



Welcome Back!

****Please make a note on your calendar, the reading homework for January 10 should be Books 11 AND 16.**



Literary Elements and Language Terms: Greek Epics

English II Pre-AP



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THE OLYMPIANS AND THEIR ROLE IN HOMER'S *ILIAD*



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THE OLYMPIANS

1. Zeus (Jupiter)
2. Hera (Juno)
3. Demeter (Ceres)
4. Hades (Pluto)
5. Hestia (Vesta)
6. Poseidon (Neptune)
7. Phoebus Apollo
8. Hermes (Mercury)
9. Artemis (Diana)
10. Ares (Mars)
11. Pallas Athena
(Minerva)
12. Hephaestus (Vulcan)
13. Aphrodite (Venus)

THE ROLE OF THE GODS...

- Ancient Greece was a polytheistic culture versus today's more monotheistic culture.
- The Greeks see the gods as:
 - Awe-inspiring
 - Dangerous
 - Powerful beings whom it is wise not to offend
- Homer uses the gods to underscore the tragedy of the human condition.
 - Often in the *Iliad*, the gods and goddesses are portrayed as shallow, petty, etc.
 - They complain, and fight amongst themselves.
 - They watch the war, and may even get involved in points, but they can't be seriously hurt by this war.
 - This highlights the tragedy of human courage and self sacrifice that will happen throughout the course of the epic.

THE HOMERIC GODS ARE NOT...

- consistently good, or merciful, or even just
- omniscient (all-seeing)
- omnipotent (all-powerful)
- transcendent – they did not create the universe, but are part of it
- in relationships with humans which are based on mutual love
- able to override fate

THE HOMERIC GODS ARE...

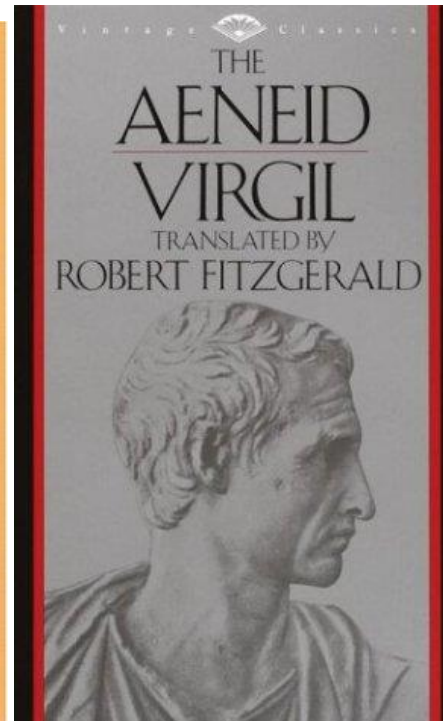
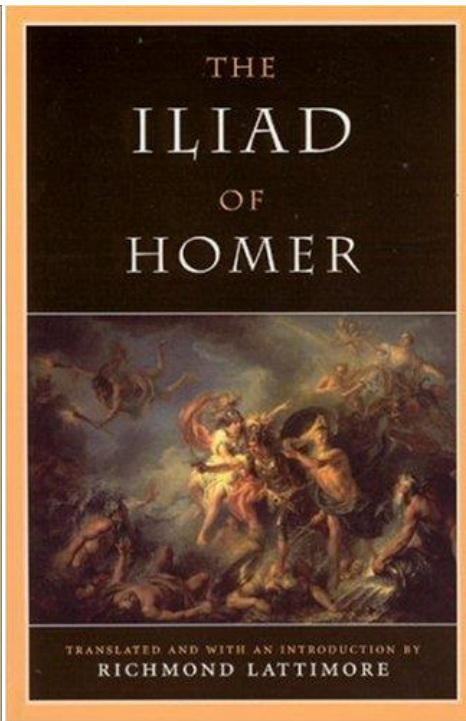
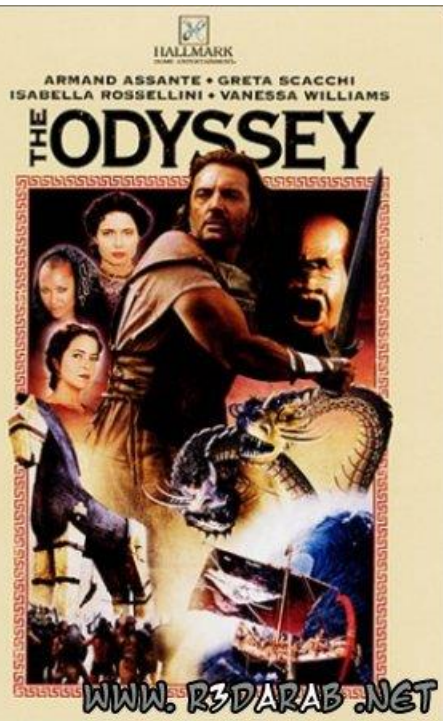
- personified forces of nature on the most basic level (Ex: Ares is war)
- the controllers of these forces of nature
- anthropomorphic – they share human form, human passions, and human emotions

