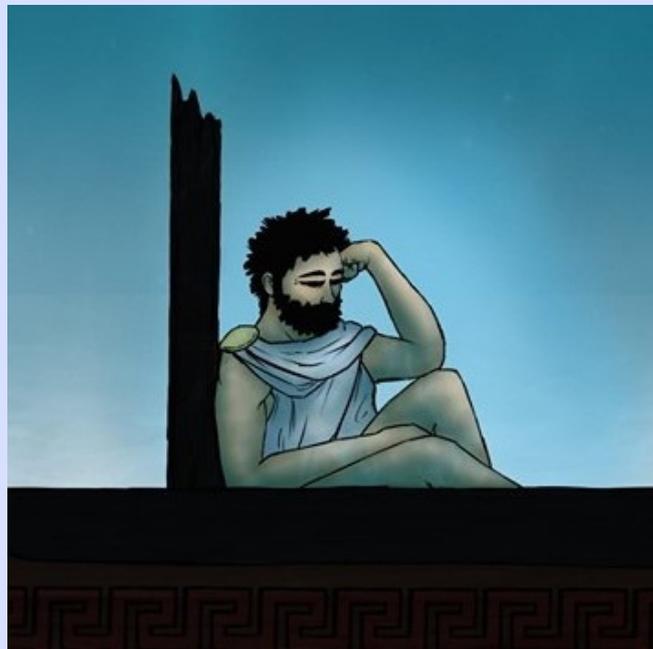


Odyssey Resource

Booklet

UCL CLASSICAL PLAY X

ACADEMUS EDUCATION



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Academus Education



Academus Education is a free non-profit Classics outreach programme, which aims to bring Classics education to students who may not have had the chance to study Classics before. Established in the height of the pandemic last year, the aim was to provide an online Classics summer school entirely for free for 13-17 year old students who hadn't had the opportunity to study Classics at school. Running over the course of two weeks, the 2020 Academus summer school was a huge success, with over 80 students participating in lessons in Latin, Ancient Greek, history and literature as well as lectures from keynote speakers including Edith Hall and Caroline Lawrence. Academus also provides online resources and articles written by university students to showcase different topics and areas of Classics, from Roman history to how Greek literature impacts the modern world (<https://www.academuseducation.co.uk/blog>). They have also supported students applying to university with 1-1 sessions from Classics students at various universities across the country.

Academus' latest projects include a series of free Digital Think Tanks, with guest speakers and panels. Upcoming events include talks for LGBT+ History month, and Academus is privileged to be hosting Paul Cartledge on March 2nd for a lecture on Thebes based on his latest book 'Thebes: The Forgotten City of Ancient Greece'. The Think Tanks are free and open to anyone who is interested.

Academus is also running a 2-day Easter crash course version of the summer school programme on the 27th-28th March 2021. This event will be for 13-17 year old students who haven't been able to study Classics before to get a taster for the subject!

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Odyssey Book Summary.

Book 1

The Odyssey begins in media res (in the middle of the action) with the council of the gods, debating what to do about Odysseus, who is currently stuck on Calypso's island. Athene argues to the gods that they should help Odysseus return home to Ithaca. She goes to Ithaca disguised as Mentos, a friend of Odysseus, in order to help Telemachus, Odysseus's son. Suitors have taken over the palace at Ithaca since there is no sign that Odysseus will return. Athene convinces Telemachus to go to Pylos and Sparta in search of news about his father. Telemachus meets with his mother Penelope to discuss his plans and tells the suitors that he plans to hold an assembly the next day.

Book 2

Telemachus holds the meeting with the suitors in which he laments his father's absence and rebukes the suitors for taking over the palace, eating the palace's meat and drinking its wine. One of the suitors, Antinous, blames Penelope for refusing to marry one of them and discusses her ruse to string them along: she said she would not marry until she had woven a shroud for Laertes, Odysseus' father, but every night she would unpick her work so no progress would be made. There is an omen of two eagles fighting, which is interpreted to mean Odysseus will return imminently. Telemachus then asks the suitors to leave, but they refuse. Telemachus prepares to sail to Pylos and Sparta, encouraged by Athene who speaks to him disguised as Mentor, a friend of Odysseus.

Book 3

Telemachus arrives at Pylos, home of Nestor who was with Odysseus at Troy. Telemachus and Athene, still disguised as Mentor, are entertained by Nestor and Peisistratos, Nestor's son. When asked about Odysseus, Nestor doesn't know much but recalls the Trojan War and the homecoming of the Greek heroes, including Menelaus and Agamemnon, who was murdered upon his return home. Eventually, Telemachus leaves with Peisistratos to Sparta.

Book 4

Telemachus arrives at Sparta and is entertained by Menelaus and Helen. Menelaus recalls his wanderings around Egypt and his homecoming after the Trojan War. When asked about Odysseus, Menelaus recalls that in Egypt he captured Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, who told him that Odysseus was being held captive by Calypso on her island. At this news, Telemachus decides to set sail for Ithaca. Meanwhile, the suitors hear of Telemachus' voyage and plot an ambush for him as he returns. Penelope overhears and is upset but is comforted by a dream from Athene.

Books 1-4 are also known as the Telemachy as they focus on the exploits of Telemachus.

Book 5

A shift in perspective: now the events of Odysseus are narrated. After a meeting of the gods, Hermes arrives at Calypso's island and demands that she lets Odysseus go as it is the will of the gods. With Calypso's help,

Odysseus builds a raft and sets sail for Ithaca, but it is wrecked by Poseidon. He is saved by a nearby river Leukothea, who allows Odysseus to swim ashore at the land of the Phaeacians.

Book 6

Nausicaa, the princess of the Phaeacians, is encouraged in a dream by Athene to go and wash her clothes in the river. Here she encounters Odysseus, who supplicates her and she invites him to the palace as a guest, as Athene makes him appear handsome and Nausicaa falls in love with him. She gives him advice on how to find the city and how to be received by her parents.

Book 7

On his way to the palace, Athene appears to Odysseus to help him appeal to the king and queen of the Phaeacians. Odysseus arrives at the splendid palace and supplicates to the king and queen, Alcinous and Arete. They receive him and ask how he arrived, and he explains his shipwreck. Alcinous offers to help Odysseus get home and gives him a place to stay.

Book 8

A feast is held in the palace of the Phaeacians. Demodocus, the bard, sings of Odysseus in Troy, and the disguised Odysseus tries to hide his tears at the story. Games are held for their guest, and Odysseus declines to compete, but his pride is wounded and he easily bests the competition in throwing the discus. Another feast is held, with celebrations and more songs, this time of the story of Ares and Aphrodite. Odysseus is given gifts for his journey, and is finally asked to identify himself and recount his tale after he breaks down at the story of the Trojan Horse.

Book 9

The next four books consist of Odysseus' story of his return from Troy. After he and his men departed Troy, they sacked the land of the Cicones, but they fight back and Odysseus's crew lose six men. Then they come to the land of the Lotus-Eaters, and once some of the men taste the intoxicating Lotus fruit they forget all about their journey and wish to stay on the island. After this, they reach the island of the Cyclopes, the uncivilised one-eyed giants. They find a cave full of milk and cheese, and begin to help themselves. Polyphemus, the Cyclops who owns the cave, returns and imprisons Odysseus' men, having eaten two of them. He vows to eat all of the men, two at a time. Odysseus devises a plan to trick Polyphemus: he gets him very drunk on strong wine he had brought from his ship, and when asked his name, Odysseus replies that he is called 'Nobody'. Then, he stabs him in the eye using a pointed wooden staff. When Polyphemus cries out, the other Cyclopes nearby ask what is happening, but Polyphemus replies that 'Nobody' is attacking him. Thus, Odysseus and his men escape from the cave by hiding beneath Polyphemus' sheep. Once they have boarded their ship, Polyphemus begins to throw rocks at them, and Odysseus triumphantly reveals his true identity. Polyphemus calls upon his father, Poseidon, to curse Odysseus.

Book 10

Their next stop is the island of Aeolus, the god of the winds. He gives Odysseus a bag of wind to guide them back home. They travel within sight of Ithaca, but Odysseus' crewmates think that the bag conceals treasure

and open it, releasing all of the winds and setting them off course. They then reach the land of the Laistrygonians, who turn out to be cannibalistic giants who try to eat the crew; they only narrowly escape. They then arrive at Aeaëa, the island of the witch Circe. She turns some of Odysseus' men into pigs, but Hermes arrives to warn Odysseus and give him the herb moly to make him immune to Circe's magic. Once he has overpowered Circe, she gives them hospitality and they stay on the island for a year, with Circe and Odysseus becoming lovers. After a year, Odysseus decides to move on and asks Circe for advice. She tells him that he must speak to the prophet Teiresias in the underworld.

Book 11

Odysseus travels to the place Circe had spoken of and prepares an offering for the spirits of the dead. He first sees Elpenor, a member of his crew who has died by falling off the roof at Circe's house, who asks to be buried properly. He then speaks to Teiresias, who tells him that he will return home and reclaim Ithaca, and that he must then make a journey to a far-off land to appease Poseidon. He warns Odysseus not to harm the cattle of the Sun otherwise he will suffer much more and return home alone. He then speaks to his mother, who has died of grief in his absence and who gives him news of Ithaca. There is then a parade of mythical women who Odysseus sees. Finally, he speaks to some of his companions from Troy, including Achilles and Agamemnon, who recounts his death at the hands of his wife. He also sees some of the famous sinners of the underworld, such as Tantalus and Sisyphus.

