

from the ODYSSEY

by Homer



Ulysses Deyring the Cyclos (1887) by I. Zelnberger.

What Do You Think
What difference can a
journey make in a person's
life?

Quickwrite

How could events in a journey reveal the heroic qualities in someone? Write down your opinions.

An Introduction to the Odyssey

by David Adams Leeming

Almost three thousand years ago, people who lived in the starkly beautiful part of the world we now call Greece were

telling stories about a great war. The person credited with later gathering all these stories together and telling them as one unified epic is a man named Homer (*Hómēros*, in Greek). Homer's great war stories are called, in English, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. (In Greek, the *Iliad* is *Ilias* and the *Odyssey* is *Odysseia*.)

Homer's stories probably can be traced to historical struggles for control of the waterway leading from the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. These battles might have taken place as early as 1200 B.C.—a time that was at least as long ago for Homer's audience as the Pilgrims' landing at Plymouth Rock is for us.

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Homer's first epic was the *Iliad*, which tells of a ten-year war fought on the plains outside the walls of a great city called Troy (also known as Ilión). The ruins of Troy can still be seen in western Turkey. In Homer's story the Trojan War was fought between the people of Troy and an alliance of Greek kings (at that time each island and area of the Greek mainland had its own king). The *Iliad* tells us that the cause of the war was jealousy: The world's most beautiful woman, Helen, abandoned her husband, Menelaus, a Greek king, and ran off with Paris, a prince of Troy. (See "Paris and Queen Helen," page 1018.)

The *Odyssey*, Homer's second epic, is the story of the attempt of one Greek soldier, Odysseus, to get home after the Trojan War. All epic poems in the Western world owe something to the basic patterns established by these two stories.

Epics and Values

Epics are long narrative poems that tell of the adventures of heroes who in some way embody the values of their civilizations. For centuries the Greeks used the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in schools to teach Greek virtues. So it is not surprising that later cultures that admired the Homeric epics created their own epics, imitating Homer's style but conveying their own value systems.

Still, for all the epics written since Homer's time and for all the ones composed before it, when people in the Western world think of the word *epic*, they think primarily of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Rome's *Aeneid*, France's *Song of Roland*, Italy's *The Divine Comedy*, and the ancient Mesopotamian tale of Gilgamesh, India's *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, Mal's *Sundata*—all are great stories in the epic tradition. But Homer's epics are at the heart of the epic tradition. The *Iliad* is the primary model for the epic of war. The *Odyssey* is the model for the epic of the long journey. The theme of the journey has been basic in Western literature—it is found in fairy tales, in such novels as *The Incredible Journey*, *Moby-Dick*, and *The Hobbit*, and in such movies as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Star Wars*. Thus, the *Odyssey* was probably Homer's most influential story.

The War-Story Background: Violence and Brutality

The background for *Odyssey's* story is found in the *Iliad*, which is set in the tenth and final year of the Trojan War. According to the *Iliad*, the Greeks attacked Troy to avenge the insult suffered by Menelaus, king of Sparta, when his wife, Helen, ran off with Paris, a young prince of Troy. The Greek kings banded together under the leadership of Agamemnon, the brother of Menelaus. In a thousand ships, they sailed across the Aegean Sea and laid siege to the walled city of Troy.



Analyzing Visuals
 Viewing and interpreting the image on the sail suggest about the Greeks, making their way to Troy?



The blind poet Homer. Detail from statue found near Naples (probably around 2nd century A.D.). British Museum, London.

The audience of the *Odyssey* would have known this war story. Listeners would have known that the Greeks were eventually victorious—that they gained entrance to Troy, reduced the city to smoldering ruins, and butchered all the inhabitants, except for those they took as slaves back to Greece. They would have known all about the greatest of the Greek warriors, Achilles, who died young in the final year of the war. The audience would probably have heard other epic poems (since lost) that told of the homecomings of the various Greek heroes who survived the war. They would especially have known about the homecoming of Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek forces, who was murdered by his unfaithful wife when he returned from Troy. Finally, Homer's listeners might well have been particularly fascinated by another homecoming story—this one about a somewhat unusual hero, known as much for his brain as for his brawn. In fact, many legends had already grown up around this hero, whose name was *Odysseus*. He was the subject of Homer's epic, the *Odyssey*.

