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PENELOPEIA:
THE MAKING OF PENELOPE IN HOMER'S STORY AND BEYOND

by

Dene Grigar; B. A., M. Ed., M. A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The University of Texas at Dallas

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

PH. D. OF ARTS IN THE HUMANITIES

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PENELOPEIA: THE MAKING OF PENELOPE IN HOMER'S STORY AND BEYOND

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For Peter

οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον,
ἢ ὅθ' ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχητον
ἀνὴρ ἠδὲ γυνή· πόλλ' ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσι,
χάρματα δ'εὐμενέτῃσι, μάλιστα δέ τ' ἔκλυον αὐτοί.

(Odysseus to Nausikaa, *Ody.* 6.182-185)

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PENELOPEIA:
THE MAKING OF PENELOPE IN HOMER'S STORY AND BEYOND

Dene Grigar; B. A., M. Ed., M. A.
The University of Texas at Dallas

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The ways in which poets, dramatists, novelists, musical composers, and visual artists have responded to Homer's Penelope from the Middle Ages to the present time vary widely and are predicated upon the way in which they view her conduct in the story. The artists of the Middle Ages embraced Penelope as a paragon of virtue, the model for "the good wife." It is from this period that Penelope acquires the epithet for which she is still well-known, "chaste Penelope." During the Renaissance, Penelope retains her virtuous qualities but takes on new traits associated with enlightenment and knowledge. Here Penelope emerges as a model for the upper class Renaissance woman who, for the most part, is better educated and who exercises more personal freedom than her Medieval counterpart. The Baroque and Enlightenment Periods introduce a Penelope endowed with heroic qualities associated with perseverance and courage. However, for her intellectual, emotional, and spiritual strength she is both praised *and* vilified. The Romantic and Victorian artists also present Penelope as the model of feminine virtue, but because their vision of womanhood precludes intellectual strength, they strip her of her cunning intelligence. With a few exceptions, she is viewed simply as the "forlorn wife" of Odysseus. Although in the modern age Penelope remains the symbol of wifehood, she also comes to represent independence, genius, and heroism. It is during this time that the issue of Penelope's adulterous nature is reintroduced.

As we see from the hundreds of portraits of Penelope, she is treated primarily as a type: the sweet and faithful wife, the wanton harlot, the wise woman, the unsuspecting lady, the jealous harpy, the good-natured matron, the damsel-in-distress, and the courageous hero. In truth, Homer's Penelope represents the quintessential woman, everywoman and everyman--for contained in her are all of the components of womanhood, as well as humanity.

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Chapter 1
The Making of Penelope

In the pathway of the sun,
In the footsteps of the breeze,
Where the world and sky are one,
He shall ride the silver seas,
He shall cut the glittering wave.
I shall sit at home, and rock;
Rise, to heed a neighbor's knock;
Brew my tea, and snip my thread;
Bleach the linen for my bed.
They will call him brave.
(Dorothy Parker, "Penelope")[1]

Introduction

In this lament Penelope speaks to us about the disparate lives she and her husband lead: While Odysseus journeys across the sea free to follow the wind, Penelope remains at home, performing household duties and participating in community life. Parker's Penelope does not grumble about her life of domesticity or begrudge Odysseus a life of adventure. What does emerge in the last line, however, is a complaint about the way they will both be remembered in history—that *he* will be the one deemed heroic, the one considered "brave." Although Penelope does not express exactly how she thinks "they" will remember *her*, the catalogue of her duties followed by the ironic tone of the last line suggests what she anticipates will happen: that she will be viewed as *un*brave and *un*heroic and will ultimately be regarded as *un*important. Strangely enough, Penelope does not seem to be angry because she is relegated to "women's work," as a reader may expect a modern female writer would portray Penelope; instead, she is mad because she will not be accorded the same *kleos*, or fame, as her husband even though they both display similar *arete*, or excellence, in the roles society expects them to play. It is for this reason that the voice of Dorothy Parker's Penelope exudes sarcasm and bitterness.[2]

Although much attention has been accorded Odysseus in the arts,[3] Parker's poem demonstrates that Penelope has achieved her own place in Western tradition. In fact, Parker's ironic treatment of Penelope represents but one response to Homer's character in the modern world. From the 14th Century to the modern age, over 300 poems, works of fiction, paintings, works of sculpture, operas, and various other types of musical compositions refer to or focus on Penelope. (See Appendix A.) However, despite Penelope's obvious popularity, no one has offered a definitive study of her presence in and influence upon Western culture. Although I do not suggest that my study can undertake such a task, I do intend to present an initial investigation into this pivotal figure. In order to lay the scholarly groundwork for a more detailed investigation of Penelope and the implications of her presence within Western tradition, I trace the artistic response to Penelope from the middle ages to the 20th Century in this study.

Seminal Works on Penelope

In *Pénélope: Légende et Mythe* Marie-Madeleine Mactoux chronicles the treatment of Penelope in the arts from the Archaic Age of Greece to the Byzantine Period. From plays written during the Golden Age of Greece[4] to highly decorative vases created during the Hellenistic Age[5] to frescoes painted during the middle of 3rd Century A.D.,[6] Mactoux demonstrates that Homer's story about the cunning and faithful Penelope has lived on in the arts. Another work that lists references to various Greek and Roman figures, Jane Davidson Reid's encyclopedic *Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990's*, catalogs over one hundred artistic works referring to various characters from Homer's *Odyssey*, from the middle ages onward.[7] As both Mactoux and Reid demonstrate, since the Greek Archaic Age artists and writers have adapted many of the exploits found in Homer's tale and have borrowed the principal characters of the *Odyssey* for literature, the visual arts, and musical compositions—and Penelope, in particular, seems to have inspired a great deal

of interest.[8] Specifically, Mactoux shows that Penelope's popularity and tradition are associated with the ways in which philosophers and artists have interpreted her conduct in Homer's story.

For the most part, interpretations of Penelope's legend consists of two disparate views. The first holds that she is the model of womanhood, remaining chaste and faithful for the twenty years Odysseus is away. Allusions to her virtue can be found in numerous literary and critical works, from ancient to modern times. The other view maintains that she is deceitful and adulterous. Stories that she was seduced by the god Hermes or deceived Odysseus with Antinoos or all of the suitors have persisted through the ages.[9] In my work I propose that the treatment of Penelope has in fact been more complex than generally believed and that this complexity adds to the tension and resolution between Penelope and Odysseus in Homer's story.

Lastly, I should mention that scholarly interest in Penelope has continued to grow in recent years, allowing for a fuller portrait of her to emerge. Marylin Katz's *Penelope's Renown : Meaning and Determinacy in the* Odyssey [10] and Nancy Felson-Rubin's *Regarding Penelope : From Character to Poetics* [11] both discuss Penelope's complex image in the *Odyssey* and offer valuable insights into the way in which Penelope has been perceived in modern scholarship. Specifically, Katz explores the notion of fame with regards to Penelope, tracing the scholarship that has shaped our reading of her in Homer's story. On the other hand, Felson-Rubin examines Penelope's multiple images found in the *Odyssey* by looking at the ways in which other characters in the story view her. Because my study examines the way other artists have responded to Homer's Penelope, my work differs from both Katz's and Felson-Rubin's work. However, it adds a valuable dimension to the way in which Penelope's actions have been interpreted by those who have read her story or viewed her conduct in Homer's plot.

Penelope Through Time

My study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 2, entitled "Paradox or Paradigm: Penelope in the Middle Ages," explores the image of Penelope found during the 12th to the 14th Centuries. As we will see, artists of the medieval period embraced Penelope as a paragon of virtue. Artists, like Giovanni Boccaccio, Christine de Pizan, Geoffrey Chaucer, and John Gower identified Penelope primarily as "the good wife."

Throughout the rest of my exploration, I demonstrate the ways in which Penelope's qualities are expanded upon or adhered to by artists from subsequent periods of time. I do not claim to be an expert in all of the historical periods that I discuss or a scholar in each of the fields that I highlight. However, in order to present a detailed examination of Penelope, I must ground the artistic response to her in philosophical and historical contexts. Some of the comments I make, though broad in scope, help to explain unique views of Penelope that arise through time.

In Chapter 3, "Brave New Penelope: Penelope in the Renaissance," we see that Penelope retains her virtuous qualities but takes on new traits associated with enlightenment and knowledge. In particular, painter Domenico Beccafumi, and poets Louise Labé, John Skelton, Sir John Davies, and Thomas Carew emphasize Penelope's intelligence and independence, as well as present her as a chaste and honest woman. During the 15th and 16th Centuries Penelope emerges as the model for the upper class Renaissance woman, who is, for the most part, better educated and exercises more personal freedom than her Medieval counterpart.

In Chapter 4, "Penelope's Great Fame and Notoriety: Penelope during the Baroque and Enlightenment," we see that artists working during 17th and 18th Centuries introduce a Penelope endowed with heroic attributes. However, for her intellectual, emotional, and spiritual strength she is both praised and vilified. As I also demonstrate, the translations published by George Chapman in 1616 and Alexander Pope during the 18th Century

contributed to the explosion in plays, operas, poetry, musical compositions, and art that focus on Penelope. Specifically, I examine Claudio Monteverdi's opera, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, John Mottley and Thomas Cooke's ballad opera, *Penelope*, and numerous paintings by Angelica Kauffman.

In Chapter 5, "Virtue Defiled: The Penelope of the Romantics and Victorians," I show that although the Romantics and the Victorians remained enamored of Penelope and continued to present her as a model of the good woman, her virtuous image is tarnished. In particular, Lord Byron lambasts virtuous women like Penelope, and Frances C. Burnand rejects the idea that a woman could remain chaste for twenty years. Thus, during the 19th Century, the idea of an adulterous Penelope takes shape again, nearly two thousand years after the Greek historians and poets presented this view of her.

Chapter 6, "Eternal Wife and Internalized Other: Penelope's Multiple *Personae* in the Modern World," illustrates that the changing aesthetic of the 20th Century did nothing to harm Penelope's stature as a figure worthy of attention. However, picking up the thread of Penelope's possible adultery and joining it to her image of the virtuous woman, James Joyce presents us with the most complete portrait of Penelope. As I demonstrate, Joyce's Molly Bloom embodies all of the qualities associated through time with Penelope. Likewise, Carlo Carrà, Ezra Pound, and Dorothy Parker all expand her virtues to encompass those traits valued in the modern age. Although Penelope remains resolutely tied to the symbol of wifehood, she also comes to represent independence, genius, and heroism. Of the Modernist poets I explore in this chapter, only H. D.'s Penelope reminds us of the frail heroine that emerged during the Victorian Age.

In Chapter 7, "Penelopeia: Penelope in Homer's Story," I turn back to the *Odyssey* in order to demonstrate that the qualities these various artists endow Penelope with are indeed found in Homer's work. Here, in order to demonstrate that Homer presents a complex figure, I will look at particular passages in which Penelope appears in

or is mentioned by others in the *Odyssey*. At the end of this section, I will present an analysis of Homer's depiction of her and compare this to those offered by artists responding to his Penelope.

The Electronic Search for Penelope

Electronic technology has enabled me to locate an enormous number of works relating to Penelope that I otherwise would not have been aware of. Although I had found numerous print sources that guided the early stages of my research, it has been the electronic databases, such as FirstSearch, MLA, and the Humanities Index, and the electronic library catalogs, electronic newsgroups, and the World Wide Web that netted me the most sources. What began as a respectable list of eighty-five works of art rapidly expanded to over three hundred possible sources. From my modem at home, I perused the holdings of numerous university libraries, such as Harvard, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, and University of Texas at Austin. Via e-mail I spoke with several scholars who suggested works for me to read, and I participated in ongoing discussions regarding areas relating to my project. Using the World Wide Web, I was able to post my research on the Internet in order that other scholars could look at and comment on it. The final component of my research will be an electronic open house, via the MOO, in which I will be able to discuss my work with other scholars in "real-time." In sum, through this new technology I have been able to conduct a very thorough search of my subject that not only changed the scope of my project but enriched my understanding of Penelope.

But the new technology presented me with a problem that I had not been prepared to face—the overwhelming number of sources from which to choose. With over three hundred works to consider, I was forced to pare down my sources to a more manageable sum. In order to do this, I traced Penelope's presence in Medieval art in which she appears. This gave me an instrument by which to measure her image during the time

periods that follow. After I had ascertained how Medieval poets portrayed Penelope in their works, I then applied this norm to the way artists who came later responded to her. This method allowed me to eliminate repetition in my own work and concentrate only on the significant differences that emerged in my study.

These deviations offered the most insight into the way the tradition surrounding Penelope has shifted with the introduction of new ideas and technologies. For the most part, the artists that I highlight fall into three distinct categories. First, I look at major artists whose ideas are generally viewed as responsible for shaping Western tradition or influencing others with their art and vision. Among these are Chaucer, Monteverdi, Byron, Joyce, and Pound. Secondly, I focus on artists whose response to Penelope includes new art forms not previously available, such as John Mottley and Thomas Cooke's ballad opera and Carlo Carra's Cubo-Futurist paintings. Lastly, I have chosen works by artists whose worldviews or aesthetics run counter to the norm for the period of time in which they were working and result in a unique view of Penelope. Here, I found the paintings of Angelica Kauffman and the burlesque of Burnand and Williams to be important to my study. In all, I am examining thirty-three works in detail and alluding to numerous others as points of references for my study.

I would also like to point out that the list of the primary sources I have gathered for this study appears in Appendix A. In order that my work may assist others in their research, I have listed these sources by the periods of time I delineate in the body of my text. I have also included pertinent information regarding each of these works, including the type of art, the date ascribed to the works of art, and the country of origin and the gender of the artists.

Additional Comments

In the interpretations of the works of art I discuss in this study, I am offering my own personal, provisional view. Because of the focus of my study is Penelope and how various artists portray her in their works, I concentrate only on this concept in the art I discuss. The vast amount of material that I must address precludes me from offering an exhaustive, thorough presentation of each artist and each work of art. Therefore, I warn the reader that I am not attempting to present, in any way, an authoritative reading based on a close analysis of these works in close context to the authors's *corpus* and specific aesthetic of the period. Instead I am offering possible readings that explain Penelope's presence in specific works of art that occur at specific periods of time. I hope those who read this study will take my interpretations further with their own areas of expertise, for that is the nature of scholarship and preliminary studies.

It should be noted that when I use the word "artist" in my work, I am referring to all men and women who engage in the creative act—that is writers, visual artists, and musical composers, among others. I should also mention here that I will refer to Penelope as "hero" rather than "heroine." Primarily this is due to the fact that heroine carries with it a connotation that is not appropriate to epic literature, *or* as I will argue in the second portion of my work, to Homer's Penelope. However, when indeed Penelope appears in a "romance novel," such as Edwin Bynner's *Penelope's Suitors* in which she warrants this title, then I will certainly employ it. Lastly, in an effort to be consistent with Odysseus's Greek name, I will refer to him as Ulysses only when he is called this by the artist whose work I am examining.

The spelling of the archaic words has been changed so that the reader can follow the works more freely. I cite the poetry by line, unless other notated. Lastly, in examining Homer's text, I rely Richmond Lattimore's translation. However, I have been guided by several translations over the course of my research. A complete list of these works appears

at the end of my study. (See Appendix B.) In regards to the other foreign texts I am using, I have elected to translate all of those works written in modern French (when the French text is available to me) and a selected few of those written in Italian and Latin. All other works written in languages beyond these are published translations and are notated in the bibliography.

Chapter 1
Notes

[1] Dorothy Parker, "Penelope," *Sunset Gun* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1928) 34.
[2] Marion Meade, *Dorothy Parker: What Fresh Hell Is This?* (New York: Penguin, 1987) xvi. Meade points out that Parker was well-known for her sarcasm and wit. She writes: "[S]he had been dubbed the wittiest woman in America, her quips preserved, repeated, and printed so that by 1927 scarcely a snappy line uttered anywhere was not attributed to her."

[3] W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1963). See also *The Odyssey and Ancient Art: An Epic in Word and Image*, ed. Diana Buitron et al (Annadale-On-The Hudson: Edith C. Blum Art Institute, 1992).

[4] Marie-Madeleine Mactoux, *Pénélope: Légende et Mythe* (Paris: Annales Littéraires de L'Université de Besancon, 1975) 49.

[5] Mactoux 107-110.

[6] Mactoux 177-178. It should be noted that there is much debate concerning the interpretation of the Roman Fresco.

[7] Jane Davidson Reid, *Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990's*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). For her reference to Penelope, see 850-854.

[8] See also, Odette Touchefeu-Meynier, *Thèmes odysséens dans l'art antique*, (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1968).

[9] Mactoux, 49-60, 97-102. During the Classical Age, Penelope was viewed as virtuous. Perhaps for this reason she does not figure prominently in the works of this period. However, Herodotus is credited with linking Penelope to Pan. Thus, he raises the suspicion that Penelope had committed adultery. During the Hellenistic Period historian Theopompus de Chios, the student of Isocrates, believed that Penelope's conduct toward the suitors was not necessarily as virtuous as some had previously thought. Others, such as Dicearchus, a student of Aristotle, argue that her appearance before the suitors demonstrate her low moral character. Likewise, playwright Dosiadas portrays Penelope as Pan's mother by Hermes, and poet Theocrites claims that Pan is her offspring, sired by all of the suitors.

[10] Marylin Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Determinacy in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[11] Nancy Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Chapter 2
Paradox or Paradigm?
Penelope in the Middle Ages

> Of all the things which are seen to have been bestowed through God's gift to the advantage of humanity, we consider nothing to be more beautiful or better than a good woman, who is a part of our own flesh, and we part of her own flesh. Quite rightly we are compelled by the law of nature to love her, and this is to the benefit of society, even if she troubles us. (Marbod of Rennes, "The Good Woman, early 12th Century)[1]

> Lucretia, Penelope, and the Sabine women carried the banners of chastity and (with few followers) brought back their prizes. My friend, there are no Lucretias, Penelopes, or Sabine women now; beware them all. (Walter Map, "The Letter of Valerius to Ruffinus, Against Marriage," c. 1180)[2]

Introduction

Marbod of Rennes's and Walter Map's comments about women demonstrate the ambivalence that existed during the Middle Ages regarding women and virtuous conduct. From Marbod's point of view "good women" do exist and deserve to be cherished, even if their presence is a nuisance to men. Map, writing close to one hundred years later, rejects Marbod's stance and asserts that virtuous women disappeared with the likes of the legendary Penelope, Lucretia, and the Sabine women. Marbod's attitude is no more an anomaly than Map's. In fact, the writings of these two men represent the Medieval view toward women: Women are held in high regard and are worshipped for their beauty and virtue *and at the same time* are vilified as base creatures, worthy only of contempt. Female virtue, for many of the artists and thinkers working during this period, is perceived to be a paradox and not a standard mode of conduct natural to women.[3] The 12th Century theologian Gratian, for example, held that women had no souls. One can surmise that without a soul, women lacked the basis for a spiritual nature. In effect, what Gratian and

others who subscribed to this view were saying is that women were incapable of virtue. It is in this strange light that we begin our examination of Penelope in Western tradition in the 14th and 15th Centuries.

Although no text of Homer's *Odyssey* could be found in Europe from the beginning of the Middle Ages until the late 14th Century, Medieval artists were very familiar with the story of Odysseus and his wife Penelope through works by Ovid, Virgil, Statius, Cicero, and Apuleius. As W. B. Stanford and J. V. Luce point out in *The Quest for Ulysses*, knowledge of the Greek language had all but disappeared, and interest in the *Odyssey* and Greek literature had diminished greatly during the anti-Greek sentiments of the 11th Century.[4] However, the end of the 12th Century saw the reintroduction of Odysseus to the West with Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Romain de Troie*. Humanism, which had been responsible for the renewed interest in classical literature during Benoit's lifetime,[5] had influenced artists working during the 1300's as well. Giovanni Boccaccio, Christine de Pizan, Geoffrey Chaucer, and John Gower, for example, all turned to the Greco-Roman classics for inspiration. In particular, each of these artists presented Penelope as a paragon of female virtue, the model of the faithful wife.

Despite the keen interest in the afterlife—the punishments awaiting those who sin and the rewards for those who don't—we cannot say that the entire Medieval Age and its writers ascribe to beliefs that limit their artistic scope.[6] Though many, like Boccaccio, Christine, and Gower, moralize about virtue and vice, others, such as Chaucer, demonstrate a complex view toward man's (and woman's) struggle with sin. If Map's and Marbod's rather disconcerting views toward women demonstrate anything at all, it is that a direct connection exists between those artists who lean primarily toward didacticism and simplistic approaches to subject matter *and* a one dimensional portrayal of Penelope and other figure and characters. Along these lines, those artists who place greater stock in creating intricate literary works that offer multiple ways of seeing and understanding the

stories produce a much more complex Penelope, thick with description.[7] Therefore, Penelope's presence in these works affords us an opportunity to explore the Medieval artists's view toward women and virtue and to examine the complexity of each artist's writing.

Dante Alighieri

We begin our assessment of Penelope in the Middle Ages with Dante. Of the five Medieval artists who refer to Penelope in their work, Dante proves to be the most difficult to evaluate, primarily because he appears to focus on her the least. When we do locate Penelope among his numerous poems and prose works, we notice only a passing reference to her in *Inferno* 26. At first glance this may seem strange to us, considering that he devotes all of *Inferno* 26 to her husband Odysseus and refers to him again in both *Purgatorio* 19.22 and *Paradiso* 27.83 of the *Divine Comedy*. However, Dante's treatment of Penelope—or lack of it—should not surprise us. Even in his earliest works, Dante's feminine ideal is Beatrice, a woman he has known since childhood and whom he elevates to a lofty status in *Paradiso*. Dante's admiration and love for Beatrice is well-documented in many of his works, but particularly *Vita Nuova*. Due to the courtly tradition that he subscribes to early in his career and the deep devotion he holds for Beatrice, Dante may not be free to turn his gaze upon other women, no matter how fictional they are. Furthermore, when we consider that the *Divine Comedy* is essentially a poem in which Dante declares his great religious faith and advocates reform in both the Church and State,[8] then it makes sense that pagan women (or men for that matter) do not prove to be the most prominent symbols of good Christian conduct. We must keep in mind that he goes as far as relegating Virgil and other pagans he admires to hell, making it clear that none of them make excellent models for Christians to emulate. Statius, for example, is Christianized in order to escape the fate the other virtuous pagans suffer in the story. Therefore, with a few

notable exceptions, Dante turns to more acceptable female role models, like Beatrice and the Virgin Mary, to symbolize various aspects of religion, virtuous conduct, and political beliefs.[9]

In sum, Dante's neglect of Penelope in light of his keen interest in Ulysses signals to us that he does not view her of any importance to Western tradition. As a pagan, she does not make an acceptable role model for his Christian audience. As a *virtuous* pagan, she lacks the qualities that would have made her a suitable figure to punish in hell. As we will see, Dante's view of Penelope represents the way many artists treated Penelope in the Middle Ages, for she appears minimally in works during this time.

Giovanni Boccaccio

Like Dante, Giovanni Boccaccio was a Florentine, one born during the time Dante was writing the *Divine Comedy*. Also, like Dante, Boccaccio witnessed many events and changes occurring in both Italy and Europe. The plague, continued struggles between the Church and secularism, growing acceptance of the classics, and the ascendancy of humanism all contribute to Boccaccio's worldview.[10] Known specifically to us through *The Decameron*, a collection of stories from numerous sources, Boccaccio achieved greater status during his life for his scholarly works written in Latin.[11]

Because Boccaccio lived in a time of transition, his sensibilities embrace portions of the Medieval and the Renaissance worldviews.[12] It is essentially this combination that we find in his treatise, *De claris mulieribus*, or *Concerning Famous Women.*[13] Here, in this collection of 104 biographies of famous women, written during 1355-1359, Boccaccio moralizes about the female virtues and, at the same time, seems to promote the more forward thinking idea that women could achieve greatness through many of the same methods that men could—that is, through the arts, scholarship, and secular rule.

In choosing the women who deserve great renown for their actions in *Concerning Famous Women*, Boccaccio focuses on Greek and Roman pagans. In light of Dante's deemphasis of pagan role models in his work, it may seem strange that Boccaccio excludes Christian and Hebrew women in his. However, there are a few notable exceptions to this rule. Boccaccio includes Eve, the first entry in his work. Calling her our "original mother" who desired a "greater glory" than what God had given her and allowed herself to be tempted by the serpent, he does credit her with discovering spinning and weaving (1-3). We also find stories about Pope Joan, Constance, Camiola, and Joanna. In his preface, Boccaccio does explain that he focuses on pagan rather than Christian and Hebrew women because the latter had the "sacred commandments and examples of their teachers" to guide them (xxxviii). On the other hand, pagan women achieved fame without the benefit of God's divine word. Furthermore, Boccaccio claims there are many other works that already describe the great achievements of Christian and Hebrew women; his, he says, will be the first to highlight those of pagans (xxxix). One other interesting choice that Boccaccio makes is to cite examples of women who have gained fame through both virtuous and immoral conduct. In doing so, Boccaccio gives himself the opportunity to moralize on both good and bad behavior. And moralize he does. I should mention here that many scholars, like Guarino, believe Boccaccio turns to biography, especially the stories of famous women, because he desires to instruct his female audience about good and bad behavior. Like Dante and other Medieval thinkers, he is concerned with the rewards and punishments of the afterlife and believes it is his duty as a writer to educate others and to "strengthen" their will.[14] However, his penchant for using these women as paragons of virtue and vice produce in Boccaccio's work very simplistic characters. In particular, Boccaccio's Penelope achieves none of the complexity that others demonstrate.

Because Boccaccio had access to the works of Homer, he was more fortunate than previous Medieval writers who alluded to characters or episodes from the *Iliad* or the

Odyssey. Through his close friend Petrarch, Boccaccio met Leontius Pilatus, whom Petrarch had asked to translate Homer and who later served as a Greek tutor to Boccaccio. Although it is not clear just how much Greek Boccaccio learned from Leontius, Boccaccio did indeed work closely with him on the translation of both Homeric texts. We know, for instance, that Boccaccio "rearranged, copied, and sent" the translations to Petrarch after Leontius left for Constantinople. For this reason, there is little doubt that Boccaccio had a more intimate understanding of Homer's work than any other Medieval writer before him.[15]

If indeed Boccaccio had read Homer in the original, he came away with a very pedantic view toward its female protagonists. He calls Clytemnestra, for example, a "faithless wife" and claims that she may have been compelled to kill the "noble" Agamemnon for bringing a mistress home with him from the war (71-72). He also suggests that both Helen and Circe are lustful and wanton (73-78). However, because Penelope rejected the suitors's advances and was determined to wait faithfully for Odysseus to return home, Boccaccio holds her up to the readers of *Concerning Famous Women* as the paragon of "untarnished honor and inviolate chastity." Furthermore, Penelope represents "a holy and eternal example for women" (81).

In Boccaccio's version of the story, Odysseus was taken by force from Ithaka and was later presumed to be dead. Although he says that Penelope doubts her husband is lost, Odysseus's mother Antikleia is not so sure and hangs herself when she hears this news. Overwhelmed by the various offers of marriage by her countrymen, Penelope remains steadfast in her decision to "grow old in chaste and eternal widowhood" (81). Boccaccio says that it was "divine light" that gave Penelope the idea to deceive the suitors with her trick of the shroud, and it was "divine mercy" that allowed Odysseus to return in time to save Penelope from the hoards of suitors angered by her deception (82). He also suggests that the reason Odysseus disguises himself when he returns to Ithaka is to watch the suitors

without alarming them. Although he does not address the reason why Odysseus reveals his true identity to Telemachos and not to Penelope, we can guess from his reading of the story that Odysseus, watching the antics of both the suitors and the untrustworthy servants, does not want to endanger his wife before he has a chance to gain the upper hand in the palace. When Odysseus does indeed finally reveal his identity to Penelope, Boccaccio says that she barely recognizes him. This version of the *Odyssey* ends happily with Penelope falling into Odysseus's arms—no mention is made of Odysseus leaving her again.

I should mention that in the last portion of his tale Boccaccio does take the poet Lycophron to task for saying that Penelope was unfaithful to Odysseus with one of the suitors. Lycophron, one of the Pleiad, was a Greek grammarian and poet living in Alexandria who wrote tragedies during the early 3rd Century.[16] According to Boccaccio, Lycophron claims that Penelope, like all of the Greek wives waiting out the war's end, was led into adultery by Nauplius, a panderer. Boccaccio says that just because one writer makes injurious claims against Penelope, she should not be discredited in light of the many, many "praiseworthy" comments that have been made about her (83).

Praising Penelope's character in this way brings us to the issue of Boccaccio's paradoxical view toward women and the role Penelope plays in this attitude. Although writing a book about famous women suggests he may want to glorify particular female historical figures, Boccaccio is still a product of his time. Despite the fact that he credits certain women with "daring, intellectual power, perseverance, natural endowments," he cannot bring himself to respect the gender as a whole. In the same preface in which Boccaccio *praises* women, he also *assails* them. He writes:

> If men should be praised whenever they perform great deeds (with strength which Nature has given them), how much more should women be extolled (almost all of whom are endowed with tenderness, frail bodies, and sluggish minds by Nature), if they

> have acquired a manly spirit and if with keen intelligence and remarkable fortitude they have dared undertake and have accomplished even the most difficult deeds. (xxxvii)

This passage implies that women deserve respect *only* when they rid themselves of their womanish spirits and accomplish tasks worthy of men. Without this drive, however, a woman is "an imperfect creature excited by a thousand foul passions. . . . No other creature is less clean than woman: the pig, even when he is most wallowed in the mud, is not as foul as they" (*The Corbaccio*).[17] One way a woman can transcend the sty, it seems, is through sexual purity—that is, chastity. Unfortunately, in Boccaccio's viewpoint this virtue is the exception rather than the rule. Elsewhere he states: "When the women see their possessions settled, they turn all their attention to pimps and lovers. And let it be clear to you that she who seems most chaste and virtuous in the cursed multitude would rather have one eye than be content with one man" (*The Corbaccio*).[18] This attitude undermines his portrayal of Penelope and other virtuous women found in *Concerning Famous Women.*

For Boccaccio, then, the story of Penelope's rejection of the suitors serves as an allegory for the way all women should reject the sin of lustfulness. Through Penelope's singular example, Boccaccio moralizes about marital fidelity, chastity, and fortitude. When we consider that Boccaccio places little faith in women to conduct their lives virtuously, it may not be an accident that he chooses Penelope and other legendary (and many times, fictional) women to exemplify "good women." But what really interests us here is that Penelope emerges not as a complex figure representing a host of meanings, but as a pure and unassuming "type" symbolizing fidelity, overpowered by Boccaccio's potent didacticism.

Christine de Pizan

Most scholars agree that it was a negative view toward women, found in the works of Boccaccio and other male writers, that compelled Christine de Pizan to pen many of her numerous books.[19] *The Book of the City of Ladies* (*La Cité*), in particular, suggests a direct response to Boccaccio's work on famous women[20] in a similar way that her *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours* and *Le Dit de la Rose* both debate the supporters of *Le Roman de la Rose* in regards to the way women are portrayed in that work.

The circumstances by which Christine became a professional writer[21] provoke interest. Her father, a court astrologer under Charles V, moved his family from Venice to Paris when she was only three years old. Growing up in the French court, Christine married the court notary, Estienne de Castel, who died less than ten years later. After his death she was left in charge of her family's finances and was forced to support herself and three children. It was at this time that she turned to writing. That Christine was able to make a living in a career women did not ordinarily pursue demonstrates both her fortitude and talent. Furthermore, the topics that she writes about suggest a wide range of interests and a deep understanding of many issues: poetry, proverbs, histories, hagiography, biographies, intellectual debates with other scholars, illuminated texts, sociological issues, and advice to kings on government and warfare. Besides her notoriety in the debate over *Le Roman*, she gained respect for her position as the official biographer of Charles V. I should also mention that Christine wrote in both the formal language of her day and in the vernacular. Thus, during the late Middle Ages through the early part of the Renaissance men and women from all levels of society read and studied her writing. In fact, at least twenty-seven manuscripts of *La Cité* are known to exist today and six tapestries had been produced illustrating portions of her book. The first English translation of *La Cité* appeared in 1521 by Bryan Anslay, entitled *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*.[22] Today, her

work has inspired interest in some female scholars who find her defense of women akin to feminism.[23]

Patterned after several sources, most notably Augustine's *City of God* and Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (*La Cité*) offers something that none of its predecessors do—that is, a woman praising other women and defending their honor. Like Augustine, she outlines the virtues inherent in a heavenly city; however, she chooses to populate hers with only virtuous women. Like Boccaccio, she moralizes about famous women; however, she excludes those whose conduct should not be emulated and includes only appropriate examples from all available sources found in Western tradition.[24] Thus, we find heroes from both Judeo-Christian *and* classical texts. Furthermore, by calling them "ladies" rather than referring to them as Boccaccio does when he condescendingly calls them "women," Christine emphasizes a particular kind of female conduct—that is, one more becoming to a "lady."[25] Another important difference I have already mentioned is that *La Cité* is written in the vernacular.[26] Following the model of Dante's *Divine Comedy* rather than Boccaccio's or St. Augustine's works, Christine created literature that one did not need to be schooled in Latin to understand. Thus, she wrote for an audience comprised both of aristocrats *and* literate tradespeople.

La Cité begins with Christine distressed over men's poor treatment of women and their allegations that women are innately evil. It is at this point in the story that she is visited by three female allegories, Reason, Rectitude, and Justice, who assure her that women are not born spiritually or intellectually inferior to men (1.2.2). In the course of the conversation they have with Christine, these women assist in building the city and laying out the criteria for entry into it. From them we learn that all women, no matter what class they come from, can become citizens of the city so long as they are virtuous. Christine organizes female virtue into well-defined categories, such as those who excel in "political and military accomplishments," "learning and skill," "prudence," "vision and prophecy,"

"filial piety," "marital love," "chastity," "constancy and steadfastness," "faithfulness," those who gain fame "by coincidence," those who exemplify "integrity and honesty," "generosity," and lastly those who are "saints and martyrs."[27] It is under the rubric of sexual purity that we find Penelope.

Christine's Penelope is "a most virtuous lady," who exemplifies "chastity." Known also for her wisdom and piety to the gods, this Penelope pays absolutely no heed to the many proposals of marriage she receives from various aristocratic suitors. In Christine's version of the *Odyssey*, there was one particular king whom Odysseus had to eliminate. In all, however, Odysseus had no reason to think ill of his wife's behavior during his absence, but "was very happy with the good reports" of her conduct. Speaking directly to Rectitude, Christine inquires about the general complaint men have made that they cannot find beauty and chastity in the same woman. Rectitude informs Christine that there are many women who exemplify both, most notably Penelope. Thus, despite her great beauty, Penelope appears as a paragon of chastity, an allegorical figure representing marital fidelity and beauty unspoiled (II.41.1).

Although Christine's Penelope has a lot in common with Boccaccio's, her views toward women and virtue differ widely from those of her predecessor. Both Penelopes are allegorical figures representing marital fidelity. However, while Boccaccio believes that women are predisposed to unfaithfulness, Christine claims that chastity in women is not an anomaly but a virtue many women possess. In fact, she believes that women far surpass men in all virtues (I.14.1-I.15.1). Therefore, Penelope functions differently in the two works. In *Concerning Famous Women*, she constitutes one of but a few examples of women who have gone beyond their nature to become virtuous. On the other hand, in *La Cité* she represents what we all can achieve if we follow God's word.

It is interesting to note that Christine inherits much more from Dante than she does from Boccaccio, for she shares Dante's worldview concerning virtue and sin. This shared

vision is manifest in the way Christine constructs her heavenly city and sets up its rules for entry into it. Like Dante's Empyrean, Christine's city is open to anyone who attains God's grace. However, for Dante this rule precludes pagans from joining the heavenly host. Furthermore, because both writers possess faith in man's goodness (although Dante grapples more than Christine does with the notion of evil and original sin), women are not kept from entering due to some innate vileness they cannot transcend. Christine's desire to set standards for female conduct in *La Cité* results in a one-dimensional portrait of Penelope and points us to Boccaccio's treatment of Penelope found in *Concerning Famous Women*. Like Boccaccio, Christine is a keen thinker whose moralizing codifies Penelope's presence in Western tradition.

Geoffrey Chaucer

Geoffrey Chaucer, another poet influenced by the literature and intellectual ideas blossoming out of humanism, translated and revised works by continental writers for an English audience. In particular, Chaucer was influenced by Italian thinkers, such as Dante and Boccaccio, whose works Chaucer may have come in contact with during a visit to Florence. Although scholars believe that Dante's *Divine Comedy* was a great source of inspiration to Chaucer, we cannot ignore what he owes to Boccaccio.[28] In fact, Chaucer's debt to Boccaccio may be rather large when we consider the numerous works he seems to borrow from the writer. *Troilus and Criseyde*, for example, reminds us of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. Likewise there are similarities between *The Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*, *Concerning Famous Women* and *The Legend of Good Women*, *De casibus virorum illustrium* and the "Monk's Tale," and *Il Teseida* and the "Knight's Tale." Even his treatment of particular subjects and themes seem to be derived from those presented by Dante and Boccaccio. That Chaucer would be interested in exploring female virtue, then, should not surprise us. Nor should we be surprised to find that Penelope appears as an

allegorical figure in the works that discuss good and bad women. He is simply following in the fashion of his predecessors. However, Chaucer's own view concerning female virtue demonstrates more complexity than Boccaccio's and his portrayal of female characters in works that Penelope appears in indicates an understanding of what some perceive to be the female mind.[29] However, we should keep in mind that Chaucer produced works that women found odious to them and at the same time created many sympathetic female characters. What this indicates is that Chaucer avoids a single-minded approach to subject matter and characters. Depicting women (and men) in various ethical situations suggests, for instance, moral ambivalence and resists promoting one particular stance toward good and evil. That Chaucer seems to vacillate, creating works that both honor and dishonor women, makes it difficult for his audience to pin him down and stereotype his work.[30]

Although Penelope's presence in Chaucer's work is meagre—one simple line in each poem—she expresses Chaucer's contradictory and complex view toward women. As a potential widow, Penelope typifies the growing number of Medieval women who through their widowhood enjoy independence and greater privileges than their younger, married counterparts.[31] However, the way that Chaucer portrays her indicates that, while she may seem like a fixed symbol in a rapidly changing world, she actually symbolizes the impossibility of such absolute constancy. Furthermore, in examining her presence in all of his works, we see that she emerges as evidence that Chaucer develops a keen understanding of how to create complex themes and characters.

Before moving into a discussion about Chaucer's Penelope, I should mention one of his earliest works of poetry from the courtly tradition, which demonstrates the contradictions found in his work and thinking in regards to women and virtue—his translation of *Le Roman de la Rose*. When his translation first began to circulate in England, Chaucer incensed no other than Queen Anne, who believed that the popular

French poem was unkind to women. In fact, the Queen's outrage may have been what forced Chaucer to write *The Legend of Good Women.* Although there is much debate surrounding how much of *Le Roman* he might have actually translated,[32] we do know that before Chaucer pens the works associated with more favorable portrayals of women, he also writes *Troilus and Criseyde*, another work that promotes a decidedly negative view toward women and goodness. It may be little wonder that women in positions far superior to his own took Chaucer to task for these poems. However, *Le Roman* may also demonstrate that Chaucer resists any limitations on subjects he wants to pursue, no matter how unpopular these subjects are. The fact that this work aroused the anger of his female audience only adds to the complexity of his attitudes toward women.

The Book of the Duchess

Believed to have been written in 1369 after the death of Blanche, wife of John of Gaunt and mother of the future Henry IV, *The Book of the Duchess* follows the pattern of a traditional elegy. However, Chaucer imbues his poem with his own feelings[33] and style, reconciling the pagan and Christian worlds in the story and introducing—perhaps for the first time—a fictional narrator, the knight. It is also a dream-poem, in which the poet falls asleep while reading a story, meets a knight who tells him a story of his lady (who is patterned after Blanche), and awakens with the book still in his lap. In the poem Penelope appears as a point of comparison for the virtuous conduct of the knight's lady. Chaucer writes: "She was as good, so have I reste, / as ever was Penelopee of Grece" (1080-2). Thus, this lady—that is, Blanche—is as excellent a woman as Penelope. Because Chaucer had so much regard for Blanche, using Penelope as a point of comparison for the Duchess is interesting: It marks the first time Penelope is found in his work, and she appears in tandem with a character representing someone from Chaucer's life. Thus, Penelope's importance as an allegorical figure representing the good woman emerges early in

Chaucer's work and is linked with someone he truly admires. We see that Chaucer does possess a great deal of respect for certain women, in this case Blanche, but does not glorify the entire gender unconditionally.

"The Compleynt of feire Anelida and fals Arcite"

Approximately five years after Chaucer penned *The Book of the Duchess*, he began "The Compleynt of feire Anelida and fals Arcite." Influenced by Boccaccio's *Il Teseida*, Chaucer's poem presents the story, well-known during this time, of the betrayal of Queen Anelida by her knight-lover, Arcite. Because scholars agree that it is a highly successful example of Chaucer's control over meter and form,[34] there is much disappointment because it is unfinished. Its complexity is represented by multiple points of view found in the work: The first portion of the poem provides the plot by an omniscient narrator while the last part includes Anelida's complaint about Arcite's treatment of her, written in the first person.

The figure of Penelope is used in the story once again to represent faithfulness. This time, however, she does not symbolize a chaste wife drawn from Chaucer's own life, but a fictional unmarried character who seems to possess a naive devotion to the wrong man. Of Anelida's virtue Chaucer writes: "And for to speken of hir stidfastnesse, / She passed bothe Penelope and Lucresse" (81-2). Anelida's faithfulness to Arcite is wasted because he prefers to turn his attention to another woman, "proud and newe"(143), who in turn treats him rather shabbily (a further mark of his unworthiness of Anelida's love). Because Arcite's betrayal of Anelida causes her great anguish and pain, we are moved to sympathize with the plight of a woman so chaste and loving that she reminds us of Penelope. The lesson the poem seems to teach is that men do not want what they can easily have (197-204). If this is indeed true, then Chaucer may be warning "good women" to be more attentive to "bad men." Yet in a society in which a woman must suffer in order to be

deemed "good,"[35] there would be no escaping situations like the one Anelida finds herself in. Thus, Chaucer seems to be critical of the courtly tradition and the kind of conduct it holds dear. Penelope's presence in this tale serves to demonstrate what happens to *some* good women, at least legendary ones like Penelope, who select more excellent men to give their love to. That Arcite is no Odysseus is made quite clear when the former rejects his true love for a woman less excellent than Anelida. Although Penelope suffers for twenty years while Odysseus is away, he, at least, does return to her. Anelida's real problem is not Arcite. It is that she is not clever enough to give her love to the right man.

Troilus and Criseyde

That Penelope underscores Chaucer's resistance to predictability is most obvious in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Widowed and living under the protection of Hector, Criseyde lives a chaste and virtuous life. However, when Pandarus tells her about Troilus's affection for her, Criseyde makes it apparent that she is ready to embark on a romance with the young man. After becoming involved with Troilus, she is forced to return to Greece and her father. Her pledge to stay true to Troilus is broken when she falls in love with Diomedes. Thus in a short period of time, Criseyde betrays two men—her dead husband and her new lover. Although some scholars argue that the Medieval audience would understand that Criseyde's poor conduct is derived from her lack of Christian morals,[36] in light of Queen Anne's admonishment of the work that Chaucer hints at at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*, we may safely say that Chaucer was aware that not all of his audience would be as forgiving of his portrayal of Criseyde—no matter how pagan she is.

Chaucer's repentant attitude at the end of the story, of course, comes a little late. What is more, it comes with his statement that he would gladly write books highlighting the virtues of particular good women like "Penolopeës trouthe and good Alceste" to offset his poor treatment of women in this tale (1772-1778). Penelope's presence in a work that

highlights the poor conduct of the female protagonist seems to suggest that although Chaucer held Penelope and females like her in high esteem, he was also believed in the human failings of women as a whole. Thus, Chaucer departs from a general admiration of women traditionally associated with courtly romance, and in doing so he demonstrates an interest in pursuing less popular stances on traditional themes.

The Legend of Good Women

Shortly before completing *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer began work on *The Legend of Good Women.* At first glance, *The Legend* seems to indicate a change from the previous poem since Chaucer presents stories of only "good women." Although never completed, the stories that he did finish praise such legendary wives as Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle, and Medea. In the prologue he mentions many other women that he intends to highlight—even Queen Anne is represented here as Alcestis. But some scholars are also quick to point out that even in this work Chaucer demonstrates an ambivalence toward his subject matter. The fact that he never completes the poem suggests a general lack of faith in what he was writing.[37] Nonetheless, the prologue credits Homer's Penelope with virtuous conduct, as seen from this one line: "Penalopee and Marcia Catoun, / Make of youre wifhod no comparyson" (206-7). Once again Penelope appears as an allegorical figure representing the virtuous wife. However, despite the compliment Chaucer pays Penelope, Chaucer's interest in extolling virtuous women *ad nauseam* comes into question when we consider he never finishes this poem.

Chronologically, *The Book of the Duchess* and "The Compleynt of feire Anelida and fals Arcite," precede *Le Roman*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The Legend*, but they have more in common with another work that was written after *Troilus and Criseyde*—the "Franklin's Tale." Although all three of these poems demonstrate a different attitude toward women, Penelope's role of the chaste wife remains unchanged.

"Franklin's Tale"

The Canterbury Tales, Chaucer's masterwork, is the story of twenty-nine pilgrims who set out for Canterbury. Meeting at the Tabard Inn, the host of the party suggests that each pilgrim entertain the group by telling stories along the road. If Chaucer indeed intended to tell the number of stories the host suggests, then *The Canterbury Tales* is also incomplete. Only twenty-four stories are told by twenty-three of the pilgrims, with Chaucer telling two stories himself.[38]

The Franklin, a freedman aspiring to gentility, tells a marriage story[39]—the tale of Dorigen, a newly married woman who is left behind by her knightly husband. While he is away in England, she is approached by Aurelius, who wishes to become her lover. Although she finds his desire for her inappropriate, out of fear for her husband's safe return, she does promise to love Aurelius if he can make the rocks on the coast of Brittany disappear. With the help of a magician, he meets her request. When her husband returns, Dorigen confesses to him what she had promised Aurelius. Although her husband agrees that she should keep her contract, she is later released from her promise by her lover.

For the last time in all of Chaucer's works, Penelope appears as an example of virtue and faithfulness. Chaucer writes: "What seith Omer of gode Penalopee? / Al Graece knoweth of hir chastitee" (735-736). Ironically, Dorigen is not quite as chaste as Penelope, for she pledges to have sex with another man. Chaucer's portrait of Dorigen, the distressed wife, is the most complex of all the female characters with whom he has compared Penelope. Essentially, Dorigen is good and loves her husband, but she is willing to undertake a deed that will bring about her faith*less*ness in order to bring her husband safely home. Herein lies the real similarity between Dorigen and Penelope. Like Penelope, Dorigen possesses cunning. Far from being helpless and meek, Dorigen exhibits a spirited nature willing to take risks. In penelopean fashion, she pledges herself

to a man in order to ensure the safe return of her husband.[40] That she admits her questionable conduct to her husband only further demonstrates her innate goodness. For all of Dorigen's lamenting over her predicament, she is no damsel in distress waiting for someone to save her from her plight. Her deal-making with Aurelius suggests that she can take charge of her situation. It is interesting to note that Chaucer's complex portrait of Dorigen is found in his final work and in the same one in which the Wife of Bath is found--another female character generally regarded as complex.[41]

In looking back at Penelope's presence in all of Chaucer's poems, we see that she provides us a way of understanding Chaucer's complex views toward women and the notion of female virtue, as shown in Figure 1.

In the *Book of the Duchess*, for example, Penelope's goodness is used as a point of comparison for Blanche's; both women exemplify excellence at being wives. Because this poem eulogizes a friend, it differs from his other poems because it represents a personal expression of grief. In "Anelida and Arcite" Penelope and Anelida both demonstrate steadfastness; however, since Anelida chooses to love a man unworthy of her, she shows none of the wisdom that Penelope (or Blanche for that matter) possesses. Thus, Anelida may be good, but, unlike Penelope, she isn't very smart. Because Chaucer did not finish this work, we can surmise that he may have lacked the initiative to complete a story adhering to such simplistic views toward good and bad conduct.

As Chaucer makes clear in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Criseyde's character differs widely from Penelope's. A deceitful woman who makes her good lover suffer, Criseyde does not demonstrate any of the faithfulness that Penelope possesses, though ironically both women are Greek. As the story indicates, Criseyde represents but one kind of woman and is not an indictment of all Greek (or Medieval) women. Departing from writing about women like Criseyde, Chaucer then turns to legends of virtuous ones in *The Legend of Good Women*. If completed, *The Legend* would have offered Chaucer's audience stories

of faithful wives. Here, Penelope exemplifies good wifely conduct with which few women could compare. But as I have already mentioned, due to the fact that it too is unfinished, Chaucer may have been uninterested in those simple depictions of virtue.

Character	Allusion to Penelope	Description of Poem
The Duchess	"She was as good, so have I reste, as ever was Penelopee of Grece."	The earliest of his longer poems. A paean to the wife of John of Gaunt. A "good" wife, based on a real person. No moral ambivalence is demonstrated, perhaps due to the personal nature of the poem.
Anelida	"And for to speken of hir stidfastness, She passes bothe Penelope and Lucresse."	Unfinished, only 300 lines complete. Reevaluation of courtly tradition. A "steadfast" woman who chooses an "inconstant" lover.
Criseyde	"And gladlier I wol write, yif yow leste Penolopeës trouthe and good Alceste."	Based on well known story. Reevaluation of the courtly tradition. An "untrue" woman who makes her "true" lover suffer. Because Criseyde exemplifies a bad woman and follows one in which the woman is good, Chaucer's views resist stereotyping
Good Women	"Penalopee and Marcia Catoun Make of youre wifhood no comparyson."	Unfinished work. Chaucer may have been forced to write it, and therefore lost interest. The deeds of "excellent" legendary wives. Chaucer seems uninterested in writing tales of virtuous women.
Dorigen	"What seith Omer of gods Penalopee Al Graece knoweth of his chastitee."	Completed story in uncompleted collection. Reevaluation of courtly tradition. A "chaste" wife who does a *bad* thing for a *good* reason. Chaucer's most complex character to which he compares Penelope.

Figure 1 Penelope's Presence in Chaucer's Poems

Under the rubric of "The Marriage Group" from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, we meet the Franklin who tells the pilgrims the story of Dorigen. Unlike the faithful Penelope, Dorigen promises to become the mistress of another man while her husband is away. However, she breaks her vow of chastity in order to ensure her husband's safe return. What Dorigen and Penelope seem to share is cunning and a willingness to push the bounds of convention for the sake a bigger, more important goal. Hence with Dorigen, Chaucer creates a complex character faced with obstacles keeping her from attaining the kind of absolute goodness that makes some other Medieval female characters we have come to know seem like caricatures.

John Gower

Chaucer's influence in England extends to his good friend John Gower. As one of two men to whom Chaucer dedicated *Troilus and Criseyde*, Gower is frequently linked to Chaucer and his ideas. Possibly born in Kent, Gower trained for law. Later, he moved to the priory at St. Mary Overie in Southwark in order to access their library for his writing. It is also thought that he was twice married, but there is much debate about his life due to the lack of documentation. However, it is true that he married late in life at the age of seventy to Agnes Groundolph. This fact about Gower proves important to understanding *Confessio Amantis* because in the story the main character—the lover—is told that he is too old for love, much as Gower himself may have been reminded.[42]

Confessio Amantis, or *The Confession of the Lover*, constitutes one of three long Gower poems written in different languages. This particular one was written in English and differs from the rest because he refrains from straight moralizing and turns instead to the more popular discussion of love. I should point out here that most scholars believe that Gower wrote *Confessio Amantis* before Chaucer began planning *The Canterbury Tales*. Thus, Gower's collection of stories organized around a narrative predates Chaucer's own

work. The text of the poem comprises over 33,000 lines and contains 141 stories, written in octosyllabic couplets. Seven of the eight books correspond to the seven deadly sins (Book I, Pride; Book II, Envy; Book III, Wrath; Book IV, Sloth; Book V, Avarice; Book VI, Gluttony; Book VIII, Lust). Book VII deviates by presenting a discussion on morality and philosophy for kings. Gower employs a narrative device that connects all of the stories: Amans, a lover, confesses to Venus's priest Genius. Afterward, Genius relays to the man tales of good conduct and love. In the end, the lover comes to understand virtue and is forgiven his sins. Unfortunately for him, however, he also learns he is too old for love.

Gower's reference to Penelope appears in Book VIII in his discussion of good wives. He tells us that he sees four women who come "commended" for their "faith" in marriage—a faithfulness for which they enjoy great fame in their old age.[43] The four wives he mentions here include Penelope, Lucretia, Alceste, and Alcione. Gower's Penelope suffers much anguish over the absence of her husband; however, despite the fact that she is alone at home, she stays faithful to Odysseus. Gower writes:

> Penelope that one was hote,
> Whom many a knight hath loved hote
> While that her lorde Ulixes laie
> Full many a yere and many a daie
> Upon the greté siege of Troy:
> But she which hath no worldés joy
> But only of her husébonde,
> While that her lord was out of londe,
> So well hath kept her womanhede,
> That all the world therof toke hede
> And namélich of hem in Grece. (438-9)

Thus for Gower, writing within the Medieval courtly tradition that values virtuous women, Penelope is an allegorical figure representing the wife who attains great fame for chastity and faithfulness. And because Penelope's story falls within the confines of excellence in marriage, she appears as a paradigm of virtue.

Because Gower is known for his didacticism, Penelope's presence in Gower's poem indicates a moral stance on female conduct and virtue. Although scholars believe that Gower's views about moral conduct influenced Chaucer, Gower does not resist predictable stances about virtue and vice as Chaucer does.[44] Instead, Gower emulates the kind of stereotyping that the courtly tradition and moralistic writing produces. The fact that Gower's *Amantis* has fallen out of favor during the 20th Century while Chaucer's *The CanterburyTales* enjoys great stature may be due to his pedantic writing.[45]

Conclusion

During the late Middle Ages Penelope is mentioned in passing in Dante's the *Divine Comedy* and functions solely as a reminder to the audience what Ulysses's rejected to pursue his life of glory. In *Concerning Famous Women*, we are treated to our first real glimpse of the Medieval view of Penelope. Here, Boccaccio presents a Penelope who symbolizes the good and faithful wife. This rather simple depiction of her makes sense when we consider that Boccaccio had set out primarily to instruct his female audience about good and evil conduct. Although Dante too moralizes in the *Divine Comedy*, Boccaccio's work on the whole is less grand, less philosophical, less intellectual than Dante's. Boccaccio's Penelope, then, emerges as a one-dimensional figure, despite the fact that Boccacio devotes more ink to telling her story than Dante does. I should also mention that Boccaccio's paradoxical views toward female virtue indicate that the good conduct of his Penelope represents an exception rather than the rule.

In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine constructs a city for virtuous women from all of Western tradition and walks of life. Because the purpose of Christine's work is to elevate the status of women and defend them from men who hold their gender in contempt, her zealous approach to her subject matter produces a simple portrait of Penelope. As an allegorical figure representing the chaste wife, Christine's Penelope reminds us of Boccaccio's. This is ironic when we consider that Boccaccio may have been one of the male writers whose work Christine responds to with *La Cité*.

Of all of the five artists who allude to Penelope in their work, Chaucer turns to her most frequently. Although she can be found in *The Book of the Duchess*, "The Compleynt of feire Anelida and fals Arcite," *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Legend of Good Women*, and the "Franklin's Tale," her appearance in these works is limited to one line in each. For the most part, Penelope is an allegorical figure representing the good wife; however, her goodness comes to mean more than a simple adherence to sexual morés. As Chaucer indicates, because she chooses to be faithful to her husband, Penelope exemplifies a high level of intelligence. Thus, Chaucer's Penelope is good because she exhibits both chastity and wisdom. Because she appears as a constant among the virtuous, the sinful, and those in between, she serves as a point of comparison for other characters. In the works in which Penelope appears, however, Chaucer questions the belief that human beings can achieve absolute goodness through sexual purity and sustained rationality. Thus with Penelope, Chaucer ridicules the moral and ethical systems held dear by religious thinkers and other secular writers. He presents a complex figure, despite the meagerness of the lines of verse devoted to her. Gower, on the other hand, presents Penelope as a simple allegorical figure representing marital fidelity, much in the same way as Boccaccio and Christine. Although Gower may have been influential in Chaucer's work and intellectual development, in *Confessio Amantis* he lacks the ability to create complex characters and

seems uninterested in challenging closely held beliefs regarding women and virtue as Chaucer does in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Thus, during the Middle Ages Penelope emerges as the symbol of the faithful wife. In the works of Boccaccio, Christine, and Gower, for example, Penelope symbolizes the good wife who rejects the sin of lust and, instead, embraces chastity despite her loneliness and fear. However, as we have seen, Chaucer expands on the concept of Penelope's chastity, allowing her to take on more complicated *personae* or making her a point of comparison for other character's conduct. Specifically, Chaucer demonstrates skepticism toward notions of absolute goodness and evil. By using Penelope as a point of comparison, he demonstrates that it is impossible for woman (and man) to attain perfection, and thus makes it a little easier for us to accept our human failings.

