isolated. Chances are they would not have spoken to the Laestrygonian girl if they had been able

to tell immediately she was a giant. The Cree stories considered here do not contemplate a context issue of this kind.[33]

An intriguing parallel between the Greek and Cree stories is the potential danger from strange others if a traveller shares her or his true name too easily or is unable to control the spread of knowledge of her or his true name. Κλέος may be a highly desired commodity among elite Greek males like Odysseus, but the overweening pursuit of it can have dire consequences stretching beyond the κλέος seeker himself. Plus, Odysseus does not have the sort of power Wīsahkēcāhk does to change names and physical features in other beings, which if available in the Greek story context could enable Odysseus to avert the danger. Yet even in Wīsahkēcāhk's case, what averts danger for him is not that power or his name, but his humility and the willingness of the weasel to see him as a relative. The irony of Odysseus giving away his name to Polyphemus seems all the greater with this in mind, because Polyphemus gives away who his father is, and Odysseus could have avoided much grief by using what he heard from the Cyclops.

The two groups of stories make it clear that approaching strange others from a disadvantaged position is not recommended. Where they differ in a non-trivial way is why. For Odysseus, the problem with starting from a disadvantage is he cannot control the situation that follows. The playing field is uneven, preventing the establishment of either true guest-friendship or a chance to engage in more raiding and pillaging. Worse, the uncontrolled situations never fail to further delay his homecoming, including his stay

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[33] The best example I know of with like contextualization issues comes from the Morning Star story cycle kept by the Blackfoot Nation. There does not appear to be a Cree equivalent to this cycle, though both the Cree and the Blackfoot are Algonquian language speakers.

with the Phaeacians. They help him get to Ithaca faster, but they unwittingly anger Poseidon in the process. His anger and Odysseus' concern to squirrel away the Phaeacians' numerous gifts keep him from sitting down with Athene to plan how he will reclaim his household.

The first couple find themselves in serious trouble because they were unable to follow an explicit instruction not to look on this world at the same time as they approached it. They certainly can not control their situation, but this would be true to a degree anyway. The land is new to them and they will need instruction on how to survive there. The trouble is they need help from beings whose first sense of them will be of their foolishness at getting themselves trapped in a tree. A fool is a dangerous companion in difficult living conditions, which are hinted at in the way this world is described, as a place of variable, and sometimes very cold weather.

Then there is Wīsahkēcāhk, who winds up in trouble because he has not followed Cree hospitality protocols for guests. He bursts into the wīhtikōw's camp without checking first to see whom he is approaching. Even a friendly host might react with alarm to a sudden arrival, interpreting it as an ambush. This censure of failing to follow hospitality protocols is shared; the danger to Odysseus' expedition on the Cyclopes' island is compounded by their entry into Polyphemus' house while he is absent. It is all too easy to miss the fact that Odysseus and his men are being punished for failing as guests as much as Polyphemus is for failing as a host.

When it comes to language, as noted briefly in the previous chapter, both the *Odyssey* and the Cree stories suggest it is no real barrier when meeting the strange other. All the strange others Odysseus and his men meet appear to speak Greek if they speak at

all, including the Laestrygonians, though their language status is a little unclear. Odysseus reports at second hand from his men:

> οἱ δὲ παριστάμενοι προσεφώνεον ἔκ τ' ἐρέοντο,
> ὅς τις τῶνδ' εἴη βασιλεὺς καὶ οἷσιν ἀνάσσοι.
> ἡ δὲ μάλ' αὐτίκα πατρὸς ἐπέφραδεν ὑψερεφὲς δῶ.
> And the men while standing beside [Antiphates' daughter]
> were speaking to her and were asking,
> who the king was of the people there and for what sort of
> people he was king.
> And she promptly pointed out the high-roofed palace of
> her father. (*Odyssey* 10.109-111)

The verb describing the girl-giant's reply φράζω, may be translated "tell," while Liddell and Scott (1996) identify the primary meaning of the verb as "show, point." Then there is the name Antiphates, translatable as "counter-speaker" or even "instead of a speaker." The Phaeacian and Cyclopian episodes with explicitly the same language spoken by Greeks and non-Greeks alike outweighs this nonetheless. On the Cree side, the stories discussed in this thesis do not turn on linguistic misunderstandings by any characters. The example of the Cree hunter stumbling on Henry Hudson's men mentioned in Chapter Four shows that Hudson's Bay Cree did not expect strange others to speak a dialect of Cree and readily used signs and gestures in lieu of speech. In light of the linguistic diversity around them, it seems plausible this was known information encoded and shared through stories, but so far this author has not found a confirming example.