Odysseus: A Hero in Trouble

In Homer's day, heroes were thought of as a special class of aristocrats. They were placed somewhere between the gods and ordinary human beings. Heroes experienced pain and death, but they were always sure of themselves, always "on top of the world." *Odysseus* is different. He is a hero in trouble. We can relate to *Odysseus* because like him we also face a world of difficult choices. Like *Odysseus* we have to cope with unfair authority figures. Like him we have to work very hard to get what we want.

The *Odyssey* is a story marked by melancholy and a feeling of postwar cynicism and doubt. *Odysseus*

was a great soldier, but his war record is not of interest to the mothers that populate the world of his wanderings. Even the people of his home island, Ithaca, seem to lack respect for him. It is as if society were saying to the returning hero, "You were a great soldier once—or so they say—but times have changed. This is a difficult world, and we have more important things to think about than your record." In the years before the great war, *Odysseus* had married the beautiful and ever-faithful Penelope, one of several very strong women in the masculine world of the Greek epic. (One writer and critic, Robert Graves, was so impressed by the unusual importance of women and home and hearth in the *Odyssey* that he believed Homer must have been a woman.)

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Penelope and Odysseus had one son, Telemachus (tuh TEHM uh kuhhs). He was still a baby when Odysseus was called by Agamemnon and Menelaus to join them in the war against Troy. But Odysseus was a homebody. He preferred not to go to war, especially a war fought for an unfaithful woman. Even though he was obligated under a treaty to go, Odysseus tried draft-dodging. It is said that when Agamemnon and Menelaus came to fetch him, he pretended to be insane and acted as if he did not recognize his visitors. Instead of entertaining them, he dressed as a peasant and began plowing a field and sowing it with salt. But the "draft board" was smarter than Odysseus. They threw his baby, Telemachus, in front of his oncoming plow. Odysseus revealed his sanity by quickly turning the plow aside to avoid running over his son.

The Wooden-Horse Trick

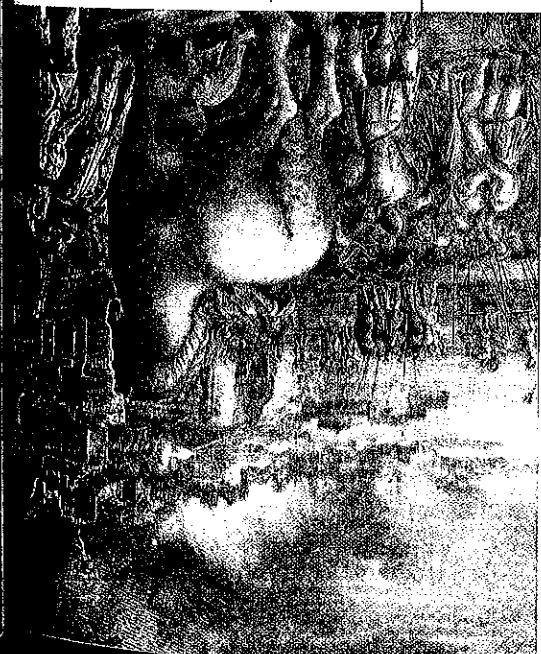
Once in Troy, Odysseus performed extremely well as a soldier and commander. It was he, for example, who thought of the famous wooden-horse trick that would lead to the downfall of Troy. For ten years the Greeks had been fighting the Trojans, but they were fighting outside Troy's massive walls. They had been unable to break through the walls and enter the city. Odysseus's plan was to build an enormous wooden horse and hide a few Greek soldiers inside its hollow belly. After the horse was built, the Greeks pushed it up to the gates of Troy and withdrew their armies, so that their camp appeared to be abandoned. Thinking that the Greeks had given up the fight and that the horse was a peace offering, the Trojans brought the horse into their city. That night the Greeks hidden inside the hollow belly came out, opened the gates of Troy to the whole Greek army, and began the battle that was to win the war.

