

Odyssey ~ Book 1

RECAPITULATION:

- 1-25 O.'s present condition
- 26-79 Council of gods: Zeus decides on O.'s safe return
- 80-96 Ath. goes in disguise to Ithaca
- 97-155 O.'s palace: the suitors
- 156-320 Ath. tells Tel. to prepare to make a journey for news of O.
- 328-364 Pen. enters to find Tel. with new strength & willpower
- 365-420 Tel. rebukes the suitors & their reply
- 421-end Tel. goes to bed & thinks about Ath.'s advice.

POINTS TO NOTE:

1-25 Introduction ('PROEM') - its MORAL use: O. was not responsible for his companions' deaths. He is the last of the heroes to return from Troy: Poseidon is his main enemy. The *Odyssey* opens with O. about to return home after 10 years of wandering after the end of the war.

29-95 Meeting of the Gods: note the mention of Agamemnon's murder on his return at hands of his wife & her lover & his son's vengeance of this murder: should Tel. seek similar vengeance & how significant to the theme of the Od. is this story? Unlike suitors, who should be punished for their uncontrolled behaviour. O. is held up as a model of respect for the gods (66-7). Ath.'s arrival in the palace gives Homer the excuse to provide an update of the sit. there.

96-324 Athene meets Telemachus: note the imp. theme of XENIA (see intro. notes on Od.) Contrast Tel.'s treatment of Ath./Mentes with that of the suitors, who ignore her. Tel. is despondent & young but maturing rapidly: he knows how to treat a xenos. The suitors almost never acknowledge the gods in their feasting with the customary libations, etc. Ath. ominously advises Tel. to kill them if all else fails (293-6). O. does not appear until Bk 5 but he dominates Tel.'s thoughts: we are given an idea of his greatness & importance & the need for him to return. Ath. speaks of remarr. of Pen. but why does she suggest Tel. kills suitors after the marr.? - to stir him to act by presenting horrible scenarios to him?

325-444 Telemachus and Penelope: "Tel.'s emergence into manhood brings about a confrontation with the suitors & an abrupt change in his relationship with his mother. To them he is now a menace: to her he is suddenly the man of the house. &, as such, something of a surprise." (G.S. Kirk)

Note the common pattern of PEN.'s ENTRANCES: appears veiled & with servants (328-35); makes a complaint (326-44); is rebuked (us. by Tel. - 345-59); retires, causing a fuss (360-6).

Note TENSION between Pen. & Tel. (e.g. 249-51); he often seems to go out of his way to rebuke/embarrass her in public. Pen. is continually trying to intervene in Tel.'s & the suitors' world, but is always frustrated. The veil & servants suggest her modesty & chastity

TELEMACHUS: his new behaviour becomes full of confidence. At 358-9 he asserts his mastery over the house. At 397-8 he states that he will fill O.'s shoes. Notice his guile & trickery (both features of O.) in replying to Eurymachus at 412ff.

The introduction of the more loyal nurse, EURYCLEIA at 429ff is a brief character sketch & desc. of Tel.'s bedtime - good example of H.'s attention to detail & his celebration of ordinary/everyday life.

Why does Homer start the story where he does? i.e. after O. has been wandering for 10 yrs., by concentrating on Tel., not O., for the first 5bks.....

- he can show the plight of his kingdom, palace, family & how much they long for his return: it also shows the challenges he faces if he returns

- the sit. in Ithaca is made more complicated/interesting by the tension between Tel. & Pen., & Pen. with the suitors. Bks 1-4 give H. the opportunity to build on the charac. of Tel. into a son worthy of O. - hence his travels & meetings with old heroes in Bks 2-4. This will bring him face to face with his own potential

- the scene is set for O. to stop in the land of the Phaeacians in Bk 6 &, as their xenos, to relate the story of his travels (Bks 9-12) in the 1st person (I...), making them more personal & interesting.

Odyssey ~ Book 2

RECAPITULATION:

1-79 Tel. at the assembly of suitors which he summoned to voice his complaints
80-128 Antinous blames Pen.
129-207 After Tel. speaks, Zeus sends an omen: the suitors ridicule its interpretation
208-59 Tel. demands a ship; assembly dismissed
260-97 Ath. appears to Tel. & offers support
298-381 Tel. rebukes Antinous & has Eurycleia prepare provisions for his journey in secret
382-434 Tel. sails for Pylos in one of Ath.'s ships

POINTS TO NOTE:

1-259 The assembly of suitors fulfils Ath.'s words of 269-92, but fails to move the dispute into the PUBLIC sphere: it remains a matter between Tel. & the suitors.

WHY do people in general not take a stand on the destruction of O.'s house/kingdom? cf239-41

Suitors' character(s) given more depth: undeniably selfish/evil; violent (198-207); arrogant (244-51); ruthless.

People often come across them playing, drinking or eating e.g. 1.106-112

299-300: H.'s implication is that they deserve their bloody fate.

Note the OMEN at 1-46ff - first of a number indicative of O.'s return (often with violent birds in them).

Development of Telemachus over Bks 1&2: the Greek word for 'reputation' is KLEOS (lit. 'What people say of you') It represented your legacy after death & was of great importance. As Bk 1 opens, Tel. is despairing & despondent (1.114-8), cannot bring himself to believe that he is O.'s son (1.215-220) & wishes that he had been son of a diff. prosperous father or one who had died gloriously in battle(1.234-243). Ath. helps him in this 'identity crisis' by telling him how like his father he is (1.207ff), telling him to abandon childhood (1.296-7) & pointing out how Orestes, Agamemnon's son, had taken revenge on Ag.'s killers (1.291-302). In Bk 2, Ath. glorifies Tel. & he makes his first public address confidently (to start with) - but then he admits he doesn't have the strength/authority to expel the suitors (60-79) & finishes in tears & a tantrum. Halitherses interprets Zeus' omen in his favour & Tel. announces his decision to travel. He still has some way to go in establishing his authority & kleos.

Penelope's Character: we see that she is more clever than many heroines of the past (115-22) & cunning (the shroud, 93ff). Note that O. was famous for being cunning. She is not just the timid little stay-at-home she may have seemed in Bk 1.

260-434 Telemachus prepares to travel: what precisely is the suitors' aim now? Merely for one of them to marry Pen.? Note their talk of dividing the property up between them if Tel. dies at sea (335); hence the advice of Eurycleia to stay at home & guard his property (367). Tel. seems to know his own mind: he rejects Antinous' suggestion quite forthrightly at 309ff & prepares to DECEIVE (O.'s favourite word) Pen. about travelling without her consent. Ath. has urged him to be like his father (270ff) & to seek kleos through WORDS & DEEDS (272). Tel. may finally be realising his potential BUT note the contrast between youth & inexperience & adult potential. From 382-434 observe his apparent authority - with ATH.'s GUIDANCE e.g. she leads & he follows at 405 & 416. However, divine help often enhances a hero - & so Tel. is WORTHY of Ath.'s support.

Questions to ponder....

- If the suitors were so ruthless, why didn't they kill Tel. & seize O.'s property at once?
- Why does Ath. encourage Tel. to travel when she knows all along that O. is about to return? Zeus said so explicitly, in the divine assembly (1.76-7).

