

## The Space Between a Wound and a Scar: The Negotiation of Heroic Identity in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*<sup>1</sup>

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THE CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS had a complex relationship with the writings of Homer. On the one hand, they were critical of ancient poets, viewing classical myths as inspired by demons and containing “shocking extravagances.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, they valued the ethics and pursuit of virtue found in Homer.<sup>3</sup> For example, Basil of Caesarea, quoting an unnamed source, writes, “all Homer’s poetry is a praise of virtue, and all he wrote, except what is secondary, bears to this end.”<sup>4</sup> For Basil, as for the other Cappadocians, wherever virtue is found, Christians ought to swarm like bees to honey and imitate the lives of

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1. I would like to thank Alison Frazier, Virginia Burrus, and Georgia Frank for their invaluable feedback on various drafts of this paper.

2. Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate*, 3: “[T]here are in them murder and eating of children, husband-murders, murders of mothers and brothers, incestuous unions, and every sort of disturbance of nature.” See also Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 39.3-7

3. Jaroslav Pelikan. *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 141-42; Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 243; Ernest L. Fortin, “Christianity and Hellenism in Basil the Great’s Address *Ad adolescentes*,” in *The Birthplace of Philosophic Christianity*, ed. Brian J. Benestad (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); Joseph Woodill, *Fellowship of Life: Virtue Ethics and Orthodox Christianity* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1998), 20; Karl Olav Sandnes, *The Challenge of Homer: School, Pagan Poets and Early Christianity* (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2009), 177-88.

4. Basil, *Ad adolescentes*, 5.6. Basil is likely quoting from Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 43.

good men.<sup>5</sup> In the eyes of the Cappadocians, Christian ethics and virtue shared a common ground with classical ethics and virtue.<sup>6</sup> Yet despite the commonality, the Cappadocians found Greek virtue and ethics lacking a distinct human *telos*. In contrast, Christianity marked “the true end of humanity” through its divine teleology.<sup>7</sup> Classical literature, then, was used as a model; the good things found therein—truth, honesty, justice, purity, beauty, piety, endurance—were used to think with.<sup>8</sup> Through the mediation of virtue, the Cappadocians found Christian truths in Homer and used them to produce distinctly Christian images.

Gregory of Nyssa provides a striking example of such an image in his *Life of Macrina*. Through a Homeric allusion, Gregory turns an Odyssean trope into a distinctly Christian one. The allusion occurs, as Georgia Frank argues, during the “postmortem episode” in which the nun, Vetiana, reveals a small scar on Macrina’s chest as Gregory prepares to dress his sister’s body for burial. Frank asserts that this scene, crucial for establishing a device for Gregory to recognize Macrina and “come to terms with her shifting identity . . . as sister, daughter, confessor, near-bride, near-angel, relief worker, martyr, monastic leader, and philosopher,” is meant to recall the recognition of Odysseus’s scar by his nurse, Eurycleia, in Book 19 of the *Odyssey*.<sup>9</sup> According to Frank, the two scenes share a common structure: “at the moment when the protagonist is presumed dead—or at least absent—a concealed scar is uncovered by an intimate subordinate. . . . What is important here is that members of the immediate family, whether a brother (Gregory) or a wife (Penelope), fail to notice the scar. Every character will eventually know the scar, but

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5. Woodill, *Fellowship of Life*, 22. Paraphrasing Basil, *Ad adolescentes*, 4.7-8. See also Sandnes, *Challenge of Homer*, 177, fn. 16. Sandnes states that in Basil’s view “imitation means to love the good examples and even to outdo the paradigms found in pagan poems.”

6. Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 142.

7. Woodill, *Fellowship of Life*, 20.

8. Gregory of Nyssa, *Canticum canticorum*, 15. Pelikan calls Gregory’s catalog of *aretai* a summary of the Cappadocians’ “Classical-Christian moral ideal.” Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 141

9. Georgia Frank, “Macrina’s Scar: Homeric Allusion and Heroic Identity in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Life of Macrina*,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 511-30; 528, doi: 10.1353/earl.2000.0063.

only through a slow process of identification.”<sup>10</sup> By casting Macrina in a Homeric trope, “the scar prepares the reader to accept her death as a homecoming” and indicates that “Macrina can be as manifold and elusive, in short, as *polutropos*, as long-suffering Odysseus.”<sup>11</sup>

I take Frank’s identification of the Homeric allusion as my starting point and accept her argument for the significance that the allusion bears on the *vita*. I aim, however, to carry the discussion a step further. I argue that the Homeric allusion extends even deeper into the *Life of Macrina* than previously recognized, stretching past the recognition scene to include the flashback detailing the origin of Macrina’s scar. This flashback closely mirrors the flashback that recounts the origin of Odysseus’s scar.<sup>12</sup> In her analysis, Frank acknowledges that both scars provide points of entry into the protagonists’ pasts via flashbacks, but does not suggest that Gregory carries the allusion beyond the recognition scene. Nevertheless, the significance of the flashback does not pass by her unnoticed. She comments that “the scar provides a digression on Odysseus’s name, his lineage, and heroic past. More than a cursory explanation, the poet plunges the audience into the hero’s past in order to encounter the visibility and palpability of each detail.”<sup>13</sup> Frank’s analysis is heavily indebted to Erich Auerbach’s essay, “Odysseus’ Scar,” in which he outlines the vibrancy of Homeric style in the recognition and flashback episodes.

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10. *Ibid.*, 517-18. Although Macrina is leaving the world and Odysseus is returning to his, Frank suggests that “the scar prepares the reader to accept [Macrina’s] death as a homecoming, thereby foreshadowing her final resting place next to her parents’ graves” (530).

11. *Ibid.*, 530. Although Frank sees a parallel, she admits that Macrina’s resemblance to Odysseus may seem tenuous. For example, Macrina’s scar, having the appearance of a mark (*στίγμα*), is referred to as a *σημείον*, a “distinctive mark,” “sign” or “miracle,” while Odysseus’s scar is referred to as a wound (*ούλή*). Moreover, Macrina’s scar is on a certain part (*μέρος*) of her chest, whereas Odysseus’s scar appears on his thigh (*μηρός*) (513). However, given the close resemblance between *μέρος* and *μηρός*, Frank posits that Gregory is making a pun, referring to the location of Macrina’s wound “with a circumlocution similar to the word for thigh” (517).

