*Highlights of European Literature:* ***Homer***

**Main Focus of Lecture:**

**The Afterlife of Odysseus (In Latin = Ulysses; Renaissance interested in Latin Texts**

* Note: Interest of Renaissance in Odysseus; Odysseus as major influence for Europe
* *Il ritorno D’Ulisse in patria* (Monteverdi) 🡪 One of the first opera’s performed (1639); Odysseus as inspiration for this opera
* Reverberation/Echo of Odysseus in Painting (Examples)
  + *Odysseus and Calypso in the Caves of Ogygia* (Jan Brueghel the Elder, 1616)
  + *Odysseus on the Island of the Phaeacians* (P.P. Rubens, 1630-35)
  + *Telemachus and Mentor* (Charles Joseph Natoire, 1730)
  + *The Sorrow of Telemachus* (Angelica Kauffman, 1783)
  + *Teiresias and Odysseus* (Henry Fuseli, 1800)
    - Side note: Fuseli as inspiration for William Blake
    - Fuseli dealing with supernatural a lot throughout painting career
  + *Scylla and Charybdis* (Henry Fuseli, 1829)
  + *Odysseus and Penelope* (Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, 1802)
  + *Odysseus Overcome by Demodocus’ Song* (Francesco Hayez, 1813-1815)
  + *Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus* (J.M.W Turner, 1829)
  + *Odysseus and Calypso* (Arnold Böcklin, 1883)
* Reverberation/Echo of Odysseus in Literature (Examples)
  + James Joyce, *Ulysses*
  + Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*
* Reverberation/Echo of Odysseus in Film (Examples)
  + *Ulysses’* Gaze ; O *Brother, Where Art Thou?*

**The Odyssey as Origin of European Literature?**

* Is Odyssey a “Big Bang” for European Literature?
  + *Iliad* (700 BC) and *Odyssey* (675 BC) oldest preserved literary works of Wes. Lit.
  + Oldest Examples of Fiction, Narration, and Epic
  + Oldest Record of Formal Poetry (Meter)
  + Sets basic Themes for European Literary Tradition (Memory, Cultural/Subjective Identity, Love, Heroism, etc.
* BUT
  + Relative Origin 🡪 Reaches back to older literatures of the Near East
  + Elusive Origin 🡪 We do not have clear material point of Origin
  + The Homeric Question 🡪 What do we know about Homer?

**The Odyssey as Elusive Origin?**

* How is Odyssey founded?
  + 1488-1489 Florence 🡪 Works of Homer edited by Demetrius Chalkokondyles who is Greek refugee living in Constantinople. Produced a rare copy in 15th century (in Venice, printing center), since Printing Greek was rare (Latin more dominant going into 16th century because of church influence)
    - *Editio princeps* 🡪 “First printed edition of a book” ; becomes primary source for most editions of it today
  + 100s of medieval manuscripts in Homeric Greek, mainly produced in Constantinople (Byzantine Empire) between 1100-1453 (NOT from church)
    - Essential Scholarship (“Scholia”) in Byzantine Empire vs. Catholic emphasis on Latin language in the West (Homer as pre-Christian pagan)
  + Early Fragments
    - From 3rd Century BC 🡪 Fragments on papyrus, all preserved in Egypt (Arid climate vs. Wet winters in Greece)
    - 332 BC: Conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great
    - No written remnants of Homer before that time
  + Library of Alexandria (Burned Down)
    - Scholarship, birth of philology
    - 3rd Century BC – 30 BC
    - From 150 BC onwards: Standardization of textual variations, basis for medieval versions
    - This period also saw the division of Odyssey in 24 books
  + Panathenaea (6th Century BC)
    - Festival with athletic contests and recitations of Homeric Epics, under tyrant, Peisitratos (name “Peisistratid recension” or revision comes from)
    - (More Speculative) Scattered evidence of standardized editions of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: “Peisistratid recension” 🡪 What evidence for this?
      * Remnants of Athenian Dialect in Odyssey of today
      * Reference in later texts (Cicero) But no scholarly consensus