Odyssey ~ Book 3

RECAPITULATION:

1-66 Tel. arrives at Pylos: finds them engaged in sacrifice to Poseidon; is well received
67-101 At Nestor's request, Tel. reveals his name & his purpose in visiting
102-329 Nest. tells of the Greeks' fate in returning from Troy & advises Tel.
330-372 The disguised Ath. talks with Nest. & departs in form of an eagle
373-497 After rest, sacrifice & meal, Tel. sets off for Lacedaemon (Sparta)

POINTS TO NOTE:

Nestor: Tel.'s first contact in the story, with the outside world - note the differences from what he has left. It is a world of heroes returned from Troy (Nest. Bk 3, Menelaus Bk 4). The gods are revered (e.g. 430ff - the most detailed sacrifice in Homer, underlining Nest.'s piety) & the plans of the gods are understood e.g. at 375ff where Nest. sees Ath.'s transformation into an eagle as an important sign of Tel.'s 'kleos'. In contrast to Ithaca, STRANGERS are welcome (xenia) e.g. 3.31ff.

Nest. is the oldest & wisest of the Greek heroes: no wonder the young Tel. is hesitant to talk to him (22-4) - a test which will bring him 'kleos'? Nest. is portrayed as kind & generous, but vague & prone to waffle (witness his meandering speech 102-200 where he mentions O. only briefly at 163 & leaves Tel. none the wiser). He says that O. returned to Ag., but not WHY - after Ag.'s dire fate, this can only serve to make Tel. despondent (205ff).

Athene She is an important part of this episode for Tel. By the time she leaves so dramatically, he is more confident & can build on the 'kleos' that Nest. has given him: the eagle episode gives Nest. proof that Ath. is honouring Tel. as much as O. Nest.'s son, PEISISTRATUS, will now accompany Tel. & encourage him further e.g. 4.156.

Compare the travels of O. & Tel.: Tel. LEAVES Ithaca to est. his identity, O. must RETURN there to do so.

Odyssey ~ Book 4

RECAPITULATION:

1-119 Tel. & Peisistratus reach Sparta; welcomed by MENELAUS
120-167 HELEN identifies Tel. & Peis. says who they are
168-264 Memory Lane: Hel. puts a soothing drug in the wine & talks about O.'s daring
265-305 Men. talks of the Wooden Horse; bed
306-332 Tel. asks about O.
333-440 Men. predicts death for suitors & tells of his travels in Egypt. aided by the divine Eidothee
441-592 Men. encountered Proteus, who desc. homecomings of other Grks
593-624 Tel. stays for a banquet
625-741 Ithaca: suitors plan ambush for Tel.; Pen. finds out & is very upset
742-end At Eurycleia's insistence, Pen. prays to Ath.; Ath. sends Pen. a reassuring dream

POINTS TO NOTE:

1-624 Telemachus, Menelaus & Helen Tel. further maturing: identified as O.'s son by Hel. at 140-54 without formal identification - increases his 'kleos'. Unlike Nestor, Men. has personally experienced loss (Ag. & O. 90ff). Men. is renowned for his wealth (he admits as much 78ff) which he acquired AFTER his Trojan adventures, esp. in Egypt - gained by guest-gifts (xenia) or raiding, NOT trade. In Egypt section. note fabulous encounter with Eidothee & Proteus: prepares way for O.'s tales of wanderings in Bks 9-12. N.B. Od is full of tales /stories within a story. Again, news of O. is thin & late in coming (555-60): Proteus says he is stuck on Calypso's island, but NOT whether he will return.
Helen: self-critical (145) & 'wifely' (e.g. spinning, 131-5). Her Trojan War anecdote (244ff), nowhere in the *Iliad*.
emph. O.'s DECEPTIVENESS. Men.'s (265ff) his ENDURANCE.

625-847 Penelope & the suitors/the 'Telemachy' Abrupt return to Ithaca: we pick up Tel. again at Bk. 15 Thus H. creates impression that O.'s adventures in Bks 5-14 happen at SAME TIME as Tel.'s wanderings in the Peloponnese. Here is a reason why O.'s return is so badly needed. Note the murderous intent of the suitors, esp. the horrible exchange at 768-77.

Penelope: for entry, rejection, departure in tears cfl. 325ff. Stress on her weakness/helplessness at 727ff: she even thinks the people are against her family. DREAM WORLD is her only escape from reality & pressure (793ff), but even in her dreams O. belongs to the PAST (814-6). Only Tel. is left to her. & even he is a child (818), not old, mature enough to be a hero yet. Ath.'s reassurance is for her & for US (825-9).

Odyssey ~ Book 5

RECAPITULATION:

- 1-20 Ath. at 2nd Council of gods asks about O. again
- 21-42 Zeus sends Hermes to order CALYPSO to send O. from her island (Ogygia)
- 43-115 Hermes flies to Ogygia & delivers his message
- 116-191 Cal. reluctantly submits & tells O. to build raft. reassuring him against trickery
- 192-227 Cal. & O. spend their last eve. tog.
- 228-270 O. builds 'boat' & departs
- 271-332 Before reaching land his boat is destroyed by Pos.' storm
- 333-375 Sea-goddess Ino/Leucothoe saves him with her scarf
- 376-493 Pos. calms storm: O. finally reaches the coast. enters mouth of a river & falls asleep

POINTS TO NOTE:

Change of location right from start: the 'real' world of Ithaca ... the gods ... the 'fabulous' world of O.'s travels. BUT note how Homer blends the human & divine/supernatural worlds without difficulty eg 192ff ("With these words...") - O. is living with the semi-divine Cal., although the diff. bet. mortals & immortals is stressed at 209. **Second Proem** at lines 1-20 (cf 1.1-21): no real need for 2nd meeting of gods (Ath. has already suggested that Hermes advise Cal. to free O. at 1.84). However this divine 'recap.' helps emph. the concern for O. from (some of) gods & also allows oral poet to remind listener of general plot outline & what is to come (at 25-42). [Some argue for this being the beginning of a version which did not contain Bks 1-4]

Odysseus: our first sight of the hero confirms Proteus' desc. of him at 4.556 - helpless, tearful, trapped & mistrustful eg 171-9 on Cal.'s island; despite this he continues to sleep with Cal., albeit 'unwillingly'! His GOAL remains Ithaca, no matter what (219-24): note that a man's loyalty to his household is unaffected by affairs with foreigners/slaves (women do not enjoy the same ideal/privilege).

O.'s CHARACTERISTICS: stubborn endurance (151-8); self-reliance eg during the storm 324ff and he has to build 'boat' himself (234ff) altho. Cal. provides favourable wind (268): calm & rational - weighs up the alternatives eg 354, 408, 465: although various gods are on his side eg Ath. & Leucothoe, O. is unaware of this, so he has to rely on himself. He also experiences frustration that he can only prove his heroic status by performing glorious deeds in sight of his peers - hence his wish that he had obtained his KLEOS by dying at Troy (306-12). Note also how often O. has to CONCEAL his identity even when he reaches land: Nausicaa (Bk 6), Cyclops (Bk 9), in Ithaca (Bks 13-22). The new heroic quality we see Homer delivering here is SELF-CONTROL.

Calypso: from Greek 'kalupto', 'I conceal'. She has kept O. for 7 YEARS. This allows Tel. to grow up & be finding his real identity & kleos in Ithaca. Cal = daughter of Atlas (1.52) but is NOT an Olympian - in fact she resents the divine interference in her life (118ff). She seems v. affectionate towards O. & is persistent - her last appeal to him is in offering him immortality (hers to give?... 203).

Note the 'comedy of manners' bet. Hermes & Cal. - she omits proper XENIA by questioning him before offering food (86-90): her anxiety? It then takes Hermes 15 lines to deliver his message & even then he puts the responsibility on Zeus (112), but note his sern threat at 146-7. HERMES is a god of TRANSITION (Greek 'hermia' = 'boundary-marker') & of exchanges & transfers.