12. *Odyssey*, 19.392-466.

13. Frank, “Macrina’s Scar,” 519, referencing Erich Auerbach, “Odysseus’ Scar” in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953).

According to Auerbach, “Homeric style [is] to leave nothing which it mentions half in darkness and unexternalized.”<sup>14</sup> Consequently, in this particular instance, the scar cannot “appear out of the darkness of an unilluminated past; it must be set in full light.”<sup>15</sup> The story of the scar, then, is conveyed in typical Homeric fashion where there is never “a form left fragmentary or half-illuminated, never a lacuna, never a gap, never a glimpse of unplumbed depths.”<sup>16</sup> Frank suggests that Gregory’s style mirrors Homer’s visibility.<sup>17</sup> But despite Homer’s clear intent to “plunge the audience into Odysseus’s past” with a flashback—just as Gregory does concerning Macrina—Frank sees the “visibility” of the scarring narrative (flashback and all) as strictly related to the recognition scene. In her view, once Vetiana holds the lamp above Macrina’s scar, every detail becomes “illuminated” for Gregory—he can see (and understand) her virtues via this fixed point of her shifting identity.<sup>18</sup>

While the scar functions as a mark of heroic identity in and of itself, I think that there is more to this story. Gregory does not come to terms with Macrina’s heroic identity simply because the scar becomes a visible site of “locational memory,”<sup>19</sup> but also because Gregory negotiates and navigates the boundaries of his sister’s identity within the flashback scene itself, detailing for his audience (as Homer does for Odysseus) how Macrina earns her mettle.

The flashback scene in *Odyssey* 19 has commonly been read as Odysseus’s rite of passage, his transition from boy to hero.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, I

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14. Auerbach, “Odysseus’ Scar,” 5.

15. *Ibid.*, 6.

16. *Ibid.*, 6-7.

17. Frank, “Macrina’s Scar,” 519.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Frank, “Macrina’s Scar,” 528, referencing Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10-23, 81-83.

20. See, for instance, Nancy Felson Rubin and William Merritt Sale, “Meleager and Odysseus: A Structural and Cultural Study of the Greek Hunting-Maturation Myth,” *Arethusa* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 137-71; Joseph Russo, “*Odyssey* 19, 440-43, the Boar in the Bush: Formulaic Repetition and Narrative Innovation,” in *Tradizione e Innovazione della Cultura Greca da Omero all’eta Ellenistica: Scritti in onore di Bruno Gentili*, ed. Roberto Pretagostini, 3 vols (Rome: Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale,

contend that Gregory intends his audience to read a rite of passage in the *vita's* flashback narrative—a transition in which Macrina, like Odysseus, becomes a hero.<sup>21</sup> In the liminal period of both Macrina's and Odysseus's rites of passage—spaces in which they negotiate various boundaries in the formation of their heroic identity—the reader comes to understand their heroic transformations. The scar remains as a corporeal reminder of this process and accentuates the connection between body and narrative in the construction of a hero. By grounding Macrina's heroic transformation in the classical tradition, Gregory seeks to situate Macrina not only within the “saintly wounded” as Frank suggests,<sup>22</sup> but also within the archetypal condition of woundedness, a prerequisite for classical heroes and god-like figures—Achilles, Hephaestus, Oedipus, and Philoctetes, for example. I look to Arnold van Gennep's and Victor Turner's discussions of rites of passage and liminality to anchor my discussion. Using Turner's anthropology to gain entry into the characters' transformations, I turn to the psychoanalysis of James Hillman and

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1993): 51-59; Stanley Lombardo, *The Essential Odyssey* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007); Erwin Cook, “‘Active’ and ‘Passive’ Heroics in the *Odyssey*,” in *Homer's Odyssey*, ed. Lillian Eileen Doherty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); J. C. B. Petropoulos, *Kleos in a Minor Key: the Homeric Education of a Little Prince*, *Hellenic Studies* 45 (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2010).

21. I am assuming that Gregory's audience would have known the *Odyssey* well enough, whether through a traditional Hellenistic education or oral transmission, to pick up and recognize Gregory's allusion. Additionally, as Derek Krueger observes, Gregory includes several “acts of remembering,” or brief analepses, in his narrative. All of the “recountings,” including the wounding and scarring scene, are embedded narratives—another character recounts a memory, but this memory is retold within Gregory's own narrative. Gregory is then able to construct the memory of his sister through his own voice, as well as the mediated voices of others. See Derek Krueger, “Writing and the Liturgy of Memory in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 483-510; 490, doi:10.1353/earl.2000.0069. It is notable, however, that the analepsis associated with the recognition scene is the only flashback in the *vita* to incorporate Homeric elements. The singularity of this event indicates to me that Gregory placed marked emphasis on this episode.

22. Frank, “Macrina's Scar,” 513-16. Frank suggests that Macrina's scar situates her in the line of Christ and the martyrs.

Dennis Slattery to assess the shift in mentality that occurs during a rite of passage, particularly in relation to woundedness and the body. I then examine the flashback of Odysseus's wounding and scarring in Book 19 of the *Odyssey* followed by its parallel in the flashback narrative of chapter 31 of the *Life of Macrina*.

## Methodology

Arnold van Gennep's work is the *locus classicus* for discussions of rites of passage. Van Gennep divides a rite of passage into three stages: separation from a previous condition (preliminal), the transition (liminal), and incorporation into a new condition (post-liminal).<sup>23</sup> According to van Gennep, a rite of passage ushers in a change of status. Building on van Gennep's work, Victor Turner focuses specifically on the "betwixt and between" of a rite of passage: liminality. Turner explains that the basic model for society is a "structure of positions" or "states." For Turner, "states" can include "social constancies" (e.g., profession, legal status), "the condition of a person as determined by his culturally recognized degree of maturation" (e.g., married, infant), ecological conditions, or the "physical, mental or emotional condition" of a person at a particular time. When a subject moves between states, an "interstructural situation" occurs in which the subject finds herself in a period of "liminality" or "period of margin." In the liminal period, the subject is in a state of ambiguity. The successful negotiation of the liminal period and the transition from one state into a new condition/position is what Turner defines as a *rite de passage*.<sup>24</sup>

In Turnerian-like terms, Jungian psychologist James Hillman describes the episode of Odysseus's wounding as an "inauguration" that "ends the state of innocence as [the wounding] opens in a new way at another place."<sup>25</sup> Hillman never explicitly uses the phrase "rite of

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23. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 21.

24. Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 93-94.

25. James Hillman, "Puer Wounds and Ulysses' Scar," in *Puer Papers* (Irving, TX:

passage” in his analysis, but for the most part describes the same process, arguing that the scene demonstrates a shift from *puer* mentality to *senex* mentality—a shift from boy to hero, from wounded to scarred.<sup>26</sup> Hillman employs the universal archetypes of *senex* and *puer* to personify the psychological structures of maturity and discipline (*senex*) and immaturity and wandering (*puer*). These diverging mentalities represent two different modes of encountering the world, of apprehending lived experience. Although these psychological archetypes extend far beyond an application to the *Odyssey*—indeed, for Hillman, Odysseus is just one illustration of these universal archetypes—Hillman’s case study of Odysseus’s scar elucidates the structures of a shift in mentality specifically in relation to being wounded and subsequently being scarred. By employing Hillman’s framework, we are able to establish a link between the body and identity, the wound/scar and the self.

Dennis Slattery, who builds his analysis of Odysseus’s scar on Hillman’s argument, takes an even more focused approach to woundedness, adding that wounds “are received at points or intersections of transitions.”<sup>27</sup> In Slattery’s view, the *puer/senex* archetypes serve as a framework for the wounding scene as they bind past, present, and future—who Odysseus was (wounded), is (ambiguous in a liminal state), and will be (scarred). Slattery thus employs the archetypes to interpret the body as a changing situation rather than a static object.<sup>28</sup> Like Hillman, Slattery indicates that as a wound closes one state, its scar simultaneously begins another. The space in between the wound and the scar, however, is not so easy to describe; it marks a shifting identity, a straddling of worlds.

Borrowing Turner’s framework for rites of passage and enriching it with both Hillman and Slattery’s concepts of inauguration and transition in relation to the body, we can begin to analyze the significance of the

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Spring Publications, 1979), 113.

26. *Ibid.*, 100–28.

27. Dennis Patrick Slattery, *The Wounded Body: Remembering the Markings of the Flesh* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 28.

28. Slattery, *The Wounded Body*, 27. Slattery here is also invoking considerations of the body made by Jungian psychologist Robert Romanyshyn in *Technology as Symptom and Dream* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1989).

transformation between states—wounded to scarred—in the stories of both Odysseus and Macrina.

### Odysseus: Wounded and Scarred

In the very moment that Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus's scar, Homer provides the reader with a flashback scene. The nurse's touching and tracing of the scar with her fingers returns the narrative to the story of the original wounding, changing the scene from present to past time within the same sentence: "[D]rawing nearer she began to wash her master: immediately she knew the scarred wound, which a wild boar once inflicted with its white tusk when Odysseus went to Parnassus to see Autolycus and his sons" (19.390-95).<sup>29</sup>

#### What's in a Name?

The flashback transports the reader to Odysseus's infancy when Autolycus, his maternal grandfather, pays a visit to the newborn in Ithaca. During the visit, Eurycleia asks a favor of him: "[F]ind yourself a name to give to your child's own child; be sure he has long been prayed for" (19.403-4). Autolycus replies, "inasmuch as I have come here having caused pain (*ὄδυσσάμενος*) to many, both men and women, across the land, let him be called Odysseus (*Ὀδυσσεύς*)" (19. 407-9). Homer engages in word play, establishing Odysseus's name as a pun on the participle *ὄδυσσάμενος*, meaning to grieve, suffer, or hate. The name marks him, as Erwin Cook points out in his analysis of heroism in the *Odyssey*, as a "man of pain."<sup>30</sup> Or, as Homeric scholar Paolo Vivante translates the name, a man of "much suffering."<sup>31</sup> Yet more than simply recognizing the pun, Vivante also notes that Odysseus's name "evokes his destiny" of enduring continual hardships.<sup>32</sup> This "destiny," according to Vivante, is

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29. Greek text is from W. B. Stanford, *Odyssey XIII-XXIV* (Bristol Classical Press, 2009).

30. Cook, "'Active' and 'Passive' Heroics," 116.

31. Paolo Vivante, "Time and Life in Homer," in *The Odyssey: Homer*, ed. Albert Spaulding Cook (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1993), 375.

32. Vivante, "Time and Life in Homer," 375.



first evidenced during the flashback, on the boar hunt where the young Odysseus is quite literally undergoing “much suffering.”

At the conclusion of the naming scene, Homer catapults the audience forward by means of Autolycus’s statement, “when he has become a young man (*ἡβήσας*<sup>33</sup>) and comes to the great house of his mother’s kin at Parnassus, where my property and possessions are, I will give him thereof and send him back rejoicing” (19.409–12). We next encounter Odysseus at Parnassus. After a night of feasting and merriment, Autolycus, his sons, the hounds, and Odysseus rise at dawn to hunt. Upon the steep wooded slopes of Mount Parnassus, in a sunny glade, Odysseus is gored by a boar and acquires his wound. Vivante points to this episode as the first display of Odysseus’s destiny of suffering, signaled by and intimately connected to his name.

Hillman carries the exegesis of this scene even further, positing a link not only between Odysseus’s name and his destiny, but also between his name and his wound/scar. He suggests that Odysseus’s name anticipates his wound and then memorializes it in his scar.<sup>34</sup> The wound/scar acts as a prophetic and commemorative device, narratologically binding Odysseus’s future and past around a liminal present. In Hillman’s view, “Odysseus’ scar builds the wound” into the narrative “all along the way.” The wound and scar belong to the “image of Odysseus,” as both are “necessary to his very name.”<sup>35</sup> Bound up in Odysseus’s identity, the wound not only signals his rite of passage on the boar hunt, but also continually speaks through his scar to (re)emphasize his transformation.