THE GODS AND FATE (*MOIRA*)...

- *Moir*a roughly translates as “share of life”
- Generally, a human does not know their *moira* ahead of time
- The gods seems to know the individual’s *moira* (Ex: Thetis knows Achilles’ fate, Zeus knows Achilles will kill Hector)
- However, the gods are part of the system. They **CANNOT** intervene with a person’s *moira*. There will be a point, however, when Zeus seriously contemplates doing so.

Epic

- A long narrative poem that tells of the adventures of a hero who embodies the values of his/her civilization. The adventures will be told in episodes important to the history of a nation or race.



Epic Conventions

- Epics will be rooted in a specific culture and society.
 - The *Odyssey*, for example, is heavily rooted in Greek society and culture.



Epic Conventions



- Main character is a physically impressive hero of national or historical importance and of great historical or legendary significance.
 - Odysseus fought for ten years in the Trojan War and devised the idea of the Trojan horse.

Epic Conventions

- The setting is vast in scope, covering great nations, the world, or the universe.
 - Odysseus' travels take him throughout the Mediterranean World.



Epic Conventions

- The action consists of deeds of great valor or requiring superhuman courage.
 - In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus must overcome many challenges.

Epic Conventions

- Supernatural forces take interest in the action of the story.
 - In the *Odyssey*, the hero encounters gods, goddesses, sorceresses, monsters, giants, and the list goes on.





Epic Conventions

- The author uses a style of sustained elevation.
 - When the sun had left the splendid sea and risen up into an all-bronze heaven, giving light to gods and mortal men and grain to farmers' fields, the ship and crew reached Pylos, a well-built city ruled by Nestor.
- The poet retains a measure of objectivity.

Epic Conventions

- The work begins *in medias res* (in the middle of things), and much of the necessary exposition is not given until later.
 - Odysseus's story begins in the middle of his journey



Epic Conventions



- The poet opens by invoking a muse.
 - “Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns / driven time and again off course, once he had / plundered the hallowed heights of Troy.”



Epic Conventions

- The poet includes **catalogs** of warriors, ships, and armies.
- The main characters give extended, formal speeches.
- The poet makes frequent use of the **epic simile**.

Epic Hero

- The central protagonist of an epic who embodies the important morals, values, and virtues of the society of which he is a product.



Epic Hero Characteristics



- The epic hero is a larger than life person who embodies the highest ideals of his culture.



Epic Hero Characteristics

- The epic hero is clever and wise, but capable of error.
- The epic hero is superior in degree to other men and his environment.

Epic Hero Characteristics

- The epic hero overcomes great obstacles/opponents but maintains his/her humanity