Book 12

After the Underworld, Odysseus returns to Aeaëa to bury Elpenor and then sets off for Ithaca. He encounters the Sirens, and makes his men use beeswax to avoid hearing their alluring song, but he ties himself to the mast so that he can hear the song. They pass by Scylla and Charybdis: Scylla is a six-headed monster who snatches men from ships and Charybdis is a massive whirlpool. They lose six men to Scylla and arrive at Thrinacia, the island of the Sun. They are stranded here due to the winds, and in their hunger the crew kill and eat some of the Sun's cattle. They are punished for this by Zeus who sends a storm to shipwreck them: only Odysseus survives. He washes up on Calypso's island where he stays until the beginning of the story.

Book 13

The end of the flashbacks. The next day, Odysseus prepares to depart with all the gifts from the Phaeacians. They arrive at Ithaca, and the Phaeacians carry a sleeping Odysseus ashore. Poseidon learns of their aid and punishes the Phaeacians by turning their ship to stone. When Odysseus awakes, he meets Athene who tells him that he is on Ithaca. Odysseus, not knowing it is Athene, disguises his identity: when she reveals herself, he realises the truth, but Athene tells him he must remain disguised to defeat the suitors. She transforms him into an old beggar and sends him to his old swineherd, Eumaeus, to wait for the return of Telemachus.

Book 14

Odysseus meets Eumaeus who receives him in his hut. Eumaeus says that he is still loyal to his old master and is waiting his return, to which Odysseus in disguise says that it will happen quite soon, despite Eumaeus' scepticism. Odysseus lies about his origins and says he is a traveller from Crete who fought in the Trojan War, and that he travelled to Egypt where he heard Odysseus was still alive.

Book 15

Athene travels to Sparta to tell Telemachus to hurry home to Ithaca and warns him of the suitors' ambush. She also tells him to go to Eumaeus upon his return. Before he leaves, he receives gifts from Helen and Menelaus. They return to Pylos to drop off Peisistratus, and Telemachus encounters Theoclymenus, a fugitive prophet. He accepts Theoclymenus and offers him clemency on his return to Ithaca. Back in Eumaeus' hut, Eumaeus tells his life story to Odysseus: that he was the son of a king who was stolen by pirates and eventually taken in by Laertes as his swineherd. Meanwhile, Telemachus and Theoclymenus arrive at Ithaca, and Theoclymenus interprets a portent as a sign of the strength of Odysseus' house.

Book 16

Telemachus goes to Eumaeus' hut and finds Odysseus disguised as a stranger. Eumaeus goes to the palace to speak to Penelope, and Odysseus reveals himself to his son. Together, the plot to overthrow the suitors: Odysseus will enter the palace disguised as a beggar whilst Telemachus hides weapons. After their failed ambush, the suitors return to the palace. Antinous proposes to murder Telemachus, but one of the other suitors Amphinomus vetoes this idea.

Book 17

Telemachus returns to the palace and reunites with his mother and nurse, Eurycleia. He tells Penelope of the news from his travels, but does not speak of Odysseus' return to Ithaca. Eumaeus and Odysseus travel to town, where they meet the cruel goatherd Melanthius, who scorns them and kicks Eumaeus. Odysseus then arrives at the palace and is recognised by his old dog Argos, who dies after seeing his old master. Odysseus enters the palace as a beggar and is treated with contempt by the suitors, and is struck by Antinous. Eumaeus tells Penelope of the stranger, and she wishes to meet him.

Book 18

Another beggar enters the palace and challenges Odysseus to a fight: Odysseus overpowers him and impresses the suitors. Athene then inspires Penelope to appear before the suitors, and she hints that she is close to choosing one of them to marry, and tricks them into bringing her gifts. One of the suitors, Eurymachus, taunts Odysseus and ends up throwing a chair at him, but the fight is broken up by Telemachus.

Book 19

Telemachus and Odysseus remove the weapons from the suitors. Odysseus meets with Penelope, and he pretends to have met Odysseus in Crete and claims that he is still alive. His old nurse Eurycleia washes his feet and recognises a scar, but she is silenced as he doesn't want Penelope to know of his identity yet. Penelope describes her dream to Odysseus and says that she will marry the first man who can shoot an arrow through the holes of twelve axes set in a line.

Book 20

Both Penelope and Odysseus have a troubled night's sleep. The next day Odysseus meets Philoetius, the kindly cowherd who is still loyal to Odysseus. The suitors are once again plotting to kill Telemachus, but Amphinomus warns against it. There are several omens of doom, including an eagle carrying a dove in its talons and the walls being covered in blood.

Book 21

Penelope says that she will marry whoever can string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through the holes of twelve axes set in a line. It is set up: Telemachus tries but can't string the bow. The suitors try and fail whilst Odysseus reveals himself and the plan to Eumaeus and Philoetius. Odysseus then asks to try stringing the bow and despite the suitor's objections he is given a go. He easily strings the bow and shoots through the axes.

Book 22

Odysseus then shoots an arrow at Antinous and reveals himself, leading to a full-scale battle. There is no way out for the suitors and they begin to fall. Melanthius the goatherd brings weapons for the suitors, but Athene aids Odysseus in the battle after seeing Odysseus' strength. The battle ends with the help of Athene. Eurycleia rounds up the disloyal maidservants and Odysseus punishes them by making them clean all of the blood and then executing them by hanging. Melanthius is also tortured and killed.

Book 23

Penelope is summoned by Eurycleia, but she doesn't believe that Odysseus has returned until she sees him with her own eyes. Odysseus plans to lay low as he has just killed all of the noble young men in the kingdom. Penelope is sceptical about Odysseus and tests him by asking her bed to be moved: Odysseus is angry as he knows that their bed can't be moved as one of the posts is part of a tree. Penelope knows it is Odysseus and reunites with her husband. He tells her his story and then goes to see his father.

Book 24

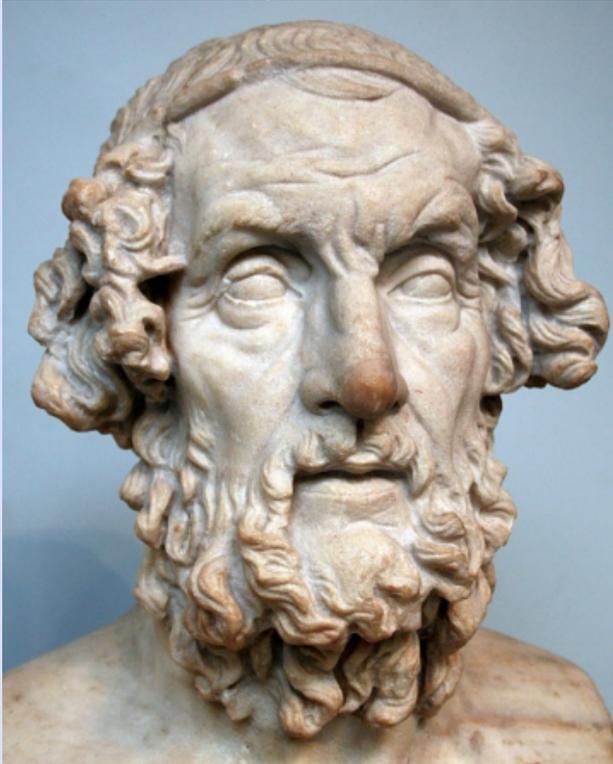
Hermes leads the souls of the suitors in the underworld, where Achilles and Agamemnon argue about who had the best death. Amphinomus tells them about what Odysseus has done and tries to blame Penelope. Meanwhile, Odysseus meets with his father Laertes, at first disguised but he eventually reveals himself and they reunite. The kinsmen of the suitors plot to kill Odysseus, but Athene puts a stop to it and only one man, Antinous' father, is killed. Peace descends on Ithaca, and Odysseus is restored as king, finally achieving his homecoming.

Who was Homer? – by Meg Finlayson

Homer is the name given to the poet of the Iliad and Odyssey, two important Epic poems that were composed some time in the 8th century BCE and are some of the earliest examples of Ancient Greek Literature. The Iliad, set during the fabled Trojan War, tells the story of the great anger of Achilles, first as a result of his quarrel with King Agamemnon and then because of the death of his closest companion, Patroclus. The Odyssey, set after the Trojan War, details the epic journey home by one of the Greek's key commanders during the war, Odysseus.

Origins and Influence

By the Classical era, Homer's own life and existence had been mythologised. There was a widespread belief that Homer was a blind bard from Ionia who composed his poems with divine inspiration from the Muses, and that his blindness was the cost of his creative enlightenment. His exact date and place of birth was unknown even in antiquity, although a clan of people from the island of Chios named the 'Homeridae', meaning 'sons of Homer', claimed descent from the great poet. However, debate exists as to whether the Homeridae were genuinely descendants of Homer himself. The name could also be derived from 'homeros', the ancient Greek for 'hostage', and so the Homeridae could also refer to the clan being the descendants of individuals who were originally brought to Chios as hostages. Equally, the 'Homeridae' can refer not just to a family of people, but to a group of rhapsodes or professional poem performers. While these people did not claim a literal familial descent from Homer, they were descended from Homer in terms of their continuation of his legacy by inheriting his performance and poetic skills. Despite Homer's dubious origins, the poet was extremely well regarded in antiquity. Homer's work had a large influence on many aspects of Ancient Greek culture and society, from art and literature to religion and politics. He was considered to be the most beloved of ancient creatives, and Plato considered him to be 'the poet who educated Greece.'



Marble bust of Homer. 2nd century Roman copy of Greek original. British Museum.

Oral Tradition

Although the Iliad and Odyssey have been available in written form as manuscripts since the Classical age, originally both the Epics were transmitted across the ancient world by oral tradition. Oral tradition is a form of communication where ideas, knowledge, and art, are preserved through story telling from generation to generation. The work of Classical scholars has determined that Homer's poems were originally constructed this way before they were codified into the text we have now. This is evidenced by the use of stock phrases and formulaic expressions and repetition of important sections which would have aided the bard in remembering and performing the poems.

