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A LIAR'S YARN: STORYTELLING IN THE LOST BOOKS OF THE ODYSSEY

©Yasuko Taoka, *Southern Illinois University, Carbondale*

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the use of storytelling in Zachary Mason's debut novel *The Lost Books of the Odyssey* (2008) with respect to Homer's *Odyssey*. While the novel is based on the *Odyssey*, it poses as an ancient manuscript which relates a series of vignettes that have gone missing from the *Odyssey*. Mason's novel presents a postmodern expansion of narrative techniques used in the *Odyssey*, in particular: concealing the identity of the storyteller, inset storytelling, achronological narrative structure, and the ekphrasis. I examine in particular the framing elements (Introduction, Appendix, author biography) for their presentation of the fictitious identity of the storyteller, and the final chapter ("Endless City") for its expansion of Homeric narrative structures. As a result Mason's novel casts the original poem in such a new light that reading the *Odyssey* in the same way again is rendered impossible.