Where two of the three Cree stories show how the strange other can be a source of teachings for newcomers, this is certainly not the lesson expressed in the *Odyssey*. Two times out of four there is no constructive interaction between Odysseus and his crew and strange others at all (Lotus-Eaters and Laestrygonians). By the time Odysseus reaches the Phaeacians, he finds them to be so Greek-like he has no need to learn anything new to interact with them. When he is dealing with Polyphemus, he presumes to teach this strangely isolated member of an already dispersed group of giants:

> ...ἡμεῖς δ' αὖτε κιχανόμενοι τὰ σὰ γοῦνα
> ἱκόμεθ', εἴ τι πόροις ξεινήϊον ἠὲ καὶ ἄλλως
> δοίης δωτίνην, ἥ τε ξείνων θέμις ἐστίν.
> ...and we furthermore, arriving at your knees
> we approach as suppliants, you should give some guest-gift
> 	or even otherwise
> give a present, which is the custom concerning strangers.
> (*Odyssey* 9.266-268)

In a Cree context such a lecture would certainly be the height of bad manners, especially after entering a person's house uninvited and raiding the pantry, and likely would be no better manners in a Greek context either. Odysseus seems to have judged the usual rules as not applying to him or his men since Polyphemus' cave did not have a door by their definition, therefore he could lecture this strange other into "Greekness."

The Cree stories of the first couple and wolverine both reinforce the message that the world of the strange other and its inhabitants need not be threatening, and may be a source of help and generosity. Patience and determination are necessities for locating

friendly beings in these places, and for learning from them how to live there. Wīsahkēcāhk follows what seems known to him right into trouble, where it turns out there is still hope courtesy of a weasel and his own quick thinking. This world may be frightening at times, but it is not inherently fearful or especially hostile against newcomers by way of the beings living in it. This could hardly be further from the view presented by Odysseus' adventures in the World of Poseidon. Repeatedly, he and his men happen on familiar elements in mysterious lands, and repeatedly these elements hide danger. The apparently mundane lulls the Greeks into complacency, forgetfulness, and death after the curse of Polyphemus.

In the end Odysseus is unable to fully trust even the Phaeacians, the most Greek-like and friendly strangers he meets abroad. When he wakes up on the beaches of Ithaca, befuddled by an Athene-sent mist, he expresses alarm and despair that he has not made it home after all, and he casts aspersions on the Phaeacians:

> ὢ πόποι, οὐκ ἄρα πάντα νοήμονες οὐδὲ δίκαιοι
> ἦσαν Φαιήκων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες,
> οἵ μ' εἰς ἄλλην γαῖαν ἀπήγαγον· ἦ τέ μ' ἔφαντο
> ἄξειν εἰς Ἰθάκην εὐδείελον, οὐδ' ἐτέλεσσαν.
> Oh, see now, not completely thoughtful or just
> were the captains and leaders of the Phaeacians,
> these men carried me to another land; and they told me that
> they were going to bring me to far-seen Ithaca, and they did
> not fulfill this. (*Odyssey* 13.209-212)

He is wrong, but the point is made. The world of the strange other is a fearful place because its denizens are never quite trustworthy. Even their help is double-edged when it comes, especially if we consider the relationship drawn between the various strange others of the Odyssey and the gods.

Hospitality Protocols Versus Distance From the Gods

Besides these many lessons for coping with the world of the strange other and the people who live there, Odysseus' adventures hold an interesting lesson about "strangeness" and godlikeness as well. Again, the World of Poseidon *is* the World of the Strange other. The question of hospitality is as crucial there as it is in the real world of the rest of the epic, for mortals even more crucial, because for them a mistake is permanent in its consequences. Furthermore, the *Odyssey* sets out in unmistakable terms what varying distances from the gods mean in terms of the behaviour of strange others.

