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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Linguistic-Narratological Commentary on the Dialogue of Odysseus and Anticlea in the Underworld in Homer's *Odyssey* (vv. 204 – 234)

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ABSTRACT
Verses 204–234 of Rhapsody *λ* in Homer's *Odyssey* present a deeply immersive and complex narrative, illustrating Odysseus's profound desire to connect with his mother, only to face the disappointment that she is merely a shadow. This passage showcases linguistic parallelism through its word order and narrative structure, creating a vivid and engaging experience. As a secondary narrator, Odysseus recounts his Underworld journey, highlighting his interactions with his mother and other souls, enhancing the narrative's focalization. The non-linear shifts in space and time add complexity and depth. This segment is crucial for understanding themes related to the afterlife and the soul's journey, enriching Odysseus's encounters with other Trojan War heroes. Despite its significance, no comprehensive narratological or linguistic analysis exists for this passage. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining thematic divisions, narratological strategies, and linguistic features, providing insights into the *Odyssey*'s narrative techniques and thematic depth.

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Introduction

The passage encompassing verses 204–234 of Rhapsody *λ* from the *Odyssey* is one of the most immersive sections of the entire rhapsody. This segment vividly illustrates Odysseus's profound yearning to touch his mother, only to face the disheartening realization that she is merely a shadowy figure without material substance. The linguistic parallelism, achieved through word order and narrative structure, immerses the reader—or narratee—in a way that makes them feel as though they are beside Odysseus. As a secondary narrator, Odysseus

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recounts his descent into the Underworld and his interactions with his mother and other souls to the Phaeacians, creating a compelling sense of focalization. This effect is further amplified by the embedded focalization present in the passage, with Odysseus directly narrating his dialogue with his mother and her responses.

The passage is marked by frequent, non-linear shifts in space and time, adding a layer of complexity that makes it particularly intriguing for analysis. It is a pivotal section within Rhapsody *λ*, offering essential insights from Odysseus's mother about the afterlife and the soul's journey to Hades—knowledge that can only come from a deceased individual. Furthermore, the inclusion of a list of women at the passage's end enriches Odysseus's connections with other Trojan War heroes, deepening his narrative experience.

This passage is crucial for both the development of Rhapsody *λ* and the broader narrative of the *Odyssey*. Notably, there has been no comprehensive narratological or linguistic commentary on this scene, specifically regarding Odysseus's meeting with Anticlea. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the passage in broader thematic sections and exploring its narrative and linguistic dimensions. By focusing on prominent themes and offering explanations for potentially problematic lines, this analysis will lay the groundwork for a more extensive examination of the *Odyssey*'s narrative techniques.

Text passage[1]

"ὣς ἔφατ', αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γ' ἔθελον φρεσὶ μερμηρίξας
μητρὸς ἐμῆς ψυχὴν ἐλέειν κατατεθνηυίης.
τρὶς μὲν ἐφωρμήθην, ἐλέειν τέ με θυμὸς ἀνώγει,
τρὶς δέ μοι ἐκ χειρῶν σκιῇ εἴκελον ἢ καὶ ὀνείρῳ
ἔπτατ'. ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος ὀξὺ γενέσκετο κηρόθι μᾶλλον,
καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων·
"'μῆτερ ἐμή, τί νύ μ' οὐ μίμνεις ἐλέειν μεμαῶτα,
ὄφρα καὶ εἰν Ἀίδαο φίλας περὶ χεῖρε βαλόντε
ἀμφοτέρω κρυεροῖο τεταρπώμεσθα γόοιο;
ἦ τί μοι εἴδωλον τόδ' ἀγαυὴ Περσεφόνεια
ὤτρυν', ὄφρ' ἔτι μᾶλλον ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω;'
"ὣς ἐφάμην, ἡ δ' αὐτίκ' ἀμείβετο πότνια μήτηρ·
'ὤ μοι, τέκνον ἐμόν, περὶ πάντων κάμμορε φωτῶν,
οὔ τί σε Περσεφόνεια Διὸς θυγάτηρ ἀπαφίσκει,
ἀλλ' αὕτη δίκη ἐστὶ βροτῶν, ὅτε τίς κε θάνῃσιν·
οὐ γὰρ ἔτι σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα ἶνες ἔχουσιν,

[1] All quotations from the *Odyssey* are taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition (A. T. Murray, rev. George E. Dimock, trans.).

ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν τε πυρὸς κρατερὸν μένος αἰθομένοιο
δαμνᾷ, ἐπεί κε πρῶτα λίπῃ λεύκ᾽ ὀστέα θυμός,
ψυχὴ δ᾽ ἠύτ᾽ ὄνειρος ἀποπταμένη πεπότηται.
ἀλλὰ φόωσδε τάχιστα λιλαίεο· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα
ἴσθ᾽, ἵνα καὶ μετόπισθε τεῇ εἴπῃσθα γυναικί.’
“νῶι μὲν ὣς ἐπέεσσιν ἀμειβόμεθ᾽, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες
ἦλυθον, ὤτρυνεν γὰρ ἀγαυὴ Περσεφόνεια,
ὅσσαι ἀριστήων ἄλοχοι ἔσαν ἠδὲ θύγατρες.
αἱ δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ αἷμα κελαινὸν ἀολλέες ἠγερέθοντο,
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ βούλευον ὅπως ἐρέοιμι ἑκάστην.
ἧδε δέ μοι κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή·
σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ
οὐκ εἴων πίνειν ἅμα πάσας αἷμα κελαινόν.
αἱ δὲ προμνηστῖναι ἐπήισαν, ἠδὲ ἑκάστη
ὃν γόνον ἐξαγόρευεν· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐρέεινον ἁπάσας.

Translation

“So she spoke, and I wondered in my heart
how I might clasp the ghost of my dead mother.
Three times I sprang toward her, and my will said, ‘Clasp her,’
and three times she flitted from my arms like a shadow or a dream.
As for me, the pain grew ever sharper in my heart,
and I spoke and addressed her with winged words:
“‘My mother, why do you not stay for me when I wish to clasp you,
so that even in the house of Hades we two may throw our arms
about each other and take our fill of chill lamenting.
Is this some phantom that august Persephone has sent me
so that I may lament and groan still more?’
“So I spoke, and my honored mother at once answered:
‘Ah me, my child, ill-fated above all men,
it is not that Persephone, daughter of Zeus, is deceiving you,
but this is the appointed way with mortals, when one dies.
For the sinews no longer hold the flesh and the bones together,
but the strong force of blazing fire destroys these,
as soon as the spirit leaves the white bones,
and the ghost, like a dream, flutters off and is gone.
But hurry to the light as fast as you can, and bear all these things in mind,

so that hereafter you may tell them to your wife.'
"Thus we two talked with one another; and the women
came, for august Persephone sent them,
all those that had been the wives and the daughters of chieftains.
These flocked in throngs about the dark blood,
and I considered how I might question each;
and this seemed to my mind the best plan.
I drew my long sword from beside my stout thigh,
and would not allow them to drink the dark blood all at one time.
So they drew near, one after the other,
and each declared her birth, and I questioned them all.

The Linguistic-Narratological Commentary

204 – 209. In lines 204–209, the subsequent nature of Odysseus's narration—where everything he recounts has already taken place—leads to the prevalent use of past tenses. The aorist tense dominates (e.g., ἔφατ', ἐφωρμήθην), portraying the events as bounded, completed actions.[2] These actions are of interest narratively not for their duration but for their content and temporal significance within the narrative framework.

Particularly noteworthy is the use of the aorist in line 206, where it replaces the imperfect to describe an action that, in reality, was prolonged and repetitive—Odysseus's repeated attempts to embrace his mother, only to fail each time.[3] This repetition, though continuous within the story's timeframe, is conveyed through the aorist because it emphasizes the bounded nature of Odysseus's attempts and their ultimate futility. The choice of tense here accentuates the finality and futility of his efforts, enhancing the narrative's emotional impact.

The imperfect tense, employed with the volitional verb (ἔθελον), underscores the ongoing barrier and the repeated psychological tension leading to Odysseus's actions, contributing to a summary narrative style. This style effectively condenses a complex temporal moment into two lines through the use of clustered aorists. The repetition of τρὶς and the conjunctions μὲν and δέ intensifies the narrative tension, creating a heightened sense of urgency. The outcome of this repeated, temporally bounded action is then reflected in the subsequent line with the imperfect (γενέσκετο), capturing the ongoing emotional turmoil and the unbounded nature of Odysseus's distress.[4]

Additionally, the passage exhibits a distinctive word order that influences the information structure. While there is frequent use of δέ with articles or pronouns to accelerate