### The Rite of Passage

Thereby a great wild boar was lying in a thick lair, through which the strength of the wet winds could never blow nor the rays of the bright sun beat, nor could the rain pierce through it, so thick it

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33. When used in connection with a male, the verb *ἡβάζω* means to have attained puberty or to be in the prime of youth, to reach sexual maturity.

34. Hillman notes that the idea of suffering is also prominently featured in his non-Homeric Latin names, Ulysses or Oulixes, as these names derive from the Greek words *ούλή* (wound) and *ισχίον* (thigh or hip). Hillman, “Ulysses’ Scar,” 118. See also Cook, “‘Active’ and ‘Passive’ Heroics,” 146.

35. Hillman, “Ulysses’ Scar,” 122.

was; and fallen leaves were there in plenty. Then around the boar there came the noise of the feet of men and dogs . . . and forth from his lair he came against them with bristling back and eyes flashing fire, and stood there at bay close before them. Then first of all Odysseus rushed on, holding his spear on high in his stout hand, eager to smite him. (19.439-49)

As Odysseus positions himself to kill the boar, the boar outmaneuvers him and drives its tusk into his thigh: “The boar was too quick for him and struck (ἐλάσειν) him above the knee (γουνός), charging upon him sideways, and with his tusk tore a long gash in the flesh, but did not reach the bone” (19.449-51). Bleeding from the leg, Odysseus gathers himself and strikes the boar in its shoulder, killing it. When his uncles catch up to him, they treat and care for his wound, “holding back the dark blood with a charm (ἐπαοιδῆ)” (19. 457-58). Brooke Holmes argues that blood is often viewed in Homeric epic as “playing an important role in the hero’s vital energy.”<sup>36</sup> The wound—the pouring of blood from the body—brings Odysseus to the threshold of mortality, but as his uncles bind his wound, his “vital energy” is (re)enclosed in his living body. In receiving the wound, the bleeding body practices death, but is still simultaneously alive. The wounded, then, as Holmes states, “are liminal.”<sup>37</sup>

Holmes’s observation returns us to notions of rites of passage. According to many scholars, the Parnassian boar hunt should be read as an inauguration, a coming of age for Odysseus, particularly since he has just reached puberty. Cook remarks that “the story of the boar reflects the typical features of an adolescent rite of passage,”<sup>38</sup> a transition from boy to man. Yet while there is general consensus that a rite of passage is present in the text, there is some debate about how it is marked. Is it through familial relations, the act of killing the boar, or the healing of the wound? In his reading of family axes in the *Odyssey*, Richard Goodkin claims that the rite of passage is marked by Odysseus’s move along the vertical axis of familial relations. He comments that the story

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36. Brooke Holmes, “The *Iliad*’s Economy of Pain,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 137, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 45-84; 63, doi:10.1353/apa.2007.0002.

37. *Ibid.*, 64.

38. Cook, “‘Active’ and ‘Passive’ Heroics,” 115.

signals Odysseus's "transition into the next generation, his coming into his inheritance" by physically passing ahead of his uncles on the hunt.<sup>39</sup> In a different reading, Rubin and Sale explore the cultural phenomenon of "hunting as initiatory rite," in which hunting myths involve "male maturation rites."<sup>40</sup> The scars and "mutilations" that result from hunts function as initiatory signs.<sup>41</sup> This interpretation, which identifies a dangerous act of killing as the transformative moment when the *techné* of Odysseus comes into full view, has been by far the most popular reading of the scene. In agreement with Rubin and Sale, Cook comments, "the story of the boar reflects the typical features of an adolescent rite of passage . . . the adult status that Odysseus achieves on Mount Parnassos is that of generic hero, and he bears the physical record of the pain that defines him throughout his life."<sup>42</sup> Classicist Stanley Lombardo likewise reads Odysseus's "first adult exploit" (the conquest of the boar) as "a defining rite of passage" into adulthood and heroism.<sup>43</sup>

While the above interpretations identify a shift in states for Odysseus, they join in neglecting the bodily aspect of his rite of passage. Slattery remedies this neglect in his reading of the scene since it is primarily tied to Odysseus's body rather than his actions on the hunt. As previously mentioned, Slattery suggests that the rite of passage takes place in the process of wounding and healing. "Scarring," he writes, "is an inauguration, an initiation into destiny."<sup>44</sup> Odysseus, then, straddles two stages of self identity on the boar hunt: wounded and scarred. The temporal threshold between these states, as Turner indicates, is a period of liminality. Yet as Slattery reminds us, liminality is not just a matter of temporality, it is also a somatic journey. Given Slattery's focus on the body and woundedness, it is his perspective on the rite of passage that I will follow here.

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39. Richard E. Goodkin, *Around Proust* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 27.

40. Rubin and Sale, "Meleager and Odysseus," 141; 140.

41. *Ibid.*, 145.

42. Cook, "'Active' and 'Passive' Heroics," 115.

43. Lombardo, *The Essential Odyssey*, xxxiv.

44. Slattery, *The Wounded Body*, 28.

## The Liminal State

In the liminal state between wounding and scarring there is a complex amalgam of weakness and strength and softness and hardness.<sup>45</sup> According to Hillman, Odysseus's transition occurs between two polarities: the *puer* spirit, which is "always ready to die"—illustrated by Odysseus hastily rushing ahead to kill the boar—and the *senex* spirit, which persists and endures—illustrated by Odysseus's composure in killing the boar on his second attempt and by his perseverance in the face of a crippling wound. These two acts, read as a coming of age, negotiate the boundary between boyhood and manhood, or more specifically, heroism, since bold behavior, skill, and mental acuity are the marks of the epic hero. In this, his first encounter with danger, Odysseus enters as an *ephebe*—vulnerable in the moment of his physical puberty—but emerges with the marks of manliness and heroism.