The more "savage" a strange other is, the closer they are both by nature and by location to the gods. The gods are immortal and have no need of labour or to follow the laws of hospitality. Some gods are kindly and wise most of the time, such as Athena or Zeus; others more often angry and destructive like Poseidon or Ares.

A mere ten days from known waters are the dangerous though not aggressive Lotus-Eaters, who have no need to labour based on Odysseus' account. He and his men leave behind the Lotus-Eaters and seem to land at the Cyclopes' island late on the same day. The Cyclopes labour lightly only for their food and drink, spending no energy on construction or social organization that Odysseus recognizes. They recognize no law of hospitality, and feel no fear of Zeus, being so close in status to him. They are so much

like Titans that they may even be immortal. Odysseus' flotilla comes to Aeolus' island almost instantly or at least only a few days after fleeing from Polyphemus. Aeolus[34] himself apparently is immortal despite having a mortal father, likely due to his role as wind-keeper. The gods have what today would be called incestuous marriages, the most famous example being the marriage of Hera and Zeus. Aeolus' six sons and daughters are married to each other, and he and his family live in an endless round of feasting without labour – except for that needed to manage the winds.

From Aeolus' island it takes only seven days to reach the Laestrygonians, when Odysseus and his men are now sailing back towards the real world. They barely escape these giants who are so much like Greeks, yet still aggressive and terrifying man-eaters. Or at least, Odysseus asserts they carry away the members of his crew they can catch to eat them. He certainly does not stick around to confirm that this is their fate. Nevertheless, their placement in parallel to the Cyclopes relative to Aeolus' island strongly suggests that he is not wrong. Only a short sail from them, apparently pell-mell further into the world of the strange other, they reach Aeaea, the home of the goddess Circe, daughter of Helios. She is not an Olympian, and so her island is still a distance from the highest gods, not many days' sail from Scylla and Charybdis. These infamous clashing rocks are in their turn close enough to the gods for a dove to reach them with ambrosia. It takes just six days more to reach Helios, and ten days of storm-tossed misery for Odysseus to fetch up on Ogygia, home of yet another non-Olympian goddess,

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[34] Interestingly, there are two beings named Aeolus in Greek mythology, one of whom is a son of Poseidon. However, this Aeolus is the son of Hippotes.

Calypso. So by that point, Odysseus is firmly within at least the outskirts of immortal lands, perhaps a twelve to fifteen days sail from known waters.

In order to reach the Phaeacians, however, it takes eighteen days, nearly twice as long as the minimum time to reach the Lotus-Eaters and Cyclopes, for Odysseus to get within sight of Phaeacia. The strange other most like the Greeks is the furthest of all strange others from the gods. Even so, there are incestuous marriages, and even the rude-mouthed Phaeacian sailors need not work very hard. Alcinous and Arete, for their part, follow the laws of hospitality all too well. As already mentioned, they are so generous that they create a kind of "hospitality impasse." No one they ferry home can hope to reciprocate their generosity, short circuiting the relationships overseen by Zeus. Elsewhere in Greek mythology such impasses are broken by direct intervention of the gods, especially by transforming the trapped mortal protagonists into birds or plants. Poseidon's intervention ends the hospitality impasse, though not by transforming the Phaeacians, who may be too close to the gods for that to be acceptable. Instead, they are cut off from contact with mortals.

The gods are those for whom the laws of hospitality are optional if they are hosts of mortals, absolutely required when they are guests of mortals. The closer to the gods a strange other is, the more like the gods in their relationship to the laws of hospitality they will be. By such logic, the Archaic Greeks are farthest from the gods, least like them of all the people they know, and most bound by the laws of hospitality. We know from the *Iliad* and from Hesiod that the gods could be difficult beings indeed. An immortal may be a mortal's patron, but that is wholly optional for them and they are not required to help a mortal they patronize at all times. They are at best amoral in human terms.