Chapter 2
Notes

1 Marbod of Rennes, "The Good Woman," *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. Alcuin Blamires (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 228.

2 *Woman Defamed*, 106.

3 For an in-depth study of the Church's attitude regarding women and virtue, see Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 56-60.

4 W. B. Stanford and J. V. Luce, *The Quest for Ulysses* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974) 177-179.

5 Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual: 1050-1200* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1992) 10.

6 Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) 5.

7 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 10. In defining what this means Geertz says: "A multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and unexplicit, and which he must first contrive somehow to grasp and then to render." As I will show in the body of this chapter, Chaucers offer a "thick description" of Penelope.

8 *The Medieval Literature of Western Europe: A Review of Research, Mainly 1930-1960*, ed. John H. Fisher (London: The New York University Press, 1968) 296-297.

9 Charles S. Singleton, *Journey to Beatrice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1981) 122-138, 184-203.

10 Vittore Branca, *Boccaccio: The Man and His Works*, trans. Richard Monges (New York: New York University Press, 1976).

11 Guido A. Guarino, introduction, *Concerning Famous Women*, by Giovanni Boccaccio (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963) ix.

12 Guarino, xvi.

13 Donald R. Howard, *Chaucer: His Life, His Works, His World* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987) 290. Like a great many works produced by Boccaccio and his friend and mentor Petrarch, *Concerning Famous Women* may have been "an addendum" to another work. In fact, scholars believe that this work is a response to Petrarch's *De viris illustribus*.

[14] Guarino, x.

[15] Branca 113-118.

[16] Oskar Seyffert, *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities*, ed. Henry Nettleship and J.E. Sandys (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1963) 366.

[17] Quoted from *Woman Defamed*, 166-167.

[18] Quoted from *Women Defamed*, 169

[19] Enid McLeod, *The Order of the Rose: The Life and Ideas of Christine de Pizan* (Towowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1976) 125. Although McLeod mentions that no particular work inspired Christine to write *La Cité*, she does say that Christine had been reading work by Maltheolus whose comments about women bothered her. We can also surmise that her revision of Boccaccio's work may point to a rejection of his ideas about women, also.

[20] Earl Jeffrey Richards, introduction, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, by Christine de Pizan (New York: Persea Books, 1982) xxxv.

[21] Richards, xxi. Richards calls Christine the "first professional writer." This may not be the case since there is evidence that Boccaccio and others before her were paid for their work. Certainly, Christine is the first record we have of a *female* professional writer.

[22] McLeod, 133.

[23] Maureen Quilligan, *The Allegory of Female Authority* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). As Quilligan demonstrates, feminists have been debating the feminism of Christine since her reintroduction into contemporary society.

[24] Quilligan, 193.

[25] *Women Defamed*, 167.

[26] Quilligan, 194-195.

[27] Richards, xxxviii-xl.

[28] John H. Fisher, *John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (New York: New York University Press, 1964) 205.

[29] Howard, 96.

[30] *Woman Defamed*, 198. As the author tells us: "While he easily emulated Walter's Map's urbanity in the standard mode of 'dissuasion from matrimony' (*Envoy to Bukton*), he also reinvigorated the antifeminist favourites by situating them in strange new contexts .... Many of his poems also challenge consideration as narratives in defence of women."

[31] Linda E. Mitchell, "The Lady is a Lord: Noble Widows and Land in Thirteenth-Century Britain," *Historical Reflections* 18 (1992) : 71-97. See also Hallissy, 163-164.

[32] Howard, 140-141.

[33] Howard, 148. He mentions that the length of the work (1300 lines) testifies to his feeling of remorse over Blanche's death.

[34] *A Literary History of England*, Ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948) 254.

[35] Hallissy, 30-33.

[36] Hallissy, 155.

[37] Hallissy, 26.

[38] Howard, 510-511. Chaucer died before he could complete the work. He had just finished part three of the story the year before he died.

[39] *A Literary History*, 261.

[40] *Ody*. 18.206-303. Penelope pledges to marry the suitor who wins in the contest she organizes. In doing so, she brings about an opportunity for Odysseus to safely take back palace and home.

[41] Hallissy, 163-184.

[42] *A Literary History*, 264-265.

[43] Gower, 438.

[44] Fisher, 227.

[45] *A Literary History*, 264-265.

Chapter 3
Brave New Penelope:
Penelope in the Renaissance

> The business and office of congruity is to put together members differing from each other in their natures in such a manner that they may conspire to form a beautiful Whole. . . ; nor does this Congruity arise so much from the body in which it is found, or any of its members, as from itself and from Nature, so that its true seat is in the mind and in reason; and accordingly it has a very large field to exercise itself and flourish in, and runs through every part and action of man's life, and every production of Nature herself, which are all directed by the law of congruity. (Leon Battista Alberti, 1452)[1]

Introduction

Separated from Nature but capable of understanding her, men of reason can find balance by appropriating her harmonizing elements. As Alberti's treatise suggests, the product of a mind that has found such "Congruity" is beauty. That this passage comes from his treatise on architecture tells us that Alberti, a humanist scholar and architect working during the Renaissance, believes true beauty reveals itself in art. However, when he links reason and other enterprises of the mind to "a man's life," there is no mistaking what else he is implying here. According to Alberti, Renaissance art is a product of the male mind and is connected, therefore, to the male experience.

While this androcentric viewpoint gave rise to some of the most highly regarded works of art ever created by Western culture, it calls into question where woman fits into this well-wrought *schema* with its orderly hierarchy and measurable boundaries. What is interesting about the Renaissance period, however, is that, despite the fact that women were excluded both from practice and from the theoretical notions underlying its aesthetics,[2] the "heightened realization" of Nature and "heroic"[3] approach to art freed artists to experiment with some of the tenets held dear during the previous time, especially with

regard to woman. If we look past the social conventions that, indeed, limited women's general participation in this brave new world,[4] we see that the result of this kind of break with tradition produces, in some cases, a "large[r] field" for women—at least for certain female characters—to "exercise" and "flourish in." In particular, we find in the Renaissance temperament a Penelope who is liberated somewhat from the constraints of virtue placed upon her in the God-dominated universe of Medieval thinkers.

The Renaissance Field of Vision

What differentiates the Renaissance worldview from that of the Middle Ages is that the artists of the Renaissance harkened back to the principles of rationality and scientific thought found in classical Greece. In doing so, they adopted an aesthetic that rejected the qualities traditionally associated with women, embracing those instead that women had generally been denied. In literature, for example, the sweet sentiments of the *dolce stil nuovo* , which praised the qualities of the lofty lady, gave way to the heroic poem extolling male bravery. Furthermore, because the methods that Renaissance artists turned to for determining design and proportions were inextricably linked to the male physique, women were omitted even from the foundation that Renaissance art was built upon. In *Women, Art and Society* Whitney Chadwick reminds us that Renaissance artists used the male body to represent the ideal proportion for expressing spatial relationships in their work. Specifically, they looked to the *braccio*, the Florentine unit of measurement based upon the length of a man's arm, to guide them in their quest for aesthetic and ideological harmony that they believed was indeed achievable through such rational enterprises as painting, architecture, and sculpting.[5] For Alberti and other artists working during this time, man—rather, the male gender—was indeed "the measure of all things."[6]

This new status as the measuring stick by which all other objects and experiences are evaluated implies a philosophical shift in thinking from the Medieval Age and is realized

in man's redefinition of the universe. Although he had inherited a "closed universe"[7] from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance artist's secular and scientific approach to art led him to reject the limitations placed on this universe by his predecessors and, in doing so, elevated his own position in this cosmos.[8] In his element Renaissance man faced no restrictions on what he could achieve, and within his cosmos Renaissance man could measure and order space, achieving in his work ideal beauty derived from "unity, harmony, and coherence."[9] Therefore, not only was the Renaissance aesthetic defined *by* the dimensions of his own body, but it was also created specifically *for* his new field of vision. Most importantly, it was one in which he was master, capable of controlling and knowing all of its parts.

Much debate arises whenever we try to classify and organize periods of time under one rubric. However, the Renaissance poses an even greater challenge for a historian since its name carries with it certain implications and suppositions. That *renaissance* means "rebirth" suggests that the periods of time preceding and following it represent a kind of death. Also, attempts to pin down the exact moment when philosophical and aesthetic shifts occur fail because dividing time into clusters of events and ideas called "periods" or "eras" implies that time follows a logical pattern when it does not.[10] Lastly, because the arts embrace intellectual ideas at different tempos, we find it very difficult to organize them into a cohesive system to delineate. But it becomes obvious to anyone investigating European history that changes were long underway that undermined religious authority and ushered in a different attitude during the 16th and 17th Centuries toward man, woman, and the universe.

The rise of individualism, obvious in the personal contributions to the Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals that dominated the landscape of the Middle Ages,[11] and the growth of secularism that followed events, such as the Black Plague and the Papal Schism of the 14th Century, may have contributed to the breakdown of the Medieval religious hierarchical system that so defined the previous period.[12] Likewise, as we saw with Leontius

Pilatus's translation of the *Odyssey* in the previous chapter, increased travel between the West and East made copies of ancient texts by classical writers and philosophers available.[13] The presence of new manuscripts by Plato and even pseudo-mystics like Hermes Trismegistus greatly enhanced the authority of classical thought and stretched the Christian worldview.[14] We can also point to the fall of Constantinople as an important event leading to the Italian Renaissance. At that time Eastern thinkers fled with their ideas and differing perspectives to the West to escape the storm of Turks threatening their empire. Furthermore, we can also cite the rise of mercantilism and the establishment of the artisan guilds as signs that economic and political changes had taken root and were edging out the feudal system that had stabilized the economy of the Middle Ages. However, some scholars point to the ascendancy of humanism—with its the optimistic view that people can know and understand the world around them—as the true mark of the Renaissance spirit that brought about some of the most important changes occurring in Europe from the 14th to 16th Centuries.[15] Because the Renaissance supposes a continued refinement of events and ideas that had begun earlier during the Middle Ages, we can describe it, then, as the "process of transition between the Medieval and the modern world... that intellectual and spiritual ferment of which the mind of man... was quickened and enlarged with a sense of old freedoms regained and of new regions to be explored.[16] Rather than the beginning of change, the Renaissance marked a world that was continuing to be transformed and expanded—but at a higher rate of speed than ever before.

The Feminine Element in the Renaissance

It is interesting to note that despite the transformation of culture taking place, feminist scholars exploring the Renaissance see little change in women's roles during this period from those of the Middle Ages. Looking specifically at the heroic epics written by Tasso and Ariosto, Donna Gunsberg, for example, points out that, as in the Middle Ages,

women in the Renaissance were prized for beauty, youthfulness, chastity, passivity, and their ability to perform specific feminine tasks like needlework, weaving, and nurturing the sick. She tells us that "aberrations" in this pattern do occur, which focus primarily on women's freedom of movement and pursuit of more masculine enterprises. However, she tells us that these deviations are viewed dimly by the male authors who present them in their work.[17] Likewise, in her book on the catalogues of women that proliferated during the ancient and Medieval times, Glenda McLeod mentions that texts focusing on women lost their influence during the Renaissance because "the Western notion of femineity changed very little" during this period.[18] While androcentric views did dominate the art and religio-political policy from the classical periods onward in Western tradition—as Alberti's treatise on architecture certainly indicates—we must also pay attention to the periodic dismantling of the hierarchical structure and the subversion of order that had so relegated women to a status of "domination and subordination"[19] in society. As I have shown in the previous chapter, male, as well as female, poets of the Middle Ages contributed to these ideas that challenged conventional views regarding women's status. New attitudes that came out of women's education and patronage of the arts emerged during the Renaissance and helped to break down some of the barriers that had restricted women's position in society.[20] Although certain ideal feminine characteristics remained static from the 14th Century onward, some artists played outside these boundaries, blurring what had been deemed socially acceptable or divinely ordained.

The Artist and Penelope

Interest in making sense of their *own* world and that of the *classical* one preceding them incited many artists to explore and redefine traditions they had inherited or rediscovered. Therefore, although Renaissance artists remained imbued with the fervor of their religious values, creating works of art derived from Biblical stories and Church

legend, we also find them turning to art that explored secular themes of Classical myth and legend. It should come as no surprise, then, that during the Renaissance, the number of artists who contributed to the legend of Penelope more than quadrupled from the previous period. Instead of five poets alluding to or writing about chaste Penelope, we find twenty-six visual artists, musical composers, and writers keeping the story of Homer's Penelope alive in their tapestries, frescoes, paintings, vocal compositions, poems, plays, and poetic catalogues.

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the Penelope that emerges in the Middle Ages represents the good wife who rejects the sin of lust and, instead, embraces chastity—despite how lonely and frightening her situation really is. Although he works within this tradition at the literal level, Chaucer expands on Penelope's *persona* by moving beyond the conventional metaphors associated with her; specifically, Chaucer endows Penelope with intelligence. However, others like Boccaccio, Christine, and Gower embrace the traditional view of Penelope, and in their works she symbolizes simply the good woman, the model after which all women aspiring to virtue should pattern their lives. Following this tradition, we find Renaissance poet Ben Jonson paying homage to the Countess of Rutland, whom he claims is a better wife than Penelope.[21] Or we hear the madrigal of William Byrd, in which chaste but miserable Penelope prays to the gods for a swift end to her pain—because if she cannot have her Ulysses, she would rather die.[22] Christopher Marlowe even draws upon Penelope's virtuous reputation in his play *Dr. Faustus* by repeating her Medieval epithet, "chaste Penelope."[23] This theme is repeated elsewhere in Robert Herrick's "The Parting Verse"[24] and many other works of art found during this age of rebirth. (See Appendix A). However as I will show, some artists do not restrict themselves to this view of her. Instead, they expand on Penelope's qualities and highlight other aspects of her conduct besides her faithfulness. Deviating from a conventional view

of her, artists like Domenico Beccafumi, Louise Labé, John Skelton, Sir John Davies, and Thomas Carew, all bring a new perspective to the Medieval tradition that persisted in the 14th and 15th Centuries.

The Visual Arts

Nowhere is the Renaissance spirit more obvious than in the visual arts. Here the artist synthesizes notions of harmony and balance with scientific principles regarding measurement and proportion found in Greek Classicism, thereby creating art that elevates and immortalizes the human experience. These ideals all come to fruition in Florence and Rome during the first two decades of the 16th Century in a period known as the High Renaissance. The principles underlying the High Renaissance eventually spread and, in some cases, were translated according to local sensibilities by artists living outside this sphere of activity.

Domenico Beccafumi

The Sienese artist, Domenico Beccafumi, is indicative of those artists working outside of the Florence and Rome who adapted elements of the High Renaissance style. Also called "Il Mecherino," Beccafumi began his career by adhering to the aesthetic conventions of the *Quattrocento* that prevailed in Siena despite the new ideas circulating in other parts of Tuscany. Viewed as "archaic," the art that Beccafumi and others following this tradition produced was not, for the most part, mimetic and was less attuned to proportion and issues of spatiality than the art created later in the Renaissance.[25] However, having spent some time studying in Rome and Florence, Beccafumi later did demonstrate some interest in the classical themes and styles that dominated the art of those cities. However, the strong commitment to principles of rationality that defines the art of the High Renaissance succumbs to notions of mystery and romanticism in Beccafumi's painting.

Although art historians classify his work into four periods, ranging from a late Medieval style to a unique interpretation of Mannerism,[26] his paintings, for the most part, are generally regarded as "pre-classical or naïve mannerist."[27]

Beccafumi's *Penelope* appeared shortly before his semi-conversion to the notions surrounding "rational principles" found in the classical style and is believed to synthesize the Sienese Gothic tradition and some of the new aesthetic principles inherent in the spirit of the High Renaissance. Painted in 1519, the painting was created to symbolize the spindle vendors in his native town. Originally attributed to another Sienese painter and associate of Beccafumi, Baldassarre Peruzzi, the painting was later purchased by Manfredini and moved to its present location at the Seminario Patriarcale in Venice. The debate that ensued early on concerning the artist's identity finally resulted in its attribution to Beccafumi. This painting was part of two exhibitions demonstrating the rise of the Italian Renaissance tradition in Tuscany, thus underscoring Beccafumi's contribution to the genius of the period.[28]

Looking at Penelope, we see a lone figure gazing wistfully out over the Tuscan landscape. In her right hand she holds a spindle whose thread is stretched diagonally toward her left. Holding on to a column, she leans back slightly. The folds of her loose fitting dress seem to rise carelessly in the breeze. Her youthful and sensual body is enhanced by the graceful fabric that is cinched at her breast and waist. What is significant about Beccafumi's interpretation of Penelope is that our focus is drawn to the trick for which she was well known. That Odysseus is not portrayed with her perhaps stresses her solitary existence and the necessity for her to act alone to protect herself and her family. Furthermore, because no other man accompanies her either, Beccafumi emphasizes her chaste rejection of the horde of suitors that inundated her at the palace during Odysseus's absence. The spindle she holds in her hand reminds us of her shrewd method of outwitting

these overbearing suitors. Thus, in this painting Beccafumi captures the many facets of Penelope's Homeric legend.

Little criticism exists concerning this particular painting by Beccafumi. However, we can look at the way mythological or legendary figures helped to shape notions of gender in Renaissance Italy to guide us in understanding *Penelope*. According to H. Diane Russell:

> Images obviously can and do convey gendered ideas about religion, law, work, and the like, but as a powerful mode of discourse in their own right, they need to be examined in their own terms. . . . [P]ower is considered to be interlocked with gender. In terms of visual images of women created by male artists, the images may be seen as part of a patriarchal discourse on women which often asserts itself as *power over women*. As in the case of gender, and inseparable from it, this power is presented in a context that appears natural and logical. . . . [W]oman is good, woman is bad. She is the Virgin, and she is Eve. . . Woman is shown as saint, virgin, carnal temptress, lover, witch, shrew, worthy. There are overlaps, moreover, between some of these categories, especially as regards the sexual nature and behavior of women.[29]

Beccafumi's Penelope proposes a particular view of women that goes beyond that of the good woman.

Looking back to the Medieval view of Penelope, we remember that two significant ideas emerged. First, she represents chastity and virtuous conduct. Second, these traits were expanded so that new meanings could be derived from them. It is obvious that choosing Penelope to represent the vendors of the spindle trade indicates that a certain level of popularity and prestige followed Penelope into Renaissance Italy. That she would be

readily recognized as an icon representing anything suggests that she had achieved some measure of renown. But that her prudence would represent sexual abstinence for these vendors is doubtful. Her steadfast nature portends, instead, for the clients of these merchants fairness and carefulness, as well as mastery of her art. Considering that she is portrayed holding a spindle and thread in her hands, we can posit that the public recognized and associated her with clever weaving. Her cleverness and faithfulness introduces traits like shrewdness, intelligence, and loyalty—all of which would certainly be considered valuable assets in the business environment of this guild. That qualities like these are associated with a female figure indicates the beginning of a shift in thinking in regards to female virtue because, as we have seen, female virtue was defined solely as sexual purity. Thus, Beccafumi's painting, one of the earliest works of arts created during the Renaissance relating to Penelope, breaks from tradition and moves into a more modern view of women.

Penelope and Renaissance Poetry

Beccafumi's presentation of Penelope as a symbol for merchants is a unique response to Penelope found during this period, for all other representations of her during the Renaissance connect Penelope to themes of love and marriage. Poets Louise Labé, John Skelton, Sir John Davies, and Thomas Carew all incorporate Penelope into their sonnets, narrative poems, and epigrams, whether they are lamenting love unrequited, complaining of love betrayed, or extolling love fulfilled. Of these, French poet Labé offers one of the most distinctive responses to Penelope.

Louise Labé

A daughter of a wealthy Lyonnaise rope-maker, Labé lacked little while growing up. However, the one unfortunate loss Labé experienced as a youth occurred shortly after

her birth, which most scholars believe took place around 1520-1523, when her mother Etienette Roybet died. Labé was left to be reared by a distracted father, who travelled frequently, and an overwhelmed grandmother. Growing up in this manner allowed Labé much freedom in her own lifestyle. Like her older brother, Labé received an excellent education—even by Renaissance standards. She excelled in music, languages, such as Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek, horsemanship, writing, and needlework. Described equally as robust and beautiful, legends about her exploits—both romantic and otherwise—abound. We do know that her brother taught her swordmanship and battle tactics. References to her war campaigns can be found in writings during the period, though most scholars reject the possibility that she did indeed participate in actual battles. Her contemporaries allude to her love affair with the dauphin, the future Henry II; they point to passages of her work they believe were intended for her royal lover. Debates about her relationships with other poets of the period, like Olivier du Magny and Claude Rubys, also suggest a less than chaste attitude toward marriage.[30]

Looking over her work, we can see that Labé possessed a passionate temperament, which indeed was a source of worry for her father, who did little to control her. Concerned with his daughter's zest for living and free lifestyle, however, her father consented happily to her engagement to Ennemond Perrin, another wealthy rope-maker. That both her father and her husband shared this profession led to Labé's title, "*la belle Cordière*."[31] Far from settling into the life of a *haute dame lyonnaise*,[32] however, Labé turned to writing. Quickly she found a place for herself in Lyon's literary society, her home becoming the center of an important salon for poets and thinkers of this period. Her own work demonstrates a musical quality influenced by an acute awareness of rhythm and sound. Specifically, she is known for producing poems about love, popular at the time. The collection of sonnets she wrote exude sensuality and sexual tension. In fact, it is in the first of these poems that we find her allusion to Penelope.

In "Sonnet I," Labé incorporates the separation motif found in Homer's *Odyssey* perhaps to parallel her own situation. Presumably written for poet Olivier du Magny during his absence, this poem—from her collection of twenty-four sonnets—tells of the poet's longing for her lover. She writes:

> Non hauria Ulysse o qualunqu'altro mai
> Piu accorto fû, da quel diuino aspetto
> Pien di gratie, d'honor et di rispetto
> Sperato qual isento affanni e guai.
>
> Pur, Amor, co i begli ochi tu fatt'hai
> Tal piaga dentro al mio innocente petto,
> Di cibo et di calor gia tuo ricetto,
> Che rimedio non v'e si tu nol' dai.
>
> O sorte dura, che mi fa esser quale
> Punta d'un Scorpio, et domandar riparo
> Contr' el velen' d'all'istesso animale.
>
> Chieggio li fol' ancida questa noia,
> Non estingua el desir a me si caro,
> Che mancar non potra ch-i non mi muoia.
>
> No one before me, not Ulysses even,
> Nor any other thought he might endure
> Such deep and pressing torment from that pure,
> That proud, incalcuable god in heaven!

So I am stricken, Eros, by your blue
And mighty gaze; and so I must decay
Through heat and luxury. There is no way
I can recover, but it be through you.

O bitter luck; as though the Scorpion's sting
Upon me sought escape from suffering
Through this same creature, trusting it might still me;

And thus I long to free myself from pain
Yet must succumb to its own cause again.
I seek relief in love. Yet love shall kill me.[33]

For the most part, Labé expresses sexual desire and the kind of pain that separation causes for lovers. Though she asks for her longing to go away, she recognizes that it is the only thing that keeps her alive while her lover is not with her. What interests us most, however, is that Labé takes the role of Odysseus and casts Du Magny as Penelope. That she does so assumes a fluidity of gender and a blurring of sexual stereotypes, which we did not see during the Middle Ages.[34]

It should first be noted that of the sonnets comprising this volume of poetry, "Sonnet I" constitutes the only one written in Italian—the rest of the works are in French. Although Labé's poem follows Petrarchan structure here, the themes found in her poem represent unique and particular experiences from her own life. In fact, the sexual imagery suggests a rejection of the Petrarchism that was so prevalent during the period in which she was writing.[35] Described as a "literary fad" that embraced certain rhetorical notions, Petrarchistic poetry centered on the love of a chaste and beautiful woman whose physical

nature lifted the lover to higher notions of hope and whose moral goodness drove him to hopelessness.[36] In Labé's "Sonnet I," we see a subversion of the platonic notion of love usually associated with sonnets of this type.

Labé begins conventionally enough by casting Du Magny in the place of a specific lady love, Penelope, and herself in the role of the wandering Odysseus. That she portrays herself as possessing an "astute" intelligence, or *accorto* (2), makes sense in light of Labé's educational background and uncommon interest in battle strategies. Portraying herself in this way tells us that Labé does not limit herself to interests generally associated with women; she is fully capable of male enterprises of adventuring and warring, as well as the active wooing of a lover. Thus, we understand at this point in the poem that she rejects the role of the patient and chaste wife, relegating it instead to her lover, who himself is full of "grace" and "honor" (3). Her description of Du Magny's "holy face," or *diuino aspetto* , and beautiful eyes, or *begli ochi* (3, 5) at first suggests a platonic love affair that cannot be consummated due to the high-mindedness of the beloved. However, looking at the sestet that follows, we notice a reference to "Scorpio," the *animale* (9, 11) that feeds on Odysseus / Labé. Because the first eight lines of the poem suggest a spiritual relationship between the two lovers, the introduction of sexual and martial imagery here surprises us.

In Western tradition the scorpion symbolizes "veracity," or accuracy and frankness. In Labé's poem, then, the presence of the "Scorpion" infuses a kind of candor into this poem not usually seen in other love sonnets. Governed by Mars, the planet named for the warrior god, and representing male sexuality with its penile-like appendage full of poison, the Scorpion can engender danger in even the purest of relationships.[37] Thus, the peril Labé laments seems to be derived from two different venoms infecting her relationship with Penelope / Du Magny: jealousy and sexual intimacy. Bored by the "tedium of life," or *noia*, without her beloved, Labé experiences the "pain of poison" that forces her to plea to the "wild beast" for a "remedy," or *riparo*, that will cure her worrying over her beloved.

Furthermore, stung at night by sexual desire for her beloved, Labé "beg[s] the sun at dawn" for relief from the "costly desire," or *caro desiro* (12-14) she experiences.[38] The *caro desiro* emerges as an important clue to understanding the kind of pain she is experiencing—that is, peace of mind, happiness, and perhaps even the relationship itself.

That it was Du Magny who journeyed to Rome away from Labé shortly after establishing their intimacy does not seem to matter here. As her contemporaries point out, Labé did not lead the life of a typical Lyonnaise housewife. In fact, her own life serves as an example of the kind of deviation that Gunsberg discusses in her schema. Labé's time was spent in a flurry of activity that her husband paid little attention to. Left to her own devices, she wandered Odysseus-like far from marital contentment and fidelity.[39] We know that while Du Magny was away, Labé took another lover, Claude Rubys—one who lived in the vicinity and seemed to travel far less than his predecessor. Therefore, when Du Magny returned from Rome, he was much chagrined to find himself replaced by another lover. Labé's fickleness proved that she was no Penelope, while Du Magny certainly appears to have remained steadfast in his passion for her. In fact, according to some sources, Du Magny, jealous of Rubys and angered by Labé's rejection, defamed Labé by publicly denouncing her as a whore, or "*courtisane publique.*"[40] We also know that not long afterward, Labé left Rubys and moved to the countryside. She died a few years later, "*déprimée et malade.*"[41]

Much debate surrounds when exactly Labé produced her sonnets. The possibility that she wrote them in response to Du Magny's attack on her seems plausible. Ardouin posits that they could also have been written for another military soldier, or "*l'homme de guerre*," or that they represent ideal love encompassing all of her many loves.[42] However, when we consider the confessional nature of this poem, we tend to follow the

suggestion of her contemporaries that advocates the poems were indeed intended for Du Magny[43] although they could have been written after he returned to Lyon and discovered her unfaithfulness.

Although Labé's Penelope is described in terms suggesting great virtue, she also represents an object of sexual desire. That the feminine is equated with sexuality is a theme in Western literary and philosophical thought; however, in light of the poetic tradition Labé follows in her sonnets and the way in which she transcends gender roles, we see that the sexual nature of her work does not set out to objectify women. In fact, the reversal of gender roles allows Labé to exert control over her life. As Odysseus, she can openly desire Du Magny / Penelope without the taint of wantonness.

Even Penelope escapes the confines of her gender by representing the male Du Magny. This Penelope is not loved solely for her goodness, although her worthiness is made evident by the lover's praise. Instead, the fire she "burns" in her lover drives her lover to yearn for her. "Holy" she may be, but holy her lover does not care for her to remain—if indeed she could join him. Unlike most Petrarchan sonnets, the despair this poet feels does not center on the moral goodness of the beloved. Instead, it seems to rest on the fact that she is not present to consummate their love. That he cannot quell his ardor for his absent lover is what drives him to his death (14). However, by drawing a parallel between Penelope and Odysseus and the separated lovers in her poem, Labé hints at another possible ending to the lover's pain: Like Odysseus, she will eventually return to Penelope and fulfill their passion for one another.

Labé may have parlayed the personal freedom she experienced in her personal life into the freedom she gave herself in her poetry. As Odysseus, she assumes the position of the wandering husband who enjoys sexual liaisons with many goddesses but who misses and prefers his Penelope, nonetheless. We may argue that because she was writing within a particular poetic tradition, Labé chose to follow the pattern and place herself in the role of

the male lover pining away for his beloved. But as we saw with another female writer, Christine de Pizan, women could redesign the tradition to fit themselves within it. Throughout her writing, Christine remained resolutely female. That Labé assumed the male role seems to be more of a personal choice derived from her own upbringing than a decision to work within a tradition. Furthermore, while this male libertine spirit may not have been unusual at the time of the 16th Century, certainly assuming the male role in order to pursue sexual freedom does provoke interest. Sexual stereotyping did not fade away during this time and the kind of blurring of gender roles sets Labé apart here from her contemporaries.

John Skelton

As the poet laureate of Oxford, Louvain, and Cambridge, tutor to Henry VIII, ordained priest, and Tudor poet who wrote *The Garland of Laurel* and *Philip Sparrow*, John Skelton achieved much fame during his lifetime that has dimmed during subsequent generations.[44] Few students today have read his satires of the corrupt Cardinal Wolsey, who served as advisor to Henry VIII, or have studied the "Skeltonic" verse he developed to deliver the quick punches of his wit. Save for the Romantics and a few modern poets, like Edith Sitwell, Robert Graves, and W.H. Auden, most critics view Skelton's work as too Medieval, too imbued with religious fervor for contemporary tastes.[45] Indeed Skelton's membership in the priesthood and his acceptance of Catholic orthodoxy reflects a sturdy moral fiber, but the way in which he parries openly with ideas he views as outmoded or wrong-minded by jabbing at social conventions and viciously attacking literary styles in his parodies renders him hard to classify. For the most part, the poetry that emerges from his intellect, particularly his dramatic monologue *Philip Sparrow*, lays open the tension found in an England in transition to the modern age.

In *John Skelton's Poetry*, Stanley Fish delineates the various ways critics have categorized Skelton's place in literary history. Although Fish himself views Skelton's work as conservative and Medieval, others such as Ian Gordon, H.L.R. Edwards, and Judith Larsen believe he represents the new thinking of the Renaissance. What these authors all demonstrate, however, is that Skelton possesses traits common in both periods. In regards to his response to Penelope, whom—like the poets of the 14th and 15th Century—he employs as a model of female conduct, Skelton leans toward a more progressive view of women we generally associate with humanism found in the 16th Century.[46] Furthermore, his portrayal of Jane Scroup, the young female character who recites the story of Penelope in *Philip Sparrow*, indicates a less conventional attitude toward women than we would expect from a poet with a narrow sensibility.

Philip Sparrow was written sometime after 1504 when Skelton had retired to Norfolk as the rector of Diss. Disillusioned by the kind of treachery and corruption he experienced as a young naïve clergyman involved in court life, he found contentment in the countryside.[47] Here at Norfolk Skelton's work as a poet flourished. Obvious in this particular poem is Skelton's erudite learning, talent for satire, and his ability to sustain humor.[48] This reputation is evident when we consider that Skelton uses over eight hundred English words in his poetry before they appear in the *New English Dictionary*, translated classical Latin texts into English, and in *Philip Sparrow* identifies over seventy different species of birds for the first time in the English language. The 1,382 lines of this poem are divided into three parts: a mock lamentation over the sparrow's death by its owner—a pre-pubescent Norfolk schoolgirl named Jane Scroup, satirical praise of the "lady" Jane by Skelton, and Skelton's irreverent defence of his work.[49] Although the poem may be seen as "a study of innocence and experience," [50] Jane Scroup's youthful longing and the feminine models that she aspires to, as exemplified by Penelope and those legendary women known for less virtuous behavior, create a tension in *Philip Sparrow*

that takes it beyond a Medieval moralistic commentary on virtue. Also of interest to us is the stream of consciousness technique Skelton employs in this poem that allows us to enter into the thoughts of Jane Scroup. Although the term was invented in 1890 by William James and applied to the writing of avant-garde novelists of the late 19th and early 20th Century, such as Édouard Dujardin, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust, we find the first example of this narrative style in John Skelton.[51]

While mourning the loss of her pet, Jane Scroup presents us with the concerns any young girl at the threshold of womanhood may have about love, marriage, and the world around her. But Skelton's Jane Scroup is not any typical girl and her bird, not just any bird. Jane emerges as a well-read young woman who can quote directly from Church services, discuss Greek mythology, knows the bible, world history, and geography, and is amazingly well-versed in English literature. Furthermore, the numerous sexual innuendos Jane makes throughout the poem reflect her budding womanhood and her frankness regarding the subject of sex. In fact, Jane treats Philip more like a dead lover than a freshly killed sparrow.[52] If we also keep in mind that birds often symbolize "the power that helps people to speak reflectively and leads them to think out many things in advance before they take action,"[53] then we can interpret Jane's discussion of Philip's death as a prelude to more important issues about life that she wishes to resolve.

It is in the first part of the poem—the mock lamentation that parodies the catalogues of women popular during the late Medieval period—that we find Penelope. As the poem begins, Jane intersperses her thoughts with the Catholic Office of the Dead. Here, she tells the story of Philip and his demise and mentions other lovers separated by death, such as Pyramus and Thisbe, and Andromache and Hector (stanzas 1-6). Angered at her cat Gib, who wrought such violence on *her* lover, she threatens to avenge Philip. The images that follow emphasize the fierceness of the housecat and the punishment he will earn for the murder (stanzas 16-19). Calling others to mourn Philip with her, Jane begins a long

catalogue of birds that adds to the irreverence Skelton has already established by extolling a sparrow's beauty and virtue and holding a lofty Church service (as the Mass of the Dead) under such circumstances in the first place (stanzas 23-29).

Next, Jane reminds us that she is "just a maid, / timorous, half afraid" (stanza 32). However, she moves into a catalogue of independent matrons like the the Wife of Bath and wanton women who cuckolded their lovers and husbands like Dame Gaynour, and Cresseid (stanza 32). Directly after telling the story of Troilus and Cresseid, Jane praises Penelope:

> Though I remember the fable
> Of Penelope most stable,
> To her husband most true,
> Yet long-time she ne knew
> Whether he were live or dead;
> Her wit stood her in stead,
> That she was true and just
> For any bodily lust
> To Ulysses her make,
> And never would him forsake. (stanza 53)

That Penelope's story follows the long catalogue of birds and the tale of legendary unfaithful Cresseid suggests two things. First, Skelton is poking fun at the numerous catalogues of women circulating Europe that were intended to educate women on good morals. Secondly, he is using Cresseid to highlight Penelope's own good conduct—a common practice for other poets bent on moralizing. But this Penelope represents more than just a model of fidelity to Skelton (and Jane), for upon closer examination we find that along with her virtue she also possesses something as important as a faithful nature—that is, a great "wit."

Writing about wit in the Renaissance, William Crane tells us that interest in this subject during the early part of the 16th Century coincided with the rediscovery of the classical study of rhetoric. Works focusing on wit, such as Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wyt*, demonstrate that serious attention was given to defining and delineating wit and its relation to the intellect and virtue. For thinkers of this time, then, it came to mean the mind, particularly those qualities of balance and intellectual quickness. It differed widely from "wits," since the plural form of this word implied the general ability to think, the faculties of the mind.[54] Along these lines, Renaissance rhetorician Gabriel Harvey defined wit as "an affluent spirit, yeelding inuention to praise or dispraise, or anie wayes to discourse (with judgment) of euerie subiecte."[55] As Crane further points out, John Skelton's satires show both a flair for and interest in notions of wit.[56] We may extrapolate, then, that Skelton's use of the word carries with it the meanings accepted at the time. Looking back at Penelope's "wit," we see that Skelton is talking about more than just her ability to think through the problem of the suitors; instead, he endows her with a creative intellect that can craft a plan and carry it out successfully in order to achieve her goal—that is, the safe return of her husband and the safeguard of their property while he is absent.

Viewed in this way, Penelope emerges as cunning, as well as virtuous and faithful. This form of cunning that Skelton endows Penelope with differs from the tradition that was found in the ancient period that associated Penelope's shrewdness with infidelity. It is interesting to note that many scholars perceive Skelton's treatment of women as demonstrating both a Medieval respect for women who display good conduct and a loathing for those he views to be less virtuous. Though we may agree that Penelope attains Skelton's high regard because of her virtue, we cannot disregard the fact he also extols her "wit." This casual compliment of her intellect shows a uniqueness in Skelton not found in many other literary artists considered to be more modern than he is.

Like Boccaccio's catalogue of women, Skelton's parody presents both virtuous and sinful women; however, we recognize instantly that Jane has no understanding of the stories she so easily recites. Because Jane cannot distinguish evil from good, she lumps these women all together under the rubric of lovers. Cresseid's unvirtuous conduct, then, has as much value to Jane as Penelope's goodness. Thus, the intent of this catalogue does not seem to be inclined toward moral instruction, as we would imagine it to be. Instead, Jane's recitation that mentions in one breath both Penelope's faithful devotion to Odysseus and Cresseid's betrayal of Troilus suggests Jane's youthful ambivalence regarding fidelity —maybe she will never forget Philip, maybe she will replace him with another bird. Similarly, Jane's earthy longing for Philip also hints to a connection with the lusty Wife of Bath. Her frequent references to kissing and caressing Philip, which she does not recognize as preludes to further sexual misconduct, alert us to Jane's precariously innocent age. The sexuality she only hints at here will become a reality for her when she enters into womanhood. Therefore, the tension in the story of Jane Scroup the schoolgirl resides in our awareness of what awaits Jane Scroup the woman. The possibility of both moral and immoral conduct loom in the foreground, exemplified by the good and wanton women Jane is fascinated by.

As exemplified by both Penelope and Jane, Skelton's women are far from one-dimensional types. Specifically, what is interesting about *Philip Sparrow* is that Penelope, as well as the other women Jane mentions, possesses the ability to get what she wants. Although *Jane* doesn't seem to be aware of this, Skelton makes it clear to *us* adults who eavesdrop into Jane's thoughts that Penelope emerges as a positive example of wit, the metaphor for the new woman of the new age.[57] His response to Penelope undercuts any stereotyping of women we may associate with him, but bestowing wit on a woman of such

good character as Penelope certainly does not veer far from Skelton's reputation as a defender of good morals. Thus, the humanism and conservatism found in Skelton's response to Penelope express his reputation as a poet writing during a transitional time.

Sir John Davies

Unlike many of his contemporaries who served as courtiers under Elizabeth I, poet Sir John Davies practiced law. Although his body of work is considered to be "one of the airiest and nimblest" of Elizabethan writing, Davies's poetry moves beyond mere frivolity.[58] A product of the neoplatonism that had spread from Italy to England, Davies's ideas combine an interest in "new metaphysics" with the scientific and philosophical views coming out of "new astronomy."[59] I should also mention that Davies avoids divisive religious debates in his work despite the fact that the arrival of hermeticism in England prompted Protestant philosophers to embrace the ideas of men like Giordano Bruno in order to confound their Catholic opponents.[60] Instead, he opts for themes focusing on love and spirituality, those elements he sees as uniting humans with each other and with God. Because of his ability to move "from the abstract to concrete, from ideal to real, from sacred to profane," his work is seen as one of the best examples of the Elizabethan temperament.[61]

Orchestra, or a Poeme of Dauncing, published in 1596, is considered to be one of his two best works. Containing one hundred and thirty-six stanzas, this poem, centering on the debate that ensues when Antinous asks Penelope to dance with him, associates dancing with cosmic order and hierarchy.[62] Through the education she receives from the very learned Antinous concerning the cosmic dance and its relationship to reason, Penelope attains a higher level of understanding of the universe. Thus, engaging in this merry entertainment with Antinous is not presented as an example of infidelity but as Penelope's

engagement in the intellectual and spiritual life she has long neglected. In fact, Davies makes it clear that Penelope's mourning over Odysseus's absence is tantamount to a rejection of godly order and reason.

In the introduction of his poem, comprising the first six stanzas, Davies's begins by reminding us of "chaste" Penelope's "unspotted" reputation gained by remaining faithful to Odysseus during the twenty years he is away. This description of Penelope seems to align Davies with other Renaissance poets who have embraced a more conventional view of her. However, Davies moves beyond this acknowledgement of Penelope's virtues and on to the real story—that is, the event that Homer "forgot" to tell us because he was too "old and blind" to notice. One evening Antinous made "courtly love" to Penelope at the palace, and this incident changed her life and her way of thinking forever. In order to understand Davies's version of the story, we must keep in mind that this Antinous differs widely from the arrogant and selfish suitor Homer presented us in the *Odyssey*, for Davies's wooer is a "fresh and jolly knight" paying homage to the lady Penelope in proper courtly fashion. Also Penelope, according to Davies, believes she is widowed, having heard that Odysseus had been killed by Neptune. Thus, her revised marital status paves the way for her to be courted by Antinous without the taint of sin (stanzas 1-6).

In his retelling of the story Davies adapts many of the the circumstances surrounding Book 18 and other parts of the *Odyssey* . Upon hearing Phemius's song of the Trojan War, Penelope appears before the suitors, her beauty enhanced by Athene's power. Following Phemius's praise of Odysseus's deeds, the minstrel turns to more festive songs because the court prefers dancing and merrier music to the mournful praise of Odysseus.[63] Shortly before Penelope joins the other suitors downstairs, Antinous had arrived, "disguisèd and unknown." Although he did not have wooing on his mind when he showed up at the "sovereign castle," Antinous is spurred to action after catching a glimpse of Penelope's great beauty as she listens intently to the minstrel's music.

Graciously approaching the queen, he asks her to dance with him, including in his invitation a reference to the universal joy that dancing brings (stanzas 7-13).

After Antinous's noble proposal, the blushing Penelope rejects his offer because she doesn't know how to dance and because it seems like a foolish pastime her "forefathers" would eschew (stanzas 14-15). Surprised by her reply, Antinous denies "that dauncing is a frenzy and a rage" unknown by her forebears and new to their generation. From this point in the story onward Antinous and Penelope engage in a debate concerning the importance of dancing. Their discussion turns first to the history of dancing and then to the place dancing holds in cosmic order and hierarchy. What is interesting about Antinous's speech is that he works extremely hard to persuade the queen to see his point of view. From his arguments, as well as his increasingly detailed and lofty evidence, we ascertain that Penelope, though portrayed as less enlightened than Antinous, is no intellectual weakling or moral pushover. She makes her suitor work very hard to present a case convincing enough to win her over.

After explaining to her that dancing is as ancient as the universe, beginning "when the first seeds whereof the world did spring," he argues that it is the "proper exercise" for love. He, then, moves into a metaphysical discussion about the stars, in which he links celestial motion with music. For Antinous, the harmony of the ancient stars results in love which manifests itself in dance (stanzas 16-22). Penelope is obviously unmoved by this theory because Antinous takes the debate further by positing that dancing is connected to reason—an argument an intelligent queen may find more appealing. He says: "Reason hath both their pictures in her treasure, / Where Time the measure of all moving is / And Dancing is a moving all in measure." Thus, by connecting dancing to music, Antinous draws attention to its scientific underpinnings, for—as he reminds us—music requires measurement of rhythm, which is, in essence, an aspect of time. To further clarify his point, he says that since knowledge of astronomy and mathematics is needed in order to

determine and understand time, time is inextricably linked to reason. Because the Elizabethans linked Reason to God, what Antinous is really implying here is that dancing is not only a reflection of cosmic order, love, and reason, but it is also a divine gift from God in which Penelope must participate in order to achieve a high level of spirituality. As if this is not convincing enough for her, Antinous adds that Queen Penelope cannot attain full "nobility" without engaging in this pastime (stanza 23-96).

Bored by his "tedious praise" of dancing, which she "despise[s]," Penelope attacks Antinous's argument by questioning love's value and associating it with vanity and cruelty (97-101). But the suitor is well-prepared for this onslaught of the lady's criticism. He sets out to separate love from "Lust:" The latter of these he admits is "traitorous" and dangerous. Focusing on "true Love," then, Antinous demonstrates that dancing is not unlike many other benign passions such as needlework. He also tells her that it brings people together, particularly wives and husbands who would ordinarily fight over small, unimportant issues. Ending his argument, he uses reverse psychology on her. He tells her that moving is the natural state for all matter—that she does not dance signals her abnormality. Besides, he adds, only barbarians reject dancing. At the completion of this speech, he prays to king "Love" to help Penelope see the truth. When Love appears, he gives Penelope a "crystal mirror" to look into. Revealed to her in the glass is a "bright moon" and a "thousand sparkling stars" that "amazed her sight." This is the court of Queen Elizabeth she sees reflected in the glass. Her mind "sooth[ed]" by this "enchanting pleasure," she is transformed, and her "weak judgment" gives way (stanzas 102-131). "Rapt with sweet pleasure" at the music and motion she takes part in, Penelope puts aside her weaving and joins Antinous in a dance. Thus, Antinous liberates Penelope from the narrow-mindedness that kept her from loftier interests and from fully uniting with God and reason (stanzas 132-136).

Davies does not disguise the fact that the enlightened Penelope represents his own queen, Elizabeth I, for in the last section of the poem he links the two women. In the introduction to the last stanzas Davies adds this comment: "Here are wanting some stanzas describing Queen Elizabeth. Then follow these." Here he discusses Penelope's new enlightened state and her dance with Antinous. We should also keep in mind that there was a long tradition of associating Elizabeth with various goddesses and heroes, such as Astraea, Isis, Diana, Deborah, and Judith.[64] Choosing the beautiful and widowed Penelope as his model for the Queen does more than flatter Elizabeth—it recounts a fact about Elizabeth's status as an unmarried monarch and her reputation as a brilliant leader. We must keep in mind that at the time Davies wrote *Orchestra*, Elizabeth was sixty-one years old. At this point of her life she was quite capable of successfully running a country as well as attracting young men to her side. That a woman as noble as Penelope is educated by a man as ignoble as Antinous may signal to a contemporary audience a lack of respect for woman's (and his queen's) natural intellectual powers. However, this is not necessarily the case. First, because he reworks Homer's story so that Antinous lacks the qualities that made him so despicable in the *Odyssey*, Davies's wooer emerges as an intellectual with a good grasp of the science and philosophy of his age. Secondly, many times the tutors and teachers of aristocratic Renaissance women during this time were men. Thus, the position that Antinous assumes as Penelope's teacher is not unusual for the period.

In 1523 Reformationist Jean-Louis Vivès published *De l'institution de la femme chrétienne*, a work addressing women's education within an enlightened society. Arguing that "most of the vices of the women of this and previous centuries stem from lack of cultivation," Vivès outlined the parameters for the instruction of women. Not to be outdone, the Catholic Church turned its attention to its female members and began teaching young girls to read and study catechism.[65] As we saw with Louise Labé, women from

wealthy and aristocratic families were able to attain excellent educations in areas beyond domestic interests. Elizabeth herself ascended the throne having been well educated.[66] That she had united a country torn apart by religious wars and had succeeded in defeating her numerous foes in battle and in negotiations is testimony to Elizabeth's intellectual powers. Thus, it is highly unlikely that the instruction of another solitary female monarch indicates that Davies, a loyal subject of Elizabeth, sees women as unable to achieve a high level of learning. Rather, it tells us what women can attain if they receive the same educational advantages as men are allowed. For Davies, then, Penelope represents the new woman for a "golden age" (stanza 126), the period of England's imperial influence under a woman whose goodness and intellectual capacities rivalled even Penelope's.[67]

Thomas Carew

Born about the time that Davies was writing *Orchestra*, Thomas Carew has been linked to both the Cavalier poetry that emerged during the reign of Charles I, as well as the Metaphysical poetry of the Pre-Baroque 17th Century.[68] A better description of his work has been offered by scholar Louis Martz, who characterizes Carew's poetry as an example of Mannerism. According to Martz, Mannerism is:

> a world of high style, a world of ultimate elegance and refinement expressed in postures and gestures of aristocratic hauteur, a world of highly crafted dance, song, costume, and scenery, with 'the dramatic use of light, the elongation of the figure and lively sinuosity of line' characteristic of mannerist artists.[69]

Indeed, sophistication about art and life seems to define Carew's personal interpretation of mannerist style. His worldliness can be seen in the rather brazen references to sex found in much of his work. In fact, during his day his vivid sexual imagery distinguished him as a

purveyor of pornography and fueled his reputation as a libertine.[70] Although John Donne and Ben Jonson exerted great influence over his style of writing,[71] Carew did indeed draw upon the libertine tradition of French writers, such as Pierre de Ronsard, and Italians, like Giambattista Marino.[72] Also in his work we find evidence of the classical tradition reflecting his interest in the Latin and Greek poets, particularly those writing about love.[73]

In "Rapture," a pastoral poem influenced by Tasso and Ovid as well as Jonson and Donne, the speaker attempts to seduce a young woman into a sexual relationship.[74] The steady application of promises of pleasure are combined with strong arguments about why she should make love to him. Penelope, together with other legendary and mythological women, is evoked to give credence to his conviction that "we only sin when Loves rites are not done" (11). But Carew's Penelope does not represent the chaste wife we have met thus far in the literary tradition of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. She is, instead, an "amorous" woman who tantalizes the young men of Ithaka with her beauty. Carew's portrayal of Penelope signals to us the reintroduction of the adulterous wife found in works of the late classical writers that we have discussed previously in Chapter 1. The boldness that we find in Carew's amatory verse underscores the loosening of the moral strictures that define the courts of this period and reemerge periodically thereafter, particularly in the 20th Century. Thus, we find in Carew's erotic poem a modern sensibility regarding the realities of love embraced by many poets from the 19th Century onward.

Divided into six stanzas of rhyming couplets, "Rapture" begins with an address to Celia, the woman to whom Carew had dedicated his love poems: "I will enjoy thee now my Celia, come / And fly with me to Love's Elizium" (1-2). More a command than an invitation, these words seem to presage the final outcome of the young man's pursuit of his lady's love: He will have her. The numerous arguments he gives to convince the woman to give in to their desire serve to tantalize both her and us in a kind of verbal foreplay rather

than to seduce a truly intrepid woman. Thus, when he reminds her about the rapturous delights that await her, we quickly realize that she has not really forgotten. The sport, then, isn't wondering *if* she'll give in, because she surely will, but *when* she will finally succumb to his appeals. For Celia seems to enjoy teasing her lover with her prolonged indecision.

The first hurdle standing in the way of their mutual bliss is the "Giant, Honour." In order to coax Celia past this "idol," Carew taunts her with the idea that only the "valiant" and the "wise" dare push past him. He ends with an argument that a strong-minded woman would heed: Honor has been concocted by men in order to squelch the ambitions of "free wom[e]n" (2-20). It becomes obvious that Carew must appeal first to Celia's intellect in order to undermine her moral sense. Complying with societal strictures regarding love and sex is a sure sign that she is a weak woman. In effect, he dares her to live by her own moral code, one that is more to his liking as well.

Parts three and four of the poem include the bulk of Carew's sexual imagery. Here, he explains in great detail exactly what he plans to do to Celia if she would mount "on the wings of love." Waiting for her in a utopian landscape are "Love, Innocence, / Beauty, and Nature"—far better allies than Honour. Taking her to this "delicious paradise" where nothing holds them back from expressing their passion for one another, he promises that he will make her a bed amid the "Cypress grove" of "Roses, and fresh Myrtle." Their pillow will be "the downe of Venus Doves." There, they can "slumber" or engage in "active play," a euphemism for the sexual pleasure they will enjoy. To elevate their experience to a loftier realm, he connects the physical expression of their love to spirituality: "And so our souls that cannot be embrac'd / Shall the embraces of our bodys taste." Their senses heightened by this experience and revitalized by Nature who will "shoot into [their] veins fresh fire," they will make love again (21-54).

Depleted from their lovemaking, he compares himself to an "empty Bee" that needs to draw nectar from a "spicy flower." In this extended metaphor, Celia becomes synonymous with a garden. Her body takes the form of the ". . .ripned Cherry, / The warm, firme Apple," "the vale of Lillies, and the bower of bliss." Like the countryside they have escaped to, she is the "swelling Appenine" where he wants to "retire," bringing "that great Elixar to [her] hive" (55-77). These promises and compliments obviously still aren't enough to entice her to give in to him because he follows them up with even more details of the love he will make to her. It is interesting to note that in this section of the poem he digresses into a diatribe on marriage. In doing so, he makes it clear that their lovemaking does not need to be confined by the bonds of marriage or conventions of society. He tells her: "Of husband, wife, list, modest, chaste, or shame, / Are vain and empty words, whose very sound / Was never heard in the Elizian ground." There in their paradise they are beyond any moral constraints. The fact that they aren't married should not hinder them from expressing the love they feel toward one another (78-114).

His argument takes a new slant when in part five he cites examples of women renowned for their great virtue—who he reveals were actually not that moral after all. Here, with Penelope, we find Lucretia, Daphne, and Petrarch's Laura, all of whom were not "slaves to the Tyrant" that he has already identified as Honour. About Penelope he writes:

> . . .The Grecian Dame,
> That in her endless webb, toyl'd for a name
> As fruitless as her work, doth there display
> Her self before the Youth of Ithaca,
> And th'amorous sport of gamesome nights prefer,
> Before dull dreams of the lost Traveller. (125-130)

As we have seen thus far in this chapter, evoking the image of Penelope generally implies a connection to chastity, as well as other qualities valued in women. However, Carew revises previous notions of Penelope by proposing that she enjoyed taking company with the suitors and was glad to give up waiting for Odysseus to return (116-146).

Using Penelope like this paves the way for his final argument, for in the last section he reiterates once again that chastity shackles women, keeping them from their "sacred right" and causing men to fight for women's honor. Returning to his original topic, he tells her that by holding on to her "Honour," she requires him to fight if someone offends her. This, he implies, will result in "blood-shed" and will cause him to leave the Church. Turning away from religion, then, will force him to become an atheist. Thus, an honor that results in another's fall from grace is no honor at all: ". . .Then tell me why / This Goblin Honour which the world adores / should make men Atheists, and not women Whores." Thus, she would be doing them both a favor by giving herself over to him (146-166).

We are first struck by the use of the imperative and future tenses that inject the poem with urgency and vitality. However, it is the logic that Carew uses on Celia to convince her to become involved with him that gives this poem its wit. Likewise, its sexual imagery and frankness remind us of contemporary erotic poetry. Because the speaker produces a more powerful argument as his bid for the woman's affection mounts, we may posit that the woman presents an intellectual challenge for him. By using Penelope and other important literary figures in his argument, Carew suggests that they are a powerful force to subvert. Her appearance at the end of Carew's long argument makes us aware of the importance Penelope's reputation has maintained in Renaissance society. It becomes paramount for him, then, to subvert that position in order to persuade Celia to give in to him. His Penelope is a woman who outwardly demonstrates chastity but whose

real actions are decidedly libertine. Thus, by recreating Penelope in this way and, then, using her as a model for Celia, Carew links his beloved to a woman known for her great virtue who also enjoyed the pleasures of love.

Appearing at the end of the Renaissance, Carew's poem serves to emphasize the change in viewpoint regarding women and virtue that had occurred and alerts us to themes and subject matter that have become fair game in a modern, secularized world. Because Celia is never portrayed as immoral in Carew's poem, he suggests a general relaxation of the moral code that limited sex to marriage. Although sexual liberation does not necessarily indicate an equality of the sexes, it does suggest here that women during the late Renaissance could engage in sexual relationships under certain circumstances without losing their good reputations. In fact, a strict adherence to virtuous conduct, according to Carew, is more dangerous for everyone than giving oneself over to one's lover. These ideas about sex that Carew and other poets promoted in their poetry run counter to what was deemed acceptable—at least on the surface of society. It becomes apparent when reading about the sexual antics of various court figures, particularly queens, that the rules about illicit sex were not always followed to the letter. Elizabeth I, though unmarried, was quite active sexually, and Henrietta Maria, the consort to Charles I, was involved in numerous extramarital affairs. In fact, Carew himself assisted Charles's Queen in covering up her relationship with Jermyn St. Albans.[75] With this in mind, it makes sense that Carew would redefine female virtue in his poem. No longer is it equated with an unrelentless devotion to sexual purity; instead, it supposes an intelligence that can evaluate a situation and determine on its own when and how to act. As Carew's theme and subject matter certainly indicate, if a woman chooses to engage in sexual intercourse with a man outside of marriage, she can and should. The suitable lover for a strong-willed woman, according to Carew, is a man who can wittily sustain her intelligence with his pleas and imaginative discourse.