The Ancient World and Ours

The world of Odysseus was harsh, a world familiar with violence. In a certain sense, Odysseus and his men act like pirates on their journey home. They think nothing of entering a town and carrying off all its worldly goods. The "worldly goods" in an ancient city might have been only pots and pans and cattle and sheep. The "palaces" the Greeks raided might have been little more than elaborate mud and stone farmhouses. Yet, in the struggles of Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus in their "primitive" society that had little in common with

Odysseus and his family are people searching for the right relationships with one another and with the people around them.

Trojan Horse (16th century) by Niccolò dell'Abbate (c. 1512–1571). Tempera on wood panel.



the high Athenian culture that would develop several centuries later, there is something that has a great deal to do with us.

A Search for Their Places in Life

Odysseus and his family are people searching for the right relationships with one another and with the people around them. They want to find their proper places in life. It is this theme, or central idea, that sets the tone for the *Odyssey* and determines the unusual way in which the poem is structured.

Instead of beginning at the beginning with Odysseus's departure from Troy, the story begins with his son, Telemachus. Telemachus is now twenty years old. He is threatened by rude, powerful men swarming about his own home, pressuring his mother to marry one of them. These men are bent on robbing Telemachus of his inheritance. Telemachus is a young man who needs his father, the one person who can put things right.

Meanwhile, we hear that his father is stranded on an island, longing to find a way to get back to his wife, child, and home. It is ten years since Odysseus sailed from Troy, twenty years since he left Ithaca to fight in Troy. While Telemachus is in search of his father, Odysseus is in search of a way out of what we might today call his midlife crisis. He is searching for inner peace, for a way to reestablish a natural balance in his life. The quests of father and son provide a framework for the poem and bring us into it as well—because we all are in search of our real identities, our true selves.

Relationships with the Gods

This brings us to mythic and religious questions in the *Odyssey*. Myths are traditional stories, rooted in a particular culture, that usually explain a belief, a ritual, or a mysterious natural phenomenon. Myths are essentially religious because they are concerned with the relationship between human beings and the unknown or spiritual realm. As you will see, Homer is always concerned with the relationship between humans and gods. Homer is religious: For him, the gods control all things. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, is always at the side of Odysseus. This is appropriate, because Odysseus is known for his mental abilities. Thus, in Homer's stories a god can reflect a hero's best or worst qualities. The god who works against Odysseus is Poseidon, the god of the sea, who is known for arrogance and a certain brutishness. Odysseus himself can be violent and cruel, just as Poseidon is.

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Who was Homer?

No one knows for sure who Homer was. The later Greeks believed he was a blind minstrel, or singer, who came from the island of Chios. Some scholars feel there must have been two Homers; some think

he was just a legend. But scholars have also argued about whether a man called Shakespeare ever existed. It is almost as if they were saying that Homer and Shakespeare are too good to be true. On the whole, it seems sensible to take the word of the Greeks themselves. We can at least accept the existence of Homer as a model for a class of wandering bards or minstrels later called rhapsodes (RAP sohds).

These **rhapsodes**, or "singers of tales," were the historians and entertainers as well as the mythmakers of their time. There was probably no written history in Homer's day. There were certainly no movies and no television, and the Greeks had nothing like a Bible or a book of religious stories. So it was that the minstrels traveled about from community to community singing of recent events or of the doings of heroes, gods, and goddesses. The people in Homer's day saw no conflict among religion, history, and good fun.

How Were the Epics Told?

Scholars have found that oral epic poets are still composing today in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world. These scholars suggest that stories like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were originally told aloud by people who could not read and write. The stories followed a basic story line, but most of the actual words were improvised—made up on the spot—in a way that fit a particular rhythm or meter. The singers of these stories had to be talented, and they had to work very hard. They also needed an audience that could listen closely.

