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PALAMEDES

by

PAUL CANTRELL

Under the Direction of Dr. Murray Brown

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a syncretic, synoptic account of Palamedes from the Trojan War. It delineates three interpretive modes: (1) that Palamedes was present all along; (2) that later poets inserted him into the Trojan narrative, either as an archetypal intellectual figure, or as Odysseus's double; (3) that Palamedes was present only as Odysseus's imaginary *Doppelgänger*. The thesis accounts for Palamedes's scarce attention in classical texts by way of Lacanian and—via Otto Rank—Freudian psychoanalytic theory, as well as by Slavoj Žižek's adoption of the "vanishing mediator." After tracing a potential textual genealogy from Palamedes to Malory's Palomydes, the thesis concludes with a reading of Palamedes's implied presence in *Inferno* 26.

INDEX WORDS: Palamedes, Odysseus, Trojan War, Doppelgänger, Double, Palomydes, Palomides, Ulysses.

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by

PAUL CANTRELL

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

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2011

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Office of Graduate Studies

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May 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

The Hawk, the Handsaw 5

Outing Achilles 7

Losing the Battle . . . 8

Rivals, or Odysseus Can't Catch a Break 10

The Three Deaths of Palamedes 13

Dictys and Dares Go to Troy 15

Philostratus Tests Occam's Razor 17

The Three Lives of Palamedes 19

What's a *Doppelgänger*? 24

Some Names of Palamedes 27

What's an Odysseus? 29

The Lone Wolf's Grandson 33

Odysseus Minus Palamedes 36

Silence, Exile, Cunning 38

Odysseus and the Horse 41

Sinon to Trojans: Please Don't Throw Me in the Briarpatch! 44

"I Wish I Had an Evil Twin": Edward Hyde and Tyler Durden 45

Who Made Whom? 52

"Palomydes, Palomydes!" 55

The Mad Flight 74

Conclusion 85

Introduction

Who is Palamedes? This question, or some unprintable version thereof, first escaped my mouth several years ago when, on some Virgilian tangent, I initially stumbled upon the name. I soon asked nearly everyone I knew—friends, classics students, former professors—and the response was always the same: "Who . . . is Palamedes?!" This ignorance is ours but not the blame. We are not supposed to know about Palamedes. To know about Palamedes is potentially to undermine much of what we think we know about Odysseus. The problem is simply that Palamedes does not exist, at least not in the way one typically thinks of others as existing.

Jorge Luis Borges, referring to Robert Louis Stevenson's observation that "a book's characters are only strings of words," applies the same reduction to the "powerful men who ruled the earth, as well: Alexander is one string of words, Attila another. We should say of Ugolino that he is a verbal texture consisting of about thirty tercets" (279). Two factors complicate such a reading of Palamedes. First, the Trojan War possesses a unique double valence insofar as it was arguably either Greece's last mythological event or its first historical one. Precariously poised between these two modes of discourse, the war enjoys an overlapping of hermeneutic matrices, and it is within this liminal space that much of this study resides. For those who hold that Odysseus is himself a fiction, this investigation will doubtless appear as preposterous as one devoted to debunking Donner, while sparing Blitzen. I am hardly the first to maintain that Palamedes is an institutionalized artifice. I aim only to seek out the parameters of this character, accepting from the outset that he may be an afterthought to the stories in which later poets have inserted him.

The second complicating factor is that there is no text of Palamedes. Rather, he appears in scattered (and often contradictory) fragments throughout various texts. Writing on James Joyce's enigmatic man in the macintosh, Frank Kermode asks, "Why, in fact, does it require a more strenuous effort to believe that a narrative lacks coherence than to believe that somehow, if we could only find out, it doesn't?" (111).[1] We may well ask of Palamedes, as Leopold Bloom asks of the man in the macintosh, "Where the deuce did he pop out of?" (6.826). Kermode is interrogating the expectation of coherence within a unified text, whereas the textual Palamedes is necessarily a composite culled from various sources. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge the possibility from the outset that the riddle is insoluble—to borrow Oscar Wilde's phrase, "a Sphinx without a secret" (218). The following study is therefore a syncretic, speculative account of Palamedes. I have gathered these disparate fragments into as cohesive a narrative as possible, indicating divergences when appropriate. The speculative portion of the argument concerns those grey areas which depend upon which interpretive mode (or combination thereof) one uses.

Although I have conflated these various narratives at times, one should be careful throughout not to treat classical writings as one textual monolith. "To create space for a different explanation," Hans Blumenberg writes, "we must free ourselves from an illusion of temporal perspective" (*Work* 151). This would be an apt motto for the ahistorical scope of some of my following claims; however, it is also important not to

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[1] I would like to acknowledge Dr. Paul Schmidt for his suggestion that I revisit Kermode's reading of Joyce with regard to Palamedes.

collapse the textual chronology so completely as to ignore outright the significance of the time elapsed between writings. For example, although Homer and Philostratus may sound equally ancient to our modern ears, their historical and cultural contexts differ considerably. Blumenberg imagines even Homer as "full of anxiety," writing in "what must already have been a moment of fatigue, in that age of incubation . . . to write down, and thus to finalize, the ancient inheritance . . ." (*Work* 152). We would therefore do well to bear in mind, throughout the following investigation of priority and doubling, that there is a sense in which this material was as ancient to Homer as it now is to us, and that even Homer, though first, had his precursors to wrestle.

Palamedes is grossly overlooked in classical writings, in no small part due to his complete absence from Homer's works, an omission which I shall address shortly. The *Cypria* briefly mentions him. Plato's *Apology* contains a passing reference as Socrates muses on a hypothetical meeting in the hereafter with "Palamedes or Ajax . . . or any other men of old who lost their lives through an unjust judgment" (41B). Virgil is no less vague in the *Aeneid*, when Sinon attempts to insinuate himself, and the wooden horse, among the Trojans by referring to the Greeks' murder of Palamedes (2.82). However, most accounts of Palamedes do not appear until the first century AD.

Following an overview of Palamedes's history with Odysseus, I shall outline three interpretive modes—ways to account for his presence within the narrative—and the various etymologies of Palamedes's and Odysseus's names which support these modes. At this point, the investigation itself will double as I perform a kind of repetition-in-difference, revisiting the events of Odysseus's career, but without Palamedes present. Psychoanalytic theory will provide the dominant critical paradigm throughout this

discussion, specifically Jacques Lacan's mirror stage, Otto Rank's work on the *Doppelgänger*, and Slavoj Žižek's adoption of the "vanishing mediator." Finally, after tracing a potential textual genealogy from Palamedes to Sir Thomas Malory's Palomydes, I shall discuss Palamedes's potential encryption in Dante's Ulysses (i.e., Odysseus).

Plato's *Phaedrus* provides one final preliminary example which will serve as our point of departure:

> SOCRATES. Then you have heard only of the treatises on rhetoric by Nestor and Odysseus, which they wrote when they had nothing to do at Troy, and you have not heard of that by Palamedes?
>
> PHAEDRUS: Nor of Nestor's either, unless you are disguising Gorgias under the name of Nestor and Thrasymachus or Theodorus under that of Odysseus.
>
> SOCRATES. Perhaps I am. However, never mind them. . . . (261B-C)

Socrates goes on to refer to "the Eleatic Palamedes (Zeno)"; however, this parenthetical appositive hardly mitigates the cryptic tone of his earlier remark—namely, that Phaedrus has unwittingly heard of Palamedes by an alias. Just as Socrates enigmatically alludes to disguising one man under the name of another, so the present interrogation of Palamedes's mysterious identity begins under the aegis of Socrates's remark.

The Hawk, the Handsaw

Of dubious origins, Palamedes crops up like Cain's wife in Genesis, seemingly *ex nihilo*. His geographical origins are as obscure as his genealogy. As E. D. Phillips notes, "[h]is very location in the heroic world is uncertain; sometimes he belongs to Locris, sometimes to Euboea, while the mountain Palamidi above Nauplia shows an old connection with the Argolid" (267). Palamedes first appears at Ithaca as part of the Greek entourage gathering troops. There he finds Odysseus, who appears to be feigning madness to avoid accompanying them to Troy. To this end, he has donned a madman's felt cap, yoked a horse to a bull, and begun salting his fields (*Fab*. 95). Palamedes alone suspects fraud, and he reasons that only a true madman would allow the death of his son. Apollodorus, writing in the second century BC, claims that Palamedes reveals Odysseus's sanity by threatening the infant Telemachus with a sword (*Epit*. 3.7). A few centuries later, Hyginus tells an alternative version in which Palamedes places the boy in front of the plow (*Fab*. 95).

"Don't forget that he was a war-dodger," James Joyce once remarked on Odysseus. "He might never have taken up arms and gone to Troy, but the Greek recruiting sergeant was too clever for him" (16).[2] Although one can perhaps understand Odysseus's reluctance to sail off to war over his wife's cousin, the oath of Tyndareus, Helen's father, stipulated that all of Helen's suitors would defend her marriage by whatever means necessary. However, the oath was Odysseus's own idea. He devised and

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[2] I would like to acknowledge W. B. Stanford's *The Ulysses Theme* for recalling my attention to Joyce's remarks, quoted here and elsewhere.

offered it to Tyndareus, not as a circumspect means of winning Helen's favor but of securing Penelope, Helen's cousin, as his bride (*Lib*. 3.10.9). What does he now care if this Helen has run off elsewhere? Of course, the oath which brings Penelope to him is the same which bears him away from her.

Odysseus's reticence to leave may also have been a reaction to Halitherses's prophecy that, were he to go, it would take twenty years for him to return (*Od*. 2.161-76). Another prophecy was that he would die at the hand of his own son, which he takes to mean Telemachus, the "far-away fighter," whom Odysseus understandably would not want to age twenty years more into a man unless under the cheer and comfort of his vigilant, paternal eye. How is Odysseus to know that the true murderous son, Telegonus, the "far-away born," is yet unborn and could in fact only be born by Odysseus's leaving Ithaca? Odysseus begets him by Calypso (or, some say, Circe), Telegonus hears of his legendary father years later, seeks him out and, scattering a herd of cattle upon his arrival in Ithaca, slays the sought-for stranger, Odysseus, who is only defending his herd and land (*Fab*. 127). Were Odysseus never to have left Ithaca in the first place, there could be no legendary exploits in the name of which his bastard son could seek him out. Of course, one could argue that, were Odysseus to stay at home, Telegonus would never be born in the first place.

The question is why Odysseus would have Palamedes killed for later suggesting that the Greeks return home, where Odysseus had wanted to remain in the first place. Sources vary as to whether Palamedes made the suggestion at all. Virgil states that Palamedes was murdered "*quia bella vetabat* [because he forbade the war]" (*Aen*. 2.84). *Veto*—from *vetāre*, which Virgil uses above—was "the word by which the Roman

tribunes of the people opposed measures of the Senate or actions of the magistrates," providing some gravity to Palamedes's objection ("Veto"). However, as these words are part of Sinon's duplicitous speech to the Trojans, their veracity is questionable.[3] Surely Odysseus could convince his fellow men to go along with Palamedes's suggestion. It is, after all, Odysseus who first convinces them of the need to defend Menelaus's marriage to Helen, as it is Odysseus who would soon convince his men to award Achilles's arms to him and not to Ajax. Why, then? Perhaps Odysseus resents not his being lured away from home but his having been outwitted. Nevertheless, for Odysseus to have to endure such a suggestion to return home from the very man who had made him leave in the first place would be to add insult to injury and would doubtlessly have aggravated Odysseus's desire for revenge.

Outing Achilles

Rather than take immediate revenge on Palamedes, Odysseus finds a surrogate in Achilles. The entourage recalls a prophecy made by Calchas when Achilles was but nine years old: Troy will not be taken without Achilles. Interpreting this as indicative of Achilles's indispensability to their cause, Odysseus and his men go forth to muster him. Achilles's mother, Thetis, lights on a syntactical nuance in Calchas's prophecy—that Troy would not be taken (sacked) without Achilles's being taken (killed). It had been at Thetis's wedding that Eris had thrown the apple of discord with its inscription, "For the

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[3] For example, Virgil's Sinon also claims that Belus is Palamedes's father, whereas most writers posit Nauplius (*Aen*. 2.82).

fairest," thereby setting in motion the events which would lead to the Trojan War. She had already taken pains to make her son immortal—with the inadvertent exception of the heel by which she had held his infant body while immersing him in the River Styx, according to later tradition. Thetis is not about to lose that son, especially in a war the origins of which concern an apple so audacious as to imply by its inscription that she is not, in fact, the fairest on her own wedding day. She therefore sends Achilles off to King Lycomedes's court at Scyros. She further induces her son to dress as a girl (*Lib*. 3.13.8).

Perhaps the will to seek revenge on a substitute drives Odysseus, the affront of having been outwitted by Palamedes still so fresh, to his mark, Achilles. Perhaps it is the prophecy that to leave without Achilles would be to undertake a fool's errand. In either case, Odysseus dons the merchant's disguise and lays out the bait, weapons mixed in with the more feminine ornaments. He then cues the trumpet blast and watches Achilles take up the arms and spring into action, thus revealing himself as a warrior (*Met*. 13-162-66; *Fab*. 96). Exposed by Odysseus, Achilles joins the campaign to Troy, leaving behind his grief-stricken paramour, Deidamia, and their son, Neoptolemus (*Achill*. 1.874-88).

Losing the Battle . . .

As Odysseus sterilizes his land, so does Achilles symbolically castrate himself by disguising himself as a girl at his mother's urging. Thetis is herself no stranger to emasculation, having inadvertently eaten of Pelops's genitals at Tantalus's banquet. The significance of Odysseus's salting his land, however, is no small matter. There is a classical emphasis on the house which John Jones notes: "'House' (the Greek *oikos* and its synonyms) is at once house and household, building and family, land and chattels,

slaves and domestic animals, hearth and ancestral grave: a psycho-physical community of the living and the dead and the unborn" (83-84). Odysseus's salting of his land is therefore significant in both practical and symbolic terms.

Among the latter I would include the symbolic self-castration implied by Odysseus's act. John T. Irwin, in his work on doubling, illuminates the Freudian psychology underlying such behavior: "The son, in the primal act of repression, psychologically castrates himself rather than be physically castrated by the father; he *actively* renders himself *passive* rather than *passively* submit to being rendered *passive* by another" (91). We should note that this incident already casts Odysseus in the subordinate role of the son, with Palamedes as the father. When Palamedes brandishes the sword toward Telemachus, he symbolically usurps Odysseus's paternal castration threat. As Irwin notes, "the son's renunciation of the phallus amounts to a kind of amputation in which a part is given up to save the whole" (89). Odysseus would rather feign madness and ruin his very livelihood at home than risk his life by joining the men at war. He would desecrate his home not to leave it.

Agamemnon, in contrast, must deal a mortal blow to his home life precisely so that he may take leave of it. At Aulis, he kills a deer and boasts that Artemis herself could not have made a better shot. The goddess then causes unfavorable winds to detain the fleet until, as Calchas verifies, she has been appeased by the sacrifice of one of Agamemnon's daughters—Iphigenia, the fairest, as with the inscription on the apple of

discord at Thetis's wedding which originally set the war in motion.[4] Odysseus convinces Clytaemnestra to release her daughter to him by promising that the girl will be wed to Achilles (*Epit*. 3.21-22). Here may be a latent sense of Calchas's prophecy—without the promised hand of Achilles, the Greeks could not procure Iphigenia, and they would have remained docked at Aulis indefinitely, unable to take Troy. Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter, literally a "making holy," has as its complement Odysseus's desecration of the *oikos*. The Greeks sustain each of these losses before having even set sail for the war.

Rivals, or Odysseus Can't Catch a Break

After the initial meeting at Ithaca, there follows a catalogue of one-upmanship in which Palamedes bests Odysseus at every opportunity and to the point of disgrace. When Odysseus suggests that the Greeks should hunt the wolves for sustenance, Palamedes observes the wolves and deduces that a plague is impending. He then establishes a strict regimen of diet, hygiene, and exercise for the men, who thereby avoid the plague which would soon ravage the area. Palamedes thus saves the allies from Odysseus's ignorant advice which, had they followed, would have killed them.