The Homeric Question

Because of the ambiguous nature of the details of Homer's life,

and the existence of oral tradition, many people question whether Homer is indeed a real person at all. 'The Homeric Question' is the name given to the debate in scholarship over whether the Iliad and Odyssey represent the work of a single author or whether Homer represents a conceptual 'author' and is a convenient name assigned to a body of literary work that was created over generations by various storytellers which eventually amalgamated into one single story. The two sides of this debate are known in scholarship as 'unitarians' and 'analysts.' Unitarians believe Homer to be a single poet and that the two Epic poems show an artistic unity which suggest they were written at one time by a single hand. Analysts believe that the poems were composed by many hands over several generations and that parts of Iliad and Odyssey may have been composed by different poets. The answer may lie somewhere between the two theories.

Evidence and Debate

Although there is a degree of consistency in the language of the Iliad and the Odyssey, linguistic analysis suggests that the Iliad and Odyssey may have been composed at different times, with the Iliad being earlier and the Odyssey being later, and so must have been composed by different people. It is certainly the case that the story of the Trojan War, and stories revolving around its key characters, had been in circulation orally before the 8th century BCE when the poems were written. It has been debated whether or not the two epic poems can be considered intertextually as being written with awareness of the other. At the start of the twentieth century, some scholars asserted that the Iliad never repeats or refers to any incident that is ever related in the Odyssey. Also noted were the Odyssey's lack of allusions to significant moments of actions from the Iliad, while there are moments of description of other events of the Trojan War, which could lead us to be sceptical that the poet, or potentially poets in this instance, that composed the Odyssey was aware of the other work as the two pieces are supposedly related to each other while making no direct reference to previous action. While this could suggest that the two are fundamentally disconnected, and therefore are intended as wholly separate pieces of work, it has been argued that it is possible that this can instead be taken as direct evidence of the avoidance of overlap between the two narratives, which would only be possible if the composer of the Odyssey did indeed possess a detailed awareness of the Iliad. It may be a case that 'Homer' codified an existing tradition, that had been evolving for generations, into one single story. Regardless of which theory scholars believe, 'Homer' is always the name credited as the author of the Iliad and Odyssey, whether 'Homer' represents one single author or the work of a collection of creatives over time.



'Homer and his Guide' by William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1874)
Milwaukee Art Museum.

Conclusion

There is still much we do not know about Homer, but one thing is certain: the Iliad and the Odyssey are some of the most famous and important works composed in history. Homer's legacy continues to impact culture today.

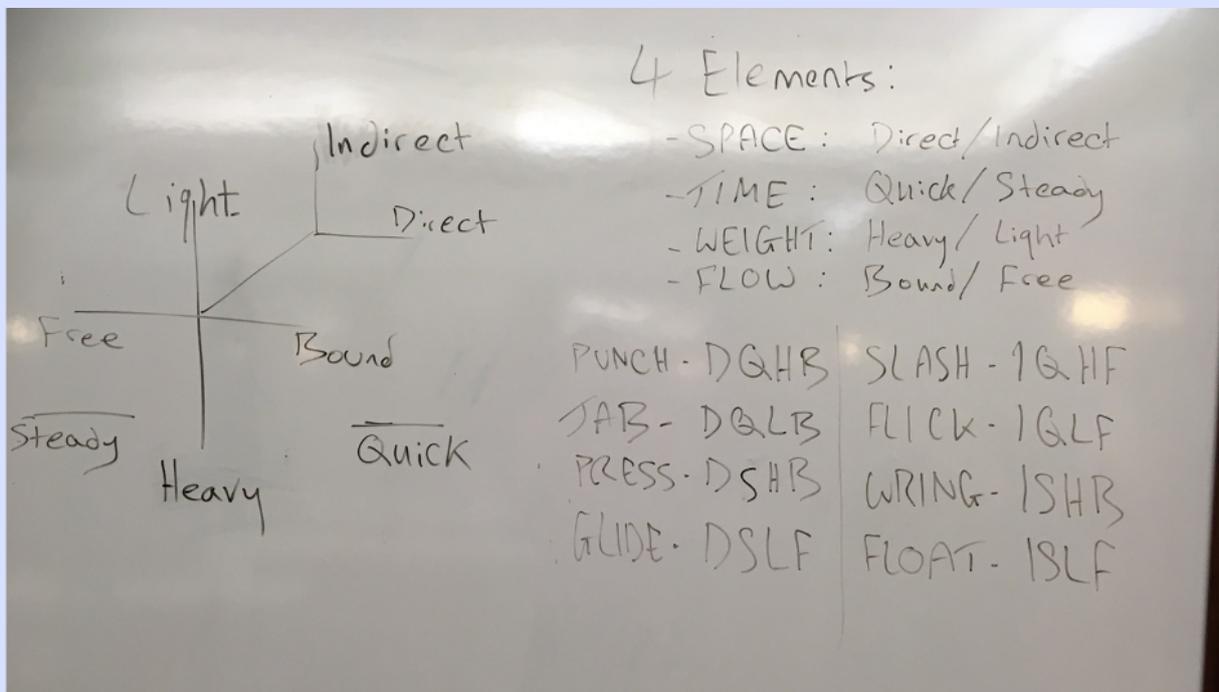
Directing Philosophy - Lewis Bentley, Director

I remember dancing when I was young. I was never the strongest, talented, nor even trained – but it made me smile. I could lose myself in the rhythm of the music, in the motion of my arms and legs, and I could just let go - be free. No matter how angry and frustrated I felt, I could just dance, and everything else would leave...

Physical Theatre has played a huge part in my understanding of theatre. It was this abstract concept – distinct from anything else I'd seen. It wasn't till a performance of Peter Shaffer's *Equus* at Trafalgar Studios, that I would understand the impact that it has on the audience (spectators). This ability for actors (players) to blend together and move their bodies in ways enigmatic to the human eye, yet still remaining so grounded in nature. Player A can move their arm in such a way that it transforms the very emotions and style of that character. Player B can become a horse with no change in costume, but simply a change in their psyche and physicality. Player A and Player B can then start to move and work together, forming a collaboration, which makes Drama and Theatre incredibly special, becoming this sort of ritual sport. I think this is what has made socially distanced theatre lack a certain edge, as the actors are unable to touch and connect, nor is the Spectator able to fully release themselves into the spirit of theatre. One could argue that the mask acts like that of the theatre company Punchdrunk, however, this is a completely different experience – there the mask detaches the spectators and allows to be objective, now it simply alienates.

Anyway, I digress. Being in a rehearsal room since last March was a really rewarding experience, and though feeling a little apocalyptic, enabled us to break free from the chains of conventional Drama practices, and meant that we focussed more on the individual, on their physicality, and started to adapt and create our very own exercises where we could bring out emotion in characters without the need for touch. The players were drained by this constant delving into their very own psyche and how this can be drawn out and act as foundations for their characters. The *Odyssey* is a story about morality and human nature, thus it's incredibly important that players are used to not just what emotion is, but how to portray it, and allow spectators to fully experience it.

But the divide lies in the distinction between the emotion and physical – how can they be connected? Players felt as though they were understanding the motives of their characters, understanding the emotions of their very selves, understanding their movements, yet lacked the ability or understanding to put it all together. That's where Rudolf von Laban comes into play. Dance carries emotion. We can be transfixed by the movement of a swan, who so gracefully glides along – but what is it that makes us feel this way? Why are we so transfixed by the form of motion? What is it that makes us want to watch more – to spectate?



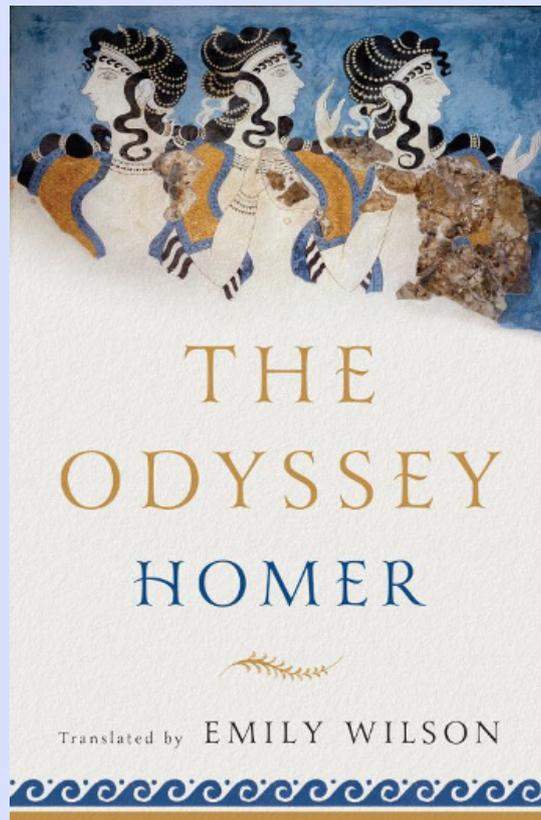
Now Laban's Effects may seem an abstract and alien concept (and a university lecture from the look of my notes!), thus I will attempt to explain it to give an understanding into just how useful it can be not just for Theatre players, but the players of everyday life. Simply, there are two principal motions – Direct and Indirect, showing how Players approach the space. An action is either intentional and has meaning, or it's reactive, acting upon what is happening in our surroundings. From this, we can construct the range of different elements (Space, Time, Weight and Flow), and form them into actions and motions. Take punch, this is Direct, Quick, Heavy and Bound. So, if we take a boxer, say Diagoras of Rhodes to keep with this Hellenistic theme, his punch will have an end (a target), it will happen quickly and have weight in his throw, whilst the actual flow is restrictive.

