



# art & man

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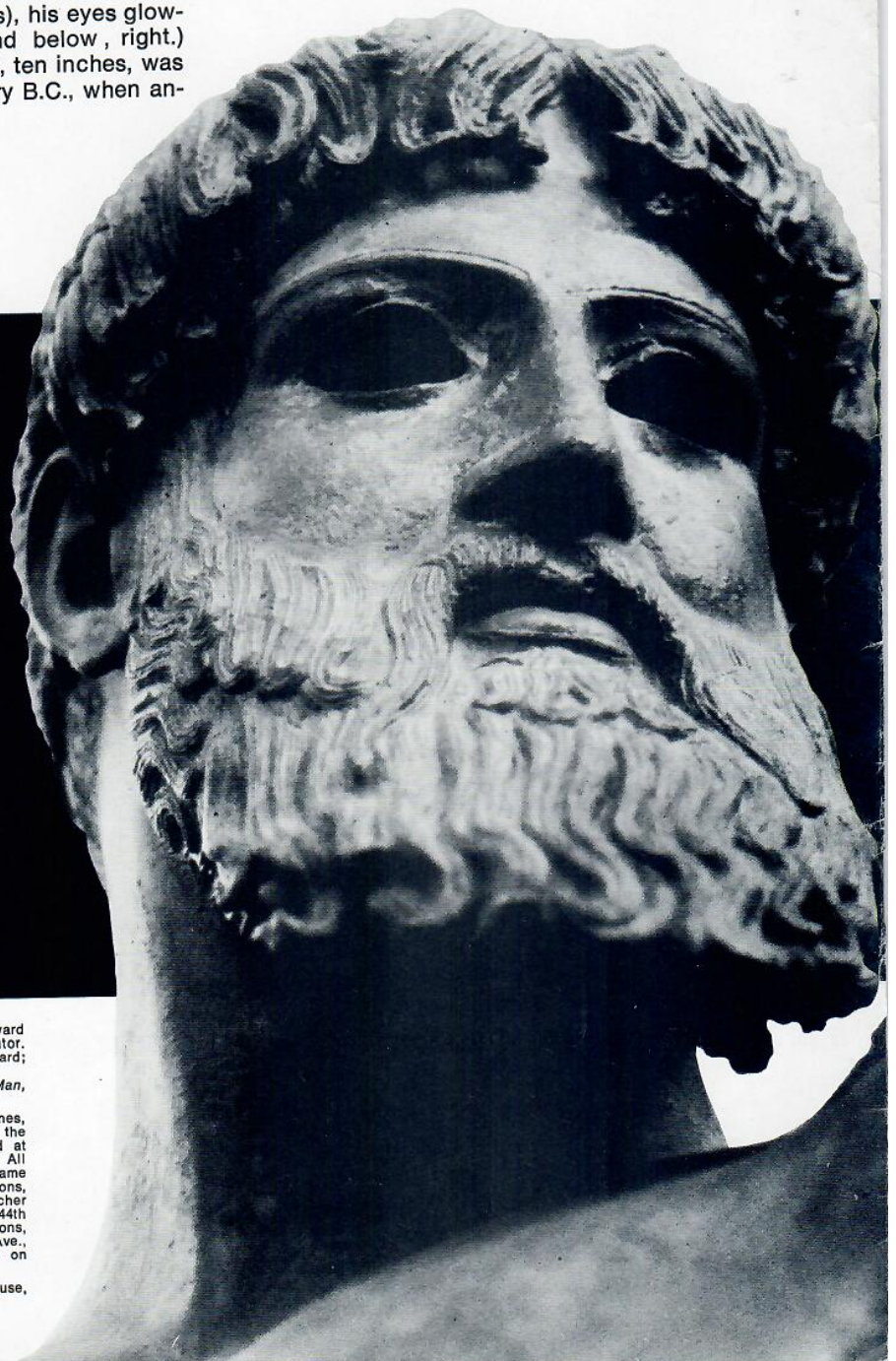
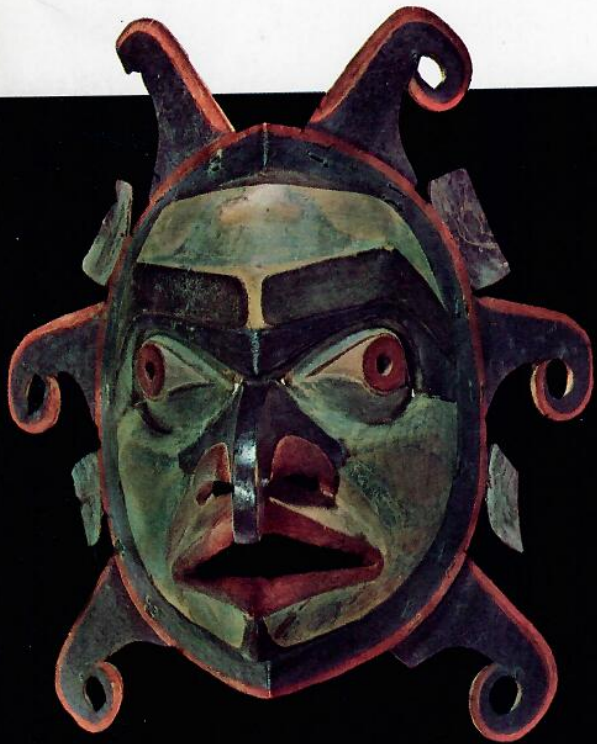
# MYTHOLOGY