Conclusion

In looking back over the artists whose work we explored in this chapter, we see that a pattern emerges regarding Penelope. During the early part of the Renaissance, we see that she maintains her reputation as the chaste wife that she established during the Middle Ages. Domenico Beccafumi, Louise Labé, and John Skelton, working from 1519 to the mid-1500's, all retain this image of her in their art. However, each of these artists moves beyond this one-dimensional view of Penelope, endowing her with other qualities as well.

In Beccafumi's painting, *Penelope*, she symbolizes craftsmanship and honesty, qualities necessary for the Sienese spindle vendors to promote to their customers. That qualities like these are associated with a female figure indicates the beginning of a shift in thinking in regards to female virtue. As we have seen, female virtue was defined primarily as sexual purity. Thus, Beccafumi's painting, one of the earliest works of arts created during the Renaissance relating to Penelope, breaks from tradition and moves into a more modern view of women. In an interesting reversal of gender roles, Louise Labé takes on the *persona* of Odysseus and portrays her lover Olivier du Magny as Penelope. Although Penelope seems to remain fixed in the role of the beloved lofty lady found in the Petrarchan sonnets that were the rage at the time, this is not the case. Instead, she is viewed as a woman who, though still a virtuous woman in all other respects, is valued for her sexuality. Labé's response to Penelope marks the first time since the Hellenistic writers that any artist acknowledges the human aspect of Penelope's sexuality. That this response comes from a woman who was supposedly involved in numerous affairs of her own, enjoyed a great deal of freedom, and exerted much control over her own life does not surprise us. The last of these artists, John Skelton, endows Penelope with intelligence in his poem, *Philip Sparrow*. His parody of the catalogues of women that were popular

during this time does not besmirch Penelope's status as a model of female virtue. In fact, by linking her with other women who achieved what they wanted, despite their less savory wantonness, he underscores her "wit." Because the Renaissance came later to English poetry than it did to the poetry on the continent of Europe, Skelton's response is unique. Considered by many to be Medieval and very conservative, Skelton's view toward Penelope is more modern than many of the Renaissance poets who came after him.

Roughly fifty years after Labé we find Sir John Davies's poem, *Orchestra, or a Poeme of Dauncing*. Here Davies presents us with a Penelope who is modelled after Queen Elizabeth I. Intelligent, serious-minded, and concerned about proper conduct befitting a woman of her status, this Penelope makes an excellent paradigm for the enlightened female ruler. And finally, at the end of the Renaissance almost fifty years after Davies, we find Thomas Carew's revision of Penelope in "Rapture." In this rather sexually explicit poem that borrows from several different traditions of English poetry, Carew tells us that Penelope was not as chaste as her reputation made her out to be. In fact, we learn that Penelope enjoyed flaunting herself in front of the suitors and was glad to end her mourning over Odysseus. Carew employs Penelope to convince the young woman he is attempting to seduce that good women enjoy sexual pleasure. Although sexual liberation does not always indicate real freedom for women, it does signal—at least in this poem—a change in definition of female virtue. Penelope's conduct is not portrayed as wanton nor does Celia appear to be in any danger of being labelled a fallen women if she indeed makes love to Carew. Because it becomes clear that Celia, like Penelope, is a noble and intelligent woman not given to indiscriminate passion, female virtue seems to take on qualifications other than absolute sexual purity. Thus, the Renaissance view of Penelope expands on and revises Penelope's status as the chaste wife of Odysseus. Talented in her craft, honest, sexually active, intelligent, enlightened, and liberated from traditional moral constraints, Penelope moves beyond the conventional view into a brave new world.

Chapter 3
Notes

[1] Leone Battista Alberti, *De architectura*, quoted in Wylie Sypher, *Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature, 1400-1700* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955) 57.

[2] Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). Although Kris and Kurz demonstrate the way in which the Renaissance artist came to be connected with the notion of divinity, they serendipitously clarify why women could not be accepted as artists of genius. Women did indeed create during this period, but it has been only recently that they have been taken seriously as artists.

[3] Sypher, *Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature, 1400-1700* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955) 67.

[4] Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990). Chadwick documents the obstacles women faced in renaissance society, particularly those limitations placed on the female artist.

[5] Chadwick, 65.

[6] Originally from Protagoras (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος), this maxim was adopted by the renaissance thinkers to capture the spirit of their age.

[7] Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1957) 5-27.

[8] Kris and Kurz, 55. They argue that the artists of this period achieved divine status through their work. That the renaissance worldview embraced the idea that God is the great artist lends itself to the inverse of this premise.

[9] Sypher, 61.

[10] Gerald Bullett, introduction, *Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1966) vi.

[11] Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual: 1050-1200* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972).

[12] Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York: Alfred, 1978). I should also mention that others, such as Philip Zeigler, deny that the plague produced any major changes in viewpoint regarding papal power. See Philip Zeigler, *The Black Death* (Bath: Alan Sutton, 1991).

[13] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1958) 196-210. Burkhardt tells the story of Pope Nicholas V who scoured the world for old manuscripts, falling into debt because of his passion for ancient texts.

[14] Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1964).

[15] Morris, 7-10. Humanism, as described by Morris, is defined as the ability to read and write Latin and a "sympathy with and delight in, mankind."

[16] Bullett, v-vi.

[17] Donna Gunsberg, "Donna Liberata? The Portrayal of Women in the Italian Renaissance Epic," *The Italianist: Journal of the Department of Italian Studies, University of Reading* 7 : (1987) 7-35.

[18] Glenda McLeod, *Virtue and Venom: Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991) 141.

[19] Gunsberg, 7.

[20] Many scholars have addressed this topic. See Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, gen. eds., *A History of Women in the West*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1993); Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[21] Ben Jonson, "An Epigram to the Honour'd Countess," *The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson*, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr. (New York: New York University Press, 1963).

[22] William Byrd, "Penelope, That Longëd For the Sight," *English Renaissance Poetry: A Collection of Shorter Poems From Skelton to Jonson*, ed. John Williams (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963) 231.

[23] Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus, The Works of the British Dramatists* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, Publishers, nd) 127-139.

[24] Robert Herrick, "The Parting Verse, or Charge to His Supposed Wife When He Travelled," *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1968).
[25] S. J. Freedberg, *Painting in Italy, 1500-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 14.

[26] Edward Lucie-Smith, *Dictionary of Art Terms* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984) 116. Lucie-Smith's explanation of Mannerism, that is "neurotic disquiet" seems to capture its essence well.

[27] Freedberg, 121, 240.

[28] Giuliano Briganti, *L'opera completa del Beccafumi* (Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1977) 89.

[29] H. Diane Russell, *Eva / Ave: Woman in Renaissance and Baroque Prints* (Washington: The National Gallery of Art, 1990) 14.

[30] Paul Ardouin, *Maurice Scève Pernette du Guileet Louise Labé: L'Amour à Lyon au temps de la Renaissance* (Paris: Librairie A. G. Nizet, 1981) 99-102.

[31] Frederic Prokosch, "Biographical Note," *Love Sonnets* (New York: New Directions, 1947) np.

[32] Ardouin, 104-105.

[33] Louise Labé, "Sonnet I," *Love Sonnets by Louise Labé*, tr. Frederic Prokosch (New York: New Directions, 1947) 2.

[34] And indeed, this is considered to be an example of an aberration in Gunsberg's schema.

[35] Willis Barnstone, "Louise Labé," 205.

[36] *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 612-613.

[37] Hans Biedermann, *The Dictionary of Symbolism* (New York: Roundhouse Publishing Co., 1992) 301.

[38] Labé, lines 12-14.

[39] Ardouin, 104-106.

[40] Ardouin, 102.

[41] Ardouin, 118.

[42] Ardouin, 102.

[43] Ardouin, 101.

[44] Arthur F. Kinney, *John Skelton, Priest as Poet* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987). As many scholars have pointed out, little is known about the life of John Skelton. The facts I state here then are the ones generally accepted by scholars.

[45] Philip Henderson, introduction, *The Complete Poems of John Skelton* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1948) v.

[46] Stanley Eugene Fish, *John Skelton's Poetry* (Hamden, Ct.: Archon Books, 1976) 27-31.

[47] *The Literary History of England*, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948) 346-350. I should mention here that Skelton later returned to London and counseled Henry VIII. The source of contention between him and Wolsey centered on Skelton's low opinion of Wolsey's character and his concern over the Cardinal's growing influence with the young king. Despite Wolsey's poor treatment of the poet, Skelton survived court life, dying a year before Wolsey's own fall from grace.

[48] Henderson vii-viii.

[49] Fish, 98. As Fish points out, most scholars have a high opinion of the first section but dismiss the last two sections. Part two, for example, is seen as "charming," while the third section was written about fifteen years later and is, therefore, seen as tacked on and not part of the original.

[50] Fish, 99. Because the sexual themes in *PS* (stanzas 8, 9, 12, and 32) keep the poem too off-balanced to stand squarely in conservatism, strong humor has to keep Skelton safely within the boundaries of propriety. Therefore, I find most readings of Skelton's poem tend to credit him with more "whimsicality" than I think he possesses or more seriousness than is really present.

[51] *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 944.

[52] Jane frequently refers to caressing and kissing Philip (stanzas 8, 9, 12, and 21).

[53] *Dictionary of Symbolism*, 39.

[54] Crane, 9.

[55] Gabriel Harvey, quoted from William Crane, *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937) 9-10.

[56] Crane, 18.

[57] Crane, 11.

[58] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960) 103-106.

59 Koyré, 28-57.

60 Yates, 205-214. Although Yates does not mention Davies specifically in her work, she does detail the spread of hermeticism in England during the late 1500's. It is easy to ascertain that a man of Davies's position and learning would come in contact with these ideas during his lifetime.

61 Tillyard, 106.

62 Bullett, xvi.

63 We find numerous references to the suitors dancing in Homer's story. See *Ody.* 1.152 and 18. 304-305.

64 Stevie Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed: The Idea of Woman in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986).

65 *A History of Women,* 101-105.

66 Roger Ascham, quoted from *Women from the Greeks to the French Revolution,* ed. Susan Groag Bell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973) 215-216. It was reported that Elizabeth was schooled in literature, religion, languages, such as French, Italian, Latin and Greek, music, history, and philosophy.

67 Tillyard, 107. He mentions in the epilogue that "the bloom of creative freshness on *Orchestra* together with its so obvious repose in its own age may remind us that the "real" Elizabethan age—the quarter century from 1580-1605—was after all the great age."

68 *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) 108-109.

69 Louis Martz, *From Renaissance to the Baroque: Essays on Literature and Art* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991) 183.

70 Lynn Sadler, *Thomas Carew* (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1979) 16. In fact, love poems make up the bulk of Carew's work.

71 Martz, 184-187. Carew wrote several tributes to his mentor Jonson, at times mimicking his style as the ultimate complement of Jonson's genius. Likewise, Carew adopts Donne's style, paying tribute to his "imperious wit." Douglas Bush points out that in Carew "the influence of Jonson and Donne is merged.... Without Donne Carew would have been poorer but that without Jonson he would not have been a poet at all." See Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier 17th Century, 1600-1660* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) 119-120.

[72] *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 473. Bush tells us that in his poetry Carew rises above Marinism— that is, the style of Marino's work. See Bush, 120.

[73] Sadler cites Ovid, Catullus, Sextus Propertius, as well as Anacreon and other Greek lyric poets.

[74] Bush, 173. Bush categorizes this kind of poem whereby a young man attempts to convince a woman to make love to him as the "persuasion to love" tradition, which can be "sober or sportive." Here, Carew opts for the sport of love.

[75] Sadler, 14. We learn that upon seeing the Queen with St. Albans in the hallway, Carew purposely puts out the light he was carrying in his hand. That Carew was leading the King to his mistress's chamber adds to the irony of the situation.

Chapter 4
Penelope's Great Fame and Notoriety: Penelope During the Baroque and Enlightenment

> Woman is all mind, and it is because she is all mind that she feels within her, as it were, a desert. She knows no sentiment, no superior force upholding her, no spring of tenderness to slake her thirst; nothing save an activity of mind, a sort of libertinage of thought which plunges her back into the disenchantment of life at every moment. Her heart floats without anchor to which it may moor. At the same time her faculties lack a link to unite them and a superior purpose to govern them; they lack faith, devotion, one of those great currents that make woman triumph over the weaknesses of her moral will.[1]

Introduction

The woman of the 18th Century, according to Edmond and Jules Goncourt, possessed a mind—or more precisely, a soul—similar to a vast harsh "desert" landscape. Like grains of sand, her ideas were whisked about by capricious winds and were unable to light anywhere for very long. Unrelentingly the heat of her environment dried up "devotion" and "tenderness." Sound judgment was swept away in the storms of her passions. Far from appearing verdant and full of life, her soul was arid, without strength, life*less*.

It is interesting to note the reason behind this rebuke of women's "moral will." Previously, as I have shown, Renaissance women from the upper class enjoyed a high level of education, on a par many times with that of their male counterparts. By the time of the Enlightenment, women were no longer content with learning for the sake of knowledge and were embarking on pursuits not normally associated with their gender, like medicine, writing, and painting. The fear that women were indeed infringing on the male domain drew a negative response from many who fretted over women's new place in the "modern" world. Philosophers, like Rousseau, devoted much thought to women's true nature and natural state. As the Goncourt Brothers's essay indicates, women should limit themselves

to the home rather than expand into the laboratory, *not* because they were not intelligent enough to handle the challenge but because they would be corrupted by going against what they are naturally meant to do. They write:

> No science repels her; the most virile sciences seem to exercise a temptation and a fascination.... The dream of the woman of the eighteenth century was universal knowledge, and a compendium of talents, inspired by an example of genius, the alert and light genius of Voltaire, who seemed to embrace whatever he touched and who, by way of relief from sifting a world of passions, took to dabbling in that of science for sport. What was it to produce? Merely a dainty monstrosity, a woman who knows how to blood-let and to pluck a harp-string, to teach geography and to play-act, to plot a novel and to draw a flower, to herborise, to preach and to rime. . . .[2]

As we can see, the debate that ensues concerning women during the Baroque Period and the Age of Enlightenment moves beyond questions on intelligence and sexual status to those focusing on what happens to women's moral sensibilities when they leave their "natural place" behind for more masculine pursuits. The Penelope of the late 17th and 18th Centuries is a highly intelligent woman in control of her environment, who like her Medieval and Renaissance counterparts is still viewed as the virtuous wife and good woman. However, that she presides as mistress of her home and participates in the return of her husband allows artists to explore, for the first time, the connection between virtue and female heroism. Opera composer Claudio Monteverdi and painter Angelica Kauffman elevate their moral Penelope to heroic status, while Mottley and Cooke, whose ballad opera is written in the mock-heroic style, ridicules her virtuous qualities and holds her femininity up for scorn.

The Effect of Printing on Homer's Popularity

The interest in Penelope that we saw in the Renaissance does not abate in the century and half that follows. The twenty-six Renaissance artists who responded to her in their work no doubt had been influenced by the availability of the complete Homeric texts translated into Latin. As we remember, it had been under Petrarch's influence that Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had been reintroduced to Europe during the late Middle Ages.[3] That Homer's *Odyssey* could finally be read in its entirety led to the explosion of interest we saw take place in the arts after the late Middle Ages.

After the invention of the printing press in the mid-1400's, classical texts became available to the reading public in a way they had never been before. Early on, Milan emerged as the center of printing for texts written in the Greek language; however, it was not long before other Italian cities began producing classical Greek texts in translation. A Florentine press, for example, is responsible for publishing the first printed work of Homer in 1488-9. Edited by Demetrius Chalcondylas of Crete, it appeared as a two volume folio dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici.[4] According to John Winterich, Venetian printers, the Aldines, were responsible for making Homer popular in Europe with their multiple editions of his work during the early 1500's. Winterich also mentions that interest in Homer's work caught fire in Northern Europe after it appeared in print at Louvain in 1523. However, it was in 1581 from a *French* translation of Homer that the first English version of the *Iliad* came to be. Not long after, in 1596, Peter Colse's loose retelling of the *Odyssey*, entitled *Penelope's Complaint, or a Mirror for Wanton Minions*, was made available for the English public.[5] However, in looking over the lists of texts published by these early presses we notice that early Church fathers like Tertullian, ancient and Byzantine thinkers like Cicero, Seneca, Aristotle, and Boethius, the Greek historian Thucydides, and writers like Virgil, Dante, and Boccaccio dominated those chosen for

publication. Therefore, although Homer owed his existence in Renaissance Europe and his early popularity among the educated classes to the few printers and translators who undertook publication of his work, his poems became part of the Western literary canon due to the publication of translations that appear later during the Baroque and Enlightenment periods, specifically Chapman's *Homer* in 1616 and Pope's in 1715 and 1726.[6] The result of the energy both men poured into their work—that is, the second explosion of interest in Homeric literature—cannot be overstated. The effect of their labor is the profusion of responses to Homer's Penelope that are tied for the first time to actual episodes of the *Odyssey*, rather than to a static reaction to what she represents.

Imprinting Penelope

That the complete story of Penelope—the mistress of Ithaka and her home while her husband is away—is finally available in the vernacular and in more affordable copies makes her a perfect space in which Baroque and Enlightenment artists and thinkers could play out the debate over women's role in society and the heroic ethos this role may engender. The Medieval and Renaissance artists had no such luxury. Due to the unavailability of a complete Homeric translation, late Medieval artists, like Dante, developed their own versions of the story based upon references ancient writers made to the work or were forced to ignore telling the story at all. And although Boccaccio had access to the Greek manuscript and a Latin translation of the *Odyssey*, he chose to embrace the tradition already developed suggested by the earlier Italian master. Other poets, like Gower and Chaucer, followed suit, content to portray her as she had been already accepted—chaste and virtuous. An undated drawing believed to have been executed during the late Middle Ages shows Penelope at the loom weaving away, seemingly unaware of the hordes of dangerous suitors threatening her.[7] For these artists she is a type, a model of

excellence, an allegorical figure. As I have shown, the complexity artists endow her with is found in the way they expand on her allegorical meanings rather than scrutinize her actions.

The Renaissance period, for the most part, follows after the Medieval view of her. The few artists who do deviate from the static vision of Penelope take a few liberties with the tradition they had inherited. For Beccafumi, Skelton, and Labé, she remains a model of virtue; however, their unique responses to her are derived from the way they redefine her excellence. By stretching her qualities to include fairness, creativity, and wit, they bring her in line with her female Renaissance counterparts. But she remains chaste, nonetheless. Even Davies's portrait of the "dancing and enlightened Penelope" remains true to her previously accepted reputation as a good woman. Only Carew's adulterous Penelope deviates from the accepted norm. Even Peter Colse's The *Complaint of Penelope*, instrumental in spreading the popularity of the *Odyssey*, follows the conventional reading of the poem. Despite his obvious access to a complete text of the *Odyssey*, his Penelope possesses none of the wit or cunning that we saw in Gower's or Davies's work.

During the Baroque and Enlightenment period, Penelope's popularity continued to grow, due to Chapman's and Pope's translations. Accepted by then that Penelope embodies intelligence, shrewdness, creativity, *and* chastity, the focus shifts to how these qualities define the female heroic ethos, for the strides women were making during this period required a new paradigm for femininity.

Claudio Monteverdi

A figure who stands at the crossroads of late Renaissance and Baroque tradition is Claudio Monteverdi. Known for his laments, operas, and numerous books of madrigals, Monteverdi achieved notoriety early in his career for debating Giovanni Maria Artusi concerning the aesthetics of "modern music." For the most part, Monteverdi advocated an

avant garde approach to his compositions, called the *seconda pratica* or "second things," that claimed kinship among poetry, rhetoric and music. For Monteverdi—a lover of the humanist tradition that embraced the text as the progenitor of wisdom—poetry deserved as much attention and respect as the music composed to accompany it.[8] This careful treatment of words led to many important collaborations with librettists who welcomed the input of a far-thinking musical composer, such as Monteverdi, into their work. This, in turn, resulted in operas lauded for their poetry, message, and musical innovation.

Of the three operas that remain of the seven Monteverdi composed between 1606-1643, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* best exemplifies his unique philosophical views regarding love and spirituality, and as I will show, female heroism. Derived from the libretto by Giacomo Badoaro, *Il ritorno* borrows from all parts of Homer's works, but concentrates heavily on those episodes taking place in Books 13-23. Prior to *Il ritorno*, Monteverdi had collaborated with Badoaro on another opera, *Le nozze d'Enea con Lavinia*, which is now lost. Although the librettist follows closely Homer's plot, the way in which the opera rejects the notion of erotic love between Ulysses and Penelope and embraces religious symbolism indicate other influences at work here. As scholars have pointed out, Monteverdi participated in the development of the libretto for *Il ritorno* until he liked the story he would be setting to music.[9] Tomlinson tells us, "The final product seems to reflect a viable compromise of the interests of composer and librettist more than the struggle of a composer victimized by an unsatisfactory text."[1] Although some scholars have argued that Monteverdi and Badoaro shared similar philosophical viewpoints, it becomes obvious to anyone working closely with *Il ritorno* that Monteverdi departs from the younger man's view of love and the way it should be treated in this particular composition.

It is well documented that Badoaro belonged to the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, in Venice founded by Giovanni Francesco Loredan and inspired by Giacomo Marino. This Venetian group of thinkers was described by their critics as "libertines." As David

Kimbell tells us, these men "introduced to opera an unbridled sensuality unimaginable in the Neoplatonic world of the earlier generation."[11] In *Il ritorno*, however, we see none of the cynicism regarding love that these younger men advocated; instead, we find once again the Neoplatonic principles that Monteverdi had subscribed to earlier in his career. Furthermore, the way in which the characters in the opera are presented reflect Monteverdi's own thinking about the nature of true love and devotion.[12] Thus, despite the fact Badoaro originally wrote the words for Monteverdi's opera, the composer stamped their meaning with his own sensibilities. With *Il ritorno*, it becomes difficult to separate composer from librettist.

Scholars are quick to point out that Monteverdi was also influenced by Giambattista Marino—and not completely without reason. Thirty years separate Monteverdi's first opera from *Il ritorno*. The ideas of Petrarch's humanism that first compelled him to assert a new aesthetic when he was a younger man composing *L'Orfeo* had continued to be shaped by others more contemporary to the time of *Il ritorno*. Like many artists living in Italy during this period of time, including his collaborator Badoaro, he had adopted some of the aesthetic principles associated with Marino popular at the time. Monteverdi's "anti-introspective" approach to his subject matter, for example, was based upon the theories found in Marino's poetry.[13] Although we can see from the opera itself that character development and the presentation of true feelings are overshadowed by "style and structure,"[14] another more important force than Marinism drives this particular opera about Ulysses and Penelope.[15]

Following the death of his dearest friend and frequent collaborator Striggio, as well as other more personal hardships,[16] Monteverdi became a member of the clergy in 1632 at the age of sixty-five.[17] Although little scholarship discusses Monteverdi's religious views, we can find in *Il ritorno* a deep religious conviction that centers on the adoration of the

Virgin Mary. Therefore, while Monteverdi may well have adopted Marinist tendencies in his approach to his art by the time of *Il ritorno*, the work itself is decidedly Marianist.

Looking closely at the opera we notice that *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* offers multiple ways to read Ulysses's return to Ithaka and the role Penelope plays in his homecoming. First, on a literal level, the story highlights the events leading up to the reunion of Ulysses with his wife and son. Like the views we have seen previously regarding Penelope, she emerges as the virtuous but resolute mistress of her household who inspires respect and worship in all who come into contact with her. Second, as a morality tale the story presents the lot of "everyman and woman," portrayed by Ulysses and Penelope, who suffer hardships that test their moral mettle. However, it is the allegorical reading that offers the most compelling portrait of Penelope. Here, Ulysses comes to represent a Christ figure, the savior who offers a new life and restores hope to the forsaken and miserable, while Penelope emerges as the Virgin Mary, the virtuous woman chosen by God to serve as the conduit for human redemption. As portrayed by Monteverdi, Penelope's status in the story is elevated, for she is not relegated to a secondary role of the long suffering wife, or even a damsel in distress waiting to be saved from dangerous suitors. She is the Queen of Heaven, through whom the savior must be born and who shares his glory upon his return. Accordingly the traits that Homer endows Penelope with are replaced with those Monteverdi finds more befitting the mother of God: Cunning is replaced with forthrightness, skepticism over the stranger's identity is transformed into unswerving loyalty to God, and the earthy treatment of language, particularly in Book 23, becomes the confirmation of her faith. But despite these changes in Penelope's character, we find that Monteverdi presents her as a woman in charge of the physical (and spiritual) well-being of her people, and in doing so, he accords her heroic status.

Before moving into my discussion of the opera, I would like to point out that I am following the libretto adopted by L'Opera Montpellier. This particular libretto is believed to be Monteverdi's original version of *Il ritorno* rather than the version that prevailed later in the 1640's.[18] Although the libretto for *Il ritorno D'Ulisse in patria* was never printed, manuscripts of the work suggesting how Monteverdi may have performed the opera have survived.[19] Although discrepancies among the various surviving scores suggest that Monteverdi may have planned many changes for the opera—among them, the eventual organization of the opera into three acts from its five act structure, as well as cuts in verses and scenes—the lack of hard evidence that Monteverdi had indeed devised these changes leads us to accept the structure most scholars believe he presented at the Venice public opera house in the autumn of 1641.[20]

In the Prologue we find the theme of the opera. Here we are introduced to Human Frailty, who sings about the lot of common man. As in a typical morality tale, allegorical figures—Time, Fortune, and Love—appear as characters who seduce everyman. Presaging the three suitors who later bedevil Penelope in the story, these enemies can cause us to become *ciechi*, or "blind" to the true way if we do not place our faith in God (49). The rest of the opera plays out this theme, juxtaposing the actions of Penelope, who remains steadfastly loyal to Ulysses, with those of the servants and suitors who are enticed by lust and greed to disregard the truth. In Act I, we learn about Penelope's woes as she awaits the return of her husband from his travels. Overwhelmed by three kings who are courting her, she is, a *misera regina* or a "hapless queen," who wavers between anger at Ulysses for deserting her and at the gods for making her life so wretched (51). We learn in this part of the story that she has been remarkably faithful and chaste while her husband is away. Deviating then from Homer's story, there is no suspicion of any wrongdoing by Penelope with the suitors, nor do we find any mention that she tricks them with her weaving. Despite these differences, we do notice that this Penelope has much in common

with Homer's: Both are grieving over the absence of Ulysses. Thus, in the beginning of the story, Monteverdi's opera captures the spirit of Homer's Penelope in *Ody.*1. 341-342 (ἢ τέ μοι αἰεὶ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλον κῆπ / τείπει, ἐπεί με μάλιστα καθίκετο πένθος ἄλαστον: "... which always afflicts the dear heart deep inside me, since the unforgettable sorrow comes to me, beyond others, ...). Ulysses's return is presaged by Eurycleia, who resolutely points out that he *must* return because he left—thus, order in the universe ordains that Ulysses will come back to Ithaka. Right from the start we see that Penelope's lack of hope borders on sin—if she truly placed her faith in natural order—that is, God—then she would know Ulysses would have to return. Thus, Penelope emerges early in the opera as everywoman tempted to sin by her lack of faith. And like the young hesitant virgin called to duty by God, Penelope is at first presented as human and very capable of faithlessness .

Monteverdi takes many liberties with the suitors and servants found in the story. First Melanthius, Penelope's servant Melantho from the *Odyssey* , who is corrupted by the wooers, is a lady-in-waiting who has fallen deeply in love with only one man, Eurymachus. And while Eurymachus appears in Homer's story as one of the belligerent suitors who dogs Penelope at the palace, here he is a gentle courtier who returns Melanthius's love. In Monteverdi's story, Eurymachus plots to convince Penelope to marry one of the kings courting her because he and Melanthius are afraid that if Penelope does not commit herself to another man soon, their love will be discovered. Thus, Monteverdi presents Penelope as an unbending queen who does not tolerate expressions of earthly passion in her home. As we see in this version, the love between Melanthius and Eurymachus is a false one predicated on lust. In contrast, the pure love that Penelope feels for Ulysses centers on the unselfish concerns of family, community, and God. Not found

in Penelope's laments for Ulysses, then, is sexual desire (56-60). Though her retainers do not understand Penelope's distrust of love, they do not hate her for it, but they do see *her* conduct—as virtuous as it may be—as selfish and wrong-headed.

In Scene V we meet Ulysses and the retinue of sirens and nereids who are protecting his sleep. Aboard the ship, Ulysses is unaware of Neptune's rage against the Phaeacians. Still desiring punishment for Ulysses, Neptune turns his attention to these people who foolishly return Ulysses to Ithaka against the gods's wishes. Because arrogance drives them to go against the gods, they suffer from the *peccato* or "sin" of pride (60-67). From Jove, Neptune receives permission to punish the seamen, but only because such punishment is just. Thus, after Ulysses is placed on the shores of Ithaka, Jove destroys the ship. That Ulysses escapes the god's vengeance suggests that he is untainted by the Phaeacians's sin. Ulysses's arrival on Ithaka parallels Christ's sinless birth. Furthermore, Ulysses's homecoming, flanked by semi-deities, indicates his lofty status—this is no mere mortal whom the sea bears. When Ulysses wakes up on the shore of his home, he is greeted by Minerva disguised as a shepherd, reminiscent of the shepherd's visit to the manger scene after the birth of Christ. Ulysses's encounter with the goddess follows closely Homer's story: Ulysses lies about his identity to her, and later, upon learning who she is, he and she hatch their plot against the suitors (68-76).

Act II finds Melanthius trying to convince Penelope to marry one of the suitors. Penelope remains steadfast in her decision to wait for her husband, arguing that love is fickle and not to be trusted. This passage signals once again that, for Penelope, true love has little to do with earthly desire. And we will see later when Ulysses does indeed return to her, Penelope's reaction to him is less wifely than it is motherly (80-82). Any hint of a sexual relationship between Penelope and Ulysses is missing from Monteverdi's version of the story. We also learn in Act II that if earthly pleasure does exist, it can be found in nature, the true expression of God's presence.

In Scene ii Monteverdi presents Eumaeus's pastoral setting as the symbol for this aspect of earthly life. We realize by the description of the verdant hills and lush landscape that spring has arrived on Ithaka. Thus, the hint the Easter and rebirth resonate in the voice of the happy shepherd and of Penelope who later visits him there. In this earthly paradise the beggar Irus shows up to taunt Eumaeus. Irus's evil presence, not unlike that of the snake in the Garden of Eden, is juxtaposed to Ulysses's visit to the herder's hut in the scene that follows. Unlike Irus, however, the disguised Ulysses conducts himself nobly. And because of his royal bearing and wise words, Eumaeus believes the stranger is a god who has come to test the old shepherd's hospitality and goodness. While Ulysses remains with Eumaeus, Minerva turns her attention to bringing Telemachus home from Sparta. Deviating once again from Homer's story, Monteverdi has Minerva carting the young man to the shepherd's hut in her chariot. Here, with the old shepherd, Telemachus meets his father for the first time. However, in an episode that can only be described as dramatic and symbolic, the disguised Ulysses is swallowed up by the ground and is resurrected as his true self. That Ulysses represents a savior figure becomes absolutely clear at this point of the story. After their tearful reunion, Ulysses and Telemachus make plans to rid the palace of the three kings (82-96).

In Act III Monteverdi juxtaposes Ulysses's counsellors (Minerva, Eumeaus, and Telemachus) with those giving Penelope advice. Melanthius and Eurymachus, reunited to discuss their failure at seducing Penelope into remarrying, misunderstand Penelope's *fede*, or "faithfulness," and call it instead pride and obstinacy. By remaining steadfast, Penelope's conduct runs counter to women's normal character, for Melanthius tells us that woman is by nature *volubile e leggera*, or "fickle and flighty" (96-100). Thus, in this exchange between the two lovers we are alerted to the fact that Penelope is unlike normal women, her divine nature becoming more evident in the scenes that follow. What

Melanthius and Eurymachus fail to realize is that what is natural on earth is not natural in heaven—Monteverdi's Penelope resides in the clouds of neoplatonic enlightenment rather than in their earthly realm of false appearances.

In Scene ii Monteverdi departs once again from Homer's text. Here he suggests that Penelope does not rid herself of the suitors, primarily because they are worthy kings who have endeared themselves to her through their courtly manner. Although we learn she is not interested in marrying any of them, she does not ignore them. Thus far, they have been circumspect in their attentions to her, though a little pompous and impatient. In fact, these suitors—Antinous ("against reason"), Pisander ("one who persuades"), and Amfinomos ("double law")—have been portrayed up until now merely as love hungry and frivolous, rather than unsavory and dangerous; in Monteverdi's version they pine away for Penelope, on the one hand, and are eager to enjoy a merry life as the king of Ithaka, on the other (100-104).

When Eumeaus shows up at the palace to announce that a stranger has arrived with news of Ulysses's impending return, Penelope does not believe the shepherd. As in the Virgin Mary's response to the angel Gabriel's announcement of the coming of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-34), Penelope is "troubled" by the "herald" Eumeaus's news of the coming of Ulysses. When the three not-so-wise kings hear the news, their true natures emerge. Fearing retribution for seducing the queen, they begin to plot the death of Telemachus. When an omen appears that suggests they will be punished by Jove for their actions, they change their minds but agree to push Penelope into making a decision to marry one of them (104-114).

We get a sense of Telemachus's youthfulness in Act IV. Here, he tells Penelope that he has fallen in love with Helen and understands why Paris abducted her. It was worth the *stragi*, or "carnage" of Troy to have the love of such a woman. This speech enrages Penelope, and she lectures him about his *folleggia*, or "foolish ideas" (114-118).

Although the reason behind Penelope's rebuke of Telemachus differs from the one found in Homer's story, it does reminds us of Penelope's speech in *Ody*. 18. 215-225 ("'Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὐδὲ νόημα. . . " : "Telemachos, your mind and your thoughts are no longer steadfast. . ."). Here, she lambasts Telemachus for losing his *kerdea*, demonstrated when he allows the stranger to be so poorly treated by the suitors. We must keep in mind that at this point in the story Monteverdi needs to clarify Telemachus's position in this household. Penelope's lofty status as the Virgin Mary and Ulysses's as Jesus Christ makes the logistics for them sharing a son in the tradition of Homer's difficult. To solve the problem, Monteverdi's Telemachus emerges first as a young man searching for knowledge—not unlike Homer's presentation of him. Thus, Telemachus's trip to Sparta in search of Ulysses and his interest in Helen suggest an early stage of his journey to enlightenment. However, later, when Telemachus takes part in planning Ulysses's return to the palace, his position is raised to that of an apostle of Christ. His steadfastness and devoted relationship to Penelope-Mary later suggests that he represents the Apostle John[21] or perhaps even Christ's own brother James.

When Eumaeus and Ulysses arrive at the palace, they are humiliated by Antinous. Monteverdi juxtaposes Antinous's conduct with that of the poor shepherd in order to highlight Eumaeus's true nobility—Antinous may indeed by a king, but he lacks the innate goodness of the modest and hard-working Eumaeus. As in *Ody*. 18. 90-109, Ulysses also gets the chance to demonstrate his physical prowess when he beats Irus in a fight. Penelope rewards the stranger by offering him a place to live at the palace. In Scene iii the three kings make their bids for Penelope's affections. In a scene reminiscent of the three kings laying gifts at the feet of the Holy Family at the manger, Pisander offers Penelope his kingdom, Anfinomus offers her *pompose spoglie*, or "sumptuous trophies," and Antinous promises her *ori*, or "gold." As in both Homer's story and the New Testament account of the three kings, Penelope-Mary accepts these gifts graciously as in *Ody*. 18. 301-304

("ἄλλο δ' ἀπ' ἄλλος δῶρον 'Αχαιῶν καλὸν ἔωεικεν. / ἡ μὲν ἔπετ' ἀνέβαιν' ὑπερώια δῖα θυναικῶν. / τῇ δ' ἀπ' ἀμφίπολοι ἔφερον περικαλλέα δῶρα." : "And each of the Achaians brought a different beautiful present; and she, shining among women, went back to her upper room, and her maidservants carried the beautiful presents for her."). However, she is much surprised when Minerva causes her to issue the contest of the bow in appreciation for their *contanto*, or "tributes." Too late to change her mind after making such a promise, Penelope allows the suitors to begin the contest. When each man tries and fails, the disguised Ulysses asks Penelope for a chance to participate in the contest, foregoing the prize if he wins. To the chagrin of the kings, Penelope assents. Managing to string the bow, Ulysses turns the arrows on the three kings dumbfounded by the old man's ability (118-132).

The last Act opens with Irus recounting to the audience the slaughter of the suitors and, then, killing himself. Parallels to Judas Iscariot abound in the reckless folly of this suicide and Irus's lack of fidelity to his master (132-134). It is interesting to note that of all of the men and women slaughtered by Ulysses in the *Odyssey*, Irus's name is not mentioned. Thus, he makes an appropriate storyteller in Monteverdi's version of Ulysses's return. Awaiting the outcome of the fight, Penelope and Melanthius fret over the sounds they hear. When Eumaeus shows up to tell Penelope that the stranger had killed the suitors and that this stranger is really Ulysses, she refuses to believe him. Penelope remains steadfastly loyal to the "true" Ulysses and awaits a sign that he has indeed arrived. Once the stranger reveals the special *serico drappo*, or "silken sheet" that Penelope had woven for her bridal bed, however, she is convinced completely. Falling into his arms, she tells Ulysses that she had rejected him earlier because he might have been a false god who had come to test her loyalty. Besides the obvious change in signs—missing is the olive bed symbolizing conjugal love—Monteverdi's scene also lacks the tension between Penelope and Ulysses found in Homer's story. The quick resolution to the problem of

identifying the stranger avoids the ambiguity found in Homer's text and fails to develop Penelope's cunning nature. However, because Penelope represents the Mary figure in the story, she should not need to test Ulysses-Christ's true identity for very long. Once the proper sign is given, Monteverdi's Penelope leaps into his arms without expressing any indignation over his long absence,[22] for God sends the savior when he is needed.

Monteverdi's story ends with the gods deciding to end Ulysses's torment and to placate the suitor's families. Penelope and Ulysses do not retire to their bed to share stories of their adventures. When they sing of yearning for one another, we come to understand that theirs is a spiritual love untainted by earthly pleasure (134-158). In fact, we learn from the opera that the proper passion to experience is Christ's Passion on the cross. According to Monteverdi, what Ulysses and Penelope are expressing, in effect, is the proper joy we should all experience following Christ's resurrection.

Although human frailty opens the opera, the story ends with a different theme—the journey to our "true home" is one of renewal and rebirth. Through his reunion with Ithaka, Penelope, and his son, Ulysses's odyssey becomes an allegory for man's journey to God. It has been noted that "opera was the creation of the baroque, when men seem to have lost their grip of the transcendent."[23] The implication here then is that opera could cut a path to rediscovering the sacred and exist as an avenue for expressing the profane. Monteverdi's use of religious symbolism associated with the coming of Christ suggests that he opted for the loftier of the two courses. Therefore, Ulysses's return to Ithaka also represents Christ's return to His fatherland, or more precisely, heaven.

Penelope emerges in the story as the zealous and resolute mistress of her home who inspires awe in her underlings for her supernatural adherence to virtue. And because she represents the Queen of Heaven as well, her focus on maintaining order and running the palace in this spiritual homeland amounts to the keeping of the flame of faith alive while the savior prepares to return. Therefore, that she adopts the role of the ruling lord before

Ulysses's coming is not treated negatively by Monteverdi. Her steadfastness creates an atmosphere that stifles sinful lust and arouses curiosity in those who do not yet understand what she is waiting for. Monteverdi treats their ignorance, particularly that of Telemachus, Melanthius, and Eurymachus, not with disdain but a forgiveness reserved for the unenlightened.

By revisioning *Il ritorno* as both a morality tale and the story of Christ's Resurrection, Monteverdi appears to offer a conventional approach to the debate regarding women's role in society. Like her Medieval and many of her Renaissance counterparts, Penelope constitutes Virtue. However as the Virgin Mary, Penelope's position as the fount of Christianity is above reproach and sets her above all others. Marianne McDonald points out:

> This Penelope has a new heroism and it is of resistance. She is an anti-Phaedra. Man may be a victim of his passions, but not Penelope. In the prologue . . . the character playing Ulysses also plays Human Frailty. A woman plays this role in the Glyndebourne production. We can see Penelope as an example of Human Frailty, buffeted by time, fortune, and love, but her strength is heroic resistance.[24]

That Penelope oversees Ithaka before the coming of Ulysses makes sense, for she is like the Virgin Mary guiding the souls to God's kingdom. Once Ulysses arrives, his reinstatement as king of his homeland is predicated upon Penelope's acceptance of him as her "true lord," both literally and figuratively, for we must remember that Christ comes into being only through the body of Mary. Along these lines, Mary's position as Mother of God endows her with powers similar to those of Christ.[25] Thus in the opera, the Queen of Ithaka may fall into Ulysses's arms, but her status as the Queen of Heaven guarantees her

position as co-ruler of the community. The power Penelope-Mary wields over her household and the suitors before Ulysses-Christ returns and the sharing of that power upon his homecoming is indicative of her contemporanity to the sentiments of the time.

In order to stay true to this reading of Penelope, Monteverdi had to eliminate those qualities, then, that Homer's Penelope was most noted for: cunning and ambiguity. The tricks of the loom in *Ody.* 2.88-95 and the bed in *Ody.* 23.181-204, two of the most significant occurrences from the *Odyssey* which demonstrate Penelope's cunning intelligence are omitted or minimized. Because Monteverdi's Penelope-Mary never really faces any danger by being seduced by the kings, the trick of the loom becomes unnecessary. Secondly because Penelope-Mary would never be portrayed as outwitting Christ, Monteverdi diminishes the importance of the trick of the bed. By the time Penelope solicits his response to her comment about the bedcover, enough evidence that connects the stranger to Ulysses has been given by other members of the household. The ambiguity that laces the conduct and language of Homer's Penelope regarding her true intentions with the three suitors and her acceptance of Ulysses as her husband, likewise, is also missing from Monteverdi's story. According to Monteverdi, Penelope allows the kings to remain at the palace because she feels a familial tenderness for them, rather than the multitude of possibilities that Homer's texts includes. Furthermore, Penelope's explanation for not accepting the stranger as Ulysses lacks the possibility that she is angry over his long absence and poor treatment of her found in Homer's story. Penelope-Mary merely explains her obstinacy as steadfastness to her faith in God. Therefore, for Monteverdi the clergyman, the queen of Ithaka's transformation into the Queen of Heaven involves less attention to Marinist cynicism—it is associated with an abiding faith in God and love of Mary and serves to elevate Penelope to a position that is beyond reproach.

Nota Cambiata **From Italian Opera to English Ballad Opera**

Prior to Monteverdi, the move to recreate Greek drama motivated late Renaissance dramatists to combine poetry with music on stage. Because the purpose of music was merely to highlight the words spoken by the performers, it played a secondary role in these early works. Penned by Florentine writers from the upper class, early operas were performed in private salons and attended by royalty and wealthy patrons. *Dafne* , written by Ottavio Rinuccini and set to music by Jacopo Peri and Jacopo Corsi in 1597, exemplifies this earliest form of opera called *dramma per musica*.[26] The popularity of these spectacles spread to other parts of Italy, finding their way to the court of Mantua where Monteverdi served first as string player and later as *maestro della musica*. .[27] Monteverdi's innovation, only some ten years later then, was to elevate the status of music as "an equal partner" with the drama.[28] As we have already seen, his aesthetic sensibility about the written word resulted in a harmonious relationship between poetry and music. His *Orfeo* (1607) influenced generations of composers from all parts of Europe for years to come. It also helped to lay the groundwork for many operatic forms, such as *opera buffa*,[29] *opera seria* ,[30] and operetta.[31]

While scholars have little doubt about the beginnings of Italian opera, there is much debate regarding the development of English ballad operas. Although musicologists argue that the ballad opera arose out of a reaction to the dominance of Italian opera,[32] literary scholars instead point to drama, particularly Restoration drama found in England during the mid to late-1600's,[33] as the major force shaping the ballad opera. Bridging the two views, we can say that the ballad opera was a theatrical form that combined the traditions found in Elizabethan drama, French burlesque,[34] *commedia dell'arte*,[35] political writing,[36] *and* Italian opera, and thereby redefined entertainment for the English opera-going public. Unlike drama written during the Restoration period that focused on the aristocracy and *opera seria* that focused on gods and heroes drawn from Greco-Roman heroes of myth

and legend, ballad operas generally turned to stories about the working class. Furthermore, because ballad operas lacked lofty language and serious subject matter, they were also called also people's opera. In 1725 the first ballad opera, *The Gentle Shepherd* written by Allan Ramsay, appeared. However, it was John Gay's *A Beggar's Opera* , which enjoyed a successful run,[37] that inspired playwrights to this form. Although ballad operas proliferated for only a short period of time, from 1728 to 1750, scholars in both fields do note that they had a hand in the development of the *opera buffa*. In fact, scholars have traced the demise of *operaseria* to the development of the ballad opera.[38]

John Mottley and Thomas Cooke

Mottley and Cooke's ballad opera, *Penelope*, opened on May 8, 1728 at the Little Theatre at the Haymarket and ran the whole of three days.[39] Although criticized for bad acting during its production, Mottley and Cooke's script offers little in the way of wit either. However, it does interest us for three reasons. First it deviates slightly from the typical ballad opera form by presenting (like Italian opera) male and female heros found in tragedy. In doing so, it set the trend in English opera for years to come.[40] Secondly, it pokes fun at Alexander Pope's translation of the *Odyssey* and the religiosity he accords the work.[41] Most importantly, it presents a unique response to Penelope; for although many of the scenes highlighting her cunning are eliminated from Mottley and Cooke's plot, their Penelope does emerge with the traits associated with the female heroic ethos. In their version of the story, Penelope emerges as a strong-willed woman determined to remain faithful to Ulysses at any cost. Her resolve disturbs her family, servants, and wooers and directs attention to her status as an independent thinker. However, far from holding up Penelope's qualities up as exemplary, Mottley and Cooke heap ridicule on Pope's

seemingly unrealistic depiction of this ancient heroic figure. Although they portray her as an independent woman in control of her environment, they also depict her single-mindedness as evidence of stupidity and unreasonableness.

Mottley had already begun work on the piece before Cooke had joined him. By that time, Cooke had gained a respectable reputation as the translator of Hesiod. However, the careers of both men suffered immensely after *Penelope* made its debut, for they took on a powerful foe when they mocked Pope, who recognized quickly that these men were attacking his talent. Soon after, Pope got revenge on Cooke by humiliating him in *The Dunciad*, a satirical work that ridiculed dull writers of his time. Pope's complaints are not necessarily unfounded, for the way in which Mottley and Cooke interpret Homer's work, even in jest, veers as far from its spirit as they claim Pope's version to be. Although we can find much proof of Mottley and Cooke's disdain for Pope's work in *Penelope*, one of the most notable pieces of evidence that affects our reading of the title character is the form Mottley and Cooke took for their ballad opera: In response to Pope's heroic couplets, Mottley and Cooke wrote *Penelope* as a mock heroic. Therefore, not only Pope's work but the fact that he treats her so seriously comes under attack in their work.

In their preface to the opera, Mottley and Cooke explain the philosophical framework that defines their response to the *Odyssey*. First, they tell us that they portray Ulysses as a sergeant of the Grenadiers and Penelope as the landlady of the alehouse because they want to turn attention to the poor and working class of England. They are quick to point out that they were not attacking Royalty—which they may have been accused of doing since they were holding up Homer's noble couple for mockery. Furthermore, they argue that Homer would approve of their version of the story because it remains faithful to his intention to entertain. Turning to Aristotle to shore up this claim, they remind us that Aristotle had proclaimed *The Iliad* to be the model of tragedy and the *Odyssey*, the model of comedy. For them, Homer is also the father of farce.

To be honest, we can find farcical elements in Homer's work. Odysseus's wailing at the Phaiakian banquet in *Ody.* 8.522-535 amounts to "physical buffoonery" (ὡς δὲ γυνὴ κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσοῦσα. . .)[42] and his linguistic and physical trickery of Polyphemos in Book 9 exemplifies broad humor.[43] Furthermore, some of the situations that Odysseus and others find themselves in appear unrealistic. That Odysseus and Telemachos overcome so many suitors in Book 22 does seem like hyperbole. In fact, Mottley and Cooke focus primarily on the last of these three features of farce. According to their reading of the story, that Penelope remained chaste for the twenty years her husband was away only underscores the farcical qualities of Homer's work—which of course Pope missed. Equally silly is that Penelope would have had so many suitors at one time making fools of themselves for so long. Therefore, Pope's serious approach to Penelope emerges as the main reason behind their attack on the poet. To be fair, I should also mention that they were also critical of Pope's dignified depiction of the disguised Odysseus: That a man as noble as Odysseus pretends to be a tramp begs for humor. Likewise, they felt that in Pope's hands Athena appears to be more of a witch than a goddess.[44] However, an attack on Pope's work is not the real focus of their play, for we must keep in mind that *Penelope* is, of course, about Penelope.

While we can't deny the comic element present in various episodes of Homer's *Odyssey*, we do not generally find it in those dealing with Penelope. We must keep in mind, though, that Mottley and Cooke are not ridiculing Homer's poem; instead, they mock Pope's pompous aesthetic that they believe elevates Penelope to unseemly tragic proportions. Lest we forget the "seriousness" with which we should approach the story of Penelope, they subtitle their work *A Dramatic Opera*. The fact that Pope skewered Cooke and not Mottley in the *Dunciad* indicates that he was keenly aware of Cooke's contribution to the collaboration. As I mentioned earlier, Cooke knew ancient Greek through his work with Hesiod and may have read Homer in the original. Familiarity with the story could

have led him to read the text differently than Pope, for it becomes obvious that, for Cooke, Homer's epic held more possibility of humor than Pope cared to depict. However, what Mottley and Cooke find ridiculous in Pope's translation speaks volumes about their own views toward women and chastity. Their incredulity over Penelope's conduct during Odysseus's absence stems from a disbelief that any woman could remain chaste under such dire circumstances *and* be worthy of so much admiration by so many men at one time. Ultimately, they not only attack Pope, but they satirize the notion of good women, for in their story Penelope makes everyone miserable with her virtuous conduct.

In the Prologue of *Penelope* we learn that Penelope, a "chaste" and "brave" (14) woman, has been living a "widow'd life" (15) while her husband is away. Despite her virtue that brought her great fame, they raise some questions about her conduct toward the suitors:

> Oh! ye bright Stars of Love! ye virtuous Fair!
> When you behold our widow'd Wife's Despair,
> When you behold her charming in Distress,
> All beauteous in her Negligence of Dress. . . . (15)

Alluding to Penelope's appearance before the suitors in *Ody.* 18.205-304 (Ὣς φαμένη κατέβαιν' ὑπερώια σιγαλόεντα, οὐκ οἴη. ἅμα τῇ γε καὶ ἀμφίπολοι δῦ ἕποντο . . . . : So she spoke, and made her descent from her shining chamber, not all alone, since two handmaidens went to attend her. . .) Mottley and Cooke suggest that the "matron" may not have been as "chaste" as some have made her out to be:

> When, in Distress, our virtuous Dame appears,
> Her Tresses loose, her Eyes bedew'd with Tears,
> Learn, Oh! ye Fair, learn from our lovely Wife,
> How to Support, with Fame, a widow'd Life. (15)

Thus, she uses her tears and beauty as methods to attain wealth and achieve fame. Right from the start, Mottley and Cooke interpret Penelope's cunning as calculating intelligence bent on fulfilling her desires at the expense of others.

In Act I we learn that Penelope mourns the absence of her husband and rejects all romantic overtures made by the suitors. She complains to her maid Doll, who is reminiscent of Homer's treacherous Melantho, that even heavy drinking does not relieve her pain. In fact, her suffering is so intense that she has lost all desire to keep herself neat and clean. However despite her hard-drinking ways and slatternly appearance, the men still pay court to her. Cleaver the butcher, Thimble the taylor, and Hopkins the parish clerk all hang around her alehouse in the hopes that she will assent to marrying one of them. She outmaneuvers them, though, by weaving on her loom. Like Homer's Penelope, this alehouse owner weaves during the day and unravels her work at night. The suitors, however, present less of a danger to Penelope than her maid, for Doll is pushing Penelope to marry also—for reasons we are not yet clear about (17-23).

Scene ii introduces us to Thimble, the first of the suitors to call upon Penelope. In order to talk to Penelope, Thimble knows he must bribe Doll. Happily he gives her a "silver thimble" to curry favor with her. We get a sense of Thimble's lack of intelligence here, for he has yet to figure out Penelope's trick and does not realize that Doll is in cahoots with Cleaver. Furthermore, even though he has given Doll a gift, she does not give him good instructions about where to find her mistress. Ambiguously, Doll directs him to "the Bar, or the Room behind" (24-25). Thus, he knows less about Penelope's whereabouts after bribing Doll than he did before he gave her a gift. In Scene iii we meet the second suitor, Hopkins. If Thimble is dull-witted, then Hopkins is just plain naive. To Doll he speaks of the "tears" and "sorrow" he feels over Penelope. Presenting the maid with a Bible, he invites her to attend his Church services, not so much to save her soul but because she seems like a church-going person. Like Thimble, Hopkins has absolutely no

idea of the kind of woman he is dealing with. Not being able to size up Doll leads us to see that neither of these suitors are man enough for a woman described as intelligent. In the last scene we are introduced to Cleaver, who plots with Doll against Penelope. With Doll's help, he plans to marry Penelope, kill her and take her money, then marry Doll. Thus we learn that Cleaver is wooing Penelope for her wealth and not for her intelligence, goodness, and beauty (28-31).

Mottley and Cooke suggest then that the suitors from Homer's story were not necessarily smitten by Penelope's charms, as many had believed. That Penelope has no knowledge that Doll is accepting bribes from the men and is plotting her death makes us aware that she is not as smart as she is made out to be. Portraying Penelope as something less than circumspect is but one way Mottley and Cooke deviate from Homer's text: The death plot directed at Telemachus in the *Odyssey* is shifted instead to Penelope in Mottley and Cooke's version.

Act II opens with Ulysses, a worn out soldier from the wars, returning home to the alehouse. Disguised in beggar's clothes, he shows up at the door asking for food. Commenting to Doll that he had lived a better life than he is currently living, Doll mocks him and sends him away to beg elsewhere. The interchange between Ulysses and Doll results in Telemachus's intervention. The young man feels pity for the beggar and invites him in. Calling out to his son, Ulysses quickly discloses his true identity to Telemachus by revealing the "mole" upon the young man's toe. Ulysses tells Telemachus that he wants to remain *incognito* in order to test his wife's "Faith" and to outwit the suitors. Later in scene v, the disguised Ulysses approaches Penelope—who has been sitting in her room writing a letter to him—with a story of her lost husband. Excited at first to hear news of her husband, she later becomes outraged when she hears that Ulysses has been living with

Circe rather than coming home to her. Her tears move Ulysses to the point that he almost reveals his identity to her, but he manages to hold back. In the song that follows he swears to himself that they will never "part again" (32-44).

The major points found in the *Odyssey*, Books 16-19—the reunion between Odysseus and Telemachos, Odysseus's return to the palace disguised at the beggar, and his interview with Penelope—all find their way into Mottley and Cooke's play. However Act II condenses the action and reduces Penelope's importance to the plot. First, in *Ody.* 18.215-225 it is Penelope who gives the stranger shelter and chides Telemachus for his lack of hospitality. Mottley and Cooke also associate Telemachus with some of the most important episodes that had belonged to Penelope in the *Odyssey*. When Ulysses reveals his identity to Telemachus, for example, his doubting son requires a sign from the stranger (the mole on his toe) that indicates the man's true identity. Thus, the σήμαθ' or "signs" that Penelope and Odysseus discuss in *Ody.* 23.105 become the link between father and son in *Penelope*. As we will see later, Mottley and Cooke's Penelope requires no such proof of Ulysses's identity. In fact, they take the stance that Ulysses remains in disguise to test Penelope, indicating he does not trust her. Although Homer leaves Odysseus's motives for disguising himself in the palace ambiguous, Mottley and Cooke's work leaves no room for interpretation. The suggestion here, of course, is that Penelope may not be as chaste as she is made out to be, and in order to be certain, Ulysses must find out through trickery. Lastly, Mottley and Cooke's Penelope becomes jealous of Ulysses's relationship with Circe. As we know from the *Odyssey*, Penelope does not learn about Circe during her interview with the beggar. Furthermore, when she and Odysseus share their stories, Penelope does not appear to be upset in any way when he mentions Circe's name. By portraying Penelope as jealous, Mottley and Cooke reduce her to pettiness.