From this, we can not only form basic actions, but start to see how these movements exist in everyday life and activity. We can see someone walking along the street and see how tense they are in their stride, their clenched fists and head-down approach. This is a wring effect (imagine squeezing a towel of all its moisture), and from this we can start to picture and develop emotions. It really allows us to look at how we use our physicality, how we present ourselves, and just what others see.

Penelope proved a really useful character for these effects, as she has a whole range of conflicting emotions throughout The Odyssey, not just in what she displays, but what and who she wants to be. The player, Maddy, struck a beautiful balance between wring and float. This led to understanding of a Penelope that is reactive, having to adapt to the very circumstances that she faces, and she's tense as a result of that, however, there are times when she is free, in her dreams and with Odysseus. This is definitely an exercise to try; to experiment not just with the movements of The Odyssey's characters, but importantly, your own.

There is an intrinsic grace within movement and dance, which always needs to be at the very forefront of theatre, ritual and life.

Emily Wilson's Odyssey – by Elena Aparicio Calero



In 1615, George Chapman – dramatist, poet, and translator – published his *Whole Works of Homer*, becoming the first in a long list of translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into English. One of the latest of these is Emily Wilson's translation of the *Odyssey*, which arrived in bookshops in 2017. A new translation of the *Odyssey* is, to the eyes of the general public, a rather insignificant occurrence. After all, there have been so many throughout the years, and the number is ever increasing. Wilson's *Odyssey*, however, is set apart, perhaps because it was the first instance of a woman translating the epic into English – this is certainly what most media outlets emphasise about the edition.

Wilson's translation of the *Odyssey* is a product of her time, as well as of her own experience. As she says herself in an interview for *The Western Canon Podcast*, you can interpret her translation as being a product of her gender, but one needs to also look at other translations and understand that they are a product of their status as men (white, American men, she specifies). This, as we shall see, is exemplified through a comparison of their translation choices at key points of the epic.

First, let's take a look at the opening lines of the *Odyssey*. Below are the two most recent translations of the first 11 lines of the epic: first, Peter Green's, and then Wilson's.

“The man, Muse—tell me about that resourceful man, who wandered
far and wide, when he'd sacked Troy's sacred citadel:
many men's townships he saw, and learned their ways of thinking,
many the griefs he suffered at heart on the open sea,
battling for his own life and his comrades' homecoming. Yet
no way could he save his comrades, much though he longed to—

it was through their own bling recklessness that they perished,
the fools, for they slaughtered the cattle of Hēlios the sun god
and ate them: for that he took from them their day of returning.
Tell us this tale, goddess, child of Zeus: start anywhere in it!” (Green, 2018)

“Tell me about a complicated man.
Muse, tell me how he wandered and was lost
when he had wrecked the holy town of Troy, and where he went, and who he met, the pain
he suffered on the sea, and how he worked
to save his life and bring his men back home.
He failed, and for their own mistakes, they died.
They ate the Sun God’s cattle, and the god
kept them from home. Now goddess, child of Zeus,
tell the old story for our modern times.
Find the beginning.” (Wilson, 2017)

Perhaps the most significant difference among the two is the language. Green’s is full of convoluted syntax and structure. Take a look at the word order in the sentences: compare, for instance, “he suffered on the sea” with “many the griefs he suffered at heart on the open sea”. In most translations of Homer, the latter style is traditionally adopted. Wilson addresses her choice to opt for more concision in her translator’s note, explaining that she aims to portray to the reader that Homeric language is not obscure and that “the *Odyssey* relies on coordinated, not subordinated syntax (‘and then this, and then this, and then this,’ rather than ‘although this, because of that, when this, which was this, on account of that’).”

Different translations serve different purposes, and these deliberate choices do not mean that one work is better than the other. Wilson prioritises the balance between readability and closeness to the style of the Greek; Throughout the epic, she does this not only through strikingly shorter sentences, but also through the avoidance of repetitions that might draw the reader away. Epithets that are always the same in the Greek, such as the traditionally translated “rosy-fingered Dawn”, are modified in different occasions to convey different things. Rosy-fingered dawn turns into “her fingers bloomed” (Od. 2.1), “her fingers bright with roses” (Od. 4.306), “touched the sky with flowers” (Od. 5.228), and so on.

Another one of the central focuses to Wilson’s translation is the treatment of the poem’s women. The language that she employs to translate the language around female characters is subtle, but consistent in its ideas. For instance, she refuses to call handmaidens or nurses anything else than what they are: slaves. She also continually avoids the usage of sexually derogatory terms in the depiction of women unless specifically depicted in the text (an example of this is the ‘common dog’ metaphor in the description of troublesome women; see 4.148, 11.426). It is apt here to compare Wilson’s translation to other modern ones – for example, Robert Fagles’ or Stanley Lombardo’s. The following are the three different ways in which they approach Od. 22.462-4:

“No clean death for the likes of them, by god!

Not from me—they showered abuse on my head, they showered abuse on my head, my mother’s too!
You sluts—the suitors’ whores!” (Fagles, 2002)

"I won't allow a clean death for these women—
The suitors' sluts—who have heaped reproaches
Upon my own head and upon my mother's." (Lombardo, 2000)

“I refuse to grant these girls
a clean death, since they poured down shame on me
and Mother, when they lay beside the suitors.” (Wilson, 2017)

Observe how the action of sleeping with the suitors (παρά τε μνηστῆρσιν ἴαυον in the Greek) is replaced with the derogatory descriptors ‘sluts’ or ‘whores’. It happens elsewhere in the epic too: in Od. 20.1-17, Odysseus sees the slave girls and is enraged, for he knows that they have been sleeping with the suitors; Wilson’s version reads: “... the girls who had / been sleeping with suitors ...” while Fagles calls them “the maids who whored the suitors”. Wilson has highlighted this particular phenomenon on many occasions, stating how stunned she was to find out that translators import these words into the language.

These terms hold connotations of sexual shame, but they are not comparable to the ancient notion. Telemachus indeed kills the slave girls for sleeping with the suitors, but the derogatory terms were consciously inserted into the translation by modern male scholars. Thus, her experience as a woman might well have influenced her translation, but it happens the other way round as well.

The addition of derogatory terms can be spotted not only in the depiction of women, but also in the ‘othering’ (the presentation of groups that differ from the accepted norm) of non-human characters. The description of Polyphemus, the cyclops, by different translators in Od. 9 is one example. He is constantly translated as a ‘beast’, as a ‘savage’, as a ‘monster’. In 9.287, Polyphemus does not answer Odysseus’ pleas – Wilson’s Polyphemus “made no reply and showed no mercy”, but Fagles writes: “not a word in reply to that, the worthless brute”.

Fagles also decides to translate the word **σχέτιε** as ‘barbarian’ in 9.351, even though the word does not have connotations of that sort; ‘Cruel’ or ‘wicked’ would have been a more accurate choice. In 9.257, where Fagles and Lombardo translate Polyphemus’ “monstrous hulk” and “the sheer size of the monster” respectively, Wilson prefers his “giant size”. Fagles’ line “he grumbled back from his brutal heart” becomes “Unmoved he said” in Wilson’s (9.271). This is to name but a few examples.

All these characteristics by no means create a comprehensive review of Emily Wilson’s *Odyssey*, but they are some of the more significant ones. When reading a work in translation it is essential to bear in mind that no translation is equal to the source-text; there is always a creative mind behind it making choices and interpreting the text in different ways. Wilson’s *Odyssey* is fresh and readable to the modern reader while still being close to the Greek language and conveying the epic tone.

Translations:

Homer (2000) *The Odyssey*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

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Bringing life to The Odyssey - Lewis Bentley

The Odyssey is a tale of elements. It is a story of a family wanting to return but unable to due to nature, the gods and forces beyond their control. There are such powerful references to the Ocean, and the struggles that Odysseus has to overcome. This is personified by Poseidon himself who represents the brute power of the Ocean and nature as a whole. Although, we don't just see danger in Nature, but grace and beauty, such as through the descriptions of lands like Phaeacia and Aea, and the characters and gods that exhibit them. Thus, Nature and its elementals were something we really wanted to explore when dramatizing the Odyssey, as it is so crucial to its very understanding.

Augusto Boal is a theatre practitioner to whom my understanding owes a lot to. Starting with a foundation of Aristotle's Poetics, he set out to find just what drama is and what spectators can gain from it. This led him to the discovery of catharsis – this release of emotions. A spectator doesn't simply go to the theatre to be entertained, instead it is didactic, something to learn from, and to learn about yourself from. Everything linked back to a telos – what was the end goal. Boal developed Forum Theatre, merging the spectators and the actors, becoming 'spect-actors', if you will, having the power to stop performances and manifest their own views and actions. The Odyssey is a story with such conflicting and contrasting moments, relating to emotions in all kinds of people, thus Boal's ideologies fitting seamlessly.