CONCLUSION

After millennia as socially embedded narratives, the Homeric epics slipped into relative obscurity with the spread of Christianity and the eventual fall of the Roman empire. They remained "just stories" until the late 1800s, when Heinrich Schliemann's excavations showed the Homeric epics contained elements of historical truth. Additional archaeological finds demonstrated the reality of boar's tusk helmets and funerary rites like those celebrated for Patroclus. It has taken somewhat longer for scholars to appreciate how still other types of knowledge could be encoded in the Homeric epics, such as how to handle an encounter with the strange other. The likelihood of non-European story cycles doing the same is also not yet widely appreciated. The standard approaches to analyzing stories for their socially embedded content may have made that content more, rather than less difficult to identify and study.

The Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree did not enter intercultural encounters without expectations. They were already equipped with models of how dealings with familiar others worked, but for strange others they had to turn to other resources, those held in their story cycles. Having selected four exemplar strange other stories from the *Odyssey* and three from traditional stories of the Hudson's Bay Cree, a non-standard approach to identifying their instructions has revealed even more of the riches these short episodes hold. By starting from the perspective of an Archaic Greek colonist and a young Cree hunter rather than binaries such as civilized-uncivilized, then carrying out a comparison and contrast, the lessons in dealing with the strange other come into crisp relief. As expected considering their social, cultural, and economic

similarities, the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree had some of the same lessons in their stories. They also came up with some very different lessons due to their different perspectives and histories. The lessons in dealing with the strange other that the discussion has revealed to us are summarized in Table 1 below.

Shared Overarching Assumption: Hospitality Protocols are universal, though strange others may not always follow them.		
Lessons Unique to the Archaic Greeks	**Lessons Shared by Both the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree**	**Lessons Unique to the Hudson's Bay Cree**
• do not eat strange food • strange others out of context are dangerous • strange others are inherently threatening, no matter how friendly they are • strange others need to be taught how to behave like Greeks • the lower classes are rude everywhere	• language is no barrier • avoid encounters when you would be at a disadvantage • strange others can be good hosts – sometimes too good • keep your true name to yourself if you can • familiar elements in an unfamiliar land do not guarantee safety	• do not be too proud to ask for help • treat helpful strange others well • strange others may perceive things differently • strange others have knowledge to share • if it is not possible to understand strange others, it is acceptable to move on

Table 2: Summary table of the lessons in dealing with the strange other from the Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree.

Hospitality Protocols as a Measure of "Us-ness"

The gods are technically non-human, so this returns us to polarities like human-nonhuman and civilized-uncivilized. These are, in fact, *moral polarities* cloaked with other names, vehicles of moral judgement. They have been dishonestly wielded to deny the humanity of peoples subjected to colonialism, thereby rationalizing its violence. These are things we know today based on the fairly recent past. As renewed colonizers, the Archaic Greeks may have been receptive to such rationalizations, and it can be almost

irresistible to assume they had them to use. There is no real evidence of such ideologies in Homeric epic or early Classical Period works, however. The incident that comes closest to such an ideology in the *Odyssey* is when Odysseus attempts to persuade Polyphemus to follow the laws of hospitality. The ultimate message of the encounter though is not that Odysseus had any right *per se* to blind Polyphemus when he refused instruction in "Greekness." It is that Odysseus, for all his cleverness, was a fool to stop on the Cyclopes' island, and was himself failing to follow the laws of hospitality.

Instead, what we are seeing is the practice of hospitality used as an index of "us-ness," a measure of the possibility of ongoing social relationship. This is the key: the question Odysseus encounters with the strange other is not "are they moral like us?", but "are they enough like us that we could make them into friends or relations according to our laws?" When Odysseus wants to know if someone is "godly in their minds" (this phrasing reflects Strauss Clay's translation) he wants to know if *they must fear the gods as Greeks do*. Even if they do, or do almost as much, there still may be no possibility of an ongoing social relationship.

We can see this in the Lotus-Eaters, who may well be too intoxicated to be afraid of anything. Supposing they are not intoxicated, they clearly are not afraid to be hosts who effectively never let their guests leave. Still, they are the weaker example; it is unclear whether they are people or grazing animals even though Odysseus often refers to them as "Lotus-Eating *men*." Based on what the epic tells us, we can not even be sure they can talk, which returns us to the Phaeacians.

Neither the humanness of the Phaeacians nor their ostensible civilization is in question, and they are very like Greeks as Cook says, so those issues can be put aside.