We can see from this why there is so much repetition in the Homeric epics. The oral storyteller, in fact, had a store of formulas ready in his memory. He knew formulas for describing the arrival and greeting of guests, the eating of meals, and the taking of baths. He knew formulas for describing the sea (it is "wine-dark") and for describing Athena (she is "gray-eyed Athena"). Formulas such as these had another advantage: they gave the singer and his audience some breathing time. The audience could relax for a moment and enjoy a familiar and memorable passage, while the singer could think ahead to the next part of his story.

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When we think about the audience that listened to these stories, we can also understand the value of the extended comparisons that we today call **Homeric** or **epic similes**. These similes compare heroic or epic events to simple and easily understandable everyday events—events the audience would recognize instantly. For example, at one point in the *Iliad*, Athena prevents an arrow from striking Menelaus. The singer compares the goddess's actions to an action that would have been familiar to every listener:

She brushed it away from his skin as lightly as when a mother brushes a fly away from her child who is lying in sweet sleep.

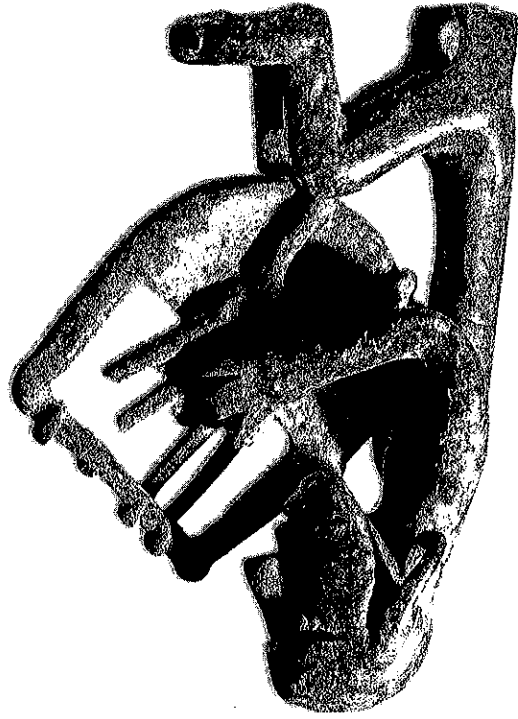
Epic poets such as Homer would come to a city and would go through a part of their repertory while there. A story as long as the *Odyssey* (11,300 lines) could not be told at one sitting. We have to assume that if the singer had only a few days in a town, he would summarize some of his story and sing the rest in detail, in as many sittings as he had time for.

This is exactly what will happen in the selections from the *Odyssey* that are presented here. We'll assume that Homer wants to get his story told to us, but that his time is limited. We'll also assume that the audience, before retiring at the end of each performance, wants to talk about the stories they've just heard. You are now part of that audience.

A Live Performance

What was it like to hear a live performance of the *Odyssey*? We can guess what it was like because there are many instances in the epic itself in which traveling singers appear and sing their tales. In the court of the Phaeacian king, Alcinous (al-SIH-noh-uh), in Book 8, for instance, there is a particularly wonderful singer who must make us wonder if the blind Homer is talking about himself. Let's picture the setting of a performance before we start the story.

Imagine a large hall full of people who are freshly bathed, rubbed with fine oils, and draped in clean tunics. Imagine the smell of meat being cooked over charcoal, the sound of voices. Imagine wine being freely poured, the flickering reflections of the great cooking fires, and the torches that light the room. A certain anticipation hangs in the air. People gossip that the blind minstrel Homer is in the city and that he has new stories about that long war in Troy. Will he appear and entertain tonight?



Bard (singer) with lyre (10th–6th century B.C.; Geometric period. Minoan bronze figure. Location: Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, Crete, Greece. Homer is said to have accompanied his epic poems with a lyre, a type of stringed instrument.

MEET THE WRITER

Homer

(c. 8th century B.C.)

Who Was Homer?