The task of providing for the Greek soldiers finds Palamedes and Odysseus in another antagonistic relationship. Odysseus repairs to Thrace in search of corn and comes

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[4] There is a tradition which claims that Iphigenia was Helen's daughter by Theseus, prior to her marriage to Menelaus, and that she gave this daughter to her sister, Clytaemnestra, who then passed her off to Agamemnon as her own. Theseus, of course, was later killed by Lycomedes (*Lib*. 3.10.9 and J. G. Frazer's note).

back with nothing, while Palamedes returns with an abundant yield. Some writers say that Palamedes serves as part of the group that goes to Delos in order to bring back Anius's daughters, the Oenotropi, each of whom Dionysus has endowed with the power to turn anything she touches into olive oil, corn, and wine, respectively (Phillips 269-70).[5] Beginning with his sterilizing his fields at Ithaca, Odysseus finds himself in one emasculating incident after another. At every turn he is outdone, and undone, by his *bête noire,* Palamedes.

Finally, one should note the incident told by Ptolemaeus Chennus in which Palamedes discloses the identity of Epipole, a young Greek woman who has disguised herself as a man in order to join the expedition to Troy (Phillips 269). This incident fits into the preceding series of revelations and recognitions in which sanity is gendered as masculine, and madness feminine, with regard to one's fitness to serve in the military. At Ithaca, Palamedes reveals Odysseus's sanity. At Lycomedes's court, Odysseus, himself disguised, reveals Achilles's masculinity. At Troy, Palamedes reveals Epipole's femininity and has the Greek army stone her to death. Here one finds a corollary to Palamedes's exposure of Odysseus's ineptitude at the expense of the latter's manhood, as well as the foreshadowing of Palamedes's own death by stoning.

Perhaps Palamedes's unclear personal background makes him such an unlikely adversary. Whereas Odysseus is clearly established at Ithaca, Palamedes seems to come

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[5] Other accounts hold that it is not Palamedes, but Odysseus, who goes on this reconnaissance mission to Delos. The significance of such an ambiguity will become apparent later in the argument.

from elsewhere, and that is perhaps as specific a locale as one may venture. With no clear fatherland, he has already appeared as an outsider of vague, seemingly extraterrestrial heritage. It is therefore appropriate that some writers, such as Philostratus, identify Palamedes as the grandson of Poseidon (*Her.* 25.25). Apparently homeless, Palamedes therefore embodies the liminal, implicitly aquatic space between homes:

> Wüst, who remarks that Palamedes is very weakly anchored in early legend, is inclined to agree with Curtius that he represents elements of Greek culture that were borrowed from the Phoenicians. He argues that the Greek tradition seems to connect him with the trading and seafaring peoples of the east. (Phillips 267)

So Palamedes comes to represent the sea for Odysseus. At Ithaca he is the Ionian whisking him off to Troy. Once there, he is the Aegean beckoning him to return home.

The sea is present in the very salt Odysseus sows instead of seed. From the moment he makes this choice, he is incessantly undermined by Palamedes. Odysseus has become impotent, no longer capable of fulfilling his patriarchal function of provider, neither at home, nor among his men. This motif of impotence has various echoes, not the least of which is in the name of the most valuable of Anius's daughters whom Palamedes seeks to procure where Odysseus has failed: Spermo—that is, "seed" (*Epit*. 3.10).

W. B. Stanford refers to Palamedes as "a kind of superfluous Prometheus in inventiveness and a superfluous Odysseus in his prudent counsels" (*Ulysses Theme* 257).[6]

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[6] Palamedes and Prometheus are alike beyond their both being martyred for their contributions in the way of culture. As principal provider for the troops (*pro*-, before +

Writers variously credit Palamedes as the inventor of dice, counting, several letters of the alphabet, wine-making, jokes, and an early forerunner of chess.[7] These are but the highlights of a career which may well have made even Benjamin Franklin blush. In one sense Palamedes anticipates the dramatic stock character of the *raisonneur*.[8] I would take this claim one step further to include the contemporary figure of the know-it-all, the nerdy gadget man. To use an example from popular culture, if the Greek army were the Goonies, Palamedes would most assuredly be Data.

Elsewhere, Phillips describes Palamedes as "the clever inventor, contriver, and teacher, so useful at the siege and otherwise a man of so amiable and exalted a character that he almost seems too good to live" (267). Evidently, Odysseus finds him superfluous as well. The Ithacan king's enmity grows until he conspires against his rival, and there are several versions of Palamedes's death at Odysseus's hands. Too good to live, indeed.

The Three Deaths of Palamedes

Hyginus's version of Palamedes's death is the most elaborate, in which Odysseus convinces Agamemnon to move their camp for a day, based on a dream he claims to have

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videre, to see), Palamedes echoes the "forethought" signified by Prometheus's own name. So does the eagle, which daily torments Prometheus on Mount Caucasus, appear in Penelope's dream as a symbol of Odysseus slaying the suitors (*Od*. 19.508-58).

[7] E. D. Phillips provides a thoroughly-annotated catalogue of the inventions attributed to Palamedes (270-72).

[8] I would like to acknowledge Dr. Murray Brown for bringing this comparison to my attention.

had. Odysseus then buries a sum of gold under the former site of Palamedes's tent, compels a Phrygian prisoner to draft a letter, sends a second prisoner to kill the first, then reveals the letter, "From Priam to Palamedes," promising the same amount of gold now under the latter's tent in exchange for his treason, which the army punishes by death (*Fab*. 105).[9] Apollodorus adds that the method was by stoning (*Epit*. 3.8). Ovid tells the story in essentially the same form, framed within a speech by Ajax (*Met.* 13.33-62).

Some variations notwithstanding, Hyginus and Ovid present the most popular version of Palamedes's death. Others are less subtle. Pausanias, for example, is quite succinct: "Palamedes, as I know from reading the epic poem *Cypria*, was drowned when he put out to catch fish, and his murderers were Diomedes and Odysseus." Pausanias then mentions a seemingly trivial detail: "Palamedes has no beard, but the others have" (10.31.2). I shall return to this observation later in the argument.

There remains one final version of Odysseus's murder of Palamedes. According to Dictys Cretensis, whom R. M. Frazer claims lived sometime between AD 66-250, Odysseus and Diomedes lead Palamedes to a well which they say contains gold. They then lower him down and hurl rocks upon him until, depending on their accuracy, he is

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[9] Hyginus's version contains one crucial internal inconsistency. When elsewhere crediting Palamedes among the Greek alphabet's inventors, he attributes "Π" and "Ψ" to the Sicilian Epicharmus (*Fab*. 277). However, as Epicharmus did not exist until the late sixth century BC, neither "Priam" nor "Palamedes," both of which begin with "Π," could have appeared in the letter in question. Susan Woodford's observation of "Telamedes" as a common alternate spelling may solve this orthographical quandary (168).

either stoned to death or buried alive. There is reason to suspect Agamemnon's inclusion in the plot, as Dictys writes that many wanted Palamedes to replace him as their commander-in-chief. Dictys even accounts for the murder by way of the following metastatic parenthesis: "(It is characteristic of human nature to yield to resentments and envy; one does not easily allow oneself to be surpassed by a better.)" (2.15). This detail of the well appears only in Dictys's account, which, as we shall soon see, is an utter forgery.

Dictys and Dares Go to Troy

Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrygius both purport that their respective histories of the Trojan War are firsthand accounts which therefore antedate Homer's. In Dares's *Fall of Troy*, which strays wildly from other reports, Palamedes is initially detained by illness and joins the Greeks later at Tenedos, an island near Troy. For several years he complains about the army's leadership until he stages a mutiny to which Agamemnon yields, and the Greeks elect Palamedes their commander-in-chief. He later kills Deiphobus and Sarpedon in battle before Paris kills him with an arrow to the neck.[10] Dares's report of Palamedes's sedition and illustrious career as leader of the Greek army realizes the idea latent in Dictys's version, in which Palamedes dies before he has an opportunity to replace Agamemnon.

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[10] Dares may have misappropriated this detail from Pseudo-Alcidamas's version in which Odysseus's incriminating letter is found hidden inside an arrow (qtd. in Woodford 165).

To usurp such an authority, Dictys and Dares capitalized on anti-Homeric currents already present. As Frazer notes, the first popular criticism against Homer concerned his portrayal of the gods as humanlike and his plots' reliance on the supernatural. Notably, Dares took his own name from a character in the *Iliad* to add to the veracity of his tale as an eyewitness account, thus using Homer's credibility against him (*Il*. 5.9). The second grievance against Homer concerned his having overlooked certain characters such as Palamedes (Frazer 5-6).

Later in the argument, I am going to be rather harsh and moralistic with regard to Dictys and Dares, but one should bear in mind that we do not always know what liberties other ancient writers took with their materials. The difference is that Dictys and Dares actually claimed to have been present during the war, and that they were caught. To their credit, it took critics nearly two millennia to discover the fraud. As we get more into the Odyssean spirit, we may perhaps applaud the success of their ruse.

For example, Philostratus's account is roughly contemporary with and every bit as fictitious as Dictys's and Dares's. As Stefan Merkle points out, Philostratus twice undermines the very basis of Dictys's account: "Protesilaus declares that Idomenus did not take part in the Trojan War (*Heroicus* 30); then we read (*Heroicus* 26.10) that the use of writing was unknown at that time. . . . Dictys maintained that he wrote his work in Phoenician letters and as Idomenus's official chronicler" (193-94). Philostratus even outright contradicts the *Cypria* when he refers to Palamedes's "soft beard . . . springing up with the promise of curls" (33.39). However, he merits more leniency insofar as he never claims to have been at Troy. Instead, he frames his version of Palamedes in the *Heroicus* as a story told by the ghost of Protesilaos, the first Greek soldier to die on the

Trojan campaign, who could nonetheless "observe the affairs of mortals" after his death (7.3).

For a similar reason, I would not include Dante in the company of Dictys and Dares, although his Ulysses is every bit as fictitious as their Palamedes. First of all, Dante's Ulysses is an infernal shade—a spirit akin to Protesilaos. Second, the nature of Dante's journey through the realms of the dead clearly places its center of credibility elsewhere. One's suspension of disbelief is contingent upon the *Commedia*'s very premise. Put another way, if Homer were George Lucas, one might be tempted to view these later writers as the countless novelists and graphic artists who have tackled the new adventures of Han and Chewie. One must nonetheless be careful not to fall into too much snobbery with regard to canonicity. These are not quite unauthorized "spin-offs" loosely based on Homer's original series. However, any considerations of the ways in which these later, apocryphal tales complement the Trojan War canon should take into account their inherent belatedness and contingency.

Philostratus Tests Occam's Razor

Philostratus's *Heroicus* provides perhaps the most detailed portrait of the antagonism between Palamedes and Odysseus, relating lengthy altercations between the two. One extraordinary scene depicts Palamedes, in the thick of battle, giving Achilles fighting lessons: "he resembled a lion tamer who calms and stirs up a well-bred lion, and he did these things without even giving way, but while hurling darts and being on guard against them, standing firm against shields, and pursuing warriors in close formation" (33.21). After Palamedes's murder by treason, which in Philostratus's account essentially

follows Hyginus's version, Odysseus has Agamemnon threaten to kill anyone who attempts to bury the body. The greater Ajax defies this edict, performs Palamedes's funeral rites, and refuses to rejoin the Greeks in battle—that is, until he sees how badly the Greeks are faring against the Trojans. Achilles's wrath and grief last much longer (33.31-36).

Dictys and Dares are not the only writers who attempt to account for Palamedes's omission from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Writers as early as Strabo had already begun to suspect that Palamedes was a creation of later poets wishing to elaborate on Homer's tales (8.6.2). Philostratus provides some particularly ingenious justifications for Palamedes's absence from Homer's narrative. In his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, devoted to the first-century AD Roman mystic, Philostratus describes his subject's encounter with Palamedes's reincarnation in India: "He is not our follower," Iarchus tells Apollonius, "but is like a lion, a reluctant captive, a prisoner who suspects us for taming and stroking him. This boy was once Palamedes at Troy, and his two greatest enemies are Odysseus and Homer, Odysseus for devising a scheme against him by which he was stoned to death, Homer for not thinking him worth a single line" (3.22.2). The lion tamer imagery recurs as in the *Heroicus*, but here Palamedes's reincarnation resents his captors for condescending to domesticate him as he had once bravely trained Achilles.

Later, Apollonius speaks of the time when he conjured Achilles, who allowed him five questions regarding the Trojan War, the last of which follows: "'How is it that Homer does not know about Palamedes, or if he does excises him from his account of you all?' 'If Palamedes did not come to Troy,' he replied, 'Troy did not exist either. But since that wisest and most warlike of heroes was killed by a ruse of Odysseus, Homer

does not bring him into his poem to avoid celebrating his crimes'" (4.16.6). With the above rhetorical formula, Philostratus thus makes Troy's historicity contingent on Palamedes's existence, assigning both the same level of reality, and rhetorically manipulates Palamedes's textual absence into evidence which bolsters the hero's historical stature and importance to the superlative degree.

In his *Heroicus*, Philostratus claims that Homer travelled to Ithaca to perform necromancy on Odysseus's ghost, who then agreed to tell him the entire story of the Trojan War on the sole condition that it contain absolutely no mention of Palamedes. The ghost claimed that it was soon to be judged in Hades and awaited its punishment by the Furies: "Palamedes is prosecuting me for his murder, and I know I'm guilty . . . but if men on earth do not think I did this to Palamedes, what happens here will not totally destroy me. So don't bring Palamedes to Troy or make him a soldier or say he was wise. For other poets will say so, but no one will believe them if you don't confirm it" (43.15; qtd. in Anderson 245). In this almost Faustian bargain, Philostratus makes Homer wholly complicit in the conspiracy to erase Palamedes from history.

The Three Lives of Palamedes

At this point it should be clear that Palamedes is a forbidden subject. I have arrived at three interpretive modes by which one may account for his existence as such. For the purposes of the following readings, I shall now leave behind the previous distinction regarding the Trojan War as either historical or mythological event. The question of Palamedes now concerns narrativity more than historicity.

According to the first mode, Palamedes was present all along as Odysseus's rival. One may even consider him as a double insofar as he stands in an antagonistic relation to Odysseus. According to this reading, Homer simply left him out of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* either because, as Philostratus claims, he wanted to be more judicious to Odysseus, or because Odysseus's ghost asked him nicely to do so. In any case, this first mode is easily the least compelling and hardly merits further comment.

The second interpretive mode exists on the premise that Palamedes was inserted into the narrative centuries later as a rival but also as an archetypal figure. Dana Ferrin Sutton points out that "[i]n the dramatic and rhetorical literature of the fifth century BC Palamedes was firmly established as a mythological archetype of the creative intellectual . . ." (112). Phillips corroborates this point and contextualizes Palamedes as "a general culture-hero, who is oddly sorted with the conventional warriors of the Trojan cycle." He further notes Palamedes's popularity among "dramatists and rhetoricians of democratic or progressive sympathies, to whom the general tone of the heroic world . . . seemed repellently barbarous" (271). This repulsion is central to understanding another function of Palamedes's character within this second mode—that of the vanishing mediator.[11]

In Slavoj Žižek's appropriation of the vanishing mediator from Fredric Jameson, the term signifies a way of bridging an ideological gap. "Once we are *within* a field of meaning," Žižek writes, "it is by definition impossible to adopt an external attitude toward it; there is no continuous passage from its outside to its inside—as Althusser put

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[11] I am indebted to Dr. Christopher Kocela for his suggestion that I apply this strand of Žižek's thought to Palamedes.

it, ideology has no outside" (*They Know Not* 203). However, Žižek applies this concept not to the transition from one ideology to another, nor from Hegelian thesis to antithesis, but to the origin of ideology itself: "[w]hat is necessarily foreclosed here—the 'forbidden' mediator which must vanish, become invisible, turn into a 'missing link,' if the reign of law is to be established—is of course the 'pathological' act of violence out of which 'civil constitution' grew . . ." (205-06). Civilization thus emerges as nature subject to Symbolic law.