[2] Regarding the importance of the Aorist tense in such hortative cases see also Lloyd (2018).
[3] For the function of the Imperfect tense and its relation with the Aorist tense see also Allan (2017); Allan (2020).
[4] See also Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989, p. 89).

the plot and immerse the external narratee, this section stands out due to the repetition of the first-person pronoun. This repetition emphasizes Odysseus's focalization and emotional intensity, as the secondary narrator continuously highlights his personal experience, thereby deepening the reader's immersion in the narrative.[5]

205. Odysseus wishes to embrace the soul of his mother, with whom he is conversing and continues to converse. In lines 219–222, Anticlea explains that after death, a person's external physical characteristics no longer remain, leaving only the soul. However, in line 213, Odysseus mentions that he sees an "idol" and wonders if Persephone has created it to deceive him. This raises a crucial question: does Odysseus see only a soul in front of him and recognize his mother when she begins speaking? Does he see an idol that conceals his mother's soul within? Or does he see his mother herself?

Two explanations seem particularly plausible. The first is that Odysseus sees souls passing before him, each with some distinguishing features that allow him to recognize them in a general sense—such as their gender—before learning who they are through communication. This would suggest that while the souls are visible, their individual identities become clear only when they speak.

The second explanation may involve the role of the primary narrator. It is possible that the primary narrator intrudes into the thoughts and narration of the secondary narrator, Odysseus, prompting him to perceive something he would not normally be able to see—that is, to recognize which soul is standing before him. This narrative layering could indicate that Odysseus's perception is influenced by the narrative voice, allowing him to identify his mother even before she speaks.[6]

205 – 206. According to De Jong, the use of the rhetorical figure known as reinstatement achieves a form of singulative narration, as Odysseus's attempt to embrace his mother is repeated three times in succession, each followed by a corresponding failure.[7] This choice of figure of speech by the secondary narrator, Odysseus, likely emphasizes his profound disappointment. By recounting the repeated efforts and subsequent failures, the narrative not only highlights the futility of Odysseus's actions but also underscores the emotional intensity of the moment, reflecting his deep sense of loss and frustration.

209 – 215. The lines within the examined portion of Rhapsody *λ* do not present any particular challenges concerning metric analysis, prosody, or caesuras. However, in certain sections, caesurae that support the meter are less frequent and serve a specific purpose. In the context

[5] The importance of focalization and the influence of feelings and emotions can also be found in De Jong (2014, pp. 48-50).
[6] This second explanation can be supported by De Jong (2014, p. 53).
[7] De Jong (2014, p. 99).

of dactylic hexameter, it is generally expected that one or two unstressed syllables follow the caesura to facilitate the recitation of the lines.[8] However, in line 209, this rule is violated. There is a five-part caesura after the word φωνήσας, followed by the stressed word ἔπεα. This deviation might be attributed to the phrase ἔπεα πτερόεντα, or it could reflect Odysseus's escalating emotional state, which becomes increasingly evident and reaches its peak in the subsequent lines (210–214).

Furthermore, some caesuras are rare in the context of Homeric dactylic hexameter. For instance, in lines 210 and 215, there is a three-part caesura. In line 210, the initial vocative, which in Homeric discourse typically serves to draw the attention of the addressee or narratee, sets the stage for the speaker—narrator's discourse.[9] In line 215, the three-part caesura plays a crucial role in completing the information unit after Odysseus's speech, creating a cohesive bridge that connects his emotional expression towards his mother with her emotions, which will be explored in the following line.[10] This caesura allows for the full realization of Odysseus's focalization, which is then seamlessly transferred to Anticlea through a linguistic shift in perspective.

210-224. According to Janse, the persistent avoidance between Odysseus and Anticlea, as well as Anticlea's aversion towards Odysseus, are characteristic narrative-linguistic features that contribute to the creation of the discursive mode.[11] This effect is further intensified by the use of imperatives within the passage, alongside the Present tense and temporal adverbs that emphasize the immediacy of the present moment (νύ, τάχιστα). These linguistic choices effectively transport the narratee into the discourse world of the secondary narrator.[12]

In these lines, Odysseus opts to recount his communication with his mother using direct speech and the Present tense. His inability to physically touch his mother has deeply affected him, leaving him unable to forget the conversation they shared. By employing the Present tense in his retrospective narration, Odysseus underscores the immediacy and emotional resonance of the events, making it clear that these experiences are still vividly present in his mind as he recounts them. This choice of tense suggests that, for Odysseus, the events are not merely memories but are being relived in the act of narration, highlighting their ongoing psychological impact.