No one knows for sure who Homer was. The later Greeks believed he was a blind minstrel, or singer, who came from the island of Chios. However, seven different cities claimed to be his birthplace, and if he was blind, then he must have been able to see at one time because his epics are so rich in visual imagery. Some scholars think there must have been two Homers; some think he was a legend; the English author Samuel Butler believed that Homer was a woman and wrote *The Authoress of the Odyssey* (1897) to prove his theory.

On the Road Again

If we accept the word of the Greeks themselves, then Homer was the model for a group of wandering bards or minstrels later called rhapsodes (RAP soh dz). He was a singer who traveled from community to community singing of the doings of heroes in battle, and the exploits of gods and goddesses. He was a historian, myth-maker, and entertainer. It is as if the author of the Book of Kings in the Bible, the writer of a history of World War II, and a famous pop singer were combined in one person.

Think
Do you think it matters
that we don't know
exactly who Homer was?
Writer
Why or why not?



Marble bust portrait of Homer, Frontal view, 2nd century B.C., Hellenistic.

Preview the Selection

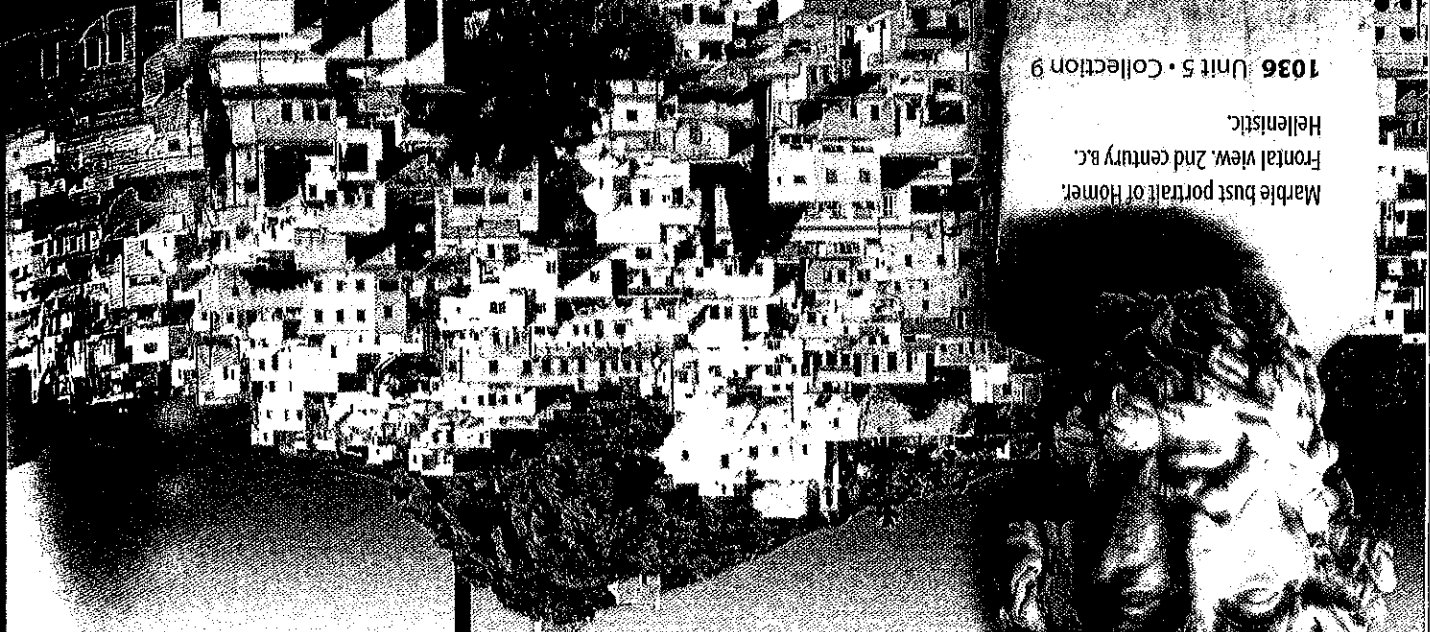
In the *Odyssey* you will meet **Odysseus**, an epic hero consumed with one goal: He wants to return home to his kingdom of Ithaca and his faithful wife Penelope.