# MYTHS: TRUE OR FALSE?

The ancient ship lay at the bottom of the Aegean Sea off the east coast of Greece. It had been wrecked and sunk by a violent storm about 1600 years before. Now, in September 1928, divers were searching the ship for any treasure it might contain. What they found was one of the most splendid bronze statues ever made by any artist. It is a powerful figure of the Greek god of the sea, Poseidon, his arms outstretched as if to hurl his trident (a spear with three prongs), his eyes glowing with anger. (See cover, and below, right.) The statue, which stands six feet, ten inches, was probably made in the fifth century B.C., when an-

cient Greek civilization was at its height. A good guess is that it was one of many statues that the Roman emperor, Constantine, was looting from Greece to adorn his new capital in the east, Constantinople. This one never reached its destination.

To the ancient Greeks, the destruction of this ship at sea would have had a simple explanation. They believed that everything that happened to



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them, whether good or bad, was willed by one or another of the gods. When a god was angry with men, he could—and did—punish them. An ancient Greek would not have doubted that Poseidon, enraged by the theft of his statue, had hurled his trident at the ship and sunk it.

The Greeks believed that their gods had wondrous, supernatural powers. Zeus hurled thunderbolts across the sky. Hermes flew through the air, propelled by winged sandals and a winged hat. Athena wove beautiful tapestries from the fleece of clouds and tinted them with the colors of dawn.

Today when we read the ancient Greek stories about gods performing superhuman deeds and controlling the destinies of men, we find them charming and entertaining, but of course we don't believe a word of them. We call them myths, or mythology, and we enjoy them as stories. But to the early Greeks, these stories were much more than entertainment. They were history, they were religion, and they were truth. Myths served a very important purpose for the early Greeks. These stories were an attempt to explain all those things that they did not understand about their world. How, for example, was the universe created? How did the race of man come about? What made the seasons change? Why did the sun rise and set? What made the crops grow? Unable to answer these questions by scientific means, the early Greeks simply used their imaginations. They invented fanciful stories that attributed practically

all these occurrences to the will, or the whim, of the gods. These stories, handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, later inspired poets like Homer and Hesiod who gave them written form.

The stories of Greek gods and their intervention in the affairs of men still delight and entertain us today. Who hasn't heard of heroes like Hercules, Odysseus (Ulysses), and Achilles? Yet it would be wrong to assume that only the ancient Greeks created myths. Practically every primitive people created a mythology to explain the same questions that perplexed the early Greeks. And while these mythologies vary widely, there are essential points of similarity. The phenomena of nature and life are explained as the workings of powerful gods and spirits who determine whether mere mortals shall prosper or decline, survive or perish. A North American Indian sun god is represented by the mask on the opposite page, left. Flat pieces of abalone shell are suspended between its curled "rays" to make it reflect light. The Japanese wind god, Fujin, is depicted (below, left) with his bag of winds around his neck. The African mask (below, right) represents a spirit of the bush that is summoned up in religious ceremonies by a dancer who wears it.



COVER: *Poseidon* (detail), 5th century B.C. National Museum, Athens. Photograph Dimitrios Harissiadis, courtesy George Rainbird, Ltd.

FAR LEFT: Kwakiutl Indian. *Sun Mask*. Provincial Museum, Victoria, BC.

LEFT: *Poseidon* (detail), 5th century B.C. National Museum, Athens. Photograph Dennis Stock, Magnum.

ABOVE: Japanese woodblock print, 19th century. *Wind God*.

RIGHT: Toma tribe, Guinea. *Bush Spirit Mask*. Peggy Guggenheim Foundation, Venice.



What made the gods of Greece so appealing to the ancients are the same qualities that make them so appealing to us today—for gods, they are astonishingly human. The Greeks created gods in their own image. They not only look like humans, though generally they are far more beautiful, but they also act like humans. They are, at times, virtuous, kind, and benevolent, but they can also be jealous, petty, mean, and even cruel. Zeus, the god of the sky, and his son, Apollo, the sun god, are also quite amorous, but apparently the early Greeks were not offended by their ardent wooing of both goddesses and mortal women.