**The Odyssey as Relative Origin? Pre-Homeric Mesopotamian Culture**

* Traditions that Predate Homer (Mesopotamian Civilizations):
  + Sumerians (3000 BC Sumerian Cuneiform)🡪 Pictographic tradition
  + Akkadians (2500 BC Akkadian Cuneiform) 🡪 Development of Cuneiform
  + Phoenicians (1500 BC Phoenician Alphabet)🡪 22 Consonants (no vowels)
    - Basis for Latin Alphabet (Known as *abjad)*
* *Epic of Gilgamesh* 🡪 Sumerian-Akkadian; cuneiform; discovered in 1853
  + Origin of World Literature? Influence on Homer?
  + Epic poem about King od Uruk (with a travel narrative, like in Homer)
  + Narrative in long verse no stanzas/refrains (fixed epithets)
  + Includes God on mountain, holding high council

**The Homeric Question**

* Who is Homer?
  + Don’t have any concrete information on who Homer actually was and how it was written
  + Sources we have:
    - Earliest reference to Homer: Callinus (7th Century BC), but only as indirect via a reference by Pausanias (2nd Century AD)
    - Xenophanes (570-475 BC) and Heraclitus (535- 475 BC) criticism of Homeric Epics
  + Scholarly Debate:
    - The historicity of “Homer” 🡪 Did he actually exist?
    - If he did exist, did he write these texts alone?
    - Debate goes back to Antiquity; become real scholarly questions in 19th CE
  + The Homeric Poets and the Greeks
    - Homer as legendary poet
    - 10 “Lives of Homer” 🡪 Fragments on Homer’s life in other texts, from Alexandrian Period onwards (300 BC)
    - Very contradictory accounts
    - “Hymn to Apollo” 🡪 “The blind man that dwells in rocky Chios; his songs deserve the prize for all time to come”
  + Homer and Alexander Pope
    - “Homer is universally allow’d to have had the greatest Invention of any Writer whatever.”
  + Debate in Late 18th Century
    - F.A. Wolf 🡪 Founder of modern philology
    - Homer as pre-literate oral bard
    - Poetic fragments transmitted orally until written down in 6th century “Peisistratid recension”
    - *Iliad* and *Odyssey* not the works of one writer, but result of long oral transmission (through several bards)
    - Analysts vs Unitarians
      * Analysts 🡪 those scholars who believe Homeric texts written by many different bards and poets (starting with Homer)
      * Unitarians 🡪 Homeric Texts by one person (Homer)
  + Milman Parry
    - Begins looking at Homeric Texts and Oral traditions
    - Textual evidence that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the results of oral-formulaic composition: Repetition of words, phrases and entire verses.
    - “Framework” for bards who had to retell the stores
    - Each bard improvises and creates a new poem aided by ready-made phrases and words
    - Shows poetry might be meant to be song

**The Odyssey as Oral-Formulaic Poetry**

* Four Elements:
  + Bards in the *Odyssey* ; Dactylic Hexameter (Heroic/Homeric Hexameter) ; Epithets ; Scenes
* Bards in the Odyssey
  + Phemius – Book I (1.164-167, 1.343 ff.); Book XXII (1.554 ff.)
  + Demodocus
    - Blind Bard at the court of Alcinous, King of the Phaeacians (Book VIII)
    - Sings of the Battle of Troy, Odysseus starts weeping, Alcinous asks him to reveal his identity, triggers Odysseus’ story of his travels (Book IX-XII)
* Dactylic Hexameter (Heroic/Homeric Hexameter)
  + Features
    - 6 feet
    - Do not work with Stress/Unstressed 🡪 Works with Long/Short Syllables
    - Either Dactyl ( – U U) or Spondee ( – –) 🡪 - = Long ; U = Short
    - 5th foot mostly Dactyl (95 percent in Homer)
    - 6th foot never a dactyl (often spondee)
    - Masculine Caesura: After 1st syllable in 3rd foot
    - Feminine Caesura: After 2nd syllable in 3rd foot
    - Enjambments
* Epithets
  + ‘dios Odusseus’ (Approx. 70 times)
  + ‘polymetis Odusseus’ (Approx. 70 times)
* Scenes
  + Arrival of the stranger and hospitality of the host (EX: Athene-Telemachus, Odysseus-Alcinous) + reversal: Lack of hospitality (Suitors in Books 1, XVII and XVIII)
  + Preparing of the meal (Book 1, 1.145-154) + Reversal (Cyclops, Laestrygonians)