Meet the Translator

Robert Fitzgerald

(1910–1985)

After Robert Fitzgerald graduated from Harvard, he first worked as a reporter for a newspaper and then for *Time* magazine. He served in the Navy during World War II and then began teaching at a college. He published poetry and worked on his famous translation of the *Odyssey* while living in Italy for ten years. His translation has been called “the best and truest *Odyssey* in the English language.”



Read with a Purpose Read to learn about the epic hero Odysseus and the journey that has inspired storytellers for centuries.

from the ODYSSEY

by **Homer**

translated by **Robert Fitzgerald**

Tell the Story

Homer opens with an invocation, or prayer, asking the Muse to help him sing his tale. Notice how the singer gives his listeners hints about how his story is to end.

Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending,^o after he plundered the stronghold on the proud height of Troy.

He saw the townlands

and learned the minds of many distant men,

and weathered many bitter nights and days

in his deep heart at sea, while he fought only

to save his life, to bring his shipmates home.

But not by will nor valor could he save them,

for their own recklessness destroyed them all—

children and fools, they killed and feasted on

the cattle of Lord Helios, the Sun,

and he who moves all day through heaven

took from their eyes the dawn of their return.

Of these adventures, Muse, daughter of Zeus,

tell us in our time, lift the great song again.

Begin when all the rest who left behind them

had long ago returned, while he alone still hungered

for home and wife. Her ladyship Calypso

^o Muse: The Greeks believed that there were nine Muses, daughters of Zeus, the chief god. The Muses inspired people to produce music, poetry, dance, and all the other arts. Many epics begin with a poet requesting inspiration from a muse.

2. contending (kuhn TEHND ihng): fighting; dealing with difficulties.

Literary Perspectives

Analyzing Historical Context When applying this perspective, you will view a literary text within its historical context. Specific historical information—such as the time during which the author wrote, the time period in which the text is set, and the ways in which people of the period saw and thought about the world in which they lived—will be of key interest. As you read, be sure to notice the notes and questions at the bottom of the pages, which will guide you in using this perspective.

A Reading Focus Summarizing Read this invocation to the Muse aloud. What does Homer tell you about the hero and what is going to happen to him?

Books 1–4 of the epic tell about Odysseus's son, Telemachus. Telemachus has been searching the Mediterranean world for his father, who has never returned from the ten-year Trojan War. (Today, Odysseus would be listed as missing in action.) When we first meet Odysseus, in Book 5 of the epic, he is a prisoner of the beautiful goddess Calypso. The old soldier is in despair: He has spent ten years (seven of them as Calypso's not entirely unwilling captive) trying to get home. The goddess Athena has supported and helped Odysseus on his long journey. Now she begs her father, Zeus, to help her favorite mortal, and Zeus agrees. He sends the messenger god Hermes to Calypso's island to order Odysseus released. Although Calypso is not described as evil, her seductive charms—even her promises of immortality for Odysseus—threaten to keep the hero away from his wife, Penelope.

No words were lost on Hermes the Wayfinder who bent to tie his beautiful sandals on,

Calypso, the Sweet Nymph

PART ONE: The Wanderings

clung to him in her sea-hollowed caves—
 a nymph, immortal and most beautiful,
 who craved him for her own.
 And when long years and seasons
 wheeling brought around that point of time
 ordained for him to make his passage homeward,
 trials and dangers, even so, attended him
 even in Ithaca, near those he loved.
 Yet all the gods had pitied Lord Odysseus,
 all but Poseidon, raging cold and rough
 against the brave king till he came ashore
 at last on his own land. . . . **A**

(from Book 1)

? 33–66. There is a great deal of nature imagery in this episode. Jot down some of the images that help you see Hermes' flight. What images describing Calypso's island appeal to your senses of sight, hearing, and smell?