How did Greek mythology explain the creation of the gods? Before there were gods, it said, heaven and earth had already been formed. They were the first parents. Their children were the Titans, gods of great size and strength who ruled the universe for ages. But their chief, Cronos, feared that one of his own children would try to overthrow him. So one by one he swallowed each of the first five. His wife, Rhea, secretly gave her sixth child, a son whom she named Zeus, to an earth nymph (a minor goddess) to raise. Then she took a rock, wrapped it in swaddling clothes, and returned with it to the palace of the gods above Mount Olympus. Cronos swallowed the rock, never suspecting he had been tricked.

When Zeus grew up, Rhea took him to live among the gods of Mount Olympus, but did not reveal his true identity to Cronos. Then she and Zeus hatched a plot against the tyrant god. They fed him a sickening drink that made him throw up first a rock, and then Zeus's five brothers and sisters, alive and undigested. Now a terrible struggle for control of Mount Olympus took place between Cronos and Zeus, and their allies. Zeus hurled his thunderbolts at Cronos; the earth shook, and tidal waves swept the seas. Finally Zeus conquered, and banished Cronos and his Titan allies to the underworld, where the ghosts of the dead wandered aimlessly.

Zeus was now supreme on Mount Olympus, king of the gods and men. His rule of the universe was

shared by the divine family that dwelt with him on Mount Olympus. The most important were Hera, Zeus's wife; Poseidon, god of the sea; Hades, ruler of the underworld; Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty; Athena, goddess of wisdom; Apollo, god of the sun; Demeter, goddess of crops; Hermes, the messenger god; Artemis, goddess of hunting; and Hephaestus, god of fire and the forge. The Greeks had many other lesser gods and goddesses, but those who dwelt on Mount Olympus were the most revered. They were called the Olympians and the Immortals, for their youth, strength, and beauty never perished.

The stories of the gods are sometimes sentimental, sometimes comical, and occasionally bizarre. Some, like the story of Athena's birth, are all three. The story is this:

Zeus, who had children by many goddesses and mortal women, was anxious about the birth of his child by Metis, a Titaness. He had been warned that if the child was a boy, it would one day overthrow him. Zeus tried to resolve the problem by swallowing Metis wholly. Soon, however, he began to suffer a terrible headache. Unable to stand it any longer, he ordered Hephaestus to split open his head with an axe. Out of Zeus's head leaped Athena, fully grown and wearing armor. The event was humorously depicted by a Greek artist in the vase painting, opposite page, top. A much more idealized representation of Athena is the statue, bottom, far left.

The story of the birth of Zeus's son, Apollo, was no less fanciful. Apollo's mother was a nymph named Leto. While she was pregnant with Apollo and his twin sister, Artemis, a curse was put on her by Zeus's jealous wife, Hera. Leto, she said, would not be able to give birth anywhere on earth. To enforce the curse, she had a serpent named Python chase Leto any time she stopped to rest. Finally Zeus sent the south wind to help Leto, and she was carried on its wings to the island of Delos. Python swam after her, but Zeus sent the island floating swiftly away, out of the serpent's reach. In such fashion did Zeus thwart Hera's curse. As the sun god, Apollo gave light to the world by driving his golden chariot across the sky each day. The handsomest of all the gods, he inspired the vision of him in the statue, bottom, left.

# GODS WHO WERE LIKE MORTALS

ABOVE LEFT: Greek vase painting. *Birth of Athena from Head of Zeus*. British Museum, London. Photograph Michael Holford.

FAR LEFT: *Apollo* (detail), about 460 B.C. Olympia Museum, Greece. Photograph Scala.

LEFT: *Hellenistic marble head of Athena*. Louvre, Paris. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.



ABOVE: Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).  
*The Judgment of Paris*, about 1638. National  
Gallery, London.

RIGHT: Greek vase painting. *Paris and  
Helen*. British Museum.





**“It was the gods who caused it, and brought war and tears upon us.”**

So King Priam of Troy explains the origin of the Trojan war in Homer’s epic poem, *The Iliad*. It is a perfect expression of the ancient Greek view that men’s actions were willed by the gods, rather than by men themselves. In this view, men were simply puppets manipulated by the all-powerful Olympians. It was a view that apparently disturbed Zeus himself, for Homer quotes the god denying such a great responsibility in the affairs of men. “How foolish men are!” Zeus says. “How unjustly they blame the gods! It is their lot to suffer, but because of their own folly they bring upon themselves sufferings over and above what is fated for them.”

Such a disclaimer did not fool the Greeks. They were convinced that all extraordinary events were of divine origin. The gods, they said, were jealous of each other, and constantly quarreling and scheming. And when the gods quarreled, they often involved men in their disputes, touching off great wars, adventures, tragedies, and triumphs.