In the last act Penelope invites the stranger to remain with her at the alehouse. Ulysses thanks her and pays homage to her "virtue:"

How few, alas! the Wives of high Degree,
Who live to Rules of Abstinece like Thee!
For twenty years can keep their nuptial Vows,
And present Lovers flight for absent Spouse!
You mind your household Cares, attend your Trade,
Nor ever think upon the Masquerade,
Oblige your Customers, can make a Bill,
And waste no Time at Ombre or Quadrille. (45-46)

In effect what he is intimating here is that women from the upper class waste their time with adulterous affairs and frivolous activities, like dancing. This common woman demonstrates far better wisdom because she keeps her mind focused on her business and her family. Considering that Homer's Penelope was indeed a queen and hence from the upper class suggests that Mottley and Cooke are not only attacking elite women of their period but the serious approach that Pope takes with Homer's Penelope. That a rich woman could avoid the temptations lurking at court is unconceivable. Therefore, the situation Homer puts Penelope in—that is, the long length of time that Ulysses is away and her unsure marital status—is supposed to be comical.

In Scene ii the suitors taunt Ulysses, calling him a "Conj'rer" due to his wild appearance. This insult alludes to the way Mottley and Cooke view Pope's treatment of Athena, which they claim depicts her as more witch-like than divine. In a obvious mockery of Pope's version of *Ody.* 13. 291-310 (κερδαλέος κ' εἴη καὶ ἐπίκλοπος ὅς σε παρέλθοι. . . : It would be a sharp one, and a stealthy one, who would ever get past you in any contriving. . .) in which Athena lauds Ulysses for having powers of invention just like her, their Minerva disguises Ulysses as a sorceror, an identity more closely related to a witch. The scene ends with the four men challenging each other for Penelope's hand in marriage (46-48).

In the meantime Minerva shows up to help Penelope. Besides being a sorceress, she is also a sot: She spends time at Penelope's alehouse because she can't find beer as good at the Royal Oak on Mt. Olympus. When the fighting breaks out, Minerva stays with the frightened Penelope. In fact, we learn from the goddess that it was she who "guarded" Penelope's "Honour" while Ulysses was away. Thus, in Mottley and Cooke's version, Penelope's moral character was not responsible for her chastity, but Minerva's magical powers. When Minerva discloses the true identity of the beggar, Penelope accepts this as truth without hesitation. Mottley and Cooke intimate that part of the reason she is in such a hurry to believe the goddess is that she cannot contain her sexual desire any longer—she has become, finally, "impatient." And her impatience is focused on sexual satisfaction. After a long fistfight, the suitors are driven out of the alehouse, and Penelope leaps into Ulysses's arms. The opera ends with the two lovers dancing in the hay and planning their "second wedding" (48-60).

Mottley and Cooke drastically change the episodes that define Books 19-23 of the *Odyssey*. First, unlike Homer's Penelope in *Ody*. 19. 576-580, Mottley and Cooke's does not suggest the contest of the bow; they credit the suitors for devising the famous challenge that will decide whom Penelope will marry. Also, in their version Penelope is not visited in her dreams by a wise goddess; in *Penelope* she is frightened out of her wits by a drunk Minerva who offers little in the way of good advice. In fact, both women drink heavily together while they wait out the fighting. Portraying Penelope as a lush undermines Pope's respectful treatment of her, but it also subverts Homer's depiction of her as well. Far from being circumspect and sensible, their Penelope behaves erratically, as seen in the way she spills her drink down her apron. Furthermore, that Minerva had to intervene to keep Penelope faithful to Ulysses suggests that Penelope could not possibly have done this on her own. In fact, after Minerva announces that the stranger is Ulysses, Penelope cannot contain her desire to have sex with him. What Mottley and Cooke hint at

here is that it takes supernatural powers for a woman to behave virtuously, especially one who is left alone for such a length of time. Lastly, Mottley and Cooke's Ulysses says he owes his life to Minerva. Missing from this version is the idea that Penelope played a big role in her husband's return.

In the ballad opera, then, Penelope is chaste and good only because Minerva makes her so. Although she rejects the suitors and keeps the alehouse running smoothly without the assistance of any men, she drinks to excess and spends her time crying. Smart enough to run a business, she is foolish in the ways of the world. She does not know that Doll and Cleaver are plotting her death and that Cleaver really does not love her. Although we are missing the trick of the bed that defines Penelope's great cunning, Mottley and Cooke do include the trick of the loom, though not much importance is placed upon it. Thus, the Penelope that Mottley and Cooke present is not as intelligent as Homer's and lacks the cunning and virtue that brought her great κλέος, or "fame."[45] In fact, their Penelope gains more notoriety than fame. Their treatment of Penelope subverts any notion that she possesses a heroic nature.

Neo-Classic Art, Heroism, and Penelope

In the mid-1700's many visual artists returned to the simplicity of classical principles, redirecting their energies to symmetry and linearity. Thus, neo-classicism arose out of a response to Rococo, a decorative style of the late Baroque period featuring asymmetrical designs and curved forms. For the most part, artists based their subject matter upon grand heroic themes found in classical history.[46] Epitomizing the Neo-Classic style, then, are such works as Gavin Hamilton's *Oath of Brutus* (1763), Jean-Baptiste Greuze's *Septimius Severus Reproaching His Son Caracalla for Having Made an Attempt on His Life in the Defiles of Scotland* (1769), and Jacques-Louis David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1784-85).

Looking specifically at Greuze's works, Albert Boime, in *Art in an Age of Revolution, 1750-1800*, sheds some light on the general notions underlying Neo-Classic art. He points to the "the masculine emphasis and the themes of devotion to patriarchal authority" found in works from this period.[47] In fact, he tells us that after the Seven Years War the English aristocracy, who were commissioning works from artists like Benjamin West and Angelica Kauffman, identified with the Greek heroes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[48] More and more they preferred works of art that emphasized qualities characterized by Achilles and Odysseus, as well as other Greco-Roman figures of legend and myth. The focus on heroism during the Neo-Classic period extended to both genders. Painters and Sculptors also explored women's heroic nature in their art. It should come as no surprise that a female artist like Angelica Kauffman, considered to be one of the leaders of English neo-classicism, would be interested in Penelope's heroism.

Angelica Kauffman

Of all the artists working at the end of the 18th Century, Angelica Kauffman is one of the most provocative ones to discuss. First, she was fascinated by Homer's Penelope, having painted her more than any other figure from Greco-Roman myth and legend. In fact, she paints eight scenes depicting Penelope from various episodes of the *Odyssey*. Secondly, as an artist Kauffman received much acclaim at a time when few women were able to make a living as painters. Therefore, as a female artist who is highly intrigued by this legendary figure, she brings to the canvas a different perspective of Penelope than the male artists who have painted her. The fact that Kauffman appears to be the only *female* artist who has ever painted Penelope also generates interest, for it raises questions concerning the way Penelope has been neglected by female artists of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Lastly, because she worked at the end of the 18th Century, her style and

worldview embrace those prevalent during the period of time that we call neo-classical; in fact, she is considered to be one of the two foremost painters working in this style in England during this time.

That Penelope appears frequently in Kauffman's work and is presented as a courageous and enterprising woman indicates that Kauffman regarded Penelope as a heroic figure worthy of admiration. And the fact that Penelope's heroic conduct is found in activities particular to women intimates that, for Kauffman, femininity does not preclude women from being considered heroic. Unlike Monteverdi, Kauffman does not have to couch Penelope's heroism in religious symbolism or link her to religious figures in order to demonstrate her power. Furthermore, what Mottley and Cooke may have viewed as weak and ineffectual traits in women, Kauffman holds up as the epitome of the female heroic ethos.

It is interesting to note that Kauffman may have felt some kinship with Penelope, for she herself found great fame without sacrificing her femininity. Born in 1741 in an area of the Swiss Tyrol, Angelica Kauffman began her career as a painter as a young girl. The early death of her mother left Kauffman under the sole care of her father, a portrait painter and muralist who encouraged his daughter to study art. Together they traveled extensively throughout Europe. With the exception of the fifteen years she spent in England during the mid-1700's, she and her father lived primarily in Italy. While a young woman in Rome she met collectors and other artists, such as Abbé Winckleman, Benjamin West, Gavin Hamilton, and Raphael Mengs.[49] She was especially influenced by the Neo-Classic style introduced by Hamilton and Mengs. Her biggest advantage during these early years was that she could communicate with most of the artists working at the time. Her knowledge of multiple languages and her training, not to mention her gender and beauty, allowed her

access to the many artistic and cultural camps that were emerging in Rome. From this fluidity of movement, Kauffman came into contact with various artistic styles and theories, some of which were later responsible for her wide popularity.[50]

Although Italy played a great role in developing Kauffman's style, it was England where she made a name for herself as an artist.[51] There she came to the notice of Joshua Reynolds, who introduced her to influential artists and collectors. Her eventual entry into the Royal Academy of Art in 1768 signifies a major feat for the time.[52] At the first exhibition of the Academy, Kauffman showed only historical works that brought her great acclaim and set her apart from the many other artists who showed only portraits and landscapes. The neo-classicism she subscribed to in these canvases set the trend for art in England for years to come.

Although she was one of the most important artists working in England at this time, Kauffman's reputation suffered greatly among the art critics of the 19th Century. Although some of the complaints about her work—that she did not produce enough "serious" art and that her male figures were too effeminate[53]—may have been warranted, we must keep in mind the professional and personal limitations she faced. First, despite the fact she preferred painting large historical scenes, her financial constraints required her to spend much of her talent painting portraits and working in the decorative arts, which were far more lucrative.[54] Secondly, because she was not allowed to study the male nude, she had to draw upon her own insights into the principles for executing the male form. It is very ironic that the woman who had been a member of the Accademia di S. Luca, a founding member of the Royal Academy, friend to Goethe, West, Reynolds, enjoyed the patronage of Joseph II of Austria and other members of the nobility of Europe, and whose funeral rivalled even Raphael's for its pomp, was relatively ignored from the 19th Century until the late 1960's.

As I have shown previously, themes of female heroic conduct began to appear during the Baroque period. However, portraying strong female characters had not necessarily become the norm among visual artists of the Neo-Classic period. The women in Greuze's paintings, for example, are depicted as "passive characters, dependent and often simpering."[55] Yet Kauffman, a young, attractive woman emerging as one of England's best artists, chose to paint scenes of the *Odyssey* in which Penelope is the focal point of the action and considered to be pivotal to the story. Like the paintings of male artists of the period depicting Severus, Brutus, or the Horatii, Kauffman's historical paintings of Penelope are heroic in nature. Therefore, instead of featuring only male figures actively performing great deeds, Kauffman expands her palette to include Penelope quietly orchestrating the events that ensure safety for herself and her family and taking steps that will assist in the return of her husband.

In her essay "Kauffman and the Art of Painting in England," Wendy Wassyng Roworth comments upon Kauffman and her interest in Penelope:

> . . .This subject was extremely rare in painting. Unlike the more frequently portrayed classical heroines, such as Lucretia, Virginia, Iphigenia, Polyxena, Araidne, Cleopatra or Andromache, Penelope is not a passive victim, an abandoned maiden or a grief-stricken suicide. Nor is the subject suitable for the rather erotic representations of bare-breasted female victims so popular in the seventeenth century. Penelope is the ideal married woman and mother: patient and faithful, gifted by Athena herself with a talent for womanly handicraft and a clever, crafty mind. It is not surprising that a young female painter with artistic skills, intelligence and wit would exploit the image of Penelope, who was so rarely depicted in art. Penelope, like so many other females in Classical

> literature, may weep and mourn, yet her perseverance and cunning allowed a more positive interpretation of female virtue and strength. Protected by Athena, the chaste warrior goddess of wisdom and the arts, Penelope provided a suitable character through which Kauffman could advertise her talents.[56]

Thus for Kauffman, Penelope possesses qualities associated primarily with women—that is, patience, craftiness, and sensitivity. Furthermore, she is endowed with those attributes particular to virtuous women, modesty and faithfulness. Rather than ridiculing her or ignoring her for these traits, Kauffman holds them up as worthy of emulation and honor.

For the most part, Kauffman turned to three sources for her portrayal of Penelope. First, she drew from a book popular at the time, Comte de Caylus's *Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, de l'Odyssée d'Homère et de l'Enéide de Vergile*. This text delineated parts of Greek and Roman epics in order to discuss theories of narrative action.[57] According to Roworth, she was also influenced by Shaftesbury's theory, prevalent at the time, that "the viewer [should be made aware] of the presence of absent loved ones through symbolic attributes. . .when they cannot include all sequential events in the single scene."[58] The third book Kauffman used was Homer's *Odyssey*. Looking at the detail found in the Penelope paintings, it becomes obvious that she relied upon the text to guide her.[59] Thus, for the theoretical notions underlying her art, Kauffman turned to Caylus and Shaftesbury; for the detail of the scenes, the poet himself.

Penelope at Her Loom

The first of many Penelopes that Kauffman painted is *Penelope at Her Loom*.[60] Completed in 1764 while Kauffman was working in Rome, it began a trend that would continue for the rest of her life—that is, painting Penelope. Looking at the canvas, we see Penelope sitting alone in a stately room with her back to an open window. Missing from

the picture is the loom, for it is stationed in front of Penelope out of our sight. With melancholy and despair, Penelope gazes away from the loom. On the floor at her feet lie her dog, Argos, and Odysseus's bow. We can tell from Argos's sad eyes that he too suffers from the loss of Odysseus. His right paw rests upon the bow as if by touching it he can touch Odysseus. Although Kauffman portrays Penelope as beautiful, she does not present her provocatively arrayed or overly youthful. She remains as she is described in the *Odyssey* —a matron, the wife of Odysseus and mother of Telemachos.

In this painting Kauffman captures the spirit of Penelope found in *Ody.* 2.93-95 (ἡ δὲ δόλον τόνδ' ἄλλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμήριξε. . . : And here is another strategem of her heart's devising. . .) and in *Ody.* 19.516-517 (. . .πυκιναὶ δέ μοι ἀμφ' ἀδινὸν κῆρ ὀξεῖαι μελεδῶνες ὀδυρομένῃσιν ἐρέθουσιν. : I lie on my bed, and the sharp anxieties swarming thick and fast on my beating heart torment my sorrowing self.). Alone in her chamber in front of her loom, Penelope secretly unravels the shroud of Laertes in order to delay an unwanted marriage. Her thoughts torment her and she feels sorrow over Odysseus's absence. Likewise, we feel this hopelessness in Kauffman's Penelope. She does not weave on the loom, denoting that she no longer believes it matters anymore that she postpone the inevitable marriage—Odysseus will not return. Sitting away from the window, Penelope no longer searches for signs of his ship on the water. His bow, which represents Odysseus, lies carelessly on the floor of her room because he will not need it anymore. Penelope's despair is written in the gloom that pervades the entire canvas.[61]

Penelope's femininity is obvious in Kauffman's painting. First and foremost, we notice the space where she resides: alone *inside* a room of her palace. That she is confined throughout the *Odyssey* in the palace, never leaving the interior of the building, is indicative of her role as wife and mother. As Nancy Tuana points out in *The Less Noble Sex*,

> One of the striking features of the history of political theory is the general concurrence on the 'proper' roles of woman. With centuries of scientific theories documenting woman's inferiority, and powerful theological warnings of her dangers, this agreement is hardly surprising. Like Locke, many political theorists accepted such beliefs as axioms upon which they developed their ideas. Upon these foundations, they constructed conclusions that can be traced throughout the history of political theory: woman's activities are to be limited to the private realm of home and family and are to be governed by man.[62]

Thus, according to Tuana, women's proper place has traditionally been within the home under the control of men. The underlying tone here is that in this space woman is both passive and powerless. The activities that women participated in that took place in this interior space have been underrated by men but also understandably reviled by contemporary women seeking to carve out a better power base for themselves.

Although we find Kauffman's Penelope grieving alone in her room, she is far from weak and ineffectual, for she has been engaged in a trick that has managed to safeguard the life of Telemachus and to deter her marriage to one of the suitors. That she had outwitted the men for so long is testament to her strength. Therefore, Kauffman's Penelope may be *hope*less, but she is far from *help*less. Her power lies not in physical prowess but in more important areas: intellectual preeminence and "resistance."[63] Despite the constraints that may be placed upon her due to her femininity, she emerges in Kauffman's work as a heroic figure. That it was engraved later by Ryland in 1777 and named *Perseverance*[64] further demonstrates that others were quite aware of the heroic ethos of the character of Penelope. It stands to reason that Kauffman would raise Penelope's status in her art: As a woman

who kept the creditors at bay and cared for her husband and father by her talent with a paintbrush, Kauffman resembles Penelope, who with her loom endured even more challenging tests of strength.

Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses

The second painting of Kauffman's Penelope series is Penelope *Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses* (1768).[65] Exhibited at the first exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1769, it had first been shown earlier at the Society of Artists exhibition in honor of King Christian VII. By this time, Kauffman had moved to England and was building a successful career as an artist. There is much conjecture as to how large a part her close friendship with Reynolds played in her success during this time. Though there is little doubt that Reynolds held her in high regard and may have been in love with her, Kauffman's reputation was derived from her own talent for painting and pleasing her clients.[66] The four paintings that she showed at the 1769 [67] exhibition caused a sensation due to their unique subject matter. As I mentioned previously, all were based on classical themes that focused on the Greek and Trojan legends.[68] With the exception of Benjamin West's *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* and Kauffman's works, most of the other paintings shown at the exhibit were portraits and landscapes. As Walch points out, the paintings "placed her right alongside Benjamin West as one of the two leading painters of classical history then in London."[69]

Of the four paintings exhibited at the show, *Penelope Taking the Bow of Ulysses* is the only one that deals primarily with the *Odyssey* and is the only one that focuses primarily on a female character. Based on *Odyssey* 21.42-62 ('Η δ' ὅτε δὴ θάλαμον τὸν ἀφίκετο δῖα γυναικῶν οὔδον τε δρύινον προσεβήσετο. . . : When she shining among women, had come to the chamber, and had come up to the oaken threshold. . .), we find Penelope majestically reaching up to the bow hanging on the wall of the storeroom.

Crouching below her is one of her attendants arranging the arrows in their quiver. Our eyes focus on Penelope's face and hands, awash in light among the shadowy features of the bow and her maid.

As in her first Penelope painting, Kauffman once again draws from Caylus's text. What is significant about *Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses* is that it presents a scene no one before has ever painted before in Western tradition. Following Shaftesbury's advice Kauffman uses the bow to represent the absent Odysseus, just as she did in *Penelope at the Loom*.[70] Thus, when Penelope touches the bow submerged in the dark shadow, she, in effect, touches her husband who may or may not be present in the great hall in the guise of the stranger. Penelope's face and hands are well lit, signifying the hope she holds for the competition—and perhaps even the revelation that Odysseus is indeed present and will win the contest. Because the bow contest is a collaboration between Athene, the goddess of weaving and strategies, and cunning Penelope, the focus on Penelope's hands makes sense here. Though no longer busy at the loom with her trickery, her clever hands are engaged in yet another scheme to bring down the slow-witted suitors.

Manners and Williamson intimate that the criticism Kauffman received for *The Interview of Hector and Andromache* also lends itself to the Penelope painting. One critic commenting on the works remarked, "'The defects in her method are in my opinion, counterbalanced by the many beauties of thought and feeling with which her work is permeated.'" He goes onto say, "'She shows great wisdom in her choice of a subject. . . . Her composition is full of grace, and the figures have the quiet dignity of the Greek models. Her women are most womanly, modest and loving, and she conveys with much art the proper relation between the sexes, the dependence of the weaker on the stronger, which appeals very much to her masculine critics'"[71] This may well be true because according to Roworth, John Parker, a friend of Joshua Reynolds, bought all four of

Kauffman's works, thus bringing her much critical and financial success. Having just inherited Saltram Park at this time, Parker was in the process of decorating it. It is believed that Kauffman's paintings were commissioned specifically for this estate.[72] Walch makes this comment about Kauffman's work from the 1769 exhibition: "Moreover, the subjects of these paintings are well suited to her talents, as none calls for overly dramatic or overly masculine treatment that would have been quite beyond her capabilities at this or any other time." He also mentions the "stoicism" found in Penelope's demeanor.[73]

Kauffman's predilection for painting Penelope may reflect her understanding of herself as a Penelope figure, for she too exudes cunning intelligence. Just as Penelope knew how to handle the suitors, Kauffman was well aware how to deal with those who could make or break her career. The critics are right. It is true that Kauffman does not shy away from emphasizing Penelope's femininity by portraying her as beautiful, modest, loving, and unmasculine. However, rather than seeing these attributes as a sign of her weakness as a woman, she portrays them as evidence of her heroism. Furthermore, Penelope emerges in this painting as courageous and determined, which are generally regarded as masculine qualities. Her active participation in the contest undermines any attempt to view her as passive and weak, or to divorce these traits from the feminine nature.

Penelope Weeping Over the Bow of Ulysses

I should mention here that Kauffman painted a continuation of this scene approximately seven years later. Commissioned by Lord Exeter for Burghley House, *Penelope Weeping over the Bow of Ulysses* [74] was executed between 1775 and 1778.[75] A rather obscure painting, little has been written about it and the image available is small and in black and white.

Taken from *Ody* . 21. 53-56 (ἔνθεν ὀρεξαμένη ἀπὸ πασσάλου αἴνυτο τόξον. . . : From there she reached, and took the bow from its peg. . .) this scene shows

Penelope seated, holding Ulysses's bow. It is obvious that she has already removed the bow from its place on the wall. Now, it rests in her lap as she cries over it. Her head is turned downward signifying her sorrow. Alone, she allows herself a moment to grieve for her husband, who may not come in time to stop the suitors. That Kauffman does not begrudge Penelope her tears indicates that it is not shameful for women to cry. It is not a sign of weakness to feel sorrow and to allow oneself to express pain, for Penelope does not indulge herself for long. As we know, she returns to the great hall to begin the contest. In his commentary on Kauffman's work, Walch refers to Penelope's stoicism,[76] demonstrated by her ability to continue with her task despite her suffering.

At the heart of this painting is Penelope's emotional outburst. As Kauffman shows us, Penelope cries for a good reason. She is at the brink of ruin. The bow contest is a last ditch effort she has concocted to save herself from the suitors. Unless Ulysses comes

now, she may not have any other option but to marry one of these men. The hope and revelation that glowed in her face in the previous painting is now missing from this one. Penelope is feeling crushed by a fate she cannot control.

It is interesting to note that in 1767 Kauffman was involved in a scandal that almost destroyed her reputation. Swept off her feet by a man posing as a Swedish nobleman, Kauffman realized too late that he was a fraud. By that time she had married the man, who was, in truth an already-married valet, taking the guise of his master. When his ruse was discovered, he kidnapped Kauffman and ransomed her to her father. Later, Kauffman was able to buy him off and he disappeared. Her marital position in question, Kauffman could not marry again until his death, which came shortly after in 1780. During the time of her "ill-fated romance" and the subsequent gossip Kauffman managed to continue painting and to get commissions. Although the taint of scandal followed long after his death, she lost no work and few friends.[77] Like Penelope, she endured.

Penelope Invoking Minerva's Aid for the Safe Return of Telemachus

Five years after the success of *Penelope Taking Down the Bow* and the other works from the 1769 exhibition, Kauffman executed her third Penelope painting. This one, *Penelope Invoking Minerva's Aid for the Safe Return of Telemachus*,[78] was shown in the 1774 exhibit at the Royal Academy. Based on the action taking place in *Ody*. 4. 762-769 ('Κλῦθί μεν, αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος, ἀτρυτώνη. . . : Hear me, Atrytone, child of Zeus of the aegis. . .), we find Penelope pleading to Minerva for her help in stopping the suitors's plans to ambush Telemachus's ship. Some scholars claim that her friend, Frances Anne Hoare, posed as Penelope for this picture. However, as Roworth points out, the disparity between the features Kauffman gives Penelope and the portrait Kauffman painted of Frances Hoare at Stourhead makes this impossible.[79]

Following Homer's text, Penelope and her maidservants beseech Athene. In the hands of one of the attendants is a container holding the barley grains they offer to the goddess. Kauffman includes in her painting a statue of Athene to signify her presence in the scene. With her hand raised, Penelope looks up at the goddess, who in turn gazes down on Penelope. Once again, Penelope is awash in light, demonstrating that the goddess listens to her entreaty and will guard over Telemachus.

Although Penelope herself is not able to single-handedly take on the suitors who plot against her son, she knows how to go about thwarting their efforts. By asking for Athene's help, she places her well-being in the hands of someone else more capable of dealing with these men than she. As in the previous painting, we are compelled to look at Penelope's hands, which motion both up to the goddess and down toward the floor of the room. When looking at them, we are reminded of what connects the two women: As the goddess of weaving and strategies, Athene certainly would certainly favor Penelope, a woman who weaves a plot to outwit the suitors. That the goddess hears Penelope on this

occasion and watches over her throughout the *Odyssey* is indicative of Penelope's worth, for Athene has made it clear that that she respects only those mortals who are cunning and wise.[80]

Like Penelope, Kauffman relied on her hands for her art, as well as for her artifice. According to Roworth, *The London Chronicle* had this to say about Kauffman and her ability to create:

> This Artist, considering her sex, is certainly possessed of very great merit. She is endued with that bold and daring genius which leads her to employ her pencil upon historical paintings which are much superior to portraits and landscapes as an epic poem is to a pastoral, or a tragedy to a farce.[81]

Thus, with her art Kauffman devises her own shroud that epitomizes her brilliance and cleverness. That she outclassed most of the male artists of her time demonstrates that she could stand up to the challenges that faced her as one woman among so many men. This point is borne out when we consider that most comments made about Kauffman often express surprise at a woman's ability to carry out the large themes required by history painting.

The Return of Telemachus

As in the paintings of Penelope with Ulysses's bow, Kauffman painted a continuation of *Penelope Invoking Minerva's Aid for the Safe Return of Telemachus*. This painting, entitled *The Return of Telemachus* ,[82] was exhibited in 1775. Edward Stanley, 11th Earl of Derby commissioned this work, along with *Andromache Fainting at the Unexpected Sight of Aeneas on his Arrival in Epirus*, for his London house. Intended as an "overdoor"—that is, a pediment over a doorway—this work is "wide, horizontal format, with figures arranged across the picture plane within a shallow place."[83] It is only one of

four decorative works authenticated as Kauffman's work. Most of what is attributed to her are simply copies and were reproduced, which is a testament to her popularity as a decorative artist.[84]

Kauffman deviates only slightly from the action found in *Ody.* 17. 31-39 (Tὸν δὲ πολὺ πρώτη εἶδε τροφὸς Εὐρύκλεια. . . : Far the first to see him was his nurse Eurykleia. . .). As we see from the picture, having just run down the flight of steps, Penelope embraces Telemachus, who has just returned safely from his journey. Penelope's face and body overshadows Telemachus's, who seems more like an adolescent than a young man who has come of age. An old woman, apparently Euryclea rushes from behind him. Her joy cannot be contained, for she has thrown her arms above her head in an obvious gesture of happiness and disbelief. Four others servants remain behind Euryclea, each motioning toward Penelope and Telemachus. That they do not run to greet him signifies their fear of his return and their obvious displeasure over the failure of the suitors's plan to kill him. The tenderness displayed among mother, son, and nurse, then is juxtaposed against the action of the maidservants who have been plotting with the suitors's against Penelope's family.

Manners and Williamson point out that "the picture is tamely painted with strong local colours on the various dresses."[85] Walch seems to be in agreement that it is more subdued than many of the rest of Kaufmann's paintings. He says that it is "not exactly heroic in tone [it is] at least iconographically adventuresome."[86] Keeping in mind the size of the work (2'2" x 5'4") and the location it was designed for, a grander painting may have not been appropriate. But I disagree that the work lacks a heroic theme. The presence of the anxious servant women is a reminder of the dangers that still await Penelope. This happy moment that she and Telemachus share is only temporary, for soon the suitors will

be back at the palace even more rapacious than before. With their plot to kill Telemachus out in the open, very little will contain them. She will need a far better trick to outwit them the next time.

The Parting of Ulysses and Penelope, Penelope at Work, and *Penelope Awakened by Euryclea with the News of Ulysses's Return*

The three additional Penelope paintings that Kauffman executed, *The Parting of Ulysses and Penelope, Penelope at Work,* and *Penelope Awakened by Euryclea with the News of Ulysses's Return*, are obscure works. In the case of the first two pictures, the images are not available for viewing, and in the case of the latter, little information can be found on its background. However, I would like to include a brief discussion about them using the materials that are available.

The first of these, *The Parting of Ulysses and Penelope* (1775), [87] belongs to the collection of the Earl of Derby in Knowsley. Manners and Williamson describe it in this way:

> On the extreme right is a circular altar adorned with blue fillets and branches, with a Greek word inscribed on a medallion in front. A bearded warrior with clasped hands approaches and gazes with an expression of great solicitude upon a matronly female, seated in a fainting state, upon a chair, and two women attend the fainting lady. The golden sacrificial vessels stand on the ground between the group of females and the altar. Sharf states that the composition is far superior to, and much more effectively coloured than, the companion picture . . . but he is uncertain respecting its actual subject. 2 ft. 2 in. X 5 ft. 4 in.[88]

We can cull some details about this work from this commentary. First, as the title says, the action takes place between Penelope and Odysseus, who is about to leave. The observation

on Penelope's matronly features intimates that this departure occurs after Odysseus has returned to Ithaka and that it is referring to his last journey. Penelope faints because she must once again experience the loss of her husband who has already been gone for twenty years of their marriage.

Penelope at Work [89] was created in 1782 for Sir William Hamilton, the British Ambassador to the court of Naples. After the death of her father, Kauffman returned to Rome for a short visit, then moved on to Naples for five months. Because Hamilton was a renowned collector of Greek vases, Kauffman's visit to the Hamilton home resulted in this painting inspired by one of the vases he had in his collection.[90] The painting, described as a large oval (2 x 1'7") piece, features Penelope and two female assistants working at the loom.[91] Like *Penelope at the Loom* executed eleven years earlier, it refers to the trick that Penelope played on the suitors found in *Ody.* 2.93-95.

The last of these, *Penelope Awakened by Euryclea with the News of Ulysses's Return*,[92] alludes to that moment in *Ody.* 23. 1-9 (Γρηὺς δ' εἰς ὑπερῷ' ἀνεβήσετο καγχαλόωσα . . . : The old woman laughing loudly went to the upper chamber. . .) when Euryclea goes to Penelope's chamber to alert her to the fact that Odysseus has returned and that he was indeed the stranger. Painted in 1773, it was engraved twice, once by Burke in 1773 and again W.W. Ryland in 1785. Walch tells us that the engraving is damaged; therefore, it is difficult to discern some of the objects clearly.[93]

Asleep in her bed, Penelope is turned on her side so that we can observe her resting peacefully. Gone are the tears she has wept and the anxious look on her face. Euryclea approaches her. Reaching out to her mistress, she touches her lightly on her shoulder. Euryclea's right hand clutches her breast as if in relief. The background of the painting is dark, as is Euryclea's dress and the bed on which Penelope lies. Only Penelope's body

and the back of the nurse emerge from the shadows. Although it is hard to make out many of the objects found in the image, Walch tells us that in the picture there are coals smoking on the brazier, a burning torch, and statue of Athene.[94]

From the way Kauffman depicts this scene, it is obvious that Penelope is already dreaming about her husband's return. That she has lost the fretful look on her face and relaxes easily on her bed indicates that she senses his presence in the palace. The loving look on Euryclea's face suggests that she gladly bears the news to her mistress. The smoldering coals suggest the death of the fiery suitors, whom Odysseus has just slain. As we remember from *Penelope Invoking Minerva's Aid*, Kauffman includes a statue of Athene to indicate the goddess's presence in the scene. Besides showing great favor to Penelope, with whom she shares many traits, Athene has also brought Odysseus safely home and has helped him defeat the men who had overrun his home.

Walch mentions that Kauffman's Penelope paintings have no precedent. The works are unique in that they depict for the first time scenes from the *Odyssey* that had yet to be highlighted in the visual arts. Furthermore, they are important because they have been copied by other artists working after Kauffman. Most notable is John Flaxman, who derived many of his ideas from Kauffman's canvases.[95] So despite the neglect she suffered, Kauffman did indeed influence generations of artists with her approach to Homer's story, whether she was credited or not for her brilliant insight in the epic.

The Penelope we find in Kauffman's work embodies those qualities generally thought to define femininity. As we have seen, Kauffman views Penelope as enterprising, cunning, modest, beautiful, intuitive, patient, wise, intelligent, loving, clever, and sensitive. However, rather than ridicule Penelope for being "womanly," Kauffman elevates her to heroic proportions. Despite the constraints placed upon Penelope's movements because of her gender, she never appears to be passive or at the mercy of the

suitors. In fact, Kauffman interprets Penelope's actions in staving off the suitors and caring for her home as active deeds, worthy of praise. That a female artist known for her great beauty and talent accords Penelope *mega kleos* makes sense, for Kauffman saw a mirror image of her own life as a woman and an artist when she looked upon Penelope.

Conclusion

At a time when women were pursuing activities outside the home and distant from those traditionally associated with them, Penelope emerges as the epitome of female heroism. Despite the fact that Homer's *Odyssey* is readily available in translation and is relatively inexpensive to purchase, artists during the Baroque and Enlightenment periods still opt to portray Penelope as she has always been. In all of the works that we have examined, Penelope remains chaste and good. Nowhere is she linked with adulterous conduct and questionable behavior. However, the artists of this time begin to view her as the embodiment of the emerging female heroism. In the case of Monteverdi, Penelope represents the Virgin Mary and, so, achieves her heroic status through her position as the Queen of Heaven and co-creator of mankind. It is interesting to note that Monteverdi's Penelope leaves the confines of her home to venture out to the countryside. Thus, she becomes the first Penelope in art associated with the public sphere. On the other hand, Kauffman's Penelope remains within the palace, attending to her duties and responsibilities as mother and queen. But Kauffman does not need to link Penelope to Christian icons in order to elevate her status. The simple fact that she excels in intelligence, courage, and craft entitles her to be considered a hero. That Penelope also possesses other traits more closely associated with women, such as sensitivity, modesty, faithfulness, beauty, and patience does not preclude her from heroism. In fact, these too contribute to the kind of

excellence unique to women. Far from idealizing Penelope, Mottley and Cooke hold her up for ridicule. Disagreeing with Pope's treatment of her in his translation of the *Odyssey*, they make a burlesque of Homer's work, lampooning those traits in Penelope others had so admired.[96]

Chapter 4
Notes

[1] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *The Woman of the Eighteenth Century*, trans. by Jacques LeClerq and Ralph Roeder, quoted from *Women: From the Greeks to the French Revolution*, ed. Susan Groag Bell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973) 243.

[2] Quoted, from *Women*, 246-7.

[3] Vittore Branca, *Boccaccio: The Man and His Works*, trans. Richard Monges (New York: New York University Press, 1976) 113-118. As I mentioned previously in Chapter 2, Leontius Pilatus was invited by Petrarch to Florence in order to teach Greek and translate homeric manuscripts during the mid-1300's. After Pilatus returned to Greece, Boccaccio continued work on editing and organizing the texts.

[4] S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974) 112.

[5] John Winterich, "How This Book Came to Be," *Homer's* Odyssey, trans. Alexander Pope (New York: Heritage Press, 1942) ix.

[6] Winterich, ix.

[7] Anonymous, *Penelope Staving Off Her Violent Suitors*, British Library, London, illus. 30 of *The Allegory of Female Authority: Christine de Pizan's Cité des Dames* by Maureen Quilligan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

[8] Tomlinson, Gary, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 21-28.

[9] Tomlinson, 216. Silke Leopold suggests that because of the discrepancies in the manuscripts, it is difficult to determine how much if any of this libretto is truly Monteverdi's. As I will show in my argument, the opera differs too widely from the then contemporary view regarding the true meaning of love to eliminate Monteverdi's influence entirely from the work. See Silke Leopold, "Ulysses' Return to His Homeland," *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*. Mus. Dir. René Jacobs. Dir. Gilbert Deflo. L'Opéra Montpellier, 1992.

[10] Tomlinson, 216.

[11] David Kimbell, *National Traditions in Opera: Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 124.

[12] Marianne McDonald, "Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*." American Philological Association. Washington D.C., 29 Dec. 1993.

[13] Tomlinson, 216-226.

[14] Tomlinson, 218.

[15] Since Monteverdi participated in the development of the libretto until he liked the final product he would be setting to music for this opera, I should mention early on that I will be referring to the opera as a whole as Monteverdi's work.

[16] Silke Leopold, *Monteverdi: Music in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 22-29. As Leopold mentions, Monteverdi's son had been summoned by the Inquisition, his friend and collaborator Marquis Alessandro Striggio died, and the struggle between Monteverdi and the Gonzaga family had resulted in great mental anguish for the artist.

[17] Tomlinson, 29.

[18] René Jacobs, "On Our Version of *IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA*," *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, by Claudio Monteverdi, mus. dir. René Jacobs, dir. Gilbert Deflo, L'Opéra de Montpellier, 1992. 26-30. He mentions that the "three-act division began to assert itself [after its first production], while the spoken drama preserved its five-act structure."

[19] Jane E. Beat, "Monteverdi and the Opera Orchestra of his Time," *The Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968) 277-301.

[20] Jacobs, 26-30. He mentions that the "three-act division began to assert itself [after its first production], while the spoken drama preserved its five-act structure." Based on my findings, I suspect that Monteverdi would have indeed changed to a three act structure to symbolize the Trinity.

[21] John 19: 25-27. In this passage, Christ requested that John take care of Mary. According to legend, the young apostle took Mary with him to Ephesus and there lived with her until her death.

[22] Hanna Roisman, "Penelope's Indignation," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 117 (1987): 59-68. Roisman argues that in *Ody.* 23. 209-230 Penelope expresses indignation over her husband's treatment of her.

[23] McDonald, 4.

[24] McDonald, 20.

[25] Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1983) 602-613.

26 This was a pastoral drama with music. The exact date of its first performance, which took place in Florence, seems to be in doubt, however. The date I give is the one mentioned most frequently by scholars.

27 Leopold, 4.

28 Francis Toye, *Italian Opera* (London: Max Parrish and Co., Ltd.) 10.

29 David Ewen, *Encyclopedia of the Opera* (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1955) 64, 91. *Opera buffa* is another term for comic opera or *opera bouffe*. Originating in Italy during the 18th Century these operas were of a nonserious nature.

30 *Concise Dictionary of Music* (Great Britain: Wm. Collins Sons and Co., Ltd., 1986) 351. Characterized by a formal and serious approach to its subject manner, *opera seria* emerged as the preeminent form of opera in the 17th and early 18th Centuries.

31 *Concise*, 351. This form of opera, also known as light opera, mixed dialogue with music. It generally combines comic and romantic elements with serious subject matter.

32 Ewen, 359.

33 *A Literary History of England*, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948) 883-884. He points out that "restoration comedies were likely to be written by gentlemen and about people who imagined themselves to be gentlemen and ladies."

34 Edmond McAdoo Gagey, *Ballad Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937) 53-56. Although burlesque dominated the scene in France during the 17th and early 18th Centuries, it didn't take long to find its way to England. During this time many entertainments focusing on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were produced on the continent and in England. Among these are: Picon's *L'Odyssée d'Homère* (1650), Marivaux's *Homère travesti, ou L'Iliade en vers burlesque* (1716), *Ulisse et Circé* (1691), Lesage's parody *Télémaque* (?), Scudamore's *Homer a la Mode* (1664).

35 Gagey, 56-60. He points out that the influence of commedia dell'arte in ballad opera was derived from French rather than Italian sources.

36 Gagey 60-64. The rise in political satire shaped the irreverent style of ballad operas.

37 Gagey, 7-9.

38 Ewen, 30. He also mentions here it was instrumental in the "final failure of Handel's Royal Academy of Music."

39 Robert D. Hume, *The Rakish Stage: Studies in English Drama, 1660-1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983) 279.

40 Gagey, 192-193.

41 Gagey, 192.

42 Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, *A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms* (New York: Noonday Press, 1961) 60.

43 Outwitting the Cyclops by tying his men and himself to the belly of the sheep in *Ody.* 9.425-436 and identifying himself by the name of "Οὔτις" in *Ody.* 9.366 remain some of the most comical scenes in the *Odyssey.*

44 John Mottley and Thomas Cooke, *Penelope: A Dramatic Opera* (London: Thomas Green, 1728).

45 *Ody.* 24. 196-198.

46 Frederick Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989) 784-797.

47 Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Revolution, 1750-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 42.

48 Boime, 112.

49 Peter Sanborn Walch, "Angelica Kauffman," diss., Princeton University, 1968, 26

50 Walch, 37.

51 Walch, 52.

52 *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England,* ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth (London: Reaktion Books, 1992) 23. She was only one of two women invited to join the Royal Academy. Mary Moser, a still-life painter, was also a founding member.

53 Walch, 75. Whitney Chadwick also addresses the problem female artists faced in studying the nude in her book. See Whitney chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990).

54 Walch, 60-61, 73. During her adult life Kauffman was financially responsible for her husband and widowed father. Also, she was blackmailed by a man believed to have been hired by a former lover to embarrass her socially.

55 Boime, 42.

[56] Roworth, 37.

[57] Roworth, 45.

[58] Roworth, 48.

[59] Roworth, 45-47.

[60] Angelica Kauffman, *Penelope at Her Loom*. Hove Museum and Art Gallery, London. Illus. 12 in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*. Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth. (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992).

[61] Roworth, 37. She echoes this sentiment in her essay: "It [the painting] represents Odysseus's faithful and patient wife as the ideal embodiment of devotion. She sits in the classic pose of melancholic reverie beside the loom on which she alternately wove and unraveled her father-in-law's shroud in an attempt to deceive and delay the numerous suitors who intended to compete for her hand.... In sympathy with her mood, Odysseus's faithful dog lies at her feet resting on his master's great bow, the weapon with which Odysseus would eventually slay the impatient suitors."

[62] Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex : Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 161.

[63] McDonald, 20.

[64] Lady Victoria Manners and Dr. G.C. Williamson, *Angelica Kauffman, R.A.: Her Life and Her Works* (New York: Hacker Books, 1976) 227.

[65] Angelica Kauffman, *Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses*. Saltram Collection, Devon. Illus. 23 in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*. Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth. (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992).

[66] Walch, 58-60.

[67] Roworth, 43-47. Besides the Penelope painting, she also exhibited *Venus Showing Aeneas and Achates the Way to Carthage* (1768), *The Interview of Hector and Andromache* (1768), and *Achilles Discovered by Ulysses amongst the Attendants of Deidamia* (1769).

[68] Roworth, 42-43.

[69] Walch, 56.

[70] Roworth, 48.

[71] Manners and Williamson, 37.

[72] Roworth, 43-44.

[73] Walch, 57.

[74] Angelica Kauffman, *Penelope Weeping Over the Bow of Ulysses*. Burghley House, Lincolnshire. Illus. 47 in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England.* Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth. (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992). Also influenced by Caylus's work, it measures 8 X 10 inches. It was later engraved by Bartolozzi.

[75] Roworth, 67.

[76] Walch, 265.

[77] Walch, 60-61.

[78] Angelica Kauffman, *Penelope Invoking Minerva's Aid for the Safe Return of Telemachus*. Stourhead Collection, np. Illus. 71 in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England.* Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth. (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992).

[79] Roworth, 67.

[80] *Ody*. 13.291-302.

[81] *TLC* quoted in Roworth, 84.

[82] Angelica Kauffman, *The Return of Telemachus*. Private Collection (The Earl of Derby), Knowsley, Prescot, Merseyside. Illus. 93 in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England.* Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth. (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992).

[83] Roworth, 64.

[84] Roworth, 113.

[85] Manners and Williamson, 185.

[86] Walch, 65.

[87] Angelica Kauffman, *The Parting of Ulysses and Penelope*. Private Collection (The Earl of Derby), Knowsley, Prescot, Merseyside. In *Angelica Kauffmann, R.A.: Her Life and Her Works*. By Lady Victoria Manners and Dr. G.C. Williamson. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1976) 185.

[88] Manners and Williamson, 185-186.

[89] Angelica Kauffman, *Penelope at Work.* Private Collection? In *Angelica Kauffmann, R.A.: Her Life and Her Works.* By Lady Victoria Manners and Dr. G.C. Williamson. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1976) 142.

[90] Walch, 83.

[91] Manners and Williamson, 142.

[92] Angelica Kauffman, *Penelope Awakened by Euryclea with the News of Ulysses's Return.* Private Collection? Illus. 48 in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England.* Ed. Wendy Wassyng Roworth. (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992).

[93] Walch, 262-263.

[94] Walch, 262-263.

[95] Walch, 263.

[96]

Chapter 5
Virtue Defiled:
Penelope of the Romantics and Victorians

> Tiresome the modern woman is. I like women when they're good and kind and pretty—agreeable objects in the landscape of existence—give life to it—and pleasant to look at and think about. What do they want with votes? (Edward Burne-Jones to Thomas Rooke)[1]

Introduction

Burne-Jones's comment here reveals much about the 19th Century attitude regarding women. First, it tells us that only old-fashioned women can be tolerated. Those who aspire to modern notions of equality are irksome at best. If we have any questions about what exactly Burne-Jones's definition of an old-fashioned woman is, he makes it perfectly clear: She is a "good and kind and pretty" ornament who merely fills out his world. This type of woman would never aspire to equality of the sexes or desire to have a say in her "landscape" by voting. Instead, she would be content to remain under men's tutelage and control. Never would she be able to maintain an estate on her own while her husband was away, never would she be able to fend off unsavory interlopers with tricks and schemes, and never, under any circumstances, would this kind of woman be able to outwit and outmaneuver her stronger more intelligent husband. Thus, we can see that this attitude about what comprises the nature of a "good woman" denudes women of their intellectual powers. Likewise, Penelope is stripped of her cunning and mental strength. With a few exceptions, she is relegated to a role in which she is viewed simply as "the forlorn wife"[2] of Odysseus—her wit and craftiness taken from her.

As we have seen thus far in this study, Penelope has been regarded primarily as faithful, modest, and chaste. However, we have also learned that some artists worked

against this tradition and portrayed her as intelligent, crafty, hard-working, enlightened, independent, and strong-willed. These anomalies that emerged outside of the traditional view of Penelope augmented her status as something more than a grieving near-widow. Thus, 19th Century thinkers and writers inherited a very complex portrait of Penelope, one whose image had been elevated during the Baroque and Enlightenment Periods to heroic status because of her resiliency and perseverance, as well as her goodness. However, in looking at the art of the Romantics and Victorians, we see that artists choose to ignore this complexity in their depictions of her. Of the forty-four interpretations of Penelope I have identified from this period most treat her simply as Odysseus's good and loving mate. (See Appendix A.) From Tennyson's "aged wife"[3] to Richmond's sculpture of the virginal and madonna-like Penelope,[4] Penelope's image is bound to the ideal of chastity and goodness —all other qualities neglected or forgotten. Furthermore, even the anomalies that crop up in this period do violence to her presence in works illustrating the *Odyssey*. What is left of her image—that is, her virtue—is defiled. In Lord Byron's poem, "To Penelope," her goodness is assailed as an obstacle to Byron's (and ultimately man's) true happiness, and in F. C. Burnand's burlesque, *Patient Penelope, or the Return of Ulysses*, her modesty is viewed as petty and vain.

19th Century Interpretations of Myth and Legend

Much discussion took place during the 19th Century regarding the "proper nature of women."[5] However, as we have already seen during previous periods of time, the definitions of and attitudes toward the "good" and "bad" woman had long been part of Western tradition. The Romantic and Victorian artists introduced little that was new to the discourse about women's conduct. However, they did indeed exert a great deal of influence in the way in which the conduct of female mythological and legendary figures

was interpreted, and this in turn affected the way their audiences viewed women and the icons used to represent them. Writing about this phenomenon, Kestner says:

> In the nineteenth century, when classical studies and icons were conspicuous, myths were crucial to the formation of attitudes about women that created predispositions about female qualities. Classical-subject canvases employed legends that reinforced the practice of the patriarchal society to define women by emphasizing sexual identity over gender identity, men by gender identity as much as by sexual identity. The result of this stress was that woman's biological function was construed as central in determining her nature, while a man's physiological role received less accentuation than his gender role. According to the patriarchy, the fact that a woman was female was a greater definer than that she was feminine, while men emphasized being masculine as well as being male. As a result, a woman could be construed as born with an unvarying nature, while a man exhibited development, progress, and advancement as well as unchanging heroic predisposition.[6]

In this context we see why Penelope's chastity emerges as the preeminent characteristic for which she is known. Furthermore, because this view of women precludes any link to heroism, we understand why Penelope's contribution to the story of the *Odyssey* becomes secondary to the more masculine enterprises of journeying and adventuring of her husband. Therefore, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's comment that "Penelope does not interest us in an equal degree with her husband"[7] makes sense here. Her role as chaste wife provokes little interest in an audience primed to prefer masculine achievements. That Penelope is locked

out of the story's action parallels the general view that women are incapable of sustained and vigorous intellectual activity that would result in anything that an audience would find worth exploring.

Interest in Greco-Roman culture continued to rise in Europe during the 18th and 19th Centuries.[8] It is interesting to note that while Homer's *Odyssey* provided the inspiration for the Romantic poet of the late 18th and early 19th Century, the *Iliad* was more highly regarded by the Victorians of the mid to late-19th Century. Odysseus's conduct, for example, aroused in the romantic spirit the notion of wanderlust and heroic adventure.[9] On the other hand, the political views originating in the "expansionist policies of British imperialism"[10] contributed to the Victorian admiration of the *Iliad.* As Kestner points out, during the Victorian Age Homer's *Iliad* . . . "'became a handbook of ethics, not just in Great Britain, but over a wide swathe of Europe, from the end of the eighteenth century onwards.' Images of Aphrodite or of her victim Helen would reinforce with classical models the negative image of women found in Christianity, whether one was a believer or not."[11] Homeric female figures also fared poorly in a culture that embraced the expansive nature of male heroes who adventure, war, and a narrow notion of conduct inherent in women. The prevailing attitudes toward women and the use of Greco-Roman myth and legend to foster these views resulted in a strict demarcation between "good" and "bad" female icons. Once associated with a particular kind of conduct, female figures were limited by the constraints surrounding that conduct. The polarity that developed between "angelic" and "demonic" behavior simplified even the most complex female figures like Penelope.[12]

For the most part, angelic icons included "sweet" Andromache,[13] "forlorn Penelope" and sacrificing Alcestis.[14] Artists generally depicted these figures in art as compliant, subservient, good-natured, non-sexual, unintelligent. On the other hand, the demonic icons included the "deluding Siren," "dehumanizing Circe," "disastrous Helen,"

and "murderous Medea."[15] Described as violent, highly charged, domineering, and self-assertive, these models were used to remind audiences of women's debased nature. In fact, it was believed that little separated the good woman from the bad—the lot of woman, in general, is that her intellectual and moral inferiority threatens to guide her into the abyss of depravity and insanity.[16]

Rejecting these notions about women, feminists of the 19th Century also rejected the icons associated with them. Penelope's image of the patient and waiting wife of Ulysses did little to encourage women involved in the fight for female rights to embrace her. Thus, because she was seen as a model of goodness, Penelope was ignored or assailed by members of her own gender *and* locked in a role by both male and female artists where she did little but weep and sigh forlornly. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that society expected women to conduct themselves virtuously like Penelope, some males found her particular brand of virtue hard to take. As we see with Byron, Penelope's image is tarnished because he associates her goodness with the virtue he found abhorent in his own wife, Annabella. Burnand, on the other hand, pokes fun at the high opinion others have of her good conduct. Although her behavior was called into question previously by Mottley and Cooke or her honor tempted as in Carew's "Rapture," we have yet to see Penelope's goodness debased solely on the basis of its virtuousness, nor have we encountered a petty and vain interpretation of good Penelope. Thus, the restraints and requirements placed on Penelope during the 19th Century leave her very little room to maneuver: She would be branded bad and demonic *if* she had behaved inappropriately with other men—like her cousin Helen—*and* at the same time she is vilified even when she acts within the bounds of virtue.

Romanticism and Homer

As an artistic movement, Romanticism emerged as a reaction to the prevailing views of the Neo-Classic Period preceding it. Douglas Bush tells us that:

> The romantic movement involved, to attempt a compendious summary, a change from a mechanical conception of the world to an enthusiastic religion of nature, from rational virtue to emotional sensibility, from Hobbesian egoism to humanitarian benevolence, from realism to optimism, from acceptance of things as they are to faith in progress, from contentment with urban civilization to sentimental primitivism, from traditional doctrines of literary imitation to conceptions of the naive and original, from poetics preoccupation with the normal, the true, and the actual to dreams of the strange, the beautiful, and the ideal.... The catalogue may be lengthened, but this will serve.[17]

Thus, the Romantic Movement entailed a shift in views from the previous period that embodies, for the most part, a move toward emotionalism, interest in social issues, primitivism, and a love for the exotic.

Due to his perceived "defects of irregularity and 'naiveté,'" Homer in particular enjoyed a rise in popularity. Romantics embraced him because as a "strolling bard" he fit the image of the lone genius. Likewise, his art was viewed as "[o]riginal" and "amazing." Stephen Rogers points out that:

> The particular nostalgia of the Hellenists often fastened on Homer. Homer received some of the sentiments which other primitivists attached to Ossian. Chénier's Homer is the primitive and pastoral bard.... To Shelley, Homer was even Shakespeare's superior, perfect as he was in the union of sensuous immediacy with clarity of

> thought. Leopardi's reflections on Homer are even more revealing. To Leopardi, Homer was a literary mystery that endlessly fascinated his speculations and supplied him with critical standards and with examples of poetic technique. Indeed, after reading through Leopardi's notes on Homer, one feels the justness of Nello Carini's surmise that to Leopardi Homer was a sort of god.[18]

The religiosity the Romantics accorded Homer influenced the way in which their audiences viewed the story. The feats of Achilles and the adventures of Ulysses regaled audiences. For most, Penelope retained her epitaph as faithful Penelope, the good wife.

Lord Byron

Byron patterned his adventuring Don Juan, a character from his epic poem of the same name, after Homer's Odysseus.[19] Thus, Byron's intellectual link to Homer is evinced in this reconfiguring of the poet's story. That Byron may have personally identified with the wandering Odysseus seems plausible. Both men traveled extensively throughout their known worlds. Both men fought for Greece against cultures originating from the same geographical areas. Both men had amorous relationships with beautiful, seductive women. Both men had faithful, virtuous wives whom they left behind. It is the last of these similarities that interests us here, for it offers the most insight into Byron's notion of Penelope and female virtue associated with her.

We get a glimpse of Byron's view of Penelope in a poem addressed to his ex-wife, Anne Isabella Milbanke, six years after their divorce. "To Penelope, January 2, 1821,"[20] constitutes a general complaint about his marriage to this virtuous woman. Byron writes:

> This day, of all our days, has done
> The worst for me and you:—

'Tis just *six* years since we were *one*,

And *five* since we were *two*.

Although it is a short poem containing only four lines, it is filled with the cynicism and sarcasm that followed the bitter break up between the two. That he addresses it to "Penelope" rather than "Annabella" suggests that he identifies Annabella with the good Penelope (as he, himself, identifies with Odysseus). For the most part, the poem tells us what he thinks of his marriage to such a woman: He rues the day he married her and is happy that enough time has passed to erase the pain of their marriage from his memory. It is important to understanding the depth of Byron's resentment toward Annabella that we look briefly at Byron's courtship of and marriage to her. In doing so, we will gain insight into his general view toward female virtue and Penelope in this poem.