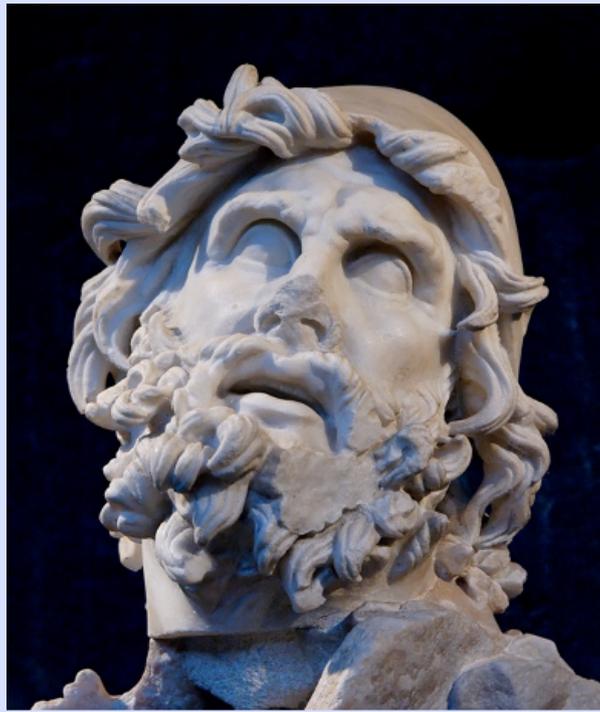
Not only were Boal's principles instrumental, but his exercises in which to realise theatre. It all stemmed from connection. Regardless of a player's skills, feelings, beliefs, they can connect with anyone else through their relating humanity and psyche. The Odyssey is an ensemble, with each player multi-roleing several characters, yet all having the same basic connection and emotion. Such as Player A being Poseidon and Eurymachus, and Player B being Zeus and Antinous. Here we see a rival conflict portrayed both on Olympus and in humanity, with the emotions and quarrels playing out similarly despite such contrasts. Our adaptation saw the Sailors take on this concept of the Greek Chorus, flawlessly changing, between scenes, yet providing this platform in which Odysseus can express himself.

Boal's exercises were heavily physical theatre based, which presents a difficulty given partially online rehearsals, masks and social distancing; however, this didn't prevent us from keeping his very ethos. Instead, as is integral to ritual and drama, we adapted, forming our own techniques and individualistic exercises. Use of Bamboo sticks enabled players to experiment and learn the motion of their bodies. A focus on neutrality allowed the players to apply a distinction between their selves and their characters, then a push to this transformation between both. Colombian Hypnosis and puppetry movements allowed a connection between players without the need of touch. His Theatre of the Oppressed is a perfect place to look for anyone engaged in theatre and drama.

This power of nature still stands strong though, through both animalistic characters, like the suitors, and morale animals, like Argos. Lee Strasberg developed an understanding that all characters and beings have an inner animal, and that needs to be discovered and fully elaborated in order for the players to begin to understand their characters. An interesting example is Lee J. Cobb who playing Willy Loman (Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman) saw him as an elephant, big and important, yet fragile within. Success required study.

So, taking Penelope, we see a lot of grace in her, similar to that of a Stag or a Swan, and so this observation and understanding of these animals is required. Once the animals became apparent, we were then able to work with how much animal and how much human takes place within the character, firstly with motion, and then developing into voice, and finally, interaction.

Odysseus: An Atypical Hero? – by Meg Finlayson



Head of Odysseus. Marble, 1st century AD. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Sperlonga

“Tell me about a complicated man.
Muse, tell me how he wandered and was lost
when he had wrecked the holy town of Troy, and where he went, and who he met, the pain
he suffered in the storms at sea, and how he worked
to save his life and bring his men back home [...]
Now goddess, child of Zeus,
tell the old story for our modern times.
Find the beginning”

(Homer’s Od. 1.1-11, translated by Emily Wilson)

A Complicated Man

Odysseus: king of Ithaca, son of Laertes, father of Telemachus, husband of Penelope, and the namesake of Homer’s great epic poem, the *Odyssey*. While Homer’s other work, the *Iliad*, features the deeds of a number of great heroes, the *Odyssey* differs in its sole focus on the journey and achievements of just one man. As a hero, Odysseus (known as Ulysses by the Romans) stands apart from other Homeric heroes due to his ‘atypical’ nature. Odysseus’ character is not totally unusual by Homer’s heroic standards as he is endowed with all the normal heroic qualities: high birth, good physique, and suitable athletic skills. But his characterisation is unique in one defining quality: his polytropic nature. Polytropos, from poly meaning ‘many’ and tropos meaning ‘ways’ or ‘manner’, can be translated in various ways, including ‘wily’, ‘sneaky’, and ‘cunning’. Emily Wilson’s translation favours more neutral language and opts for ‘complicated.’ Odysseus polytropic nature is demonstrated throughout the *Odyssey* through his intelligence and adaptability. Although Odysseus’ eloquence and cunning are not qualities solely unique to him, his polytropic nature goes above and beyond anything seen in other Homeric heroes, setting him apart for his intelligence and cunning in all its facets.

A Typical Hero?

There has been a tendency in Homeric scholarship – dating back even to ancient critics – to devalue the *Odyssey* in comparison to the *Iliad* and subsequently disregard Odysseus in favour of Achilles and the nature of their respective roles as heroes. Particular comparisons have been drawn between the polytropic character of Odysseus to the conversely singular and unchangeable nature of characters such as Ajax, Agamemnon, and Achilles. Although not inherently unheroic, Odysseus' polytropic qualities have led to him be considered an atypical hero; Achilles, on the other hand, is most commonly exemplified as the archetypical Greek hero, with his prevailing characteristic being his bodily strength. In contrast, Odysseus' defining heroic feature is his cunning intelligence; the way in which this intelligence manifests across the Homeric tradition has led scholars to consider his character to be clever in a deceitful sense, opening discussion as to whether this renders him more or less heroic. Certainly, some of his actions during the course of the *Odyssey* put him at odds with the traditional ideal of the Homeric hero.

Heroic or Deceitful Words?



Ulysses and Nausicaa. Michele Desubleo, 1654.

One of Odysseus' main polytropic qualities that surfaces across both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is his skill with rhetoric and his use of speech to achieve a desired outcome. Odysseus' cunning intelligence and way with words is emphasised in *Iliad*, 2, in which Odysseus' talents influence an entire army of panicked Greeks and the course of the Trojan War – It is Odysseus who prevents the demoralised Greeks from fleeing Troy in a moment of panic, establishing himself as a trusted leader and key influencer amongst them. Here, his persuasive skills can be seen as a kind of verbal athleticism that enhances Odysseus' influence and heroic role. Odysseus would again use his rhetorical skills to achieve a desired outcome during his journey home from Troy in the *Odyssey*. Finding himself stranded both physically and figuratively naked upon the strange shore of Phaeacia, Odysseus uses rhetoric to establish trust between himself and the princess Nausicaa, followed by the ruling King, ensuring his safety in an unknown land.

Odysseus' speech to Nausicaa is renowned as one of the most skilfully crafted in the epic, as Odysseus tactfully supplicates to the princess – but in a purposely altered manner. Traditionally, when begging for

mercy, a 'suppliant' would be expected to grasp the knees of the person whom they are addressing. Instead, Odysseus shows a high degree of social awareness and chooses to address Nausicaa from a distance, respecting the delicate power dynamic that exists between Odysseus – a powerful and naked man – and the noble young woman. In this way, Odysseus is able to assess the situation and achieve the most beneficial outcome with his speech by ingratiating himself with the Phaeacians, especially Nausicaa's father King Alcinous, thereby ensuring his safe passage home and remaining the hero of his narrative.

But Odysseus' affinity for words has not always proved to be so beneficial to his cause. In Iliad. 9, Odysseus' speech to Achilles – much like his exchange with Nausicaa – is considered by many Homeric scholars to be an example of skilfully-constructed, persuasive oratory. However, in this instance his words have the opposite of the desired effect. The deliberate and careful nature of his speech is interpreted as disingenuous by Achilles, who remarks in response that he 'hate[s]... the man who hides one thing in his mind and speaks another.' This exchange puts Odysseus at direct odds with the established hero of the Iliad and sets up an inevitable comparison between the two famed Homeric heroes. This episode can be considered to bring about detriment to his own heroic role within the wider narrative; rather than gaining any advantage from the speech, his words fail in their task to return Achilles to battle and ensure a swift victory for the Greeks. Achilles' seeming attack on Odysseus' duplicity has led to a critical narrative in which Achilles is considered 'true and simple' while Odysseus is considered to be 'wily and false.' In this case, Odysseus' polytropic qualities work against him and his reputation as an untrusty character permeates later literature, undermining his role and likeability as an Homeric hero.

Heroic or Deceitful Actions?

Despite his greater reputation with words, there are several instances in which Odysseus proves himself to be a hero of military value as well. Iliad. 10, often referred to as the Doloneia, presents one such episode: in the absence of the key hero Achilles, it is Odysseus who becomes the focus of a heroic deed, using his cunning to achieve a victory from behind enemy lines. Although Odysseus' enduring heroic glory is achieved during the Odyssey rather than the Iliad, he maintains a crucial role in the Trojan War; it is his intelligence that is the critical driving force behind the invention of the Wooden Horse which enabled the capture of Troy. Achieving a military goal through trickery rather than brute force and military strength is certainly not typical for a Greek hero, even if it ultimately culminates in victory.

Although Odysseus is denied a moment of pure military might in the Iliad (unlike his heroic counterparts, such as Achilles, Ajax, and Diomedes), the slaughter of the suitors in Od. 22 is reminiscent of the carnage and violence of the Trojan War. When Odysseus takes revenge on the suitors who had been courting his wife in his absence, it is undeniably a testament to his martial prowess. Here, we see Odysseus fully revelling in the height of his heroic glory, presented through the language used in this scene. In the wake of the slaughter Odysseus is described as both a 'lion' and a 'fearsome spectacle'; the lion simile is particularly significant – throughout Homer's epics, a comparison to a lion was a certain indicator of a character's heroism and glorious nature. By slaughtering the suitors Odysseus, not only demonstrates a distinct physical strength necessary for any Homeric hero, he also reduces the threat to his material wealth and reclaims his dominant position in his household.