210. The key to understanding the interpretation of the deictic "now" (νύ) lies in the character of Odysseus, who, as a secondary narrator, recounts his descent into Hades in this rhapsody.

[8] This specific metric rule can be found among others in Τσοπανάκης (2014, p. 198).
[9] See also Janse (2020, p. 20).
[10] See also Janse (2020, pp. 19–20).
[11] Janse (2020, pp. 17–8).
[12] Bakker (2009, pp. 123-4) discusses this relationship between the narrator and the narratee in *Odyssey* with specific reference to the 're-use' of narrative statements and the so-called 'projected indexicality'.

This use of "now" represents a *Deixis am Phantasma*, as it involves a shift from the current world or mental space where Odysseus is narrating (in the palace of the Phaeacians) to the world or mental space of his descent into the underworld, where the events of this embedded narration took place. This shift in deixis allows the reader or narratee to move from the present moment of narration to the vivid, re-enacted past experiences of the hero, blending the boundaries between the two temporal and spatial realms.[13]

211. The overarching setting established through Odysseus's narration is Hades, where his encounters and interactions with the souls occur. However, considering that, even with divine assistance, a mortal cannot physically enter the underworld, it is plausible that this descent is a fictional construct created by the secondary narrator. The descent to Hades may thus be envisioned as a hypothetical or dreamlike space, serving as a narrative frame rather than a literal setting. The depiction of this setting is broad and lacks specific details about the particular area of Hades where the heroes are located.[14]

Additionally, there is no detailed description of the different regions of Hades, which could be attributed to the mental framework or conceptual map the narrator possesses regarding the underworld, rendering a detailed description unnecessary or irrelevant. In terms of the functions served by this space, Hades functions symbolically as a classic example of *locus horridus*, embodying the grim and unsettling nature of the underworld.[15] It also serves a characterization function, as encountering his deceased mother attributes certain specific characteristics to her, such as her intangible form. Furthermore, it fulfills a psychologizing function, as Odysseus's emotional turmoil and psychological impact are clearly heightened by his descent into the underworld and his interactions with the dead.

213. The demonstrative pronoun τόδ' serves a deictic function in this context, as it indicates that the idol Odysseus is referring to is directly in front of him, making it proximal and relevant to the current speech situation. This deixis is spatial, situating the idol within the immediate visual and temporal field of the narrator.

However, understanding the deixis at this point might be more effectively approached through the psychological or affective domain. Odysseus is deeply distressed by the fact that he is not seeing his mother but rather a mere phantom in Hades. His emotional turmoil is reflected in his reference to εἴδωλον τόδ', highlighting his sorrow and disappointment over the deceptive nature of the apparition.[16] The positioning of the demonstrative pronoun after the noun, which is atypical and emphasizes the noun, contributes to the overall sense of

[13] De Jong (2012, pp. 69-70).
[14] Regarding the setting cf. also De Jong (2014, p. 107).
[15] The different functions of space can be found in De Jong (2014: pp. 122-9).
[16] See also Heubeck &Hoekstra (1989, pp. 89-90).

frustration and tension. This inversion in Greek often serves to underscore the emotional weight and create a heightened sense of dramatic impact.

216. According to De Jong, at this juncture, the focalization shifts to Anticlea's perspective, which is overt despite her role as a tertiary internal narrator.[17] She begins the line with an exclamation that reveals her emotional state, showcasing her deep disappointment and sadness regarding the plight of her son. By addressing him as τέκνον ἐμόν, she emphasizes her personal and emotional connection, demonstrating that her response is far from neutral. Additionally, her use of the epithet κάμμορε φωτῶν further intensifies her anguish and sorrow, as it underscores her perception of Odysseus as the most wretched among humanity. Through these choices, Anticlea's narrative voice vividly conveys her profound distress and empathy for her son's suffering.

218. Anticlea's reference to a state of human nature that is universal and inherent to all people characterizes her narration as omnitemporal, gnomic, and proverbial, according to De Jong.[18] This iterative narration transcends specific temporal events to reflect a general truth about the human condition. It introduces a discoursive mode in which Anticlea immediately establishes the relevance of her narrative for understanding the stages of death.