Initially Byron's relationship with the young and innocent Annabella was tangled up in liaisons with other women whom he was fond of. The niece of his confidante Lady Melbourne and a cousin by marriage to Caroline Lamb, with whom Byron enjoyed an intense and tempestuous affair, Annabella possessed none of the libertine spirit of her relations. Raised in semi-isolation by the sea outside Durham, Annabella was schooled by tutors. Evidence suggests that she received an excellent education, adept at math, philosophy and, like Byron, the classics.[21] Uncomfortable with her knowledge of mathematics, Byron sarcastically referred to her later as his "Princess of Parallelograms."[22] But despite her vast learning, Annabella lacked social graces and an understanding of men like Byron. Though her initial instincts about Byron's waywardness were correct, they quickly gave way to romantic notions of saving his soul and correcting his rakishness. As for Byron's view of Annabella, he was intrigued by this "feminine" young woman who possessed a "retired modesty about her."[23]

When they met away from the hordes of admirers surrounding Byron after the publication of his masterwork, *Childe Harold*, Annabella sensed a lack in his temperament,

but was certain that Byron was truly good. Writing to her mother at this time, Annabella remarked: "Lord B. is certainly very interesting, but he wants that calm benevolence which could only touch my heart." Later she added: "I consider it as an act of humanity and a Christian duty not to deny him any temporary satisfaction he can derive from my acquaintance.... He is not a dangerous person to me.... I cannot think him destitute of natural religion—it is in his heart."[24] Byron's remark to his lover Caroline about Annabella is telling. He said: "She is too good for a fallen spirit to know, and I should like her more if she was less perfect."[25] Despite their better instincts, the two wrote often to one another, thus encouraging a relationship that was doomed from the start.

Byron's recognition that his affair with the married Caroline ran the risk of ruining his political stability and social standing may have contributed to his musings about marrying Annabella. But however much he claimed to hold Annabella in high regard, Byron was reticent about getting involved with a woman who "requires time and all of the cardinal virtues" and preferred to dally with married women looking for a temporary but passionate companion.[26] Lady Melbourne, eager to see her brooding friend content with a loving wife, began to press Annabella into considering Byron as a suitable mate. The response she received from the young woman suggested that Annabella could be happy with anyone but the poet. Feeling rejected by Annabella's response, Byron turned away momentarily from Annabella to less apprehensive women and more dangerous relationships.[27] It was shortly after this that Byron began his involvement with his half-sister Augusta. It is interesting to note that after marrying Annabella, he tormented his wife with the fact that had she married him when he asked two years earlier, she would have kept him from this heinous sin.

But Annabella's modest and circumspect ways piqued Byron's interest more than deterred him. Her letters to him frequently contained "sermons" and talk of virtue.[28] Byron took his time in accepting the official invitation to visit her, opting instead to remain

with his sister with whom he was far more comfortable. When finally the situation surrounding their relationship threatened to ruin the reputations of both brother and sister, Augusta pressed for Byron to find a wife. Shortly after, one of Byron's letters to Annabella contained the thinly veiled suggestion that he loved her and would still marry her. Annabella, by this time sure of her love for Byron, accepted Byron's rather weak and unromantic marriage proposal. Byron's response to her acceptance of his proposal contains references to the happiness she will bring him and her goodness. He writes: "Your letter has given me new existence. It was unexpected, I need not say unwelcome . . . . . I know your worth and revere your virtues as I love yourself and if every proof in my power of my full sense of what is due to you will contribute to *your* happiness, I shall have secured my own."[29] While there is much conjecture as to whether Byron meant this at the time to Annabella, friends close to him had doubts about his ability to sustain a relationship with one so inexperienced and high-minded. Caroline's reaction contains a honest inventory of the problems that would soon arise between Byron and Annabella: He would never be able to "pull with a woman who went to church punctually, understood statistics, and had a bad figure."[30] This was still Byron, the *infidel* who rejected religion, disdained handling money and working through numbers, and loved voluptuous women. He had no experience with women like Annabella.

Nevertheless on January 2, 1815 Byron married her. A simple wedding, the bridge and groom were accompanied only by Annabella's immediate family, her governess, and two clergymen. By the time Byron had arrived at Seaham for the ceremony he had long entertained doubts that were growing by the minute. The forty mile carriage ride that took them to their honeymoon retreat did little to convince him that he had made the right decision. Byron's irascibility over his wife's prim and virtuous nature and Annabella's temerity of Byron's moodiness stood in the way of what should have been a happy occasion.[31] Other problems also arose in the first weeks of their marriage. Byron

interpreted Annabella's inexperience with men as a coldness toward him. Likewise, Annabella had her own complaints about Byron's cool treatment of her. Due to his embarrassment over his malformed leg, Byron had made it a point never to fall asleep with his lovers, which bothered Annabella. Furthermore, Byron's sullenness and frequent alcohol-induced outbursts frightened the prim young wife, while Annabella's inability to understand Byron's sarcastic humor angered him. And on top of the difficulty the two were having in adjusting to one another and marriage, Byron's own personal finances were a disaster. When after his marriage he pressed Augusta to continue their relationship, she rejected him. Byron's mood, though dark to begin with when the visit with his sister began, became venomous toward both women.[32] As his temperament continued to worsen, Annabella—certain that he was insane and dangerous—left him, taking their child Ada with her.[33] Shortly afterward, Byron took off for Europe to escape the scandal of incest and his financial problems, never to see Annabella again.

Six years and two weeks after their wedding, then, Byron penned the poem maligning their union. Why Byron married such a modest and religious woman to begin with after bedding down some of the most cultured and willing women in Europe raises questions about just how much he did indeed identify with Odysseus, for throughout his courtship with Annabella Byron commented upon her virtue and goodness. The answer to this question may be found in another author that Byron held dear to his heart: Dante. For although he may have "take[n] the *Odyssey* as [his] first pattern," he certainly turned to the *Divine Comedy* for his second.[34] Scholarship about Byron has focused on the poet's identification with Ulysses, mostly pointing to Ulysses's connection to Byron's character, Don Juan. Both W. B. Stanford and Hermione de Almeida demonstrate this in their studies.[35] However, little work has been done on the way he connected Annabella to Penelope, which in fact holds the key to understanding why he married and then rejected this woman in the first place and ultimately gives us insight into the poem.

We do not need to look far to find Byron's love for Dante. During his travels in Italy, for example, Byron took great pains to visit Dante's tomb in Ravenna and spent time reading the *Inferno* with his lover Teresa.[36] For the most part, Byron admired all of the *Divine Comedy* but turned his attention most often to the story of Francesca and Paolo found in *Inf.* 5[37]—at least when he wished to demonstrate forbidden love with one of his married paramours. But his interest in the story does not end there. We find *Inf.* 26 is reflected in the way Byron viewed domestic life with a virtuous and devoted wife. While Byron may have coveted the love of an unattainable and virtuous woman represented by Francesca in *Inf.* 5, he had no remorse about rejecting a good woman who was truly his—just as Ulysses does with Penelope in *Inf.* 26.

Looking back at *Inf.* 26.90-99, we remember that after spending a year with the enchantress Circe, Ulysses chooses to continue with his voyage rather than return home. He foregoes his responsibilities to his father, son, *and* wife in order to "divenir del mondo esperto / e de li vizi umani e del valore" ("to learn about the world and the vices of people and their worth"). Likewise, Byron dallied with numerous exciting and exotic women, foregoing his virtuous wife to pursue a life of adventure in Europe. Byron's lack of commitment to Annabella was obvious from the start. He wanted nothing to do with a large church wedding, forcing Annabella to agree to the small gathering in her home. When they moved to London, Byron continued with his old habits of staying out late with friends, eschewing the idea that he should remain home with his wife.[38] An invitation to join his friend Hobhouse in France to observe the changes in that country tempted Byron; the poet remained home only because of his poor financial state and physical fatigue.[39] Eight months into the marriage, Byron took off to visit Augusta, leaving Annabella at home.[40] Even when he returned later to her, he engaged himself in a liaison with a local actress to the embarrassment of his pregnant wife.[41] Byron's commitment to his marriage mirrored Ulysses's neglect of Penelope in Dante's version of the story.

Writing about Dante's interpretation of Odysseus, Stanford says:

> It was Dante who revolutionized the interpretation of Ulysses's final fate by presenting him as a man possessed by an irresistible desire for knowledge and experience of the unknown world. This conception of an outward-bound, home-deserting hero inspired some remarkable modern presentations of Ulysses. . . .[42]

Byron's conduct toward his wife certainly indicates a bent toward desertion, at first manifesting itself as an emotional withdrawal and culminating later in a physical one. Further, in his study, Stanford connects Tennyson's wandering "Ulysses" to Byron's. Stanford further states that ". . .the Byronic mood returns again for a moment. This time it expresses itself in ironical contempt for the home-loving Telemachus, 'centered in the sphere of common duties', decent, pious, blameless—in fact, (Ulysses implies) intolerably complacent and priggish."[43] Although in Tennyson's retelling of Byron's story, it is Telemachus who receives the brunt of Byron's disdain; however, we can see that the adjectives used to describe Odysseus's virtuous son apply also to Annabella / Penelope.

Because Byron had linked himself to Ulysses, he had assumed that a wife as virtuous as Penelope would suit him well—she would remain at home tending to the home and hearth without complaint while he sought adventure and pleasure outside of marriage. Because Dante never gives Penelope's point of view in his telling of the story and because 19th Century expectations of virtuous women did not include speaking up against their husbands, Byron had a difficult time with Annabella's feats of liberation, for Annabella was not silent about being married to a husband filled with wanderlust and a wandering eye to boot. She took control of her situation. Convinced of his insanity, Annabella began pressing friends to aid her in getting help for Byron. But when a doctor's report found Byron quite sane, Annabella had no choice but to sue for separation over maltreatment.[44] In the end, Annabella's fear that Byron would fight her for guardianship of their child and

her desire to put a quick end to their poor marriage compelled her to reveal the "suspicions which had been festering in her mind." The testimony given by Caroline, Byron's former lover, was all the proof Annabella needed to scare Byron. Afraid that he was near financial and social ruin, Byron left Piccadilly Terrace with three servants and his doctor and headed for the continent.[45]

That Annabella took measures to curb her husband's conduct earlier in their relationship through her constant lecturing about virtue and, then, in the end rose up against his ill treatment of her may have been more than Byron bargained for in a marriage. In the end, Annabella's / Penelope's virtue stood in the way of his happiness and as his poem indicates, he disliked being married to a woman like Annabella. In sum, Byron's rejection of Annabella indicates a rejection of the virtues that Penelope possesses. He turns Penelope's μέγα κλέος, or "great fame" for her virtue into Annabella's infamy for her priggishness in "To Penelope." While society at large may have extolled such a woman and held her up as a model for other women, Byron certainly does not value her.

Victorian Burlesque

In writing about the peculiarities of Victorian literature, Gordon N. Ray says:

> The eclecticism of Victorian writers, the continuing nineteenth-century attempts to exploit almost every literary manner, lead one to expect poetry of almost every kind in this period. . . . [C]omparison with the literature of proceeding periods suggests that Victorian poetry is without the tragic vision, without the heroic, and without any notable achievement of satire.[46]

According to Ray, the elements of poetry of the late 19th Century include borrowing and

reworking literary forms of previous periods. Furthermore, he tells us that these reconfigurations of past traditions are but dim reminders of the more powerful works that Victorian poetry borrows from.

Even though Ray is talking about one specific form of writing, his comments extend to other types of literature written during this time. From his remark about the decline of satire during the Victorian age, we can surmise that other forms of comedy may also have suffered during this period. Indeed, scholars point to the mid-18th Century as the point of decline for burlesque.[47] The comedic drama of Mottley and Cooke found in the mid-18th Century, for example, is more highly valued than the work of F. C. Burnand, whose plays appeared over one hundred years later. On the surface, both works—*Penelope, A Dramatic Opera* and *Patient Penelope, or the Return of Ulysses*—seem to perform the same task: to poke fun at the seriousness accorded Homer's work by lampooning the heroes (and gods) who appear in the story. The two plays do, however, vary widely. First, in Burnand's work the heroes are not heroic and the gods have disappeared. Secondly, while Mottley and Cooke mount a general attack on the way *translators*, specifically Alexander Pope, presented Homer's Penelope to the reading audience, Burnand turns his attention to a general criticism of contemporary female conduct through his depiction of Penelope.

Burlesque is a child of comedy whose purpose is to amuse and entertain. Never bitter, its light humor aims toward an impious treatment of the "objects of its affection."[48] Because burlesque "employs laughter as a criticism and reflects truth rather than the artificial or the ideal"[49] we can see that Burnand—like Mottley and Cooke—is not a reformer, nor is he interested in holding up Penelope's virtuous conduct as a model for women to emulate or reject. Indeed, that is a job for a satirist.[50] However, *un*like Mottley and Cooke, he lacks the awareness that Penelope may possess a heroic nature, or he may simply choose to ignore her heroism even though this possibility emerged during the period

preceding his. Thus, while Mottley and Cooke scrutinized Penelope's *perceived* heroism, Burnand never *conceived* that she possessed a heroic nature. For Burnand, Penelope's conduct is unattached to any higher notions of perseverance and intelligence. It is simply a product of typical female vanity and deceitfulness. Furthermore, because Burnand's play calls attention to the way in which Penelope's patience runs out at the very moment her husband returns from the war, it is the wronged Ulysses who emerges as the main object of the playwright's affection. The "truth" Burnand presents, then, does not center on any failing of Ulysses but on the conduct of Penelope, who for the most part, exemplifies "the distraught heroine" and a shallow and immoral Victorian aristocrat.[51]

F. C. Burnand

Because scholars consider British playwright F. C. Burnand to be a minor artist, little criticism or commentary exists about his work. He is known for creating burlesques based on myth and legend that were, for the most part, not well received by his critics. Of his work one critic wrote: "Mr. F. C. Burnand has made an excellent move by quitting the region of classical antiquity and turning into a new direction.... People were getting a little tired of those fabulous gods and goddesses.... "[52] His one act play, *Patient Penelope* , avoids deities altogether and concentrates, instead, on mortals from Homer's story. Comprised of seven "tableaux" (Medon, Penelope, Eurymachus; Ulysses and Medon; The Banquet; The Apparition; Penelope and Ulysses; Retribution; Happiness), Burnand reduces Books 17-23 of Homer's *Odyssey* to events that occur over the course of one evening taking place in one room of the house— "Penelope's Room." Burnand further compresses the story by eliminating all but four characters from Homer's story, contemporarizing them along the way. Present are Penelope, an English lady, Ulysses, disguised as an organ grinder, Penelope's servant Medon, and one suitor, Eurymachus.

The first tableau opens with a confrontation between Eurymachus and Medon, who is dusting Penelope's boudoir when Eurymachus comes calling. The low humor[53] of this scene focuses primarily on a possible pregnancy for Penelope, for Eurymachus's knocking on the door is turned into a pun by the two men about "knocking" Penelope up. From the start, then, Penelope's fidelity is called into question. With her husband away, either the servant or the lover would be responsible for the paternity of a child. Because Eurymachus must bribe his way to Penelope's presence, we learn that if indeed Penelope is unfaithful, it has not been with the suitor. The possibility also arises that he hopes that his visit to her may result in a sexual liaison between them (Burnand, 5-6).

When Medon does indeed take Eurymachus to see Penelope, she is busy crocheting. Hiding from her view, Eurymachus waits patiently while Medon paves the way for his visit. Penelope's faithfulness and patience come under suspicion when Medon announces Eurymachus's visit. When Medon mentions that her husband may indeed be dead, she seems happy. Her mood switches to unhappiness when Medon then assures her that her husband is alive. Saying that she would "indulge no more / In earthly bliss," she then declares aloud that she loves "to moan, and groan, and moan." "Earthly bliss," here, suggests carnal pleasures, which are further emphasized by Penelope's explicit second comment. Her remarks are not lost on Eurymachus, who hears the lament and silently promises Penelope that he would not "leave her alone." Thus, Eurymachus suggests that he would be happy to oblige Penelope should she desire to take a lover (7-8). In this exchange, Burnand captures the general ambivalence accorded to Penelope's grief, for throughout the *Odyssey* we find references both to her grieving for Odysseus and her interest in marrying another man.[54]

Penelope sends the servant away. Just as she begins to relax alone in her room, Eurymachus jumps out from behind her chair, thus fulfilling his previous promise. At first Penelope is startled and like the heroine from a sentimental novel, she responds helplessly

to his advances. Locking her in the room, Eurymachus begins reading the "Reuter" report containing information of Ulysses's whereabouts. Here, Penelope learns that Ulysses has been tarrying for seven years with Calypso on her island and has even married the nymph. Enraged by her husband's infidelity, Penelope reacts by showing jealousy toward Calypso, avoiding blaming her husband for the affair. She says:

> Whoe'er she is, there's none I'd like to whip so,
> And with a cat o' nine tails make her skip so.
> Her arms with pincers I should like to nip so;
> The infidel, I'd have her on the hip so,
> and scratch her eyes out, mark her pouting lips so;
> Then in her heart a poisoned dagger dip so,
> and thus I'd make an end of Miss Calypso! (9-10)

That Penelope would ignore Ulysses's own culpability, while heaping the blame on his lover, hints at a larger "truth" that Burnand is having fun with—that is, the double standard between men and women and the way in which women contribute to this standard.

Writing about Victorian mores, Nancy Fix Anderson tells us that a double standard existed that allowed for a man's "discreet sexual freedom" while restricting a good woman from such action.[55] Of course, if all good women must confine their sexual urges to their husbands, then the only woman with whom a husband could consort is a bad woman. Thus, we come to understand the nature of Penelope's attack on Calypso and why she lets Ulysses off the hook for his actions: She equates Calypso's conduct to that of an infidel, or a fallen godless woman. We must keep in mind that Burnand's Penelope reacts differently from Homer's, for Homer's Penelope never issues any complaint over her husband's actions.[56] Criticism of Penelope in this tableau, then, focuses on her misplaced anger. This virtuous woman possesses virtue not because she understands ethical issues or can reason out right and wrong for her herself, but because she blindly accepts the morals

of the status quo—no matter how misguided they are. Burnand further underscores this flaw in Penelope by her blind acceptance of Eurymachus's plan for revenge. When Eurymachus promises to help her extract vengeance against Ulysses, Penelope is at first overcome by emotion and faints. However, when Eurymachus revives her, Penelope then turns her anger on her "mad" husband, promising to "plunge a dagger home" in his heart when she "get[s] hold of him" (10). That Penelope would advocate murdering both Calypso for her immorality and Ulysses for his madness suggests she lacks sound judgment and is unable to control her passions. Seduced by Eurymachus's lie, Penelope plots her husband's death. The tableau ends with Eurymachus and Penelope dancing together and rejoicing over their plan to kill the unfaithful husband (10-11).

Tableau 2 introduces Ulysses to the play. Here he is disguised as a "wandering minstrel" (11) and "organ grinder" (12). Entering his home, Ulysses is overjoyed that his favorite chair remains where it was before he left. However, he states that unlike the unchanged chair, Penelope will look different. No longer will she be "young" and "slim" (11). Thus, the emphasis here is on Penelope's physical beauty rather than her intelligence and goodness. Quickly, Ulysses encounters Medon, who tries to send the street musician away. When Ulysses calls his name and plays "Pop Goes the Weasel," Medon recognizes the music of his former master. Here, by connecting Ulysses to a song about a weasel, Burnand pokes fun at Ulysses's reputation as a "sneak"—the trick of the Trojan Horse, for example, associated him with stealth and secretive conduct.[57] Revealing his true identity to the wayward servant, Ulysses inquires about Penelope. Medon tries to hide evidence of Eurymachus's presence in the house, but Ulysses sees the second dinner plate and knows that his wife is entertaining another man. Angry that Penelope has "played him false" (13), Ulysses proposes to hide in her chamber in order to find out who she is involved with. Thus, he lies in wait for yet another enemy.

From his secret place, Ulysses espies the two lovers arm-in-arm. Penelope tells Eurymachus that she can no longer be faithful to a man who has been unfaithful to her. Thus, Tableau 3 begins "the banquet scene" in which Ulysses watches the pair flirt with one another. Under orders from Ulysses not to give his presence away, Medon serves the pair their dinner. The exchange between Penelope and Eurymachus implies Penelope's lack of wisdom and her suitor's corrupt nature:

> Eurym. I hope to suit you; for I think you said,
> You like a man who is well-born and—
> Medon. (*waiting*) *Bread!*
> Penel. Oh, really, sir, you put me in such a flutter!
> Eurym. You have such lovely eyes, and nose and—
> Medon. (*as before*) Butter!
> Penel. Before the servant, take care how you talk out;
> I've wealth for both. (Medon *listening*)
> Eurym. (*to him*) I want another fork out.
> I love to think some day that you'll be mine. (15)

Thus, eager to end her loneliness, Penelope is seduced by Eurymachus in front of her husband, while the servant tries desperately to warn the pair of Ulysses's presence in the room (15).

In order to put an end to the banquet, Ulysses replaces the sherry about to be served to Eurymachus with "vinegar" (16), representing the sour nature of the suitor's intentions toward Penelope. Toasting her with his glass, Eurymachus drinks the concoction and immediately becomes ill. At first they think he is poisoned but realize that he is merely uncomfortable. After Eurymachus leaves, Penelope bemoans her misconduct but refuses to give up her plan:

Penel. Ulysses loves another! I'm to blame,

If calmly, I make light of his new flame.

* * * * *

Well, since Ulysses has found some one new,

Yes, I will make my present suitor do.

He seeks my wealth, and I am told, he says,

Using what is on 'Change a low stock phrase,

'She smells of money;' p'raps by that is meant,

That dividends come in, at five purse scent.' (17-18)

This lament signals to Ulysses that Penelope is not necessarily interested in Eurymachus; instead, she is tempted into unfaithfulness because she thinks he is involved with Calypso. Penelope's reputation as a schemer in the *Odyssey*, then, parallels her plotting against her husband's life in *Patient Penelope*. But the nature of her trick here differs from the one she devises in Homer's story [58] and is based on an emotional response rather than an intellectual reckoning. Burnand's passionate heroine is no hero of cunning intelligence.

Tableau 4 introduces a reworking of the trick between husband and wife found in the *Odyssey* that assures Penelope that the stranger is indeed her husband.[59] In Burnand's version, however, it is Ulysses who gets the better of Penelope. While Penelope primps in front of the mirror, Ulysses sends her a note telling her that her husband is dead. At first she gives the appearance of sadness, but when he realizes that she is not crying over his death, he decides to kill her. He, then, changes his mind and threatens suicide in order to haunt her after his death (19). Accidentally knocking over a lamp, Penelope sends the room into darkness so that, when she does finally see Ulysses, she thinks he is an apparition. When "the ghost" questions her about her upcoming marriage to Eurymachus, Penelope replies that she is angry that Ulysses had married Calypso. Declaring that the

Reuter's report that Eurymachus read was a lie that the suitor concocted in order to trick Penelope into marrying him, Ulysses forgives Penelope for her indiscretion with Eurymachus (20). Thus, Tableau 5 contains the reunion between Ulysses and Penelope.

In Tableau 6 Ulysses and Penelope plot to avenge themselves against Eurymachus. Their plan is simple: Ulysses will dress as Penelope and wait for the suitor to come to Penelope's room. When Eurymachus kneels and kisses *her* hand, Ulysses will attack him. Once again Ulysses lies in wait for his enemy and again he takes on a disguise—this time as his wife. Before Eurymachus has a chance to show up, however, Medon decides to warn Penelope of Ulysses's presence in the house. Instead of revealing the news to his mistress, he ends up relating the story to the disguised Ulysses. Ulysses fares little better in distinguishing identities in the dark than Penelope did. Mistaking Medon for Eurymachus, Ulysses throws him out of the window (21-23).

When Eurymachus does finally show up, we find that Medon had fallen on top of him when Ulysses tossed him out of the window. The suitor's pitiable appearance compels Ulysses to forgive him for his bad conduct. Tableau 7 ends with all of the players rejoicing over "the return of Ulysses to Penelope" (24).

Burnand's reworking of Homer's story, however steeped in the burlesque tradition, goes a long way to alter the perception of Penelope. In the *Odyssey* she attains μέγα κλέος, or "great fame" for her patience and cunning.[60] Yet, in this play none of these qualities are present. She does not persevere while her husband is away. Instead she gives in to her passions and plots against her husband. Furthermore, Burnand transforms her weaving of the shroud that craftily deters her suitors into "crocheting" merely to pass time while her husband is gone. The second trick for which she is well known, the trick of the bed, is shifted instead to a trick in which Ulysses outwits his wife. Likewise, her modesty gives way to primping in front of the mirror, and her chastity to anticipation of remarriage. Even her plotting against Ulysses takes the shape of being duped by

Eurymachus. Despite her carousing with the suitor, she remains "good" nonetheless. Burnand does little to shake up her iconic status as the sexually pure wife of Ulysses though he certainly goes far to highlight her sexuality. However, by insinuating that she is virtuous only in so far as she meekly follows what other people suggest or what society at large holds true, we come to realize that she is not really good after all. Thus, *Patient Penelope* serves as a commentary about women who are perceived as good but who have no idea what the notion of virtue entails. Ultimately, Burnand demotes Penelope: She no longer is perceived as capable of heroic conduct as she had been in Mottley and Cooke's play, and in Burnand's work she represents shallowness and frivolity—her virtue lost in stupidity.

Conclusion

In looking back at Byron's and Burnand's work then we see that they are both reacting to Penelope's virtue in a negative way and are challenging public perception of the true nature of female virtue. For Byron, a good woman makes a poor companion. Her expectations of marriage are unrealistic and her demands are unable to be fulfilled without extracting a high price from her husband. An adventurous man cannot afford to tie himself to such a woman. That Ulysses deserted Penelope so that he could be free to explore the world made sense to a man like Byron, for Penelope would have held him back from such an adventure. Ulysses's heroism, then, depends upon a rejection of virtue, if not his own, then certainly that of his wife.

Burnand attacks female virtue, but from a different tack. He pokes fun at women who appear to be virtuous but who really have no idea what true goodness is. In his play Penelope oscillates between wanting to stay pure for her husband and marrying Eurymachus. Furthermore, she misses Ulysses but wants to kill him in retaliation for a perceived adulterous liaison. Like the first woman of the Judeo-Christian tradition, this

"Eve" is seduced by a snakey Eurymachus. However, instead of receiving the wisdom in exchange for her liaison with the serpent, she remains stupid. As a sentimental heroine, then, Penelope is imbued with passion and emotion and is sorely lacking in intelligence and wit. She emerges simply as shallow, petty, and vain—not at all virtuous and not all heroic.

Chapter 5
Notes

[1] Joseph A. Kestner, *Mythology and Misogyny: The Social Discourse of Nineteenth-Century British Classical-Subject Painting* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 107.

[2] Kestner, 10.

[3] Tennyson, Alfred Lord, "Ulysses," *Victorian Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Gordon N. Ray (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959) 31-32.

[4] William Blake Richmond, *The Death of Ulysses*, cited in Kestner, 175.

[5] Kestner, 7.

[6] Kestner, 13.

[7] *Heroes and Heroines of Fiction*, ed. William S. Walsh (Philadelphia: Lippincott Company, 1914) 232.

[8] Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1937) 40-50.

[9] W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1963) 172.

[10] Kestner, 17.

[11] Kestner, 19.

[12] Kestner, 14.

[13] Kestner, 5.

[14] Kestner, 12-13.

[15] Kestner, 12-13.

[16] Kestner, 38.

[17] Bush, 43-44.

[18] Stephen Rogers, *Classical Greece and the Poetry of Chenier, Shelley, and Leopardi* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1974) 7-8.

[19] De Almeida, Hermione, *Byron and Joyce Through Homer: Don Juan and Ulysses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981) 23.

[20] "Biographical Sketch," *The Complete Poetical Works of Byron* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, nd) i-xxi.

[21] Leslie A. Marchand, *Byron: A Portrait* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970) 119.

[22] Marchand, 174.

[23] Marchand, 120-121. She was at first critical of his "sarcasm and vehemence."

[24] Marchand, 121-122.

[25] Marchand, 123.

[26] Marchand, 133.

[27] Marchand, 133-134.

[28] Marchand, 164.

[29] Marchand, 176.

[30] Marchand, 180.

[31] Marchand, 184.

[32] Marchand, 191-205.

[33] Marchand, 212.

[34] De Almeida, 3.

[35] See Stanford, 2, 44, 202-203, 235. De Almeida's study is cited elsewhere in this chapter.

[36] Marchand, 305.

[37] *Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie Marchand (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1982) 198.

[38] Marchand, 199.

[39] Marchand, 202.

[40] Marchand, 204.

[41] Marchand, 207

[42] Stanford, 202.

[43] Stanford, 203.

[44] Marchand, 218.

[45] Marchand, 233-234.

[46] Ray, Gordon N. General Introduction. *Victorian Poetry and Poetics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959) xix-xx.

[47] V. C. Clinton-Baddeley, "The Nature of Burlesque," *The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre after 1660* (London: Methuen Books, 1973) 27.

[48] Clinton-Baddeley, 2.

[49] Clinton-Baddeley, 1.

[50] Clinton-Baddeley, 1. As he points out: "Satire is actuated by a burning desire to rebuke and to reform, 'to lash in general the reigning and fashionable vices and recommend and set virtue in as amiable a light as possible.'"

[51] Clinton-Baddeley, 140-141. In his study of burlesque, Clinton-Baddeley identifies forty-two different categories of "canonical jokes" found in burlesque. Although poking fun at the aristocracy does not exist as a classification, we can assume that Burnand is having fun with "the distraught heroine."

[52] Clinton-Baddeley, 107.

[53] John D. Jump, *Burlesque* (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1972) 1-2. Jump separates burlesque into four categories, two of which he calls low humor and two high forms of humor. Patient Penelope is the former rather than the latter.

[54] See for example *Ody.* 19.136-136; *Ody.* 2.96-103.

[55] Nancy Fix Anderson, *Woman Against Women in Victorian England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) 197-199.

[56] *Ody.* 23.306-344.

[57] Stanford, 85.

[58] *Ody.* 2.95.

[59] *Ody.* 23.181-204.

[60] *Ody.* 2-125; *Ody.* 24.195.

Chapter 6
Eternal Wife and Internalized Other: Penelope's Multiple *Personae* in the Modern World

> We want to glorify war—the only cleansing act of the world—militarism, patriotism, the destructive act of the anarchists, beautiful ideas which kill, and contempt of women. . . . We want to destroy museums, libraries, to combat moralism, feminism and all such opportunistic and utilitarian acts of cowardice. ("First Manifesto of Futurism") [1]

Introduction

Marinetti and the other futurists who advocated these changes for society stood at the forefront of Italy's avant garde and exerted much influence over thinkers and artists working in Europe during the early decades of the 20th Century. As we can see from Marinetti's manifesto, the Futurist agenda called for a violent rejection of the past: the destruction of temples of culture and learning, such as museums and libraries, the annihilation of previously held concepts of beauty and morality, and obliteration of the feminine element that they believed produced a degenerate society of cowards and weaklings. It is the last of these items in their program, in particular, that underscores the anxiety modern society felt about women's roles and gives us insight into Penelope's presence in the artistic works in the early part of this century.

Before moving into our discussion about Penelope, I would first like to clarify some points concerning the mood of the 20th Century in regard to change. First and foremost, we cannot say that all of the artists working during the early part of the 1900's were imbued with the kind of modernist spirit demonstrated by the Futurists. As seen in the works of playwright Stephen Phillips, poets Alfred Noyes and Roselle Mercier Montgomery, painter Gari Melchers, and musical composer Gabriel Urbain Fauré, some artists still worked within the traditions popular during the Victorian Period.[2] In

particular, the elements defining the Victorian notion of women that we discussed previously can be seen in their passive, domestic-minded, and long-suffering faithful Penelopes that epitomize the womanly qualities associated with hearth and home.

As the Futurists indicate, however, there were artists who saw the new century as a signal for change. For them, "modern" was more than an age, it was a philosophy. More vocal about the aesthetic and, sometimes, sociopolitical principles underpinning their art, these "modern" artists rejected old ideas, old ways of seeing. They took up new causes, embraced new philosophies, introduced new forms. Heralded as the visionaries of their time, these artists pushed the boundaries of style and propriety from positions, both inside and outside tradition and traditional protocol.

Modernism, the epoch these artists come to be associated with, is now generally regarded as consisting of numerous avant garde movements that sprang up during the early 20th Century.[3] Most scholars regard it as a response to the sociocultural changes occurring in the late 19th Century and see its influence extending far beyond the arts. In *P Reborn*, Susan Stanford Friedman writes:

> The starting point of modernism is the crisis of belief that pervades twentieth-century western culture: loss of faith, experience of fragmentation and disintegration, and shattering of cultural symbols and norms. At the center of this crisis were the new technologies and methodologies of science, the epistemology of logical positivism, and the relativism of functionalist thought—in short, major aspects of the philosophical perspectives that Freud embodied.[4]

Begotten, then, by both the breakdown of culture and the rise of technology and new philosophies, modernism was essentially fostered by men and women with the urge to experiment, take risks, and challenge society with these modern ideas.

In essence, the modernist artist that emerged during this period embraced personal expression, sometimes without regard to the past, its traditions, or its conventions. To publicize their rebellion and promote artistic autonomy, many turned to propaganda and attention-seeking exploits. Their vocal attacks upon previous traditions created tension that resulted ultimately in antagonism between artist and audience.[5] The "Futurist Manifesto of 1909," for example, was one of many proclamations published during this period that challenged ideas and beliefs dear to those who weren't quite ready to leave the 19th Century behind.

However, far from being a cohesive movement in which all participants shared common views and agendas, modernist artists demonstrated varying degrees of uncertainty about how far to go with breaking with the past or revising previously held notions. Despite all of the rhetoric announcing the coming of a new age, the art and ideology of even some *modern* artists still lingered in the 19th Century. This becomes particularly evident in the way in which artists, both male and female, viewed women's place and evaluated female conduct in this so-called new society. Penelope's image in art of this period testifies to the ambivalence and anxiety present among modern artists in regards to women. Furthermore, the fact that she exists at all in modern art proves a reluctance on the part of some modernists to sever all ties to previous tradition, for her legend is played out in the canvases of points and planes, the abstruse linguistic experiments, and the elusive musical motifs.

Therefore, unlike any other period that we have discussed, the artistic response to Penelope varies widely and, in some cases, ventures beyond the parameters of her legend. Although the many different *personae* of Penelope that we meet in the work of Carlo Carrà, Ezra Pound, H. D., James Joyce, and Dorothy Parker are united in the eternal symbol of wifedom, this does not change the fact that she also represents what "modern" and "woman" mean individually to each of these artists. We envision her as the fulcrum on

which the instrument of the changing sensibilities fluctuates: the "feminine" tradition of the 19th Century and the "virile" machine age of the 20th, the decorous aesthetics of the Victorians and the starker realities of the moderns, an equal member of the community and the contemptible "other," a member of the weaker sex and an independent woman, the prototypical faithful wife and the more common faithless whore.

Carlo Carrà

Changing sensibilities are expressed most clearly in the work of Carlo Carrà. As a member of the Futurist movement who later develops a taste for Italian masters and Greco-Roman mythology, Carlo Carrà makes an excellent introduction to modernist ambivalence and anxiety regarding the past and women. His Cubo-Futurist Penelope includes both his tendency toward Futurism, including all of its contempt for the past and women, *as well as* his rejection of the movement.

Having begun his career as a house decorator in the Piedmont area of Italy, Carrà traveled to Paris at the age of eighteen to work for the Universal Exhibition. Here amid the salons and museums, he was introduced to French art. However, it was seven years later that he finally had the opportunity to study painting. In Milan at the Accademia di Brera, Carrà met other Italian artists, many of whom he later collaborated with. He learned the Pointillist techniques at the academy that defined his early painting style. Influenced also by the expressionism found in modern art, Carrà distinguished himself by connecting this new approach to painting with the cultural and social changes occurring around him.[6]

Much has been written concerning Carrà's collaboration and disagreements with Marinetti and other Futurists, such as Umberto Boccioni and Giacomo Balla. Viewed as an arts movement whose roots were found originally in literature, Futurism rejected the old conventions of language, style, and artistic techniques. Anti-monarchist and anti-papist, the Futurists made proclamations (manifestos) that extended far into the spheres of culture,

politics, and religion. Their theories of art focused on ways to express "interpenetration of planes," as well as to show speed and simultaneity in their art. Hostile to femininity and women, Futurists dwelled on the masculine cult of virility, extolling war, anarchy, and patriotism.[7]

An active proponent of Futurism who participated in the development of its ideology and aesthetic principles,[8] Carrà surprised many of his colleagues and followers when he later left the movement. His departure stemmed from a growing discomfort with Marinetti's control over the direction of the movement and his own new-found interest in the old masters from the late Medieval and early Renaissance periods. Despite the influence these Italian artists had on Carrà's work during this period, he still eschewed notions of beauty, preferring to explore the *antigrazioso*, or "anti-graceful" concept. His Cubo-Futurist compositions, the work from which Carrà's Penelope originates, integrate both the issues of spatiality held dear by the avant garde and the aesthetic principles found in the old masters. In looking over Carrà's work and ideas, then, we can say that in his early career he made a name for himself because of his active, high-profile involvement in Futurism. However, he later distanced himself from certain aspects of Futurist ideology and aesthetics. His later works are described as presenting a "new relationship with nature"[9]—quite a departure from the artist who extolled science as the great hope of mankind.[10]

Carrà's *Penelope, 1917* belongs to his Cubo-Futurist Period and is generally regarded as an example of one of his metaphysical works.[11] At this point in his career, Carrà had distanced himself from Futurism and had begun experimenting with Cubism in order to move beyond both aesthetics. In this picture, then, Penelope is comprised of a series of planes. Standing upright in a long narrow room alone, she is caught in the act of choosing between two open doors. A web-like structure can be seen in the pattern of planes that make up the floor on which she stands. Her eyes are closed, and her head is bowed slightly in a gesture that can be described as contemplative. Her femininity is

subdued within the points and edges of the planes. Only the contours of her body and the long braid of her hair reveal her female-ness. In fact, she wears her many cubes and triangles like colorful, protective armor.

The difficulty we have in recognizing this figure as Penelope lies in the fact she she is mechanized and devoid of individual character. That this painting is described as metaphysical is attributed to the "magical atmosphere" present in the work. In *Italian Moderns* , Marco Valsecchi points specifically to"the rooms, the checkered floors, the mythical heroes stripped and featureless like tailor's dummies" as contributing to the otherworldliness of this scene.[12] Yet, for all of her strangeness, she remains a representation of Penelope.

The epithets used for Penelope, such as "wise" or "thoughtful," can be seen in her contemplative stance. The choices she is forced to make between marrying one of the suitors or waiting for her husband to return is represented by the two open doors. The infamous web she wove on the loom literally engulfs her entire being. The armor she wears signifies her unapproachable status, despite her husband's long absence. Thus, Carrà transforms Homer's Penelope into his own ideal vision of woman. Stripped of her femininity, her sexuality protected by the brilliant, variegated cubes, she emerges as a lone ambiguous figure facing multiple choices with intelligence and circumspection. Consumed by her craft, she disdains frivolity and vanity. De-sexed, she is de-objectified. The suitors and Odysseus do not choose her; she alone chooses the fate of all of the men in the story. For Carrà Penelope is an allegory representing the independent and hard-edged woman of the modern age. In this powerful image of Penelope, Carrà's Futurist contempt for "woman" is tempered by an awe for a being whose authority is derived from inner strength linked to intelligence rather than an outward manipulation connected to sex.

Modernist Poets

While Carrà and other Futurists railed against the museum-going, great books tradition of the bourgeoisie that cities like London embodied,[13] Americans Ezra Pound and H. D. both spent numerous fruitful years in England experimenting with avant garde aesthetics and poetry. Likewise, Dubliner James Joyce embraced past literary masters while developing his influential stream of consciousness style of writing. The Penelopes that they present in their works run the gamut of modernist views toward women and the characteristics that define gender.

Ezra Pound

Born in Hailey, Idaho and educated at Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania, Ezra Pound has long been considered one of the most preeminent figures in English speaking poetry. Early in his career he moved to London, where, along with T.E. Hulme[14] and Ford Madox Ford[15] he began reshaping notions about poetry and aesthetics.[16] He participated in two schools of poetry, "Imagism" (with H. D. and Richard Aldington) and "Vorticism."[17] However, what changed the focus of Pound's thinking and writing and led him to produce his most celebrated works of art was the despair he experienced during and after World War I.

"Hugh Selwyn Mauberly"

Convinced that culture was in decay, he set out to revitalize it with poetry. The result of this ambitious undertaking includes "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly."[18] Although he began some of the work on *Personae* —the collection of poetry in which "Mauberly" is found—as far back as 1900, this particular poem was completed in 1919 when the poet was thirty-five years old. Chronologically it follows his *Seafarer* translation, *Lustra*, *Cathay*, "Propertius," and the first drafts of the *Cantos*.

Eighteen poems comprise "Mauberly."[19] The first of these, entitled "E.P. Ode Pour L'Election de Son Sepulchre,"[20] contains a reference to Odysseus and Penelope. Opening with an allusion to his travels, his "Odyssey of discovery and frustration",[21] Pound writes:

> For three years, out of key with his time,
> He strove to resuscitate the dead art
> Of poetry; to maintain 'the sublime'
> In the old sense. Wrong from the start--. (1-4)[22]

By the time Pound sat down to pen these lines, he had already journeyed to Spain, Italy, and France, struggling along the way with odyssean craft against those who did not understand him or his work.[23]

Stanza 2 explains why he may be misunderstood: He was born "in a half savage country, out of date" and he is "bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn" (5-6). Handicapped, then, by his intellectually barbaric heritage, trapped in a time unsuited to his tastes, and driven to create beauty out of the harsh realities of life, Pound finds himself pushing against the current of what is acceptable in art. And though he is detained from his goal momentarily by the "chopped seas" (12)—that is, writing he is not satisfied with—he strives to return home to his "Penelope." His allusion to Penelope ("His true Penelope was Flaubert"[24]) here stems from Pound's belief that, like Flaubert, he labors for an exactitude in his use of language (13).

Although the reference to Penelope confuses us with its complex allusions to Homer and Flaubert, it makes sense when we consider what these two writers meant to Pound. Homer, along with Dante and Cavalcanti, exerted much influence over Pound's art.[25] In fact, Pound regarded Homer as the progenitor of Western civilization and

literature. The more difficult job, then, is explaining Pound's respect for Flaubert, whose work was rejected by the British because he was believed to be "foreign, feminine, rather comically earnest indulger in quite un-British preciosity."[26]

As Hugh Kenner tells us in *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, Flaubert "represents [for Pound] the ideal of disciplined self-immolation from which English poetry has been too long estranged." Like Penelope, the French poet waits for an Odysseus to "bend the hard bow of the 'mot juste' and "entangl[ing] crowds of suitors (superficial 'realists') in their own self-deceit."[27] Thus, Pound as Odysseus fights his way back to his first and only love, exactitude.[28] Kenner adds that that Flaubert is "'wrong from the start,' surrounded by mistaken admirers, and very possibly a whore; a suitable Penelope for this energetic American."[29] Pound's Penelope, sired first by Homer, who influenced all of Western tradition with his epic poetry, is reborn as Flaubert, the novelist of the 19th Century whom Pound believes represents the summit of 19th Century fiction.[30]

Going from the general to the specific, then, Pound presents us with the metaphor for Flaubert's brand of "exact presentation" in the Penelope of "Hugh Sewelyn Mauberly." That Pound saves Flaubert from unruly admirers and reclaims him as his "true" spouse suggests Pound's low opinion of the company the French novelist keeps before his rescue by this new, self-styled Odysseus; however, despite Flaubert's possible adultery with these unworthy men, he is forgiven and reinstated to his rightful place as the progenitor of modernism. Pound's duty as father-Odysseus to Flaubert's mother-Penelope is to nurture the writers born of this union-epoch to take his place.[31] Although casting Flaubert in a female role can be seen as usurping woman's place and displacing her in the creative act,[32] we can also read it as ambivalence toward the kind of gender differences embraced by the Victorians.[33]

"Canto CII"

Pound's London years are viewed as a time of preparation for his epic masterwork, the *Cantos*. First appearing in *Poetry* in 1917, the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound represent his finest and most elusive work. Published at various stages of completion, these works are loosely connected by the theme of the artist's journey. Because a tradition of literary criticism has only emerged since the printing of a complete text of the *Cantos* in 1970, our understanding of the obliqueness of Pound's writing remains somewhat incomplete. However, in *Pound's Cantos*, Peter Makin tells us that this work is about "a series of heroes who fail to reach their goals in voyaging *past* the limits set for them." Pound himself claimed the *Cantos* "were merely footnotes to the *Divine Comedy*."[34] For others, such as Carroll F. Terrell, this work represents a "great religious poem," and "an account of man's progress from the darkness of hell to the light of paradise"[35] As models for this, Pound selected what he viewed to be the greatest master poets—Homer, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Browning .

As I have previously mentioned, Pound possesses a high regard for Homer and his place in the Western literary tradition. Because of his respect for Homer and his culture, Pound frequently alludes to the Greek poet and his stories and characters in the text of the *Cantos*. Of all of Homer's characters, however, Penelope appears only once in this poem.[36] About her he writes:

> This I had from Kalupso
> who had it from Hermes
> 'eleven literates and, I suppose,
> Dwight L. Morrow'
> the body elected,
> residence required, not as in England
> 'A cargo of Iron'

lied Pallas

and as to why Penelope had waited

keinas . . . e Orgei. line 639. Leucothoe. . . . ("CII" 742)

The first two lines refer directly to the the episode of the *Odyssey* in which Hermes relays Zeus's command that Circe release Odysseus so that he can return home. Lines three to six deviate from this story and recall instead an incident in Pound's life in which he received a reply to a question he put to an American senator regarding how many intelligent men serve in the government. The answer was nine and "I suppose Dwight L. Morrow."[37] Here Pound includes Hermes and Circe to bring the number up to "eleven." Lines seven and eight refer to the lie that Athene tells Telemachos in *Ody* 1.184. It is in the last two lines that he alludes to Penelope. Here Pound ponders why Penelope waited twenty years for Odysseus to return and points to the *Odyssey* for the answer.[38]

Looking back to Homer's story, we see that in *Ody*. 4.686-693 (and not line 639 as Pound claims)[39] Penelope speaks to the herald Medon, who brings her the news that the suitors are plotting to kill her son Telemachos. She says:

οἳ θάμ' ἀγειρόμενοι βίοτον κατακείρετε πολλόν,

κτῆσιν Τηλεμάχοιο δαΐφρονος· οὐδέ τι πατρῶν

ὑμετέρων τὸ πρόσθεν ἀκούετε, παῖδες ἐόντες,

οἷος 'Οδυσσεὺς ἔσκε μεθ' ὑμετέροισι τοκεῦσιν,

[690] οὔτε τινὰ ῥέξας ἐξαίσιον οὔτε τι εἰπὼν

ἐν δήμῳ, ἥ τ' ἐστὶ δίκη θείων βασιλήων·

ἄλλον κ' ἐχθαίρῃσι βροτῶν, ἄλλον κε φιλοίη.

κεῖνος δ' οὔ ποτε πάμπαν ἀτάσθαλον ἄνδρα ἐώργει.

You, who keep gathering here, and consuming away much livelihood,

the property of wise Telemachos, nor have you listened

> to what you heard from your fathers before you, when you were chil:iren,
> what kind of man Odysseus was among your own parents,
> how he did no act and spoke no word in his own country
> that was unfair. . . but Odysseus was never outrageous at all to any man.

Pound's reference in Greek "*keinas* . . *e Orgei,* " (transliterated from Homer's κεῖνος and ἑώργει) alludes to the last line of this passage: "κεῖνος δ'οὔ ποτε πάμπαν ἀτάσθαλον ἄνδρα ἑώργει." In citing these lines in answer to his question, Pound contends that Penelope was faithful to her husband because of his goodness and wisdom. That he never treated any of his friends or subjects unfairly is testimony to his excellence. In saying this about Odysseus and Penelope, Pound implies that they are *homofroneonte* , or "like-minded:" Only a woman who possesses excellence would be the right spouse for a man such as Odysseus. The notion of like-mindedness reverberates later in *Ody.* 6.183, when Odysseus explains to Nausikaa what it takes for a good marriage.

If indeed we follow Pound's own suggestion that the section of the *Cantos* in which "CII" appears parallels Dante's *Paradiso* and that it is called "Thrones," then we can understand why he would allude to Penelope's faithfulness in this poem. He tells us that "thrones concern the states of mind of people responsible for something more than their personal conduct."[40] First, Pound can be referring to the "thrones" that the blessed sit upon in the Rose Coliseum; secondly, he can also mean the category of angels who, along with the "contemplative," dwell on Saturn.[41] Like Dante's Beatrice who sits at the feet of the Virgin Mary in God's Heaven, Penelope is elevated in stature in Pound's universe by her goodness and circumspection. She behaves justly to Odysseus not because she is compelled to by any personal regard for her own well-being, but because it is the right way to treat a man deserving of so much respect and honor. Although the question Pound asks concerning Penelope's faithfulness to Odysseus receives an answer, it serves the larger purpose of exploring the issue of just conduct. By asking this rhetorical question, Pound

implies that we, like Penelope, must "move out from egoism and to establish some definition of an order possible or at any rate conceivable on earth."[42] By demonstrating just behavior, then, Penelope exemplifies an ordered mind—less concerned for her own well being and more interested in doing what is right for her likewise virtuous husband.

It is interesting to note that Pound's two Penelopes represent lofty concepts of good writing associated with modernist aesthetics, as in "Hugh Sewelyn Mauberly," and just conduct and contemplation found in "CII" from the *Cantos*. The issue of Penelope's faithfulness does not affect her status as the elevated symbol in these works. Furthermore, Pound does not focus on her sexuality or degrade her femininity. In fact, by identifying Penelope with Flaubert and placing her in Paradise, he seems to display a high regard for women, one that can be traced from the beginning to the end of his career with these two poems.

Hilda Doolittle (H. D.)

Writing about her close relationship with Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) confesses:

> We were curled up together in an armchair when my father found us. I was "gone." I wasn't there. I disentangled myself. I stood up; Ezra stood beside me. It seems we must have swayed, trembling. But I don't think we did. 'Mr. Pound, I don't say there was anything wrong. . . .' Mr. Pound, it was all wrong. You turn into a Satyr, a Lynx, and the girl in your arms (Dryad, you called her), for all her fragile, not yet lost virginity, is *Maenad, bassarid.* God keep us from *Canto* LXXIX, one of the *Pisan Cantos.*[43]

Just as on this day in her father's living room, the lives of H. D. and Ezra Pound were so interwoven that H. D. never completely disentangled herself from Pound's influence over her writing or from her affection for this friend. It provides quite a challenge to anyone writing about either of these poets to avoid mentioning the other in the same breath. But despite years of their collaboration and intimacy, H. D. emerges in time as a distinct and unique voice of modernism. Her view of Penelope stays within the confines of H. D.'s intuitive self, the womb vision[44] that defines her aesthetics.[45]

Born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, H. D. was the daughter of a professor of math and astronomy. Her stepmother was a follower of the *Unitas Fratrum*, better known as the Bohemian or Moravian Brotherhood. A melancholy child, H. D. turned early in life to a study of Greek and Latin. Her connection to modernism began at fifteen when she met and became engaged to Ezra Pound, who encouraged her classical studies and put her in contact with the Latin Renaissance poets. Much to Professor Doolittle's relief, her relationship with Pound abruptly ended, but her poor health and personal conflicts regarding her sexuality did not. After a brief affair with a young woman named Frances Gregg, H. D. moved to London and continued her friendship with Pound; however, their previous intimacy was never successfully rekindled. Though she married and divorced Richard Aldington and later became romantically involved with Winifred Ellerman ("Bryher"), H.D. remained one of Pound's most loyal friends.[46]

Primarily H. D. is known through her membership in the avant garde movement of Imagism. Imagism, a literary movement begun by Pound, Aldington, and H. D., focused on the object in the poem, omitted unnecessary words, and moved away from a regular rhythm.[47] Like Pound, H. D.'s modernism never caused her to abandon her classical roots. At the heart of her poetry was Greco-Roman and Egyptian mythology; her translations of and commentaries on Greek plays further attest to her devotion to classical literature.

Much has been written about H. D.'s sexuality, or more precisely her bisexuality.[48] That she became romantically involved with both genders cannot be denied. What is important to this study, however, is the way she depicts the relationship between men and women in her poems, "At Ithaca" and *Winter Love*. Specifically, we are concerned with the way H. D. portrays Penelope in these two works.

"At Ithaca"

"At Ithaca," appearing in her collection, *Heliodora and Other Poems*, [49] was begun in 1916 and completed around 1924. In the poem Penelope speaks as she weaves and unweaves Laertes's shroud. The repetition of Penelope's phrase, "over and back," emphasizes the action of undoing the threads of her father-in-law's garment (1, 8). Describing the night, she tell us that it is the time when ". . .the sea / takes on that desperate tone / of dark that wives put on / when all their love is done" (4-8). Her allusion to "desperation" warns us of her anxiety, her growing fear of her position in the palace.

In Stanza 2, still unweaving, she laments that she longs for some "fiery friend" to appear and take her away from her tedious chore (13-15). We can guess it is Odysseus whom she wishes would come to her, but in the next stanza, we also learn that she tires of longing for him. She now entertains ideas that "play traitor to [her] soul" (17). What's more, her love for Odysseus now wanes: "Enchantments that [she] thought / he had. . . " she no longer sees (27). His "fire and fame" no longer binds her faithfully to him, and her desperation drives her to hope that one of the suitors will "stoop and conquer that / long waiting with a kiss" (35-36).

In Stanza 5 we are told that the pattern she weaves into the shroud serves as a reminder of Odysseus. However Athene, not Penelope, instigates the pattern that "steels" Penelope's "soul" and warns her of her husband's power (41). She tells us that she sees

" . . .shafts of rain / his chariot and his shafts, / . . .the arrows fall" (43-45). Most alarming, however, she watches "bright rivals and. . . those lesser rivals flee" (49-50). Thus, the pattern that Athene forces Penelope to weave and reweave is meant to warn her about the consequences of her actions if she does indeed give into the suitors's demands or her own weakness. Like Odysseus's rivals and enemies, she too would perish by his fiery wrath.

H. D.'s Penelope lacks personal strength and determination to continue in the manner she has been going. Her faithfulness to Odysseus is derived from two rather tenuous sources: Athene's intervention and the fear of her husband's reprisal over her disloyalty. Based on the Imagist notion that the ideas expressed in their poetry were "emanations, as it were, of life itself"[50] rather than representations of ideas and objects, H. D. invites us to make connections between the figures in the poem and people in her life. For instance, in talking about the "resemblance[s]" between the Greek mythology in her poem, *Helen in Egypt*, and her own life, she says:

> There is a resemblance in this, the two men meet in war, the Trojan War, the Achilles of my fantasy and imagination and the Odysseus of Ezra's. They do not meet, they never can meet in life. But the two women, Helen (of my creative reconstruction) and the Penelope (a human activity) can communicate.[51]

According to H. D., then, Helen and Penelope both represents various *personae* of H. D.: Helen is manifest in her creative self; Penelope, her personal life. Specifically, in "At Ithaca" there can be little doubt that Penelope's desperation is linked to H. D.'s own personal agonies.[52]

We can extrapolate from her allusion to "fire and fame" that Odysseus is Pound.[53] In *End To Torment*, she tells us about a "premonition" she had: "Here is the legend, the

myth; actually, the basic myth can not be localized. Wotan, Odysseus or Herakles, born in Hailey, Idaho or wherever it is, educated in . . .wherever is was."[54] For H.D., then, Pound emerges as the absent hero, her lover who does not dwell resolutely under the same roof, but resides within her unsteady heart—the lover she can never completely escape from or entirely purge.[55] The rivals could include any of the men and women that seduce H. D. away from her duty to Pound (or Pound's aesthetics). For all of H. D.'s disdain for representation, "At Ithaca" allegorizes love strained by absence, physical or emotional, kept alive only by some kind of torment. In this light H. D.'s Penelope emerges as an anxious and weak woman, full of despair and left with little hope.

Winter Love

Winter Love,[56] a collection of twenty-eight poems H. D. referred to as "Helen poems," was written in the last four years of her life. Along with *Hermetic Definition*, they demonstrate her lifelong interest in mythology, legend, magic, and religion and are a continuation of her well-regarded *Helen in Egypt* . The focus of the poem, however, centers once again on her relationship with Pound, who had just been released from St. Elizabeth's. The name *Winter Love* implies the kind of love that comes to us at the end of our lives. However, H. D. had originally called it *Espérance*, or "hope," suggesting "the child she and Pound might have had" if they had stayed together. *Winter Love*, then, is the

> response to her own question of why the relationship
> [between her and Pound] worked itself out in the way it did,
> her final answer seems to be a philosophical one: things
> tend to continue in the form in which they begin. The
> moment of birth prefigures the moment of death; the first

> birth had been the poem, and the last birth would be the
> poem. The poem is in and of itself a resolution of tensions,
> an expression of life.[57]

Thus, the love that comes to H. D. at this point of her life is the love she began her life with: Her love for Ezra Pound. The product of that union remains throughout their lives their memories and their poetry.