This incident is not without reproach, however – in the same book, Odysseus commands his son Telemachus to kill the enslaved women in his household who had relationships with the suitors during Odysseus' absence. This action has been criticised by later scholars for its unnecessary brutality. While Homeric heroes were expected to be violent, the slaughter of defenceless women was an act of dubious morality even by standards of the Archaic world.



Odysseus and Polyphemus. Arnold Böcklin, 1896. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Another example of Odysseus' morally ambiguous heroism is his blinding of the cyclops, Polyphemus, one of the most famous episodes of the *Odyssey*. Although a heroic deed on the surface, it had caused some issues for scholars because of its deceptive nature. The surrounding trickery is commented upon within the epic itself – Polyphemus points out that he had expected 'some big and handsome fellow of tremendous strength' and instead received a 'puny, good for nothing, little runt' who had to dull his senses and confuse him with wine in order to blind him. Odysseus also gives the false name 'Nobody' to the cyclops so that when the injured Polyphemus cries out for help, the other cyclopes think he is playing a trick.

Odysseus' actions in this situation are not expected of a typical Homeric hero. Some commenters have suggested that other epic heroes would have opted to simply kill Polyphemus instead of utilising underhand trickery. But Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus was a necessity to continue the journey unharmed – without the cyclops alive, they would not have been able to escape the cave. So, the action itself – achieved by subterfuge or not – was still justified in terms of Homeric morality.

His polytropic nature also manifests itself through the various disguises which he adopts throughout the latter half of the *Odyssey*. Before revealing his true identity at the climax of the epic, Odysseus tells a number of lies to those around him, including his loyal slaves, his wife, and his own father. His disguise as a beggar could be considered unbecoming of a Homeric hero; he is far reduced from the heroic status he had previously enjoyed and endures endless debasing and mockery at the hands of the suitors. Odysseus' fondness for deceit is even commented upon by the goddess Athena, who favours him above all other heroes. She commends his wily ways and the 'lying tales that he loves from the bottom of his heart.' In these passages, Odysseus again takes on the role of a trickster, putting him at odds with a straight-forward heroic character. He wholeheartedly warrants the title of 'atypical hero'.

Zoe, Assistant Director

From the very beginning, the elemental presences in the *Odyssey* were something I really looked forward to exploring through physical theatre as I intrinsically felt that movement was one of the most authentic ways to understand and capture the relationship between wind, water and the body. I have always been fascinated by the theme of vulnerability in the *Odyssey* particularly with regard to the natural world and how the 'wine-dark sea' which carries Odysseus, seems to highlight the boundaries of our human condition. This image has been very vivid to me on account of our current circumstances and has made me reflect on the temporality of the ocean particularly in Ancient Greece; the philosophers who observed it, its presence in mythology and the many ships that sailed through it. Ultimately, how it has carried us through time, itself unchanged. By contrast, when thinking dramaturgically, I began to look at water more introspectively considering its presence in our everyday lives and its unique physical properties. One of my main ambitions with the ensemble became to explore as best we could, our bodies in the medium of water - the space they occupy, and how our capacity for movement changes. In my workshops with the sailors, I tried to focus on the density of the ocean and its power against the oars of the ship. We used bamboo sticks to recreate the structure of the sails as well as the oars. I was interested to see the actors move around the room with their bamboo sticks and imagine the resistance of the water changing with the current. One of our first exercises was to balance the bamboo stick on the palm of both hands, moving the stick as if it was independently flowing down a stream. This then shifted to firmly holding the bamboo stick with both hands and using it as an object to stay afloat in the deep sea. I tried to experiment with different scenarios of attaching and detaching the body from the object in order for us to observe the effect of weight and intention. It made us consider the 'light-ness' of floating and the 'pull' of drowning as well our bodies as physical objects that react to being immersed. In retrospect, these exercises made me reflect on the foreignness of the sea as the 'other' earthly space in which our bodies do not naturally belong and instead, how they are decontextualised and vulnerable. We finally incorporated these ideas when rehearsing rowing and, with mime, we displayed the friction of the ocean by emphasising the difference between rowing in calm waters and agitated ones. It was important to me that when relevant, the presence of the ocean was always felt and portrayed.



Women in the Odyssey – by Sophie Park

If we compare the Odyssey to a tapestry, the women are the warp to Odysseus' weft. While Odysseus weaves his way through the Mediterranean, the women on his journey are not only his most crucial supporters but also pillars of their communities. Although women are often confined to certain roles within the narrative, they still shine forth as fully-realized individuals subverting the rolls they've been given. Simultaneously narrative anchors and poetic innovations, these women are an essential part of the poem.

Circe

The Odyssey explores how to return to a normal life; Homer shows that finding people you can trust is a vital part of that process, and, notably, his trustworthy characters tend to be women. Chronologically, the first major female figure that Odysseus meets on his journey back from Troy is Circe, the infamous witch of Aiaia who turns men into beasts. Although she is a potential threat to the hero, she ends up being one of the most helpful characters in the poem. When Odysseus manages to evade the effects of her magic and to see through her feminine wiles, he gains her respect. She graciously hosts him and his crew, and they essentially enjoy a year-long vacation on her island. Once the men regain their strength, Circe advises them to visit Teiresias in the Underworld, who will tell them crucial information for their journey home. Thus, Circe's knowledge and generosity not only physically prepare him for the rest of his adventure but also serve as a reminder that the world is not completely out to get him. Odysseus needs to use his wits and exercise caution to survive, but he will eventually meet characters like Circe whom he can trust.

Nausicaa

Right before Odysseus arrives home, he visits Phaeacia, and during his time there, the Phaeacian youths display their prowess in a variety of athletic events (e.g., sailing, running, etc.), but the young princess, Nausicaa, proves to be especially exceptional. In one of the poem's most famous similes, she's compared to Artemis, goddess of the hunt, towering over her band of nymphs. Soon after, she meets a feral-looking Odysseus, who's likened to a hungry mountain lion. While her friends run away from the frightening man, Nausicaa holds her ground, listens to Odysseus, and diffuses the situation. Once she helps him get cleaned up, she tells him the best way to ask her parents for help. (Notably, she advises him to supplicate to her mother Arete, whom the Phaeacians hold in high regard.) In contrast to her brothers, who taunt and offend Odysseus during their contest, Nausicaa treats him with respect, guides him to safety, and earns his praise. Epic poetry has a fondness for highlighting the excellence of young men, but Nausicaa truly rises above the rest.

Athena

When Odysseus reaches Ithaca, his troubles are far from over—his house is overrun by arrogant suitors plotting the murder of his son. Fortunately, he has the goddess Athena on his side. Compared to the other gods in the poem and their level of involvement in mortal affairs, Athena has a very close relationship with Odysseus, and her stronger interest in his well-being resembles that of the other female characters in the poem. However, she also likes to challenge him. When Odysseus wakes up on the shores of Ithaca, Athena has shrouded them in mist so that he doesn't recognize where he is. Then she approaches him in the guise of a shepherd. A battle of wits ensues as they each attempt to conceal their identity until the other reveals their own. Having proved his cleverness, Athena delightedly calls a draw, and finally tells him how to deal with the

suitors. She knows her help is essential, and she is eventually willing to offer it, but she never lets Odysseus off easily.

Eurycleia

Following Athena's advice, Odysseus returns to his house disguised as a beggar, but Eurycleia, an old slave woman who took care of Odysseus as a baby, sees through his deception. During Odysseus' absence, she has run the day to day business of his household and raised his son Telemachus. The closeness of her relationship with Telemachus is clear when he confides his plan to learn news of his father, which he's kept secret even from his mother, Penelope. Eurycleia's emotional recognition of Odysseus indicates that she has a similar bond with him. Especially since his mother has died, this loyal nursemaid acts as a welcoming maternal figure, someone who's been absent from his life in the last twenty years at war and at sea.

However, another side of Eurycleia comes out when Odysseus slaughters the suitors. She points out to him the maids who have been disloyal to Penelope and Telemachus, and she delights in the bloodshed even more enthusiastically than the vengeful hero himself. At one point, Odysseus warns her to tone it down. This extreme and disturbing response illustrates Eurycleia's loyalty to Odysseus, but it is also an expression of her pent up rage. She has devoted her life to taking care of people she deeply cares about without complaint, but in the four years leading up to Odysseus' return, she has had to labor for a ravenous cohort of parasitic houseguests instead of enjoying the respect and rest an old, faithful household slave deserves. Even though we shouldn't condone Eurycleia's cruel glee, Homer shows there is a reason behind it, and we get a glimpse of how Odysseus' actions affect, and are affected by, the women in his life.

Penelope

Similarly to Eurycleia, Penelope dutifully fulfills a certain role, but she also goes beyond that expectations by matching wits with, then straight-up outwitting, her husband. While Odysseus deceives his way across the sea, Penelope devises schemes at home and gives him time to come back. She promises to chose a new husband as soon as she has finished weaving a funeral shroud for her father-in-law, Laertes, but every night she secretly unravels the works she has accomplished during the day. This fools the suitors until one of the slaves reveals her trick, but soon enough Odysseus returns to reclaim his home. When Odysseus is in disguise, his interactions with Penelope confirm her faithfulness, and even when no one is watching, Homer shows that she is steadfast in her love (e.g., all alone, she prays for Artemis to prevent her from remarrying). Clearly, the woman is clever and devoted to Odysseus.

What's equally, if not more, remarkable is that she is the only character that outsmarts him. To verify that her husband is indeed who he claims to be, she asks Eurycleia to move their marriage bed, which only she and Odysseus know is immovable. He falls for her trick and angrily explains how he constructed the bed of an olive tree still rooted in the ground. She is able to fool him because she understands him better than everyone else. Thus, the combination of her cunning along with her emotional intelligence allows her to best the cleverest man in Greece.

