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Gary Huang CFI Professor Masri 9/26/12 The Odyssey Paragraph Responses

Paragraph 1 This passage can be found in the beginning of The Odyssey in Book One, Lines 1-12. It's significant not only because it's how the epic begins, but also because it gives quick insight to Odysseus' character and what happens on his way home. Odysseus is revealed to be a man " of twists and turns"(1) which gives the double meaning in the literal sense of his journey home and his cunning nature. In this case, The Odyssey follows the guideline of an epic as it states what the rest of the poem entails. The speaker asks a Muse to sing to him while he gets ready to tell the tale of Odysseus' journey. He travels through " many cities"(4), suffers " many pains"(5), and it's implied that he is the last of his crew to survive as the " recklessness of their own ways destroyed them all"(8). This shows that his perilous journey and hero-like features make him deserving of an epic. Also this opening foreshadows all that is to come later in the book with him trying to save his crew's life from disaster, his crew being wiped out because of eating the cattle of the Sun, and Odysseus' nearly impossible trip home. Another notable thing is that the Muse is allowed to " start from where [she] will"(12) and she does this throughout the epic by using flashbacks and swaps between the separate storylines of Telemachus and Odysseus.

Paragraph 2 This paragraph deals with two passages both of which can be found in Book Nine, lines 404-414 and lines 529-536. In the first passage Odysseus shows his sharp wits by naming himself " Nobody" in which the Polyphemus believes him. Not only does Odysseus have the smarts to get the Cyclops drunk first, he understands that outsmarting the enemy leads to victory regardless of being physically strong. This shows Odysseus' hero like

qualities in that he is able to fight with strength and courage as well as his intellect to overcome the Cyclops who is undoubtedly much stronger than he is. After poking his eye out, Polyphemus can only scream “ Nobody’s killing me now by fraud and not by force”(453). He also acknowledges that Odysseus is smart enough to blind him so that he cannot consume Odysseus and his crew. However, in the latter passage, Odysseus, immediately after defeating Polyphemus with craftiness ends up showing how he is just as irrational as he is clever. He yells to the blinded Cyclops that it was “ no weak coward it was whose crew you bent to devour”(531-532) in which the Cyclops is still able to hear and almost wrecks the ship by throwing a rock at Odysseus’ general direction. Odysseus even goes on to exclaim that it was “ Odysseus, raider of cities, he gouged out your eye, Laertes’ son who makes his home in Ithaca! ”(560-562). With this, Odysseus shows an ignorant side of his personality much opposite to the cunning he showed when he was able to defeat Polyphemus. His taunt is most likely due to his hubris and the excitement in being able to overcome a huge obstacle on his way home. In this, Odysseus also learns the danger in provoking the gods as he has just maimed Polyphemus, son of Poseidon.