Leucothoe = Ino: Homer using myth creatively - mortal (Ino) was changed into sea-goddess (Leuc.) & so is sympathetic to O. bec. she was once mortal: BUT, as with Cal. (176ff), O. is suspicious (356ff). Note also the reappearance of ATH., helping her favourite (382ff) - reminder of the divine plan for O.

Style: note H.'s use of DOUBLETS in Bk 5. O. is wrecked by Pos. twice: has 2 monologues, two helpers, & climbs back onto his boat twice. Compare this with the two suitor-spokesmen Antinous & Eurymachus & compare Cal. with Nausicaa in Bk 6.

SIMILES - Iliadic technique of clustering round exciting scene: here, the storm (wind at 328 & 368, sickness at 394, octopus at 432, fire at 488).

Odyssey ~ Book 6

RECAPITULATION:

O. has reached Scheria, land of the Phaeacians.

1-47 Ath. visits the princess Nausicaa in a dream & tells her to go & wash clothes at the river

48-84 N. is given leave by her father, sets out in mule cart with attendants

85-109 They wash clothes, eat & play ball

110-48 They wake O.: he decides to ask for help

149-250 O. speaks to N.: she gives him clothes & food

251-315 N. asks O. not to accompany her back to city for fear of scandal, but to approach the Queen alone

316-331 When they reach the city, O. remains outside in Ath.'s grove.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Initially, it seems that O.'s troubles are over (Pos. has vowed to leave him alone 5.288-9). PHAEACIANS seem respectful of strangers (208); they revere the gods properly (12-18) despite being far away from civilisation (4, 8, 204ff) & their nation is unwarlike (202-3).

DANGERS? N.'s apparent attraction to O.: never defined by Homer, always vague (eg 239); stress on her marriageable age (25ff & 282-4); there are unpleasant gossips around (274) & people have connections with Pos. & Cyclops (5 & 267).

BALANCE: Ath. has a sacred grove there (291-2) & appears to N. (24ff) - Ath. is in control of events (110ff) altho. O. does not know this (326).

Odysseus : naked, begrimed, rugged hero of the Trojan War who has nothing but his wits to rely on to win the confidence of N. who is exposed & vulnerable (138ff). Contrast his relationship with the regal, bashful & endearing N. with the devious & stubborn Caypso: Cal. feeds O. (5.196), bathes him (5.264) & sleeps with him (5.226-7); N. orders the servants to bathe him (210), feed him (246) & merely admires him from afar (237). N. remains practical, folding clothes etc. in O.'s presence (252), but hints very strongly at 276ff that he would be pretty much her ideal husband! Book 6 gives ample illustrations of qualities O. now needs to survive (cf Iliadic skill in battle): tact, courtesy, careful handling of sits. (eg 118 & 141); his problem is that he is still an 'Homeric hero' & his concealment must be thrown off at some point to be his true self - but when?

Nausicaa : portrayed sympathetically; practical (252-3), crafty/wheedling (56-65), has courage to stay to face naked man at 139 & also at 199ff, fun-loving (99ff), cautious (209-10), flattering (276-84), & commanding (tells O. to wait in Ath.'s grove 255ff).

Marriage is on her mind (239-45) - with O? (276-84) - but her instructions to O. to kneel before the Queen are with his eventual return home in mind (313-15).

Her speech at 57ff is a masterpiece of wheedling, appealing to the needs of her father & brothers, never once mentioning her dream of marriage: note also the closeness of father & daughter here.

The preparations for her washing trip (71ff) enable Homer to celebrate the ordinary (cf Tel. going to bed 1.451ff).

Like Pen. (1.328-35), N.'s reputation & person are protected by maidservants & veils (100); protection will soon be removed when she is unveiled & servants flee at approach of O. (138).

Supplication : (142ff) Usually a Greek disarmed & threw himself upon the mercy of another by clinging to the supplicattee's knees - the position indicated complete surrender. O. decides against this method because it might be misunderstood as a potential threat to her. Hence his first words to her are tactful, reassuring (149-61) & emphasise the value of chastity.

Homeric Technique : note device of anticipating/preparing listener for what will happen shortly - see lines 25-40 (Ath. tells N. to wash clothes) & 112ff (Ath. arranges for O. to awake & see N.) cf 5.28ff & councils of gods. To help listener to keep grip on plot?

Simile: O. 'like a mountain lion' (130) - also used of warrior advancing in Iliad 12.299f & so amusingly out of context here (O. nakedly advancing on vulnerable females).

To ponder...

Why does N. play little part after this when it looks like it could develop into quite a romance?

Why the suggestion that O. approach Queen Arete, as if there is a crucial role she is to play in the proceedings (310) but in Bk.7 she seems to play little or no part at all?

Odyssey ~ Book 7

RECAPITULATION:

1- 13 Nausicaa reaches home
14-77 O. is directed by Ath. to palace of Alcinous, King of Phaeacians
78-132 Palace & gardens described
133-66 O. begs for help from Queen Arete
167-227 He is hospitably received & promised convoy home
228-97 Arete questions O. & he describes how he came to Scheria
298-347 Alc. reassures O. of his goodwill before all retire for the night

POINTS TO NOTE:

Scheria

DIVINE /MYSTERIOUS connections: 92-4, 199-206
HOSTILITY TO STRANGERS: 16, 32
LOVE OF SHIPS: 325-8
KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHT & WRONG: 164-6, 315-8
UTOPIAN IDEALS of palace: 81ff

Odysseus

Still cared for by Ath. (14, 40-2), continues to CONCEAL IDENTITY (helpless stranger, 22-6 & needy beggar, 215-21). He is complemented (226, 311-5) & accepted into palace. His self-presentation + Nausicaa's hinting in Bk 6 re. marriage cause Alc. to offer her in marr. to O. (though he doesn't insist!) The uncertainty of the sit. enables H. to develop theme of O.'s mastery of his circumstances.

Queen Arete

Name = 'prayed to' in Greek. At 6.310-5, she is suggested (by Naus.) as vital to O.'s welfare (& by Ath. at 7.47ff) but it is Alc. who takes over (155ff) after O. has supplicated her: she asks only 2 qns., one of which is 'Who are you?' and this remains unanswered & is not pursued. WHY? Is it evidence for multiple authorship of Odyssey? - further development of Arete in another version? Or is it more a qn. of O. having to remain incognito at pres. because he needs to know them better: would a people who apparently live so far from human soc. have even heard of him? He needs to be sure they would believe him too - & he is at pres. completely destitute. Arete delays questioning for the sake of xenia & allows him to eat: her role is small but part of the importance of their hospitality. she is approached by O. as one who is respected & admired for her good sense & ability to arbitrate in disputes (69ff).

Homeric Technique

Common feature of how heroes in need are helped by gods in disguise (18ff).

Ath. will also help O. with a mist at 13.187ff in Ithaca.

Note how women hold the key to O.'s survival in the early bks: Calypso, Ino, Naus., Arete, Circe, Ath. - unusual sit. for Iliadic hero.

O.'s version of events at 244ff shows how the oral poet can compress series of events (he omits Ino episode, noise of the girls who woke him & -wrongly- says Naus. bathed him).