How did the gods cause the Trojan war? One day they were having a wedding feast on Mount Olympus. Eris, the goddess of discord, had not been invited because she was such a troublemaker. Resenting the snub, Eris decided to do her worst. She threw among the feasting gods a golden apple marked “For the fairest.” All the goddesses claimed the honor, but the choice was finally narrowed down to three—Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena. Then the three great goddesses asked Zeus to choose among them. Zeus wisely declined to put himself on the spot. Instead, he recommended that they let Paris, the son of King Priam of Troy, decide, for Paris was an excellent judge of beauty.

Paris was banned from Troy after Priam received a warning that he (Paris) would some day bring about the city’s ruin. The three goddesses found him herding some sheep outside Troy. Each one offered Paris a bribe to choose her as “the fairest.” Aphrodite’s bribe was the most tempting. She promised to give him the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris promptly awarded the golden apple to Aphrodite. This scene, called *The Judgment of Paris*, was painted by the 17th-century Flemish master, Rubens (top). Behind Paris stands the winged messenger of the gods, Hermes.

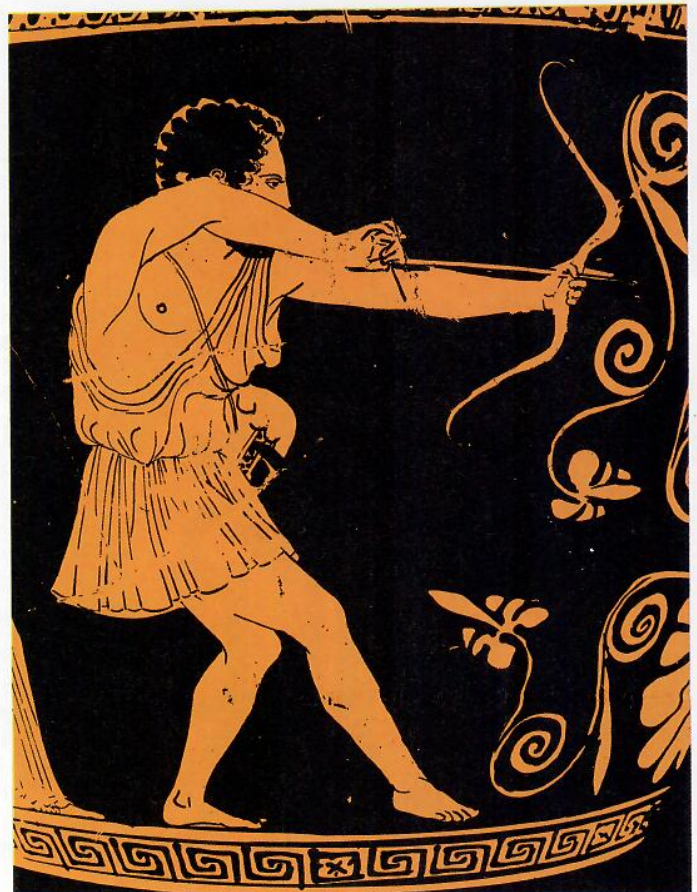
The judgment of Paris inevitably led to the Trojan war. For the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen, was already married to King Menelaus of Sparta, and Menelaus did not take it lightly when Paris carried his wife off with him to Troy. (See Greek vase painting, bottom.) Menelaus summoned all the other kings of Greece to help him make war against Troy and recapture his wife. Led by King Agamemnon of Mycenae, Menelaus’ brother, a great army of Greeks sailed in 1000 ships to lay siege to Priam’s city on the coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

So it was that a quarrel among the gods began a war among mortal men that would last 10 years.

# THE GODS WILL AWAR



# THE TROIJAN WAR





It was not the nature of the gods to be passive spectators once a war of their own making had started. Even before the Greeks had beached their ships on the shore facing the walled city of Troy, the gods had taken sides. Aphrodite naturally favored Paris and the Trojans. Just as naturally, Hera and Athena, whom Paris had offended, favored the Greeks. Poseidon, the god of the sea, also favored the Greeks because they were great sailors. Ares, the god of war, had a crush on Aphrodite so, to please her, he supported the Trojans. Apollo admired King Priam's son, Hector, the bravest of the Trojan warriors, so he too sided with the Trojans. What about Zeus, the king of the gods? His sympathies were mainly with the Trojans, but because he was something of a henpecked husband and was afraid to oppose his wife, Hera, he had to maintain a pretense of neutrality.

Having taken sides, the gods did not hesitate to intervene in the fighting. Battles were won or lost, depending upon which gods used their supernatural powers to influence the decision. On some occasions, the gods became actual battlefield combatants. Once, Ares fought alongside Hector in the Trojan ranks. The Greeks panicked when they saw the feared war god among their enemies, and began to retreat. Hera was incensed. Somehow she had to get rid of Ares, the son whom she and Zeus both detested. Hera then stood beside a Greek leader and inspired him with the courage to attack Ares. The Greek hurled his spear at him, and Athena made sure it didn't miss. Ares fled to Mount Olympus, bellowing with rage. The Greeks then counterattacked and forced the Trojans back.