Although H. D.'s devotion to Pound suggests faithfulness, she does not take the *persona* of Penelope in the poem. However, she does allude to Penelope several times. In poem 2 we find an example of an apostrophe, for she laments to an absent Pound about what their relationship could have been: "If I thought of you, I only thought / of something that endured, that might endure" (2.1-3). Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa represent the ideas and situations that gained power over him and came between them when they were young and in love. She adds that "Penelope was a far-off dream of home" (2.3-5). Linking their situation to Odysseus and Penelope, she alludes twice to the "ten years" (2.16, 2.18) that Pound was held at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, which H. D. calls "the Palace" (2.17).

The rather oblique reference to Penelope and home has its roots in Pound's poetic journey, with which H. D. was very familiar. As Stephen Sicari points out, Pound's "lost home" is the world severed by the moral depravation that man's lack of social consciousness produced. He points out:

> When cut off from any cultural tradition that can provide
> responsible moral leadership for one's journey, the heroic
> individual must emulate the 'self-reliance' of Odysseus and
> adopt the pose of an 'adventurous' wanderer working in
> isolation from the rest of his culture, responsible only to

> himself. . . . And Homer's hero provides for the modern
> poet such a destination in his intense longing for a return to a
> lost home.[58]

H. D.'s Penelope, then, symbolizes the utopian vision of a world unfettered by the madness of war and devastation, the place where men and women live ordered and righteous lives. In H. D.'s viewpoint, Pound's odyssey in search of this Penelope leads him ultimately back to herself, his friend and lover who knew the poet long before his shipwreck on the shores of Fascism.[59]

In poem 8 (called the "Antistrophe") H. D. alludes to weaving and the loom:

> Frail is the thread and long,
> pale is the hand and fragile,
> busy upon the loom. (8.1-3)

Of course, the one busy at the loom is Penelope who "reweav[es] with threads of gold. . . / the pattern, the history, / the legend. . . " (8.5-8). Pound appears once again—this time in the guise of "the Lord of Troy." Pound, who "dares" to experiment with poetry and defies America with his political sensibilities, is this hero who "dare[s] to defy the Sun . . . Beauty, . . .to say Troy is forgotten" (8.9-15). In the last line of this poem H. D. unites Pound and herself for eternity in the *mythos* of their story : "The Song and the Singer are one" (8.16). As the singer of the story, H. D. becomes the storyteller, the Homeric poet recounting the heroic deeds of odyssean Pound. However, just as Pound's fame relies on H. D.'s craft, H. D.'s renown is linked to Pound's larger-than-life *persona* and her own skill to write a compelling "song." Thus, the relationship they sparked during their lifetime burns on in perpetuity in this symbiosis of storyteller and tale.

Although H. D. and Pound collaborated in Imagism, sharing similar visions of poetry, and experienced some of the same despair over the devastation that resulted from World War I, their work reflects a major difference in the way they approach their art. H.

D. relies upon an intuitive, mystical response to the world around her, or a "womb-vision." In fact, she tells us in "Notes on Thoughts and Vision" that her experience of pregnancy resulted in "jelly-fish consciousness," or superfeelings (93-96). Thus, H. D. draws upon her feminine powers of motherhood to shape her artistic sensibilities. We can surmise that this vision, predicated on the womb and childbirth, comes naturally to women, but—as H. D. tells us—it is also attainable for some men who work to develop this kind of vision. Therefore, when she writes about her personal anguish in *End to Torment*, she turns to mythical images of primordial woman: "Chltonian darkness—the black-out. I don't pretend to understand. We [Pound and H. D.] have gone through some Hell together, separately" (26). While Pound's Penelope is not locked into any preconceived notions of gender, H. D.'s is—and unabashedly so. Pound's Vorticism, which focuses on the intellect rather than emotion, and abstracts from reality rather than intuits from it, results in a different kind of response to the world around them.

We can see the depth of H. D.'s emotions in "At Ithaca." Here, Penelope (as H. D.) emerges as an anxious and weak woman, full of despair and left with little hope. In the same way, *Winter Love* suggests the imagery of birthing associated with motherhood. In this poem H. D.'s Penelope takes on a larger, more varied *persona*. First, she represents the unattainable utopia lost to Pound, a philosophical and psychological womb that would have kept him safe from harm. Secondly, she is the priestess who keeps the flame of Pound's infamy lit by her poetic torch and within her personal psyche. Because both Penelopes found in the poems "At Ithaca" and *Winter Love* are, in fact, *personae* of H.D., they have a metonymic quality about them. When she tells us about an old lover, who left her for " . . . Helen / Fate, Fortune, Defamation, / Treachery, Adultery, War" (13-15) we read "Pound" in place of "Lord" and Odysseus, and most importantly, we read "H.D." in the one who longs for his return.

James Joyce

H. D.'s and Pound's lives, wound together as they were in the shaping of the early modern aesthetic, were only part of the web of modern writers and thinkers. Another artist who devised his own response to Homer's Penelope was James Joyce. That Pound and Joyce were perceived as significant contributors to literature of this period is obvious: When they both arrived in Paris in 1920, it signaled for many "a new literary era."[60] In his "Paris Letter" to *The Dial*, written in 1922, Pound says this about James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

> Incomplete as I write this. His profoundist work, most significant—"Exiles" was a side-step, necessary katharsis, clearance of mind from continental contemporary thought—*Ulysses*, obscure, even obscene, as life itself is obscene in places, but an impassioned meditation on life. He has done what Flaubert set out to do in *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, done it better, more succinct. An epitome.[61]

Thus, Joyce as a creator of the *mot juste*, is, like Pound and H.D., a product of Flaubert—a child of modern aesthetics.

Joyce was hailed even during his lifetime as one of the greatest writers of the 20th Century and the shaper of the modern novel. A Jesuit education left Joyce critical of the Irish Catholic Church for most of his life and caused him to eschew many of its dictates. One manifestation of his rejection of Catholic dogma was that he chose to live outside of marriage with Nora Barnacle, whom most scholars point to as the model for Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*. Beginning his writing career as a poet with *Chamber Music*, he moved into short stories (*The Dubliners*) and novels (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses,* and *Finnegan's Wake*). Although he attained much critical recognition for his work, he was

plagued by poverty, eye trouble, and family problems for most of his life. Like Pound, Joyce was influenced by Homer and Dante and held fellow Dubliner Yeats in high regard.

Ulysses [62] was published in 1922, but it had appeared in the *Little Review* prior to that time. Due to its frank treatment of sex and bodily functions, it was banned in America until 1933. The story focuses on the wanderings and adventures of Leopold Bloom on June 16, 1904, the date of Joyce's first walk with lover Nora. The title of the novel suggests a connection to Homer's *Odyssey*, which Joyce much admired. In fact, Joyce did contend early on that each episode of his book corresponded with an episode in Homer's story.[63] However, later Joyce rejected some of the close parallels to Homer that many scholars suggested. In reading the novel, we do see connections between Leopold and Odysseus, Stephen Dedalus and Telemachos, and Molly and Penelope.

The last episode of *Ulysses* , generally referred to as "Penelope," corresponds with Book 23 of Homer's *Odyssey*. In this interior monologue, comprised of eight long sentences and related to us in Joyce's stream of consciousness narrative style, Molly Bloom rests in bed after her tryst with Blazes Boylan, her sleepy mind full of rambling thoughts. Because the bed in Homer's story is the essential clue that allows Penelope to verify the stranger's true identity and, thus, to reunite the two lovers, the fact that the action in Joyce's episode takes places in Molly and Leopold's bed suggests a possible reunion between the estranged couple. Yet this Penelope has not kept her wooers at bay but has become involved with a man as uncouth as any of Homer's suitors. Although Leopold ("Poldy," as Molly calls him) is merely separated from Molly for one day, he has been absent from her for quite some time: Following the death of their child, he has not been able to engage in sexual intercourse with her. Emasculated by tragedy, Bloom becomes less husband and more servant to his willful wife. Molly, fearing old age[64] and understandably filled with lust,[65] takes virile but repugnant Blazes to bed. At the end of her monologue we come to understand Molly, and we recognize that Joyce does not

portray her actions as villainous. In fact, her tender and motherly feelings toward Leopold make us aware of the deep love she has for him. That the monologue begins and ends with thoughts of Bloom suggests circularity and eternity,[66] even reminiscent of a wedding band. And because the story ends with Molly contemplating serving breakfast to Bloom in their bed, there is a hint that they will be able to revive their withering marriage.

Before offering an analysis of Joyce's vision of Penelope, I would like to return to the debate surrounding Penelope that has been taking place since the Classical Age. For the most part, responses to Homer's Penelope have centered primarily on questions relating to her sexuality, intelligence, temperament, and courage: Was she faithful to Odysseus, or did she have an affair (or affairs)? Was she really waiting for Odysseus to return, or was she planning to marry one of the suitors? If she really wanted the suitors to go away, why didn't she *do* something more drastic about ridding the palace of them? Did she recognize Odysseus in the beggar's disguise, or was she totally duped? Or did she recognize him subconsciously but just wasn't *aware* that she knew it was he? Did she absolutely forgive him after he revealed himself (melting into his arms), or was she harboring some resentment over not being included in the plan? Were the ideas she had for the shroud and the bow contest her own, or was she simply following Athene's suggestions? What is truly interesting about Joyce's Molly is that we can see twenty-five hundred years worth of responses to Homer's Penelope all come together simultaneously in this one episode. In fact, when talking about this section of his book, Joyce wrote: "Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilisable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent *Weib. Ich bin das Fleisch das stets bejaht*"[67]

First, in addressing Molly's sexuality, Joyce separates notions about sex and love in the story. In this particular situation—in which Molly and Bloom cannot engage in conjugal relations but still demonstrate much tenderness and love toward one another—

Molly's sexual encounter with Blazes Boylan does not result in moral outrage. We can say that, although Molly commits adultery, she is not necessarily unfaithful to Bloom, for her thoughts turn to him repeatedly in her monologue. Criticized for her whorishness[68] and cherished for her sentimental remembrances of her early courtship with Bloom,[69] Molly combines Penelope's possible trysts with Hermes, Antinoos, and all of the suitors with Penelope's faithful vigil for Odysseus.

Secondly, in regards to Molly's intelligence, Joyce portrays her as possessing low-brow tastes[70] and a rather poor vocabulary[71] and *at the same time* he confers upon her a good wit and much cunning. A wry sense of humor is apparent when Molly refers to an Irish political organization erroneously as the "Sinner Fein" (748). We must also keep in mind that planning her tryst with Blazes in her own bed attests to some ability to connive and scheme. Concerning Molly's temperament, her sentimentality and "hot temper" may have been patterned on Penelope's gentle reminiscing about Odysseus in *Ody.* 4.686-693 and her outrage over the treatment of the intriguing beggar in *Ody.* 18.215-225. Lastly, Molly may have gained a great deal of her spunk and resiliency *as well as* her laziness and complacency from Penelope's brave tricks on the suitors and continued despair over her predicament.

We may argue that Joyce's Molly may not represent the universal Woman,[72] but certainly his Molly is *all* Penelope. Therefore, although she is viewed by most scholars as an anti-type to Homer's Penelope, or an ironic treatment of Homer's Penelope,[73] Joyce's Molly does not differ that much from Homer's. In fact, Joyce seems to draw upon diverse readings and multiple *personae* for his rendering of Molly. Thus, we can both agree and take umbrage with this description of Molly offered by David Hayman in *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning*:

> Molly *could be* a great whore and the *Magna Mater*, but she is a lazy, ignorant bundle of instincts tied to middle class

> values, though endowed with a fairly good singing voice, a hot temper, a sense of humor, and ample dimensions. If the superobjective voice of "Ithaca" fails to tell us this, the subjective effusion of "Penelope" reveals all, giving the lie to the list and altering many of our preconceptions."[74]

Rather than condemning Molly for these things, Joyce's loving, and perhaps comedic and ironic, portrayal of her dares us not to revel in her deceit and forthrightness, adolescent cravings and cleverness, testiness and her upbeat humor, slatternly lifestyle and nervy pluck. Whether we like Molly or not is really not at issue here. What seems to be more important is that Joyce's Molly-Penelope synthesizes all of the *possibilities* of Homer's Penelope and, in doing so, gives us one of the most fully formed characters relating to Homer's.

Dorothy Parker

Although very little time separates the modernist artists I have already discussed and Dorothy Parker, their aesthetic tastes and views are worlds apart. A highly successful artist, critic, editor (of *Vogue*), and member of the Algonquin Round Table, Parker was born in New Jersey (having been cheated out of being made a native New Yorker, she once quipped, by pure chance). Unlike Pound and H.D., Parker, *née* Rothschild, spent her most productive years in Manhattan. Although she visited Europe, spending time with Ernest Hemingway in both France and Spain and passing James Joyce in the streets of Paris, she was undeniably American and interested in the events of her own native terrain.[75]

That she became a writer is an accident (from which she often recovered, due to her bouts with depression and alcoholism). She rose to prominence in her mid-twenties to become the model of the modern woman. However, as her many attempts at suicide and

numerous vapid romantic affairs attest, being a modern woman was not without its pitfalls, and Parker seldom shied away from a forthright account of her chaotic life. Writing about Parker, Marion Meade tells us:

> She had chosen to present herself not so much as a bad girl but as a bad boy, a firecracker who was aggressively proud of being tough, quirky, feisty, a variation on the basic Becky Sharp model, and she managed to carry it off with terrific style and humor. She was putting on an act, but it was an act that seemed as if it might sell.[76]

Appearing to be tough-minded and independent, Parker eschewed domesticity and middle class values in print, despite her life-long desire for acceptance in her personal life.

What seemed to worry Parker the most was that her work was not worthy of the kind of attention it received. In fact, she viewed her writing as mediocre—her poetry trivial and her criticism shallow. When, for example, her first book of verse, *Enough Rope?*, elicited good reviews from critics, she rejected the notion that she belonged to the elite group that *McCall's* applauded as the greatest American poets.[77] In light of Parker's confessional approach to her work and her suspicion that she did not really deserve the popularity and acclaim she received, it makes sense that she would voice her fears in print about the way she will be remembered in time.

Sunset Gun, the volume of poetry in which "Penelope" is found, marks the second book of published verse for Dorothy Parker. Originally entitled *Songs for the Nearest Harmonica*, this book also received rave reviews from critics anxious for a follow-up for her first success, *Enough Rope?*. Dedicated to John Garrett, a man with whom Parker was tenuously involved, the poems found in *Sunset Gun* represent a difficult time for Parker, who was recently divorced, drinking too much, and suicidal.

In "Penelope," Penelope laments her fate to us: While Odysseus "ride[s] the silver seas" and "cut[s] the glittering wave," she is left behind to "sit at home, and rock" (4-6). She must pay attention to the responsibilities of hearth and home, that is participating in community life, providing refreshments for her family, and cleaning the home (7-9). The author's cynicism and wit is evident in the last line of the poem: "They will call him brave" (10). What she seems to be implying here is that the domestic chores, long associated with women, have not been traditionally viewed as the proper activity of heroism. On the other hand, gallivanting around the world, sailing the seas—as Odysseus does—is considered to be stuff that epics are made from. She attempts to revise this outlook, arguing instead that what Penelope does, performing her duties to family and friends, is just as important as what her husband is known for. Dorothy Parker's infamous wit uses irony to present Penelope's view of the way in which heroism is evaluated. Anyone familiar with her poems and stories knows that Dorothy Parker excelled at sarcasm, and irony was one of the many tools at her disposal to achieve it.

As we can see in Parker's "Penelope," by surprising us with the real reason that Penelope laments Odysseus's adventuring ways and by positioning her complaint in the last line of the poem she expands our understanding of the words, "they," "him," and "brave." For example, Parker has not introduced a plural noun for the pronoun, "they," to replace, but we can guess from the context that she is referring to those people who bestow fame—historians, critics, one's colleagues and friends. Furthermore, by placing "him" after an explanation of her own daily activities and immediately before "brave," Penelope suggests that her own conduct will be "unbrave," though it demands as much courage as his conduct requires.

We also realize that she uses Penelope as a metaphor for the forgotten female hero. For although Penelope did indeed do more than any other woman in literary history to keep

her home together for her husband and son, she has never once been called heroic; in fact, with the exception of very recent scholarship, we see that she has been ignored by critics.

Parker's predilection for men who were incompatible with her views and tastes, combined with an honest assessment of the work she published, may have contributed to the dark tone this poem takes. In particular, Garrett was incapable of sustaining a monogamous relationship with her and shared no interest in her work. Furthermore, he was critical of her career and disliked her drinking habits. Her Penelope demonstrates a bitterness that Parker herself was known to frequently exhibit, particularly to men who she felt deserted her emotionally. However, the real anxiety in the poem over not being remembered emerges as the dominant theme of the poem.

Current reassessment of the individual members of the Algonquin Table tend toward presenting them in a less than glorious light. *Bon mots* ascribed to Parker and others are being denied them or are condemned as practiced or pre-prepared. In "Wits at the Round Table: Was It, Er, Um, Square?," William Grimes suggests that the popularity Parker and other members received was actually due to "self-promotion, back scratching and log rolling."[78] The most damning evidence of their lack of humor and talent seems to lie in the fact that they relied heavily on "spoken lines" rather than printed documentation of their wit. Although Grimes does accord Parker respect for her writing, he points specifically to her stories, rather than her verse, criticism, and repartée. Thus, Parker's anxiety over her fame following the publication of her poetry was well-founded: Her stature has diminished considerably since her death in 1967. Like her Penelope, Parker too is viewed as *un*brave, *un*heroic, and *un*important. It is interesting to note that Parker's loss of fame parallels H. D.'s own fall from literary grace. Contemporary feminists point to the appropriation of modernism by male critics who focus only on the contributions of male modernists.[79] Only recently do we see the inclusion of such female modernists as H. D.

and Gertrude Stein in the 20th Century American canon. Predictably missing from Harold Bloom's article, "278 Books You Should Have Read By Now," are any works by Dorothy Parker.[80]

One last comment concerning Parker's work is that her "rage"[81] about being forgotten is mirrored in the works of contemporary female poets. Meade tells us this about Parker's writing:

> There were alarming glimpses, no more than a series of snapshots, of the tragedies that would be recognized by twentieth century women as peculiarly their own: the gut-searing loneliness of the women who have "careers," the women who don't marry, the women who do but divorce; the women deprived of maternal warmth and comfort who are condemned to seek love forever in the barren soil of husbands and children and even animals; women howling primitively for nourishment, flanked on one side by rejecting mothers and on the other by rejecting lovers. Her verse began to acknowledge the timeless subject of female rage.[82]

In this litany of subjects occurring in Parker's work that also appears in contemporary feminist poetry is the rejection of men all together—as demonstrated in Parker's article, "Why Haven't I Married." In sum, then, we can say that Penelope represents the forgotten female hero who is relegated (by those in charge of according fame) to oblivion no matter how excellent her conduct was. The fear and anger that Parker's Penelope expresses in this poem presages the sentiments of the Penelopes to come.

Conclusion

In looking back at the modernist view of Penelope, we see that, unlike any other period that we have explored, the artistic response to her varies widely and, in some cases, extends the parameters of her legend. What is more, although the many different *personae* of Penelope that we meet in the work of Carlo Carrà, Ezra Pound, H.D., James Joyce, and Dorothy Parker are united in the eternal symbol of wifedom, this does not change the fact that she also represents what "modern" and "woman" means individually to each of these artists. Lastly we must keep in mind that Penelope indicates the changing sensibilities of this period of time.

Ironically, H. D.'s Penelope emerges as the most traditional of all of the portrayals we have explored here in this chapter. First, she makes Penelope's gender a focal point of her work. Secondly, her portrayal of Penelope harkens back to Victorian values associated with women. In "At Ithaca," for example, Penelope (as H. D.) emerges as an anxious and weak woman, full of despair and left with little hope. In the same way, *Winter Love* suggests imagery of birthing, associated with motherhood. Thus, for H. D., Penelope's strength is derived from her feminine power of giving birth and from men who will come to save her from herself and terrible outside forces. It is interesting to note that although H. D.'s poetry is experimental, her ideas regarding women are not.

Another irony that we find in this period is Carrà's response to Penelope. As a futurist whose contempt for women and femininity was well-documented in the various manifestoes he participated in, Carrà's Penelope is remarkably feminist: His Penelope is an allegory representing the independent and hard-edged woman of the modern age whose authority is derived from inner strength rather than feminine wiles and manipulation. Pound too presents us with a very feminist treatment of Penelope. In "Hugh Sewelyn Mauberly" she represents lofty concepts of good writing associated with modernist aesthetics. Keeping in mind the parameters of Penelope's legend, we notice that Pound

pushes these boundaries slightly. For although Homer presents her as a persuasive speaker who can solicit gifts from the suitors,[83] she is not remembered in legend as a rhetorician like Odysseus. In "CII" from the *Cantos*, however, Pound depicts her more traditionally by linking her to just conduct and contemplation. However, the innovation that Pound offers is that he does not make her gender an issue in her virtuous conduct—unlike the traditionalists who limit her kind of virtue to those appropriate to her femininity.

Joyce's Penelope emerges as the most fully formed representation of Homer's Penelope, embodying notions of sexuality, intelligence, temperament, and courage and drawing upon diverse readings and multiple *personae* for his rendering of Molly. His loving portrayal of Penelope and his non-judgmental treatment of her adulterous behavior differs from traditionalists who view this kind of conduct as evidence of a woman's fall from grace. Although we may be tempted to suggest that the novel form allows for a more detailed treatment of Penelope, this is not the case. Penelope appears in numerous other novels from the 19th to the 20th Centuries. Nowhere else does she emerge so fully fleshed out as she does in Joyce's work. (See Appendix A.) Lastly, Dorothy Parker's Penelope, the metaphor for the forgotten hero, presages the voices of feminist poets writing during the 1970's and '80's.

Thus, in light of the diverse portrayals of Penelope by modern artists and the way in which she comes to represent differing notions of "modernism" and "woman," we read with great skepticism the comment made by Shari Benstock that

> modernism itself, seems to be about language—the history of words and the principles by which sentences construct themselves. Kenner's work constructs a grammar for this literary event, interests itself in the syntax and diction of the modern. Indeed, an interest in language would seem to define the modern, and certain linguistic practices (evident in

> the work of Eliot, Joyce, Pound, and Williams) would characterize Modernism. . . . One discovers that expatriate women participate in the Modernist enterprise often seeking to subvert and invert its cultural and aesthetic premises."[84]

Ironically, it is male artists like Carrà, Pound, and Joyce, as well as non "ex-patriate" female writers like Parker, who present a Penelope that "subvert[s] and invert[s] its cultural and aesthetic premises" while the expatriate modernist female artist, H.D., remains aligned with traditional views toward women. Tracing Penelope in the modern age demonstrates the difficulty we have in defining what modernism exactly is and in categorizing the response to the changes occurring during this period by gender or geographical location.

Chapter 6
Notes

1 "Futurist Manifesto 1909," quoted from Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990) 245.

2 *Futurism and Futurisms*, Ed. Pontus Hutlen. (New York: Abbeville Press,"The Futurist Manifesto of 1914," for example, railed against the "arrested development" of the British, derived from Victorian conventions they still subscribed to in their art and culture.

3 Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990) 122.

4 Susan Stanford Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, quoted from Shari Benstock,*Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986) 26.

5 Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music, and Painting in Europe, 1900-1916*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 1-3.

6 *Futurism and Futurisms*, 441-443.

7 *The Dictionary of Art Terms*, 86-87.

8 Marco Valsecchi, *Italian Moderns* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1959) 5. As Velsecchi points out, Carrà was "remembered for the riotous Futurist Evening of 1913 at the Teatro Costanzi, and he retained the reputation of being a firebrand of the revolutionary movement in art."

9 *Futurism and Futurisms*, 443.

10 *Futurism and Futurisms*, 516. In the "Futurist Manifesto, 11 May 1913" Marinetti writes: "Futurism is grounded in the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries of science."

11 Valsecchi, 32.

12 *Futurism and Futurism*, 459. Although futurism influenced many movements, Dada and Surrealism can be deemed its most notable heirs, despite the fact artists of these movements rejected Futurist notions.

13 Butler, 209.

14 Butler, 209. Called by T.S. Eliot "the foreruner of a new attitude of mind, which should be the twentieth century mind, if the twentieth century is to have a mind of its own."

Butler points out that despite Hulme's innovations, "until Pound and others gave them a more explicitly avant-gardist context, Hulme's views remain indebted to the Paterian view of art."

15 Martin Seymour-Smith, *Who's Who in Twentieth Century Literature* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976) 286-287. Seymour-Smith mentions that Pound "takes over (and genuinely transforms imagism from Hulme and Ford and others." Despite this usurping of Ford's ideas, Pound was one of only a few friends who remained loyal to Ford when others forgot him (119).

16 Butler, 212. Butler treats Pound's borrowing of Hulme's and Ford's ideas less severely, saying only that "he seems to have forgotten many of [the "forgotten school's] doctrine, including that of the 'image', until he came upon verse by H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), which he labelled 'Imagiste', and so fitted some poetry to a theory that could not possibly have inspired it."

17 *Futurism and Futurisms*, 597. "Vorticism was conceived as British art's independent alternative to Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism. The word Vorticism was coined by Ezra Pound early 1914, and he explained in the Vorticist's magazine Blast that 'the vortex is the point of maximum energy. it represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency.'"

18 Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985) 164-182. Kenner points to this work and "Homage to Sextus Propertius" as evidence of Pound's preeminence in poetry.

19 Peter Brooker, *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979) 183-188. Brooker tells us that the "fictitious Mauberly" was for Pound a "distant persona."

20 188-192. A detailed annotation to this poem can be found in Brooker's book. As we can see from the title, Pound makes a pun out of "epode," but he essentially borrows this title from Pierre Ronsard's poem, "De l"Élection de son sépulcre."

21 Kenner, 170.

22 Ezra Pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly: Contacts and Life," *Personae* (New York: New Directions, 1990) 185-202.

23 For further information regarding Pound's poetic journey, see Stephen Sicari. *Pound's Epic Ambition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991) 17-66.

24 Pound, "HSM," line 13.

25 Kenner, 14. This claim is easily substantiated when we read through Pound's literary essays. See Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*. Ed. with introduction by T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968) 21, 27.

26 Kenner, 171.

27 Kenner, 170.

28 Butler, 212. Pound's interest in exactitude can be seen in Imagism: "direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective," and "to use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation."

29 Kenner, 170-171.

30 Pound, *LE*, 399-400.

31 Ronald Bush. "Introduction to Ezra Pound." *The Gender of Modernism*. Ed. Bonnie Kime Scott. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 357-358. Here in the notes to his essay on Pound, Bush cites the numerous *women* Pound encouraged to write. Among there are H.D., May Sinclair, Natalie Barney, and Nancy Cunard.

32 Bush, 353-359. There is much debate concerning Pound's treatment of women. A good, brief explanation can be found in Ronald Bush's essay. In particular, he takes K.K. Ruthaven to task for her "reductive" reading of Pound's relationship with some of the women whose careers he nurtured.

33 This latter view is born out in "Doggerel Section of Letter to Marianne Moore." Pound writes:

> The female is a chaos ,
>
> the male
>
> is a fixed point of stupidity. . .
>
> the male
>
> is more expansive
> and demands other and varied contacts. . .
>
> You , my dear correspondent ,
> are a stabilized female ,
> I am a male who has attained the chaotic fluidities"

See Ezra Pound, "Doggerel Section of Letter to Marianne Moore," *The Gender of Modernism*, 362-365.

34 Makin, 13.

35 Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) viii.

[36] Odysseus appears 16 times; Circe, eleven times and Kalupso, twice.

[37] Terrell, 488.

[38] Terrell, 659.

[39] Terrell, 659. He tells us that "around 1950 Pound wanted friends not to send clichéd Christmas cards but a question that would send people back to the classics, such as 'Why did Penelope wait for the return of Odysseus?'" In this canto he answers the question for us.

[40] Pound, quoted in Makin, 276.

[41] Makin, 276.

[42] Pound, quoted in Makin, 276.

[43] H. D., *End To Torment* (New York: New Directions, 1979) 17.

[44] H. D., "Notes on Thought and Vision," quoted from *The Gender of Modernism*, 94.

[45] *The Gender of Modernism*, 86. In her introduction to H. D., Susan Stanford Friedman writes: "The forces of history—particularly its cycles of cataclysmic violence—created in H. D. the need for her to develop a more explicitly gendered discourse. Her postimagist poetry—for example, "Eurydice" (1917), *Hymen* (1921), and *Heliodora* (1923)—regularly featured a woman speaking through a mythic mask, respeaking the myths of classical masculinist culture from a woman's point of view. Even more directly, her autobiographical fiction of the twenties and thirties wove and rewove her personal stories into selves that were healed in the process of being written."

[46] *ET*, viii. H. D.'s steadfast loyality to Pound, particularly during the time he was incarcerated at St. Elizabeth's, antagonized her friends Bryher and Sylvia Beach

[47] Butler, 212.

[48] For an in-depth look at H. D.'s sexuality, see Benstock, 311-356.

[49] H. D. "At Ithaca," *Heliodora and Other Poems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Company, 1924) 39-41.

[50] Janice Robinson, *H.D.: The Life and Work of an American Poet* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1982) 53.

[51] H. D. *ET*, 32.

[52] H. D., *Advent*, 153; quoted in Susan Stanford Friedman, *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 1. "'It must be Penelope's Web I'm weaving,' H.D. wrote about 'the novel' she was perpetually doing and undoing, the story of her woman-poethood in the modern world split open by war.'"

[53] H. D. *ET*, 24, 48. Recalling his powerful presence in her life, H.D. refers to her moments with Pound as "fiery" and she describes his "cold, blazing intelligence."

[54] H. D. *ET*, 43.

[55] H. D. *ET*, 35. Indeed, H.D. mentions that she "was separated from [her] friends, [her] family, even from America, by Ezra."

[56] H. D.*Winter Love, Hermetic Definition* (New York: New Directions, 1972) 87.

[57] Robinson, 428.

[58] Sicari, 17-18.

[59] Pound's involvement with Fascism is well-documented. See Tim Redman, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[60] Noel Riley Fitch. *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation: A History of Literary Paris of the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983) 58.

[61] Ezra Pound, *LE*, 415-416.

[62] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1961). I will be referring to this text throughout this section of the chapter.

[63] Fitch, 67.

[64] Joyce, 766. Molly says: "I suppose he thinks Im finished out and laid on the shelf well Im not no nor anything like it well see well see now. . . ."

[65] Joyce, 740. Molly complains about Bloom's lack of interest in regular sexual intercourse, a situation that provides her little satisfaction. "Simply ruination for any woman and no satisfaction in it pretending to like it till he comes and then finish it off myself anyway and it makes your lips pale. . . ."

[66] James Joyce, as quoted from James Van Dyck Card, *An Anatomy of Penelope* (Rutherford, Associated University Presses, 1984) 20. Joyce says "Penelope" "turns like the Hugh earthball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning."

[67] James Joyce, as quoted from Card, 20. The German reads: "Woman. I am the flesh, constant always in the affirmation of my sexuality.

[68] David Hayman, *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning* (xx: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982) 117. Even Molly seems aware of the thin lines she walks when she complains that "you feel him trying to make a whore of me" (740).

[69] Doherty, 344-345.

[70] Hayman, 117.

[71] Gifford, 608-634. Gifford mentions several errors Molly makes in word usage.

[72] Stuart Gilbert, James *Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958) 385. Gilbert writes: ". . .The force of this long, unpunctuated meditation, in which a drowsy woman's vagrant thoughts are transferred in all their naked candour of self-revelation on to the written record, lies precisely in its universality."

[73] Lillian Doherty, "Joyce's Penelope and Homer's: Feminist Reconsiderations," *Classical and Modern Literature: A Quarterly* 10 (1990) : 343-349. She also suggests here that "unfaithful Penelope" exemplifies an oxymoron.

[74] Hayman, 117-118.

[75] Marion Meade. *Dorothy Parker: What Fresh Hell Is This?* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987) 167-171. After accompanying Hemingway to Spain to watch a bullfight, she was overwhelmed with a sense of horror over the spectacle she saw. Joyce, she found, was incredibly "taciturn."

[76] Meade, 45.

[77] Meade, 178.

[78] William Grimes, "Wits at the Round Table: Was It, Er, Um, Square?,"*New York Times* 28 Jun. 1994, late ed.: B1.

[79] *The Gender of Modernism*, 7.

[80] Harold Bloom, "278 Books You Should Have Read By Now," *The Dallas Morning News* 16 Oct. 1994, late ed.: J12.

[81] Meade 109.

[82] Meade, 108.

[83] *Ody*. 205-304.

[84] Benstock, 25, 34.

Entr'Acte

The Penelope of Modernists Carrà, Pound, H. D., Joyce, and Parker contain all of the qualities found in the Penelopes who have appeared thereafter. After 1928, we see Penelopes who, like Carrà's, are strong, independent, and intelligent; who, like Pound's, are metaphors for larger concepts like wit and talent; who, like H. D.'s, are faithful, forlorn, frightened, and fragile; and who, like Parker's, are angry, skeptical, and outspoken. Moreover, as I have mentioned previously, Joyce's Penelope embodies all of the possibilities of Homer's Penelope, and the artistic responses to her as well.

Although no new portraits of Penelope emerged after the early 20th Century, the contemporary period interests us because it marks the "second explosion" of responses to Penelope. From 1928 to 1995 over one hundred and twenty-eight works of art focus on Penelope or refer to her in some way. (See Appendix A.) As we recall, the first explosion occurred in the 16th and 17th Centuries due to the printing press and the accessibility of Homer's work. The response to Penelope tripled from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance Period. Likewise, responses to her in the contemporary period more than tripled from that of the 19th Century—the majority of which are found from the 1960's onwards.

The most important forces influencing interest in Penelope during the 1960's and 1970's were the various rights movements that arose in America. Due to the feminist movement, more women expressed themselves and found themselves in print than ever before. It is interesting to note that although the movement contributed greatly to the increase in portrayals of Penelope, it did not guarantee that the Penelope that emerged out of these new female voices was a strong and independent one. However, the ones found in the work of Janet Dubé,[1] Marilyn Hacker,[2] and Kate Llewellyn[3] certainly possess these qualities. For the majority of artists working during this time, she embodies the qualities of

the traditional woman and are, thus, either extolled or rejected. Some artists, like Jane Oliensis,[4] Judy Thurman,[5] and Dame Mary Gilmore,[6] associate Penelope primarily with her patience for waiting for Odysseus and the joy she experiences when he returns to her. Others, like Léonara Carrington and Orianna Fallaci, paint her as the weak and abandoned wife of Odysseus: Carrington's girl-woman surrounds herself with her toys and cannot function independently in the world[7] and Orianna Fallaci's model of womanhood discovers that her true place is not in the warlike business world of men, but in the domestic sphere of femininity.[8] These two works, in particular, recall the iconic image of the helpless Penelope that had so dominated the Victorian Age. It is also interesting to note that not one of the female artists that I studied from this period portrayed her as a cunning woman who could outwit the shrewdest of mortals.

Even black civil rights and gay writers do not forge new views of Homer's Penelope. Jay Wright, for example, connects Penelope's hopelessness to the despair of the black community following the deaths of civil right advocates Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.[9] Looking at James Harrison's poem, we see that he too follows the Victorian tradition of the abandoned Penelope even though the lovers in the story are both male.[10] Even those striving for personal freedom under totalitarian governments in Europe present only one aspect of Homer's Penelope. When Elisaveta Bagryana, writing about the communist regime in Bulgaria, states resolutely "I am not Penelope of Ancient Greece" (line 29), she subscribes to the traditional view of the faithful and enduring Penelope.[11]

Despite the fact that we can trace a dominant and traditional view of Penelope throughout the seven hundred years of art, the anomalies that emerge outside of this tradition signal to us that there is not one correct way of viewing her. Many different images of Penelope can, in fact, exist. As I will show in the next chapter, all of the hundreds of Penelopes that we have encounter in literature, the visual arts, and music are found in Homer's one story, the *Odyssey*.

Entr'acte
Notes

1 Janet Dubé, "Penelope," *Dancing the Tightrope: New Love Poems by Women*, ed. Barbara Burford et al (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1988) 11.

2 Marilyn Hacker, "Mythology," *The Norton Anthogy of Modern Poetry*, ed. Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1973) 1574-1575.

3 Kate Llewellyn, "Penelope," *Honey: Poems* (Hawthorn: Hudson Publishing, 1988) 79-80.

4 Jane Oliensis, "Penelope Sets Up Home with Odysseus," *Under 35: The New Generation of American Poets*, ed. Nicholas Christopher (New York: An Anchor Book, 1989) 149.

5 Judy Thurman, "Penelope," *The New York Times Book of Verse*, ed. Thomas Lask (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970) 8.

6 Dame Mary Gilmore, "Penelope," *A Map of Australian Verse: The Twentieth Century*, ed. James McAuley (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977) 91-92.

7 Léonara Carrington, *Pénélope* (Paris: Garimard) 1969.

8 Orianna Fallaci, *Penelope at War*, trans. Pamela Swinglehurst (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1966).

9 Jay Wright, "Death as History," *The Poetry of Black America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) 280-282.

10 James Harrison, "Penelope," *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*, ed. J. Paul Hunter (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) 307.

11 Elisaveta Bagryana, "Penelope of the Twentieth Century," *Penelope of the Twentieth Century: Selected Poems of Elisaveta Bagryana*, trans. Brenda Walker et al (London: Forest Books, 1993).

Chapter 7
Penelopeia:
Penelope in Homer's Story

> Agamemnon's encomium opens by invoking Odysseus, and congratulates him heartily, but critics have found it troublesome that he then goes on to celebrate the *kleos* of Penelope. As Finley remarks, 'That comes near making our *Odysseia* a *Penelopeia*.'[1]

Introduction

Although Finley's comment here focuses on the attention Penelope receives from Agamemnon in Book 24 of the *Odyssey*, the truth of the matter is Penelope is highly visible throughout the entire story and, in fact, the κλέος, or "fame," of the hero Odysseus depends upon her presence and the qualities leading to her own κλέος. That she also possesses the capacity to endure hardships comes as no surprise. Although Homer never once refers to Penelope as "faithful"—the epitaph accorded her in Western tradition—the way in which she perseveres during the twenty-year absence of her husband Odysseus does indeed lead us to see that tenacity and fidelity comprise two of her greatest qualities. However, in Penelope Homer presents us with more than a steadfast, chaste woman, for she also possesses other qualities, such as intelligence, wit, cunning, and courage. Furthermore, the ambiguity that Homer builds into the story[2] leaves room for less savory views of Penelope. In certain episodes, for example, we find ourselves questioning her chastity and strength of character. That Homer's Penelope possesses the possibility of all of these traits, both positive and negative, indicates her "complex personality," for like Odysseus, Homer has created a "polytropic hero in full."[3]

Before turning to the *Odyssey* to recover Homer's Penelope, I would like to discuss previous scholarship on Penelope and, then, delineate the traits that the artists we have studied explore in their versions of her. By doing this, I will show that, like artists, some scholars ignore the breadth of Penelope's character and disregard her complexity. Secondly, I will also demonstrate that a pattern emerges in the way Penelope has been viewed through time. Then, I will link these traits to passages in Homer's story in which she speaks or is spoken about to show that artists have derived these traits from Homer's Penelope. I should mention here that the reading of the *Odyssey* that I give in this section of my work reflects ways various passages of the text can be read and interpreted. What I hope to show by doing this is that Penelope's image in Western tradition is far from static and is derived from a complex presentation of her given to us by Homer.[4]

Penelope Scholarship

Modern Homeric scholarship, from the 17th to the mid-20th Centuries, sought to answer questions concerning the origins and development of Homer's text and the identity of the poet. In the 1600's and 1700's, for example, Abbé d'Aubignac, Richard Bentley, Giambattista Vico, and Robert Wood all debated the existence of Homer and the sources of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The mid to late-1800's saw the rise of textual criticism. F.A. Wolf and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff debated the influence of orality and literacy upon the creation of Greek epic, both men forwarding theories regarding the poems's composition. Although these issues have not yet been resolved, the influence of Milman Parry's study of oral heroic poetry, completed in 1928, *The Traditional Epithet in Homer*,[5] changed the focus of some Homeric scholars in the decades that followed.[6]

From the 1950's onward, many scholars began to examine the literary conventions of the *Odyssey*, looking, for instance, at plot, themes, and character. Here we find P. W. Harsh's "Penelope and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* XIX (1950),"[7] Geoffrey Kirk's *The*

Songs of Homer (1962),[8] Charles R. Beye's "Male and Female in the Homeric Poems" (1974),[9] and Charles Segal's "Kleos and Its Ironies in the *Odyssey*" (1983),[10] among others. Some works, like Cedric Whitman's *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*[11] and Gregory Nagy's *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*,[12] focus on the heroic tradition that Odysseus represents. Interest in Penelope arose during this time; however, until recently, conventional wisdom regarding Penelope deemphasized her presence in the story; many were more interested in her sexual conduct, particularly her *mis*conduct, than in her cunning intelligence. For example, in "Penelope ΠΟΛΥΤΡΟΠΟΣ" Patricia Marquandt argues that Penelope wanted to keep her options open with regard to choosing between the suitors and waiting for her husband to return.[13] And Sheila Murnaghan's "Penelope *Agnoia*" presents us with a Penelope who is unaware of the plot against the suitors and the true identity of the stranger.[14] On the other hand, Anne Amory suggests that Penelope subconsciously recognizes Odysseus but is in no frame of mind to move on her instincts.[15] The view that Penelope possesses the wherewithall to recognize her husband and be an active partner in the plot against the suitors can be seen, however, in a few works, like W. B. Stanford's *The Ulysses Theme* and P. W. Harsh's "Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX."

In the last decade a growing interest in the ambiguity found in Homer's text has resulted in a different view of Penelope. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, both Marylin Katz and Nancy Felson-Rubin argue for a complex image of Penelope derived from the *Odyssey's* ambiguity. Specifically, in *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Determinacy in the Odyssey*[16] Katz explores the notion of fame with regard to Penelope and points to inconsistencies in the text that subvert a single plot line. On the other hand, in *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics*,[17] Felson-Rubin examines Penelope's multiple images found in the *Odyssey* by looking at the ways in which other characters in the story view her. As both of these works suggest, there are multiple ways of reading the *Odyssey*

and the way in which Penelope acts in the story. And as my own study has borne out, the way in which artists view Penelope in the *Odyssey* affects their response to Penelope in their own work.

Polytropic Penelope

As Stanford points out, Western tradition has not always been kind to Penelope. Many artists and scholars ignored or devalued her primarily because they have perceived only one aspect of her personality—her faithful nature.[18] But as I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, she does indeed receive a great deal of attention in the arts. For the most part, this attention has focused on four human characteristics[19] that Penelope possesses: sexuality, intelligence, temperament, and courage. In looking over the works of art responding to Penelope, we can define these qualities by the questions the artists raise concerning her conduct in the story.

Sexuality

Penelope's sexuality emerges as the focus of most of the works we have studied thus far and is expressed primarily through her behavior toward the suitors. The questions artists raise about her are: Does Penelope engage in sexual relations with the suitors or desire to marry one of them? Does she wait chastely for Odysseus to return, rejecting the suitors's advances and attention? Although issues of Penelope's sexuality are inextricably linked to politics involved in remarrying or staying true to her marriage, reactions to Penelope's conduct still focus primarily on her sexual nature. As Thomas Carew suggests in "Rapture" and Mottley and Cooke tell us in *Penelope*, Penelope does indeed enjoy the attention of the suitors while Odysseus is away. Likewise, James Joyce's Penelope / Molly sleeps with Blazes Boylan in *Ulysses*. Along these lines, F. C. Burnard's Penelope is willing to marry Eurymachus in *Patient Penelope, or the Return of Ulysses*. Others, like

Sir John Davies, reconfigure the story so that Penelope does demonstrate a certain amount of involvement with other men without losing her image as the good woman. But Boccaccio, Christine de Pizan, Chaucer, John Gower, John Skelton, Claudio Monteverdi, and Angelica Kauffman, all present Penelope as the epitome of chastity; she eschews romance with any other man and opts instead to wait patiently for Odysseus. From artists of the Middle Ages, in fact, we inherit this image of the "virtuous woman" by whom all other good women are measured. Some artists, like Ezra Pound in "Hugh Sewelyn Mauberly" and "Canto CII," stretch the meaning of Penelope's chaste conduct, by connecting her fidelity to Odysseus to a faithful or loyal devotion to an ideal.

Of the artists we explored, only Lord Byron presents Penelope's fidelity in a dim light, making us aware that he does not hold chastity in high regard. Others, like Mottley and Cooke and H. D., strip Penelope of her virtue by suggesting that she remains faithful only because Athene intervened and stopped her from getting involved with the suitors. Along these lines, H. D. also tells us that Penelope remained chaste because she was afraid of her husband's treatment of her if he did indeed return and found she had been unfaithful. I should also mention that of all the artists we have studied, only Louise Labé, Thomas Carew, and James Joyce laud Penelope's sexuality, disassociating it from issues of chastity and fidelity and viewing it as a normal part of the human experience. Although Mottley and Cooke's Penelope is impatient to enjoy her husband at the end of the story, we recognize that they are poking fun at her sexuality rather than celebrating it. On the other hand, Monteverdi deprives Penelope completely of her sexuality in his opera. His "madonna-Penelope" is devoid of any desire for earthly pleasures.

Intelligence

At the heart of many portrayals of Penelope is her intelligence. Here, artists explore whether or not Penelope recognizes Odysseus in the beggar's disguise, or if she is totally

duped by him. Some artists question if she received the inspiration for the contest of the bow from Athene or came up with the idea herself. Likewise, they wonder about the great cunning she possesses that outwits the suitors and eventually her own husband. Unlike discussions about Penelope's sexuality which have always been an issue with the artists we studied, we notice that discussions about Penelope's intelligence are linked to particular historical periods. Renaissance artists, for example, appear as the first who associate intelligence with Penelope. John Skelton and Sir John Davies, in particular, lead the way for further expressions of Penelope's intelligence, wit, and cunning. That Penelope can get what she wants by using her wit is evident in Skelton's portrayal of her in *Philip Sparrow*. Likewise she emerges as an enlightened woman, in the tradition of Queen Elizabeth, in Davies's *Orchestra, a Poeme of Dauncing*. But neither of these artists focuses on the storyline of Homer's poem—this we see in the works coming out of the Baroque and Enlightenment Periods. However in Monteverdi's opera written in the 17th Century, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and in Mottley and Cooke's *Penelope*, written in the 18th Century, Penelope lacks cunning. In Monteverdi's work the trick of the loom is never mentioned, Minerva inspires her to devise the bow contest, and Penelope does not outwit Odysseus in the trick of the bed. Mottley and Cooke's Penelope does weave, but no importance is placed upon this activity. Along these lines, she does not think up the bow contest, nor does she outwit her husband by forcing him to reveal his true identity. In fact because Mottley and Cooke's Penelope is duped by her suitor, Cleaver, we can say that she demonstrates little cunning at all. However, Penelope retains her intelligence in the canvases of Kauffman. In fact, Kauffman depicts Penelope heroically: She is responsible for keeping the suitors at bay with her weaving trick in *Penelope at the Loom*, and she devises the bow contest, taking it upon herself to bring Odysseus his bow from its storage place in *Penelope Taking Down the Bow of Ulysses*.

19th Century artists are not interested in Penelope's intelligence; instead, like Medieval artists, they focus on her chastity and goodness. It is not until the 20th Century that we see again a Penelope who is capable of intelligence and wit. Carrà reintroduces the possibility that Penelope weaves her freedom in his Cubo-Futurist painting, *Penelope*. For Pound she represents a woman whose rhetoric is matchless among men in "Hugh Sewelyn Mauberly." Joyce's Penelope / Molly cleverly organizes her tryst with her lover under her husband's nose and holds sway over her household. Likewise in "Penelope" Dorothy Parker's Penelope is savvy enough to recognize that history will not be kind to her.

Temperament and Courage

Less explored, but still present are questions surrounding Penelope's temperament and courage. With regard to her temperament, artists ask if Penelope forgave Odysseus easily for staying away for so long or was really harboring some resentment over not being included in the plan or his long absence. Monteverdi's Penelope falls into her husband's arms without questioning why he had been away so long; however, Joyce's Penelope / Molly waits in their bed, thinking of him—as well as her other lovers. And though she contemplates serving him breakfast in bed the next day, we do not see her do this, for Joyce does not allow us to see the reunion between husband wife. On the other hand, Burnand's Penelope becomes angry when she hears about her husband's affair with Calypso and plots his death with her lover Eurymachus. Her anger disappears only when Ulysses proves to her beyond a doubt that she has been duped by Eurymachus. And Parker's Penelope resents the way she will be remembered in literary history, although she is not angry over her husband's absence.

Artists also wonder whether Penelope acquiesces to the demands of the suitors because she is intimidated by them, or if she courageously bides her time in order to protect Telemachos and her property. In Monteverdi's opera, Penelope displays little courage, for

her suitors are not dangerous men. Instead they are three kings who love her so much that they simply make a nuisance of themselves. Other artists treat Penelope similarly. Mottley and Cooke and Burnand depict Penelope as unable to stand up to the suitors. H. D.'s Penelope weeps instead of acts. On the other hand, Kauffman's Penelope is brave. Whether she weaves at the loom or seeks her husband's bow alone in the storage room, Penelope emerges as a strong and courageous woman. Though she weeps over the bow after taking it down and prays for Minerva's aid when she hears of Telemachos's departure in *Penelope Weeping Over the Bow of Ulysses*, her tears are not shed out of fear but from sadness.

In light of these many images of Penelope, we should be asking ourselves where these artists have found so many different depictions of her in Homer's text. The answer, of course, lies in the ambiguity found in the *Odyssey* and the way in which Penelope adjusts herself to the situations facing her. Of her husband Odysseus, Stanford says:

> Of the Homeric heroes, and, indeed, Roman mythology, Ulysses was by far the most complex in character and exploits. His adventures in the *Odyssey* brought him beyond the limits of the known world into unexplored regions of mystery and magic. His character was both more varied and more ambiguous than the character of any figure in Greek mythology or history until Archilochus. And, most significant of all for the possibility of later adaptations of his myth, one of his chief qualities, as Homer portrayed him, was adaptability.[20]

While it is obvious that Odysseus's complexity shines through due to the ambiguity found in the text and because of his ability to adapt himself to various situations, it has been less apparent to many that the same can be said also of his wife Penelope. They are, if we remember, ὁμοφρονέοντε, or "like-minded" (*Ody.* 6.183). As the artists's response to

Penelope indicates, she too is a well-drawn character, adaptable and much-enduring, possessing a multiple of personae, not always congruent, whose presence is felt throughout the story, even if she herself is absence from the text.

Penelope's Presence in the *Odyssey*

Penelope's presence is felt throughout Homer's story, for she appears or is mentioned in all but five books of the *Odyssey*. She speaks forty-four times in the poem, addressing all major characters and many minor ones. Others talk about her or refer to her over two hundred and thirty times in the poem. Moreover, we may read her presence in the text as extremely important: Her constant trickery foils the suitors's aggressive push for marriage for almost four years, and she manages to outwit the most cunning of all men in the Western literary tradition. Although the *Odyssey* is, indeed, about Odysseus, we may say that without the perseverance and intelligence of his wife, there would be no νόστος, or "return" for him. And because this homecoming is the origin of Odysseus's fame, Odysseus's presence and importance in our tradition depends upon his wife's presence and influence in the story. That Penelope can function this way in the poem underscores the complexity that Homer endows her with, for she is not a type—but a fully fleshed-out character imbued with a sexual nature and qualities of intelligence, temperament and courage, expressed in ways that can be interpreted as both positive and negative.

Penelope's Sexuality

The questions about Penelope's sexuality appear in the first book of the *Odyssey* and are raised by her son Telemachos. Specifically, Telemachos, without a father to guide him throughout his life, has come of age and is concerned about his paternity. Doubts about his mother's fidelity emerge, and he wonders who his father really is. Watching the suitors court Penelope only exacerbates his doubts. The conversations he has with Mentes,

Mentor, and Athene contain more than just misgivings over his heritage; they carry with it a whole subtext that leads the reader to question Penelope's sexual conduct in the story, for if Odysseus is not his father, then who is? But beyond that, the implication of Telemachos's doubts raises even larger questions concerning Penelope's behavior with the suitors, for if Penelope was unfaithful with another and spawned Telemachos from that union, couldn't she be unfaithful to Odysseus even now?

Unfortunately Telemachos gets little relief from his concerns if the reverse instead proves to be true. If indeed Odysseus is his real father as everyone says, then would Telemachos inherit his father's penchant for pain and suffering? In fact, that such a man as Odysseus fathered him causes Telemachos almost as much concern as Odysseus not being his father—for his father has not yet returned from the Trojan War after twenty years and has perhaps endured a horrible fate on the high seas

In *Ody.* 1.214-220, we find Telemachos first questioning his parentage to Athene in the guise of Mentes, the leader of his allies, the Taphians. Athene has just arrived at Odysseus's palace from the council of the gods where it has been decided that Odysseus will be allowed to return home. By the time Athene intervenes on Odysseus's behalf, the suitors have overrun the palace, causing Telemachos great concern over his future. The suitors's poor treatment of him and his property makes him aware that without taking bold measures quickly, nothing will be left of his father's legacy. In this passage, Telemachos answers Mentes, who has just asked him if indeed he is Odysseus's son:

τοιγὰρ ἐγώ τοι, ξεῖνε, μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω.
μήτηρ μέν τέ μέ φησι τοῦ ἔμμεναι, αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γε
οὐκ οἶδ'· οὐ γάρ πώ τις ἑὸν γόνον αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω.
ὡς δὴ ἐγώ γ' ὄφελον μάκαρός νύ τευ ἔμμεναι υἱὸς
ἀνέρος, ὃν κτεάτεσσιν ἑοῖς ἔπι γῆρας ἔτετμε.

νῦν δ' ὃς ἀποτμότατος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,

τοῦ μ' ἔκ φασι γενέσθαι, ἐπεὶ σύ με τοῦτ' ἐρεείνεις.

See, I will accurately answer all that you ask me.

My mother says indeed I am his. I for my part

do not know. Nobody really knows his own father.

But how I wish I could have been rather son to some fortunate

man, whom old age overtook among his possessions.

But of mortal men, that man has proved the most ill-fated

whose son they say I am: since you question me on this matter.

Although Mentes asks his question innocently—for he claims he has not seen Odysseus for twenty years and has had no contact with his family during that time—Telemachos takes this inquiry quite seriously, and he complains to Mentes that his future appears to be bleak whether or not Odysseus is his father. But what really interests us here is the way he hints at Penelope's misconduct and his own mistrust of her. That she has assured him that Odysseus is his father is not enough for the boy to go on because "nobody knows his own father." He does not believe, at once, Penelope's words. Penelope's credibility suffers here when Telemachos introduces the audience to his concern over his mother's conduct.

Upon hearing Telemachos's reply to her question, Mentes / Athene does little to clarify the boy's questions about his paternity. In fact, she only acknowledges Penelope as Telemachos's mother and completely avoids mentioning Odysseus's name. Mentes does assure Telemachos that he will attain fame; however, this fame is derived from his own accomplishments rather than acquired through his father's or mother's glory:

"οὐ μέν τοι γενεήν γε θεοὶ νώνυμνον ὀπίσσω

θῆκαν, ἐπεὶ σέ γε τοῖον ἐγείνατο Πηνελόπεια.

The gods have not made yours a birth that will go nameless

hereafter, since Penelope bore such a son as you are. (*Ody.*1.222-3)

This reply brings little comfort to Telemachos since the issue of his parentage is still not settled.

In *Ody* . 2.274-280 Athene appears once again to Telemachos to incite the boy to take action in finding out about his father. This time, however, she takes the disguise of Mentor, a friend of the family who speaks up for Telemachos at the council with the suitors. She meets Telemachos at the shore where he has been walking and asking the goddess Athene for her help. By evoking the image of Odysseus, Mentor / Athene intends to encourage Telemachos:

εἰ δ' οὐ κείνου γ' ἐσσὶ γόνος καὶ Πηνελοπείης,
οὐ σέ γ' ἔπειτα ἔολπα τελευτήσειν, ἃ μενοινᾷς.
παῦροι γάρ τοι παῖδες ὁμοῖοι πατρὶ πέλονται,
οἱ πλέονες κακίους, παῦροι δέ τε πατρὸς ἀρείους.
ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσεαι οὐδ' ἀνοήμων,
οὐδέ σε πάγχυ γε μῆτις 'Οδυσσῆος προλέλοιπεν,
ἐλπωρή τοι ἔπειτα τελευτῆσαι τάδε ἔργα.

But if you are not the seed begotten of him and Penelope,
I have no hope that you will accomplish all that you strive for.
For few are the children who turn out to be equals of their fathers,
and the greater number are worse; few are better than their father is.
But since you are to be no thoughtless man, no coward,
and the mind of Odysseus has not altogether given out in you
there is some hope that you can bring all these things to fulfillment.