Odysseus's transition from boy to hero is no easy task, however, as his wound is nearly fatal. In this respect, the liminal period is a state between living and dying. On the one hand, the wound points to the natural teleology of human life. As Marina McCoy comments, "Wounds serve as reminders of death's inevitable limit on every life."<sup>46</sup> Yet on the other hand, the scar, as Slattery notes, congeals Odysseus's history and future.<sup>47</sup> The commingling of life and death point both toward the past and toward the future: the wound toward the past, the scar toward the future. In this instant, body and narrative are entwined in the creation of Odysseus's heroic persona. Odysseus's history—at least as Homer explains it—is an embodied story, summed up in his scarred wound.

In addition to traversing the boundaries of life and death, boy and hero, Odysseus's wounding is rife with sexual symbolism. As the boar charges, it violates Odysseus's body, violently driving its tusk into his thigh. The tusk becomes a metonymical phallus. The youthful—and passive—Odysseus is literally opened and penetrated by the boar. Hillman feminizes his wounded thigh, characterizing it as a "symbolic vulva"—an image intended to evoke a connection to Zeus's thigh which

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45. Hillman, "Ulysses' Scar," 121.

46. Marina Berzins McCoy, *Wounded Heroes: Vulnerability as a Virtue in Ancient Greek Literature and Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 16.

47. Slattery, *The Wounded Body*, 42.

birthed Dionysus—since it is from Odysseus’s thigh that his heroism is born.<sup>48</sup> The bodily violation renders Odysseus a penetrable boy, but in what seems to be a reaction to this passivity, he rises and kills the boar, penetrating it, in turn, with his spear. Here we may likewise read the weapon as a metonymical phallus. In a competition of superiority marked by degrees of penetration, it is Odysseus, not the boar, who emerges as victor, as a hero. Odysseus thus moves between notions of passivity and activity, emerging as a sexually potent, penetrating man.

Yet Odysseus’s transformation is not as straightforward as it initially seems. That is, his transition is not marked by a passage from one stable archetypal status to the next. The picture Homer paints is more complex. Rather than simply moving from *puer* to *senex*—from wounded to scarred—Odysseus transforms into a composite state, one that is composed of a “*puer-et-senex*” consciousness—one that is both wounded and scarred simultaneously since the wound is always present in the scar.<sup>49</sup>

### The Unusual Case of Odysseus’s Wound

As alluded to above, the wounding and scarring is more than just a point of recognition; it is a narrative in itself—it is the history of Odysseus within the text. The trope of woundedness, however, is not unique to Odysseus; neither is the notion of a character’s history being bound up in a wound. The bloody sockets of Oedipus’s gouged eyes, for instance, are intimately connected to his name, tragic history, and piteous fate. But unlike Odysseus, Oedipus is not a hero. The archetype of wounded hero, a popular motif in classical literature, encompasses figures like Achilles, Hector, and Philoctetes. Although we might initially classify Odysseus among these classical heroes, he differs from them all. Each one suffers a wound that either precipitates his death or is the harbinger of disaster and misfortune. In striking contrast, Odysseus does not die or suffer a downfall. Although the scar can be viewed as a *memento mori* since it recalls the vulnerability of his body and brush with death, it is at the same time a mark of his heroic identity. Instead of a transition from wounded to debilitated (as with the heroes above),

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48. Hillman, “Ulysses’ Scar,” 119.

49. *Ibid.*, 122.

Odysseus's transformation from wounded to scarred "gets him through twenty years of unparalleled dangers."<sup>50</sup> In this way, Odysseus deviates from the common trope of the wounded hero. The contrast is even more pronounced if we recall that in Greek mythology being gored by a boar is a common form of royal death.<sup>51</sup> Instead of resulting in death, however, his wound becomes a scar. According to McCoy, such a wound becomes life-bearing, an "occasion for virtue in enduring suffering."<sup>52</sup> Put otherwise, wounds that might result in death make the scene of wounding and suffering a stage for personal virtue.<sup>53</sup> In the *Life of Macrina*, Gregory models Macrina's suffering on this Homeric trope, anchoring her wound and scar in the virtue and heroism of Odysseus.

### Macrina: Wounded and Scarred

When it was time to wrap [Macrina's] pure body in linen . . . the woman who was present and taking part in the work said, "Don't let the greatest of the wonders accomplished by this holy woman pass by unnoticed." "What is this?" I said. Exposing the part of [Macrina's] chest (μέρος τι τοῦ στήθους), she said, "Do you see this small and unapparent mark (σημείον) on her skin? It resembles a mark (στιγματι) made by a small needle (ῥαφίδος)." At the same time she placed the lamp nearer to the place she was showing me. "What is so wondrous," I said, "if her body is inscribed with some unapparent mark (σημείω) in this place (μέρος)?" "This," she said, "was left on her body as a reminder of the great help of God. For there was once some troublesome disease (πάθος) on this part (μέρος). (31.1-13)<sup>54</sup>

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50. Ibid.

51. Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, vol. 2 (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1960), 170.

52. McCoy, *Wounded Heroes*, 15-16.

53. Ibid.

54. Greek text from Pierre Maraval, *Grégoire De Nysse: Vie De Sainte Macrine* (Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1971). Translations loosely follow W. K. Lowther Clarke, *The Life of St. Macrina* (London: SPCK, 1916).

Just as Eurycleia's recognition of Odysseus's scar moves the story from the present to the past, so too does Vetiana's exhibition of Macrina's scar. Vetiana's response to Gregory's questions shifts the narrative into past time, describing Macrina's debilitating condition and her transition from wounded to scarred. Yet Gregory's rendition of the Odyssean flashback does not force the biography of his sister into the Homeric frame. Rather, he rearranges and adjusts the constituent parts of the flashback to fit and fashion his hero, a "baptized Odysseus" as Frank calls Macrina.<sup>55</sup>