In this context, the narrative's progression is halted, and the pacing is deliberately slowed. The action described becomes unbounded, highlighting a stable and repetitive process common to all humans. The use of the Present tense emphasizes the frequency and enduring nature of this action, representing a natural and continuous aspect of human existence.

Additionally, the pronoun αὕτη is employed in a notable way. This deictic cataphoric use of the demonstrative pronoun points forward to the discourse referent, distinguishing it from ἥδε.[19] This choice indicates that the common fate of death and descent to Hades is not yet part of the shared understanding between narrator and narratee. While Anticlea, based on her own experiences, comprehends and recounts the process by which the soul is separated from the body, this is new information for Odysseus.

219 – 222. Anticlea's discussion focuses on the transition from life to death and the physiological processes that occur in the human body during this transition. As someone who has experienced death firsthand, she is situated in Hades with other souls, giving her a profound understanding of the death process and its stages. Narratively, she employs a form

[17] De Jong (2014, p. 26).
[18] De Jong (2014, p. 100).
[19] De Jong (2012, pp. 69-70) refers to the double deixis in Homer (anaphoric/endophoric and the cataphoric/exophoric) using the personal pronouns and the deixis they represent.

of metalepsis by referring to the general nature of death and implicitly describing her own death, despite the temporal distance of her demise from Odysseus's encounter.[20]

Given Anticlea's direct experience of death, her narration exhibits analepsis, as she recounts events that have occurred prior to Odysseus's arrival in the underworld. This reflects her acquired wisdom about death. However, her mention of the soul touches on supernatural elements beyond ordinary human experience. This apparent contradiction can be explained by the notion that the dead possess knowledge inaccessible to the living. Having drunk the sacrificial blood, Anticlea can reveal insights into the afterlife that transcend mortal understanding. Thus, she encapsulates Homer's view on the soul and its journey beyond death.[21]

At this juncture, it is possible that the detailed account of the soul's journey may not solely originate from Anticlea but also reflects the primary narrator's influence. The primary narrator might inject elements into her account to convey the author's perspective on the soul and its fate. Anticlea's description, while rooted in her own experience, could be supplemented with information she could not fully grasp, thus serving dual functions: explanatory and persuasive. The explanatory function is evident in clarifying why Odysseus could not physically touch his mother in the earlier lines (196–208, 210). The intangible nature of Anticlea's soul renders physical contact impossible for her mortal son. The persuasive function is seen in the narrative's progression, as Anticlea's intangibility foreshadows the eventual separation between Odysseus and his mother, leading to his continued journey and encounters with other figures. This advancement in the plot is crucial for Odysseus's ultimate return to Ithaca and completion of his *Odyssey*. The narrative's ability to progress hinges on Odysseus's understanding of the separation between the living and the dead.[22]

Finally, Anticlea's use of the Present Perfect verb πεπότηται at the end of her speech (222) heightens the emotional intensity. This tense, often found in lyrical poetry or dramatic contexts, accentuates the emotional weight of her final reflections on death, intensifying the narratee's sense of anguish and the emotional resonance of the narrative.

223. A sudden shift occurs from the narrative of death to Anticlea's direct address to her son. If we accept that the detailed narration of death is attributed to the primary narrator, as previously discussed, this moment marks a return to Anticlea's perspective with a focus on her urgent appeal to Odysseus. This shift is notably intense, with an acceleration underscored by the temporal-adverb τάχιστα ("as quickly as possible") and the imperative λιλαίεο ("yearn" or "hasten").[23]

[20] See also De Jong (2014: pp. 78-87).
[21] See also Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989, p. 90).
[22] See also Heubeck & Hoekstra (1989, p. 90); Chantraine (2013, p. 436).
[23] See also De Jong (2014, pp. 94-5).

This narrative choice reflects Anticlea's profound emotional distress as she is compelled to relive the memory of her own death. At the same time, the plot advances, highlighting Odysseus's pressing need to return to the living world and his home. The reaffirmation of the soul's journey post-death is hastened by the pronoun ταῦτα ("these things"), which interrupts the previous pause in the narrative. This acceleration is driven by Anticlea's urging, pushing Odysseus to expedite his return to the world of the living.

224. Anticlea instructs Odysseus to recount to his wife, Penelope, all that he has witnessed and learned in the underworld, including details about Troy and its heroes. This moment features a form of prolepsis, as Anticlea's soul anticipates Odysseus's eventual return to Ithaca and his reunion with Penelope, who will become the narratee of his narrative. This anticipatory reference effectively foreshadows the conclusion of the *Odyssey*, a knowledge Anticlea possesses due to her current state as a deceased soul.