Odyssey ~ Book 8

RECAPITULATION:

1-54 Phaeacian assembly agrees to send O. home by ship
55-82 Princes go back to palace; bard Demodocus entertains
83-130 O. weeps; Alc. introduces athletics contest
131-64 O. challenged to compete & taunted
165-233 O. hurls discus beyond others & issues own challenge
234-65 Alc. introduces some dancing
266-369 Demod. sings of the affair of Ares & Aphrodite
370-448 Dancing; gifts brought to O.
449-68 O. bathes & bids farewell to Naus.
469-520 Feasting & song
521-86 O. weeps again at the song; Alc. qns. him about himself

POINTS TO NOTE:

Theme of Book 8:

Gradual est. of O.'s identity & heroic stature until finally confirmed at 9.19
Book carefully structured with repetition for emph. - 3 blocks of entertainment, each broken by song, O. weeping at 1st & 3rd sessions, to prompt Alc. to ask 'Who are you?' etc. at the end (548-86).

Scheria

H. cont. to build on pic. est. by earlier bks.: hostility of Euryalus (159ff) is made up for by Alc. (235ff) & repentant Euryalus at 400ff. Phaeacian friendliness & generosity (39ff, 392ff) & love of ships again at 48-55 & 556-63. Note how they CRAVE luxury (248, 368), not like O. (altho. he likes possessions) - but unlike suitors, they know right from wrong.

Alcinous

Generous (7.186ff, 8.388ff); wordy - likes own voice! (eg 550-86 just to ask 'Who are you & where from?'); he likes praise (381-8) & proud of his people (7.317ff, 8.244, 252); he is tactful when O. weeps (93ff) & is willing to admit wrong (396-7); observes xenia.

Demodocus

Comparison with H? The poet's art gives lasting glory because it ensures that a memory of events/people is saved (579-80) & reinforces heroes' glory.
The Achilles-Odysseus quarrel at 75ff is recorded nowhere else in Grk. lit., but serves here to emph. greatness of O. as man of cunning par excellence.
Song of Ares & Aphrodite (267ff) - unusual for other gods to be seen condoning adultery, but Zeus the overseer of morality (and serial adulterer himself!) is kept out of it & the adultery is punished by CUNNING not force (331) - the quality of O. It is also just a good laugh.

Odysseus

His heroic authority increases with the athletic contest; one should not trouble a xenos with enough trouble of his own to have to defend his honour - O.'s tact (207) & charm (170) are missing from the conduct of Euryalus & his rude challenge at 159ff.
By 237 his status & authority are acknowledged by Alc. & he seals their xenia with gifts of grt. generosity at 389ff, thus publicly acknowledging O.'s kleos.
Demod.'s songs place O. in context as hero of Troy; simile touching as O., the sacker of cities, weeps at the memory of it like a woman who has lost a husband in battle, enduring her loss & her fate - poignant moment which O. can only find it hard to share with his hosts in their celebratory mood.

Odyssey ~ Book 9

RECAPITULATION:

1-38 O. reveals to Phaeacians his name & country

His adventures:

39-61 attack on the Cicones

62-104 Storm & encounter with Lotus Eaters

105-51 Landing near country of Cyclopes

152-230 Discovery of a Cyclops' cave

231-98 Arrival of Polyphemus, who devours some of O.'s men

299-402 O.'s successful plan of revenge

403-72 Tricking of other Cyclopes, escape from cave & flight

473-542 O. taunts blinded Poly. & is cursed

543-566 Departure from land of Cyclopes

POINTS TO NOTE :

Books 9-12

Adventures of Bks. 9-12 last 3 yrs. (O. away from Ithaca for 20yrs. - ref. 2.174: 10 yrs. of Trojan War + 7 yrs with Calypso - ref. 7.259). Remember these stories are being told to Phaeacians.

Elements of MAGIC/FANTASY in O.'s adventures: contrast 'real' world of Phaeacians. However, H. wishes to show human side of his heroes & even 'humanises' the most incredible monsters eg Poly.

We may wonder whether O. exaggerates his tales to gain kleos or sympathy from his hosts, esp.

bearing in mind his famously cunning nature. However he repeats the tales to Pen. when under no

such obligations to exaggerate his greatness or that of his perils/adventures (23.306ff).

Just as Bks. 1-4 help assert Tel.'s identity, so 9-12 offer confirmation of O.'s identity as the cunning hero, courageous & versatile.

Adventures of Book 9

CICONES: O. is at mercy of the winds (39) - unlike the Phaeacians. The behaviour of his MEN & their foolishness (45ff - they want to stay & drink & eat) - 1st example of this: it is their own fault, not O.'s (see proem). O. had 12 ships (159) & c.60 men per ship - 72 killed here (6 from each ship - line 59).

THE LOTUS EATERS: note O.'s loyal determination to rescue all his men (100-2)

THE CYCLOPS: Lack of civilisation in their lifestyle (112ff), no laws etc. Poly. ignores all conventions of xenia, altho. he's aware of them (356) but chooses to ignore them (273-9) to the extent of performing a mockery of xenia (369-70) in offering to eat 'Nobody' last. Poly lacks intelligence to contrast with O.'s cunning: 'Nobody is killing me' (408). Note PUN of METIS (cunning) & ME TIS (no one). There is, however, a sense of PATHOS in the blinded Poly. taking comfort in his ewes, treating them with care (220. 307 & 447) - aaah!

Odysseus

Man of intelligence/cunning working at full-stretch, constant decision-making eg cannot kill Poly. in cave because of entrance stone. Where violence alone rules, as with Cyclops so with suitors, only the one who can OUT-THINK the others can prevail, the man of METIS. O. is here, essentially, the man of deception, adapting to circumstances, always looking for possible moments of advantage.

Style

Notice the points of Homeric preparation evident in this book in the telling of the story in readiness for what will happen eg Poly living alone (188), mention of the wine (197), the fire (251), the goats (168). This preparation of the details could possibly be extended to cover themes too, e.g. O.'s deception & concealing of identity as with suitors later.

Consider...

Why does O. reveal his real identity to Poly at 500ff? Poly can now curse him & this is the curse which dogs him all the way home.

..... Is O. concerned that the kleos gained by his skillful deception & conquest over Poly. will go unrecognised if a mere nobody blinded him? O. is also in control of when he reveals his identity whenever he does so (to Phaeacians, to Poly, to Eumaeus, to Suitors, to Pen. etc.)

Odyssey ~ Book 10

RECAPITULATION:

- 1-16 Arrival at island of Aeolus, King of the winds
- 17-33 O. well received & sent away after a month with all winds (except favourable one to Ithaca) tied up in bag
- 34-79 O.'s men open bag, with disastrous results
- 80-132 Loss of crews of 11 ships in attack by Laestrygonians
- 133-55 O., on his 1 remaining ship, comes to Aea. island of Circe
- 156-86 O. kills lrg. stag & all eat
- 187-229 Scouting party is sent out to explore
- 230-60 Circe turns them into pigs, except Eurylochus, who reports back to O.
- 261-405 O. goes to rescue his men & succeeds, with help of Hermes
- 406-79 All are entertained at Circe's & stay for a year
- 480-540 O. asks Circe that they be allowed to leave & she agrees, advising that a visit to the Land of the Dead is necessary & giving directions
- 541-74 They set out, altho. Elpenor dies accidentally

POINTS TO NOTE:

Pattern of Book 10

cf Bk 9 - two shorter incidents (Aeolus + Laestrygonians) followed by major encounter (Circe). Note development of imp. themes from Bk 9: tension bet. O. & his men (32,41,419) & certain negative aspects to O. eg he seems keener to stay with Circe than his men (469ff), altho. she doesn't obstruct him like Calypso does.

Adventures of Book 10

AEOLUS: fully humanised Olympian god - H. plays down the fairytale idea of folk law & legend. Note O.'s despair at his men's folly (51ff) - lack of metis? His decision to endure is another aspect of his metis.