### The Importance of a Name and the Nature of the Wound

Unlike the flashback scene in the *Odyssey*, in which the story of Odysseus's name is the opening episode, Gregory places Macrina's naming episode outside of the flashback at the beginning of the *vita*. Following a brief introduction that explains Gregory's purposes for writing (1.1-31), he begins his narrative with Macrina *in utero*. He records that Macrina was given two names: an official name and a secret name. Her official name, he writes, had been given to her "by her parents in memory of a remarkable Macrina earlier in the family, our father's mother, who had distinguished herself in the confession of Christ at the time of the persecutions" (2.1-4). Macrina's official name situates her firmly within a tradition of reputable Christian women (exemplified also by Macrina's mother, whom Gregory describes as "extremely virtuous, following the will of God in all things and embracing an exceptionally pure and spotless way of life" [3.8-12]). Macrina's secret name, however, distinguishes her in virtue from her predecessors. The secret name was given to her "in connection with a vision that occurred before she came into the light at birth" (2.6-8). Gregory explains that a figure "of greater than human shape and form" (2.23-24) appeared to their mother in a dream and addressed the child she was carrying by the name of Thecla, "that Thecla, who is so famous among the virgins" (2.24-27). Gregory continues, "this name was only used in secret. But it seems to me that

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55. Frank, "Macrina's Scar," 519. Frank borrows this phrase from Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5.

the apparition spoke not so much to guide the mother to a right choice of name as to forecast the life of the young child and to indicate by the name that she would follow her namesake's mode of life" (2.30-34).

Because Gregory describes the implications of the name, he assumes that his audience knew the story of Thecla—one of the most popular early Christian apocryphal tales, often included in and associated with the *Acts of Paul*. In the *Acts of Thecla*, after hearing Paul speak, Thecla spurns her fiancé to follow Paul and preach the gospel. In so doing, she foregoes marriage in favor of a virginal life.<sup>56</sup> In a similar fashion, Macrina's father arranged a marriage when she came of age, but before it could take place, her fiancé died. Rather than finding another suitor, Macrina "called her father's decision a marriage on the grounds that what had been decided had actually taken place and she determined to spend the rest of her life by herself. . . . She insisted that the young man joined to her by her parent's decision was not dead, but living in God because of the hope of the resurrection . . . and it was out of place, she maintained, for a bride not to keep faith with an absent husband" (5.3-16). While both Macrina's grandmother and mother gave their bodies over to the carnal aspects of human corporeality, Macrina in contrast, follows her secret namesake, forsaking earthly marriage and sex in favor of a virginal life.

Since Macrina's secret name is a direct reference to the paragon of virginity, it is only appropriate that Macrina, unlike Odysseus, is never penetrated in the creation of a wound. Macrina's wound is not an open bloody gash, but a serious ailment, a matter of life and death: a distressing disease (πάθος ἀνίαρόν) (31.15). The πάθος is described as a mass or tumor (ὄγκον) (31.16). While it is not a wound like Odysseus's gash, it is, nevertheless, a debilitating and crippling affliction. It is a subdermal wound, a mass of festering cells and tissues, metastasizing, infecting, and invading. In this respect, the tumor marks Macrina's diseased body as a wounded body, her mass as a wound. The pain of her wound is highlighted in her dismissive response to her mother's pleas to seek medical attention, as she judges that uncovering her body to a stranger is "worse than the suffering" (πάθους χαλεπώτερον). The absence of an

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56. *Acts of Thecla* 2.



open wound in Macrina's story is, like Odysseus's wound, closely connected with her name. Slattery comments that in ancient texts being named and being wounded are part and parcel of each other, since "wounds name or identify . . . [and] give the trajectory of destiny."<sup>57</sup> Just as Odysseus's name signals a destiny of suffering, Macrina's secret name, as Gregory indicates, denotes her destiny to remain a virgin, thus implicating the closed nature of her wound. Further, Macrina's secret name puts the nature of her wound in direct conversation with Thecla's lack of wounds. The *Acts of Thecla* records that after drawing the ire of a potential suitor, Thecla is placed in the arena *ad bestias*. Seemingly facing impending death, Thecla jumps into a pool of man-eating seals in order to baptize herself. Immediately, lightening flashes and the seals float dead atop the water, and a cloud of fire encircles her so that no beast can touch her.<sup>58</sup> The name Thecla not only betokens virginity as a lifestyle, but frames virginity as a kind of non-wound by a beast or a wound that is always healed before it is ever received.

Like Odysseus's name, Macrina's name, too, is central to her nature, built narratologically into the story of her wound from the beginning of her life. But whereas Homer takes nineteen books to divulge Odysseus's infancy and naming via the flashback story of the wound, Gregory divulges the meaning of Macrina's name within the first hundred lines. In the case of the *Odyssey*, Homer presumably intends to accentuate Odysseus's suffering and *polytropic* nature through multiple dangers and hardships—to induce the pathos of his audience—before revealing near the end of the epic that Odysseus had been a hero in the making ever since his birth: his suffering was presaged in his name and wound/scar. In contrast, Gregory provides an excursus into Macrina's name almost immediately to ensure that the holiness of his sister is recognized. He does not write about Macrina as just another pious Christian woman or virtuous virgin—rather she is a saint (*ἁγία*) (31.6). He cannot wait, as Homer does, to reveal her saintly nature, or the audience may question the very sanctity Gregory endeavors to construct.

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57. Slattery, *The Wounded Body*, 15.

58. *Acts of Thecla* 9.9.

### The Rite of Passage

[Macrina] entered into (ἐντὸς) the sanctuary and implored the God of healing. Water poured from her eyes to the ground and she used the mud created from her tears as the cure (φαρμάκῳ) for the disease. When her mother felt discouraged and was again encouraging her to allow a doctor to assist, [Macrina] said that there was a treatment for her affliction, if her mother would apply the holy seal on the place with her own hand. When her mother placed her hand inside (ἐντὸς) her breast, by which to make a seal on the part, the seal worked and the disease disappeared. (31.24-33)

While Odysseus's rite of passage is relatively clear, Macrina's is somewhat more ambiguous. The rite of passage is undoubtedly bound up in her transition from wounded to scarred, but her transformation between fixed states is not entirely clear. Gregory never reveals the point in Macrina's life at which the tumor appeared or how long it lasted, though Vetiana seems to indicate that the scar had been around for quite some time, since it "was present until the end" (31.35). As a result of this ambiguity it is difficult to gauge her transformation, for instance, from girl to woman. However, Gregory's continuation of the Homeric allusion tells us something about his goal in writing the *vita*, particularly by his inclusion of the flashback scene. In progressing from wounded to scarred, Odysseus emerges a hero. It is this aspect of the flashback that Gregory seeks to emulate in his rhetorical creation of Macrina. Following the unusual case of Odysseus's wounding (and scarring), Gregory aims to situate Macrina in the archetypal position of the wounded hero whose wound not only heals, but also serves as a mark of enduring virtue. Yet there are some curious aspects of the narrative, particularly in respect to the unusual gendering and sexual symbolism that take place in the liminal space between Macrina's wounding and scarring. These elements possibly suggest movement between states, but the states themselves seem to be inherently unstable.

