In his *Memorabilia*, before saying that Socrates practised Greek religious rituals in full view of everyone, Xenophon asks himself: 'what evidence did they produce of that' (ποίῳ ποτ' ἐχρήσαντο τεκμηρίῳ) to say that Socrates 'did not recognize the gods of the city' (οὐκ ἐνόμιζεν οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεούς)? In the *Apology,* before declaring that he performs Greek rituals, Socrates says: 'One thing that I marvel at in Meletus, gentlemen, is what may be the basis of his assertion that I do not believe in the gods worshipped by the *polis*' (τοῦτο μὲν πρῶτον θαυμάζω Μελήτου, ὅτῳ ποτὲ γνοὺς λέγει ὡς ἐγὼ οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει θεοὺς οὐ νομίζω). These two sections of text form a key factor in Xenophon's argument: he has doubts about the proof, the τεκμήριον, which allowed us to suspect Socrates of not believing in the existence of the city's gods. Thus, by declaring that Socrates performed the Athenian religious ceremonies, Xenophon does not necessarily show a lack of interest in Socrates' beliefs: he simply demonstrates that the accusers lack the evidence to allege that Socrates did not believe in Athens' honoured gods. On the other hand, nothing says that, by emphasizing Socrates' active practice of religious rituals, Xenophon proves Socrates' innocence either, despite what Hendrick Versnel maintains. Xenophon simply says that the absence of Socrates' beliefs is impossible to prove.

In other words, nowhere does Xenophon confirm that ritual practice is the absolute proof of the acknowledgement of the gods. He merely states that given Socrates' active and visible performance of Athenian religious ceremonies, there can be no evidence of what we have accused him of. The absence of rituals could be evidence of non-recognition of the city's gods.[11] In the absence of the lack of rituals, there is no proof. Thus, according to Xenophon, it is difficult to prove that somebody so obviously devout does not believe in the gods, because the actions that he carries out are related in a sense to beliefs, including the existence of the city's gods. Therefore, these excerpts prove neither that only ritual had a place in Greek religious norms nor that Socrates was prosecuted merely for his acts, or rather for his lack of acts of worship.

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EURIPIDES, *CYCLOPS* 375–6

ΟΔ. ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω, δεῖν' ἰδὼν ἄντρων ἔσω 375
κοὐ πιστά, μύθοις εἰκότ' οὐδ' ἔργοις βροτῶν;

OD. O Zeus, what am I to say, when I've witnessed such terrible things inside the cave—things that are incredible, like stories but not like deeds of mortals?[1]

[11] Cf. J. Mikalson, *Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford, 2010), 168: 'Not to sacrifice to [the gods] is an act of ''lack of respect'', which indicates that one does not believe they exist.'

[1] The text is that of the lone manuscript and, punctuation aside, of all recent editions; the translation is that of Patrick O'Sullivan, in P. O'Sullivan and C. Collard (edd.), *Euripides Cyclops and Major Fragments of Greek Satyric Drama* (Oxford, 2013). I invite my readers to join me in thanking the

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Odysseus has just entered the acting area following the choral song, during which he witnessed the Cyclops butchering, cooking and then eating two of his companions. In these lines Odysseus seemingly presents himself as being at a loss for words (τί λέξω), and claims that what he witnessed inside the cave is not to be believed (οὐ πιστά). These are, of course, nothing more than rhetorical ploys, with frequent parallels in Euripides and elsewhere. When Odysseus says οὐ πιστά he means not that what he is about to recount lacks credibility—he does, after all, expect the satyrs (and the audience) to accept his account as reliable—but that it surpasses the bounds of ordinary human experience.[2] And the account that follows belies his apparent profession of being at a loss for words, since he is about to deliver what is in effect a messenger-speech of over fifty lines (382–436). Expressions of aphasia are common in Euripides, sometimes accompanied, as here, by lengthy exposition.[3] Characters use such expressions to indicate that the circumstances in which they find themselves are beyond the power of language to convey.[4] There is, therefore, something discordant in Odysseus immediately following his expression of aphasia by saying that what he has witnessed is 'like stories', especially when he is about to tell the story of the circumstances in which he finds himself. It is the purpose of this note to suggest that the words μύθοις εἰκότ' have been universally misunderstood, and that Odysseus is here saying something quite other than that the events in the cave have a greater resemblance to stories than to reality.