This emergence of civilization is therefore wholly contingent upon Žižek's imperative that the mediator must vanish from cultural memory. It must, according to Žižek, "undergo a 'primordial repression' if the reign of law is to take hold." The mediator therefore occupies an "uncanny third domain . . . the abyss of absolute freedom: the pure Evil of a violence which is 'no longer' nature . . . and 'not yet' culture" (206). Insofar as Palamedes has been repressed within the collective consciousness of culture, he vanishes from its accounts accordingly. He has enabled the transition from a band of barbarous warriors to the intellectual culture typified by Athens centuries later. Put another way, perhaps Homer cannot refer to Palamedes because Palamedes is precisely what made a poet such as Homer possible. When later poets restored the "missing link" of Palamedes to the narrative, they mimetically reconstituted the violence of his removal from history (via repression) in Odysseus's physical removal of him from the narrative (via murder). This insertion of Palamedes is in fact doubly mimetic inasmuch as these authors implicitly—and in Dictys's and Dares's cases, explicitly—stake a priority over the precursor, Homer, just as Palamedes threatens to usurp Odysseus's paternal priority.

This discussion of repressed material is entirely in keeping with Palamedes as the purported inventor of jokes. First of all, one would hardly think that such a thing would have needed inventing. Laughter surely existed, but this distinction concerns the spontaneous solicitation of laughter through language. To borrow a Promethean corollary, if laughter were fire, the joke would be the match. However, the attribution of the joke to Palamedes belies a repressive mechanism similar to what Žižek describes above. Sigmund Freud, for example, refers to Kuno Fischer's observation that jokes "must bring forward something that is concealed or hidden" (qtd. in Freud 11). Freud goes on to note how the "repressive activity of civilization" prevents one's enjoyment through censorhip; however, "jokes provide a means of undoing the renunciation and retrieving what was lost" (120). Therefore, Palamedes, who represents the repressed link between nature and culture, becomes known as the inventor of the means whereby one may enjoy hitherto-repressed material.

One should note that, although Palamedes accomplishes more with this cleverness than Odysseus ever had, he is in reality merely preserving the status quo. He musters the men for the expedition to Troy, but once there, what does he really do? He keeps the men fed—no small feat, to be sure. He fills their idle hours, keeping them occupied with dice games and the alphabet, yet in the final analysis Palamedes does nothing to further the Greeks' progress. He merely keeps them alive, occupied. Such a role would especially befit the purported inventor of jokes.

Palamedes's accomplishments, both cultural and agricultural, are laudable; however, what is needed is not mere strategy of preservation, but of military ingenuity. Only in Odysseus's hands can this cleverness be turned to ends which, while too sinister

for pious Palamedes to stomach, nonetheless bring victory to the Greeks. Just as Palamedes hoists Odysseus by his own petard in invoking the oath of Tyndareus, so does Odysseus's masterstroke and *coup de grâce*, in Hyginus's version, entail using the very alphabet he has learned from Palamedes to forge the letter which seals Palamedes's fate.

According to the second interpretive mode, Palamedes was inserted into Odysseus's narrative much later. However, we now read Palamedes as part of that story. The story, insofar as it exists on the page and in one's cognitive process of reading it, contains Palamedes. The result entails something akin to textual time travel or the theater of the absurd. One envisions Odysseus, his sanity revealed at Ithaca, looking up incredulously at the stranger, asking, "Who are you?" "Palamedes." "Who is Palamedes?" "No one, but poets centuries from now will create and place me here. We are being read. I am in your story now. Get used to it." One could even imagine a more fanciful version in which Palamedes's incessant interpretation of their metatextual situation is what causes Odysseus to murder him.

The first two readings present Palamedes as Odysseus's double, a broad literary term which signifies, among other things, a certain mutual antagonism and mirroring. "Palamedes" does not exist as such until he is named by poets centuries later. However, as one reads their narratives which posit a separate existence for him, there emerges a third interpretive mode which construes a kind of *Doppelgänger* fantasy. Although not interchangeable with the double, the *Doppelgänger* nonetheless represents a specific kind of doubling. Within the psychoanalytic and literary paradigm of the *Doppelgänger*, Palamedes would be the same person as Odysseus. Palamedes would not objectively exist except in Odysseus's imagination. Palamedes, embodying both *ager* and *agere,* a

provider of sustenance and man of action, is the realized form of the hero which lies latent in Odysseus. He is not only "the Inventor" but, more important, the invented. I submit that Palamedes is the alter ego of Odysseus—an alias, a *nom de guerre*—in short, not only a double, but a *Doppelgänger*.

What's a *Doppelgänger*?

Although I intend to discuss the *Doppelgänger*[12] paradigm as it gradually unfurls throughout the argument, a few preliminary remarks may be useful here. The double is a broader term, and among its literary indicators are mirrors, shadows, and twins, to name but a few. Of course, a situation or plot may also be said to double or mirror a similar situation. The *Doppelgänger*—literally a "double-goer"—is a specific kind of double. Scholars typically credit Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann among the theme's founding fathers, but it also has precedents in the dramatic commonplace of plots involving mistaken identity and in the philosophical duality of body and soul.

Otto Rank's work on the subject remains seminal, exploring the theme in its psychoanalytic, literary, and anthropological modes. Harry Tucker, Jr., in his introduction to Rank's work, notes that the psychoanalytic contribution to the field illustrates that "the double-theme derived not so much from the authors' conscious fondness for describing preternatural situations (Hoffmann), or separate parts of their personalities (Jean Paul), as

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[12] I have retained the German (and therefore capitalized and italicized) spelling simply because I find it somewhat off-putting and because the signifier thus befits its signified with overtones which the English appropriation, "doppelganger," does not have.

from their unconscious impulse to lend imagery to a universal human problem—that of the relation of the self to the self" (xiv). With that understood, I shall nonetheless discuss each of the above authorial motives in turn and, later, illustrate the first two by way of Tyler Durden and Edward Hyde, respectively.

The Student of Prague serves as Rank's cinematic prototype and point of departure, and I base the following summary on his synopsis. In short, Balduin, a young student, sees his reflection step out of a mirror and walk into the world. It continues to haunt him at the most inopportune moments, specifically frustrating his romantic endeavors. Just as he is about to take his own life, his *Doppelgänger* reappears, and Balduin shoots him instead. The *Doppelgänger* promptly disappears, and Balduin looks down only to find that he has fatally shot himself (Rank 4-6).

This film provides a basic template for many *Doppelgänger* plots. Rank concisely contextualizes the underlying psychology when he observes

> a powerful consciousness of guilt which forces the hero no longer to accept the responsibility for certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another ego, a double, who . . . appears in other forms of the theme as a beneficient admonitor (e.g., *William Wilson*) who is directly addressed as the "conscience" of the person (e.g., Dorian Gray, etc.). As Freud has demonstrated, this awareness of guilt, having various sources, measures on the one hand the distance between the ego-ideal and the attained reality; on the other, it is nourished by a powerful fear of death and creates strong tendencies toward self-punishment, which also imply suicide. (76-77)

Rank's analysis is primarily Freudian; however, more recent critics, such as John T. Irwin, have supplemented this paradigm with a Lacanian one. I should therefore briefly differentiate between two key terms which will recur as my argument develops. I take Lacan's "ideal ego" to signify the idealized, unattainable, Imaginary self—the reflected self in Lacan's mirror stage.[13] I take the "ego-ideal" to mean that point within the superego from which one perceives oneself with repulsion, thus approximating the moral function of the conscience. Palamedes immediately establishes himself as both the specular embodiment of the unrealized hero latent in Odysseus (ideal ego) and the point from which Odysseus perceives himself with the paternal "No" (ego-ideal). At Ithaca, Odysseus acquiesces; at Troy, his refusal of Palamedes as superego entails nothing short of psychological patricide.

With these distinctions in mind, we may now set about testing this admittedly peculiar thesis. I shall begin on the semiotic level, investigating the linguistic origins of the doubles' names in relation to their shared history.

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[13] Throughout, I have observed the common practice of capitalization (i.e., "Imaginary," "Symbolic") when using Lacanian terminology. I should point out here that "Imaginary" primarily means "referring to images." I will, however, play on this meaning, especially with regard to "Imaginary friends" in the sense of "make-believe." Similarly, "Symbolic" refers to the realm of language, not necessarily to symbolism in the broader literary sense.

Some Names of Palamedes

Various etymologies of Palamedes's name refer either to his death—suggesting that he was named posthumously as a character, not at birth as a man—or to Odysseus himself. Tiresias foretells that Odysseus will only know a peaceful death when he has travelled far enough inland, with an oar in hand, to encounter men who do not know what the oar is (*Od*. 11.119-37; 23.264-84). However, we should consider this prophecy in light of one potential etymology of Palamedes's name: "*pala* was applied anciently . . . to the blade or broad part of an oar" ("Pala"). Similarly, the Latin *palma*, the "broad end or blade of an oar," derives from the Greek *palame* ("Palma"). Susan Woodford also notes an early tradition according to which Oeax sends word of his brother Palamedes's death to their father, Nauplius, by inscribing the news on an oar (166). Thus the oar, after which Palamedes may have been named, is inextricably involved with his death and its historical transmission. Perhaps Homer has thereby encrypted a second sense of Tiresias's prophecy—that Odysseus will never know rest until he has found men who have never heard of Palamedes. In a broader historical sense, such ignorance is precisely what Odysseus's ghost seeks to establish through Homer in Philostratus's account.

If one accepts the premise that Odysseus and Palamedes are the same person, then there are two other incidents worth mentioning with regard to anonymity. The first occurs when Odysseus tricks the Cyclops, Polyphemus, by identifying himself as "Nobody," so the other Cyclopes believe that Polyphemus has injured himself (*Od*. 9.366-67). This ruse is especially pointed insofar as "Nobody" bests Polyphemus, whose name signifies widespread fame—literally, "abounding in songs and legends" ("Πολύφημος"). More important is the hidden corollary to, and perhaps a compulsive repetition of, Odysseus's

encounter with his Imaginary *Doppelgänger*. The Cyclopes envision Polyphemus as we find *Fight Club*'s protagonist, who thinks that he is fighting Tyler Durden when he is really brawling with himself.[14]

The second instance concerning anonymity appears in Plato's *Republic*, when each soul in Hades must choose its next life. Odysseus's choice of identity entails a negation of identity:

> And it fell out that the soul of Odysseus drew the last lot of all and came to make its choice, and, from memory of its former toils having flung away ambition, went about for a long time in quest of the life of an ordinary citizen who minded his own business, and with difficulty found it lying in some corner disregarded by the others, and upon seeing it said that it would have done the same had it drawn the first lot, and chose it gladly. (10.620C)

Whereas Philostratus's Odysseus entreats Homer to avoid his soul's destruction by the Furies, Plato's embodies a poignant resignation. This is the last thing that Odysseus does before he drinks of the River Lethe, thereby forgetting his life as Odysseus and becoming another. He wishes to be a nobody.

H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, in their *Lexicon*, translate Palamedes's name as "the Inventor" ("Παλαμήδης"). Here one again finds a moniker which must have been assigned after the formation of an identity, not at birth. The related word, *παλάμη*, which may signify both "the palm of the hand, the hand" and, metaphorically, "cunning, art, a

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[14] I intend to address other parallels with *Fight Club* later in the argument.

device," complements the above meaning in the sense of invention as handiwork ("Παλάμη"). If we may gain anything from a translation of a translation, perhaps it is in the sense of Palamedes as "in-comer," both for its conveyance of textual intrusion and its connotation of phallic potency. As regards the latter portion of Palamedes's name, the suffix *-medes* is a common ending, shared, for example, by Odysseus's cohort Diomedes. It often indicates a measurement.

Palamedes's name implies not only invention but also guilt. A related entry sheds a sinister light on the root of our hero's name. *Παλάμη* relates to *πᾰλαμναῖος*—"one guilty of violence, a blood-guilty man, murderer"—and to an early form of the name "Alastor" (*αλάστωρ*), "the avenger of blood" ("Πᾰλαμναῖος"). At a glance, the attribution of such an epithet to guiltless Palamedes might appear absurd. However, Palamedes is the guilty one in that he instills guilt in the other. He is the projection of Odysseus's guilt.

Insofar as stoning is common to two of the three deaths of Palamedes, it should come as no surprise that yet another potential derivation of the first half of Palamedes's name is *pala*, a variant of the Latin *pila*, meaning a "pillar, pier, or mole of stone" ("Pile, *n*.," def. 3). This sense recalls the episode with Epipole as well as the revenge which Nauplius, Palamedes's father, exacts on the returning Greeks, lighting false beacons and causing them to crash on the stones.

What's an Odysseus?

Another batch of etymologies pertains not to Palamedes's death but to Odysseus himself. One such derivation involves the group including *palaestra* and *Palaemon.* Whether or not this etymology rings true, the image of the wrestler is apt, for it conveys

the struggle, the agon in which Odysseus is engaged.[15] Another example of this etymology's relevance concerns the encounter with Arnaeus, whom the other Ithacans call Irus—after Iris, messenger of Olympus—due to his unfailing readiness to run errands. Odysseus, his own errantry behind him, has returned to Ithaca, but has not yet fully disclosed himself. Irus provokes him into a fight, and before long a crowd of suitors has gathered to watch the spectacle. Homer provides a telling phrase which explains, in part, the motivation for the brawl. Of Irus, he writes, "He came now, and was for driving Odysseus from his own house" (*Od*. 18.7-8). In order to keep himself from being thus driven away, Odysseus must vanquish the errand boy, an aspect of his character with which, in light of his perennial wandering, he will risk being identified by later traditions. Homer describes the agon with Irus as a boxing match, but both Hyginus and Apollodorus indicate that it was a match not of boxing, but of wrestling (*Fab*. 126; *Epit*. 7.32).

Odysseus is specifically named at birth, yet the sense of his name foreshadows his encounter with Palamedes. From the outset of the *Odyssey*, Homer frequently uses Odysseus's name in the sense which means "man of pain" or "to will pain to."[16] The last play on Odysseus's name in the narrative relates the first such use chronologically—that is, the naming of the infant Odysseus by his maternal grandfather, Autolycus, "who excelled all men in thievery and oaths" (*Od*. 19.392). The original passage from Homer

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[15] Odysseus's knavish grandfather, Autolycus, first teaches Palaemon (better known as Hercules) how to wrestle (*Lib*. 2.6.3).

[16] *Od.* 1.62; 5.340, 423; 14.145-47; 19.275, 407-09.

goes as follows: "Inasmuch as I have come here as one that has willed pain to [*odyssamenos*] many, both men and women, over the fruitful earth, therefore let the name by which this child is named be Odysseus" (*Od*. 19.405-12). Although a seemingly trivial phrase, "the fruitful earth," in light of Odysseus's later salting of the fields at Ithaca, takes on a tone of unwitting prophetic irony. George Chapman's rendering, "the many feeding earth," further underscores this sense (19.568).

For *odyssamenos,* Liddel and Scott add "to be wroth against, to hate" ("Ὀδύσσομαι"). "In the most famous digression in literature," Fritz Senn elaborates, "Odysseus is named in what appears the most arbitrary and whimsical way, in almost Saussurean fashion, and yet the random signifier becomes potently ominous." However, Senn notes the double register which the signifier, "odyssamenos," bears when it becomes the signified of the new, "eponymous" signifier, "Odysseus." "Since grandfather Autolykos passing by at the birth happened to be 'odyssamenos,' the child was called, 'eponymously,' 'Odysseus.' The participle form 'odyssamenos' is either 'made angry' or else 'making angry' . . . [I]t suggests a man connected with wrath or odium, and it came to signify both a wrath inflicted and a wrath suffered" (28). This nominal duality thus enacts, at the level of the signifier, the subjective struggle central to Odysseus's character.

One need not be a strict structuralist to illustrate the pun's elusiveness. T. E. Lawrence, in a 1931 letter written "in great haste" to Bruce Rogers, raises the semiological stakes of Odysseus's name to some comedic effect:

> Palmer translated *Odyssamenos* (the pun-word) as "odious." I think there is no other English word which preserves even the shadow of a pun. The

> Greek word means grieved, angered, disgusted, peeved. Odious is not very close: it refers to the other men and women, and not to Autolycus; he was fed up with them, not they with him: at least he thought so. I have no doubt the disgust was mutual, myself: and so odious is rather good. But it does stretch things. Palmer says "since I come hither odious to many men and women . . . therefore Odysseus be his name." I should have said—"let his name be Odysseus, for their odiousness." Or better still "for the odiousness" or "in odiousness" (this is really pretty good).