### Liminality and the Sexual Symbolism of the Wound

The nature of Macrina's wound is coupled with her name and destiny in that there is no element of hyperbolic penetration in her story such

as we read in the *Odyssey*. This is not to say, however, that Gregory's rendition in the *vita* is free from such erotic connotations. His account subtly hints at penetration, allowing homoerotic overtones between Macrina and her mother, but is never forthright with the imagery. In the healing scene Macrina tells her mother that the tumor will be cured if she makes the sign of the cross on the afflicted part of her body. Vetiana describes how Macrina's mother "placed her hand *inside* (*ἐντὸς*) her breast (*κόλπου*), by which to make a seal on the part, the seal worked and the disease disappeared" (31.31-33). How should we read the preposition *ἐντὸς*? Is it a subtle penetration of Macrina's body by her mother's finger? Should we read a parallel to John 20:27 where Jesus instructs Thomas to put his hand inside (*εἰς*) of his wounds in order that he may believe?<sup>59</sup> In contrast to the author of John who uses the preposition *εἰς* to indicate motion into, Gregory uses more ambiguous vocabulary. Yet had Gregory simply wanted to indicate that the mother placed her finger *on* Macrina's breast, rather than *into*, we would expect the preposition *ἐν*. Instead, in Macrina's liminal state, Gregory fittingly opts for a word that falls between two ranges of motion (*εἰς* and *ἐν*). In doing so, he provides his readers with an ambiguous description of what takes place *within* Macrina's breast. Does her mother pierce the wound *inside* her breast? Does she merely reach *within* Macrina's shirt and touch it? The word seems to hint at a puncturing, a pricking, a penetration—seven lines earlier Gregory uses the same word to describe Macrina's entrance *into* the sanctuary: "She came inside the sanctuary (*ἐντὸς γενομένη τοῦ παναγιαστηρίου*)." Does Macrina's penetration of a space equate to her mother's entrance *inside* her body? Macrina's mother may, to some degree, penetrate her daughter. Given the possible homoerotic undercurrent of Macrina's healing scene, perhaps we should revisit Odysseus's healing. Although no questionable vocabulary is used, the uncles' binding of Odysseus's body and attention to his wound in a moment of vulnerability constitute the height of intimacy. The uncles literally make Odysseus a man as they certify his manliness by presiding over his rite of passage and healing him.<sup>60</sup> Read with and against the *eros*

59. John 20.27 (NRSV): "Then he said to Thomas, 'Bring your finger here and see my hands; and bring your hand and put it into my side; do not doubt, but believe.'"

60. Rubin and Sale, "Meleager and Odysseus," 147.

in Macrina's healing scene, the Odyssean scene, filled with a similar *eros*, supplies a pattern whereby Gregory can express an unstated intimacy between Macrina and her mother.

If Macrina is penetrated, metaphorically or literally, does that change the way we read her wound? Contrary to the closure of her body, which Gregory emphasizes so forcefully, might her body, like Odysseus's, actually be open? Virginia Burrus's assessment of Macrina's scar complicates any notion of open versus closed. Burrus characterizes Macrina's *σημαίον* as a "tattoo" since it appeared as if it were made by a small needle. "The virginal body," Burrus writes, "opening itself to the prick of a needle is . . . shockingly transgressive."<sup>61</sup> Macrina is, of course, not literally tattooed, but as Vetiana tells Gregory, the mark "was left on her body as a reminder of the great help of God" (31.13-14). In Burrus's language, the mark is "a tattoo admittedly inscribed miraculously, but nonetheless also manifested visibly on the fleshy body. God has written on Macrina's body."<sup>62</sup> In this sense, God has also penetrated Macrina. Through writing on her body—a penetration of her flesh—God has marked Macrina as his own, as belonging to Him: "God writes on Macrina, and Macrina submits. But Macrina also wills the mark, and God—through the mediation of her mother—submits to her desire."<sup>63</sup> Gregory thus makes clear that God has "pricked" Macrina and "made her his bride."<sup>64</sup> Whether Macrina's body is inscribed by God or probed by her mother, Macrina is symbolically (and quite literally) opened and marked. The scar, the seal of her penetrated flesh, serves a dual function: it indicates a site of entry, but also signals, "as a token of God's powerful help," that Macrina's body, like Thecla's, is protected from corruption. Just as Odysseus's scar memorializes the open wound—the penetration by the boar—Macrina's scar commemorates God's penetration of her body through the agency of her mother. In this sense it is a reminder of that openness, a rupture in corporeal self-containment. Yet the scar simultaneously functions as a mark of her continued virginity, a closed

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61. Virginia Burrus, "Macrina's Tattoo," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 403-17; 408, doi:10.1215/10829636-33-3-403.

62. *Ibid.*, 404.

63. *Ibid.*, 412.

64. *Ibid.*, 409.

body, hiding what has been and should only be seen (and penetrated) by her bridegroom, Christ. For this reason Gregory downplays Macrina's penetration—both by her mother and God—and opts to portray his sister as the impenetrable Thecla. Macrina's heroism, much like Odysseus's, is born from her wound, but departs from the Odyssean trope as Gregory seals Macrina's sanctity inside her scar.

