Notes for Dialogue 12
10/17/11
Scribe: Peter Hadar

Longing for a Hero

Words of the Day:

- Hora- “season, seasonality, the right time, the perfect time”
  - Related to Hera, similar
  - Heros-Heroes
- Pothos—“longing, yearning, desire”
- Thesis: People in song culture long for the seasonality (hora) that comes with a hero/goddess

Passage A: Philostratus On Heroes 2.6-3.6

- 3rd Century C.E. (from an era that is much later than the eras we have studied so far),
  gives away secrets of hero-cult
- Original guardedness about talking about heroes; considered taboo, primarily due to local nature of the phenomena
  - This is the reason hero-cult not spelled out in Iliad/Odyssey, but rather in Philostratus
- Passage deals with uninitiated Phoenician sailor (educated, non-Greek intellectual who doesn’t understand Greek religion) and an anonymous initiated Greek vinekeeper (like the show “Lost”).
  - Phoenician sailor stumbles upon a cult site of a hero
  - Shows how people relate to hero in daily life
  - Relate it to Iliad/Odyssey, preparing for Greek tragedy
- Pay attention to link of “right time” (hora) with beauty, and the tie-in of beauty to perfection
  - Beauty is the corpse, which serves to help community
    - Death is also most beautiful moment in life
  - Connection of hero to the varied (poikile) garden
    - Beauty is glory in variation, like flowers on Aphrodite’s robe in Sappho (metaphor for different experiences of love)
    - Poikile (variation) relates to wondrous works of humans as well
- Groundskeeper thinks of hero as living consciousness
  - Vinedresser says that hero Protesilaos lives there, farms together with him (gardening is sacred activity, sailing is unnatural).
Asks about anabiosis (resurrection), coming back to life

- Hero comes from Phthia region, similar to Achilles
- Had two resurrections: groundskeeper only understands one of them
  - Cult-hero system is competing with Christianity
  - Introduces concept of “faith,” belief in mysteries of hero, comparable to Christianity
- Hero exercises in beautiful garden
  - Beautiful naked hero exercise in beautiful nature vinedresser doesn’t use
    - Erotic, beautiful longing for perfect hero
      - Similar epiphany of married people turn in to gods in Sappho, same language
  - Secondary historical reading on website can supplement understanding of Philostratus
    - Ties in to Iliad and Odyssey
      - Multi-dimensionality of heroes

Passage B: Protesilaos in Iliad II 695-90

- Dead, but people long and desire erotically for him
- Pothos survives until modern day: Seferis (famous 20th century Greek poet, Nobel laureate) poem of Arnisi (denial)
  - On the secret beach/ white like a dove/ we thirsted at noon/ but the water was brackish/ on the beach, the blond beach/ we wrote down her name/ beautiful the way the sea breeze blew/ but the writing was extinguished/ with what heart, with what breath/ with what longings and with what passion/ we seized (or messed up) our life, got it wrong/ And we changed life
  - Orea (modern greek word for beautiful) is same word as hora, functioning as immediate beauty
  - In garden description, there was beautiful aroma of hero’s breath/flower’s blossom
  - Nice Greek music of Theodorakis:
    [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9IqV5SazpU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9IqV5SazpU)
- See torso sculpture of Apollo or young man (in ritual climax, can’t tell which one)
  - Rilke (secretary of Rodin) had poem “Archaic Torso of Apollo,” which inspired Seferis
  - Says that “You must change your life,” while Seferis says “we changed it”
- Tradition continues in Greek song culture today

Passage C: Philostratus On Heroes 9.1-3

- Talk of how nymphs created trees around a kolonos, part of a sema (tomb)
• Branches pointing toward Troy die, while trees that live on other side of tomb will prosper
  • Hero and sacred space connected through metonymy

Passage D: Philostratus *On Heroes* 51.12-1

• Tell uninitiated stranger (xenos) about story of Achilles
  • Reason why Acheans can no longer grow out hair
  • Desire to embrace hero by throwing themselves on sema
  • Stimulated by aroma of hero (breath of a flower)
• Philostratus spells out metonymy of sema and touching the hero, gives away secrets
• Achilles in Hellespont, a kolonos
  • Touching is like embracing him

Passage E: Philostratus *Heroikos* 53.8-1

• Offer garlands (on hair) to dead Achilles
• Hymns sung to Thetis
• Ties back to *Iliad* IX, such that Achilles has a kleos
  • There is a flower used in garland that does not wilt, still used in Greece today (used as a metonymy for dead person)
    ▪ Dry, has color, has smell, and used for ritual

Passage F, G, and H from *Iliad*

• Return to *Iliad*
  • Achilles talks about himself as a cult hero
    ▪ In passage F (*Iliad* II 232-244), Achilles talks about how people will miss him (pothe) and scepter will not sprout leaves again
    ▪ In passage G (*Iliad* XVII 687-69), Patrokles dies and best of Achaeans is considered dead
      • Longing (pothe) lasts forever
    ▪ In passage H (*Iliad* XIX 319-32), the lament of Achilles for Patrokles uses pothe (longing for his friend)
      • Death of Patrokles worse than if the father or son of Achilles had died
      • Achilles longing for himself, by longing for Patrokles

Akira Kurosawa Film Clip

• Longing for his youth, ties into pothos
• Child sees a cut-down orchard, realize some things will never come back (no more peach blossom festival)
• Boy longs for little girl, she has bell that is also tied to tree
• Peach trees are represented by choral ensemble who mock child until they realize he is worthy of seeing the blossoms one more time