The prolepsis is internal to the narrative, occurring within the timeframe of the main story. Following this moment, there is a noticeable pause in Anticlea's narration, after which she exits the narrative of Odysseus's encounter with the Phaeacians. This interruption is marked by an ellipsis, as Odysseus omits further details about his mother and immediately shifts focus to other female souls.[24] This "narrative amnesia" could result from several factors: the appearance of numerous other souls might have caused Odysseus to lose track of Anticlea, or the pervasive darkness of Hades could have obscured his view of her as she receded from his immediate surroundings.

225 – 234. In examining the use of verbs within these lines, including lines 204–209, a notable shift occurs in line 225, where the narrator concludes his interaction with Anticlea abruptly, transitioning without a smooth lead-in to the other souls. This sudden change can be attributed to the influx of other souls, which necessitates this narrative shift and serves the progression of the story. The souls, who had been drinking from the sacrificial blood to speak, are reawakened by Persephone, who had also created the idol of Anticlea.

The subsequent lines (225–229) introduce complications in the narrative. Unlike a straightforward climax, line 230 serves as a pivotal moment, with the peak of the narrative following a prior evaluation. Evaluation is evident in line 229, where Odysseus's emotional turmoil and his struggle to determine his response are portrayed. The resolution appears in lines 231–232, where Odysseus attempts to stop the souls from drinking the blood with his sword, although this attempt ultimately fails.

To fully understand the coda, it is essential to consider the overarching meaning of lines 225–234. These lines set up the forthcoming list of women and serve as an introduction to this list. It can also be suggested that this list facilitates a smoother transition to Odysseus's

[24] See also De Jong (2014, p. 98).

interactions with other souls from the Trojan War and enriches his experiences. This, in turn, prepares him for his return home, where he will face further challenges, including dealing with the suitors. Consequently, the coda is intricately connected to this list and indirectly to the main narrative, as it enhances Odysseus's readiness for the trials he will encounter upon his return to Ithaca.

225 – 226. While Odysseus converses with his mother, he observes the other souls gathering around him. This situation presents a panoramic standpoint, attributed to Odysseus as the secondary narrator and secondary focalizer. Thus, it represents an actorial panoramic viewpoint. The souls of the women who approach Odysseus during his dialogue with Anticlea serve as internal secondary narratees. In this context, the internal primary narrator of the speeches by Odysseus and Anticlea is the other interlocutor (Anticlea or Odysseus, respectively), while the external primary narratee is the listener or reader of the rhapsody. However, the presence of these female souls in the same space allows them to function as narratees as well.

This role of the souls as narratees is further underscored by the temporal indication in line 225. The temporal clause introduced by ὡς and the Present tense verb ἀμειβόμεθ' ("we are exchanging") illustrates the ongoing nature of the dialogue, which the souls overhear as they gradually approach Odysseus (ἤλυθον). The use of the Present tense highlights the unboundedness of the dialogue, demonstrating how the souls' gathering overlaps with the conversation between Odysseus and Anticlea. Additionally, the conjunctions μὲν - δὲ emphasize the temporal parallelism between the dialogue between mother and son and the appearance of the souls, reinforcing the role of the souls as both listeners and narratees within this narrative framework.

226. Odysseus cannot know that the souls have been roused by Persephone, as the goddess is not present during his conversation with his mother. If Persephone were indeed responsible for the souls' uprising, she would have done so in a hidden, divine manner rather than overtly in front of Odysseus. This discrepancy suggests that the primary narrator may have intervened, granting the secondary narrator (Odysseus) knowledge that would otherwise be beyond his reach. This narrative choice reflects the primary narrator's role in shaping the story and providing information that aligns with the broader narrative structure and thematic elements.

227. According to De Jong, the mention of the women approaching Odysseus as the wives and daughters of heroes serves as a particular form of foreshadowing known as "the seed".[25] At this point in the narrative, the reference to their origins may seem insignificant. However, its

[25] De Jong (2014, p. 86).

true significance becomes clear later when Odysseus encounters prominent soldiers of the Trojan War in Hades, whose deaths and connections to these women are revealed. This early reference thus plants a narrative seed that gains importance and meaning as the story unfolds.