LAESTRYGONIANS: note civilised aspects of their lives, considering their behaviour: road building for wood collecting (103), glorious houses (111), assemblies (115), living in communities (118ff). Note O.'s decision to have to abandon rest of his men, saving those he can.

CIRCE: (compare &) contrast with Calypso - Cir.'s palace full of drugged animals(211), Cal.'s orderly garden(5,55ff); Cir. seems greater threat by dabbling(!) in magic, etc. but has O.'s best interests at heart in the end, yet it requires divine intervention to make Cal. let O. go.

Both live alone on wooded islands, both weave & sing & have strange powers (Cal. - 5.268); both are untrustworthy (5.173ff; 10.336ff & 378-87); Cal.= daughter of Atlas (1.52); Cir. = daughter of Sun (10.138); Note the sexual duelling from both.

CONSIDER...

Look at how H. uses typical/formulaic scenes in this book (eg 13-18 as xenia sequence; 87-102 - cf 9.88-90 - as desc. for sending men inland; 148 - cf 9.165-7 - for seeing smoke rising in distance) to open up new adventures.

Why is Elpenor left unburied?

Odyssey ~ Book 11

RECAPITULATION:

1-50 Journey to entrance to Hades & blood offerings to dead
51-224 Meetings with Penelope, Teiresias & Antikleia (O.'s mother)
225-332 Meetings with a catalogue of women - histories of divine heroines
333-384 'Intermezzo': King Alcinoos & Queen Arete make O. cont. the tale
385-567 Meetings with heroes: Agamemnon, Achilles & Ajax
568-635 Rewards & punishments given out to various heroes & villains
636-640 The return journey

POINTS TO NOTE:

Problems of authenticity: Some believe that this book gives stronger indication of multiple authorship due to inconsistencies -

- i) Circe sent O. to ask Teiresias about his ret. to Ithaca (10.538), but Teir.'s reply is barely sufficient (11.100ff) & Circe seems far more informative later (12.37ff)
- ii) The 'intermezzo' section pointlessly extends O.'s stay with Phaeacians another day
- iii) The catalogue of women: no connection with O. & just a series of tales
- iv) The closing scene of heroes & villains in Hades (568ff) presents a diff. pic. from the earlier dignified portrayal of the women, heroes, Teir. & Antik.

Book 11 & its purpose

Note emph. on O.'s bravery etc. in being prepared to go to Underworld, which elevates him above ordinary men.

O.'s emotional responses show diff. side to him (eg with his mother).

O. refuses to maintain past grudges with Ajax - a superior heroism?

Catalogue of women shows how even the greatest of women can be corrupted - warning for O'?

In heroes & heroines section, we see JUSTICE at work among the dead.

The Dead

In H., souls of dead are without substance, thought & speech & powerless to intervene in human affairs from Underworld. Libations soak into the ground & were thought to nourish the dead. BLACK animals were sacrificed to gods of Underworld. Normal mortals can only hope their name will live on after death by their deeds, etc. & H. makes it clear that this can also be through poetry.

Antikleia

O. asks her about Pen. - 1st mention of his wife since Bk 5. Seems to think of her primarily in terms of her being the guardian of his kingdom, but H. shows good understanding of the human condition by making Antik. answer in terms of the stress, etc. which Pen. is under.

There is a haunting melancholy in the cause of Antik.'s death - she died of a broken heart.

Odysseus' Meetings with Heroes in the Underworld

Note horror of Ag.'s death, which has been repeatedly referred to before this point, & that it was at a celebratory time (415): O. will slaughter suitors at a feast of Apollo in Bk 22 when they, too, will least expect it - BUT he has good cause.

O. is mistrustful of women (eg 436-9) after his encounters with Cal. (Bk 5) & Circe (Bk 10).

Achilles has a deep hatred of death & is deeply unhappy, longing to be alive ~~ex~~ as a serf rather than even as king of the dead (489-91); his qns. centre on the living - his son.

Ajax refuses a reconciliation with O. despite O.'s attempts. Note his magnificent silence at about 563-4.

Heracles (601ff) is one of v. few mortals who became gods on account of their valour; he too completed a successful descent to the Underworld.

Odyssey ~ Book 12

RECAPITULATION:

- 1-15 O. & men ret. to Circe's & bury Elpenor
- 16-141 Circe welcomes them & warns O. of other dangers on voyage home
- 142-200 O. & men set out; they safely pass the sirens
- 201-59 They avoid the whirlpool Charybdis but the monster Scylla kills 6 men
- 260-373 They reach Thrinacia, island of the Sun god; against O.'s warnings, men eat some of the god's cattle
- 374-90 The Sun god learns of the sacrilege & demands vengeance, which Zeus promises
- 391-425 After 6 days, they sail on: ALL except O. are drowned in storm
- 426-53 O. manages to escape Charybdis a 2nd time & reaches Calypso's island (Ogygia). End of his story to the Phaeacians.

POINTS TO NOTE:

General Pattern Same as Bks 9 & 10: two shorter incidents [i)Sirens ii) Scylla & Charybdis] followed by longer adventure [arrival on Thrinacia, cattle, loss of men].

Circe gives O. imp. advice & warnings about what lies ahead in his journey & what to do to avoid disaster (37-150); this enhances his status as a hero since he is to be considered worthy to receive such aid from superior powers/beings (cf Calypso & Ino Bk 5). However, he is v. much on his own in the actual dealings with these dangers, fighting his own battles, & there is a distinct lack of gods, notably Ath., in the narrative (apart from the odd unspecified ref. eg 169 'some power lulled the waves').

Odysseus' Men Their destruction has been awaited since its mention in Bk 1 (line 7). As for their 'guilt', they were warned (264-70), swore an oath (303), were aware of the risk of disobeying O.'s orders (343-51) & did not have the proper resources for a sacrifice (358); they were not even put off by the slaughtered cattle's revival on the spits (395). A parallel may be drawn with suitors in their behaviour & feasting: their fate is in their own hands & yet they bring destruction upon themselves.

Odysseus in Books 9-12 These bks enable us to see the characteristics he will need to exploit to the full to return to Ithaca & defeat suitors: INTELLIGENCE/CUNNING - Cyclops; ENDURANCE - Aeolus; WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ADVICE - Circe; SELF-CONCEALMENT - Cyclops; RESPECT FOR GODS - Sun god; BRAVERY - FACING Scylla/Charyb. & visiting spirits of Underworld. There is tension & mistrust bet. O. & his men & he will have to be careful about his CHOICE OF HELPERS in Ithaca. The adventures have also taken place in an atmosphere of xenia/its failure, & anticipate the suitors treatment of O. in Bks 13-22.

The Adventures of Book 12

CIRCE'S ADVICE/SIRENS (1-200): as at 10.480ff, she tells O. everything in private & leaves him to pass on what he thinks nec. to his men - at 222-5 he hides info. on Scylla (sensibly?) & never says what they can expect if they eat the cattle. Circ. acknowledges his strength in battle in Iliadic terms (an aspect of him we do not see much of in these episodes). Why does O. insist on hearing the Sirens? They offer the truth about the past (189) - and one as ceaselessly curious as O. could hardly refuse.

SCYLLA & CHARYBDIS (201-59): Note O.'s Iliadic gesture of putting on armour (almost defiance) at 228 in the face of hopeless odds. It is also a decision-making moment for O. (to lose 6 or risk all his men). The appeal of the 6 doomed men is personal (257) & their deaths drawn out.