Concluding Remarks

Although there is a lot more to say about each of these women (and few others not mentioned), it is apparent from this brief survey that they are not just supporting players in the poem—they are extraordinary individuals

in their own rights. Whether they are cast as enchanting seductresses, nurturing slave-women, or domestic queens, each overcomes challenges and proves to be more than meets the eye. Taking charge of situations with creativity, skill, and ingenuity, they run great households and match wits with their male counterparts. Luckily for Odysseus, they are also interested in his success and well-being. In many respects, the world of the *Odyssey* would unravel without them.

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Holly McClenaghan, Assistant Costume Head

“As the play was to be set atemporally, I saw this as an exciting opportunity to bring both classical and modern elements together.

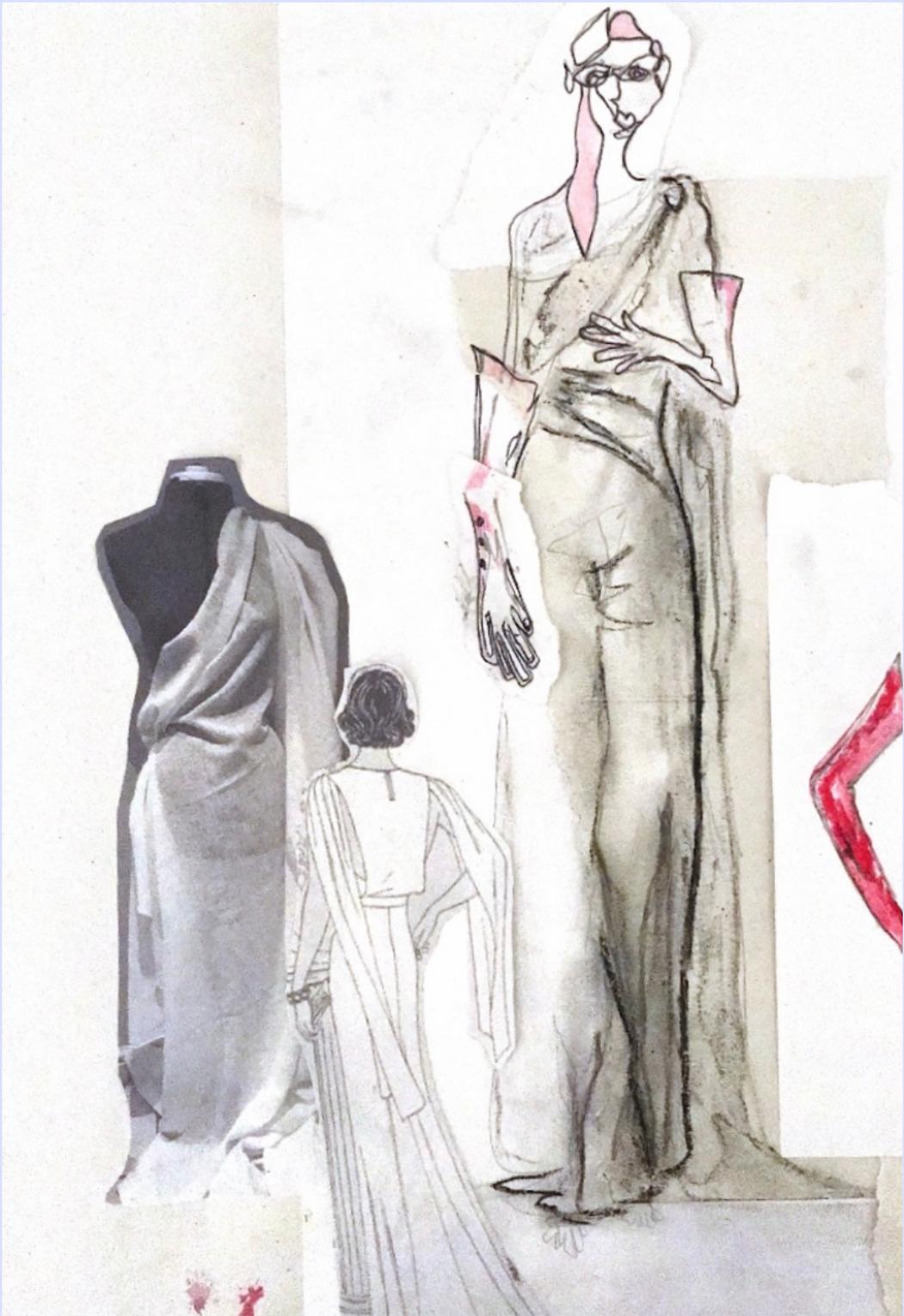
These drawings focus on the development of Penelope’s character. I wanted to use drapery with its allusions to Greek and Roman statues to create a more modern silhouette, thus combining the past and the present. In doing so I hoped the audience would see Penelope as a modern ‘desirable’ woman, just as the hordes of suitors around her see her, rather than a historical character emotionally distant from the viewer. However, Penelope is much more than just a prize for men in the play and has become a symbol of marital fidelity for many centuries after. Perhaps more recently she had also been seen as an intelligent and astute character in her dealings with the suitors and I wanted to ensure her costume was reflective of this, through deep colours and her dress allowing movement, working with her rather than restricting her.

We wanted the different groups in the Odyssey to be roughly represented by different colours, the Ithacan’s in red, but different shades representing rank and character. For example, the suitors in faded reds and terracottas, an imitation of the rulers and elites they aspire to be.

We still had much to develop and finalise, but I hope this gives an idea of the thoughts behind what was to be an amazing show!”







The Fates and the Immortals in Homer's *Odyssey* – by Lucy Moore



Mattei Athena. 1st century BCE. The Louvre

Keywords and characters

- Homer: Greek author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
- Epic poem: A long, narrative poem
- Trojan War: War fought between the Trojans and the Greeks
- Nostos: The homecoming of a hero by sea
- Odysseus: Homer's hero of his epic *The Odyssey*
- Mycenaean Era: The last phase of the Bronze Age in Ancient Greece
- Penelope: Odysseus' wife
- Telemachus: Odysseus' son
- Anthropomorphic: Having individual human form
- Polytheistic: Worshipping more than one god
- Nyx: Greek goddess of night
- Themis: Titan goddess of divine law and order
- Ananke: Greek primordial deity in charge of inevitability, compulsion and necessity
- Nausicaa: Princess of the Phaeacians
- Metis: Cunning
- Polyphemus: Cyclops son of Poseidon
- Scherie: Home of the Phaeacians
- Xenia: Friendship between strangers/guests and hosts

Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*, was written around the 8th–7th Century BCE and is one of the two major poems which discuss the events and aftermath of the infamous Trojan War (1250-1180 BCE), alongside the *Iliad*. The *Odyssey* follows the nostos of the epic hero Odysseus during the Mycenaean Era around the 12th Century BCE and his reunion with his faithful wife Penelope and now fully-grown son Telemachus, after

being away at sea for ten years. Homer's work includes a plethora of themes, but the role of the divine – the Fates and the Immortals – is particularly prominent.

The Fates and the Immortals are depicted with high regard and usually in human form, since the Greeks believed the gods were anthropomorphic. As a polytheistic society, the Greeks thought that they had to show the gods and immortal figures the upmost respect to avoid incurring their wrath and vengeance.

In the *Odyssey* and the wider Homeric universe, there are three components affecting the course of an individual's life: The Fates, the gods, and the man's own actions. Arguably the strongest component of the three is The Fates – once they have determined someone's future, there is nothing the gods can do to reverse the decision.

The Fates

In myth, the Fates – also known as the Moirai in Greek and Fatae in Latin – are three deities who have existed since the beginning of time: Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. They have the capability and strength to control the fortunes of gods and mortals alike. From the moment an individual is born, they decide what their life will entail and how they will meet their end. Their genealogy is somewhat debated by scholars; it is generally agreed they are the daughters of Nyx but there are debates about whether they were produced by Zeus, Themis, or as described by Plato in his *Republic*, the daughters of Anake.

Their Roles

- Clotho, known as Nona in Roman mythology – in charge of spinning the Thread of Human Life
- Lachesis, known as Decima in Roman mythology – in charge of measuring the Thread of Human Life which determines the length of the life of mortals
- Atropos, known as Norta in Roman mythology – in charge of cutting the thread of life with the Shears of Destiny, ending the lives of mortals

Even though The Fates are not explicitly seen in *The Odyssey*, they play a huge part in ensuring Odysseus' nostos is completed.

Athena

Athena, the Goddess of War and Wisdom, is Odysseus' guardian and patron, acting as the key aid for his nostos after her plea to her father Zeus in *Od.* 1. The main avenue Athena uses to guide Odysseus is by disguising him.

The epic's various disguises help Odysseus to reach certain places and certain people throughout the poem. The earliest example is in *Od.* 1 when Athena disguises herself as Mentos in order to reach Telemachus and advise him to seek information on his father. As the epic continues towards its climax, Athena's deceptive interventions ease the travels of Odysseus and enable him to safely arrive on the shores of Phaeacia and Ithaca.

Homer creates a metaphorical weighing scales in balancing Athena's interventions and guidance within the *Odyssey*. She helps and aids those in need, but allows individuals to follow their pathways too. She is the

most prominent immortal within the epic and her actions may be interpreted as proof that the female psyche can achieve and be on the same playing field as greatness. Athena is described by Homer as 'bright-eyed' and the 'hope of soldiers', exacerbating her willpower and strength as a goddess.