Yet from the start there is no question of Odysseus having a guest-friendship with Alcinous even though the Phaeacians can travel anywhere by sea easily. They do not even need to know how to navigate, since their ships do all the hard work. When Odysseus hears from Alcinous the prophecy of how Poseidon would one day hide the city away in retaliation for escorting someone home, he knows at that moment he will never see the Phaeacians again. This doubly forecloses the possibility of guest-friendship. Practically, Odysseus has no means to supply an appropriate "starter gift" and even if he could, he could never provide comparable gifts in his own turn as he would be obligated to do. As a mortal, far from the gods, Odysseus can never approach the value or meaning of as priceless a gift as free passage home for a lost beggar – a passage he knows will end access to the Phaeacian city forever.

For the Cree, the practice of hospitality is still an index of "us-ness." But this time the question guiding the meeting between Cree protagonist and strange other is, "What are these relations we have never met before like?" Wīsahkēcāhk is wondering if the hunter he expects to meet has been lucky and if the hunter will share the bounty with him, as he expects any familiar other would. A reciprocal relationship is always possible in these stories, even between animals that today are antagonistic. All together, this view is much more optimistic, yet not naïvely so. Some of these relatives may turn out to fail in upholding the protocols of hospitality and the requirements of reciprocity for an ongoing relationship. In that case, no ongoing social relationship is possible, and the consequences for the failed relative may be mortal. Nevertheless, even divinity or different spiritual states need not be barriers to reciprocity and ongoing relationships. They can speak with each other and interact in ways intelligible to both parties; Wīsahkēcāhk is at least a

border-line deity in mainstream terms, and still he and a weasel can establish and uphold a reciprocal relationship. Sometimes even the most powerful beings need the help of the least powerful.

The difference in application of the criterion of "us-ness" between Odysseus and the Cree story protagonists is logical, and starts from their differing views of the world of the strange other. What for the Cree is simply this world long ago when it was still malleable and different, is for the Archaic Greeks an entirely separate one. Once the Archaic Greeks began colonizing southern Italy and discovering there were no Cyclopes and Phaeacians there after all, that world ceased to be separate from the human world. Yet by becoming part of the human world by Greek colonization, the World of Poseidon and the gods in general were pushed further away, along with the various beings closer in nature to gods than humans. They must have left the former World of Poseidon, the World of the Strange Other behind, emptied out for those furthest from the gods to move into.

The sky world and the world below it are connected in the story of the arrival of the first human couple, and in Cree epistemology the boundary between human and animal is at minimum porous, if not blurred. The boundary between human and powerful spirit beings is just as penetrable, at least in the time from which ācaðōhkīwina stories come. That people are no longer able to easily access the sky world, speak to animals, or contact spirit beings reflects a change in people, not the world. Neither the animals nor the spirit beings have left, rather, they are still present, and the potential remains for humans to interact with them again as freely as in those distant times outside of direct social memory. The Archaic Greeks probably and their Classical era descendants certainly had no such expectations. As we know, part of the purpose of the Trojan War

was to remove the demi-gods from the earth, a removal symptomatic of the end of direct contact between humans and deities.

Applying Stories of the Strange Other in the Real World

Now that we have a sense of what ideas the Hudson's Bay Cree and the Archaic Greeks brought to their encounters with the strange other, the question remains as to how they applied them.

The Archaic Greeks' opportunity to apply the lessons from the *Odyssey* came with their trading and colonization ventures in southern Italy, led by the Euboeans and Corinthians. They were not the first Greeks to find their way to Italy, at least for trade. The Mycenaean Greeks preceded them in the sixteenth to eleventh centuries BCE (Ridgway 1992: 3). However, Archaic Greek memory of this seems to have been murky at best, with only a few references to Sicilian slaves in the *Odyssey* of unclear age.

In both the Mycenaean and Euboean cases, the traders were seeking new sources of desirable and precious metals (*Ibid*: 137). The Euboeans turned to colonization later, but initially they focussed on developing a wide trade network in southern Italy, apparently trading pottery and training locals in new pottery and metal working techniques. Eventually Euboean traders intermarried with the Etruscans, though both groups remained distinct (*Ibid*: 137, 141). For their part, the Corinthians were more interested in colonization from the beginning, and it appears they maintained an official separation from the local communities (Dunbabin 1948(1964): 38-93). Once the importance of colonization rose, the neutral to positive types of relationships the Euboeans formerly cultivated became less common.