Odysseus, *odyssamenos*'s namesake, embodies the word's fundamental ambivalence as active and passive—Odysseus, he who hates and is hated—a mutuality which implies duality, reflexivity. The syllogism is brief: Odysseus hates Palamedes. Palamedes is Odysseus. Therefore, Odysseus hates Odysseus. Put another way: Odysseus hates another; however, the other is Odysseus.

What is at work here is an externalization of an interior duality of guilt and guile, of will and wile. Odysseus, too clever for the war into which he is thrust, his sense of heroic duty ever at odds with his innovativeness, must come to terms with his ingenuity. "But once at the war," Joyce notes, "the conscientious objector became a jusqu'auboutist. When the others wanted to abandon the siege he insisted on staying till Troy should fall" (16). However, Odysseus cannot devote himself to the war until he accepts his having been unable to get himself out of it in the first place. Palamedes enables the objectification of a subjective struggle so that Odysseus can embrace the cleverness that failed him at Ithaca.

The Lone Wolf's Grandson

Having traced various etymologies of Palamedes's and Odysseus's names, we may now consider them in light of Odysseus's relation to his maternal grandfather, Autolycus.[17] The above readings of Odysseus's name are in close keeping with William Walter Merry's 1878 observation of "a double sense, as incurring and dealing out wrath"; however, as Stanford notes, this view would soon succumb to a strictly active reading ("Homeric Etymology" 209). Given Autolycus's duplicitous nature, his intentions are appropriately dubious. (One should not be surprised that his name means "lone wolf.") Stanford further points out that Odysseus seems to have been "doomed to cleverness at his birth," although "Autolycus meant [the name] primarily as a memorial of his own unpopularity" (*Ulysses Theme* 12). Intentions notwithstanding, Autolycus provides an indispensable context for much of Odysseus's career.

The episode with Dolon and Odysseus in *Iliad* 10 brings this genealogical significance to the fore. Stanford condenses the encounter as follows: "Dolon . . . set out by night from the Trojan camp to spy on the Greeks; was waylaid by Odysseus and Diomedes; was tricked by Odysseus's ambiguous words into believing that his life would be spared if he told them everything; and was immediately killed by Diomedes without any demur from Odysseus" (15). Just prior to this meeting, however, Odysseus dons a felt cap. More specifically, it is the felt cap that Autolycus had stolen years before and

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[17] Many of my remarks on this subject closely follow W. B. Stanford's excellent study in *The Ulysses Theme*.

which Odysseus indirectly inherits from him—the same felt cap which, in other versions, Odysseus dons just before first meeting Palamedes at Ithaca.[18]

Stanford cites a substantial list of passages in the *Iliad* which refer to Odysseus's expertise in devices, or *doloi* (13). He therefore notes the "irony . . . in Dolon's name—'Wily-man, son of Good-planner'; for this Wilyman was doomed to meet a wilier man in the grandson of that Autolycus whose name Homer had mentioned (perhaps with studied casualness) shortly before" (15). By now it should be clear that Homer, without mentioning Palamedes by name, nonetheless appears to make a veiled reference to Palamedes's story through the encounter with Dolon. In both incidents, Odysseus puts on the felt cap, deceives a man whose name contains the meaning of "a device" and whom he perceives as a Trojan spy— in Palamedes's case, by his own machination—and, in the company of Diomedes, has the man murdered.[19] In the episode with Dolon, the *Iliad* therefore presents a version of the entire Palamedes narrative in compressed form.

Ernest Jones, in his "Phantasy of the Reversal of Generations," contextualizes the grandfather within the Freudian Oedipal paradigm as follows: "*A* experiences . . . hostile

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[18] Lest one envision a kind of nondescript beanie, I should describe the cap itself. Homer refers to it as a helmet made of hide, lined with the teeth and tusks of a boar on the outside, with a felt lining on the inside (*Il*. 2. 260-65).

[19] Stanford's observation that "one cannot ignore the possibility that Palamedes really was a traitor in the original legend" is indispensable to any discussion of Palamedes (*Ulysses Theme* 84). However, I have found no evidence which would commend following this speculation through to its consequences.

impulses directed against his father *B*, and fears that his father will punish (*e.g.*, castrate) him for them in the appropriate talion manner. When *A* grows up, he fears to have a son, *C*, lest *C*, the unconscious equivalent of *B*, carry out this punishment on him." It is along these lines that Jones explains "the constant identification of grandson with grandfather; both are equally feared by the father, who has reason to dread their retaliation for his guilty wishes against them" (412). That Autolycus is Odysseus's maternal grandfather, of course, somewhat complicates Jones's Oedipal algebra. Furthermore, just as we have generally found Palamedes filling the paternal role, so Autolycus assumes the paternal function of naming his grandson, Odysseus. Seemingly paradoxically, Odysseus vanquishes the embodiment of "device"—i.e., Dolon and Palamedes—through the *doloi* of Autolycan wiliness. So too does Odysseus adopt his grandfather's wiliness in his later strategems which win the war. Nevertheless, Stanford repeatedly points out Odysseus's "constant effort to avoid Autolycan odium," which evokes an Oedipal struggle against the father, as opposed to the identification between grandfather and grandson (28).

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* provides an apt illustration of Odysseus's predicament. "I joke too much!" cries Willy Loman, berating himself in self-loathing for his craftiness which he knows to be symptomatic of his own ineffectuality. By the second act, an agricultural corollary conveys the salesman's existential anguish:

> WILLY, *anxiously:* Oh, I'd better hurry. I've got to get some seeds. . . . I've got to get some seeds, right away. Nothing's planted. I don't have a thing in the ground. (122)

Like Odysseus, Loman finds himself at odds with Autolycan odium and an impotence symbolized in agricultural terms, as with the salt-sown fields at Ithaca. Again one finds

Odysseus's struggle to resolve his interior duality—that is to embrace his Autolycan ingenuity without its attendant odium. By situating Palamedes—hitherto seen as the embodiment of this ingenuity in its negative, guilt-laden aspect—within Odysseus as part of his psyche, we may now progress to this study's inevitable next stage, in which we subtract Palamedes from the narrative altogether.

Odysseus Minus Palamedes

Consider the events, beginning at Ithaca, without Palamedes. Palamedes summons Odysseus to Troy; however, the summoning itself is in essence only the invocation of the oath of Tyndareus, Odysseus's idea. When Palamedes calls Odysseus's bluff at Ithaca, he is simply reminding Odysseus of the duty which Odysseus himself, by the oath, created. Therefore, in a sense, Odysseus summons Odysseus to Troy.

Provisioning the troops amid plague and paucity of resources, Odysseus envisions his failure. Addled with doubt, with no prospect of success in sight, he could not have kept the prophecies of Tiresias far from his thoughts. Facing twenty years as an exile, facing death by the hand of his own son, Odysseus finds his ingenuity put to the test. He musters resources for his men, but still there is that version of himself whom he has imagined as failing to provide what is necessary to survive. If such a depiction appears fanciful, one need only recall the straits in which he has left his fields and family at Ithaca. The fear is that what had been a voluntary failure at home may become an involuntary one at Troy.

As for that part of Odysseus which still yearns for hearth and home, would he not see this part of himself as a traitor to his own cause, a betrayer of his men and mission,

one who may as well have acted as a double agent with King Priam himself? This, too, is Palamedes. Thus the apparent and peculiar reversal occurs when Palamedes suggests that the fleet return home. This is Palamedes's fatal misstep, precisely the sign of weakness which Odysseus needs to exploit. Their original roles at Ithaca are now reversed, and the advantage is Odysseus's now as it had been Palamedes's then. At this point, Odysseus knows that he has his alter ego on the ropes. He must out-Palamedes Palamedes. Only then can Odysseus overtake him. By out-inventing the Inventor, Odysseus usurps his power. Having confronted the full scope of his cleverness and its implications, Odysseus vanquishes his weakness. Palamedes is no more.

Here one finds the relation of repetition compulsion to the "it was" of Friedrich Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which goes as follows:

> The will cannot will backwards; and that he cannot break time and time's covetousness, is the will's loneliest melancholy. . . . That time does not run backwards, that is his wrath; "that which was" is the name of the stone he cannot move. . . . This, indeed this alone, is what revenge is: the will's ill will against time and its "it was." (251-52)

So emerges a new understanding of Odysseus's name and its meanings: "to will pain to," "to be wroth against." At Ithaca, Palamedes exposes Odysseus as a traitor for his wish for home. The repetition at Troy, roles reversed, circumvents the linear movement of time and manifests itself through the symmetry of revenge.

This story has multiple endings—rather, it has multiple versions of the same ending. The *Cypria* finds Odysseus, repulsed at his having resorted to fishing as a means of providing sustenance for his men, which is, as Phillips notes, "usually reckoned an

undignified way for Homeric warriors to get food" (270). Odysseus glimpses his reflection in the water and, recoiling from his image, he banishes that specter, this Palamedes, to the bottom once and for all. Told another way, Odysseus sees Palamedes's face struggling beneath the water's surface. The drowning complete, Odysseus then sees Palamedes's' face sink from view and, once the waters calm from the deed, Palamedes's face is substituted by Odysseus's own reflection.

At Dictys's well, the last thing that Palamedes sees is either his own reflection in the water or the stones thrown down on him. The stones, as mentioned above, provide an etymological reflection insofar as *pala* may mean "stone." It is as though his own name is being hurled upon him.[20] Finally, to the extent that Palamedes is the corporealized ego-ideal of Odysseus, he even sees his reflection in his double's face when he is stoned by the Greek army for treason. These coincidences of literal and figurative reflections closely correspond to Jacques Lacan's mirror stage—that defining experience of one's own otherness—in which the subject is necessarily an infant.

Silence, Exile, Cunning

Lacan's subject in the mirror stage is implicitly unable to speak, and there is something literally unspeakable about Palamedes's tale. It is worth recalling that Philostratus depicts Odysseus's ghost as silencing Homer on the subject of Palamedes;

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[20] The same would apply to the drowning, had Odysseus used an oar as a weapon. One may also note this etymology's coincidence with Nietzsche's stone imagery above.

however, there is another layer to this theme of the tacit.[21] In all of the classical literature on Palamedes, excepting a handful of surviving play fragments and a few lines in Philostratus's *Heroicus*, he speaks not a single word. Moreover, these authors do not even attribute words to him indirectly. They speak of him only in terms of action. Dictys, for example, does not even dare to paraphrase Palamedes's diplomatic speech before Priam at the war's outset. It is a scene entirely of his own fabrication, yet synopsis is the most he will venture. He concludes the scene by stating that "Palamedes was making his points with marvelous eloquence, and there was a certain indescribable force in the moving tone of his speech," apparently content to leave the content of the speech to his readers' imaginations (6).

Dana Ferrin Sutton, discussing one such play fragment, notes that one "obvious problem facing a playwright writing a *Palamedes* would be posed by the protagonist's proverbial intelligence: how could such an intelligent man be caught so off guard by the wily Odysseus?" (116).[22] Sutton thus suggests that putting words in such a wise man's mouth would entail a kind of hubris. Stanford provides an alternative explanation of Palamedes's silence: "Shakespeare is said to have remarked that he had been compelled to have Mercutio killed off in *Romeo and Juliet* because the strain of keeping so exuberant a character alive would have been too exhausting. So the original conceivers of

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[21] Much of *Fight Club*, which I shall discuss shortly, is similarly predicated on silence. The first and second rules of fight club are that "you don't talk about fight club" (50).

[22] I should admit outright that my claim that Palamedes is Odysseus's alter ego both solves and circumvents this problem.

the Troy legend may have found it necessary to eliminate one of the rival Wily Lads" (*Ulysses Theme* 84). There is, in either case, a peculiar irony in thus silencing the reputed inventor of a substantial portion of the alphabet.

While teaching the soldiers the alphabet, Palamedes further establishes his paternal role as he shepherds each pupil, Odysseus included, into the Symbolic order. Only after Odysseus has run the gauntlet of the Imaginary phase of development, through his encounter with Palamedes as his specular double, can Odysseus properly enter the Symbolic realm of experience. "The condition of the passage from nature to culture," Žižek writes, "is thus an uncanny inner split of nature itself into nature as balanced circuit regulated by instincts and nature as 'unruliness' that has to be tamed by law." This "split" is precisely what occurs within Odysseus, prompting Palamedes's appearance. Žižek goes on to state that "[t]he ultimate 'vanishing mediator' between nature and culture is the death-drive as this derailed, denaturalized nature . . ." (*They Know Not* 206-07). We may now compare this concept to John T. Irwin's remarks on the double, namely that "[t]he ego loves the double as a copy of itself, but it simultaneously hates and fears the double because it is a copy with a difference—the double is the ego tinged with its own death" (90). Put another way, the encounter with the ego-ideal as a specular other underscores one's own alterity, one's status *qua* object, and thus one's own mortality.

To complete the ego's formation and enter the Symbolic order, Odysseus must differentiate the image from reality—the ego-ideal from the ego, Palamedes from himself. He must shatter the *eikon*, claim the reflection as himself; he must kill Palamedes. Palamedes's function as vanishing mediator is therefore double. In one sense, as alluded to earlier via Žižek, Palamedes functions as the intermediary which enables the

Greeks' transition from the warrior cult of natural barbarism to culture itself—that is, from the collective id to the formation of a cultural identity, an ego. In another sense, "Palamedes" is a kind of placeholder term between Odysseus the man and Odysseus the hero.

Maynard Mack describes one phase of heroic development in which "the hero tends to become his own antithesis." Mack claims that the tragic journey belongs to this phase, and the hero "will normally pass through a variety of mirroring situations. . . . Coriolanus, revolted from Rome and now its enemy, meets himself in Aufidius's embrace in Antium. Hamlet meets himself in Fortinbras as the latter marches to Poland, but does not see the likeness—only the differences" (178-80). It is difficult to say which is Odysseus's tragic journey. Perhaps it is his failed mission to Thrace, perhaps the one to Delos. In any case, the doubling of Hamlet and Fortinbras is especially apt. By the time Odysseus returns empty-handed to Troy, one can almost hear him thinking "O, from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!" (*Ham*. 4.4.65-66). The voyage marks the end of Odysseus's metamorphosis into himself. During the preceding time, beginning with the departure from Ithaca, Odysseus has become "his own antithesis." And "Palamedes" becomes a kind of password, a *shibboleth* for "Odysseus."

Odysseus and the Horse

From the point following Palamedes's murder, Odysseus is fully formed. No longer self-doubting, no longer seeking ways around the prophecy of twenty years away from home, he throws himself into the war effort. He embraces his exile. He has become the man of action, the Homeric hero. Having renounced his cleverness as an instrument

of his cowardice at Ithaca, he now reclaims that same cleverness as an instrument of his vengeance at Troy. Instead of a cleansing we have a dirtying of hands, so to speak, through a reversal—instead of a personal and divinely-willed catharsis, a situational, self-willed peripeteia. After Odysseus's partial castration—his actively rendering himself passive—he reasserts his priority to his double. His movement is from a passive—etymologically, "suffering"—enduring of the centripetal forces of circumstance that got him into the war to an active creation, a centrifugal willing of the circumstances that will get him out of it—not by fleeing the war, but by winning it. He concocts brilliant schemes: the heist of the Palladium, the mustering of Philoctetes, and most significantly, the Wooden Horse.

Consider this piece of ingenuity. Odysseus, now out of Palamedes's (which is to say, his own) shadow, does the unthinkable. He has his men pretend to return home. The very suggestion of such a thing would have been too tempting to Odysseus in his former, unrealized state. To convey the full range of implications here, I must briefly turn to Irwin's remarks:

> Thus, in doubling, the ego takes the embodiment of its own death as its object of sexual desire, and the murder of the double becomes a suicidal *liebestod,* an annihilating union in which the sexual instinct and the death instinct (both of which seek to restore an earlier state) fuse in the ultimate regressive act—the suicidal return to the womb, the sexual reentry into Mother Death. . . . (90-91)

There is a general tradition according to which one cannot kill one's *Doppelgänger* without simultaneously killing oneself. One stabs him in the heart, only to look down to

find the blade in one's own chest. However, after slaying Palamedes, Odysseus does not fall to the ground, battered by stones. Instead, he compels his men to repeat his original actions as part of the Wooden Horse stratagem.