### Overcoming Gender

The sexual symbolism of the episode is also tied to gender instability. This aspect, however, is not unique to Macrina's liminal state. Macrina's gender instability is not simply transitory in her passage from wounded to scarred; it is a significant aspect of the entire *vita*. As Frank, Krueger, and Burrus point out, Macrina's gender is shaped and constituted through familial relations. But might there be another dimension to the rhetorical construction of Macrina's gender? Macrina's naming scene as tied to her wounding and scarring emphasizes a gender overcoming—the abject female body becoming a body of masculine perfection through virginal closure. Through a transition to the masculine, the manly Macrina follows Odysseus's path from boy to hero.

In various places throughout the *vita*, Gregory refers to what he deems female nature. In one instance, following the death of his brother, Naucratus, Gregory describes how “nature won out” over his mother: “For she collapsed, and in a moment lost both her breath and speech, since her reason failed her under the disaster, and she was thrown to the ground by the assault of the evil tidings, like some noble athlete hit by an unexpected blow” (9.16–22). Gregory also recalls that Macrina pulled their mother out of distress so that she “was not overwhelmed by the grief, nor did she behave in any ignoble and womanish way, so as to cry out at the calamity, or tear her dress, or lament over the trouble, or strike up funeral chants with mournful melodies” (10.6–10). In this passage Gregory describes female nature as characterized by crying, lamenting, and giving in to emotion. Yet throughout the *vita*, Macrina continually surpasses her feminine nature. This is such a prominent feature of the text that Gregory remarks in his introduction that he cannot even speak of his sister as woman since “I do not know if it is fitting to designate her as a woman, who went beyond the nature of a woman”

(1.15-16). Moreover, in contrast to Macrina's steadfastness, Gregory portrays himself as "womanishly weepy," unable to harness his emotions.<sup>65</sup> Burrus identifies the performed reversal of gender as a "queering" of the household that "allow[s] Macrina to take the lead as teacher, parent, and lover. Gregory turns the traditionally female necessity to submit into a desirable masculine virtue."<sup>66</sup> This model holds true except for one instance. In the flashback episode, Macrina enters the sanctuary to supplicate God for healing and "a stream of tears fell from her eyes onto the ground." In her afflicted state, Macrina's emotion—her feminine nature—is seen for the first and only time.

In contrast to Odysseus, who survives his feminization to become a man and hero, Macrina must reject her femininity in order to become male and a hero. The renunciation of her feminine nature, then, also plays a role in her masculine transformation as virginity itself (as also apparent in the *Acts of Thecla*) is an expression of masculinity. In her assessment of Macrina's asceticism, Susanna Elm comments that Macrina's virginity absolved her of "the paramount female obligation: procreation."<sup>67</sup> In this way, Elm continues, she was able to transcend "notions of biological function and predetermination as expressed by childbearing and motherhood."<sup>68</sup> The ascetic practice of virginity, according to Gregory, transformed the body into a near angelic state: "[Macrina and her mother] fell short of the angelic and immaterial nature only insofar as they appeared in bodily form" (11.36-45). By renouncing her femininity Macrina is able to assume intellectual leadership roles in her household and ascetic community previously reserved for men. Her virgin body ceases to be female, unconstrained by biological urges and womanly functions. Her body becomes instead a marker of perfection—of maleness.

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65. Krueger, "Writing and the Liturgy of Memory," 490. Krueger is speaking directly about Gregory's characterization of himself in the *vita*. Frank also notes the feminization of Gregory as mourner. Frank, "Macrina's Scar," 527.

66. Virginia Burrus, "Gender, Eros, and Pedagogy: Macrina's Pious Household," in *Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau*, ed. Blake Leyerle and Robin Darling Young (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 168.

67. Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 94.

68. *Ibid.*, 95.

Elm further notes that as time progresses in the first (linear) part of the narrative, Macrina's role in both the household and in the narrative becomes increasingly complex. At first she is a "virgin widow"; then she becomes mother and educator to her brother, Peter; next she becomes her mother's guide. According to Elm, it is at this point that Gregory "portrays her in traditional male terminology."<sup>69</sup> Macrina physically appears like a woman, but her inner expression is male. Explaining this internal transformation, Elm writes:

She displays courage, that is manliness, steadfastness, and self-control: all characteristics of the Stoic Philosopher, that truly wise man. Macrina is no longer female, but her character is further enhanced by maleness, she becomes a manly woman. . . . Yet all of these changes occur internally, on a purely spiritual and intellectual level. Macrina's outward appearance remains female. It is only her soul that, as her asceticism progresses, adopts the qualities of a sage, an exemplary man.<sup>70</sup>

At the liminal turn of her wounding and scarring, Macrina's femininity is simultaneously displayed and renounced; we see Macrina both as a woman and a man, penetrated and impenetrable.

In her transition from wounded to scarred, Macrina, like Odysseus, negotiates multiple boundaries. In her liminal period she is ambiguous—she is a woman becoming a man, ontologically existing somewhere between death and life, transitioning between wounded and scarred as she shifts from girl to (Christian) hero. Like Odysseus, Macrina does not die or suffer a downfall as a result of her wound, she thrives. Modeling this scene on the *Odyssey*, Gregory uses the motif of woundedness to illustrate Macrina's heroic transformation.

## Conclusion

In the recognition and flashback scenes, Gregory translates a Homeric myth into a Christian story, clothing Macrina in the virtue of the

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69. *Ibid.*, 101.

70. *Ibid.*

classical hero, Odysseus, through the trope of wounding and scarring. Yet Gregory's hero is distinctly Christian as Macrina's narrative becomes a site for thanksgiving to God (*eucharistia*).<sup>71</sup> Thanks to Gregory's rhetorical fashioning of Macrina, we see that the body and its narrative share a common heritage in the construction of a hero. Odysseus and Macrina receive their scars by moving through a liminal period in which certain boundaries (life/death, male/female porosity) are negotiated and traversed. Macrina's scar not only serves, as Frank claims, as the site of "locational memory," but also as its own narrative excursus into its origin, Macrina's nature, and her destiny. In contrast to the recognition scenes, the flashback narratives with their rites of passage should be read interstructurally—from within the space between the wound and the scar—as a history of a shifting self, for only then can each recognition scene fully grasp the identity of its hero.

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71 Krueger, "Writing and the Liturgy of Memory," 505.