Let us begin with the words/deeds antithesis which features prominently in our passage (μύθοις … ἔργοις) and which is a favourite topos in the works of Euripides and his contemporaries.[5] The topos is more commonly conveyed using a form of λόγος, but there is considerable variety in the way in which the contrast between words and deeds is expressed, including use of μῦθος.[6] There are two ways in which Euripides employs the topos. The first, which may be categorized as contrastive, corresponds to what Adam Parry calls the 'popular' strand in the development of the antithesis, where a character is portrayed 'placing value on ἔργον as unquestioned reality, and condemning λόγος as some-

journal's anonymous referee, whose valuable comments have made significant improvements in both the substance and the readability of this note.

[2] Compare *Hec*. 689 (with δεινά in 693), *IT* 328, 796, 1293, *Hel*. 1520 (with δεινά in the previous line), Ar. *Pax* 131, *Av*. 416, 421–2. For a discussion of this type of locution, see the illuminating article by T.C.W. Stinton, '"Si credere dignum est": some expressions of disbelief in Euripides and others', *PCPhS* 22 (1976), 60–89 (= *Collected Papers on Greek Tragedy* [Oxford, 1990], 236–64).

[3] The noun ἀφασία is attested first in Euripides (*HF* 515, *Hel*. 549, *IA* 837); his use of it is parodied at Ar. *Thesm*. 904. Cf. *Heracl*. 535, *HF* 514, *Hel*. 483, 496, 564, 631, 656, *Ion* 1446, *IT* 777, 839, *Phoen*. 312.

[4] *Alc*. 1082 (μᾶλλον ἢ λέγω), *Hec*. 667 (μᾶλλον ἢ λέγω), *Suppl*. 844 (κρείσσον' ἢ λέξαι λόγῳ), *HF* 916 (οὐκ ἄν τις εἴποι), *IT* 837 (κρεῖσσον ἢ λόγοισιν), 840 (λόγου πρόσω), 900 (μύθων πέρα); cf. Ar. *Av*. 1706 (μείζω λόγου).

[5] For a survey of the topos down to the time of Euripides, see A.M. Parry, *Logos and Ergon in Thucydides* (New York, 1981; originally diss. Harvard, 1957), 15–57; for Euripides, see F. Solmsen, 'ὄνομα and πρᾶγμα in Euripides' *Helen*', *CR* 48 (1934), 119–21, and F. Egli, *Euripides im Kontext zeitgenössischer intellektueller Strömungen* (Leipzig, 2003), 214–16.

[6] μῦθος/ἔργον Hom. *Il*. 9.443, 19.242, [Aesch.] *PV* 1080–1, Soph. *OC* 1581–2, Eur. fr. 282.26 (*Autolycus*) Kannicht, *CGFP* 76.22–3 Austin (Cratinus?); ἔπος/ἔργον Hom. *Il*. 15.234, *Od*. 3.99, 4.163, 15.375, *Hymn. Hom. Cer*. 65, 117, 199, Heraclitus B1 DK, Aesch. *Pers*. 174, Soph. *El*. 622–3; ἔπος εἰπών/ἔρξας Hes. *Op*. 710; ὄνομα/ἔργον Eur. *Hipp*. 501–2, *Tro*. 1233, *Hel*. 792, *Or*. 454; γλῶσσα/ἔργον Soph. *Phil*. 99; ῥῆμα/ἔργον Soph. *OC* 873; λόγος/χείρ Soph. *OT* 883–4, Eur. *Phoen*. 313; λόγος/ὅπλα Eur. *Ion* 1298. For the various ways in which the antithesis is expressed by Thucydides (whose vocabulary admits τὸ μυθῶδες, 1.21.1 and 22.4, but not μῦθος), see Parry (n. 5), 11–14.

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thing purely delusive'.[7] Typical of this use of the antithesis is Admetus' characterization of his parents as friends in name alone, λόγῳ γὰρ ἦσαν οὐκ ἔργῳ φίλοι.[8] The second, and somewhat less frequent, way in which Euripides employs this topos is in what I would call the complexive use, that is, treating words and deeds not as antithetical but as embracing the range of human activity. We see this in Polyxena's injunction that Hecuba not obstruct her resolve by any means whatsoever, telling her mother: 'Place no obstacle in my way, (either) by speaking or by acting', σὺ δ' ἡμῖν μηδὲν ἐμποδὼν γένῃ λέγουσα μηδὲ δρῶσα (*Hec*. 372–3). Teiresias expresses himself similarly when he says that he used every means possible in trying to head off fratricidal civil war, ἀγὼ τί οὐ δρῶν, ποῖα δ' οὐ λέγων ἔπῃ; (*Phoen*. 878). Earlier in the same play Jocasta had sung about how she might express her joy at seeing her son in every way she can, καὶ χερσὶ καὶ λόγοισι (313). Similarly, the Argive herald in *Heraclidae* confidently claims that he is justified in using every means at his disposal to extradite the children of Heracles, δίκαι' ἁμαρτῇ δρᾶν τε καὶ λέγειν ἔχων (138). This mode of 'polar expression' is common in Greek literature from Homer onwards, and is so pervasive that it is occasionally used even when one of the two terms is strictly speaking inappropriate.[9] It is a means of strengthening an expression and increasing its emphasis by making the statement universal.