229. The pace of the narration slows down, transitioning into a more scenic depiction as the secondary narrator, Odysseus, reflects on his thoughts and emotions while the souls approach him. The use of the verb βούλευον, which denotes perception and cognition, enhances the focalization from Odysseus's s perspective. This choice allows him to externalize his internal concerns and articulate his viewpoint to the narratees, offering a deeper insight into his emotional state and thought process during this moment.

230. The use of the pronoun ἥδε at the beginning of the sentence establishes a cataphoric discourse deixis, as it anticipates the idea Odysseus is about to present to the narratees. By employing this pronoun, Odysseus signals that he will soon share his considered strategy or plan for addressing the souls that appear before him. This anticipatory reference sets up the forthcoming exposition of his thoughts and responses, providing a framework for understanding his approach in the subsequent lines.

230 – 234. At this juncture, the narrative undergoes a pronounced acceleration, which is heightened by the frequent use of pronouns and articles, accompanied by the boundary marker δέ. This linguistic strategy facilitates a fluid presentation of subject shifts, encompassing both Odysseus's s actions and those of the souls, as well as individual actions separately.

Most information units commence with a ConTop—introduced by particles and pronouns/articles—and are followed either by a postverbal GivTop, which includes gestures or references to the narrator's psychological state (e.g., anger), a broad focus clause (e.g., προμνηστῖναι in line 233), or ends with a verb that signifies a subject shift (e.g., ἐρέινον in line 234). This structuring allows for a chronological and abstract narration of events.[26]

The use of the boundary marker e not only aids in delineating these units but also helps in creating "ideas" or "intonation units," which represent the information relived by Odysseus as he narrates the main story. This technique effectively enhances immersion by drawing the narratee deeper into Odysseus's s immediate experience and emotional state.

[26] A Given Topic is a referent that is already active in the discourse and continues as the topic. Here, he (= Odysseus) is a Given Topic because he was already the topic of the previous sentence. A Contrastive Topic introduces a comparison or contrast between alternatives. Here both "Odysseus" and "his men" are Contrastive Topics because the speaker contrasts them. On the matter, see also Janse (2020, pp. 18-20).

Discussion — Conclusions

In this analysis of the narrative techniques and structural elements within the selected lines of Rhapsody *λ* from Homer's *Odyssey*, we observe several crucial aspects that enhance both the narrative depth and emotional resonance of the text. The use of aorist and imperfect tenses, along with intricate narrative techniques, reflects a sophisticated approach to storytelling that deepens our understanding of Odysseus's encounter with the dead in Hades.

The predominance of the aorist tense in lines 204–209 serves to encapsulate completed actions, emphasizing the bounded nature of Odysseus's futile attempts to embrace his mother. This tense choice intensifies the finality and emotional impact of these repeated failures, highlighting the profound sense of loss and frustration experienced by Odysseus. The shift to the imperfect tense, particularly in the depiction of his ongoing emotional turmoil, allows for a nuanced portrayal of the unbounded distress that lingers beyond the specific actions described.

The narrative's shift from the detailed recounting of Odysseus's interaction with Anticlea to a panoramic standpoint with the approaching souls underscores the layered narrative perspective. The role of the secondary narrator, Odysseus, is enriched by the intervention of the primary narrator, who introduces elements beyond Odysseus's s direct knowledge, such as the divine influence of Persephone. This narrative layering not only bridges the internal experiences of Odysseus with the broader mythological context but also facilitates a deeper engagement with the thematic elements of divine intervention and mortal perception.

Furthermore, the use of deictic elements, such as the demonstrative pronoun ἥδε and the boundary markers, reflects an intricate narrative technique that underscores the immediacy of Odysseus's perspective and the unfolding drama. The cataphoric discourse deixis, in particular, anticipates the forthcoming exposition of Odysseus's strategy and contributes to the dynamic progression of the narrative.

The detailed examination of caesurae and metrical deviations, alongside the narrative's acceleration and scenic depiction, highlights how Homer employs these techniques to enhance the emotional and thematic depth of the text. The transition to Anticlea's perspective and the subsequent proleptic references serve to advance the plot while also deepening the emotional engagement with Odysseus's journey and his impending return to Ithaca.

In summary, the passage reflects a complex interplay of narrative techniques, tense usage, and structural elements that collectively enhance the emotional intensity and thematic richness of the *Odyssey*. By weaving together the internal experiences of the characters with broader mythological and narrative structures, Homer creates a multi-layered and immersive storytelling experience that continues to resonate with readers and scholars alike.

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