THRINACIA/THE CATTLE OF THE SUN GOD (260-453): Awkward that it is not Pos., O.'s great enemy, but the Sun god should be responsible for the ultimate destruction of all O.'s ships & men. Thrinacia could mean 'island of the trident' - is this to make a connection with Pos? Also note that it is Zeus, not Pos., who sends the final storm of destruction (386-8) - Zeus is the watcher of moral behaviour eg 1.32-4 & it is men's disobedience & own behaviour that is to blame, not the gods.

ponder... Do we feel sympathy for his men? They are in a desperate plight, forced to survive on fish: seems sincerity in Eurylochus' prayer & vow to Hyperion (Sun god) at 346 to build him a temple if they survive - BUT the sacrifice is not complete (no barley, 358 or wine, 362).

Odyssey ~ Book 13

RECAPITULATION:

1-80 O.'s tale to Phaeacians has ended & a further day is spent in prep. for his departure, giving of gifts.
81-92 Phaeacian crew & O. set sail.
93-125 Arrival in Ithaca with O. still asleep - they leave him there like this.
126-186 Council of gods bet. Pos. & Zeus; Pos.' punishment of Phaeacians.
187-286 O. wakes up, does not know where he is until he meets Ath. in disguise; O. tells first of his lying tales to Ath.
287-441 Ath. reveals herself & helps O. plan for his return to the palace, disguising him (396f.); she goes off to fetch T. from Sparta, where we left him in Book 4.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Theme The epic takes on a new form now. O. finally returns to Ithaca after 20 yrs' absence. It is now not just a tale of RETURN but one of REVENGE. The time with Calyp. & Phaeacns. was somewhat removed from REALITY; now he is back to the real world. O.'s sleep & Phaeacns.' dep., tog. with the mist thrown over Ithaca by Ath., help emph. his awakening from the 'dream' of the magical worlds into reality. (191)

Function of Book 13 i) re-introduces the ITHACA Tel. left in Bk 4. Wickedness of suitors restated (375-8); ^{new} punishment, not just duty of O. but also the concern of Zeus (see 213-4); Pen.'s desperate sit. (336-8); Tel.'s *kleos* makes him ready to prove himself as son of O. (421-4)

ii) re-establishes HARMONY bet. O. & Ath., despite O. telling her off, not seen in Bks 5-12 where O.'s INDEPENDENT HEROISM had to be established. Ath. sees *METIS* ('cunning') as the quality both she & O. must employ above all.

iii) FALSE TALES are imp. weapon in O.'s armour of disguise & self-preservation but also an Homeric device to increase pathos, tension or dramatic irony at times of recognition. (The tales often feature Phoenicians & Cretans - poss. reflecting the ever-expanding contemp. trading world of 8th Cent. Greece.)

Odysseus The means to his victory will not just require VALOUR but CONCEALMENT /DISGUISE/ DECEPTION as well as the qualities we've seen in him since Bk 5: self-control, endurance & heroism.

Eumaeus His invention is technically useful in allowing O. to gain info. & watch sit.; also allows reunion with Tel. in safety.

Odyssey ~ Book 14

RECAPITULATION:

- 1-44 O. arrives at Eumaeus' hut; description of the place
- 45-112 Eumaeus' xenia toward O. & his desc. of suitors & his master
- 113-185 O. inquires more about himself & attempts to reassure Eum.
- 186-359 Lying tale of O. (Troy - Egypt - attempts to enslave O. - Thesprotia - escape while near Ithaca after another attempt to enslave him)
- 360-409 Eum. 's sympathy for his guest, but won't trust travellers' tales re. O.
- 410-456 Return of other swineherds
- 457-end Lying tale to test kindness of Eum.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Disguise: subtly diff. in Bks 13-22 from that of 5-12; in earlier bks it was a calculated response to difficult situations; it is now IMPOSED upon O., together with the necessary humiliation it entails. H. exploits the potential for IRONY & PATHOS eg lines 32, 36, 396.

Purpose of Book 14: seems long-winded, with O.'s endless false tales, his preoccupation with food, exploitation of the good Eum. (457ff), etc. But we must remember that O. is PLAYING A PART as the beggar & trying to be convincing in this (note his occasional slips eg 315, 440, 443) - people loved to hear a traveller's stories of where he had been & to hear news; O. must have had such people at his palace before & listened to them himself.

Morality: there is a move away from epic style in considering Eum. & his attitude/morality - note his perfect xenia, trust in the gods, honest generosity. This helps to establish a sense of ORDER & how palace used to be run by seeing Eum. upholding the old ways even now, as best he can, & so helps us become more convinced that the suitors will be JUSTLY punished.

Odysseus: note how he becomes increasingly in command as part of the restoration of order, even in Bk 14, with Eum.'s growing sympathy for him.

Eumaeus: worthy (3), faithful (4), does not take advantage of O.'s absence (9ff), receives O. as courteously & lavishly as he can (45ff). H. enjoyed this character (55). Eum. lives simply, aware of right & wrong & his duty to the gods (eg 405ff); but he is no fool (121-33); he cares deeply for O. & O.'s family (140-6; cf 16.12-22)

Odyssey ~ Book 15

RECAPITULATION:

1-42 Athene goes back to Lacedaemon to fetch Telemachus.

43-184 Tel. takes his leave of Menelaus; giving of gifts; omen (160ff) of O.'s return.

185-219 On their way back to Pylos (& Nestor), Tel. & Peis. stay a night at Pherae as they had on the journey out (3.488) & then Tel. goes straight to his ship in Pylos.

220-300 About to sail. Tel. encounters Theoclymenus (who goes with him. 280).

301-495 Cut to O. at Eumaeus' (two days have passed); Eum. tells O. the history of how he came to Ithaca & was bought by Laertes. their talk lasting until the following morning.

496-end Tel. arrives in Ithaca (but not the main port) & entrusts Theoclymenus to Peiraeus' hospitality: he himself goes on foot to Eum.'s whilst the crew sail round to the city's port.

POINTS TO NOTE:

9-42 Note how Ath. plays on Tel.'s fears/anxieties: his house & property, mother's faithfulness, suitors. This is all to achieve her purpose of ensuring his return & her priority is to reunite Tel. & O. (37). It has its desired effect (43-6 & 198-209).

68-85 Menelaus' awareness of duties of xenia - if ever we were concerned/confused about O.'s preoccupation with receiving gifts, this section should convince us of its being the proper way to behave (cf Peisistratus 48-55). Tel.'s kleos is also being re-established by this wealth (since this is often measured by other heroes' reception of you, eg 4.589ff).

160-179 Omen of return of O. cf 2.147ff, 19.535ff, 22.302f.

301ff O. becomes more aware of Eum.'s closeness to his family (362-79), esp. during his absence, & learns his history (401-95) - giving impression of their growing relationship & winning of Eum.'s confidence by O.

525-534 A second omen in this book - giving confidence to Tel.

Timescale This book brings tog. the adventures of O. & Tel., as promised by Ath. at 13.404-15, in preparation for their reunion in Bk 16. H. often narrates diff. events as if they were taking place simultaneously, without regard for actual time - as here, since we might ask what Tel. has been doing during the 29 days or so it took O. to leave Calypso & return to Ithaca; also, why has Ath. taken a whole day (the day of Bk 14 - O. & Eum. - Ath. absent after end Bk 13) to reach Lacedaemon/Sparta, since she promised in Bk 13 to go to Tel.? The temporal interlocking of Tel.'s & O.'s stories helps juxtapose & compare the two characters.

Theoclymenus It is hard to reconcile the detailed treatment he receives in the giving of his background. He will be useful, however, as a prophet/interpreter as the doom of the suitors draws nearer. He could have been introduced to carry a more expansive role in another version of the story.