The Greeks burn their tents, a destruction of their temporary *oikos* akin to Odysseus's salting the fields at his actual home in Ithaca. Under cover of night, they repair to Tenedos and await the lighting of the beacon, their signal to return to Troy (*Aen*. 2.254-56).[23] This detail is in a symmetrical relation to Dares's account, in which Palamedes, originally detained by illness, meets the rest of the army at Tenedos (17-18). This detail also doubles the scene at Lycomedes's court, where Odysseus had disguised himself and awaited the trumpet blast which would expose Achilles. Here the army, cloaked by darkness and the pretense of having fled, awaits the beacon on Achilles's grave (*Epit*. 5.15-19). Odysseus has the army repeat their initial approach, but it is a repetition-in-difference. This deliberately symmetrical repetition constitutes revenge against their collective "it was"—namely, the failure of the entire mission to date. They approach Troy afresh and, most importantly, without Palamedes.

Odysseus meanwhile enters the wooden womb of the horse which is symbolic of his death and, when he emerges from its belly, his rebirth.[24] Knowing the outcome, one may easily overlook the Greeks' vulnerability, as Stanford phrases it, "inside a wooden box, completely at the mercy of their foes if they should be discovered too soon" (85).

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[23] The beacon is among Palamedes's many purported inventions.

[24] Virgil repeatedly refers to the horse by variants of *uterus* (*Aen*. 2.20; 2.38; 2.58; 2.243; 2.258).

Stanford rightly brings attention to the fact that the Wooden Horse is itself a kind of glorified coffin. In this respect, one may note the correspondence with the uterine features of the well and the sea—two scenes of Palamedes's death. The theme of reentry is itself repeated and heightened when, after Sinon's convincing speech, the Trojans permit the horse within the city's walls. One would like to think that the horse had been wrought from the oars of the Greeks' ships, but that, perhaps, would be too perfect a correspondence. So too may it be worth noting one final derivation of Palamedes's name—"hand-measure"—that is, by linguistic coincidence, as one measures a horse.

Sinon to Trojans: Please Don't Throw Me in the Briarpatch!

The scene with Sinon entails a performative repetition of Palamedes's fate. Just as Odysseus has dictated Priam's letter to the Phrygian prisoner, so does he author the figurative script of Sinon's reenactment. He then has Sinon pretend to bear false witness against Odysseus and company, to pretend to act as a double agent for the Trojans. Not only does Sinon play the role of Palamedes, he refers to Palamedes outright. In fact, Palamedes functions as both Sinon's point of departure and primary point of reference. "If it chance that speech to your ears has brought some rumour of Palamedes," Sinon coyly begins, even adding the insidious parenthesis, "not unknown is the tale" (*Aen*. 2.81-91). By invoking Palamedes and his fate at Odysseus's hands, he convinces the Trojans that he feared for his life in Odysseus's company. He then adds, perhaps for symmetry's sake, a rhetorical flourish—that he was to be sacrificed so that the Greeks could leave Troy, just as they had sacrificed Iphigenia in order to get there. Sinon refers to the false witness borne against Palamedes in order to lend credibility to the false witness he is

bearing among the Trojans at that very moment. In fact, one could argue that the tale of Palamedes, albeit perhaps as a decoy, originates in precisely this moment of Sinon's speech.

It is easy to forget just how precarious the situation is as Sinon denounces Odysseus's actions to the Trojans. For all we know, depending on the acoustics and thickness of the wood, over the breath and thudding heartbeats of the men inside, Odysseus may well have been able to overhear Sinon's every word from within the Wooden Horse. It is also difficult to account for whether Sinon would have been aware of his extended audience.

Only then do the Trojans bring the horse within their walls. Sinon is so convincing, not even the outrage of Laocoön and Cassandra can dissuade them. Having heard Sinon's will to revenge the death of his friend, Palamedes, even under the constant threat of Odysseus, whom Sinon fears will take his life by similar means, the Trojans let their guard down. Sinon lights the ambush signal for the troops at Tenedos, Odysseus and company emerge from the horse, and, by the next day, Troy is in flames (*Aen*. 2.77-144).

"I Wish I Had an Evil Twin": Edward Hyde and Tyler Durden

Having reviewed the Trojan expedition with Palamedes subtracted from it, we may now turn to a closer study of his *Doppelgänger* status. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* may provide a familiar example by which to understand the present case. Henry Jekyll's alter ego, Edward Hyde, begins as a receptacle for the vices and sociopathic inclinations too intolerable for Jekyll's conscience. Recalling the mirror's initial reflection, Jekyll writes, "I saw for the first time

the appearance of Edward Hyde. . . . This, too, was myself" (51). Two factors complicate Jekyll's "I" here. It either refers to Jekyll's subjectivity as he recalls the event while writing the letter, or it alludes to some shred of Jekyll's consciousness which observes Hyde while simultaneously being Hyde. This same complication arises in the line, "Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde," in which it is unclear whether the shock occurs at the time of the act or only after he recalls it, having changed back to Jekyll (53).

Eventually these metamorphoses begin to occur independently of the drug: "Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde" (54). He soon feels compelled to choose between the two, noting that "Jekyll (who was composite) . . . had more than a father's interest; Hyde had more than a son's indifference." The sense in which Jekyll is "composite" is of great importance, and the song, "I Wish I Had an Evil Twin" by The Magnetic Fields, usefully illustrates this point.

Stephin Merritt sings of wishing for an "evil twin to do my will / to cull and conquer, cut and kill / just like I would / if I weren't good." The last lines' irony lies in the fact that part of the speaker obviously is not "good." Part of the speaker wants to perform these acts himself, which therefore makes him composite. The vicarious satisfaction is short-lived, however, as the speaker soon turns to violence: "he'd send the pretty ones to me / and they would think that I was he / I'd hurt them and I'd go scot free." The first-person pronoun is crucial here. The twin now functions as a kind of wrangler and, ultimately, as a scapegoat: "I'd get no blame and feel no shame / 'cause evil's not my cup of tea." He reassures himself that he is still "good," seemingly oblivious to the reversal that has occurred. In appropriating the twin's function, the

speaker thus becomes the twin. Merritt's speaker relates to Jekyll insofar as neither could have distilled a purely evil precipitate were that evil not present in the original composite.

As Hyde becomes the more exercised and developed part of the composite Jekyll, the latter marks a physical transition, "as though the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature, as though (when I wore that form) I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood." Jekyll suspects that "the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown, the power of voluntary change be forfeited, and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine" (55). Jekyll's prior sense of peaceful cohabitation now cedes to his acknowledgement of the split: "He, I say—I cannot say, I" (59). By the time he concludes his letter, on the verge of changing irrevocably into Hyde, he acquiesces, "God knows; I am careless"—which Katherine Linehan glosses as "indifferent"—"this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself" (62). By claiming the "son's indifference" which he had formerly attributed to Hyde, Jekyll thus confirms the paternal reversal which he had suspected, "that I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse" (55). He concludes his letter with the ominous implication that he will soon resume his double's form and die as Hyde.

Whereas Jekyll and Hyde share the same body, Palamedes appears to Odysseus in separate corporeal form. Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* therefore provides a closer and more current template.[25] In the novel's recognition scene, the unnamed protagonist

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[25] David Fincher's 1999 film adaptation complements the novel with some scenes absent from the latter, and I shall indicate which version I am discussing as the need arises.

confronts his love interest, Marla Singer, only to learn that he has been the other, the double, all along: "I ask Marla what my name is. . . . Marla says, 'Tyler Durden'" (160). This name is a pseudonym, but the effect is the same insofar as he has considered Tyler Durden another person until this point.

The protagonist—pseudonymously referred to as "Jack" in the film's commentary—first encounters his double aboard an airplane. In this scene, absent from the novel, Tyler exposes various illusions of airplane safety, alludes to homemade explosives, and tells Jack, "You have a kind of sick desperation in your laugh." Screenwriter Jim Uhls notes in his commentary that "until now Jack has the authority of the film because everything we experience is filtered through his commentary. . . . The other characters seem subordinate to him. So what actually needed to happen here was Tyler had to become superior to him as a character." To establish this superiority, he has Jack compliment Tyler as "by far the most interesting single-serving friend I've ever met," only to have Tyler dismiss his explanation of the term: "Oh, I get it. It's very clever. How's that working out for you? . . . Being clever." "That was an attempt to transfer the power," Uhls explains. Palahniuk, within the same commentary, observes how Tyler's response "completely trivializes and mitigates everything that Jack does well. . . . It undermines Jack's own value of his own cleverness. It's been sort of thrown in his face." This undermining of cleverness, one should note, is precisely how Palamedes asserts dominance over Odysseus in their initial meeting at Ithaca. The exchange which immediately follows between Jack and Tyler is also worth examining for its illustration of the characters' power dynamic. Tyler rises from his seat, saying, "Now a question of etiquette as I pass. Do I give you the ass or the crotch?" Tyler gives Jack

"the ass," thus providing him with the illusion that Jack is still in the dominant position. However, when he gives a nearby stewardess "the crotch" seconds later, he nonetheless displays his virility as a threat.

Tyler Durden is a specular double, an imaginary friend of sorts, presumably brought on by the protagonist's insomnia. As Andrew J. Webber notes, "the *Doppelgänger* is above all a figure of visual compulsion. . . . In the visual field the autoscopic, or self-seeing, subject beholds its other self as another, as visual object, or alternatively is beheld as object by its other self." Webber therefore concludes that "the subject may not so much have as actually *be* the *Doppelgänger* by seeing itself. This visual double-bind provides the model for the general divisive objectification of the subject in the case of the *Doppelgänger*" (3). This phenomenological distinction provides one way of understanding Palahniuk's doubling paradigm. "'There isn't a me and a you, anymore," Tyler says, and he pinches the end of my nose. 'I think you've figured that out.'" This patronizing, "got your nose" comedic bit contradictorily indicates two separate bodies, as Tyler immediately states, "We both use the same body, but at different times" (164). He further explains that, within this confrontation scene, the protagonist is dreaming.

Sleeping and dreaming are central to the protagonist's relation to his double. "When I fall asleep, I don't really sleep," he says (173). Tyler is more specific: "We're not two separate men. Long story short, when you're awake, you have the control, and you can call yourself anything you want, but the second you fall asleep, I take over, and you become Tyler Durden" (167). So far we have what appears to be a kind of sleepwalking scenario: "Tyler is a projection. He's a disassociative personality disorder.

A psychogenic fugue state" (sic, 168). According to the above explanation, no sooner does the protagonist fall asleep than he awakens as Tyler Durden. In this respect, falling asleep would be equivalent to Hyde's taking the drug. However, one should recall that the first case in which Jekyll involuntarily becomes Hyde also involves sleep: "I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde." Whereas Jekyll presumably means that he has slept for a time and awoken *as* Hyde, it appears in *Fight Club* that the protagonist, by the very act of falling asleep, awakens Tyler Durden. The metamorphosis appears to be immediate. Another difference is that the protagonist is unaware of being Tyler and still perceives him as a specular other. The trouble arises when Tyler tells the protagonist that he is dreaming.

First, if one double awakens when the other falls asleep, and the two share the same body, then one arrives at the impossible case in which the body simply never sleeps. Second, if the narrator is dreaming, then he is asleep. If he is asleep, then he would presumably experience this exchange as Tyler. We must therefore expand the paradigm to account for a more fluid, reciprocal model. However, the labyrinthine logistics in Palahniuk's novel are not necessarily crucial to its relation to Palamedes and Odysseus. The fundamental difference between Stevenson's model and Palahniuk's is that, some ambiguity notwithstanding, Jekyll never unequivocally sees Hyde as a figure physically separate from himself, whereas the protagonist firmly believes that Tyler is another person.

Jekyll's fear of becoming "incorporated" into his double is well put, for it expresses precisely this struggle of ownership over the body shared by the two consciousnesses. *Fight Club*'s protagonist gives voice to a similar fear: "Tyler Durden is

a separate personality I've created, and now he's threatening to take over my real life" (173). Just as Jekyll notes Hyde's gradual increase in physical stature, the protagonist acknowledges that "[e]very night that I go to bed earlier and earlier, Tyler will be in charge longer and longer" (174). The double is shedding its contingency.

Hyde, though not Jekyll's hallucination, is likewise brought on by an altered state of mind—chemically-induced, in this case. At this point, one should recall that Odysseus is feigning insanity the first time that he sees Palamedes. This point will likely raise some strenuous objections, namely that Odysseus is merely pretending, whereas Jekyll's and the *Fight Club* protagonist's altered states are authentic. However, Palamedes, who is merely Odysseus's hallucinated projection, is the one who reveals Odysseus's sanity. If Palamedes is not objectively present, then it is Odysseus who reminds himself of his sanity, an arguably impossible feat for a man who is actually insane.

Although there is not enough evidence to argue conclusively that Odysseus experiences a kind of temporary insanity which spawns Palamedes, the following logic remains dubious. Odysseus pretends to be mad, but then a fellow whom he has never seen before appears and threatens his son, and he therefore stops. That the grandson of Autolycus was outwitted by a stranger should provide cause for suspicion. However, empiricism and objectivity cannot mitigate the epistemological paradox inherent in one's evaluation of one's own sanity. Compare this incident to *Fight Club*, in which the protagonist thinks that he is simply down on his luck with insomnia and good old-fashioned *ennui*, but then this marvelous stranger appears and offers him a place to stay, so all is well. Whereas the scene at Ithaca is implausible because it entails the outwitting of the Greeks' best wit, the scenario in *Fight Club* appears too good to be true and too

naïve of the jaded protagonist to accept at face value. Given these corollaries, it is difficult to ignore the possibility that Odysseus's madness is genuine.

The doubling between Palamedes and Odysseus therefore relies on neither sleep nor narcotics. The period simply begins when Odysseus "feigns" madness at Ithaca and ends with his murder of Palamedes. Odysseus, though not physically asleep, nonetheless lies figuratively dormant during this period. This is Odysseus between the salting at Ithaca and the slaying of Palamedes at Troy—Odysseus, possessing neither cleverness nor heroism, inert as the ships at Aulis, a ship without an oar. "One self does what the other self can't," Karl Miller writes. "One self is meek while the other is fierce. One self stays while the other runs away" (416). So Odysseus kills Palamedes not to vanquish the cleverness he embodies, but to reclaim it, to reincorporate it back into himself. Palamedes has indeed become superfluous—redundant, unnecessary to Odysseus.

Who Made Whom?

Jekyll's anxiety that he will be "overthrown" by his double is shared explicitly by *Fight Club*'s protagonist and implicitly by Odysseus. To incorporate another famous example, consider what Edgar Allan Poe's William Wilson says regarding his eponymous (and pseudonymous) double:

> Wilson's rebellion was to me a source of the greatest embarrassment; the more so as, in spite of the bravado with which in public I made a point of treating him and his pretensions, I secretly felt that I feared him, and could not help thinking the equality which he maintained so easily with myself,

> a proof of his true superiority; since not to be overcome cost me a perpetual struggle. (431-32)

Thus there is a fear that the double, in revealing his superiority, will thereby claim paternal priority—that is, that the genuine article will become contingent, will become a copy of the double and, therefore, the double himself.[26] One may well ask: Who is whose foil? Why is Odysseus any more than a footnote in the epic of Palamedes? Odysseus ensures the response to these questions with the same act which preempts them, by killing Palamedes. That history is written by the victors is a familiar saw, but it is nonetheless thus that Odysseus gains authority and control of the discourse whereby he will be remembered.

The question of priority has fatal consequences in another famous case of doubling—Romulus and Remus in the founding of Rome. "Since the brothers were twins," Livy writes, "and respect for their age could not determine between them, it was agreed that the gods who had those places in their protection should choose by augury who should give the new city its name, who should govern it when built." After Remus receives an augury of six vultures, twice as many appear to Romulus. "Thereupon each was saluted king by his followers, the one party laying claim to the honour from priority, the other from the number of birds. They then engaged in a battle of words and, angry taunts leading to bloodshed, Remus was struck down in the affray (1.6.4-1.7.2). We should not be surprised that when the question of priority reaches an impasse, it cedes to

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[26] This fear of displacement is the same fear central to the debate on cloning, so prevalent in the mid-1990s.

one of posteriority—that is, which will survive the other. “Me first” becomes, by murder, “Me last.”[27]

The same reversal is at stake in the following exchange with Tyler Durden in *Fight Club*:

> Tyler is my hallucination.
>
> . . . Tyler says[,] “Maybe you're *my* schizophrenic hallucination.”
>
> I was here first.
>
> Tyler says, “Yeah, yeah, yeah, well let's just see who's here last.”
>
> This isn't real. This is a dream, and I'll wake up.
>
> “Then wake up.” (168)

Note particularly the absence of quotation marks where the protagonist is concerned. He is in dialogue with Tyler, yet his portion is narrated—that is, thought, not spoken. The protagonist’s half of the dialogue thus addresses the reader and Tyler simultaneously, subtly postulating the reader as the double. This point recalls the earlier, absurdist example in which, after being situated within the story by the reader, Palamedes is somehow aware of that reader as eavesdropper.