The most dramatic combat in *The Iliad* is the duel between the "godlike" Achilles, the greatest of the Greek warriors, and his Trojan counterpart, Hector. Though Fate, a power even greater than the gods, had already determined that Achilles would win, the gods helped to make his victory a certainty. Hephaestus himself forged the magical armor and weapons that Achilles would use against Hector. And Athena was beside Achilles as he sought out the Trojan leader. For the first time, Hector became frightened and ran for his life. Athena, however, tricked him into stopping. She appeared before him as one of his brothers. Hector, believing that he now had an ally, turned to face Achilles. Achilles hurled his spear at him, but missed. No matter—Athena retrieved the weapon for him. Then Hector threw his spear at Achilles. His aim was true; the spear struck Achilles' shield in dead center. But no spear made by men could pierce the armor forged by a god. It glanced off the shield harmlessly. Hector then turned to his brother to get back his spear, but he was gone. Now Hector realizes that he has been tricked and that there is no escape for him. "The gods have summoned me to death," he says, and a moment later Achilles slays him.

The death of Hector did not end the Trojans' resistance. After almost 10 years of fighting, the Greeks had failed to make a dent in the city's walls. It was obvious that the Greek army was not strong enough to take the city by force alone. Now a Greek warrior-king named Odysseus (opposite page, bottom) who was known for his exceptional cunning, devised a scheme to trick the Trojans. He had workmen build a huge wooden horse that was hollow inside. He and some other Greek chiefs would hide in it, while the rest of the army would pretend to sail home. Actually the fleet would hide behind a nearby island.

Odysseus' strategy was successful. Believing that the siege was over and that the horse was a sacred offering to Athena, the Trojans pulled it inside the city gates (opposite page, top). Late that night the Greek chiefs stealthily emerged from the horse, and opened the gates to their army. Then they set fire to the city. As the bewildered Trojan defenders rushed out of their homes, they were butchered. By morning, the city was in ruins, its men dead, its women and children captives.

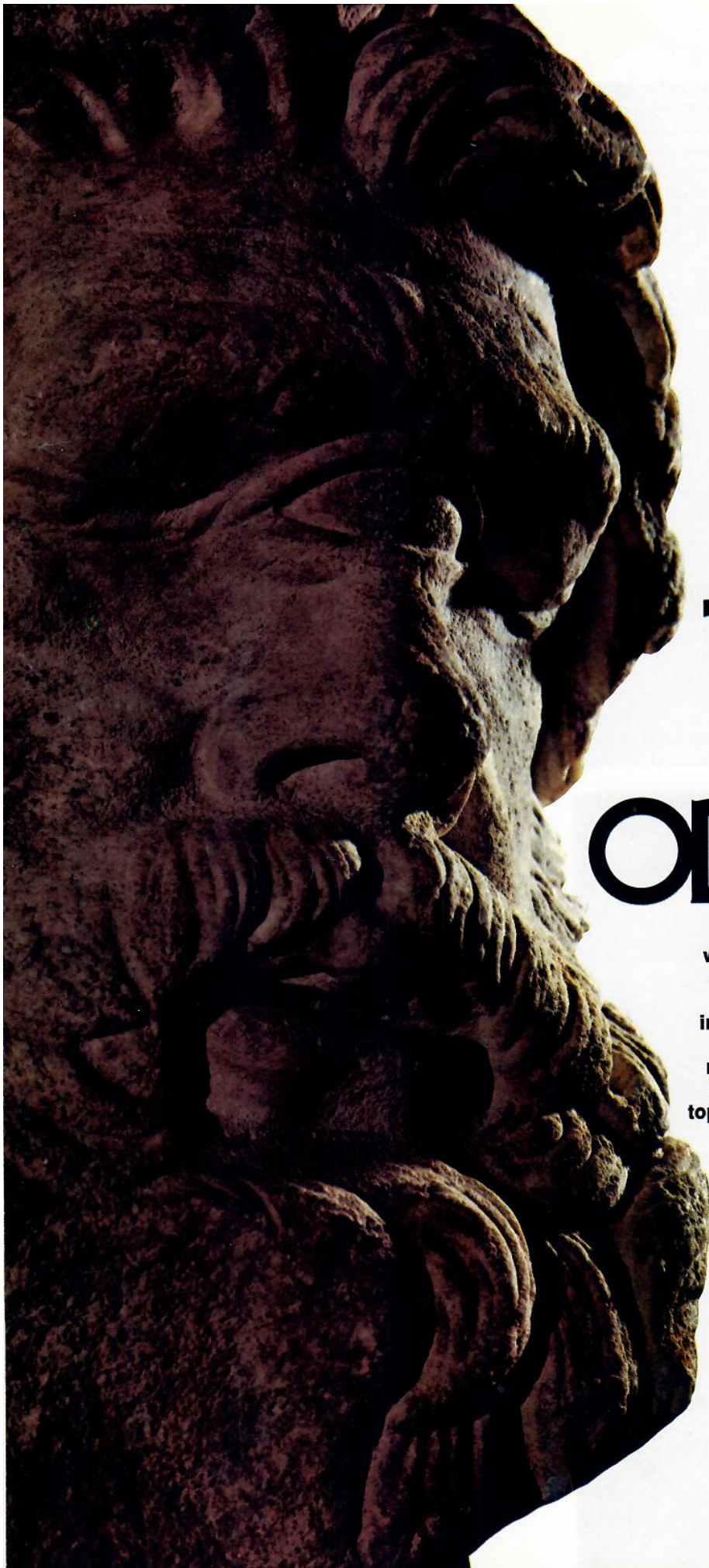
Now, at last, the Greeks did sail home. To some, like Menelaus, the gods were kind. Menelaus got back his wife, Helen, reached home safely, and prospered. His brother, Agamemnon (left), met a far different fate. On his return home, he was murdered by his faithless wife and her lover. His son, Orestes, would ultimately avenge him. And what about Odysseus? Before the gods would let him return home, he would have to wander over the face of the earth for 10 years and experience the most harrowing adventures.