**The Homer Question**

* Debates Today
  + Stylometric Method: suggests integral unity of Homer’s works
  + Sheer length appears to indicate written composition
  + 3 Hypotheses:
    - *Transcription Hypothesis:* Homer as an illiterate bard who dictated the *Odyssey* to a literate scribe
    - *Ballad Hypothesis:* Homer as a folk-poet of short ballads; ballads were later combined
    - *Oral/Written Hypothesis:* Homer as a poet trained in oral tradition and versed in new art of writing

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book V**

* Main Events:
  + Odysseus refuses immortality from Calypso:
    - Metaphorical immortality through finite heroic life
  + Struggle against Poseidon’s Storm
    - Simile for struggle against unheroic death and oblivion
  + Heroic life safeguarded by the Gods (Ino and Athena)

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book II-IV**

* “Telemchia”
  + Establishes situation at Ithaca – telos of Odysseus’ travels
  + Introduces Odysseus by means of takes
  + Builds suspense towards appearance of Odysseus

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book I**

* Apostrophe to Mnemosyne (Memory)
  + apostrophe refers to a speech or address to a person who is not present or to a personified object
  + Cultural Memory created through narrative
* When are Events Happening?
  + 12th Century BC Asia Minor (400 years before composition of the poem)
  + Bronze Age (vs. Iron Age)
  + Archaic words and phrases
  + Literature as Cultural Memory
* What does Book I tell us:
  + “Andra” 🡪 Man. General interest in the diversity of cultures and ways of life
  + “Polytropon” 🡪 Many ways/turns (travel, cunning, identity)
    - “Speak Memory, of the *cunning* hero
  + Exile, wandering exploring the limits of civilization
  + “Ainigma” 🡪 Structured like a riddle (Odysseus not named until 1.15)
  + “Atasthalia” 🡪 “Recklessness”
    - “Atasthalia” has basis of tragedy
  + “Xenia” 🡪 Hospitality of Telemachus vs. Arrogance of Suitors
  + Athena’s plan: theme of ‘nostros’
* Implicit Framework of Book I
  + Penelope ------- Clytemnestra

Odysseus ------- Agamemnon

Telemachus ---- Orestes

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book X-XI**

* Book X
  + Sail to island of Aeolia
  + Laestrygonians as reversal of Phaeacians 🡪 perversion of *xenia*
  + Aeaea, home of Circe 🡪 Paradise as threat to heroic life ; Amnesia / Memory
* Book IX
  + Odysseus’ “Nekyia” (mortal visit to Hades)
  + Prophecy of Tiresias (prolepsis)
  + Anticlea, mother
  + Odysseus as poet
  + Agammenon’s warning
  + Achilles’ insight
  + Ajax’s silence

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book VIII-IX**

* Book VIII
  + Odysseus is entertained by the Phaeacians
  + Blind Singer Demodocus Sings of the Trojan War and Odysseus’ role in it
  + Odysseus weeps and is asked to identify himself by Alcinous
* Book IX
  + Odysseus reveals his identity and recounts his voyages
  + Becomes intradiegetic narrator, resembles bard
  + Long Analepsis (Books IX-XIII)
  + Disguises Identity with Cyclops (“noman”)
  + Self-contained story of the Cyclopes
    - Perversion of *xenia*
    - Climax of Odysseus’ cunning (Polytropos)
    - Polyphemus: *atasthalia* of Odysseus

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book VI-VII**

* Book VI
  + Odysseus is welcomes by Princess Nausicaa, who clothes him and takes him to King Alcinous of the Phaeacians (*xenia*)
* Book VII
  + Odysseus implores the help of Alcinous and his queen, Arete. He tell them a short version of his story but conceals his identity