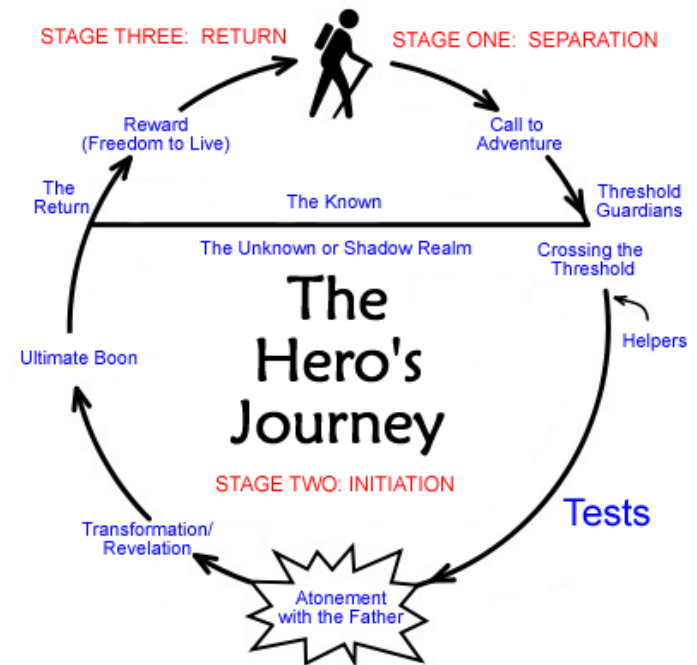
Epic Hero Characteristics



- The epic hero is especially skilled both with and without weapons.
- Ordinary laws of nature are sometimes suspended for the epic hero.

Epic Hero Characteristics

- The epic hero usually undertakes a quest/journey to achieve something of great value to themselves or society



Epic Hero Characteristics

- Not a superman with magical powers but a regular human whose aspirations and accomplishments set him/her apart



Epic Hero Characteristics

- Epic hero experiences typical human emotions, yet is able to master and control these human traits to a greater degree than a typical person



Epic Hero Characteristics

- Epic heroes live on after death meaning they are forever remembered by those who live after them...achieving a type of immortality. As such, the epic hero strives for honor and fame.





Literary Elements

Epithet

- a descriptive label/phrase applied to a person or thing that emphasizes a particular quality or attribute of what is being described; often repeated throughout the text
 - ex. Odysseus is frequently referred to as “the man of twists and turns.”

Epithet (cont.)

- Six Types of Epithets
 - Origin/home
 - Patronymic
 - Appearance/State
 - Skill/art
 - Position
 - Heroic quality/general

Epic (Homeric) Simile

- An elaborate simile that usually goes on for a number of lines; often compares heroic events to understandable/everyday things.
 - Ex. She brushed [the arrow] away from his skin as lightly as when a mother / Brushes a fly away from her child who is lying in sweet sleep.



Narrative Drift/ Digressions

- an interruption in the narration to elaborate on what aspect of what is being talked about
 - ex. If Homer mentions a gift of wine, he will digress and describe both the history of the gift and the history of the giver.



Greek Cultural Concepts

Greek Cultural Concepts

- **Shame Culture**: Self esteem/image or worth in this culture is generated by what other people say/perceive about someone (rather than their own self worth)

- Consider the implications for an warrior & motivations for fighting

- **Nostos**: Greek word meaning “return song” or “homecoming song”

- Odysseus MUST achieve *nostos* in order to have his *kleos*. As such, we can term the *Odyssey* to be Odysseus’s *nostos* – his homecoming song, the story of his return home. The story herein is not just of a physical homecoming, however, but a story of the journey and homecoming of the soul.

- **Kleos**: Greek word meaning “song of glory”; what people say about someone or what is spoken aloud about someone.

- Hero wins this when he accomplishes a great deed.

- *Kleos* is closest things to immortality a human can achieve; it is the ultimate goal of a warrior.

Greek Cultural Concepts

- **Xenia**: A BIG DEAL; Greek for “hospitality;” refers to the expectation of generosity and courtesy to visitors far from home
- **Moira**: Greek word meaning “share of life”
- **Aristeia**: A soldier’s highest moment of glory in way, when he fights so bravely and single-mindedly as to experience no fear and to appear nearly invincible

Greek Cultural Concepts

- ***Timê***: Greek word for “honor”; closely related to *kleos*; it’s the tangible, physical expression honor in the form of booty, gifts, prizes, etc; the hero expects to receive this in proportion to his worth (esp. in battle)
- **Geras**: The booty, gifts, or particular prize collected by a warrior
- **Mênis**: Greek word for “anger, rage, wrath”

THE MYTH OF THE GOLDEN APPLE & THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS

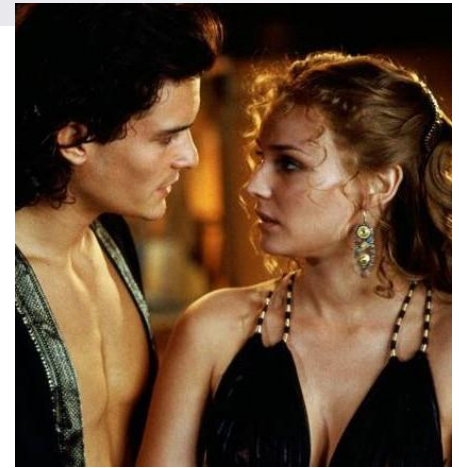


- First, it is assumed by Homer that we know what events precipitated the Trojan War (*in media res*).
- So we must know the background story...
 - The Goddess of Discord, Eris, was not invited to the wedding of King Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis (Achilles' parents) when all the rest of the gods and goddesses were.
 - So to cause trouble and retaliate, Eris throws a golden apple into the banquet hall with an inscription that read "For the Fairest."
 - So of course, all the goddesses want it.
 - The choice, however, is narrowed down to Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena.

- Deciding to stay out of it, Zeus says Paris, a young shepherd and prince of Troy, will decide.
 - Paris, currently living with a lovely sea nymph named Oenone, was working as a shepherd because his father Priam, King of Troy, had been warned that Paris would one day ruin his country.
- Instead of judging the goddesses' beauty, he is presented with three different bribes:
 - Hera – He will be Lord of all Europe and Asia
 - Athena – He will lead the Trojans to victory against the Greeks
 - Aphrodite – He shall have the fairest woman in all the world
- Paris ends up giving the apple to Aphrodite, but there's a catch...



- Paris chooses Helen, the fairest of all mortals. But she is...
 - The daughter of Zeus and Leda (mortal)
 - The WIFE of King Menelaus of Sparta, who is the brother of King Agamemnon
- Paris tricks Menelaus into letting him stay at his home in Sparta while the King is away.
- Thus Helen is stolen and taken to Troy.
- Paris' abduction of Helen is a violation of the code of *xenia*
 - *Xenia* is the guest-host relationship
 - It was a code that governed the behavior between the two parties.



SO WHY DID THIS START A WAR?

- There's the obvious insult to Menelaus
- The vow to Tyndareus (Helen's father)
 - Before she married Menelaus, Helen had been pursued by many suitors.
 - Fearing retaliation from the scorned suitors, Tyndareus made all the suitors vow that if any wrong was done to Helen's husband, whoever it may be, they would all champion his cause.
 - Thus, they are all bound to defend Menelaus' honor when Helen is abducted.
- So Helen became one of the most famous women in history as she is known to have "the face that launched a thousand ships"

- Menelaus calls on all the chieftains to help. All respond eagerly, except for two...

- **Odysseus**, King of the island of Ithaca, shrewdest and most sensible man, did not want to leave his house and family to go overseas and fight for a faithless woman.
- **Achilles**, the Greeks' greatest warrior, is sent by his mother Thetis, who knows he is fated to die at Troy, to hide in Lycomedes' court disguised as a woman.

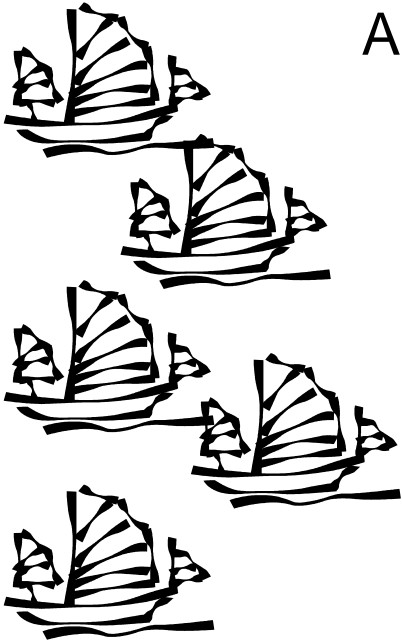


GODS:
Hera
Athena
Poseidon

WHO'S WHO IN THE ILIAD

GODS:
Aphrodite
Apollo
Zeus*

ACHAEANS



Agamemnon
Achilles
Menelaus
Ajax
Patroclus
Nestor
Calculus
Odysseus
Diomedes

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TROJANS

Paris/Helen
King Priam/Hecuba
Hector/Andromache
Aenaes
Helenus
Glaucus





What to annotate for as you read . . .

- Elements of an epic
- Characteristics of an epic hero
- Presence of the gods/how do you see them intervening in the lives of mortals
- Characterization of major characters
- Imagery and other figurative language techniques
- Elements of Greek culture and consider the relationship between those Greek concepts