ABOVE LEFT: Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770). *The Trojan Horse*. National Gallery, London.

FAR LEFT: *Ulysses as Archer*. Berlin State Museums. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

LEFT: Greek vase painting, about 430 B.C. *Agamemnon*, British Museum, London. Photograph Dimitrios Harissiadis, courtesy George Rainbird, Ltd.



# THE TRIALS OF ODYSSEUS

**"The Cyclops was a monstrous man, who was then tending his flocks a long way off by himself. He would not mix with the others, but kept apart in his own lawless company. Indeed he was a wonderful monster, not like a mortal man who eats bread, but rather like a mountain peak with trees on the top standing up alone in the highlands."  
—Homer, *The Odyssey***

The disasters that beset the Greeks on their return voyage they brought upon themselves. They had run wild the night they captured Troy, burning, looting, slaying even women and children, and profaning the sacred temple of Athena. This wanton behavior had outraged the gods, especially Athena who had been the Greeks' greatest champion in the Trojan war. She appealed to Poseidon to take vengeance on them for their wrongdoing. "Give the Greeks a bitter homecoming," she urged the god of the sea. "Stir up your waters with wild whirlwinds when they sail. Let dead men choke the bays and line the shores and reefs."

Poseidon agreed, and soon created a tempest that wrecked most of the Greek fleet. Odysseus was one of those who survived the storm, but his suffering would last the longest—fully 10 years.

Odysseus' first grim adventure came when he beached his ship (below, left) in an unknown land that was inhabited by a race of ferocious giants. These monsters, called Cyclopes, were quite hideous, having only one eye that was centered in the forehead (opposite page).

Odysseus took 12 men with him to explore the place, and discovered a

huge cave filled with cheeses and pails of milk. His men wanted to help themselves to the cheese and go, but Odysseus insisted on waiting for the owner to return. He had brought some excellent wine with him, and intended to offer it in exchange.

When the owner came back to the cave with his flock of sheep, the Greeks were dismayed to discover that he was a giant Cyclops. His name was Polyphemus and he was, by coincidence, the son of Poseidon. Enraged at finding intruders in his cave, the Cyclops picked up two of them in his enormous hands and threw them to the ground, dashing out their brains. Their companions were overcome with horror.

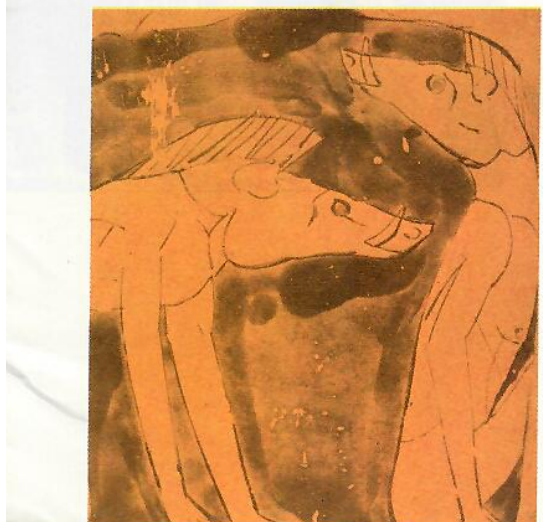
That night, while Polyphemus slept, Odysseus tried to think of some way to escape. Even if he and his men could kill the Cyclops, it would be useless. An enormous stone covered the entrance to the cave, and only the Cyclops could move it. For once, Odysseus, the master of cunning, was stumped. But the next day, after Polyphemus had left the cave with his sheep and covered the entrance, Odysseus hit upon a plan. He found a long pole that he and his men sharpened to a point at one end. Then they turned the point round and round in a

fire until it became white hot.