This question of priority is inexorably involved with that of paternity. Palamedes is Odysseus’s alter ego, but he is also the paternal force overseeing Odysseus’s heroic apprenticeship. This role is already established at Ithaca, particularly in light of Irwin’s remarks on Odysseus’s figurative, partial castration. To see this double as the father in

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[27] One should also note that the name of the slain double, Remus, coincidentally means “oar.” However, the implications of this coincidence fall outside the scope of my study.

the Oedipal triangle, one should also recall that it is Palamedes who first takes Odysseus from Ithaca, thus intervening between him and his wife, Penelope, and exposing her to the suitors' advances. We may thus account for the apparent ambiguity concerning Odysseus and Palamedes, a reciprocity akin to Ernest Jones's fantasy of the reversal of generations. However, this triangulation is never fully stable. The two men are never quite interchangeable, nor are sources clear as to which is the elder. Pausanias refers to Palamedes as the only Greek soldier depicted without a beard. This could be evidence of his youth, but it may just as easily be a result of the hygienic practices he introduced before the plague.

These intimations of reciprocity are actualized in the medieval figure of Palomydes. Although his career contains strong parallels with Palamedes's, as second-best he appears more allied with Odysseus. All the while, Palomydes embodies the psychological dialectic of ambivalence between the two classical rivals.

"Palomydes, Palomydes!"

Call it confirmation bias perhaps, but after spending enough time with doubling, I have found that doubles begin to appear seemingly everywhere. Before long one subconsciously becomes a self-appointed Noah, pairing off anything in sight. In some cases, however, the corollary is so obvious, so glaring as to alleviate any doubt of superfluity, and Sir Thomas Malory's Palomydes presents precisely such a case. Insofar

as he functions both as Palamedes's intertextual double and as Tristram's double in the *Morte Darthur*, even the doubling here is doubled.[28]

Any discussion of the doubling between Sir Palomydes of Arthurian legend and Palamedes of the Trojan War requires immediate qualification.[29] First, there is little evidence of any connection beyond a merely nominal coincidence. Second, each character inhabits an ill-defined, liminal space which is neither wholly mythological nor historical. Even when one accepts the premise of the Trojan War's and King Arthur's historical veracity, Palamedes and his medieval counterpart, Palomydes, still appear suspiciously out of place. Neither figure quite belongs in his respective narrative in the first place. Alongside an Agamemnon, Palamedes seems a phantom—even were he not Odysseus's hallucination—just as Palomydes never achieves the same degree of historical authenticity as a Tristram. When Andrew J. Webber claims that "the *Doppelgänger* operates as a figure of displacement" and "characteristically appears out of place, in order to displace its host," he is referring specifically to doubles within the same textual space. One must therefore expand Webber's paradigm to account for a doubling which occurs across boundaries of textual transmission, history, and culture. "The *Doppelgänger*," Webber continues, "is also temporally out of place, appearing at the

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[28] Geoffrey Chaucer's Palamon in *The Knight's Tale*, who is based on Giovanni Boccaccio's Palemone in the *Teseida*, functions as a middle term in this progression. However, I have restricted my remarks to Malory's later representation of the figure.

[29] Although spellings vary among critics, I have retained these two versions of the names for the sake of clarity and consistency.

wrong time" (4). So it is with Palomydes, who appears roughly two millennia after the Homeric period. Following a survey of Palomydes's character and critical reception, I shall then trace a textual genealogy which may account for the unlikely appearance of this dubious classical figure's namesake in King Arthur's court. Finally, I shall resume the character study by linking the two characters through Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.

Sir Palomydes occupies a peculiar position in Arthurian legend. He is perhaps best known as Sir Tristram's foil in Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. Throughout their rivalry, in love and combat, Tristram repeatedly bests him. "When he fails," Bonnie Wheeler notes, "and he fails frequently, he turns in upon himself. He fills a crucial role in chivalric society, that of the runner-up or, perhaps more accurately, the almost-best" (68). Though hardly an outright failure, Palomydes nonetheless spends the majority of his career in his rival's shadow. However, this inward turn, noted by Wheeler, provides Palomydes with a heightened subjectivity unique in Malory's work. This superior degree of self-awareness is part of what makes Palomydes, in Kevin T. Grimm's words, "so central to [the tale's] thematic dialectic and so compelling to a modern, psychologically attuned aesthetic" (68-69). This singularity of character is primarily the result of his marginalization on cultural and religious grounds.

A Saracen, Palomydes is an outsider to the English chivalric world from the outset. "Few words," Wheeler observes, "are as good as the unstable term 'Saracen' for meaning any strictly 'Other.'" The location of Sarras is itself uncertain, "variously located by Arthurian writers—eleven miles from Jerusalem, or in Wales, or in Logres, or where the Saxons lived. . . . If Camelot is home," Wheeler concludes, "Sarras is away"

(69-70). “Saracen” is therefore a protean signifier of alterity which Donald L. Hoffman traces back to the original schism between descendants of Sarah and those of Hagar (43). As such, it has suited the exigencies of religiously-motivated antagonism ever since. Its very vagueness has ensured its fluid adaptability from epoch to epoch, ever resisting identification with a specific other. Regardless of the term’s denotation in antiquity, Jacqueline De Weever claims that for medieval writers “the Saracens were defined by what they were not: not Latin, not English, not French, not Christian” (6). However, she is also quick to situate the term within the military and political context of the Crusades, arguing that Malory’s readers would have understood the term as designating “a non-Christian enemy coming from a place outside the confines of Arthur’s empire” and “the implacable enemy of the Latin world” (7). Palomydes thus shares Palamedes’s vagueness of geographical origin, and both “appear out of place,” in the literal sense of Webber’s note on the *Doppelgänger*.

Palomydes’s textual provenance is likewise dubious. Maureen Fries points out that Palamède was a newly introduced character in the French prose *Tristan*, one of Malory’s probable sources. In this version, the rivals’ roles are somewhat reversed, with Tristan initially cast as the jealous one, believing that Palamède has already won Isode’s favor (Fries 95). Malory’s seemingly playful relation to his source material further complicates this reversal. As Roberta Davidson notes, “Malory’s much-cited ‘Freynshe booke’ (singular) is itself a fiction,” and his references to its authority usually introduce details altogether absent from that source and of his own invention entirely (138).

With his origins thus obscured, Palomydes provides Malory with a relatively blank slate onto which the author may project an outsider’s perspective on the narrative.

Palomydes voluntarily prolongs his status as an outsider when he vows to defer his baptism until after he has "done seven trewe bataylis for Jesus sake" (2.666). Wheeler notes this device's creation of suspense over whether Palomydes will survive as many fights. "Theologically," she elaborates, "the issue is strictly irrelevant, since Sir Palomydes is in effect already christened—not by water or by blood, but by desire" (71-72). One must nonetheless be careful not to account for Palomydes's deferral solely by authorial intention. Were Malory only concerned with creating suspense, why would he not have removed the very possibility of Palomydes's baptism at this narrative juncture? The answer cannot simply be that Malory has a tale to tell and knows it will be altogether stillborn should Palomydes receive immediate baptism. More significantly, why would Malory make Palomydes the obstacle to his own goal of salvation, preemptively sabotaging and neutralizing the very suspense Malory means to build?

One method of addressing these questions is by way of Palomydes's triangular relationship with Tristram and Isode. Hoffman thus accounts for the peculiarity of Palomydes's choice, despite its immediate context of the chivalric *topos* of vow-making. He claims that Palomydes "has decided that he must prove his worth to Christianity, just as the knight in a more traditional context fights to demonstrate his worth to his beloved." Hoffman counts this choice among Palomydes's "erroneous mistakes in interpretation" of his new culture (56). However, as we shall see, the psychology underlying Palomydes's conflation of Christianity with Isode contains various other implications worth exploring.

Whatever Palomydes's motivation for deferring his christening, it is his subsequent combat regimen, specifically his rivalry with Tristram, which frames his character's development. This rivalry shapes Palomydes's experience in fundamental

ways, frequently placing his character on the brink of complete dependence on and subordination to Tristram's. Olga Burakov Mongan assesses this rivalry as a triangulation in which Tristram mediates Palomydes's desire for Isode (75). Palomydes's pursuit of the unattainable Lady closely parallels his attitude toward baptism. During the very act of deferring his christening, Palomydes states, "I woll that ye all knowe that into this londe I cam to be crystynde, and in my harte I am crystynde, and crystynde woll I be" (2.666). It appears as though he views the actual sacrament as a mere formality, when in reality he is heightening its significance by creating the terms of its postponement.

Slavoj Žižek's Lacanian interpretation of courtly love provides a persuasive way of combining Palomydes's stances toward baptism and Isode. Žižek argues that the knight must create the obstacles between himself and his beloved; however, he clarifies that the knight does not "set up additional conventional hindrances in order to heighten the value of the object," as I stated above. Rather, these hindrances exist "*precisely to create the illusion that without them, the object would be directly accessible* [Žižek's emphasis]." On the one hand, Palomydes claims already to be christened in his heart; on the other, his deferral of his actual christening betrays his anxiety that the sacrament itself will do nothing to change his outsider status. By conflating baptism with attainment of the beloved—in this case, Isode—one may substitute Palomydes's impending christening with the unattainable "Lady-Thing," which Žižek claims is "originally empty: she functions as a kind of 'black hole' around which the subject's desire is structured" (94). He must therefore create a program of chivalric combat in order to postpone the empty sacrament which neither will nor can absolve him of his alterity within the chivalric milieu.

Once baptized, Palomydes disappears from the narrative in order to pursue yet another unattainable object. As Hoffman notes, he then "abandons the Quest for the Questing Beast, a mini-quest that seems little more than an allegory about the futility of questing. Thus he is no sooner assimilated into Camelot than he is erased . . . praised and neglected, Christian and forgotten" (58). Palomydes's anxieties regarding the ritual therefore prove well-founded. Prior to these events, however, he sets about the duels which he believes will make him worthy of his christening. During this process he substitutes the love of Isode as his goal.

Žižek identifies the courtly Lady with alterity itself. "This traumatic Otherness," he claims, "is what Lacan designates by means of the Freudian term *das Ding*, the Thing . . . the hard kernel that resists symbolization." One may therefore view Palomydes's love of Isode as a projection of his otherness onto her, just as Žižek argues that the "idealization of the Lady, her elevation to a spiritual, ethereal Ideal . . . is a narcissistic projection whose function is to render her traumatic dimension invisible" (90). For Palomydes, it is not merely a matter of investing the love-object with a spiritual dimension. Rather, he substitutes Isode for Christianity to such a degree that one wonders whether even he knows for which he is fighting. Moreover, he knows and states openly that he will never have Isode, "the causer of my worshyp" (2.781), as he tellingly co-opts the religious term for amatory usage.[30]

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[30] I would like to thank Dr. Scott Lightsey for calling my attention to the above phrase as a medieval commonplace. One should therefore be careful not to rely on its literal meaning as the sole evidence of the Lady's apotheosis.

Regarding the triangular relationship with Tristram and Isode, Mongan notes that the homosocial bond is privileged above the heterosexual one insofar as "the real source of strength and of emotional support for men lies in the fellow feelings of other men, rather than in their relationships with women" (79). Grimm, by comparison, perceives Palomydes's relation to Tristram in terms of a constant vacillation between love and envy. More precisely, he finds these two impulses simultaneously, as in the following scene in which jealous rage yields to tender admiration: "I wolde fyght with hym . . . and ease my harte uppon hym. And yet, to say the sothe, sir Trystram ys the jantyllyste knyght in thys worlde lyvynge" (2.529). Dorsey Armstrong notes a similar ambivalence in his postcolonial analysis of the *Morte Darthur*, claiming that Palomydes "both longs for and loathes the approval, recognition and acceptance of the colonizer. . . . [H]e wishes to be like Tristram, but desires simultaneously to destroy Tristram and what he represents because he knows he can never fully attain equal status with this knight of the Round Table" ("Postcolonial" 178). I find no contradiction among these three readings. The ambivalence noted by Armstrong and the vacillation between love and envy which Grimm observes both fit well within the homosocial bond which Mongan discusses.

Grimm claims that the salient case of this coincidence of emotion occurs when Palomydes calls Tristram a traitor after having lost to him in a tournament (69). This grave accusation is unacceptable among knights, yet it is both necessary and essential to an ideology which mandates combative striving within the very fraternity it fosters. Andrew Lynch similarly notes that the "contradictory career of Palamides perfectly displays the conflict between the competitive basis of chivalry and its myth of

collectivity" (109). Palomydes, as the runner-up, is thus in a unique position to interrogate the institution of chivalry within which he is so precariously placed.

It is in the scene at the well that Lynch locates Palomydes's moment of subjective revelation. Here the knight encounters his own reflection, notes his faded appearance, and acknowledges his failure. He swears by the savior he has deferred, performing a double invocation of his own name which only underscores its hollowness: "'Lorde Jesu, what may this meane?' seyde sir Palomydes. And thus he seyde to hymselff: 'A, Palomydes, Palomydes! Why arte thou thus defaded, and ever was wonte to be called one of the fayrest knyghtes of [the] worlde? Forsothe, I woll no more lyve this lyff, for I love that I may never gete nor recover'" (2.779). When Tristram arrives and accuses Palomydes of treason, adding insult to injury, Palomydes makes the same admission of defeat to his rival: "so had I nevir, nor never [am] lyke to have, and yet shall I love her to the uttermuste dayes of my lyff as well as ye" (2.781). Here and elsewhere Hoffman observes that Palomydes is "not quite 'in' on the rules" (51). However, Hoffman also argues that this exchange proves that Palomydes is "the only one to embrace the painful understanding of courtly love, the fact that fidelity is forever and is not compromised by opportunity or rejection. In this, he is far more a traditional courtly lover than his rival" (54). Thus Palomydes, precisely because he is the runner-up, is able to carry the project of courtly love to the absurd end of its logic.

In this crucial moment, Lynch claims that the "accumulated weight of his history opens for Palamides a subject-position that outgrows the narrative function hitherto provided for him. Now that he, as a character, breaks free, Tristram is left behind. They exist, for the moment, on different planes . . ." (129). Hoffman likewise writes of

Palomydes's collision with the chivalric ideology's glass ceiling (56). The ideology can no longer contain him in his newly realized and heightened subjective mode. This point is what enables Hoffman to identify Palomydes as "both the apogee and the futile finale of the Christian imperative of medieval chivalry"—not because his christening poses a threat, but because his inclusion among the other knights suddenly seems superfluous and beneath him (57). Palomydes, perennial outsider, has so penetrated the chivalric ethos as to transcend it altogether.

Palomydes's implicit relation to Palamedes is beginning to emerge in terms of character. However, before explicitly outlining that correspondence in full detail, I must first trace the latter's textual transmission through the medieval Troy narratives. Whereas Philostratus impugns Homer by implicating him in Palamedes's deliberate exclusion from the narrative, Dictys and Dares discredit the poet by including elaborate, albeit wholly fabricated accounts of Palamedes's exploits in their histories. Their shared claim to having witnessed the war firsthand, along with the anti-Homeric trend already in place, made their accounts the most trusted and followed sources for the medieval Troy story. Around AD 1160, Benoit de Sainte-Maure based his *Roman de Troie* upon the two authors' works. "His main source was Dares," Frazer notes, "but he also used Dictys, especially toward the end of his work where the former authority failed him" (3). There is, however, an exception to Frazer's claim.