Summarizing the history of the Greek colonization of southern Italy and Sicily, Dunbabin wrote in 1948 that

> When the era of official colonization began, however, the Greeks preferred the sword to peaceful penetration. At least half of the Greek colonies were built on sites previously occupied by native towns, and it is likely that most were. In every case of which we hear, the Greeks drove out the Sikels or Italians by force. (Dunbabin 1948(1964): 43)

More recent archaeological data has not changed this summary. Where they were outnumbered or the locals seemed more similar to them, as in the case of the Etruscans, Greek colonists favoured peaceful relations. Once their numbers and strategic position was sound enough, they were quick to drive Italians and Sikels out of fertile regions or proximity to major trade routes. With what we have already learned, it is no surprise to find that when the Greeks seized the Sikel town of Leontini and the fertile plain it controlled, they renamed the latter the Laestrygonian Plain (*Ibid*: 10).

For their part, the Hudson's Bay Cree were quick to pursue trading opportunities with the English and French newcomers to their lands. It was clear to them that these strange others lacked not only knowledge of how to live in the lands they had come to or of any language spoken there, but they also lacked relatives. Without relatives and designated places in the social networks that guided trade, diplomacy, and travel, they would be a source of danger to themselves and others. So there was both great necessity and great potential benefit from making alliances with them. Nevertheless, the Hudson's

Bay Cree did not immediately pursue alliances with the Europeans. They opted to trade or not depending on how they were treated, their economic returns, and practical issues such as food availability and weather conditions. Thistle briefly describes a 1670 French expedition into Hudson's Bay Cree territory in which the French never saw more than the local peoples' old campsites (1986: 11). Since the southern Hudson's Bay region did not strike the French or the English as suitable for agriculture, they focussed on building and maintaining fur trade forts and seasonal "flying posts" (temporary trading depots). So at first colonization efforts affected the Hudson's Bay Cree only indirectly, and they could take full advantage of the asymmetrical trade situation between the inland French and coastal English fur traders.

The Hudson's Bay Cree shifted their approach as fur trade competition intensified and colonization efforts began to give more than intimations of trouble to their relatives and allies in the south. They increased their efforts to bring the French into stable, reciprocal relationships not just as traders but as genuine relatives (Thistle 1986: 16-18, 21) . Success in those efforts would counter any French tendencies toward bad behaviour by engaging their commitment to Cree social norms. As always, these efforts were not exclusive to the French, and the Hudson's Bay Company found itself with a population of Cree-intermarried traders living with their wives in company forts in defiance of company rules. Semi-permanent communities of the Cree wives' relatives were often also nearby, a situation nearly overdetermined by the European practice of building forts on top of large, regularly used campsites and meeting places for trade. Violent clashes were not unheard of and usually related to reciprocity issues; Chapter Four describes such an incident, when French traders failed to share food with starving adopted relatives, and

paid dearly for their parsimony. The Hudson's Bay Cree never attempted a wholesale removal of the French or English or otherwise took an overall aggressive stance, since they were comfortable and at home.

Beyond Archaic Greece and 17th Century Hudson's Bay

People live through stories. On one hand this is a truism, and on the other, a statement easy to lose in abstraction. In *Letting Stories Breathe*, Arthur Frank keeps this statement concrete by examining how stories are lived by, lived against, passed down, and reformulated in two memoirs. This thesis has held onto the concrete meaning of the statement by considering a specific type of information encoded in a few stories from the oral traditions of two different, yet similar peoples. The Archaic Greeks and the Hudson's Bay Cree experienced and shaped their interactions with the strange other through those and numerous other stories. The stories are powerful, but so are the people who retell and use them. We can imagine what a difference it might have made if the Archaic Greeks had mapped a part of Scheria onto the plain controlled by Leontini, rather than the land of the Laestrygonians. Or, we can imagine what might have happened if the Hudson's Bay Cree had interpreted Europeans as less like wolverine among the wolves and dogs and more like a wīhtikōw in the forest alone. With such illustrations of the power of stories, both actual and potential, the importance of recognizing the lessons they carry is undeniable.

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