When Polyphemus returned that night, Odysseus got him drunk on the wine he had brought along. Soon the Cyclops fell asleep. Odysseus and his men then seized the pole with its white hot point and drove it straight into the monster's eye (below, center). The Cyclops roared in agony as he wrenched the pole out.

The next morning, the blinded giant pushed aside the stone at the entrance, hoping to catch the Greeks as they tried to run out. But Odysseus had planned for this too. He and his men tied themselves under the bodies of Polyphemus' sheep, and in this manner passed safely out of the cave and made their getaway. Then Polyphemus prayed to his father, Poseidon, to make Odysseus' return home a long, drawn-out ordeal. Poseidon heard him, and plotted new trials for Odysseus.

One of these came when Odysseus' ship landed at an island that was the home of Circe, a beautiful but dangerous witch. When some of Odysseus' men reached her house, she turned them all into pigs (bottom of page), although their minds remained the same as before. Odysseus went in search of his missing comrades, and was met by Hermes who gave him an



FAR LEFT: Greek, 2nd century B.C. *Marble head of Polyphemus*. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

ABOVE LEFT: Campana terracotta relief, 2nd century. *Ship of Ulysses*. Louvre, Paris. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

ABOVE: Greek amphora, about 630 B.C. *Blinding of Polyphemus*. Eleusis Museum, Greece. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

ABOVE RIGHT: Etruscan, 4th century B.C. *Bronze mirror of Ulysses and Circe*. British Museum, London. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

LEFT: Greek red-figured vase painting, 5th century B.C. *Ulysses' companions changed into swine*. National Museum, Athens. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

herb that would protect him from Circe's magic. Circe was so astonished when her deadly art did not work on Odysseus that she threw herself at his feet and offered him any favor he would ask (page 11, bottom right). Odysseus asked her to restore his men to him, and this she did, making them younger, handsomer, and taller than before.

When Odysseus left Circe, she told him of the next danger that would confront him. His ship would have to pass by the island of the Sirens (below, left). They were marvelous singers whose voices lured men to their deaths. The skeletons of their victims were piled high on the shore. Odysseus ordered his men to plug their ears with wax when they approached the island. But he himself wanted to hear the Sirens, so he had his men tie him securely to the mast. When the ship passed the island, the Sirens sang so enticingly that Odysseus pleaded with his men to set him free. Instead, they tied more ropes around him until the danger was passed.

Now another, more terrible ordeal lay ahead for Odysseus. His ship would have to sail through a narrow strait of water between two very high, rocky cliffs. Beneath one cliff was a female monster named Charybdis who

swallowed ships in a swirling whirlpool. In a cave on the opposite cliff lived Scylla (below, center), a female monster with six heads, each at the end of an enormously long neck. Odysseus knew that if he steered his ship close to Scylla, he would lose six of his men. But if he steered close to Charybdis, he might lose them all. Taking a calculated risk, Odysseus sailed by Scylla's rock. He had to watch helplessly as the huge monster grabbed six of his screaming crewmen and lifted them up to her cave to devour them.

Eventually, a thunderbolt shattered Odysseus' ship, and all were drowned except him. Odysseus held on to a wooden beam, and was cast ashore on the island of a beautiful nymph named Calypso. She fell in love with him, and would not let him leave.

By this time, almost 10 years had passed since Odysseus had left Troy. Now at last the gods began to feel sorry for him, and none more so than Athena. Calypso was ordered by Zeus to release Odysseus, and later a swift Greek ship carried him safely home to Ithaca.

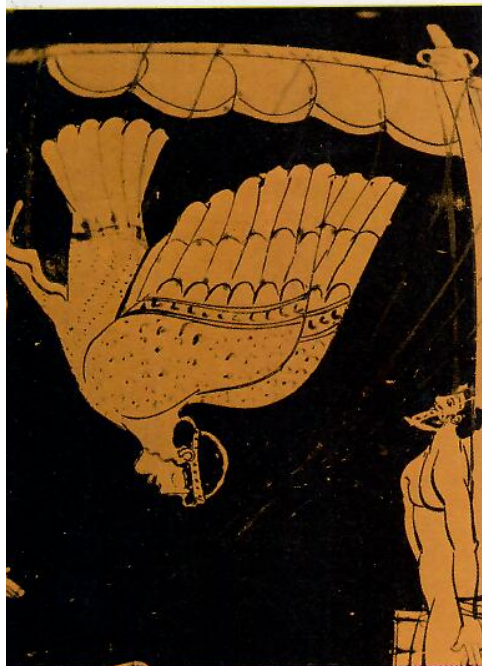
His troubles, however, were not yet over. Arrogant noblemen had occupied his palace, determined not to leave until his "widow," Penelope,

should marry one of them. They taunted her and her young son, Telemachus, who had grown to manhood during Odysseus' long absence. Penelope wanted none of these greedy suitors, but was powerless to drive them out of her home.