According to Dictys, as noted earlier, Diomedes and Odysseus stone Palamedes to death in the well (2.15). In a slight variation of the versions told by Hyginus and Apollodorus, Dictys writes that Palamedes's father, Nauplius, avenges his son's death by lighting false beacons so that the returning Greeks would crash their ships against the

rocks. Oeax, Palamedes's brother, meanwhile exacts his revenge by falsely reporting to Clytemnestra and Aegiale that their husbands, Agamemnon and Diomedes, are to return with women whom they prefer to their wives. This deception results in Aegiale's barring Diomedes from entering the city and Clytemnestra's collusion with Aegisthus, with whom she had already been committing adultery, in the murder of Agamemnon (6.1-2).

Benoit's *Roman* tells the same story about Nauplius's and Oeax's revenge. There is only one problem: he also follows Dares in making Paris Palamedes's killer (18830-35). To include both plot threads, Benoit conflates the two sources and forms a third story of his own. He still tells the story of Palamedes's murder by Diomedes and Odysseus at the well; however, he frames it as a fiction told to Nauplius (27837-69). It is therefore with inadvertent irony that Benoit, in privileging Dares's account over Dictys's, presents the latter as a lie told within the former, when in fact he has merely created a new lie of his own. On the borrowed authority of two forgers, he manages in one fell swoop to discredit Apollodorus, Hyginus, and other more reputable sources who at least had the decency to provide a motive for inciting Nauplius's revenge. Benoit, in contrast, provides no reason why the Greeks would have told Nauplius the fiction that his son was betrayed and executed instead of the truth that he died heroically in battle.

Thus Benoit, like Philostratus's Homer, becomes inadvertently complicit in bearing false witness. Nevertheless, his *Roman*—and, therefore, the accounts of Dictys and Dares on which he based it—gained currency across Western Europe and was ultimately responsible for most medieval Trojan War narratives. Perhaps its most notable adaptor was Guido delle Colonne, whose *Historia Destructionis Troiae* constitutes an abridged paraphrase of the *Roman* (Frazer 4). Guido's work would then be translated—

that is, in medieval terms, appropriated—by John Lydgate, Malory's contemporary, in the *Troy Book*. Around the same time, John Gower likewise relates Nauplius's revenge in his *Confessio Amantis* (3.973-1066). Even William Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* was but an English rendering of a French translation of Guido's work (Frazer 5). Therefore the majority of Troy-related materials available to Malory would have indirectly stemmed from Dictys's and Dares's accounts.

In *The House of Fame*, Geoffrey Chaucer envisions "the gret Omer [Homer]; / And with him Dares and Tytus [Dictys] / Before, . . ." (1466-68). This enjambed indication of priority subtly privileges the two falsifiers over Homer, providing but one medieval example of the latter's fall from favor. In fact, E. Bagby Atwood points out that the Rawlinson *Excidium Troie* manuscript is "the only complete mediaeval account of the Trojan War completely independent of Dares and Dictys" (379). As Nathaniel E. Griffin notes, Perizonius definitively debunked the two forgeries in 1702; however, the European Troy tradition spent the intervening centuries "at the mercy of a lie" based almost solely upon these fraudulent reports (37-38).

To complete the peculiar textual connection between Palomydes and Palamedes we must return to France—c. 1190, a few decades after Benoit's work—to examine the prose *Tristan*. Renée L. Curtis persuasively argues that the *Tristan* was originally the work of Luce del Gast, who appears to have died while composing it (36). The work was then completed by Hélie de Borron, of whom almost nothing is known. Emmanuèle Baumgartner posits that Hélie more probably reworked Luce's completed text, the latter of which is now lost ("The Prose" 325). Nevertheless, Curtis's above view represents the consensus of Arthurian scholarship. The *Tristan* draws from various sources, such as the

works of Béroul and Thomas d'Angleterre; however, as H. R. Tedder and Michael Kerney attest, it was Hélie who first introduced the Saracen knight, Palamède (648).

Tedder and Kerney relate what little is known of Hélie. He was presumably a relative of Robert de Borron, author of the Grail story, *Joseph of Arimathea* (c.1170-80), and his work was done "at the request of a king of England, alleged to have been Henry II or Henry III" (645). Suspicion arose concerning whether this enigmatic author had merely borrowed Robert's surname in order to lend authority to his work—a practice which, one should note, would be much akin to the fraud perpetrated by Dictys and Dares a millennium beforehand. Referring to Hélie's later *Palamède*, which contains both *Meliadus* and *Guiron le Courtois*, Eilert Löseth notes a trend in which "editors, embarrassed by the mention of the false Hélie de Borron by whom the *Palamède* was so artlessly interpolated at 355, thought to set everything right by making the name Hélie disappear and attributing the interpolated portion, as well as the rest, to Rusticien . . ." (435; my translation).[31] Nevertheless, Patricia M. Gathercole notes the prevalent claim regarding Edward I—son of Henry III, for whom Hélie allegedly wrote—which may make editorial practices such as the one observed by Löseth irrelevant.

This view holds that in 1270, during the Crusades and just prior to his coronation, Edward I was passing through Sicily with Hélie's writings in tow. It was there that he met Rusticien and, like his father or grandfather before him, requested that he make a compilation—this time, of Hélie's work (408). The resultant *Roman de Roi Artus*

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[31] Rusticien de Pise (Rustichello da Pisa) would later meet Marco Polo in prison and become perhaps best known as the amanuensis for the latter's autobiography.

includes the interpolation from Hélie's *Palamède* to which Löseth refers. Therefore, if Rusticien's work was based on Hélie's, then attributing the latter's work to the former author solves nothing. In fact, such an attempt at redirected deference merely constitutes a deferral to a fraudulent authority once-removed.

The precise extent to which Malory incorporated Hélie's work is not central to this investigation. Davidson likewise warns against an overemphasis of Malory's work as translation, especially "when not only was he far from the first English writer to do so, but several of his sources were already in English" (138). What matters here is Palomydes and what could have prompted Hélie to insert him into Arthurian legend in the first place. Unfortunately, so little is known about this enigmatic author that it is impossible to say with any meaningful degree of certainty how one may account for the parallels between Palamedes and Palomydes. One may well argue that the coincidence is solely nominal—that is, perhaps Hélie simply liked the name and used it to add a veneer of antiquity to the character he was creating. To such objections I can provide no definitive refutation. Although the manuscripts' historical evidence regarding Hélie's work is hardly what one would wish, there are nonetheless enough coincidences shared by the two narratives to suggest a substantive connection.

First, there is the matter of the well in both stories. Fountains abound in Hélie's *Tristan*, and Baumgartner rightly notes their function as a kind of *locus amoenus* throughout the narrative ("*La Parole*" 195). However, *fontaine* may mean not only "fountain" but also "well." The former is symbolically phallic, the latter feminine. The *fontaine*'s double register of meaning thus corresponds to the reciprocity of displaced desire between Tristram and Palomydes with regard to Isode and each other.

As previously noted, Isode functions as a stand-in or surrogate for Palomydes's christening, which is itself less a religious event than a symbol of his acceptance and "worshyp" in chivalric society. Even the *fontaine* where Palomydes laments his lot serves as a secular parallel of the baptismal font which verges on parody. The ambitions of Hélie's Tristan are similarly constructed. "Rather than Isolt as object of desire for which Mark is mediator," Fries notes, "Tristan now has a new ambition—his longing for a seat at the Round Table, and a new mediator—its knights . . ." (93). So for Tristan, Palamède mediates his desire for Isode, while both merely cloak the fame which is his ultimate goal. In what seems a fit of displaced sexuality, Tristan defeats Palamède and wins Isode only to have an immediate affair with the wife of Palamède's brother. Regarding the prose *Tristan*, Fries notes that "new mediation weakens the original motifs," and the "ineffectiveness of old elements of the legend" may have caused Hélie to incorporate new characters such as Palamède (94-95). The well notwithstanding, there loom even deeper correspondences of which Hélie and Malory may not have even been aware—especially insofar as, if they knew of Palamedes at all, it was only via the accounts of Dictys, Dares, and their adaptors.

There is an apparent inconsistency between the classical and medieval stories insofar as there is no woman in triangulation with Palamedes and Odysseus.[32] Instead, as Fries notes with regard to Tristan and Palamède, the desire-object is a feminized renown—Fama, or Lady Fame—whose honor may only be had by one of the two rivals

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[32] Although I argued earlier that Palamedes acts as an interloper between Odysseus and Penelope, there is hardly the explicit romantic triangulation as in the medieval tale.

(93). It is for fame—in the sense of posteriority as posterity—that Odysseus kills Palamedes, for fame that Philostratus's apocryphal ghost of Odysseus forbids Homer's reporting of the crime. Palomydes likewise makes his lament in terms of renown: "I may never wyn worship where sir Trystram ys, for ever where he ys and I be, there gete I no worshyp" (2.529). This concern belies an anxiety with social status and station but also with how one will be remembered by posterity. Philostratus raises the stakes drastically by making Odysseus's reputation on earth responsible for the degree of his soul's destruction by the Furies in the hereafter.

Dhira Mahoney argues that the importance invested in objects associated with chivalric status signifies "that the primary motivation for action in the world of the *Morte Darthur* is the search for earthly glory, for 'worshyp' and a name." However, she notes, "'[w]orshyp' is more than reputation; it is a man's worth-ship, his self-worth, captured in his 'name,' or what is publicly known about him—the battles he has won, the knights he has defeated." Although I have compared "worship" to the classical concept of Fama, Mahoney rightly points out its separate semantic register which, as the *OED* indicates, derives from the Old English *weorð* + *-scipe* ("Worship").

Mahoney counts horses and armor among these "trappings" and indicates that "[w]hen Palomides falls 'oute of his wytt,' the mark of his changed state is that he has put his horse out to pasture . . ." (111). She also notes several similar examples in which abandoning one's horse signifies a certain discord or disavowal within the chivalric community. The above case of Palomydes clearly evokes the scene in which his classical counterpart first appears. Regardless of whether Odysseus is genuinely "oute of his wytt" or merely pretending, the yoking of two ill-matched animals and the desecration of the

field, in light of John Jones's remarks on the semantic range of *oikos*, both parallel Mahoney's claim.

In the well scene, Palomydes becomes so distraught that "he gate his swerde in hys honde and made many straunge sygnes and tokyns, and so thorow the rageynge he threw hys swerde in that fountayne" (2.528). Here is a symbolic "renunciation of the phallus," a throwing away of the phallic sword, akin to Odysseus's scene at Ithaca. Similarly, Phillips notes that, in Philostratus's *Heroicus*, Palamedes arrives at Troy "with neither followers nor a fleet as a proper Homeric chieftain should" (267). In Dares's version, Palamedes arrives with a fleet of thirty ships, but he claims to have been delayed by illness (18). Given these examples, one could argue that each figure may strategically feign weakness in turn. It is worth noting that, despite the various instances in which Palamedes bests Odysseus, this initial incident at Ithaca is cited as Odysseus's motive for murder in nearly all accounts. The irony is that, in exposing Odysseus's strength, Palamedes actually weakens Odysseus by asserting dominance over him. Having seen through the inauthentic renunciation, Palamedes enacts the very psychological castration that Odysseus had feigned.

In Malory's depiction of Palomydes's despair after his loss at a tournament, Armstrong notes the mimesis inherent in the "inability of Palomides to articulate what he is feeling, paired with the more striking inability of the narrator to describe exactly the gestures he makes." Instead, Armstrong continues, Palomydes is "reduced to making bizarre gestures, unable to verbalize his anguished position." He thus regresses to a kind of infantile state. Armstrong takes "Malory's inability to find words to describe an experience each knight has" as indicative of Palomydes's defining difference as a

Saracen ("The (Non-)" 31). However, Palomydes's speechlessness also presents an acute case of Palamedes's silence throughout the narrative in terms of Lacan's mirror stage.

Palomydes thus regresses to the infantile, Imaginary stage of development just prior to his revelation of subjectivity at the well, and he understands himself precisely by way of his otherness as seen in the image. However, instead of the usual experience of seeing the image of the unattainable ideal-ego, he encounters the ego-ideal, that point within the superego from which he perceives himself with repulsion. The elevated subjective position which Lynch attributes to Palomydes in this scene also entails a kind of death—specifically, of the knight's former subjectivity. It is therefore no coincidence that this revelation coincides with the confrontation of his mortality. Palomydes immediately vows that he "woll no more lyve this lyff," just as he tells Tristram shortly afterward, "I have as good wyll to dye as to lyve" (2.779-781). This despair quickly yields to aggression, in keeping with the psychological ambivalence previously discussed in terms of Grimm's and Armstrong's arguments.

Mongan, as noted previously, explains Palomydes's vacillation by way of the privileged homosocial bond among knights, and Irwin provides the logical extension. As also mentioned earlier, Irwin claims that "[t]he ego loves the double as a copy of itself, but it simultaneously hates and fears the double because it is a copy with a difference–the double is the ego tinged with its own death. Thus, in doubling, the ego takes the embodiment of its own death as its object of sexual desire, and the murder of the double becomes a suicidal *liebestod*. . . ." Now that the Lady-object and "worshyp" have revealed themselves as empty stand-ins for the Real, the subject's desire seeks fulfillment, as Irwin states the matter, in "an annihilating union in which the sexual

instinct and the death instinct (both of which seek to restore an earlier state) fuse in the ultimate regressive act—the suicidal return to the womb, the sexual reentry into Mother Death . . .” (90-91). The otherness which Palomydes intuits in his own reflection must therefore be projected onto the other, Tristram, in the form of an ambivalent desire which embodies both the death drive and narcissistic love.

In each version of Palamedes’s death, as noted earlier, one finds this same instance of the image’s reflection. Odysseus then enters the horse, in keeping with Irwin’s above remarks. He emerges reborn, wins the war, and sets about his long homeward wandering. Palomydes too wanders, seemingly vanishes in pursuit of the Questing Beast. Dante’s Ulysses (i.e., Odysseus), provides one final, extreme example of such a quest which is the subject of the following section.

For now it will suffice to observe that, paradoxically, the most compelling correspondences between Palomydes and Palamedes are also the least historically probable. This improbability exists insofar as many of the correspondences concern elements of the classical story absent from Dictys’s and Dares’s accounts and therefore unlikely to have factored into Malory’s probable source materials—namely, the prose *Tristan* and *Palamède*. Nevertheless, the parallels remain compelling enough to suggest that, were more historical evidence available, one could definitively prove an even more consistent link than I have outlined here between the Trojan War hero and the Arthurian knight.

The Mad Flight

There remains one final version of Odysseus which merits a place in this discussion of doubling, one which strays drastically from nearly all other accounts. Dante's Ulysses never returns to Ithaca. He and his crew make it as far as Circe's island, at which point Ulysses persuades his men to abandon their homeward journey and venture instead to the farthest reaches possible. I shall discuss this ill-starred voyage momentarily. First, I want to discuss which sin of Ulysses's is punished in the *Inferno*.

It is Virgil who explains to Dante that the twin flame contains Ulysses and Diomedes, and he accounts for their punishment as follows:

> And there, together in their flame, they grieve
> over the horse's fraud that caused a breach—
> the gate that let Rome's noble seed escape.
> There they regret the guile [*arte*] that makes the dead
> Deïdamia still lament Achilles;
> and there, for the Palladium, they pay. (*Inf*. 26.58-63)

The offense is therefore threefold: the horse, the mustering of Achilles, and the theft of the Palladium. We must now attempt to find the sin which unites these crimes. Scholars have traditionally classified this region of Dante's *Inferno* as the "Bolgia of the Fraudulent (or Evil) Counselors." However, Anna Hatcher argues that this designation is an egregious misnomer and points out that neither the horse nor the Palladium heist involves counseling of any kind (109-10).

David Thompson provides a literal reading of the above final line: "Ulysses and Diomedes are paying the penalty for the Palladium. Period. A trivial detail, perhaps—

unless we recall that *some one else stole the Palladium*" (sic). As Thompson indicates, Dictys and Dares claim that Antenor stole the Palladium, and in the medieval period these accounts had yet to be discredited. Guido delle Colonne, for example, retains the detail in his *Historia destructionis Troiae*, written in Dante's lifetime. According to this reading, Ulysses's counseling in the theft may only be inferred (150-51). Virgil attributes the theft to Ulysses as the "author of the crime [*scelerumque inventor Ulixes*]" (*Aen*. 2.164).[33] Thompson appears to presuppose that Dante would have privileged the accounts of Dictys and Dares, which certainly had currency at the time, over Virgil's. If so, then the pilgrim would presumably choose not to correct his guide as a matter of courtesy. However, Giuseppe Mazzotta notes precisely such a correction just six cantos earlier concerning "a debate on the origin of the name of Mantua, a city founded, as Virgil now affirms, by Manto, daughter of the Theban Tiresias. This statement contradicts the one Virgil himself made in the *Aeneid*." Mazzotta claims that Virgil thereby "places in question his own authority" (353). However, Dante's reaction confirms the opposite: "O master, that which you have spoken / convinces me and so compels my trust / that others' words would only be spent coals" (*Inf*. 20.100-02). This hardly sounds like someone who would privilege Dictys and Dares, regardless of their claim to temporal priority. In any case, the theft of the Palladium appears to have involved neither fraud nor counseling, and these other crimes are not going to discuss themselves.