Odyssey ~ Book 16

RECAPITULATION:

- 1-129 Tel. arrives at Eum. 's farm, meets O. (as beggar)
- 130-153 Tel. sends Eum. to inform Pen. of his return
- 154-224 Ath. instructs O. to reveal himself to Tel., which he does (186ff)
- 225-320 O. tells Tel. how he got to Ithaca & they plan their attack on the suitors
- 321-451 The sit. in the palace
- 452-end Eum. 's hut, O. & Tel. informed of events re. the (failed) attempt to ambush Tel.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Structure

H. manoeuvring the pieces skillfully into position (in Bk 17 all will be brought tog. - O., Tel., Pen., suitors, Eum.)

Carefully organised mvt. of the story from the countryside to the palace, O. being present virtually throughout - he is at the CENTRE & the unknown guiding force of the action.

Reunion of Odysseus & Telemachus

- i) 11-129 Look for poignancy in the details, esp. O. 's silence.
- ii) 156-320 - of obvious importance: O. is in no doubt that Tel. is of an age to help him effectively ('tho. Ath. has to remind him of this at 20.34-5).
O. 's challenge to Tel. is to perform in the way O. himself has had to - ENDURE, keeping IDENTITY of O. SECRET, even under duress eg attacks on O. at 17.462, 18.394, 20.299.
When we see the suitors' attitude to tel., they will be deceived by him in thinking of him in the same way as BEFORE he went to Pylos & not in his NEW role (only Antinous seems wary at 364f - but he is ignored).

Revelation of Odysseus to Telemachus & other recognition scenes

For other recognition scenes to compare, see: 17.301 (Argos); 19.467 (Eurycleia); 21.207ff (Eumaeus & Philoetius); 22.45, presumably (the suitors); 22.498 (the household); 23.205 (Penelope); 24.345 (Laertes); 24.391 (other servants).

Note the following COMMON ELEMENTS in most of them: testing comment, supportive response, 'I am he', proof, examination, embrace, tears, element of doubt.

Odyssey ~ Book 17

RECAPITULATION:

1-165 Tel. goes to palace & speaks with his mother; Theoclymenus is received as a guest
166-181 Suitors relaxed & enjoying themselves
182-259 O. & Eum. make their way to the palace & O. encounters abuse from the shepherd Melanthius
260-327 O. & Eum. arrive at palace: Argus greets O. & dies
328-481 O. enters hall at mealtime: he begs & is assaulted by Antinous
482-end Pen. sends for O. (as beggar) to tell her of any news of O. but he declines; Eum. leaves

POINTS TO NOTE:

The action from now on takes place in O.'s palace

Tensions & ironies arise in a situation where opposite themes combine:

ignorance & knowledge
deception & honesty
hostility & sympathy
youth & experience
hope & despair
appearance & reality
loyalty & hypocrisy

EXAMPLES:

Feasting of suitors to accompaniment of lyre & song (261-70 & 604-6) is like that of epic heroes; but they are hypocrites (66, 403, 454).

The suitors have a deleterious effect upon some of those in contact with them eg Melanthius & Argus. O. begs for his own possessions/food in his own house.

O., who has been tested so much on his travels NOW TESTS THE SUITORS.

Abuse of Odysseus is typified by his reception by Melanthius (212ff).

There are also FIVE ASSAULTS on O. by foot/chair/fist/h hoof.

The basic pattern is: i) abuse of O.; ii) attack on O.; iii) defensive reaction against attacker; iv) further threats.

Note also the common elements in verbal abuse eg beggars as 'plate-lickers at the feast'.

Argus - touching scene as first 'member' of palace to greet O. His poor state of health reflects much about the way things are there.

The two sides are contrasted and built up eg Eumaeus (& also Eurynome at 495) contrasts with Melanthius: Antinous contrasts with Tel./Pen.

Odyssey ~ Book 18

RECAPITULATION:

Same evening as Bk 19, which carries on directly from this book.

1-110 Appearance of Arnaeus/Irus who fights with O. (& loses)

111-158 O. gains respect for this from suitors

159-304 Pen., beautified by Ath., extorts gifts from suitors

305-339 O. tests the maids & is insulted by Melanthe

340-end Suitors cont. their insults against O.; he responds to provocation from Eurymachus, who throws a stool & misses O.; Amphinomus calms the sit. & they leave.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Assaults & abuse of Odysseus

Irus 1-157

Melanthe 304-45

Eurymachus 346-428

O. through these, intangibly asserts his authority, even when suffering the worst of insults for a Greek - being laughed at, esp. by a woman.

Penelope

Important scene 158-303

1.) PROBLEM - Does she mean it when she says she's going to remarry? Remember she's said it before (eg Laertes' shroud 2.89ff) & response of O. indicates how we should take it (he thinks she's cleverly getting gifts from suitors with ulterior motive - 281ff); also remember that Ath. has motivated this scene (158ff) & evidence/rumour of O.'s return is mounting eg Bk17 lines 152-61, 522-7 & 541-7.

...OR is she just being practical? - the bow & axes trial is in her mind; this would make her quotation from O. to be free to remarry when Tel. is of age a real quote (259ff) & she has certainly seen him changing of late & being his own man. The irony of this is that it is all working not toward a remarriage but toward the reunion with O. & Ath. KNOWS THIS.

2.) PROBLEM? - Why are we given no insight into O.'s feelings on his first sight of his wife after 20 yrs., esp. in her beautified state?

i) focus is on Pen. & suitors' reactions

ii) O. needs to remain incognito - altho. no reason why we can't be told his inner thoughts

iii) in another version of the story, O.'s identity may already have been revealed to Pen. - perhaps this causes some of the unanswerable difficulty of problem 1. above.

Odyssey ~ Book 19

RECAPITULATION:

1-52 In the evening, O. & Tel. remove all weapons, etc. from the hall

53-317 Pen. & O. in the hall talk for 1st. time. He tells of his travels, a mixture of truth & lying tale; she believes what he tells her.

318-392 Pen. orders Eurycleia to wash O.'s feet

393-467 Digression on cause of O.'s scar

468-507 Euryc.'s reaction to seeing the scar & O.'s warning to say nothing

508-569 Pen. resumes talk with O. & asks him to interpret her dream

570-end Pen. tells O. of her intention to remarry & her plan to test the suitors by the trial of the bow.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Odysseus Contrast the care & restraint with which O. approaches his encounter with Pen. (107-22, 165-7, 209-12, 336-48) & the instant mastery he shows over Euryc. when she recognises him (479-502).

Psychology Beware of applying modern psychology to ancient fictional characters. Pen.'s decision to remarry does present her with psychological difficulties, but of greater importance to H. are the situations for dramatic tension & irony this can present.

Odyssey ~ Book 20

RECAPITULATION:

1-56 O. tosses & turns in his anxiety of how to deal with the suitors. Ath. reassures him
57-91 Pen. is also sleepless & close to despair
92-122 O. receives a favourable omen as Dawn appears
123-162 Tel. speaks with Euryc. who keeps her silence over recognising O.; preparations are made for the festival that day
163-231 O. encounters Eumaeus & Philoetius, whom he judges loyal
240-286 Further omen deters suitors from their plan to kill Tel. Feasting begins in palace.
287-344 Ctesippus assaults O. & Tel. rebukes him for this
345-end Further omens foretell the doom of the suitors, interpreted by Theoclymenus who then leaves.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Doubt & confidence:

OF ODYSSEUS - doubts: 1-56; confidence 226-34. Understandable anxiety before the great undertaking; he needs the reassurance of the gods; he also gains reassurance/knowledge of the sit. by his encounters with other characters, both loyal (Philoetius 185ff) & disloyal (servants 5-13) as well as further evidence of the wickedness of the suitors.