Here, the goddess points to both Odysseus and Penelope as the parents of Telemachos. Her comment ("...ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ὅπιθεν...") carries with it no condition or taint of impossibility. According to the goddess, Telemachos is indeed the son of Odysseus. Penelope's sexual conduct has been circumspect—at least in the case of his own paternity.

Far from accepting these wise men's words as truth, Telemachos still harbors doubts. We must keep in mind that in both cases Telemachos is aware that these advisors are deities in disguise. As I will show later, mortal men and women put little stock in gods.

It is not until Telemachos reaches Lakedaimon, the home of Menelaos and Helen, that the boy puts his concerns about his parentage away, once and for all. In *Ody.* 4.111-112, Menelaos verifies that Odysseus bore a son by Penelope who was left behind when Odysseus went to Troy:

Λαέρτης θ' ὁ γέρων καὶ ἐχέφρων Πηνελόπεια
Τηλέμαχός θ', ὃν ἔλειπε νέον γεγαῶτ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ."

...The aged Laertes
and temperate Penelope must surely be grieving for him,
with Telemachos whom he left behind in his house, a young child.

Thus, Menelaos makes it clear that Penelope and Odysseus had a son named Telemachos who, for all practical purposes, is the same age as this Telemachos.

Menelaos's words are echoed when Helen, entering the room during Menelaos and Telemachos's discussion, recognizes Telemachos as that child of Odysseus and Penelope. She remarks to her husband:

οὐ γάρ πώ τινά φημι ἐοικότα ὧδε ἰδέσθαι
οὔτ' ἄνδρ' οὔτε γυναῖκα, σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωσαν,
ὡς ὅδ' Ὀδυσσῆος μεγαλήτορος υἷι ἔοικε,

Τηλεμάχῳ, τὸν ἔλειπε νέον γεγαῶτ' ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
κεῖνος ἀνήρ, ὅτ' ἐμεῖο κυνώπιδος εἵνεκ' Ἀχαιοὶ
ἤλθεθ' ὑπὸ Τροίην πόλεμον θρασὺν ὁρμαίνοντες."

. . . For I think I never saw such a likeness, neither
in man or woman, and wonder takes me as I look on him,
as this man has a likeness to the son of great-hearted Odysseus,
Telemachos, who was left behind in his house, a young child
by that man when, for the sake of shameless me, the Achaians
went beneath Troy, their hearts intent upon reckless warfare.
(*Ody.* 4.140-146)

What Telemachos learns from the famed king and queen sets his mind at ease, for no mention of Telemachos's doubts about his paternity are expressed again in the rest of the story. However, despite the fact that he is no longer uncertain that Odysseus is his father, he does still entertain doubts about his mother's fidelity. In fact, when Telemachos finally accepts the fact that he is Odysseus's son, he becomes even more concerned than ever over Penelope's own loyalty to his father.

It is Telemachos once again who first expresses concern over Penelope's conduct in the palace over the course of the four years before Odysseus's return. Although the concern shifts away from his paternity, Telemachos's doubts still center on Penelope's fidelity and loyalty to Odysseus. In *Ody.* 1.245-251 he raises the question: Is Penelope waiting for Odysseus, or is she looking forward to marrying one of the suitors? Telemachos complains to Mentes / Athene:

ὅσσοι γὰρ νήσοισιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι,
Δουλιχίῳ τε Σάμῃ τε καὶ ὑλήεντι Ζακύνθῳ,
ἠδ' ὅσσοι κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν,

τόσσοι μητέρ' ἐμὴν μνῶνται, τρύχουσι δὲ οἶκον.
ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν
ποιῆσαι δύναται· τοὶ δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἔδοντες
οἶκον ἐμόν· τάχα δή με διαρραίσουσι καὶ αὐτόν."

For all the greatest men who have the power in the islands,
in Doulichion and Same and in wooded Zakynthos,
and all who in rocky Ithaka are holders of lordships,
all these are after my mother for marriage, and wear my house out.
And she does not refuse the hateful marriage, nor is she able
to make an end of the matter; and these eating up my substance
waste it away; and soon they will break me myself to pieces.

Thus, Penelope's sexual conduct once again comes under suspicion. Her own son does not trust her actions and suspects that she has been less than chaste in her intentions toward the suitors.

Others however are not so quick to condemn Penelope. During his trip to the underworld Odysseus encounters his mother Antikleia, who reports to Odysseus that Penelope has been waiting patiently for him during his absence:

Καὶ λίην κείνη γε μένει τετληότι θυμῷ
σοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν· ὀιζυραὶ δέ οἱ αἰεὶ
φθίνουσιν νύκτες τε καὶ ἤματα δάκρυ χεούσῃ.

All too much with enduring heart she does wait for you
there in your own palace, and always with her the wretched
nights and the days also waste her away with weeping. (*Ody.* 11.181-184)

Antikleia's words here bring little comfort to Odysseus. Before Odysseus can let this news of Penelope settle in his mind, Agamemnon appears, offering his own view to the hero about trusting wives:

> Τῷ νῦν μή ποτε καὶ σὺ γυναικί περ ἤπιος εἶναι·
> μή οἱ μῦθον ἅπαντα πιφαυσκέμεν, ὅν κ' ἐὺ εἰδῇς,
> ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν φάσθαι, τὸ δὲ καὶ κεκρυμμένον εἶναι.
> ἀλλ' οὐ σοί γ', Ὀδυσεῦ, φόνος ἔσσεται ἔκ γε γυναικός·
> λίην γὰρ πινυτή τε καὶ εὖ φρεσὶ μήδεα οἶδε
> κούρη Ἰκαρίοιο, περίφρων Πηνελόπεια.
>
> So by this, do not be too easy even with your wife,
> nor give her an entire account of all you are sure of.
> Tell her part of it, but let the rest be hidden in silence.
> And yet you, Odysseus, will never be murdered by your wife.
> The daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope,
> is all too virtuous and her mind is stored with good thoughts.
> (*Ody.* 11.441-446)

Agamemnon's words, though representing his own unfortunate experience with Klytemnestra, cannot completely be discounted. Weighed with Antikleia's good report on Penelope, this sober warning of women's natural deviousness leaves us questioning Penelope's real intentions toward the suitors and her treatment of Odysseus when indeed he does return to Ithaka.

Odysseus receives his second warning about Penelope when he meets Athene on the shore of Ithaka. Here Athene echoes Antikleia's sentiments about Penelope found in *Ody.* 11.181-183. However, it is also clear that she also approves of Odysseus's skepticism about his wife's conduct:

σοὶ δ' οὔ πω φίλον ἐστὶ δαήμεναι οὐδὲ πυθέσθαι,
πρίν γ' ἔτι σῆς ἀλόχου πειρήσεαι, ἥ τέ τοι αὔτως
ἧσται ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν, ὀϊζυραὶ δέ οἱ αἰεὶ
φθίνουσιν νύκτες τε καὶ ἤματα δάκρυ χεούσῃ.

. . .but it is not
your pleasure to investigate and ask questions, not till
you have made a trial of your wife; yet she, as always,
sits there in your palace, and always with her the wretched
nights, and the days also, waste her away with weeping.
(*Ody.* 13.335-338)

Thus, Athene approves of Odysseus's plan to test his wife. At the same time, Athene makes it clear that she believes Penelope is trustworthy. Later, Athene reiterates that Penelope has been grieving over Odysseus; however, she also makes it plain that the suitors actively court Penelope and that she encourages their advances:

"διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ,
φράζευ ὅπως μνηστῆρσιν ἀναιδέσι χεῖρας ἐφήσεις,
οἳ δή τοι τρίετες μέγαρον κάτα κοιρανέουσι,
μνώμενοι ἀντιθέην ἄλοχον καὶ ἕδνα διδόντες·
ἡ δὲ σὸν αἰεὶ νόστον ὀδυρομένη κατὰ θυμὸν
πάντας μέν ῥ' ἔλπει καὶ ὑπίσχεται ἀνδρὶ ἑκάστῳ,
ἀγγελίας προϊεῖσα, νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοινᾷ."

Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
consider how you can lay your hands on these shameless suitors,
who for three years now have been as lords in your palace,

and courting your godlike wife, and offering gifts to win her.

And she, though her heart forever grieves over your homecoming,

holds out some hope for all, and makes promises to each man,

sending them messages, but her mind has other intentions.

(*Ody.* 13.375-381)

The last comment she makes (νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοινᾷ"), however, leaves much room open for interpretation, for Athene does not specify what exactly she means by "other intentions." Shortly after this speech, Athene refers to Penelope as ἐχέφρονα Πηνελόπειαν (*Ody.* 13.406). Although, Lattimore translates *exephron* as "constant," it generally refers to sensibility and prudence, which here is viewed as remaining faithful to Odysseus. But considering that Athene's comments about Penelope's conduct has remained ambiguous thus far, we can see that Penelope's sensible nature may not be limited to her sexual conduct, although that is what it is being linked to here.

We return to Telemachos's concern over his mother's actions while he was away at Pylos and Lakedaimon in *Ody.* 16.31-35. Upon his return Telemachos asks Eumaios, who is sitting with the disguised Odysseus, if Penelope has remarried:

σέθεν δ' ἕνεκ' ἐνθάδ' ἱκάνω,

ὄφρα σέ τ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδω καὶ μῦθον ἀκούσω,

ἤ μοι ἔτ' ἐν μεγάροις μήτηρ μένει, ἦέ τις ἤδη

ἀνδρῶν ἄλλος ἔγημεν, Ὀδυσσῆος δέ που εὐνὴ

χήτει ἐνευναίων κάκ' ἀράχνια κεῖται ἔχουσα."

But it was for your sake I came here,

to look upon you with my eyes, and to hear a word from you,

whether my mother endures still in the halls, or whether

some other man has married her, and the bed of Odysseus

lies forlorn of sleepers with spider webs grown upon it.

In Telemachos's speech we find a hint of resentment. To him the bed remains his father's rather than his mother's, who has slept in it for so long alone. The reference to κάκ' ἀράχνια, or "evil spider webs" implies that he worries that she has been absent from this bed a long time. Hence, his real concern is that she married one of the suitors immediately after he left on his journey. But Eumaios's reply is straightforward and takes the view that Penelope has remained chaste all along. He states:

"καὶ λίην κείνη γε μένει τετληότι θυμῷ

σοῖσιν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν· ὀϊζυραὶ δέ οἱ αἰεὶ

φθίνουσιν νύκτες τε καὶ ἤματα δάκρυ χεούσῃ."

All too much with enduring heart she does wait for him

there in your own palace, and always with her the wretched

nights and the days also waste her with weeping. (*Ody.* 16.37-39)

Yet, despite Eumaios's positive report of Penelope's conduct, Telemachos tells the shepherd that his mother lacks the steadfastness that Eumaios credits her with:

μητρὶ δ' ἐμῇ δίχα θυμὸς ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμηρίζει,

ἢ αὐτοῦ παρ' ἐμοί τε μένῃ καὶ δῶμα κομίζῃ,

εὐνήν τ' αἰδομένη πόσιος δήμοιό τε φῆμιν,

ἦ ἤδη ἅμ' ἕπηται 'Αχαιῶν ὅς τις ἄριστος

μνᾶται ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἀνὴρ καὶ πλεῖστα πόρῃσιν.

And my mother's heart is divided in her, and ponders two ways,

whether to remain here with me, and look after the household,

keep faith with her husband's bed, and regard the voice of the people,

or go away at last with the best man of the Achaians

who pays her court in her palace, and brings her the most presents.

(*Ody.* 16.73-77)

Keeping in mind that Odysseus is sitting among these two men, we find that he is hearing two completely different reports of Penelope's conduct with the suitors. His son presents a less than savory picture of a woman torn between staying faithful to her husband and taking a new man in her life, while Eumaios portrays Penelope as resolutely fixed on the idea of waiting for Odysseus. Thus, like Odysseus we do not get a clear cut view of Penelope's conduct.

To make matters even more difficult, the poet himself tells us that Amphinomos pleases Penelope best of all the suitors:

Νίσου φαίδιμος υἱός, Ἀρητιάδαο ἄνακτος,

ὅς ῥ' ἐκ Δουλιχίου πολυπύρου, ποιήεντος,

ἡγεῖτο μνηστῆρσι, μάλιστα δὲ Πηνελοπείῃ

ἥνδανε μύθοισι· φρεσὶ γὰρ κέχρητ' ἀγαθῇσιν·

. . .the shining son of Nisos, son of the lord Aretiades,

and led those suitors who had come over from the abundant

grasslands and grainlands of Doulichion, and pleased Penelope

more than the others in talk, for he had good sense and discretion.

(*Ody.* 16.395-98)

That any of the suitors please Penelope at all subverts the idea that they are hateful to her, for next in Penelope's speech we learn that she finds at least Antinoos revolting:

"Ἀντίνο', ὕβριν ἔχων, κακομήχανε, καὶ δέ σέ φασιν

ἐν δήμῳ Ἰθάκης μεθ' ὁμήλικας ἔμμεν ἄριστον

βουλῇ καὶ μύθοισι· σὺ δ' οὐκ ἄρα τοῖος ἔησθα.

μάργε, τίη δὲ σὺ Τηλεμάχῳ θάνατόν τε μόρον τε
ῥάπτεις, οὐδ' ἱκέτας ἐμπάζεαι, οἷσιν ἄρα Ζεὺς
μάρτυρος; οὐδ' ὁσίη κακὰ ῥάπτειν ἀλλήλοισιν.

Antinoos, violent man, deviser of evil: in Ithaka
the common account says you are the best man among your age mates
for speech and counsel. But you have never been such. Oh, boisterous
creature, why do you weave a design of death and destruction
for Telemachos, and take no heed of suppliants over whom
Zeus stands witness? It is not right to plan harm for each other.
(*Ody.* 16.418-423)

This sentiment is repeated in her speech to Eurynome. Here, Penelope continues her diatribe against Antinoos though this time she includes all of the suitors in her criticism:

"μαῖ', ἐχθροὶ μὲν πάντες, ἐπεὶ κακὰ μηχανόωνται·
Ἀντίνοος δὲ μάλιστα μελαίνῃ κηρὶ ἔοικε.
ξεῖνός τις δύστηνος ἀλητεύει κατὰ δῶμα
ἀνέρας αἰτίζων· ἀχρημοσύνη γὰρ ἀνώγει·
ἔνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐνέπλησάν τ' ἔδοσάν τε,
οὗτος δὲ θρήνυι πρυμνὸν βάλε δεξιὸν ὦμον."

Mother, they are all hateful, since all are devising evils,
but Antinoos, beyond the rest, is like black death. Here is
a stranger, some unfortunate man, who goes through our palace
asking alms of the men, for his helplessness forces him to it.

Then all the others gave and filled his bag, but this man
struck him with a footstool at the base of the right shoulder.
(*Ody.* 17.499-504)

Strangely enough, Penelope singles Antinoos out here for his lack of hospitality rather than his evil intent. The other suitors demonstrate more charity toward the disguised Odysseus. Thus, we are left wondering if Penelope may be able to overlook the conduct of some of the others when it comes time to remarry.

In Penelope's speech in *Ody.* 18.164-168, however, it becomes clear how she feels about all of the men who have been overwhelming her at the palace. She decides to appear before them in the great hall so that she can undercut any plot they may be devising to harm Telemachos. We also learn here that Penelope finds the suitors's conduct abhorrent:

"Εὐρυνόμη, θυμός μοι ἐέλδεται, οὔ τι πάρος γε,
μνηστήρεσσι φανῆναι, ἀπεχθομένοισί περ ἔμπης·
παιδὶ δέ κεν εἴποιμι ἔπος, τό κε κέρδιον εἴη,
μὴ πάντα μνηστῆρσιν ὑπερφιάλοισιν ὁμιλεῖν,
οἵ τ' εὖ μὲν βάζουσι, κακῶς δ' ὄπιθεν φρονέουσι."

Eurynome, my heart desires, though before it did not,
to show myself to the suitors, although I still hate them. Also,
I would speak a word to my son, and that would be for the better,
that he should not always go among the insolent suitors,
who speak him well, but are plotting evil things for the future.

So that no one mistakes her motives, Penelope rejects Eurynome's offer to embellish her beauty for her appearance before the suitors, opting instead to go plainly before them as a sign of her modesty and lack of interest in them:

"Εὐρυνόμη, μὴ ταῦτα παραύδα, κηδομένη περ,
χρῶτ' ἀπονίπτεσθαι καὶ ἐπιχρίεσθαι ἀλοιφῇ·
ἀγλαΐην γὰρ ἐμοί γε θεοί, τοὶ Ὄλυμπον ἔχουσιν,
ὤλεσαν, ἐξ οὗ κεῖνος ἔβη κοίλῃς ἐνὶ νηυσίν.
ἀλλά μοι Αὐτονόην τε καὶ Ἱπποδάμειαν ἄνωχθι
ἐλθέμεν, ὄφρα κέ μοι παρστήετον ἐν μεγάροισιν·
οἴη δ' οὐκ εἴσειμι μετ' ἀνέρας· αἰδέομαι γάρ."

Eurynome, though you care for me, do not speak of such matters
as washing my body and anointing myself with unguents,
seeing that the gods, they who possess Olympos, ruined
my glory, from that time when he went away in the hollow
ships. But tell Autonoe and Hippodameia
to come, so that they can stand at my side in the great hall.
I will not go alone among men. I think that immodest. (*Ody.* 18.178-184)

Penelope tells us clearly here that she misses Odysseus and believes that the gods *ὤλεσαν* or "destroyed" her by taking Odysseus away from her. Thus, from Penelope's own mouth we learn she is not interested in enticing the suitors to marry her.

Despite Penelope's desire to go plainly before the rowdy men, Athene endows her with great beauty and bearing. The poet tells us:

ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη·
κούρῃ Ἰκαρίοιο κατὰ γλυκὺν ὕπνον ἔχευεν,
εὗδε δ' ἀνακλινθεῖσα, λύθεν δέ οἱ ἅψεα πάντα
αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ κλιντῆρι· τέως δ' ἄρα δῖα θεάων
ἄμβροτα δῶρα δίδου, ἵνα μιν θησαίατ' Ἀχαιοί.
κάλλεϊ μέν οἱ πρῶτα προσώπατα καλὰ κάθηρεν

ἀμβροσίῳ, οἵῳ περ ἐϋστέφανος Κυθέρεια
χρίεται, εὖτ' ἂν ἴῃ Χαρίτων χορὸν ἱμερόεντα·
καί μιν μακροτέρην καὶ πάσσονα θῆκεν ἰδέσθαι,
λευκοτέρην δ' ἄρα μιν θῆκε πριστοῦ ἐλέφαντος.

Then the goddess gray-eyed Athene thought what to do next.
She drifted a sweet sleep over Ikarios' daughter,
and all her joints were relaxed so that she slumbered, reclining
there on the couch. Meanwhile she, shining among goddesses,
endowed her with gifts immortal, to make the Achaians admire her.
First, for her beauty's sake, she freshened all her fine features
with ambrosia, such as fair-garlanded Kythereia uses
for salve, whenever she joins the lovely dance of the Graces.
She made her taller for the eye to behold, and thicker,
and she made her whiter than sawn ivory. (*Ody.* 18.187-196)

Penelope's goddess-inspired beauty only incites the suitors to lust for her even more than before. Eurymachos, for one, compliments Penelope on her beauty and tells her that many more men would be hurrying to Ithaka to court her if they could see her now. Penelope replies to Eurymachos that life ended the day Odysseus sailed away to Troy:

"Εὐρύμαχ', ἦ τοι ἐμὴν ἀρετὴν εἶδός τε δέμας τε
ὤλεσαν ἀθάνατοι, ὅτε Ἴλιον εἰσανέβαινον
Ἀργεῖοι, μετὰ τοῖσι δ' ἐμὸς πόσις ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς.

Eurymachos, all my excellence, my beauty and figure,
were ruined by the immortals at that time when the Argives took ship
for Ilion, and with them went my husband, Odysseus. (*Ody.* 18.251-253)

However, we must keep in mind that Penelope does not dissuade the suitors from pursuing their suit. By not rebuking Eurymachos, or any of the men, Penelope manages to remain neutral towards them, keeping their hope alive. In fact, later in *Ody*. 18.281-283 she convinces them to give her gifts like true wooers should give their beloved:

> ὣς φάτο, γήθησεν δὲ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
> οὕνεκα τῶν μὲν δῶρα παρέλκετο, θέλγε δὲ θυμὸν
> μειλιχίοις ἐπέεσσι, νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοίνα.

> She spoke, and much-enduring great Odysseus was happy
> because she beguiled gifts out of them, and enchanted their spirits
> with blandishing words, while her own mind had other intentions.

Convinced that she will indeed choose one of them in a contest, they shower her with riches. Although Penelope's action here gladdens Odysseus's heart—for she increases the wealth of her household—she does little to convince Telemachos that she means to remain true to his father.

Penelope's explanation of her behavior in *Ody*. 19.158-161 does little to settle the question. Here she tells the disguised Odysseus that she has come to the end of her tricks and is forced to marry against her will. She says:

> νῦν δ' οὔτ' ἐκφυγέειν δύναμαι γάμον οὔτε τιν' ἄλλην
> μῆτιν ἔθ' εὑρίσκω· μάλα δ' ὀτρύνουσι τοκῆες
> γήμασθ', ἀσχαλάᾳ δὲ πάϊς βίοτον κατεδόντων,
> [160] γιγνώσκων· ἤδη γὰρ ἀνὴρ οἷός τε μάλιστα
> οἴκου κήδεσθαι, τῷ τε Ζεὺς κῦδος ὀπάζει.

> Now, I cannot escape from this marriage; I can no longer
> think of another plan; my parents are urgent with me

> to marry; my son is vexed as they eat away our livelihood;
> he sees it all; he is a grown man now, most able
> to care for the house, and it is to him Zeus grants this honor.

The reality of the situation is this: She despairs and is out of ideas how to stave off the suitors anymore. The situation at the palace is at the critical point, for if Odysseus does not return home immediately all that she has fought for will surely be lost. Therefore, she may be enticing the suitors to marry her because she has no choice and must make the best out of a bad situation. On the other hand, because she lies so adeptly to the suitors, she may indeed be lying even now to Odysseus. The poet keeps us off-guard; we are never completely sure of Penelope's intentions

As we see in these passages, Telemachos at first doubts his mother's faithfulness. He does not believe that Odysseus is his father, until he is convinced beyond a reasonable doubt by Mentes, Mentor, Menelaos and Helen. But his acceptance of this truth does little to convince him of Penelope's overall good conduct, for he still doubts that she is waiting for Odysseus to return. When Telemachos encounters the disguised Odysseus, he relays this opinion to him. Already Odysseus has met others who have expressed differing views of Penelope's conduct. Although Antikleia counsels him that Penelope is waiting, Agamemnon is not so certain. Thus, when Odysseus encounters Athene's ambivalence about Penelope's conduct and then hears the differing opinions of Eumaios and Telemachos, he is left to wonder still what Penelope has been up to while he has been gone. Penelope herself demonstrates that she can tell lies extremely well, so her testimony cannot be taken entirely into account. That Penelope can be viewed these various ways, then, offers multiple readings of her conduct. In Homer's story she possesses the ability to abstain from sexual liaisons with the suitors and at the same time engage in conduct that can

be interpreted as questionable. Thus, the myriad of ways artists have portrayed her sexuality through time is grounded in the ambiguity of Homer's text and the complexity of Penelope's character.

Penelope's Intelligence

Questions about Penelope's intelligence emerge early on in the *Odyssey* and are answered in various ways throughout the story. Furthermore, this intelligence is expressed in three different qualities: cunning, skepticism, and perceptiveness. Because Penelope possesses varying degrees of these kinds of intelligence, she never appears to be one-dimensional. Instead, her character achieves complexity and richness.

Described as κέρδεα, Penelope's "cunning intelligence" gives her the ability to outwit the suitors on three different occasions and her husband Odysseus once. However, Homer also presents us with the notion that Penelope does not come up with the ideas that allow her to outsmart these men on her own. At times it is the goddess Athene who thinks up these intelligent ploys and incites Penelope to take action. Thus, Homer cleverly undercuts his own clever design.

The first hint of Penelope's cunning appears in *Ody.* 2.88-95. Here, Antinoos, one of Penelope's many suitors, complains bitterly to Telemachos and the men of Ithaka about being outwitted by Penelope's loom trick:

> σοὶ δ' οὔ τι μνηστῆρες 'Αχαιῶν αἴτιοί εἰσιν,
> ἀλλὰ φίλη μήτηρ, ἥ τοι πέρι κέρδεα οἶδεν.
> ἤδη γὰρ τρίτον ἐστὶν ἔτος, τάχα δ' εἶσι τέταρτον,
> ἐξ οὗ ἀτέμβει θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν 'Αχαιῶν.
> πάντας μέν ῥ' ἔλπει καὶ ὑπίσχεται ἀνδρὶ ἑκάστῳ
> ἀγγελίας προϊεῖσα, νόος δέ οἱ ἄλλα μενοινᾷ.
> ἡ δὲ δόλον τόνδ' ἄλλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μερμήριξε·

στησαμένη μέγαν ἱστὸν ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὕφαινε,

λεπτὸν καὶ περίμετρον·

And yet you have no cause to blame the Achaian suitors,

but it is your own dear mother, and she is greatly resourceful [cunning].

And now it is the third year, and will be the fourth year presently,

since she has been denying the desires of the Achaians.

For she holds out hope to all, and makes promises to each man,

sending us messages, but her mind has other intentions.

And here is another stratagem of her heart's devising.

She set up a great loom in her palace, and set to weaving

a web of threads long and fine. . . .

Antinoos's complaint does not end here. He continues with his diatribe against Penelope's cunning, reminding all that no one compares with her in this quality:

εἰ δ' ἔτ' ἀνιήσει γε πολὺν χρόνον υἷας Ἀχαιῶν,

τὰ φρονέουσ' ἀνὰ θυμόν, ὅ οἱ πέρι δῶκεν Ἀθήνη

ἔργα τ' ἐπίστασθαι περικαλλέα καὶ φρένας ἐσθλὰς

κέρδεά θ', οἷ' οὔ πώ τιν' ἀκούομεν οὐδὲ παλαιῶν,

τάων αἳ πάρος ἦσαν ἐυπλοκαμῖδες Ἀχαιαί,

Τυρώ τ' Ἀλκμήνη τε ἐυστέφανός τε Μυκήνη·

τάων οὔ τις ὁμοῖα νοήματα Πηνελοπείῃ

ἤδη· ἀτὰρ μὲν τοῦτό γ' ἐναίσιμον οὐκ ἐνόησε.

τόφρα γὰρ οὖν βίοτόν τε τεὸν καὶ κτήματ' ἔδονται,

ὄφρα κε κείνη τοῦτον ἔχῃ νόον, ὅν τινά οἱ νῦν

ἐν στήθεσσι τιθεῖσι θεοί. μέγα μὲν κλέος αὐτῇ
ποιεῖτ', αὐτὰρ σοί γε ποθὴν πολέος βιότοιο.

But if she continues to torment the sons of the Achaians,
since she is so dowered with the wisdom bestowed by Athene,
to be expert in beautiful work, to have good character
and cleverness [cunning] such as we are not told of, even of the ancient
queens, the fair-tressed Achaian women of times before us,
Tyro and Alkmene and Mykene, wearer of garlands;
for none of these knew thoughts so wise as Penelope
knew; yet in this single matter she did not think rightly;
so long, I say, will your livelihood and possessions be eaten
away, as long as she keeps this purpose, one which the very
gods, I think, put into her heart. She is winning a great name
for herself, but for you she is causing much loss of substance.
(*Ody.* 2.115-126)

Thus, in these two passages we learn that for almost four years Penelope has duped the many men who have been hanging about the palace with her loom trick. We are also told that the fame Penelope gains as a result of this trick is a reputation for cunning intelligence, wisdom, and skillfulness.

It is interesting to note that along with Antinoos's rebuke of Penelope's cunning, we find a warning to Telemachos that his mother's antics will not go unpunished by them. Antinoos brags to Telemachos that the suitors will continue to devour Odysseus's goods until Penelope makes a decision to marry one of them. Included with this warning is Antinoos's claim that Penelope will never outwit them again. However Penelope's speech in *Ody.* 18.274-280 indicates that she is setting the suitors up again for a "fall," for not

only do they soon shower her with gifts after asserting that they will devour her goods, but they are led to believe that she wants to marry one of them. Penelope says:

> ἀλλὰ τόδ' αἰνὸν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἱκάνει·
> μνηστήρων οὐχ ἥδε δίκη τὸ πάροιθε τέτυκτο·
> οἵ τ' ἀγαθήν τε γυναῖκα καὶ ἀφνειοῖο θύγατρα
> μνηστεύειν ἐθέλωσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις ἐρίσωσιν,
> αὐτοὶ τοί γ' ἀπάγουσι βόας καὶ ἴφια μῆλα,
> κούρης δαῖτα φίλοισι, καὶ ἀγλαὰ δῶρα διδοῦσιν·
> ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀλλότριον βίοτον νήποινον ἔδουσιν."
>
> But this thing comes as a bitter distress to my heart and spirit:
> the behavior of these suitors is not as it was in time past
> when suitors desired to pay their court to a noble woman
> and daughters of a rich man, and rival each other. Such men
> themselves bring in their own cattle and fat sheep, to feast
> the family of the bride, and offer glorious presents.
> They do not eat up another's livelihood, without payments.

Shortly after Penelope delivers this speech, the suitors rush to outdo each other in gifts for her (*Ody.* 18.285-303). Thus, despite their boasting, the suitors lose once again to the more intelligent Penelope.

Penelope's tricks on the suitors do not end with shoring up her declining wealth. She has an even greater plan in mind that will settle her troubles with them once and for all: She devises the bow contest. Here all of the men will compete against one another in a test of strength and precision, a deed that only Odysseus is able to accomplish. Outlining her plan to the stranger, Penelope says:

νῦν δὲ μνηστήρεσσιν ἄεθλον τοῦτον ἐφήσω·
ὃς δέ κε ῥηΐτατ' ἐντανύσῃ βιὸν ἐν παλάμῃσι
καὶ διοϊστεύσῃ πελέκεων δυοκαίδεκα πάντων,
τῷ κεν ἅμ' ἑσποίμην, νοσφισσαμένη τόδε δῶμα
κουρίδιον, μάλα καλόν, ἐνίπλειον βιότοιο·

Now I will set these up as a contest before my suitors,
and the one who takes the bow in his hands, strings it with the greatest
ease, and sends an arrow clean through all twelve axes
shall be the one I will go away with, forsaking this house
where I was bride, a lovely place and full of good living.
I think that even in my dreams I shall never forget it. (*Ody.* 19.576-580)

Of course, the man who does indeed succeed in the performing this task has achieved something only Odysseus has been able to. However, as Homer has long demonstrated, these suitors are no match for Odysseus. Therefore, the task that Penelope sets before the suitors is an impossible one—none will succeed. The fact that they cannot clearly understand the difficulty of this contest illustrates their dim-wittedness. Though they are simple marks for the more intelligent Penelope, Odysseus, the great strategist, fares no better. The trick she plays on him in order to test his identity constitutes the highlight of Homer's story.

In Book 23 Odysseus has sent Eurykleia to bring Penelope down to him so that they can finally be reunited. However, Penelope does not immediately take him at his word. In fact, she forces him into two separate actions in order to prove himself to her. First, he must bathe and present himself in a reasonable manner, reminiscent of her demand for the suitors to behave correctly toward their beloved. When Telemachos expresses indignation over his mother's coolness to Odysseus, his father hushes him saying:

"Τηλέμαχ', ἦ τοι μητέρ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔασον
πειράζειν ἐμέθεν· τάχα δὲ φράσεται καὶ ἄρειον.
νῦν δ' ὅττι ῥυπόω, κακὰ δὲ χροῒ εἵματα εἷμαι,
τοὔνεκ' ἀτιμάζει με καὶ οὔ πω φησὶ τὸν εἶναι.

Telemachos, leave your mother to examine me in the palace
as she will, and presently she will understand better;
but now that I am dirty and wear foul clothing upon me,
she dislikes me for that, and says I am not her husband. (*Ody*. 23.113-116)

However, much to Odysseus's chagrin, Penelope still refuses to accept him even after he cleans himself up. Thus, a second action is necessary. In a test of Odysseus's mettle, Odysseus must give Penelope a sign that he is indeed her husband. It is this challenge that proves Penelope's intellectual superiority.[21] In *Ody*. 23.225-230 Penelope finally accepts the angry and frustrated Odysseus as her husband with these words:

νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ ἤδη σήματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας
εὐνῆς ἡμετέρης, ἣν οὐ βροτὸς ἄλλος ὀπώπει,
ἀλλ' οἶοι σύ τ' ἐγώ τε καὶ ἀμφίπολος μία μούνη,
'Ακτορίς, ἥν μοι δῶκε πατὴρ ἔτι δεῦρο κιούσῃ,
ἣ νῶϊν εἴρυτο θύρας πυκινοῦ θαλάμοιο,
πείθεις δή μευ θυμόν, ἀπηνέα περ μάλ' ἐόντα."

But now, since you have given me accurate proof describing
our bed, which no other mortal man beside has ever seen,
but only you and I, and there is one serving woman,
Aktor's daughter, whom my father gave me when I came here,
who used to guard the doors for us in our well-built chamber;

so you persuade my heart, though it has been very stubborn.

Thus, after killing the suitors with a feat only he can do, Odysseus is forced into two separate actions—one in which he reveals his identity beyond a reasonable doubt. Because returning home is predicated on winning back his place in Ithaka, Odysseus is highly dependent upon Penelope's decision to accept him or not. It becomes clear here, then, that Odysseus gains his return and ultimately his κλέος, because of Penelope. She alone is the final arbitrator of his glory.

But Homer also subverts this reading of the cunning Penelope, for the poet also suggests that she gains her tricks from the goddess Athene. In fact, it is Penelope herself who admits to the disguised Odysseus that the loom trick was not her own idea:

ἀλλ' Ὀδυσῆ ποθέουσα φίλον κατατήκομαι ἦτορ.
οἱ δὲ γάμον σπεύδουσιν· ἐγὼ δὲ δόλους τολυπεύω.
φᾶρος μέν μοι πρῶτον ἐνέπνευσε φρεσὶ δαίμων,
στησαμένῃ μέγαν ἱστόν, ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὑφαίνειν,
λεπτὸν καὶ περίμετρον·

I waste away at the inward heart, longing for Odysseus.
These men try to hasten the marriage. I weave my own wiles.
First the divinity put the idea of the web in my mind,
to set up a great loom in my palace, and set to weaving
a web of threads, long and fine. (*Ody.* 19.136-140)

The possibility that Athene is the strategist behind Penelope's tricks takes away from Penelope's reputation for cunning. As we will see later, Homer even subverts Penelope's trick on Odysseus by suggesting that her fear of being seduced by the gods led her to uncharacteristically mistreat her husband.

On many occasions Penelope demonstrates skepticism concerning people and of the situations she finds herself in. It is this mistrust that leads her to question the validity of the stranger's claims and the identity of her husband. Discounting the bow contest in which all men participated, Penelope puts her husband through two tests to prove himself—once in his disguise as the stranger, and the other after he takes back his own identity.

In Book 19 Penelope examines the stranger, who claims to have information about the whereabouts of Odysseus. So that we are clear about Penelope's intentions when she meets with the stranger, Homer tells us what she sets out to do:

> "Εὐρυνόμη, φέρε δὴ δίφρον καὶ κῶας ἐπ' αὐτοῦ,
> ὄφρα καθεζόμενος εἴπῃ ἔπος ἠδ' ἐπακούσῃ
> ὁ ξεῖνος ἐμέθεν· ἐθέλω δέ μιν ἐξερέεσθαι."
>
> Eurynome, bring up a chair and put a fleece on it,
> so that the stranger can be seated, and tell me his story,
> and listen also to what I say. I wish to question him. (*Ody.* 19.97-99)

During the interview she asks specific questions about Odysseus's clothes and comrades. The way in which the stranger answers these questions are intended to provide evidence that the stranger is telling the truth and his information can be believed. Penelope says:

> "νῦν μὲν δή σευ, ξεῖνέ γ', ὀΐω πειρήσεσθαι,
> εἰ ἐτεὸν δὴ κεῖθι σὺν ἀντιθέοις ἑτάροισι
> ξείνισας ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐμὸν πόσιν, ὡς ἀγορεύεις.
> εἰπέ μοι ὁπποῖ' ἄσσα περὶ χροῒ εἵματα ἕστο,
> αὐτός θ' οἷος ἔην, καὶ ἑταίρους, οἵ οἱ ἕποντο."
>
> Now, my friend, I think I will give you a test, so see if
> it is true that there, and with is godlike companions,

you entertained my husband, as you say you did, in your palace.
Tell me what sort of clothing he wore on his body, and what sort
of man he was himself, and his companion, who followed him.
(*Ody.* 19.215-220)

The questions that Penelope asks the disguised Odysseus pose no difficulty for him to answer. With much aplomb, the stranger easily provides her with the correct answers.

The next test proves to be more arduous for Odysseus, however. Although we learn from Odysseus that he is willing to be tested by Penelope, he may have been led astray by the simple manner she questioned him while he was in the guise of the stranger. He is not prepared for the trap she lays for him later when he finally admits to her that he is Odysseus. Here in *Ody.* 23.113-116 Odysseus calms Telemachos's wrath, telling his son that Penelope must examine him in order to be convinced of his identity:

"Τηλέμαχ', ἦ τοι μητέρ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἔασον
πειράζειν ἐμέθεν· τάχα δὲ φράσεται καὶ ἄρειον.
νῦν δ' ὅττι ῥυπόω, κακὰ δὲ χροῒ εἵματα εἷμαι,
τοὔνεκ' ἀτιμάζει με καὶ οὔ πω φησὶ τὸν εἶναι.

Telemachos, leave your mother to examine me in the palace
as she will, and presently she will understand better;
but now that I am dirty and wear foul clothing upon me,
she dislikes me for that, and says I am not her husband.

Odysseus's sure confidence quickly turns to nervousness and anger when Penelope mentions that she will have their bed taken out of their room. Admitting that no one can move their bed, the symbol of their marital bliss, and explaining the reasons why in great detail, Odysseus loses the upper hand that he believes he has gained by killing the suitors.

After Odysseus admits the truth about the bed, Penelope admits her "stubbornness" to Odysseus:

> νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ ἤδη σήματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας
> εὐνῆς ἡμετέρης, ἣν οὐ βροτὸς ἄλλος ὀπώπει,
> ἀλλ' οἶοι σύ τ' ἐγώ τε καὶ ἀμφίπολος μία μούνη,
> 'Ακτορίς, ἥν μοι δῶκε πατὴρ ἔτι δεῦρο κιούσῃ,
> ἣ νῶιν εἴρυτο θύρας πυκινοῦ θαλάμοιο,
> πείθεις δή μευ θυμόν, ἀπηνέα περ μάλ' ἐόντα."
>
> But now, since you have given me accurate proof describing
> our bed, which no other mortal man beside has ever seen,
> but only you and I, and there is one serving woman,
> Aktor's daughter, whom my father gave me when I came here,
> who used to guard the doors for us in our well-built chamber;
> so you persuade my heart, though it has been very stubborn.
> (*Ody.* 23.225-230)

The trick of the bed marks the final showdown between the two most cunning mortals in Homer's story and sets the stage for Agamemnon's praise of Penelope in Book 24. Here in this episode, Penelope catches Odysseus off-guard and forces him to admit without a shadow of a doubt that he is indeed who he says he is. As I stated earlier, Penelope devises tricks for all of the men who seek her hand in marriage. What is interesting about Penelope here, however, is that she does not lose her head even when it may be easy to do so, for her mistrust extends to the pretenders to the throne as well as the man who claims to be her husband. Her skepticism has kept her safe from the suitors and frauds during the twenty years of Odysseus's absence and forces her husband into an uncomfortable position of having to submit to his wife's superior cunning.

Homer provides us with evidence that Penelope's skepticism and mistrust of others is a natural by-product of an inquisitive and analytical mind. The servants and family members all accuse her of being hard-hearted and mistrustful of others. For example, in Ody. 23.72 her nurse Eurykleia accuses Penelope of always being suspicious when she says "θυμὸς δέ τοι αἰὲν ἄπιστος " / "Your heart was always mistrustful." Penelope's own son attacks her for being stubborn and cruel when she does not automatically leap into Odysseus's arms without being certain it is truly her husband standing in front of her:

> οὐ μέν κ' ἄλλη γ' ὧδε γυνὴ τετληότι θυμῷ
> ἀνδρὸς ἀφεσταίη, ὅς οἱ κακὰ πολλὰ μογήσας
> ἔλθοι ἐεικοστῷ ἔτεϊ ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν·
> σοὶ δ' αἰεὶ κραδίη στερεωτέρη ἐστὶ λίθοιο."
>
> No other woman, with spirit as stubborn as your, would keep back
> as you're doing from her husband who, after much suffering
> came at last in the twentieth year back to his own country.
> But always you have a heart that is harder than stone within you.
> (*Ody.* 23.100-103)

Even Odysseus, angry that Penelope refuses to accept that he is her husband even though he has bathed, intimates that she is hard-hearted:

> ὣς ἄρ' ἔφη πόσιος πειρωμένη· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ὀχθήσας ἄλοχον προσεφώνεε κεδνὰ ἰδυῖαν·
> "ὦ γύναι, ἦ μάλα τοῦτο ἔπος θυμαλγὲς ἔειπες·

So she spoke to her husband, trying him out, but Odysseus
spoke in anger to his virtuous-minded lady.
What have you said, dear lady, has hurt my heart deeply.
(*Ody*. 23.181-183)

But the final evidence we receive is from Penelope herself in *Ody*. 23.230 who admits to Odysseus that she is unyielding: "πείθεις δή μευ θυμόν, ἀπηνέα περ μάλ' ἐόντα." "/ "so you persuade my heart, though it has been very stubborn."

Yet Homer also hints that Penelope's skepticism is not born out of any innate intelligence but from a fear of the gods. This particular view of Penelope arises in Book 23, when Penelope is first made aware that Odysseus has returned, and it continues throughout until she finally accepts him as her husband.

In *Ody*. 23.11-17 Eurykleia awakens Penelope from a deep sleep to tell her that the stranger killed the suitors and is really Odysseus in disguise. Dubious at what she hears, Penelope corrects the nurse and insists that the gods have deluded the poor woman:

"μαῖα φίλη, μάργην σε θεοὶ θέσαν, οἵ τε δύνανται
ἄφρονα ποιῆσαι καὶ ἐπίφρονά περ μάλ' ἐόντα,
καί τε χαλιφρονέοντα σαοφροσύνης ἐπέβησαν·
οἵ σέ περ ἔβλαψαν· πρὶν δὲ φρένας αἰσίμη ἦσθα.
τίπτε με λωβεύεις πολυπενθέα θυμὸν ἔχουσαν
ταῦτα παρὲξ ἐρέουσα καὶ ἐξ ὕπνου μ' ἀνεγείρεις
ἡδέος, ὅς μ' ἐπέδησε φίλα βλέφαρ' ἀμφικαλύψας;

Dear Nurse, the gods have driven you crazy. They are both able
to change a very sensible person into a senseless
one, and to set the light-wit on the way of discretion.
They have sent you awry; before now your thoughts were orderly.

> Why do you insult me when my heart is heavy with sorrows,
> by talking in this wild way, waking me from a happy
> sleep, which had come and covered by eyes, and held them fastened?

Thus, the episode begins with Penelope blaming the gods for a host of events and problems she has encountered or will face.

That Penelope blames the gods on six different occasions in this episode of the *Odyssey* indicates that she is wary of them and the kind of tricks they play on mortals. In *Ody.* 23.63 she believes that ἀθανάτων, or "the immortals" have killed the suitors, rather than Odysseus as Eurykleia claims. Later in *Ody.* 23.81 she proceeds to warn Eurykleia that mere mortals cannot understand θεῶν αἰειγενετάων, or "the gods's motives." The poet builds on this theme when he describes Odysseus as being ἀθανάτοισιν ὁμοῖος, or "like a god" when he emerges from his bath in *Ody.* 23.163. Later in *Ody.* 23.185, when Odysseus explains to Penelope the impossibility that a mortal could know about or move their bed, he does admit that θεὸς, or "a god" in fact could. After Penelope does indeed accept the stranger as her husband in *Ody.* 23.210, she explains the reasons behind her skepticism and treatment of him. In effect, she blames θεοὶ or, the gods for causing misery to mortals. Likewise in *Ody.* 23.223, she reminds Odysseus, lest he remain angry at her, that even her own cousin had been hoodwinked by a god: Helen would never have forsaken her husband and homeland for Paris if θεὸς, "a god" hadn't interfered. Thus, Penelope's skepticism emerges as a function of fear of untrustworthy gods rather than innate intelligence.

Penelope's intelligence is also expressed in terms of her perceptive powers. That she is aware of the events around her and of the people she encounters points to her ability to discern the danger lurking in the palace. However, Homer offers four different possibilities concerning Penelope's skill in grasping others's motives and actions.

First, we may view Penelope as not perceptive. The fact that one of her servants reports the loom trick to the suitors points to Penelope's inability to know which servants to trust. Antinoos admits to Telemachos:

> καὶ τότε δή τις ἔειπε γυναικῶν, ἣ σάφα ᾔδη,
> καὶ τήν γ' ἀλλύουσαν ἐφεύρομεν ἀγλαὸν ἱστόν.
>
> one of her women, who knew the whole of the story, told us,
> and we found her in the act of undoing her glorious weaving.
> (*Ody.* 2.108-109)

Though Penelope obviously gives herself away to the wrong person here, she also does surround herself with some more worthy of her trust. We learn in *Ody.* 16.411-412 that Medon the herald, for example, provides her with information regarding the suitors's plans. The poet tells us: "πεύθετο γὰρ οὗ παιδὸς ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὄλεθρον / κῆρυξ γάρ οἱ ἔειπε Μέδων, ὃς ἐπεύθετο βουλάς" ("For she had heard how they planned her son's death in the palace. / The herald, Medon, who overheard their planning, had told her." Thus, Homer also presents her as possessing good powers of perception.

Penelope's perceptiveness, whatever it is, does not allow her to notice Eurykleia as the old nurse tries to draw her attention to Odysseus's scar. In fact, Penelope is looking elsewhere while Eurykleia motions for her to look at the stranger's thigh during the foot-washing scene:

> ἦ καὶ Πηνελόπειαν ἐσέδρακεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
> πεφραδέειν ἐθέλουσα φίλον πόσιν ἔνδον ἐόντα.
> ἡ δ' οὔτ' ἀθρῆσαι δύνατ' ἀντίη οὔτε νοῆσαι·
> τῇ γὰρ 'Αθηναίη νόον ἔτραπεν·

> She spoke, and turned her eyes toward Penelope, wishing
> to indicate to her her beloved husband's presence,
> but Penelope was not able to look that way, or perceive him,
> since Athene turned aside her perception. (*Ody.* 19.476-479)

Whether or not we believe that Athene is to blame for distracting Penelope, the fact remains that while she was sitting in the same room with Odysseus she did not notice the single most important clue that can give away his identity. This action accounts for a particular view of Penelope's perceptive powers.

That Penelope recognizes Odysseus before he reveals his identity to her is not clear in the text. Homer provides evidence throughout Book 19-23 that supports varying views. One of the most telling examples of the ambiguity found in the Odyssey concerning Penelope's ability to recognize Odysseus appears in *Ody.* 23.93-95. Here, Penelope seems to recognize Odysseus, then she doesn't

> ἡ δ' ἄνεω δὴν ἧστο, τάφος δέ οἱ ἦτορ ἵκανεν·
> ὄψει δ' ἄλλοτε μέν μιν ἐνωπαδίως ἐσίδεσκεν,
> ἄλλοτε δ' ἀγνώσασκε κακὰ χροῒ εἵματ' ἔχοντα.

> She sat a long time in silence, and her heart was wondering.
> Sometimes she would look at him, with her eyes full upon him,
> and again would fail to know him in the foul clothing he wore.

In this passage we notice that she may indeed know him and she may not. Both possibilities are contained in her actions toward the stranger sitting in front of her.

It is interesting to note that some artists and scholars have placed so much value on Penelope's recognition of Odysseus as a signpost of her intelligence. However, what seems to be more important is that Penelope reveals her intelligence in various ways and in varying degrees, rendering us unable to make any resolute pronouncements about her.

There is little doubt that she demonstrates cunning, skepticism, and perceptive skills in certain instances; however, Homer also portrays her as a pawn of the gods and fearful of them. In some cases, she seems unaware of the dangers surrounding her. This ambiguity provides a rich pool from which to draw many different personae of Penelope. Perhaps Odysseus's statement in Ody. 23.361 best sums up the ambiguity surrounding Penelope's intelligence, for his word is the final one uttered by a mortal: "σοὶ δέ, γύναι, τάδ' ἐπιτέλλω, πινυτῇ περ ἐούσῃ" (But I tell you this, my wife, though you have your own understanding).

Penelope's Temperament and Courage

The way in which Homer portrays Penelope in the story makes it impossible for us to gain a firm grip on her temperament. At times she pines away in despair for Odysseus, unable to withstand any mention of his death. Yet she often exhibits hope that he will indeed return. From time to time she appears to us as an angry woman, resentful over her plight and the way she is treated by others; yet, we also find evidence of a sweet and kindly disposition—often in the story she is referred to as the dear or sweet wife of Odysseus and she is known for her kindness to guests. It is also difficult to determine whether she is fearful of others and her future or whether she possesses a strength of character that provides her with the fortitude she needs to carry on in the face of danger without her husband.

When we first encounter Penelope, she is mourning for her lost husband and unable to hear any reference to the war that took him away from her. In fact, when the minstrel Phemios begins to sing about the deaths of the heroes of the Trojan War, Penelope bursts into tears and begs him to stop:

> τοῖσι δ' ἀοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός, οἱ δὲ σιωπῇ
> ἥατ' ἀκούοντες· ὁ δ' Ἀχαιῶν νόστον ἄειδε

λυγρόν, ὃν ἐκ Τροίης ἐπετείλατο Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
τοῦ δ' ὑπερωιόθεν φρεσὶ σύνθετο θέσπιν ἀοιδὴν
κούρη Ἰκαρίοιο, περίφρων Πηνελόπεια·
κλίμακα δ' ὑψηλὴν κατεβήσετο οἷο δόμοιο...
δακρύσασα δ' ἔπειτα προσηύδα θεῖον ἀοιδόν·
"φήμιε, πολλὰ γὰρ ἄλλα βροτῶν θελκτήρια οἶδας,
ἔργ' ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, τά τε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί·
τῶν ἕν γέ σφιν ἄειδε παρήμενος, οἱ δὲ σιωπῇ
οἶνον πινόντων· ταύτης δ' ἀποπαύε' ἀοιδῆς
λυγρῆς,

The famous singer was singing to them, and they in silence
sat listening. He sang of the Achaian's bitter homecoming
from Troy, which Pallas Athene had inflicted upon them.
The daughter of Ikarios, circumspect Penelope,
heard and heeded the magical song from her upper chamber...
All in tears she spoke then to the divine singer:
Phemios, since you know many other actions of mortals
and gods, which can charm men's hearts and which the singers celebrate,
sit beside them and sing one of these, and let them in silence
go on drinking their wine, but leave off singing this sad
song. . . . (*Ody.* 1.325-341)

Penelope's sorrow here compels her to appear before the men in the great hall and plead with Phemios to change the music he is playing, though she may be aware that by doing so she will instigate a rebuke from the audience of suitors. It is interesting to note that it is Telemachos who chides her for her response to Phemios's song.

Later, in *Ody.* 18.201-205 Penelope's sadness takes a darker turn when, after awaking from a dream, she prays to Artemis to strike her dead so that she would not have to bear her pain anymore. She sighs out loud:

"ἦ με μάλ' αἰνοπαθῆ μαλακὸν περὶ κῶμ' ἐκάλυψεν.
αἴθε μοι ὣς μαλακὸν θάνατον πόροι Ἄρτεμις ἁγνὴ
αὐτίκα νῦν, ἵνα μηκέτ' ὀδυρομένη κατὰ θυμὸν
αἰῶνα φθινύθω, πόσιος ποθέουσα φίλοιο
παντοίην ἀρετήν, ἐπεὶ ἔξοχος ἦεν Ἀχαιῶν."

That was a strange thing, that soft sleep that shrouded me.
How I wish chaste Artemis would give me a death so
soft, and now, so I would not go on in my heart grieving
all my life, and longing for love of a husband excellent
in every virtue, since he stood out among the Achaians.

The dream she had gives her little respite from her pain. She longs to die because she tires of waiting for the lost Odysseus and realizes that no man wooing her can match his *ἀρετήν*, or "arete."

Yet Penelope is not entirely without hope, for it has been her steadfast belief Odysseus will return that has kept her going through the twenty long years of his absence. In *Ody.* 17.541-547, for example, she laughs aloud when she hears Telemachos sneeze, believing it to be an omen that the suitors will soon be slain:

ὣς φάτο, Τηλέμαχος δὲ μέγ' ἔπταρεν, ἀμφὶ δὲ δῶμα
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε· γέλασσε δὲ Πηνελόπεια,
αἶψα δ' ἄρ' Εὔμαιον ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
"ἔρχεό μοι, τὸν ξεῖνον ἐναντίον ὧδε κάλεσσον.
οὐχ ὁράᾳς ὅ μοι υἱὸς ἐπέπταρε πᾶσιν ἔπεσσι;

τῷ κε καὶ οὐκ ἀτελὴς θάνατος μνηστῆρσι γένοιτο

πᾶσι μάλ', οὐδέ κέ τις θάνατον καὶ κῆρας ἀλύξει.

She spoke, and Telemachos sneezed amain, and around him the palace

re-echoed terribly to the sound. Penelope, laughing,

spoke presently to Eumaios and addressed him in winged words:

Go, please, and summon the stranger into my presence. Do you

not see how my son sneezed for everything I have spoken?

May it mean that death, accomplished in full, befall the suitors

each and all, not one avoiding death and destruction.

Penelope's outburst here marks the only time in the text that she exhibits laughter, and it comes on the heels of Eumaios's report that a stranger has arrived in Ithaka who has information concerning Odysseus's whereabouts. Also in her response we find a wish for the θάνατον καὶ κῆρας, or "death and destruction" of the suitors. Thus, Penelope enjoys a momentary respite from the despair plaguing her.

Homer also depicts Penelope as bitter and angry, as well as sweet-natured. Resentful of the treatment she endures at the hands of the suitors, her servants, and family, Penelope has the potential of causing them great pain. Many, like Telemachos, are afraid of engendering her wrath. In *Ody.* 2.130-137, for example, when Telemachos speaks to Antinoos at the council, he tells the suitor that he fears his mother's wrath if indeed he sent Penelope away from her home:

"'Αντίνο', οὔ πως ἔστι δόμων ἀέκουσαν ἀπῶσαι

ἥ μ' ἔτεχ', ἥ μ' ἔθρεψε· πατὴρ δ' ἐμὸς ἄλλοθι γαίης,

ζώει ὅ γ' ἢ τέθνηκε· κακὸν δέ με πόλλ' ἀποτίνειν

Ἰκαρίῳ, αἴ κ' αὐτὸς ἑκὼν ἀπὸ μητέρα πέμψω.

ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς κακὰ πείσομαι, ἄλλα δὲ δαίμων

δώσει, ἐπεὶ μήτηρ στυγερὰς ἀρήσετ' ἐρινῦς
οἴκου ἀπερχομένη· νέμεσις δέ μοι ἐξ ἀνθρώπων
ἔσσεται·

Antinoos, I cannot thrust the mother who bore me,
who raised me, out of the house against her will. My father,
alive or dead, is elsewhere in the world. It will be hard
to pay back Ikarios, if willingly I dismiss my mother.
I will suffer some evil from her father, and the spirit will give me
more yet, for my mother will call down her furies upon me
as she goes out of the house. And I shall have the people's
resentment. . .

Although Telemachos cites numerous reasons for not sending her back to her family, we are aware that he does fear her wrath. He reiterates this concern later in *Ody.* 20.343-344:

αἰδέομαι δ' ἀέκουσαν ἀπὸ μεγάροιο δίεσθαι
μύθῳ ἀναγκαίῳ· μὴ τοῦτο θεὸς τελέσειεν."

But I am ashamed to drive her unwillingly out of the palace
with a strict word. May this not be the end god makes it.

The use of αἰδέομαι here in this speech implies shame, fear, and respect. Therefore, once again Telemachos reveals a real fear of what Penelope will do to him if he sends her away.