Which of these uses, then, is represented here in *Cyc.* 376? The contrastive use, which sets solid reality in opposition to the insubstantiality of mere words, seems inappropriate to Odysseus' apparent assertion that what he has in reality witnessed resembles words rather than deeds. Indeed, it would only serve to undermine the truthfulness of what he is about to relate.[10] I propose that this line has been consistently misunderstood by critics, and that we are dealing here with the complexive use of the topos. As it happens, the words μύθοις εἰκότ' οὐδ' ἔργοις βροτῶν are capable of two

[7] Parry (n. 5), 15, with discussion at 47–51. Compare D.J. Mastronarde (ed.), *Euripides Phoenissae* (Cambridge, 1994), 259, on *Phoen*. 389: 'this antithesis, found … frequently elsewhere in Eur. and Thuc., usually implies criticism of λόγος as insubstantial, insincere, or false.'

[8] *Alc.* 339. Other instances are frr. 97.3, 360.13, 528.2, 572.4–5, 727c.21, 898.5–6, *Hipp*. 501–2, *Andr*. 239, 264–5, *Suppl*. 908, *El*. 893, *Tro*. 1233, *Ion* 1298, *Hel*. 792, *Phoen*. 389, *Or.* 287, 454. The fragment from *Autolycus* referred to above (n. 6) is the exception that stands out; in it the unnamed speaker controversially condemns, in terms reminiscent of Xenophanes fr. 2 West, the universal practice of the Greeks, who honour athletes rather than the just and sensible man, 'who eradicates evil deeds by means of his words' (ὅστις τε μύθοις ἔργ' ἀπαλλάσσει κακά).

[9] See G.E.R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge, 1966), 90–4. Lloyd ([this note], 92) cites Hom. *Od*. 15.374–5 οὐ μείλιχόν ἐστιν ἀκοῦσαι οὔτ' ἔπος οὔτε τι ἔργον. Similar are Aesch. *Pers*. 173–4 μή σε δὶς φράσειν μήτ' ἔπος μήτ' ἔργον, Anaxagoras B7 DK μὴ εἰδέναι τὸ πλῆθος μήτε λόγῳ μήτε ἔργῳ, and Eur. *Heracl*. 537–8 τίς ἂν λέξειε γενναίους λόγους μᾶλλον, τίς ἂν δράσειεν (with τί λέξω preceding at 535).

[10] Some scholars have, indeed, advocated a sceptical 'metapoetic' reading of the line, in which the reality of the entire story is questioned, as Heracles seems to question stories like that concerning his own divine birth (*HF* 1346 ἀοιδῶν οἵδε δύστηνοι λόγοι); but in such a case there are no actual deeds to contrast with the words fabricated about them, so the topos is out of place. For such a reading of the line, see R. Lämmle, *Poetik des Satyrspiels* (Heidelberg, 2013), 336–7, R.A.S. Seaford, *Euripides Cyclops, Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford, 1984), ad loc. and R. Kassel, 'Bemerkungen zum Kyklops des Euripides', *RhM* 98 (1955), 279–86, who considers this line the clearest evidence (286) in support of his view (endorsed by M. Napolitano, *Euripide Ciclope* [Venice, 2003], ad loc. and Lämmle [this note]) that Euripides is using disruption of the dramatic illusion in order to present the epic accomplishments of Odysseus in an ironic light. This is, however, the only place Kassel can point to where the irony is put into the mouth of Odysseus himself. In any event, a metapoetic reference does not require a sceptical reading. Euripides can be seen as calling attention to the 'real' events that will only later be treated in the stories of poets like Euripides and Homer in the same way Homer himself presents Helen reflecting on the stories that poets will tell in future about her: Hom. *Il*. 6.357–8; cf. *Od*. 8.579–80, 24.196–202, *Hymn. Hom. Ap*. 299.