OF TELEMACHUS - his confidence has increased now as he deals with the suitors (257-76) and in speaking with independence & being an authority figure (303-21).

Omens: Lines 101-22; 240-6; 347-9

The omens are increasing. At 19.535ff. Pen. had recounted a favourable dream; O. receives 2 omens from Zeus early in Bk 20 (101-22 & 240-6) & Theocl.'s vision (347ff) is the most powerful foreshadowing yet of what is to come. Wickedness & divine judgment make an irresistible case against the suitors.

Odyssey ~ Book 21

RECAPITULATION:

1-99 Pen. brings the bow & axes to the suitors & issues her challenge
100-135 Tel. attempts to string the bow but is stopped by O.
136-188 The suitor Leodes fails to string the bow
189-244 O. reveals himself to Eumaeus & Philoetius & proves it by his scar
245-273 Suitors continue but contest is postponed by Antinous with the excuse to feast
274-375 O. requests a go at stringing the bow; both Pen. & Tel. say yes to this - for a diff. prize than her hand; Pen. withdraws & Tel. takes control
376-end O. has the entrances/exits locked & then strings the bow & fires arrow thru' axes. He then gives Tel. the nod....

POINTS TO NOTE:

The Book of the Bow

The bow's pedigree is est. & Pen. sees it as her memory of O., attached to his heroic past; in handing it over she seems to be bidding her final farewell to O.

Note the movement of the bow thru' the hands of the loyal & faithful (Pen. 54 > Eum. 80 > Tel. 124), then to the enemy, and finally, via Eum. (with Tel.'s encouragement) 359-79 to O. (379).

Ominous words of suitors

e.g. Antinous 90; Leodes 154-5

Revelation

The revelation of himself by O. to Eum. & Philoet. is closely comparable to that with Laertes (24.226ff) but has elements common to the recognition scenes elsewhere (see notes on Bk 16).

Lapiths & Centaurs

Ref. lines 295-310: The Centaurs desc. in H. are not necessarily the half-horse half-man of later tradition. They were invited to the wedding of the Lapith King Peirithous, but the drunken Eurytion tried to rape the bride Hippodameia & was punished for it. Both the Parthenon & the Temple of Zeus at Olympia carried scenes from the battle bet. Lapiths & Centaurs, which symbolised the clash bet. civilisation & barbarism.

Observe the irony of Antinous' comparison as he clearly thinks that the suitors = heroic Lapiths, enjoying a peaceful celebration in the palace of a forthcoming marriage (thus Hippodameia = Pen.) but disturbed by a drunk (Eurytion = O.) who receives a punishment. It is, in fact, the suitors who are the barbarians & Melanthius will receive a punishment almost exactly the same as Eurytion's (in the next book: 22. 473-6).

Odyssey ~ Book 22

RECAPITULATION:

1-33 Immediately following on from Bk 21: O. takes another arrow & shoots Antinous; suitors think it is an accident.

34-87 O. reveals himself to the suitors; Eurymachus speaks out & is killed by O.

88-115 Amphinomus is killed by Tel. who then fetches armour & more weapons from store-room

116-202 O. continues to kill suitors with arrows but Melanthius fetches weapons for suitors from the open store-room; he is then caught & tied up by Eum. & Philoet.

203-329 Ath., as Mentor, comes to O.'s assistance to encourage him & the battle continues

330-380 Phemius the minstrel & Medon the herald are spared by Tel.'s intervention

381-479 O. sends for Eurycleia & has the servant-women clean up; they are then hanged *en masse* by Tel.; Melanthius is also killed.

480-end O. purifies the hall before Euryc. fetches Pen. & her maids.

POINTS TO NOTE:

'Aristeia': heroic feat of arms against powerful enemies, such as that of Diomedes & Agamemnon at the start of Bks 5 & 11 (respectively) of the *Iliad*. The typical elements of an Iliadic 'aristeia' are: divine exhortation & inspiration of the hero, arming, enthusiasm for battle, the advance of the hero thru' the ranks, single combats, counter-attacks, a moment of danger or weakness (often a wounding), a grand duel and, finally, victory with ritual boasting over the slain man; similes (sometimes multiple ones) & divine interventions during these events cause the hearer to dwell upon certain moments.

LOOK FOR THESE THINGS, whilst, of course, bearing in mind that the circumstances are different: it is not a battlefield, subterfuge & surprise are the imp. elements - no battle is expected; also remember that the BOW is not the weapon of Iliadic hand-to-hand combat.

The SIMILARITIES that exist, however, set it in the heroic world: it is the differences which mark it out as Odyssean eg moral judgments, good triumphing over evil - reminding us of the moral programme H. set out at the beginning of the epic of how men choose to behave the way they do & their deaths are justified.

At the end of Book 22, all is restored to order - except for the reunion of Pen. & O., which H. has deliberately delayed (eg 430 'Don't wake her yet' says O.)

Eurycleia: note how O. continues to speak to her, treats her. WHY? eg 390-435, 480-end.

Odyssey ~ Book 23

RECAPITULATION:

1-84 Eurycl. tells Pen. of O.'s return but Pen. cannot bring herself to believe it

85-110 Pen. enters the hall but cannot accept O.; she decides to test him on things only he & she would know

111-152 O. & Tel. plan how to prepare for the reaction of the suitors' families to their sons' deaths

153-204 O. bathes & is beautified by Ath.; in speaking to Pen., he is tested by a trick by her re. their bed, which is unmoveable.

205-296 Pen. realises it is O., they are reunited & after much talk they go to bed

297-end O. recounts his adventures to Pen. until he falls asleep! On waking, he sets off with Tel., Eum. & Philoet. to see his father, Laertes.

POINTS TO NOTE:

Penelope and the Bed

Reunion of Pen. & O. is arguably the climax of the epic. It has been criticised: that Pen. has to test O. (110f) before accepting him, that Pen. is ignored whilst O. & Tel. discuss their plans (111-152), that his beauty treatment from Ath. (153f) does not have the desired effect. These all, however, typically for H., help build up the tension & make the bed episode all the more imp. & symbolic - the bed is the enduring, firm symbol of their living love.

Homeric problem

Did the *Odyssey* end at 23.296?....

Odyssey ~ Book 24

RECAPITULATION:

1-15 The souls of the suitors are escorted to Hades

16-97 Achilles' & Agamemnon's ghosts consider each other's greatness & deaths

98-204 Suitors' ghosts tell Agamemnon & Achilles how they have come to be here with a summary of Bks 14-22.

205-314 O. (+ Tel., Eum. & Philoet.) reaches Laertes' house: O. tells his father a lying tale of who he is.

315-411 O. reveals his true self to Laertes & they eat (with Dolius & sons)

412-471 People by now have heard of suitors' deaths & gather at the palace. Antinous' father urges revenge. Mentor says a god killed their sons. Halitherses says the suitors were to blame. The majority decide on revenge.

472-488 Council of gods: Ath. asks for an end to the strife & Zeus agrees.

489-end O. & the others prepare for battle. Ath. urges Laertes to cast the 1st. spear & the fighting ensues: she then stops it with a great cry; the Ithacans flee & O. is about to pursue but Zeus intervenes & Ath. tells O. to stop & establishes peace between the two sides.

How do you view this final book as an ending to the *Odyssey*?

Read Peter Jones' introduction to the Penguin translation and consider the group of works known as 'The Epic Cycle'.