Even at their happy reunion Odysseus must endure Penelope's resentment over his tricky disguise he took partly at her expense. Although this passage has long been viewed as evidence that Penelope gladly accepts Odysseus back with open arms,[22] others like Hanna Roisman have proposed that Penelope harbors resentment toward Odysseus for not including her in the secret of his identity.[23] Penelope explains to Odysseus:

αἰεὶ γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν
ἐρρίγει μή τίς με βροτῶν ἀπάφοιτο ἔπεσσιν
ἐλθών· πολλοὶ γὰρ κακὰ κέρδεα βουλεύουσιν.

For always the spirit deep in my heart was fearful
that some one of the mortal men would come my way and deceive me
with words. For there are many who scheme for wicked advantage.
(*Ody.* 215-217)

Penelope's use of κακὰ κέρδεα here is telling, since the word κέρδεα , or cunning intelligence, has been used exclusively throughout the *Odyssey* for Odysseus, his family, and Athene.[24] That she would call this brand of intelligence "bad" at this point does indeed hint at a rebuke of mortal men who use their cunning against her for evil intent. Thus, Penelope may be resentful of Odysseus's treatment of her, even though she is happy that he has finally returned.

Despite the evidence that Penelope demonstrates anger and resentment in the *Odyssey*, she is often depicted as sweet-natured and delicate. φίλης παιδὸς , or "beloved daughter," (*Ody.* 1.278), φίλη μήτηρ , or "dear mother," (*Ody.* 2.88), ἐχέφρων (*Ody.* 4.111) and περίφρων Πηνελόπεια , "constant," "temperate," "circumspect" Penelope (*Ody.* 5. 216), and ἐυφραίνοιτε γυναῖκας , or "blameless" and "peerless" wife (*Ody.* 13.43) are descriptions used throughout the story for her. Although she is complimented for her kindly and sensible nature, Penelope's actions reveals more about her innate goodness.

In *Ody.* 14.128-130, for example, we learn from Eumaios that Penelope welcomes all strangers to her palace, offering them food and clothing—even when they lie to her about their knowledge of Odysseus. Eumaios tells us:

ὃς δέ κ' ἀλητεύων 'Ιθάκης ἐς δῆμον ἵκηται,
ἐλθὼν ἐς δέσποιναν ἐμὴν ἀπατήλια βάζει·
ἡ δ' εὖ δεξαμένη φιλέει καὶ ἕκαστα μεταλλᾷ,
καί οἱ ὀδυρομένῃ βλεφάρων ἄπο δάκρυα πίπτει,
ἣ θέμις ἐστὶ γυναικός, ἐπὴν πόσις ἄλλοθ' ὄληται.

. . .and any vagrant who makes his way to the land of Ithaka
goes to my mistress and babbles his lies to her, and she then
receives him well and entertains him and asks him everything,
and as she mourns him the tears run down from her eyes, since this is
the right way for a wife when her husband is far and perished.

Hospitable to a fault, Penelope lets herself be taken advantage of by devious strangers who lie to her about Odysseus. If she is kind to her guests, then it is understandable that she would be extremely solicitous to strangers who turn out to be members of her own family. For example, when she learns that the beggar is really Odysseus in disguise, she runs immediately to him and apologizes for her hard-heartedness toward him. The poet says:

ὣς φάτο, τῆς δ' αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ,
σήματ' ἀναγνούσῃ τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' 'Οδυσσεύς·
δακρύσασα δ' ἔπειτ' ἰθὺς δράμεν, ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας
δειρῇ βάλλ' 'Οδυσῆϊ, κάρη δ' ἔκυσ' ἠδὲ προσηύδα·
"μή μοι, 'Οδυσσεῦ, σκύζευ, ἐπεὶ τά περ ἄλλα μάλιστα
ἀνθρώπων πέπνυσο· θεοὶ δ' ὤπαζον ὀϊζύν,
οἳ νῶϊν ἀγάσαντο παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντε
ἥβης ταρπῆναι καὶ γήραος οὐδὸν ἱκέσθαι.

> So he spoke, and her knees and the heart within her went slack
> as she recognized the clear proofs that Odysseus had given;
> but then she burst into tears and ran straight to him, throwing
> her arms around the neck of Odysseus, and kissed his head, saying:
> Do not be angry with me, Odysseus, since beyond other men,
> you have the most understanding. The gods granted us misery,
> in jealousy over the thought that we two, always together,
> should enjoy our youth, and then come to the threshold of old age.
> (*Ody.* 23.205-212)

In this scene, Penelope begs Odysseus for forgiveness and blames the gods for causing their separation. As I pointed out earlier, she explains that she was forced to be prudent because she feared being tricked by gods. Her sweet and convincing apology here wins Odysseus over, and any doubts he may have been harboring about her trustworthiness dissipate.

Questions about Penelope's courage center primarily on her relationship with the suitors. We wonder if she acquiesces to the suitors's demands because she was intimidated by them, or if she was courageously biding her time in order to protect Telemachos and her property. In the story, we find that Homer presents both possibilities.

Often Penelope is depicted as fearful and reticent about speaking up. For example, she cowers when her son chides her for overstepping her boundaries. When Phemios sings the sad song of the Achaian heroes's death and begs him to stop, Telemachos issues a rebuke. The poet tells us:

> Ἡ μὲν θαμβήσασα πάλιν οἶκόνδε βεβήκει·
> παιδὸς γὰρ μῦθον πεπνυμένον ἔνθετο θυμῷ.
> ἐς δ' ὑπερῷ' ἀναβᾶσα σὺν ἀμφιπόλοισι γυναιξὶ

κλαῖεν ἔπειτ' 'Οδυσῆα φίλον πόσιν, ὄφρα οἱ ὕπνον
ἡδὺν ἐπὶ βλεφάροισι βάλε γλαυκῶπις 'Αθήνη.

Penelope went back inside the house, in amazement,
for she laid the serious words of her son deep away in her spirit,
and she went back to the upper story with her attendant
women, and wept for Odysseus, her beloved husband, until
gray-eyed Athene cast sweet slumber over her eyelids. (*Ody.* 1.360-364)

Telemachos's words send Penelope meekly to her chambers, where she cries herself to sleep. This is not the only instance when Penelope obeys her young son's commands. In *Ody.* 17.45-51 she refrains from becoming overly excited when Telemachos returns home from his dangerous journey. He tells her:

Τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ηὔδα·
"μῆτερ ἐμή, μή μοι γόον ὄρνυθι μηδέ μοι ἦτορ
ἐν στήθεσσιν ὄρινε φυγόντι περ αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον·
ἀλλ' ὑδρηναμένη, καθαρὰ χροῒ εἵμαθ' ἑλοῦσα,
εἰς ὑπερῷ' ἀναβᾶσα σὺν ἀμφιπόλοισι γυναιξὶν
εὔχεο πᾶσι θεοῖσι τεληέσσας ἑκατόμβας
ῥέξειν, αἴ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς ἄντιτα ἔργα τελέσσῃ.

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:
Mother, do not stir up a scene of sorrow, nor trouble
my heart once more, now I have escaped from sheer destruction;
but go, wash with water and put clean clothing upon your body,
and going on to the upper story with your attendant

women, vow to all the gods the service of complete

hecatombs, if Zeus grants requital for what is done to us.

Heeding his words, Penelope dutifully returns to her chambers to clean herself up and make offerings to the gods.

If Penelope submits to her son Telemachos, then she cannot in any way stand up to the violent suitors who dog her at the palace. In *Ody.* 2.50-51 we learn from Telemachos that these men are taking advantage of her:

μητέρι μοι μνηστῆρες ἐπέχραον οὐκ ἐθελούσῃ,

τῶν ἀνδρῶν φίλοι υἷες, οἳ ἐνθάδε γ' εἰσὶν ἄριστοι,

For my mother, against her will, is beset by suitors,

own sons to the men who are greatest hereabouts. . . .

That Penelope cannot rid herself of the suitors points to her timidity and fearfulness. News of her plight extends beyond the borders of Ithaka; even Nestor in Pylos knows that she is overrun by these men:

φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἵνεκα πολλοὺς

ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάασθαι·

εἰπέ μοι, ἠὲ ἑκὼν ὑποδάμνασαι, ἦ σέ γε λαοὶ

ἐχθαίρουσ' ἀνὰ δῆμον, ἐπισπόμενοι θεοῦ ὀμφῇ.

they do say that many suitors for the sake of your mother

are in your palace against your will, and plot evil against you.

Tell me, are you willingly put down, or are the people

who live about you swayed by some divine voice, and hate you?

(*Ody.* 3.212-215)

Nestor's speech suggests one of two reasons for Telemachos and Penelope's problem. Either they are unable to exert enough strength to send these men away, or they are unloved by the gods. The possibility that Penelope cannot handle the situation she finds herself in lurks in the minds of those who know her strength and mettle.

Further evidence of her lack of fortitude can be seen in *Ody.* 4.716-720. Here, Penelope hears about Telemachos's departure. Instead of formulating a plan to ensure him a safe return, she collapses to the floor and weeps. The poet tells us:

> τὴν δ' ἄχος ἀμφεχύθη θυμοφθόρον, οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτ' ἔτλη
> δίφρῳ ἐφέζεσθαι πολλῶν κατὰ οἶκον ἐόντων,
> ἀλλ' ἄρ' ἐπ' οὐδοῦ ἷζε πολυκμήτου θαλάμοιο
> οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρομένη· περὶ δὲ δμῳαὶ μινύριζον
> πᾶσαι, ὅσαι κατὰ δώματ' ἔσαν νέαι ἠδὲ παλαιαί.
>
> and a cloud of heart-wasting sorrow was on her, she had no strength left
> to sit down in a chair, though there were many there in the palace,
> but sat down on the floor of her own well-wrought bedchamber
> weeping pitifully, and about her her maids were wailing
> all, who were there in the house with her, both young and old ones.

Thus, Homer portrays Penelope as a weak-willed and overly soft-hearted woman unable to take action on her own to save herself and family.

Far from meek and frightened, Penelope emerges as assertive and brave. She reprimands the suitors, family, and the servants in the story for misconduct and the injustices they cause. In *Ody.* 16. 418-420 Penelope offers a strong insult to Antinoos for plotting against Telemachos. She roars:

"'Αντίνο', ὕβριν ἔχων, κακομήχανε, καὶ δέ σέ φασιν
ἐν δήμῳ 'Ιθάκης μεθ' ὁμήλικας ἔμμεν ἄριστον
βουλῇ καὶ μύθοισι· σὺ δ' οὐκ ἄρα τοῖος ἔησθα.

Antinoos, violent man, deviser of evil: in Ithaka
the common account says you are the best man among your age mates
for speech and counsel. But you have never been such. . . .

Despite the grave danger she and her son are in, Penelope hazards a rebuke to the suitor she believes to be the most dangerous among the unsavory men.

She also brooks no misconduct from Telemachos and issues him strong words about his lack of manners and sense in regards to the inhospitable treatment of the stranger. She calls out to him in front of the suitors:

"Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὐδὲ νόημα·
παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν καὶ μᾶλλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ κέρδε' ἐνώμας·
νῦν δ', ὅτε δὴ μέγας ἐσσὶ καὶ ἥβης μέτρον ἱκάνεις,
καί κέν τις φαίη γόνον ἔμμεναι ὀλβίου ἀνδρός,
ἐς μέγεθος καὶ κάλλος ὁρώμενος, ἀλλότριος φώς,
οὐκέτι τοι φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὐδὲ νόημα.
οἷον δὴ τόδε ἔργον ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐτύχθη,
ὃς τὸν ξεῖνον ἔασας ἀεικισθήμεναι οὕτως.

Telemachos, your mind and thoughts are no longer steadfast.
When you were a child still, you had better thoughts in mind [κέρδε'].
Now,
when you are big, and come to the measure of maturity, and one
who saw you, some outsider, viewing your size and beauty,

would say you were the son born of a prosperous man;

your thoughts are no longer righteous, nor your perception;

such a thing has been done now, here in our palace, and you

permitted our stranger guest to be so outrageously handled.

(*Ody.* 18.215-222)

As I mentioned earlier, Odysseus and his family are described throughout the text as κέρδε', or "cunning." Therefore, when Penelope scolds him here and complains that he has lost his cunning, she essentially disinherits him from the family legacy: He can't possibly be Odysseus and Penelope's son if he behaves this way. Caught off guard by her words and protecting his knowledge of the stranger's true identity, Telemachos blunders his way through an excuse and apology for his bad behavior.

Penelope's difficulty with her servants is made apparent early in the story when we learned that one of her serving women reported the loom trick to the suitors. In *Ody.* 19.91-95, however, Penelope chides the culprit, Melantho, for her treatment of the stranger. For Penelope, revenge is sweet:

"πάντως, θαρσαλέη, κύον ἀδεές, οὔ τί με λήθεις

ἔρδουσα μέγα ἔργον, ὃ σῇ κεφαλῇ ἀναμάξεις·

πάντα γὰρ εὖ ᾔδησθ', ἐπεὶ ἐξ ἐμεῦ ἔκλυες αὐτῆς

ὡς τὸν ξεῖνον ἔμελλον ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐμοῖσιν

ἀμφὶ πόσει εἴρεσθαι, ἐπεὶ πυκινῶς ἀκάχημαι."

Always I know well what monstrous thing you are doing,

you bold and shameless bitch; you will wipe it off on your own head.

You understood all this very well, because you had heard it

from me, how in my halls I intended to question the stranger

about my husband; since I am troubled for him incessantly.

Thus, Penelope stands up to the dishonest servant even though this woman has close ties to Eurymachos and enjoys great power in the palace.

Looking at the ambiguity Homer builds in the text regarding Penelope's temperament and courage, we notice that she emerges with several different personae. Penelope is a grieving and despairing woman and at the same time a woman full of hope. She is resentful and angry, yet sweet-natured and good. At times she is fearful and timid, but then she also asserts herself and is courageous.

Conclusion

When we hear Agamemnon's praise of Penelope's virtue, he—like a great many of the artists we have examined—is looking solely at one small part of her total personality. That he lauds her prudence and steadfast nature is understandable from a man killed by an adulterous wife. But Penelope's κλέος is derived from much more than a faithful devotion to her husband's bed. As we have seen in the art depicting Penelope throughout the last seven hundred years, Penelope achieves great fame because of her complexity. Like her husband, she has been an inspiration for literature, visual arts, and music in the Western world since her inception. And like Odysseus her "complex personality becomes broken up into various simple types,"[25] leaving us at times with simply one aspect of her: the sweet and faithful wife, the wanton harlot, the wise woman, the unsuspecting lady, the jealous harpy, the sweet-tempered matron, the damsel in distress, and the courageous hero. In truth, Penelope represents the quintessential woman, everywoman *and* everyman—for contained in her are all of the components of womanhood, as well as humanity. She is a triumph of Homer's imagination and a rich source of legends and traditions for the artists she has stirred.

Chapter 7
Notes

[1] Marylin Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the* Odyssey (Princeton: New Jersey, 1991) 26.

[2] W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: The Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1963) 7. Stanford talks at great length about the ambiguity found in Homer's poem.

[3] Stanford, 80.

[4] Nancy Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 3, 126. Here, Felson-Rubin tells us that "multiple images" of Penelope are created through the "gazes" of the male characters in the story. She also points out that Penelope is fully fleshed out and far from being a "flat" character.

[5] Milman Parry, "The Traditional Epithet in Homer"("L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère"), *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 1-190.

[6] Adam Parry, introduction, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*," by Milman Parry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) ix-lxii.

[7] P. W. Harsh, "Penelope and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* XIX," *American Journal of Philology* 71 (1950) 1-21.

[8] Geoffrey Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

[9] Charles R. Beye's "Male and Female in the Homeric Poems," *Ramus* 3.2 (1974) 87-101.

[10] Charles P. Segal, "Kleos and Its Ironies in the *Odyssey*" *AC* 52 (1983), 22-47.

[11] Cedric Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1958) 154-180. See also W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: The Study of the Adaptability of a Hero* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1963).

[12] Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

[13] Patricia Marquandt, "Penelope POLUTROPOS" *American Journal of Philology* 106.1 (1984) 32-48.

[14] Sheila Murnaghan, "Penelope Agnoia: Knowledge, Power, and Gender in the *Odyssey*" *Helios* 13 (1986) 103-115.

[15] Anne Amory, "The Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope, *Essays on the Odyssey: Selected Modern Criticism*, ed. Charles H. Taylor, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963) 100-121.

[16] Marylin Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Determinacy in the* Odyssey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[17] Nancy Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[18] Stanford, 55.

[19] Stanford, 55. Here Stanford tells us that "It would take a whole volume to free [Penelope] from the accumulated disparagements of centuries. . . . But Homer presents real men and women, not dream-fantasies

[20] Stanford, 7.

[21] John Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthopology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge Press, 1990) 129-161.

[22] Stanford, 58-59. Stanford writes: Yet—and this is her greatest moral triumph—once she has got the effect she wanted by her subterfuge, instead of boasting and making Odysseus admit that she can be cleverer than he, when she likes, she simply yields.

[23] Hanna Roisman, "Penelope's Indignation," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 117 (1987) 59-68.

[24] Dene Grigar and Mindi Corwin, "The Loom and the Weaver: Hypertext and Homer's *Odyssey*," Computers and Writing Conference, Columbia, Missouri, 22 May 1994.

[25] Stanford, 80.

Appendix A
Artistic Works in Chronological Order

Artist	Name of Work	Kind	Date	Nat.	Gen.
Alghieri, Dante	*The Divine Comedy*	poem	1307-21	Italian	Male
Boccaccio, Giovanni	"Penelope, Wife of Ulysses" from *De mulieribus claris*	poem	1355-59	Italian	Male
Chaucer, Geoffrey	"Book of the Duchess"	poem	1369	British	Male
	"Anelida and Arcite"	poem	circa 1374		
	"Troilus and Cresyde"	poem	1381-89		
	"Legend of Good Women"	poem	circa 1386-94		
	"The Franklin's Tale" from *The Canterbury Tales*	poem	1386-1399		
Gower, John	*Confessio amantis*	poem	1390	British	Male
De Pizan, Christine	*Le livre de la Cité des Dames*	prose	1405	Italian	Female
anonymous	*Penelope Staving Off Her Violent Suitors*	???	???	British	—
anonymous	*Penelope at the Loom* (also	tapestry	1480-3	Franco-Flemish	—
anonymous	*Penelope Writing*	manuscript illustration	early-1500's	French	—
Pinturicchio	*Telemachos and Penelope* (also *Scenes from the Odyssey*)	fresco	1509	Italian	Male
Beccafumi, Domenico	*Penelope*	painting	1519	Italian	Male

Skeleton, John	"Garland of Laurel" *Phyllyp Sparowe*	poem poem	1523 1504-1512	British	Male
Labé, Louise	"I"	poem	mid 1500's	French	Female
Ducis, Benedictus	"Hanc tua Penelope"	vocal composition	circa 1544	Swiss-German?	Male
Sachs, Hans	*Die Irrfahrt des Odysseus*	play	1555	German	Male
Primaticcio, Francesco	*Ulysses and Penelope* *Penelope and Her Handmaidens Spinning*	painting painting	1556-59? undated	Italian	Male
Jean Cousin the Elder	*Penelope*	drawing	1560	???	Male
van der Straet, Jan and Morandini, Francesco	*Penelope*	fresco	1562	? / Italian	Male
Garnier, Robert	*La Troade*	play	1579	French	Male
Spenser, Edmund	*The Faerie Queene* *Amoretti*	poem poem	1579-1589 1594	British	Male
Della Porta, Giambattista	*Penelope*	play	before 1580	Italian	Male
Greene, Robert	*Penelope's Web: wherein a christall myrror of faeminine perfection*	poem	1587	British	Male
Della Porte, Giambattista	*Penelope*	play	1591	Italian	Female
Bassano, Jacopo	*Penelope*	painting	1592	Italian	Male
Davies, John (Sir)	"Orchestra or a Poeme of Dauncing"	poem	1594	British	Male

Coles, Peter (also Colse)	*Penelope's Complaint: or, A Mirrour for Wanton Minions*	poems	1596	British	Male
Byrd, William	"Penelope, That Longëd For the Sight" (also "Constant Penelope")	madrigal	circa 1600	British	Male
Marlowe, Christopher	*Dr. Faustus*	play	1604	British	Male
Shakespeare, William	*Coriolanus*	play	1609	British	Male
Jonson, Ben	"Epigram to the Honored Countess"	poem	1616	British	Male
Heywood, Thomas	"Of Penelope"	history / mythology	1624	British	Male
Herrick, Robert	"The Parting Verse"	poem	1627	British	Male
Pona, Francesco	*La galleria delle donne celebri*	poetic cataloque	1633	Italian	Male
Smith, James	*The Innovations of Penelope and Ulysses*	travesty	by 1640	British	Male
Carew, Thomas	"The Rapture"	poem	circa 1640	British	Male
Monteverdi, Claudio (and Badoaro, G.)	*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*	opera	1640	Italian	Male
Picon, ?	L'Odysée d'Homère	burlesque	1650	French	Male
Pariati, Pietro	*Penelope: tragicommedi*	play	1600's?	Italian?	Male
Draghi, Antonio (and Nicolò Minato)	*Penelope*	opera	1670	Italian	Male
Michel Corneille the Younger	*Penelope*	fresco	early 1670's	French	Male

Jacob Jordaens	*Penelope and her Lovers*	painting	circa 1678	Belguim??	Male
Genest, Charles-Claude	*Penelope: tragedie*	play	1684	French	Male
Pallavicino, Carlo	*Penelope la casta*	opera	1685	Italian	Male
Giordano, Luca	*Minerva and Arachne*	painting	circa 1695-6	Italian	Male
Rheinhold Keiser and Bressand, Friedrich C.	*Penelope und Odysseus* (also: *Penelope, oder, Des Ulysses anderer Theil)*	opera	1702	German / ?	Male
Perti, Giacomo, Antonio (and Noris, ?)	*Penelope la casta*	opera	1696	Italian	Male
Scarlatti, Alessandro (and Noris, ?)	*Penelope la casta*	opera	1696	Italian	Male
Fenelon, Francois de Salignac de la Mothe	*Les aventures de Telemaque*	play	1699	French	Male
Rowe, Nicholas	*Ulysses*	play	1705	British	Male
Fiorè, Andrea Stefano (and Pariati, Pietro)	*Penelope La casta*	opera	1707	Italian?	Male
Cameo, Giacomo	*Penelope's Choice between Her Father and Her Husband*	painting	after 1711	Italian	Male
Wharton, Anne	"From Penelope to Ulysses"	poem	circa 1712	British	Female
Mouret, Jean-Joseph	*La ceinture de Vénus*	ballet-opera	1715	French	Male
Chelleri, Fortunato (and Noris, ?)	*Penelope la casta*	opera	1716	Italian	Male
Prior, Matthew	"Down Hall, a Ballad"	poem	1723	British	Male

Conti, Francesco Bartolomeo (and Pariati, Pietro)	*Penelope*	opera	1724	Italian	Male
Salio, Guiseppe	*La Penelope: tragedia*	play	1724	Italian	Male
Gillier, Jean-Claude	*La Penelope moderne*	opéra-comique	1728	French	Male
Mottley, John (with Cooke, Thomas)	*Penelope: A Dramatic Opera*	ballad opera (libretto)	1728	British	Male
Le Moyne, Francois	*Penelope Weaving a Tapestry (Refusing Gifts from Pretenders)*	painting	1729-30	French	Male
Renier, Nicolas	*Ulisse et Pénélope*	cantata	1731	French	Male
Verocai, Giovanni (and Pariati, Pietro)	*Penelope*	opera	1740	Italian	Male
Rolli, Paolo Antonio	*Penelope—Melodrama*	play	1741	Italian	Male
Galuppi, Baldassare (and Rolli, Paolo Antonio)	*Penelope*	opera	1741	Italian	Male
Friz, Andreas	*Penelope: Tragedia*	play	1761	Austrian?	Male
Kauffmann, Angelica	*Penelope at the Loom*	painting	1764	Swiss	Female
	Penelope Hanging Up the Arms of Ulysses (also *Penelope Taking Down the Bow*)	painting	1769		
	Penelope Awakened by Eurykleia with the News	painting	1773		
	Penelope Invoking Minerva's Aid for the Safe Return of Telemachus	painting	1774		
	The Return of Telemachus	painting	1775		

	The Parting of Ulysses and Penelope	painting	1775		
	Penelope Weeping over the Bow of Ulysses	painting	1775-8		
	Penelope at Work	painting	1782		
Gazzaniga, ?	*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*	opera	1781	Italian?	Male
Carvahlo, João de Sousa (and Martinelli, Gaetano)	*Penelope nella partenza da Sparta*	opera	1782	Portuguese	Male
Marmontel, Jean-Francois	*Penelope*	play	1785	French	Male
Piccinini, Niccolò (and Marmontel, Jean Francois)	*Penelope*	opera	1785	Italian	Male
Despreaux, Jean-Étienne	*Pénélope*	parody	1786	French	Male
Cimarosa, Domenico (and Diodati, Guiseppe Maria)	*Penelope*	opera (musical score)	1795?	Italian	Male
Radet, Jean Baptiste	*Constance: A Parodie de Penelope en un acte en vaudevilles*	parody	1786	French	Male
Gyllenborg, Gustaf Fredrik	*Penelope*	play	1791	???	Male
Flaxman, John	*Penelope* (series of 7)	illustrations	1804	British	Male
Géricault, Théodore	*The Departure of Ulysses*	painting (lost)	1812	French	Male
Byron, George (Lord)	*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*	poem	1812-18	British	Male
	Don Juan	poem	1817-18		
	"To Penelope, January 2, 1821"	poem	1821		
Portugal, Marcos Antonio (and Michailov, ?)	*Penelope*	opera	1818	???	Male

Ponceau, D'Oigni du	*Pénelope*	play	1826	French	Male
Daumier, Honoré	*Penelope's Nights* *Ulysses and Penelope*	lithograph lithograph	1842 1842	French	Male
Tennyson, Alfred Lord	"Ulysses"	dramatic monologue	1842	British	Male
Jerichau, Jens Adolphe	*Penelope*	sculpture	1843-6	Danish	Male
Wyatt, Richard James	*Penelope*	sculpture	1844	British	Male
Bournonville, August (and Lovenskjold, Herman Severin)	*Den ny Penelope, eller, Foraarsfesten i Athenen*	ballet	1847	French /	
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett	"Queen Anelida"	poem	mid-1800's	British	Female
Chapu, Henri	*The Departure of Ulysses (from Penelope)*	sculpture	1853	French	Male
Glaser, Adolf	*Penelope*	play	1854	German	Male
de Lajarte, Théodore (and Henri Boisseaux)	*Mam'zelle Penelope*	opera (vocal score)	1859	French	Male
Landor, Walter Savage	"Penelope and Pheido"	poetic dialogue	1859	British	Male
Grange, Eugene (also Eugene Pièrre Basté)	*La Penelope à la mode de Caen: Parodie en cinz actes*	opera	1860	French	Male
Jeanne, Gregoire	*Ulysse et Penelope: Drama antiques en cinq actes*	play	1862	French	Male
Burnand, Frances C. (Esq.) (with Williams, Montague)	*Patient Penelope: or The Return of Odysseus*	burlesque	1863	British	Male

Stanhope, John Spencer	*Penelope*	painting	1864	British	Male
Alma-Tadema, Lawrence	*The Sculpture Gallery in Rome*	painting	1887	British	Male
Lazarus, Emma	"Penelope's Choice"	poem	1867	???	Female
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel	*Penelope (at her loom)*	painting	1869	British	Male
Taluet, Ferdinand	*Penelope*	sculpture	1869	French	Male
Harte, Brett	"Penelope Song"	song (vocal score)	1871	American	Male
Böhm, G.	*Penelope*	play	1873	???	Male
Bruch, Max	from *Odysseus* "Penelope Weaving a Garment" "Penelope's Grief"	choral work vocal score vocal score	1873	German	Male
Victor, Frances Fuller	*The New Penelope*	fictional sketch	1877	American	Female
Sandys, Frederick	*Penelope*	chalk drawing	1878	British	Male
Simmons, Franklin	*Penelope*	sculpture	1880	American?	Male
Perigini, Charles Edward	*The Loom*	painting	1881	British	Male
Homer, Winslow	*Fisher Girl Knitting*	painting	1884	American	Male
Muschamp, F. Sydney	*Penelope's Web*	painting	1884	???	Male
Sanders, Tony	"Words to Penelope"	poem	1886?	American	Male
Bynner, Edwin	*Penelope's Suitors*	novel	1887	American?	Male
Richmond, William Blake	*The Death of Ulysses*	painting	1888	British	Male

Solomon, Edward	*Penelope*	musical comedy	1888	British	Male
	Penelope	musical farce	1889		
Innsley, Owen	*Penelope's Web*	novel	1890	American?	Male
Pratt, Sarah H.	"Penelope's Symposium"	dialogue	1891	American?	Female
Horner, Burnham	*Penelope*	cantata	1892	???	Male
Weiser, K.	*Penelope*	play	1896	???	???
Spence, Thomas	*The Song of Phemius and the Sorrow of Penelope*	painting	1897	British	Male
Bridges, Robert	*The Return of Ulysses*	play	late 1900's	British	Male
Field, Erastus Salisbury	*The Embarkation of Ulysses*	painting	circa 1900	American??	Male
Maniglier, Henri-Charles	*Penelope*	sculpture	1901	French	Male
Kilpi, Volter	*Antinoils*	novel	1903	Norwegian?	Male
Marble, Thomas	*Mistress Penelope: A Romantic*	play	early 1900's?	British	Male
Lowndes, Belloc	*The Heart of Penelope*	retelling	1904	British?	Female
Phillips, Stephen	*Ulysses: A Drama in a Prologue and Three Acts*	play	1904	British	Male
	"Penelope to Ulysses"	poem	1915		
Bourdelle, Émile-Antoine	*Penelope*	sculpture	1905-12	French	Male
Noyes, Alfred	"A Song of Exile"	poem	early 1900's?	British	Male
	Drake	play	1906		

Melchers, Gari	*Penelope*	painting	1910-11	American	Female
Waterhouse, John Williams	*Penelope and Her Suitors* (also *Penelope*)	painting	1912	???	Male
Fauré, Gabriel Urbain (and Fauchois, René)	*Pénélope*	opera (vocal score)	1913	French	Male
Terramare, Georg	*Des Odysseus Erbe*	play	1913	???	Male
Carra, Carlo	*Penelope, 1917*	painting	1917	Italian	Male
Pound, Ezra	"CII" from *The Cantos* "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly"	poem poem	1917-1972 1920	American	Male
Joyce, James	*Ulysses*	novel	1921	Irish	Male
H. D. (Doolittle, Hilda)	"At Ithaca" *Hermetic Definition*	poem poem	1924 1958	American	Female
Montgomery, Roselle Mercier	"Ulysses Returns"	poem	circa 1925	American?	Female
Sr. Mary Madeleva	"Penelope"	poem	circa 1926	American?	Female
Kavafis, Konstantinos	"Ithaka"	poem	circa 1920's	Greek	Male
Erskine, John	*Penelope's Man: The Homing Instinct*	novel	circa 1920's	American?	Male
Muir, Edwin	"Penelope in Doubt" "Song For a Hypothetical Age" "Telemachos Remembers" "The Return of the Greeks" "The Return of Odysseus"	poem poem poem poem poem	1920's-40's 1920's-40's 1920's-40's 1920's-40's 1920's-40's	British?	Male

Parker, Dorothy	"Penelope"	poem	1928	American	Female
Moeller, Eberhard Wolfgang	*Douaumont: The Return of the Soldier Ulysses*	play	late 1920's?	German?	Male
Tchelitchew, Pavel	*Penelope*	painting	1930	???	Male
Graves, Robert	"Ulysses"	poem	1933	British	Male
Stoessl, Otto	"Das Tuch der Penelope"	poem	1933	German??	Male
Bagryana, Elisaveta	"Penelope of the Twentieth Century"	poem	1934	Bulgarian	Female
Harrison, Susie Frances	"Penelope"	poem	1934	Canadian	Female
Masefield, John	"Penelope"	poem	1935	American	Male
Rubbra, Edmund	"Penelope, for her Ulisses' sake" (song after Spencer's *Amoretti*)	song	1935	British?	Male
Giraudoux, Jean	*La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*	play	1935	French	Male
Lorenz, Friedrich	*Odysseus und Penelope: Der Liebesroman des homerischen Helden*	novel	1936	German?	Male
Peterson, Agnes Emile	*Penelope: Play in One Acte*	play	1938	American	Female
Beckett, Samuel	*Murphy*	novel	1938	Irish	Male
Clair, Pola	*Penelope Over the Sun*	play	1941	American?	Female
Cocteau, Jean	*La patience de Pénélope*	play (unpub.)	1940's	French	Male
Delvaux, Paul	*Penelope* *Penelope* *In Praise of Melancholy* (*Penelope*)	painting painting painting	1945 1946 1951-2	???	Male

Hope, A.D.	"The Muse"	poem	1945	Australian?	Male
Morstin, Ludwik Hieronim	*Penelopa*	play	1945	Polish?	Male
Babbitt, Milton	"Penelope's Night Song" from musical, *Fabulous Voyage*	song	1946	???	Male
Varnalis, Kostas	*To imerologhio tis Penelopis*	poem	1946	Greek	Male
Geissler, Horst Wolfram	*Odysseus und die Frauen* *Odysseus und Penelope*	novel novel	1947 1970	German	Male
MacNeice, Louis	"Day of Returning"	poem	mid-1900's?	Irish	Male
Gilmore, Mary (Dame)	"Penelope"	poem	mid-1900's?	Australian	Female
Fernando, Patrick	"The Return of Ulysses"	poem	mid-1900's	British?	Male
Bodart, Roger	*La tapissiere de Penelope*	poem	1946	French	Male
Durrell, Lawrence	"Penelope"	poem	1948	British	Male
Lutyens, Elisabeth	*Penelope*	musical drama with ballet	1948	???	Female
Viereck, Peter	"Penelope's Loom"	poem	1948	???	Male
Millay, Edna St. Vincent	"An Ancient Gesture"	poem	1950	American	Female
Blair, Ann	*A Modern Penelope*	poem	1951	American?	Female
Root, Edward Merrill	*Ulysses to Penelope*	poem	1951	American	Male
Maugham, W. Somerset	*Penelope: A Comedy in Three Acts*	play	1952	British	Female
Savinio, Alberto	*The Departure of Ulysses*	painting	1952	???	Male

Buero-Vallejo, Antonio	*La tejedora de sueños*	play	1952	Spanish	Male
MacLeish, Archibald	"Calypso's Island"	poem	1952	American	Male
Lambotte, Emma Pratin	*Le Roman de Penelope*	novel	1952	French	Female
Liebermann, Rolf (and Strobel, Heinrich)	*Penelope: Opera Semiseria in 2 Teilen*	opera	1954	Swiss	Male
Stevens, Wallace	"The World as Meditation"	poem	1954	American	Male
Camerini, Mario (dir.)	*Ulysses*	film	1954	Italian?	Male
Bagg, Robert	"Penelope"	poem	1957	American	Male
Kazantzakis, Nikos	*The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*	novel	1958	Greek	Male
Thurman, Judy	"Penelope"	poem	circa 1960's	American?	Female
Loubet, Jorgelina /Male and Modern, Rodolfo	*Penelope Aguarda*	play	1961	Argentinian	Female
Berg, Josef	*Odysseuv Návrat: komorní opera na autoruv text s použitím Homérovy Odyssey*	opera (vocal score)	1962	Czech	Male
Antoniou, Theodore	*Epilogue: After Homer's "The Odyssey"*	choral work vocal score	1963	Greek	Male
Hadju, Étienne	*Penelope*	sculpture	1966	???	Male
Fallaci, Orianna	*Penelope at War*	novel	1966	Italian	Female
Lowell, Robert	"Penelope"	poem	1967-8	American	Male
Duncan, Robert	"The Loom"	poem	1968	American	Male

Humphries, Rolfe	"Arachne, Penelope"	poem	1969	American	Male
Pastan, Linda	"Penelope"	poem	1969	???	Female
	"You Are Odysseus"	poem	1969		
	"At the Loom"	poem	1969		
	"Rereading the *Odyssey* in Middle Age"	poem	1969		
Wright, James	"Death as History"	poem	late 1960's?	American	Male
Hacker, Marilyn	"Mythology"	poem	late 1960's?	American?	Female
Carrington, Léonara	*Pénélope*	play	1969?	French	Female
De Chirico, Giorgio	*Penelope and [child] Telemachus*	sculpture	1970	Greco-Italian	Male
Molchanov, Kirill Vladimirovich	*Odissey, Penelope, i drugiye*	musical comedy	1970	???	Male
Aguirre, Francisca	*Itaca*	poem	1972	Spanish	Female
	"El Desván de Penélope"	poem	1972?		
Lattimore, Richmond	"Notes from the *Odyssey*"	interior monologue	1972	???	Male
Meurice, Jean-Michel	Penelope	painting series	1973	French	Male
Atwood, Margaret	"When you look at nothing"	poem	1974	American	Female
Brewster, Elizabeth	"The Siege of Troy"	poem	1974	Canadian?	Female
Weiss, Theodore	"The Storeroom"	poem	1976	American	Male
Arias, Olga	*El Tapiz de Penelope*	poetry	1976	Mexican	Female

Whitehill, Karen	"Penelope"	poem	1976	American?	Female
Wikoff, Jack	*Penelope the Queen*	poem	1976-81	American	Male
	Greece	poem	1976-81		
	"Anaximenos"	poem	1976-81		
Molinaza, José	*Sueños de Penelope: Obra teatral*	play	1977	Hispanic??	Male
Tosi, Maria	*Le Jardin de Penelope*	poem	1977	French / Italian?	Female
Cole, Keith Ramon and Pickering, Ken	*Ulysses*	rock opera (musical score)	1979	American?	Male
Ligare, David	*Penelope*	painting	1980	California	Male
Pita, Juana Rosa	*Viajes de Penelope*	poem	1980	Spain	Female
Wakoski, Diane	"Daughter Moon"	poem	1980	American	Female
Crosby, John	*Penelope New: A Novel*	novel	1981	American	Male
Scohy, Antoine	*Le chant de Penelope et autres poemes*	poem	1981	French?	Male
Mateo, Andres L.	*La otra Penelope*	novel	1982	Santo Domingo	Male
Pollitt, Katha	"Penelope Writes"	poem	1982	American	Female
Davie, Donald	"Penelope"	poem	1983	British	Male
Resino de Ron, Carmen	*Ulisses no vuelve*	play	1983	Spanish	Female
Salzedo, Leonard	"The Last Song of Penelope"	song (musical score)	1984	???	Male

Tyler, Anne	*The Accidental Tourist*	novel	1985	American?	Female
Coughlin, Maria L.	"Penelope's Dream"	poem	1985	American	Female
Heaney, Seamus	"The Stone Grinder"	poem	1987	Irish	Male
Belli, Gioconda	*The Inhabited Woman*	novel	1989	Nicaragua	Female
Llewellyn, Kate	"Penelope"	poem	circa 1980's	Australian	Female
Cofer, Judith Ortiz	"Penelope"	poem	circa 1980's	Cuban	Female
Unger, Barbara	"Penelope"	poem	circa 1980's	American?	Female
Oliensis, Jane	"Penelope Sets Up House With Odysseus"	poem	1970's-1990's	American???	Female
Dubé, Janet	"Penelope"	poem	late 1980's?	British	Female
Laedarach, Monique	*Penelope*	poem	late 1980's?	Swiss	Female
Fallon, Padraic	"Penelope Pulls Home: Kiltartan Legend"	poem	late 1900's?	Irish	Male
Walcott, Derek	*The Odyssey: A Stage Version*	play	1993	West Indian	Male
Malloy, Judy	*Its Name Was Penelope*	hypertext	1993	American	Female
Ritsos, Yannis	"Penelope's Despair"	poem	late 1900's?	Greek	Male
Le Carré, John	*Our Game*	novel	1995	American?	Male
Clancy, Tom	*Op Center*	novel	1995	American	Male
Harrison, James	"Penelope"	poem	late 1900's	American	Male

Williams, Ursula Vaughn	"Penelope"	poem	???	???	Female
Erni, Hans	*Penelope and Odysseus Embrace* *Penelope Hands the Bow to Odysseus*	line drawing line drawing	???	Swiss	Male
Bentley, Eric	*The Fall of the Amazons*	play	???	???	Male

Works Still Under Consideration:

Caramondavi, Antonio Filistri de	*Il ritorno di Ulisse à Penelope*	opera	circa 1700's?	Italian	Male
Martinelli, Gaetano	"Penelope nella partenza da Sparta"	libretto/ play?	circa 1700's	Italian	Male
???	*Penelope: Tragedia*	play??	1700, 1799		
???	*Penelope*	libretto??	1739		
Arne, Thomas	"The Second Volume of Lyric Harmony. Consisting of Eighteen Entire New Songs and Ballads"	song (score)?	1748	British	Male
La Mettrie, Julien Offray de (also Aletheius Dematrius)	*Ouvrage de Penelope ou Machiavel en medicine*	play??	1748-50	French	Male
Heyden, Ludwig Jakob Christophe	*Penelope*	play?	1761		
Jenner, Charles	*Letters from Lothario to Penelope*	???	1762		
Beijerinck, G.J.A.	*Penelope*	play?	1821, 1835		

Hell, Theodor	*Penelope: Taschenbuck fur das Jahr 1834*	folk stories?	1833	German	Male
Karr, Alphonse	*La Penelope normande*	novel	1858	French?	Male
Butler, Samuel	*Ulysses: A Dramatic Oratorio*	vocal score	circa 1900?	British	Male
Newlin, Katharine	*Penelope Interbides*	novel???	1912		
Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel	"Scena from Ulysses"	musical score	1918		
Castelhun, Dorothea	*Penelope's Problems*	novel	1922	???	Female
???	*Penelope in California*	novel??	1926		
Schell, Stanley	*Clever Penelope—Humorous Colonial Monologues and Sketches*	plays	1928	???	Male
D'Ambra, Lucio	*Penelope dei nostri giorni*	novel?	1929	Italian	Male
Partch, Harry	"Plectra and Percussion Dance: An Evening of Dance Theater"	musical score	1955		
	"Ulysses Departs from the Edge of the World"	recording	circa 1950's		
Plakotare, Alexandra	*Penelope*	novel???	1962		
Anderson, William	*Penelope*	???	1964	???	Male
Montes de Oca, Mario Antonio	*Poemas*	recording	1968	Mexican	Male
Eddleman, David	"Continuum: For Chorus"	musical score	1972		
Thewell, ???	*Penelope*	novel???	1972, 1989		
Schields, Alice	"Odyssey: An Opera in One Act"	opera score	1976		

Rapp, Michael	"Ulysses--the Greek Suite"	recording	1978		
Nichols, Christopher Galen	*Penelope: A Soliloquy for Several Voices*	musical score	1978		
Sedano, José Asenjo	*Penelope y el Mar*	short stories	1978	Spanish	Male
Casolini, Aristide	*Penelope resta in casa*	novel??	1978	Italian	Male
Vizzari, Giovanna	*Un lettro per Penelope*	novel	1980	Italian	Female
Mees, L.F.C.	*Helen und Penelope*	novel???	1981		
Campos, Carlos	*Engodo omeres de Penelope*	???	1981		
Merkel, Inge	*Eine gang gewhnliche elie--Odysseus und Penelope*	novel??	1982		
Haubenstock-Ramati, Roman	"Ulysses Szenen einer Wanderung: poeme choreographique"	recording	1982		
Mauriat, Paul	"Penelope"	recording	1982		
Chesney, Marion	*Penelope*	novel??	1982, 1989		
Byorkester, Odense	"Holbergiana"	recording	1984		
Harbison, John	"Ulysses' Bow"	recording	1986		
Kalogeras, Alexandros	"Ulysses Dance: For Viola"	musical score	1987		
Bossi, Elio	*Tutte Penelope: racconti*	stories?	1988	Italian	Male
Szasz, Bela	*Penelope es a lovag*	???	1988		

???	"Rational Music for an Irrational World"	recording???	1989		
Kocab, Michael	"Odysseus: A Mysterium on the Motives of Homer's *Odyssey*"	recording	1990		
???	*Don't Look Back*	recording	1990		
Ferrers, Hebert	*Penelope*	libretto??	1990		
???	*Penelope and Other Plays*	play	nd		
Sarantopoulos, Demitrios	*Penelope*	???	???	Greek???	Male

Appendix B
Translations of the *Odyssey*

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang. 1905. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Samuel Butler. 1900. New York: Walter J. Black, 1944.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Albert Cook. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1967.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. 1961. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Richmond Lattimore. 1965. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. T. E. Lawrence. 1932. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1993.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. A. T. Murray. 2 vols. 1919. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. George Herbert Palmer. 1884. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Alexander Pope. 1726. New York: The Heritage Press, 1942.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Ennis Rees. New York: The Modern Library, 1960.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. E. V. Rieu. 1946. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962.

_____. *The Odyssey*. Trans. W. H. Rouse. New York: Mentor, 1937.

Appendix C
Penelope's Speeches

Book	Lines	Speech	Addressee
Book	1. 337-344	Tells Phemios to stop playing his music	Phemios
Book	4.681-695	Realizes Telemachos is gone	Medon
	4.707-710	Realizes Telemachos is gone	Medon
	4.722-741	Tell servants to warn Laertes about Telemachos	servants
	4.762-766	Prays to Athene	Athene
	4.810-823	Dreams of her sister	Iphthime
	4.831-834	Asks her sister if Odysseus is alive	Iphthime
Book	16.418-433	Lambasts Antinoos for his plot against Telemachos	Antinoos
Book	17.41-44	Welcomes Telemachos home	Telemachos
	17.101-106	Asks him about his journey	Telemachos
	17.163-165	Wishes that Theoklymenos's prophecy comes true	Theoklymenos
	17.494	Asks about the commotion in the great hall	servants
	17.499-504	Speaks against Antinoos	Eurynome
	17.508-511	Asks if the beggar knows about Odysseus	Eumaios
	17.529-540	Asks for the beggar to be brought to her	Eumaios
	17.544-559	Laughs at Telemachos's sneeze	Eumaios
Book	18.164-168	Warns Eurynome that she is taking action	Eurynome
	18.178-184	Tells Eurynome not to worry about her	Eurynome
	18.201-205	Is transformed by Athene	servants
	18.215-225	Chides Telemachos for his bad manners	Telemachos
	18.251-280	Solicits gifts from the suitors	suitors
Book	19.104-105	Asks the beggar about his background	Odysseus
	19.124-163	Tells her story about the web and loneliness	Odysseus
	19.215-219	Tests beggar about his story	Odysseus
	19.253-260	Admits that the beggar is telling the truth	Odysseus
	19.309-334	Doubts Odysseus's return	Odysseus
	19.350-360	Agrees to get Eurykleia to wash his feet	Odysseus
	19.509-553	Invites beggar to stay at palace; asks about dream	Odysseus
	19.560-581	Tells beggar about her bow contest	Odysseus
	19.589-599	Says goodnight to the beggar	Odysseus
Book	20.61-90	Dreams about Odysseus lying beside her	Artemis

Book	21.68-79	Invites the suitors the bow contest	suitors
	21.312-319	Insists the beggar compete in the contest	Antinoos
	21.331-342	Ensures that beggar will not win her hand	Eurymachos
Book	23.11-24	Doubts Eurykleia's claim that Odysseus is home	Eurykleia
	23.35-38	Asks Eurykleia for more information	Eurykleia
	23.59-68	Voices her skepticism over Odysseus's return	Eurykleia
	23.81-84	Says she'll go downstairs anyway	Eurykleia
	23.105-110	Warns Telemachos that she is waiting for a sign	Telemachos
	23.174-180	Agrees that Odysseus should move the bed	Odysseus
	23.209-230	Explains her hesitancy	Odysseus
	23.257-262	Demands to know the bad news first	Odysseus
	23.286-287	Expresses little concern over the news	Odysseus

Appendix D
References to Penelope

Book	1.13	Odysseus longs for his wife	Poet
	1.215	His mother claims his father is Odysseus	Telemachos
	1.221-223	Penelope bore Telemachos	Mentor
	1.245-251	Suitors are wooing Penelope	Telemachos
	1.274-278	Let Penelope marry if she wishes	Mentor
	1.289-292	If Odysseus is dead, let Penelope remarry	Mentor
	1.346-359	Penelope is chided during Phemois's song	Telemachos
	1.365-366	Suitors lust for Penelope	Poet
	1.415-416	Penelope takes counsel from seers	Telemachos
Book	2.50-54	Penelope is beset by unwanted suitors	Telemachos
	2.87-128	Penelope outwits the suitors with loom trick	Antinoos
	2.130-137	Fears sending Penelope away from her home	Telemachos
	2.195-207	Send Penelope home to prepare for remarriage	Eurymachos
	2.223	If Odysseus is dead, Penelope can remarry	Telemachos
	2.246-251	Penelope would be widowed if Odysseus returned	Leokrites
	2.274-276	Only the son of Odysseus and Penelope will be successful	Mentor
	2.334-336	If Telemachos perishes, his possessions will be divided up for Penelope and her new husband	Suitors
	2.357-360	Will get his provisions after Penelope goes to sleep	Telemachos
	2.372-376	Don't tell Penelope that I have gone	Telemachos
	2.410-412	Get the provisions while Penelope is not here	Telemachos
Book	3.211-215	I hear Penelope is beset by wooers	Nestor
Book	4.110-112	Penelope must be mourning Odysseus	Menelaos
	4.838-841	Penelope is comforted by her dream	Poet
Book	5.215-220	Penelope cannot compare to you, Kalypso	Odysseus
Book	8.243	Remember us when you are with your wife	Alkinoos
Book	11.66-8	In the name of your wife and father, don't leave my body behind	Elpenor
	11.115-118	Suitors are overwhelming your wife and home	Teiresias
	11.162	You haven't seen Penelope yet?	Antikleia
	11.177-179	Tell me about Penelope	Odysseus
	11.181-183	Penelope waits for you	Antikleia
	11.223-224	Be sure to tell Penelope about this meeting one day	Antikleia

	11.441-449	Though Penelope is prudent and understanding, don't trust her completely	Agamemnon
Book	13.44	May the gods send me home to my wife	Odysseus
	13.333-338	You intend to test your wife who mourns for you	Athene
	13.377-381	The suitors woo your wife who allows them to court her though she mourns for you	Athene
	13.406	Eumaios loves your wife and son	Athene
Book	14.122-130	Penelope entertains anyone with news of Odysseus	Eumaios
	14.162-164	Odysseus will return to avenge his dishonored wife	Odysseus
	14.172	Penelope desires Odysseus's return	Eumaios
	14.372-374	I only go to the city when Penelope bids me to	Eumaios
Book	15.16-23	Hurry home before Penelope remarries	Athene
	15.40-42	Send Eumaios to tell Penelope you have returned	Athene
	15.313-315	I'll tell Penelope what I know about Odysseus	Odysseus
	15.514-517	Penelope seldom appears before the suitors	Telemachos
Book	16.31-35	I've returned to see if Penelope has remarried	Telemachos
	16.37-39	Penelope has been faithful	Eumaios
	16.73-77	Penelope doesn't know what to do	Telemachos
	16.122-134	Penelope won't make a decision	Telemachos
	16.150-153	Go to Penelope and tell her about the stranger	Telemachos
	16.302-404	Don't tell Penelope I am back	Odysseus
	16.328-332	Told Penelope that Telemachos was back	Crewman
	16.338-341	Eumaios tells Penelope what Telemachos told him to	Poet
	16.385-392	We will woo Penelope until someone wins her	Antinoos
	16.395-398	Amphinomos pleases Penelope the most	Poet
	16.435-447	We will not hurt Telemachos	Eurymachos
	16.449-451	Penelope mourns Odysseus until Athene puts her to sleep	Poet
	16.457-459	Athene disguises Odysseus from Penelope, others	Poet
Book	17.6-9	I am going to see Penelope so she won't worry	Telemachos
	17.46-56	Go bathe yourself and make sacrifices to the gods	Telemachos
	17.57-60	Penelope does as Telemachos tells her to	Poet
	17.389-391	Eumaios chides Antinoos in the name of Penelope	Eumaios
	17.401-403	Don't pay attention to Penelope here	Telemachos
	17.468-469	Praises Penelope	Odysseus
	17.553-559	Penelope wants to talk to you	Eumaios
	17.561-573	Tell Penelope to meet me after dark	Odysseus
Book	18.143-146	The suitors are dishonoring Penelope	Odysseus
	18.158-163	Athene inspires Penelope to appear before the suitors	Poet

	18.188-200	Athene enhances Penelope's beauty	Poet
	18.206-214	Penelope goes before the suitors	Poet
	18.226-227	I understand why you are angry, mother	Telemachos
	18.245-249	If others could see you, Penelope, they would surely come here to woo you also	Eurymachos
	18.281-283	Odysseus is glad that Penelope cajoled the suitors out of so many gifts	Poet
	18.285-289	We will bring you many gifts	Antinoos
	18.290-303	Penelope receives many valuable gifts	Poet
	18.313-317	Go help Penelope with her needlework	Odysseus
	18.321-326	Penelope was kind to Melantho	Poet
	18.351	Calls to Penelope's wooers to jeer at the stranger	Eurymachos
Book	19.44-46	I will talk to Penelope	Odysseus
	19.53-64	Penelope arrives to interview the stranger	Poet
	19-83-84	The stranger reminds Melantho that Penelope will be angry if he is mistreated	Odysseus
	19.89-90	Penelope overhears the stranger chiding Melantho	Poet
	19.107-109	Penelope has attained great renown	Odysseus
	19.164-168	You you ever quit asking me who I am, Penelope?	Odysseus
	19.204-214	Penelope weeps in front of the stranger	Poet
	19.249-252	Penelope accepts the stranger's words as truth	Poet
	19.261-273	Penelope, Odysseus will return	Odysseus
	19.335-348	I do not need any blankets, Penelope	Odysseus
	19.374-377	Penelope has asked me to wash her feet	Eurykleia
	19.476-479	Odysseus threatens Eurykleia not to tell Penelope that Odysseus is home	Poet
	19.554-559	Penelope, I'll tell you what your dream means	Odysseus
	19.582-587	Don't delay the contest any longer, Penelope	Odysseus
	19.600-604	Penelope mourns Odysseus	Poet
Book	20.33-35	Athene reminds Odysseus he is home with his wife and family	Athene
	20.58-60	Penelope awakens	Poet
	20.131-133	Penelope's conduct is not consistent	Telemachos
	20.134-137	Don't blame Penelope for mistreating the stranger	Eurykleia
	20.289-290	Ktesippus is a suitor of Penelope	Poet
	20.326-327	I have a word to say to Telemachos and Penelope	Agelaos
	20.334-337	Tell Penelope she must remarry	Agelaos
	20.339-344	I am ashamed to drive Penelope out of her home	Telemachos
	20.387-394	Penelope heard every word that the men said	Poet
Book	21.1-67	Penelope goes to the storeroom to get the bow	Poet
	21.85-87	Eumaios is upsetting Penelope	Antinoos
	21.101-117	Come try the bow and win Penelope's hand	Telemachos
	21.157-162	Many men will want to win Penelope	Leodes
	21.275-284	Let me try the bow!	Odysseus

	21.320-329	We shouldn't let him try, Penelope	Eurymachos
	21.344-353	Mother, go to your chamber now	Telemachos
	21.354-359	Penelope is amazed at Telemachos's conduct	Poet
Book	22.34-40	How dare you woo Penelope	Odysseus
	22.321-325	You wanted to have children by my wife	Odysseus
	22.424-429	These female servants dishonored Penelope	Eurykleia
	22.430-432	Don't wake Penelope yet	Odysseus
	22.462-464	Don't let these women who treated Penelope so badly not suffer for their conduct	Telemachos
	22.481-484	Go tell Penelope to come here	Odysseus
Book	23.1-9	Wake up Penelope, Odysseus is home	Eurykleia
	23.32-34	Penelope is happy to hear the news	Poet
	23.85-95	Penelope is unsure how to treat Odysseus	Poet
	23.111-116	Let Penelope test me	Odysseus
	23.166-172	I'll sleep in another bed	Odysseus
	23.181-186	Penelope, who moved my bed?	Odysseus
	23.205-208	Penelope is happy to see Odysseus is home	Poet
	23.231-246	Penelope and Odysseus are tearfully reunited	Poet
	23.247-255	Penelope, our suffering is not over yet	Odysseus
	23.300-309	Penelope tells her story	Poet
	23.344-365	Penelope, I will go see Laertes	Poet
Book	24.126-190	We suitors were outwitted by Penelope	Amphimedon
	24.191-202	Penelope shall gain great fame for her conduct	Agamemnon
	24.294-296	Penelope mourns for Odysseus	Laertes
	24.403-405	Does Penelope know you are home?	Laertes
	24.406-407	Yes, Penelope knows	Odysseus
	24.458-460	The suitors dishonored Penelope	Halitherses

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