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very different constructions, only one of which, as far as I am aware, has been entertained. Patrick O'Sullivan's translation, quoted above, reflects the way in which the text has been universally understood.[11] In support of this understanding of the text recent editors refer to Denniston, *GP* 191, who cites this passage, along with other examples from Homer, Herodotus, tragedy and comedy, of 'οὐδέ for ἀλλ' οὐ, holding apart incompatibles'.[12] Elsewhere, however, Denniston himself supplies equally strong support for an alternative view, one that has not previously been recognized as applicable to *Cyc.* 376. For it is also possible to understand οὐδέ as negating both μύθοις and ἔργοις, so that what Odysseus is saying is 'things unparalleled in both the words and the deeds of mortals'.[13] In fact, one of the examples Denniston uses to illustrate this phenomenon is precisely the passage from *Hecuba* that we saw earlier as expressing the words/deeds antithesis in its complexive use (σὺ δ' ἡμῖν μηδὲν ἐμποδὼν γένῃ λέγουσα μηδὲ δρῶσα, 372–3). Denniston notes that in that instance 'the preceding negative … certainly makes the omission easier', and the same is perhaps the case with Pind. *Pyth.* 3.29–30, where we are told that no god or mortal circumvents the will of Apollo, (either) by actions or by designs, κλέπτει τέ μιν οὐ θεὸς οὐ βροτὸς ἔργοις [NB] οὔτε βουλαῖς. But other examples cited by Denniston (and in the works referred to in n. 13 here) have no negative preceding and, in any event, the force of the negative in οὐ πιστά at *Cyc.* 376 may be felt to carry over, inasmuch as εἰκότα modifies the (unexpressed) noun to which οὐ πιστά refers. The reason, then, why Odysseus speaks of the terrible events he witnessed as incredible is that they surpass the bounds of ordinary human experience, nor can he produce a parallel for them from any realm of human experience, either in word or in deed.[14]

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[11] The revision, by M. Griffith and G.W. Most (2013), of Arrowsmith's Chicago translation is freer, but reflects the same understanding: 'Unbelievable horrors, the kind of things men hear about in myths, not in real life.' (Arrowsmith's original translation [1956] was 'myths and plays'.) Similar are the Loeb translation by D. Kovacs (Cambridge, MA, 1994) and the translations into Italian by L. Paganelli (Bologna, 1991) and Napolitano (n. 10), into German by D. Ebener (Berlin, 1980) and into French by L. Méridier (Paris, 1925). This understanding is at least as venerable as the Latin translation by M. Aemilius Portus (*fabulis similia, non operibus hominum*), printed in W. Canter's edition of Euripides (Heidelberg, 1597).

[12] R.G. Ussher (Rome, 1978), W. Biehl (Leipzig, 1983), Seaford (n. 10). Denniston's reference to 'Crates *Fr.* 29 Dem.' is to fr. 1 (page 29) Demiańczuk; Soph. '*Fr.* 624' is presumably fr. 838 Radt. Hom. *Od.* 9.408, of which Denniston quotes only δόλῳ οὐδὲ βίηφιν, is a special case, as the context (ὦ φίλοι, Οὖτίς με κτείνει δόλῳ οὐδὲ βίηφιν) shows. In addition to *Cyc.* 376, Denniston cites two other examples from Euripides, frr. 87 (*Alcmeon*) γυναῖκες, ὁρμήθητε μηδ' ἀθυμία σχέθῃ τις ὑμᾶς and 418 (*Ino*) γίγνωσκε τἀνθρώπεια μηδ' ὑπερμέτρως ἄλγει.

[13] Denniston, *GP* 194 (οὐδέ; add *Hel.* 395, Theoc. *Id.* 11.28 and *Epigr.* 6.6) and 511 (οὔτε). This phenomenon, where the negative appears only with the second of two negated words, is widely attested in languages other than Greek; for examples from English, Italian, German, Old English, Old Norse and Old High German, see Kühner–Gerth II 291; O. Jespersen, *Negation in English and Other Languages* (Copenhagen, 1917), 108–9; J. Wackernagel (Engl. transl. D. Langslow), *Lectures on Syntax* (Oxford, 2009), 787–8. For French, see La Rochefoucauld's *Maxime* 26: 'Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement.'

[14] For the collocation 'incredible' and 'unspeakable', compare Ar. *Av.* 421–2 οὔτε λεκτὸν οὔτε πιστόν (paratragic; cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 875 οὐ τλητὸν οὐδὲ λεκτόν).

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