Poseidon

Poseidon, the god of the sea, is renowned as the wrathful one of the 12 Olympian gods and acts as the catalyst for many obstacles in Odysseus' journey. It is established from the beginning that there are ill feelings between the god and Odysseus – in Od. 1, it is only decided by Zeus that Odysseus will return home when Poseidon is not present at the Council of the Gods.

Unlike Athena, Poseidon intervenes directly with Odysseus's nostos to delay and impede his journey. After Odysseus' metis trick on the cyclops Polyphemus, Poseidon curses the hero and causes his ship to be thrown off course. Even though he could not ultimately prevent Odysseus' return home – the Fates had already decided that – his actions were out of duty were key in delaying it as much as possible. He protects his offspring, Polyphemus, just like Odysseus does with Telemachus at the climax of the poem.

Poseidon is described by Homer as the 'earth-shaker', proving his power and intervention with the earthly goods and nature.

Calypso

When Odysseus reaches Calypso's island, Ogygia, in Od. 5, after being rescued from Poseidon's storm, he becomes her adored prisoner. In total, Calypso keeps Odysseus captive on her island for 7 years.

Despite Penelope waiting for Odysseus in Ithaca, Calypso hopes that Odysseus will become an immortal and stay with her. It is only when Zeus orders her (using Hermes as a messenger) to release Odysseus that she lashes out against the male gods, criticising how they are free to pursue relationships with mortal women, while goddesses have to adhere to a strict set of rules and are left to suffer the consequences if they behave in similar ways.

Despite her heartbreak, Calypso still aids Odysseus in forming his raft by bringing him tools and food for his journey. Therefore, despite her iconography as a temptress, she still adheres to some Greek ideals of a woman's role, helping a man when he needs it.

Calypso is depicted by Homer as a 'beautiful nymph' and a 'cunning goddess', illustrating her function as a distracting enchantress and obstacle for Odysseus within the poem.

Circe

In Od. 10, the audience is introduced to another goddess and temptress Circe, on the island of Aeaea. She is initially volatile towards Odysseus and turns his men into pigs. It is only when Hermes visits Odysseus and instructs him on how to overpower and pacify the goddess that she becomes more amicable and reverts the spell on Odysseus' men.

Like Calypso, she is presented as a dangerous woman and an obstacle, but appears not to be as emotionally attached to Odysseus, instead viewing the hero as a product of entertainment for her upon her island. She

ultimately proves useful when she gives clear instructions to Odysseus on how he can continue his nostos. Circe is characterised by Homer as an ‘enchantress’, suggesting her alluring nature and apparent desire to use men as her playthings.

Ino

Ino is known as a sea nymph. In Od. 5, she works as a divine aid to help Odysseus after Poseidon’s storm has set him astray. She gives the hero a veil which helps him reach land safely after the damage caused by the sea god. Her veil leads Odysseus to the land of Scherie (also known as Phaeacia) where he meets the princess Nausicaa, is accepted by the Phaeacians and is able to tell the story of his wanderings.

Ino is described by Homer in being ‘lovely-ankled’ – this can be seen as a reoccurring motif in the epithets of Homeric women, which all relate to erotic female beauty.

Hermes

The Messenger God Hermes is seen three times within the epic:

- 1) Book 5 – instructing Calypso to release Odysseus’ from Ogygia
- 2) Book 10 – helping Odysseus pacify the goddess Circe
- 3) Book 24 – escorting the spirits of the Suitors to the Underworld

Hermes is mostly recognised by Homer as the ‘messenger of the gods’, and throughout the poem he is seen fulfilling this duty.

Zeus

Despite him not being especially prominent within the epic, it is Zeus’ approval that determines the whole nostos of Odysseus. His role is to pass judgement and send omens during the poem as a reminder of his strength and his dominion over the heroic world.

The only example of Zeus’ ill-will towards Odysseus is shown in Od. 12 when he commands a storm to perish the rest of Odysseus’ crew after they break the rules of xenia and eat the cattle of the sun-god, Helios, although it is forbidden. Despite favouring Odysseus, Zeus still works in this way to prove his fairness and unbiased nature.

Zeus is known as ‘mighty’ and the ‘father of gods and men’ by Homer. This portrayal links to his almighty ascendancy and acts as a reminder of his power over all.

Heracles

In Od. 11, Heracles is introduced to Odysseus and the audience. His role is short but acts as a reminder of his power of a demi-god. He describes his form as being in two halves – his mortal ghost remains in the Underworld and his immortal half-lives in Olympus with his wife, Hebe.

Aeolus

It is in Od. 10 when the audience is introduced to the Keeper of Winds, Aeolus. Through the conventions of xenia, the immortal gives Odysseus a tightly sealed bag of winds to aid him on his journey home to Ithaca.

However, when Odysseus' men open the bag and it sends them back to Aeolus, he refuses to give them any more help, believing the crew to be cursed.

Helios

Known as Hyperion in some translations, the sun-god Helios' role in Od. 12 is pivotal to Odysseus' journey. When Odysseus' men eat Helios' cattle, they become under the peril of Zeus and lose their lives for breaking the oath, leaving Odysseus to be the only one to return home.

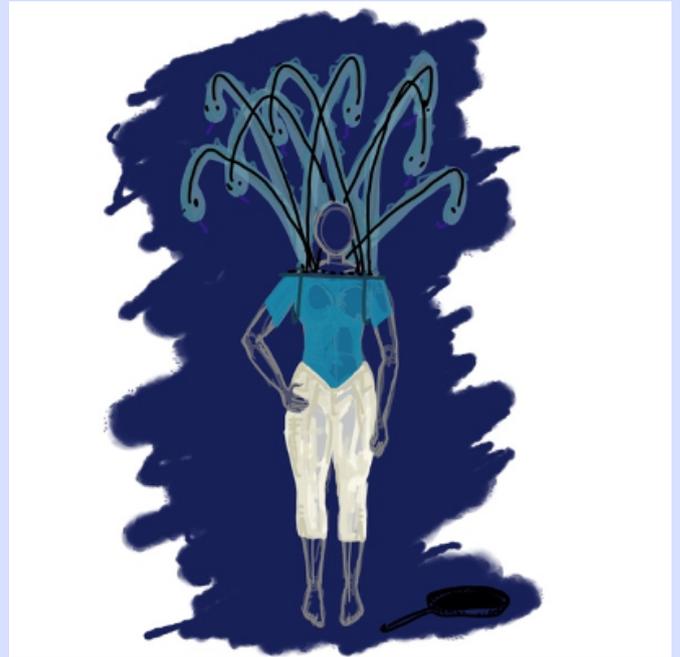
Conclusion

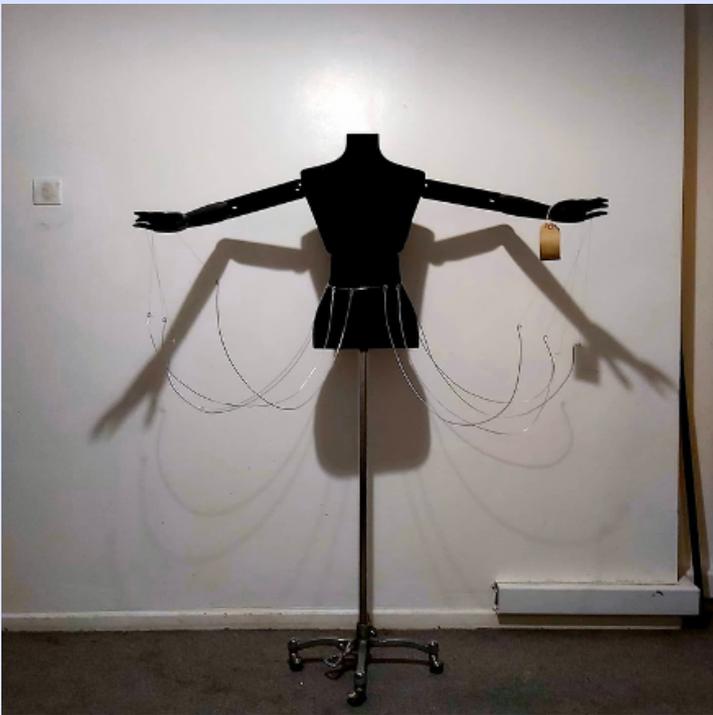
Overall, the Fates and Immortals either guide or impede Odysseus' nostos throughout the poem. The Fates lay out the journey for the hero and the Immortals impact the timing and circumstances of his arrival back to Ithaca. As the Greeks believed that the gods played a huge part in their daily lives, seeing their interventions within Odysseus' livelihood would have given them hope that they would receive the same favourable treatment and guidance – ideally without bringing about Poseidon's wrath!

Bori Papp, Assistant Costume Designer

SCYLLA

The skeleton of Scylla sits comfortably on the hips of my mannequin, waiting to be finished. I knew from the get-go that I wanted to make Scylla a puppet. She had to be scary, and she had to be able to move as freely as possible. I had two plans for her: one involved placing the puppet on the actor's shoulders, relying only on secondary movement to sway the monster's necks. The other one, which I went with in the end, involved attaching the puppet at the waist, and using marionette-style strings to control each head individually. She was going to be made out of tubes of fabric sewn around the wire skeleton, stuffed loosely with cotton. I hope to finish her one day!







AEOLUS

The photos that I saved from Pinterest to use as inspiration for Aeolus are now filed away neatly on my laptop, waiting to be opened again. Aeolus was going to be light and breezy, with a flowy white top and matching wide leg trousers. He was going to wear a pair of wings, made out of white feathers from an old duvet of mine. A mental image that I kept coming back to while I was planning his costume was "human seagull". I was going for gentle but powerful - if he opened his wings, Aeolus would have looked quite imposing on stage.