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book XIX - XX**

* Book XIX
  + Odysseus and Telemachus removes the weapons from the hall. Odysseus and Penelope begin a lengthy conversation. He convinces her that he is now on his way home, but she will not be convinced. The old nurse Euryclea washes his feet and recognizes him by a scar as Odysseus. Penelope tells him a dream and describes the test of the bow, which she will set to the Suitors to the next night
* Book XX
  + Omens portend success for Odysseus

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book XIII - XV**

* Book XIII
  + The Phaeacians land Odysseus, deeply asleep, with Alcinous’ rich gifts on the beach of Ithaca
  + Athena comes along and they plan the campaign against the Suitors
  + She disguises him as a decrepit beggar
* Book XIV
  + Odysseus goes to the hut of the loyal swineheard Eumaeus. He entertains Eumaeus with invented tales about himself
* Book XV
  + Telemachus in Sparta
  + Farewells from Menelaus and Helen
  + Telemachus evades the tedious hospitality of Nestor and sails for home, picking up a seer, Theoclymenus by name, who is on the run

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book XII**

* Book XII
  + Siren’s Song
    - Anti-Epic, knowledge vs. poetry; try to divert Odysseus’ nostalgia to his former self
  + Scylla and Charybdis
  + Thrinicia:
    - men slaughter Hyperion’s cattle
    - Violation of time
    - Finitude as necessary condition for human striving

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book XXIII - XXIV**

* Book XIII
  + Euryclea informs Penelope, who refuses to believe that this is Odysseus. After a scene of fencing between husband and wife, Odysseus reveals himself in response to her trick instruction to move his bed. He tells her his true story, and the two are united at last in love
* Book XXIV
  + Dialogue Achilles and Agamemnon: Reaches back to opening
  + Achilles and Odysseus as Diverging concept of hero
  + Culminates in hero’s survival and return to community (vs *Iliad:* Heroic death and entry into myth)
  + Restoration of generational lineage (Laertes / Odysseus / Telemachus)
  + “Andra”: Return to familial relations, community, political life

**PowerPoint Presentation: Book XXI-XXII**

* Book XXI
  + Penelope fetches the bow of Odysseus and announces the test: stringing the bow and shooting through the axes. The suitors in turn try to string the bow but fail. All the Suitors fail except Antinous, who postpones his turn (he doesn’t try). Odysseus succeeds, over the opposition, in getting hold of the bow; Penelope being sent away from the hall; he strings it and shoots trough the axes
* XXII
  + Odysseus revealed but not named. Most Iliadic book of the *Odyssey*: Violence, martial valour, textual echoes

**Reading Notes:** **Selections from the Odyssey**

**Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King* (1859-85)**

* What is this?
  + 12 Narrative Poems
  + Reinterprets Arthurian Legend for Victorian audience
  + Dedicated to Albert, Prince Consort
  + Arthur as embodiment of Victorian Ideals who fails to lift his Knights at Camelot to the same ideal level (betrayals of Lancelot and Mordred)
  + Gothic, Dark, Lost World

**Thomas Malory’s *Morte Dartur* (1469)**

* Background
  + Thomas Malory was a Solider (knighted in 1441) and member of parliament (1443)
  + Negative Side: Thief, Kidnapper, and Rapist who was imprisoned in 1452
  + Writes *Morte Dartur* while in Newgate Prison (1469-1470)
* From Manuscript to Print (*The Death of Arthur)*
  + Instead of being written in verse, Malory reworks some of the most famous Arthurian tales into prose
  + Includes translations/interpretations from the *Vulgate Cycle*
  + Supplemented by Malory’s own original material (the Gareth Story)
  + Best-known work of English-language Arthurian literature today
* William Caxton
  + Publisher (possibly the one to have introduced the printing press in England in 1476)
  + 1485 – one of the first gooks published by him is Malory’s text)
* Style
  + Historical Fantasy
  + Historicity questioned
* Popularity wanes until 19th century
  + 1816: *Morte Dartur* reprinted for first time since 1634

**Term Answers for Exam**