35 ambrosial, golden, that carry him over water
 or over endless land in a swish of the wind,
 and took the wand with which he charms asleep—
 or when he wills, awake—the eyes of men.
 So wand in hand he paced into the air,
 shot from Pieria down, down to sea level,
 and veered to skim the swell. A gull patrolling
 between the wave crests of the desolate sea
 will dip to catch a fish, and douse his wings;
 no higher above the whitecaps Hermes flew
 until the distant island lay ahead,
 then rising shoreward from the violet ocean
 he stepped up to the cave. Divine Calypso,
 the mistress of the isle, was now at home.
 Upon her hearthstone a great fire blazing
 scented the farthest shores with cedar smoke
 and smoke of thyme, and singing high and low
 in her sweet voice, before her loom aweaving,
 she passed her golden shuttle to and fro. **A**
 A deep wood grew outside, with summer leaves
 of alder and black poplar, pungent cypress.
 Ornate birds here rested their stretched wings—
 horned owls, falcons, cormorants—long-tongued
 beachcombing birds, and followers of the sea.
 Around the smooth-walled cave a crooking vine
 held purple clusters under pily of green;
 and four springs, bubbling up near one another
 shallow and clear, took channels here and there
 through beds of violets and tender parsley.
 Even a god who found this place
 would gaze, and feel his heart beat with delight:
 so Hermes did; but when he had gazed his fill
 he entered the wide cave. Now face-to-face
 the magical Calypso recognized him, **B**
 as all immortal gods know one another
 on sight—though seeming strangers, far from home.
 But he saw nothing of the great Odysseus,

A Literary Perspectives Analyzing Historical Context What do the characters of the gods reveal about the beliefs of the ancient Greeks?

B Literary Focus Epic Heroes and Conflict How does the natural beauty of Calypso's island contrast with the internal conflict that Odysseus is experiencing?



Analyzing Visuals
 Ulysses and Calypso, Red-figured vase (5th century B.C.)

Viewing and Interpreting
 What does the portrayal of Calypso, Red-figured vase (5th century B.C.), Location: Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy, values and beliefs of the ancient Greeks?

35. ambrosial (am BROH zhuhl): fit for the gods; divine. Nectar and ambrosia are the drink and food that keep the gods immortal.
 40. Pieria (py IHR ee uh): place in central Greece not far from Olympus; a favorite spot of Hermes.

40–45. To help his audience visualize Hermes dropping down and skimming the waves, Homer compares Hermes to a gull. This comparison between something the audience knows to something unknown is called an epic simile.
 60. pily: twisted strands.

People and Places in the *Odyssey*

The following is a list of characters who take part in the sections of the *Odyssey* included in this book. Note that the Greeks in the *Odyssey* are often referred to as **Achaean**s (uh KEE uhnz) or **Argives** (AHR gyvz). *Achaean*s, the more general term, also includes the people of Ithaca, the island off the west coast of Greece where Odysseus ruled. The word *Achaean*s is taken from the name of an ancient part of northeastern Greece called Achaea. The name *Argives* usually refers to the Greeks who went to fight at Troy.



Penelope by John Roddam Spencer Stanhope (1829–1908). Oil on canvas. Private collection.

The Wanderings: Characters and Places

Aeaea (ee EE uh): home of Circe, the enchantress and goddess.

Aliconius (al SIHN oh uh): king of Phaeacia.

Odysseus tells the story of his adventures to

Aliconius's court.

Calypso (ka LIHP soh): nymph goddess who keeps

Odysseus on her island for seven years.

Charibdis (kuh RIHB dilz): female monster who

sucks in water three times a day to form a deadly

whirlpool. (Scholars believe the character is based on a real whirlpool in the Strait of Messina.)

Cicones (sih KOH neez): people living on the southwestern coast of Thrace who battle Odysseus and

his men on their journey.

Circe (SUR see): enchantress and goddess who

turns Odysseus's men into swine.

Cyclops: See **Polyphemus**, below.

Erebus (EHR uh buhs): dark area of the underworld where the dead reside.