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[33] I would be remiss not to point out the application of *inventor* to Ulysses in light of the previous etymological discussion of Palamedes's name.

This leaves us with the incident with Achilles at Scyros, which, Hatcher argues, also fails to qualify as fraudulent counsel. She goes on to note that readers have been so invested in maintaining the paradigm that they have mistakenly applied fraudulent counseling to Ulysses's final address to his men. However, she claims, insofar as Ulysses genuinely believes in the quest, this speech does not constitute such a sin, nor is it listed among his offenses. Hatcher then distinguishes between "the use of fraud in counseling" and "counseling the use of fraud" (111-13). James Truscott, who corroborates Hatcher's above points, states that false counsel "means simply *advice to use false promise*, and nothing else" (61). This reading applies primarily to Guido da Montefeltro in the following canto. The fact that Guido occupies the same bolgia as Ulysses, Hatcher argues, has caused readers to apply the sin retroactively to Ulysses (111). However, if according to Dante's schema the two must be punished for the same sin, then one must find a sin common not only to Ulysses's three offenses, but to Guido's case as well.

In explaining his tale to Virgil, Guido states that his "deeds were not / those of the lion but those of the fox." Although Hatcher admits to leaving the task of identifying the precise sin to another, she finds a point of departure in the above image. "Guido is in Hell because he was a fox," she posits. "And Ulysses is there for the same reason" (115). They are there for having perverted their God-given gifts of "exceptional sharpness of intellect and powers of invention." Here one finds a point of connection with Palamedes as "the Inventor," but it need not be belabored. I argued earlier that Palamedes functions as a missing link between the Greeks' barbaric warrior culture and the intellectual culture later typified by Athens. Stanford echoes Guido's animal imagery when he notes the latter culture's burgeoning hostility toward Odysseus: "by the end of the fifth century the

Homeric lion was transformed into a machiavellian fox, and . . . this fox in turn had become the scapegoat of the Athenians" (sic, *Ulysses Theme* 101). Hatcher concludes that Ulysses and Guido share their punishment for "fraud (foxiness, trickiness) unspecified except as the abuse of extraordinary talent" (116). I concur with Hatcher's analysis and wish to point out a few remaining semantic connections.

"The wiles and secret ways," Guido continues to Virgil, "I knew them all / and so employed their arts that my renown / had reached the very boundaries of earth" (*Inf.* 27.74-78). These lines rhetorically tether Guido to Ulysses. The "guile [*arte*]" to which Virgil attributes Deidamia's grief reappears as Guido's deceptive "arts [*arte*]." On an intertextual level, Allen Mandelbaum's translation of the *Odyssey* repeatedly applies Guido's word, "wiles," to Odysseus, as in the opening line: "Muse, tell me of the man of many wiles" (1.1). Mandelbaum's use of "wiles" in his *Inferno* translation thus ties Guido to Odysseus's Homeric incarnation. Finally, Guido's reference to the "boundaries of the earth" recalls the Pillars of Hercules, which Ulysses describes as the "boundary stones / that men might heed and never reach beyond" (26.108-09).

Although Ulysses's voyage constitutes an act of hubris in the *Inferno*, Hans Blumenberg notes a modern appropriation in which the quest functions as an emblem of empowerment. "The self-consciousness of the modern age," he claims, "found in the image of the Pillars of Hercules and their order, *Nec plus ultra* [No further], which Dante's Ulysses still understood (and disregarded) as meaning 'Man may not venture further here,' the symbol of its new beginning and of its claim directed against what had been valid until then." Blumenberg attributes this shift in meaning to a simple illustration. "On the title page of Bacon's *Instauratio magna* [*Great Renewal*] of 1620," he continues,

"Odysseus's ship was seen to appear behind the Pillars of Hercules, interpreted by this self-confident motto: *Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia* [Many will pass through and knowledge will be increased]" (*Legitimacy* 340).[34] Dante's Ulysses thus enjoys an affiliation with the Promethean archetype previously held only by Palamedes.

Whereas Prometheus and Palamedes became martyrs for humanity, Odysseus was considered the "scapegoat of the Athenians" in large part for his murder of Palamedes (*Ulysses Theme* 96). However, Blumenberg seems to argue that the illustration of Odysseus's ship beyond the Pillars of Hercules fixes Odysseus in the company of these great benefactors of mankind. Odysseus's defiance no longer constitutes hubris but a kind of heroic overreaching, the blazing of a trail for Bacon and all others whose "knowledge will be increased." This magnanimous depiction sounds suspiciously less like Odysseus and more like his double, Palamedes. I am not necessarily insisting that Ulysses relapses into being his alter ego on his last adventure. However, this is but the first in a series of examples in which Palamedes seems to lurk within Dante's textual presentation of Ulysses.[35] Before addressing Palamedes's implied textual presence in *Inferno* 26, I

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[34] I would like to acknowledge Dr. David Adams for having introduced me to Blumenberg's reading here (*Colonial Odysseys* 12).

[35] One may recall, for example, the relation of Palamedes's name to *pila*, "pillar," as well as its connection to Hercules's alias, Palaemon, whom Odysseus's grandfather taught to wrestle. Although these correspondences are hardly conclusive, they nonetheless contribute semiotic evidence of Palamedes's textual haunting of Odysseus's death at sea.

should first address his absence—for which it is nearly as difficult to account—and to investigate his absence, we shall begin with Diomedes's presence.

Dante places Diomedes, Ulysses's accomplice in two versions of Palamedes's murder, in the same flame as Ulysses. Virgil provides the explanation that "Within that flame, Ulysses / and Diomedes suffer; they, who went / as one to rage, now share one punishment," but this is as specific as the text gets (26.55-57). To describe any of their three listed crimes in terms of "rage [*ira*]" seems an odd choice. The original is as follows: "Là dentro si martira / Ulisse e Dïomede, e così insieme / a la vendetta vanno come a l'ira." First, one should note the added Promethean resonance of "si martira." Although Dante's portrayal of Ulysses is hardly sympathetic, this connotation of martyrdom suggests a dignity which the text denies him elsewhere. Second, the simile's construction is complicated by both objects' reliance on the verb, "vanno." Henry Longfellow's translation is more literal: "and thus together / They unto vengeance run as unto wrath." A clumsier version would be "they run unto vengeance as they ran unto wrath"—with "ran" in the imperfect tense, in the sense of "used to run"—yet Dante, in applying the present-tense "vanno" to both objects, semantically performs the ubiquity of the past in the infernal present.[36] Whether one reads *l'ira* as "rage" or "wrath," it certainly more befits murdering someone than suggesting the building of a horse, talking a boy into military service, or asking someone to steal a statue. If one refuses to accept

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[36] As a rhetorical device, the simile also serves a mimetic function in terms of the *contrapasso*, the concept whereby the punishment enacts some form of the crime upon the perpetrator.

Hatcher's argument against the "fraudulent counseling" paradigm, one should recall that every instance of Palamedes's murder involves Odysseus's lying. He falsely counsels Agamemnon to move the camp so that he can plant the gold, and he falsely counsels Palamedes to look for the treasure, whether in the water or the well.

Why, then, does Virgil not mention Palamedes? One waits for it with baited breath in vain. How does murder not trump all of the offenses listed? One must be careful not to conflate Virgil with Dante on this point, remembering that the latter is responsible for the words we are reading. However, the *Commedia*'s allusive network makes it abundantly clear that Dante knew Virgil's texts intimately. Insofar as Virgil's *Aeneid* relates Palamedes's story through the lying Sinon, it is possible that Dante assumed it to be another fiction. It would have been nonetheless possible for Virgil to believe it. By excluding Palamedes's murder from Virgil's list of Ulysses's crimes, Dante implies by omission that Virgil thought the story false as well. However, Dante also clearly knew Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which Ajax berates Ulysses for the murder of Palamedes, which makes Palamedes's exclusion from the canto all the more puzzling.

Whereas Tiresias had predicted for Odysseus a land so far inland that an oar would be unknown to its inhabitants, Dante's Ulysses charges his men to gain "experience of that which lies beyond / the sun, and of the world that is unpeopled"—that is, to travel to the limits of the sea (*Inf.* 26.116-17). I do not want to force the corollary with Palamedes as a symbol of the sea, nor do I wish to press the relation of Spermo and Ithacan sterility to the following agricultural image: "Consider well the seed [*semenza*] that gave you birth: / you were not made to live your lives as brutes, / but to be followers of worth and knowledge" (118-20). The above connections are admittedly tenuous. We

may, however, note a stronger affiliation with one of the functions of Žižek's vanishing mediator.

Mazzotta claims that in the above speech "Ulysses casts himself as the rhetorician who fashions moral life: an Orpheus or a civilizing agent who assuages the beast within and sees life as an educational process" (350). I argued earlier that Palamedes functions as a "civilizing agent," and Ulysses seems to be taking on a similar role in his address to his men. Prior to reiterating his speech, Ulysses expresses to Virgil his desire to experience "the vices and the worth of men" (99). This passing mention recalls the cases of Hyde and Durden, in which the *Doppelgänger* enables the vicarious gratification of vice. However, Ulysses wants to know the vices directly. Mazzotta is quick to point out that the quest is hardly ethical in nature (351). Rather, its object is, as Ulysses puts it in his address, "worth and knowledge." This is a telling substitution. Ulysses's private admission to Virgil—he appears unaware that the bard's companion is taking copious mental notes—concerns "vices and worth," while his public address to his men speaks of "worth and knowledge." Mandelbaum has translated both *valore* and *virtute* as "worth"; therefore Dante's structure is not entirely parallel. There is nonetheless the implied equation of "vice [*vizi*]" with "knowledge [*canoscenza*]," which, subtly—perhaps subconsciously on the speaker's part—betrays a significant misunderstanding by Ulysses, like mistaking philosophical knowledge with the carnal, Biblical variety.[37]

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[37] This point and the one which follows are really but gussied-up forms of the more familiar "street-smarts"/"book-smarts" binary.

"In effect," Mazzotta states, "by having Ulysses equate virtue and knowledge . . . Dante retrieves the fundamental error of Socratic thought: the illusory belief that to know a virtue is tantamount to having that virtue. . . . Ulysses attempts to travel the distance that separates words from facts and to fill those words with reality" (351). One may therefore view Ulysses's quest as an act of defiance against the Symbolic order as learned from Palamedes. "There is no necessary correspondence between *res* and *signa*," Mazzotta continues, "between things and their signs, nor is the sign a receptacle of reality" (352). Ulysses appears to be attempting to empty the signifier of its power, to castrate the word. Of course, we may note along with David Adams that "Dante's irony thoroughly undermines this attempt to contrast Greek seed, worth, and knowledge with brutishness, for immediately after reenacting this speech to his men, Ulysses informs Virgil and Dante of the brutal consequences of transgression" (27). As controller of the poem's discourse, Dante "undermines" Ulysses just as Tyler Durden undermines Jack on the airplane in *Fight Club*, just as Palamedes undermines Odysseus at Ithaca and elsewhere. The deed, it seems, cannot overpower the word; it may only attempt to circumvent it, and Ulysses's final voyage charts this doomed trajectory.

Ulysses's men take the rhetorical bait, and he describes their voyage to Virgil: "we / made wings of our oars in a wild flight [*de' facemmo ali al folle volo*]" (124-25). There are two things worth noting in this line. First, I believe that Mandelbaum has translated *folle* as "wild," and not as the more literal "mad," in order to mimic the original's triple fricative alliteration (*facemmo*, *folle*, *volo*) with the alliteration of "we," "wings," and "wild." To translate *folle volo* as "mad flight," however, immediately recalls Odysseus's madness at Ithaca, thus symmetrically bookending his life since the

war's outbreak. Second, there are but four tercets between the end of Ulysses's speech and the appearance of Mount Purgatory which portends his shipwreck (121-32). The first of these tercets simply relates his crew's excitement. The last two contain strictly astronomical imagery. Of these twelve total lines, the dominant image involves the figurative metamorphosis of oars into wings.

This choice of image, as with nearly every word of the *Commedia*, strikes me as deliberate. That Dante did not read Homer is of no importance here, although that blindspot does arguably forestall one's reading of this image as a parody of Tiresias' prophecy regarding the oar in the *Odyssey*. Nevertheless, a close reader of Virgil and Ovid, Dante would certainly have been familiar with Palamedes. It is more difficult to prove unequivocally that he had in mind the Latin etymology of *palame* as "oar" in this passage. However, the choice still appears to contain at least a veiled allusion to Ulysses's rival.

Finally, as the ship completes its final turn in the whirlpool, Ulysses states that "our prow plunged deep, as pleased an Other, / until the sea again closed—over us" (141-42). This phrase, "com' altrui piacque," reappears when Dante and Virgil arrive at the base of Mount Purgatory, implying that Dante's humility has succeeded where Ulysses's hubris failed (*Purg*. 1.133). Two variants of this formula appear in *Paradiso*: "As pleased my guide [*Come a lei piacque*]" (*Para*. 22.22) and "as pleased Him [*come i piacque*]" (*Para*. 29.17). The latter instance's English capitalization is appropriate insofar as Beatrice is clearly referring to God. However, the original spelling of "com' altrui piacque" is identical in *Inferno* 26 and *Purgatorio* 1. Mandelbaum's note—"[t]hat is, as God decreed"—clarifies that he is not suddenly adopting a Lacanian reading (382).

Reading the "Other" as God is certainly a valid choice, but the original Italian provides options which the translation perhaps precludes. For example, throughout this discussion we have come to know Palamedes as the very embodiment of alterity. Given the above textual clues, Palamedes therefore stands as a viable candidate as the referent for *altrui*.

With regard to Tiresias's prophecy of Odysseus and the oar, one should recall that he prescribed it as the means to assuage the wrath of Poseidon for the blinding of his son, Polyphemus the Cyclops. In the *Heroicus*, however, Philostratus discounts the Cyclops altogether, instead maintaining that "it was for Palamedes, who was his grandson, that Poseidon made the sea impossible for Odysseus to navigate . . ." (25.15). Rather than journey far enough inland to find men ignorant of oars, Dante's Ulysses ventures out to the middle of an aquatic nowhere—Poseidon's domain. Perhaps the sea god there exacts a grandfather's revenge, one enjoyed vicariously by the specter of Palamedes close by. Such a reading, in which Ulysses's murdered hallucination derives pleasure from its host's demise, would suggest the final gratification of the death drive as seen throughout the *Doppelgänger* paradigm.

To return to the remark from Borges with which this investigation began, we may say that Dante's Ulysses is a "verbal texture" consisting of about twenty-nine tercets. Within that text, however, one finds a virtual palimpsest containing traces of Palamedes's implied involvement in Ulysses's sin. He appears inscribed in Ulysses's story as much as in the words with which he tells it, suggesting that their fates are entwined even in death.

Conclusion

Most people only get one life, yet these thus merit many. We have seen Homer's Odysseus without Palamedes, others' Odysseus with Palamedes, and Odysseus again without Palamedes—that is, with Palamedes as a subjective, Imaginary presence, not an objective one. We have investigated a Trojan War hero who did not exist and how two second-century writers who also did not exist may have caused a twelfth-century writer who did not exist to include a man in King Arthur's court who did not exist but had the same name as the Trojan War hero. We have even seen Palamedes's implied presence at the watery grave of his rival, at the very ends of the earth.

Whether Odysseus died by the hand of Telegonus as did Apollodorus's, at sea beyond the Pillars of Hercules as did Dante's, or at a restful old age in keeping with Tiresias's prophecy, these ends depend on which tradition one believes. Yet one question remains, and one cannot help but wonder. When Odysseus did finally die, which face did the others find—his own, or the beardless face of Palamedes?

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