Eurylochus (yuh RIHL uh kuh): a member of

Odysseus's loyal crew.

Lotus Eaters: people who feed Odysseus's men

lotus plants to make them forget Ithaca.

Phaeacia (fee AY shuh): island kingdom ruled by

King Aliconius. The Phaeacians are shipbuilders

and traders.

Polyphemus (pahl uh FEE muhs): son of the

sea god Poseidon and blinded by Odysseus.

Polyphemus is a **Cyclops** (SY clops), one of a

race of brutish one-eyed giants, the **Cyclopes** (sy

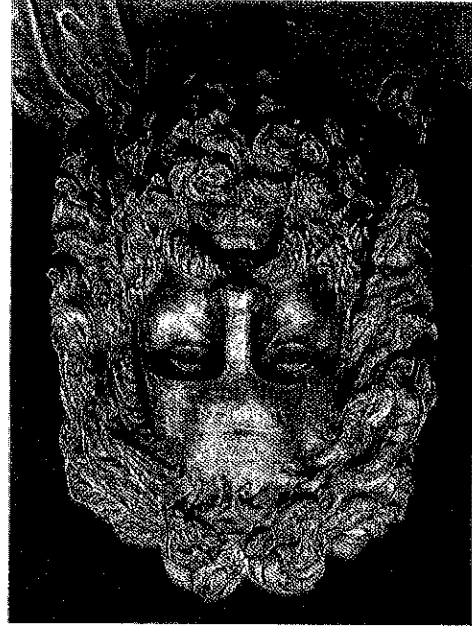
CLOH pee), who live solitary lives as shepherds,

supposedly on the island now known as Sicily.

Scylla (SIHL uh): female monster with six serpent

heads, each head having a triple row of fangs.

Colossal head of Zeus (1st century B.C.) from Otricoli, Hellenistic. Location: Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican Museums, Vatican State.



Penelope Athena, a votive relief from the Acropolis (c. 470–450 B.C.). Acropolis Museum, Athens, Greece.

(Scholars believe this character is based on a dangerous rock in the Strait of Messina.)

Sirens: sea nymphs whose beautiful and mysterious music lures sailors to steer their ships toward

dangerous rocks.

Teiresias (ty REE see uhs): famous blind prophet

from the city of Thebes. Odysseus meets him in

the Land of the Dead.

Thrinakia (thrih NAY kee uh): island where the sun

god Helios keeps his cattle.

Ithaca: The People at Home

Antinous (an TIHN oh uhs): one of Penelope's main suitors; an arrogant and mean young noble from Ithaca.

Eumaeus (yoo MEE uhs): swineherd, one of Odysseus's loyal servants.

Euryclia (yoo ruh KLEE uh): Odysseus's old nurse.

Eurymachus (yoo RIHM uh kuh): suitor of

Penelope.

Eurynome (yur IHN uh mee): Penelope's house-

keeper.

Penelope (puh NEHL uh pee): Odysseus's faithful

wife.

Philoetes (fih LEE shee uhs): cowherd, one of

Odysseus's loyal servants.

Telemachus (tuh LEHM uh kuh): Odysseus's son.

The Gods

Apollo (uh PAHL oh): god of poetry, music, proph-

ecy, medicine, and archery.

Athena (uh THEE nuh): favorite daughter of Zeus;

the great goddess of wisdom as well as war and

peace. She favored the Greeks during the Trojan

War. She is often called Pallas Athena.

Cronus (KROH nuhs): **Titan** (giant god) who ruled

the universe until his son Zeus overthrew him.

Helios (HEE lee ahs): sun god.

Hephaestus (hee FEHS tuh): god of metalwork-

ing.

Hermes (HUR mee):

messenger god.

Poseidon (poh SY

duhn): god of the

sea; brother of Zeus.

Poseidon is called

Earth Shaker because

he is believed to cause

earthquakes. He is an

enemy of Odysseus.

Zeus (zoos): the most

powerful god. His

home is on Olympus.

Poseidon. Detail from a bronze statue (5th century B.C.).