And how was Odysseus to overcome these nobles who were so numerous that they filled his banquet hall when they dined? Again Athena resolved the problem. She disguised Odysseus as an old beggar so the nobles would not know him when he entered his palace. Then Odysseus told Telemachus, who knew his real identity, to hide the nobles' weapons. When this was done, Odysseus slew them one by one in a great bloodbath, and finally claimed his faithful wife (below, right).

After 20 years, Odysseus had come to an understanding of life. In his own words, it is this:

"Man thinks no evil thing can ever come upon him, so long as the gods give him power and his knees are nimble. But when the blessed gods bring sorrow, he has to bear this also, unwillingly yet with patient heart. Therefore no man should ever disregard justice, but let him enjoy in silence the gifts which the gods may give him."



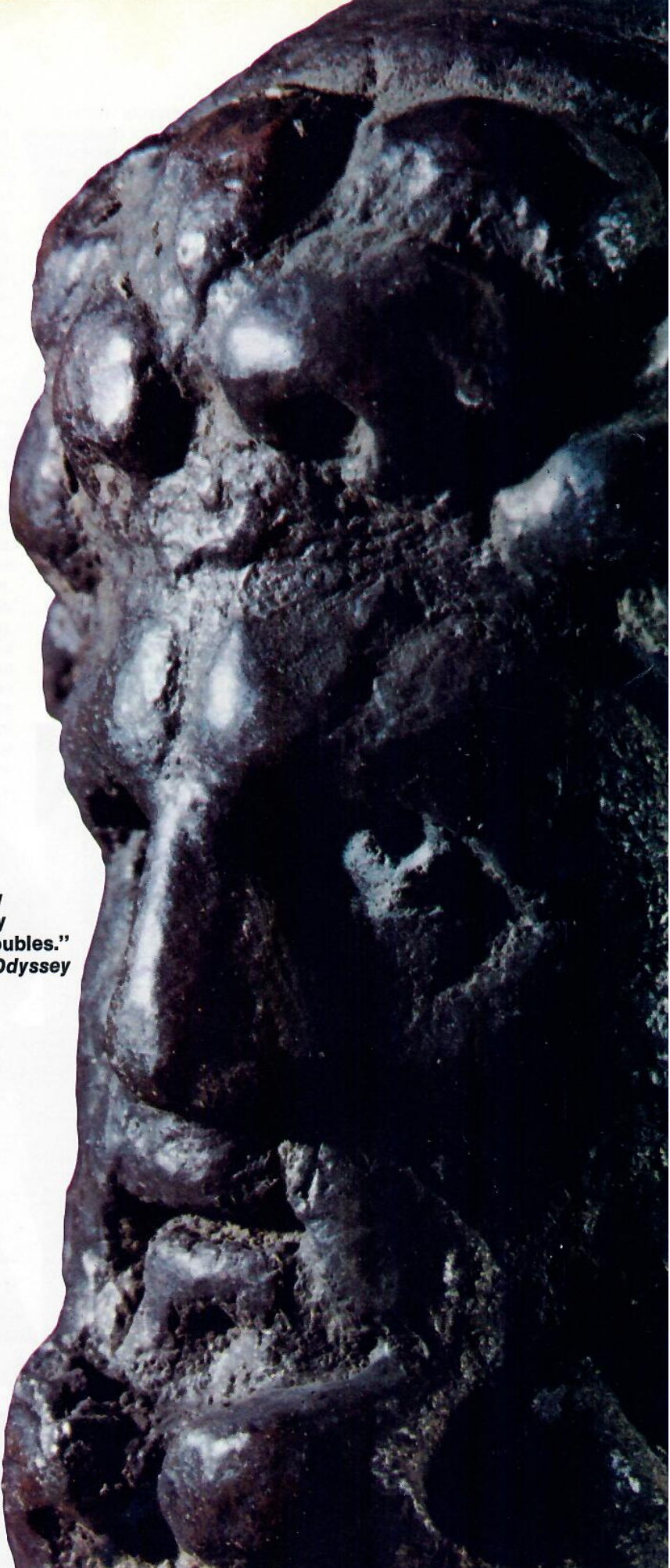
LEFT: Greek red-figure vase painting, 5th century B.C. *Siren*. British Museum, London. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

ABOVE: Melian Relief, *Scylla*. British Museum, London. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

RIGHT: Melian Relief, 5th century B.C. *Ulysses and Penelope*. Louvre, Paris. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.

FAR RIGHT: Roman. *Bronze statuette of Ulysses (detail)*. Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. Photograph Erich Lessing, Magnum.



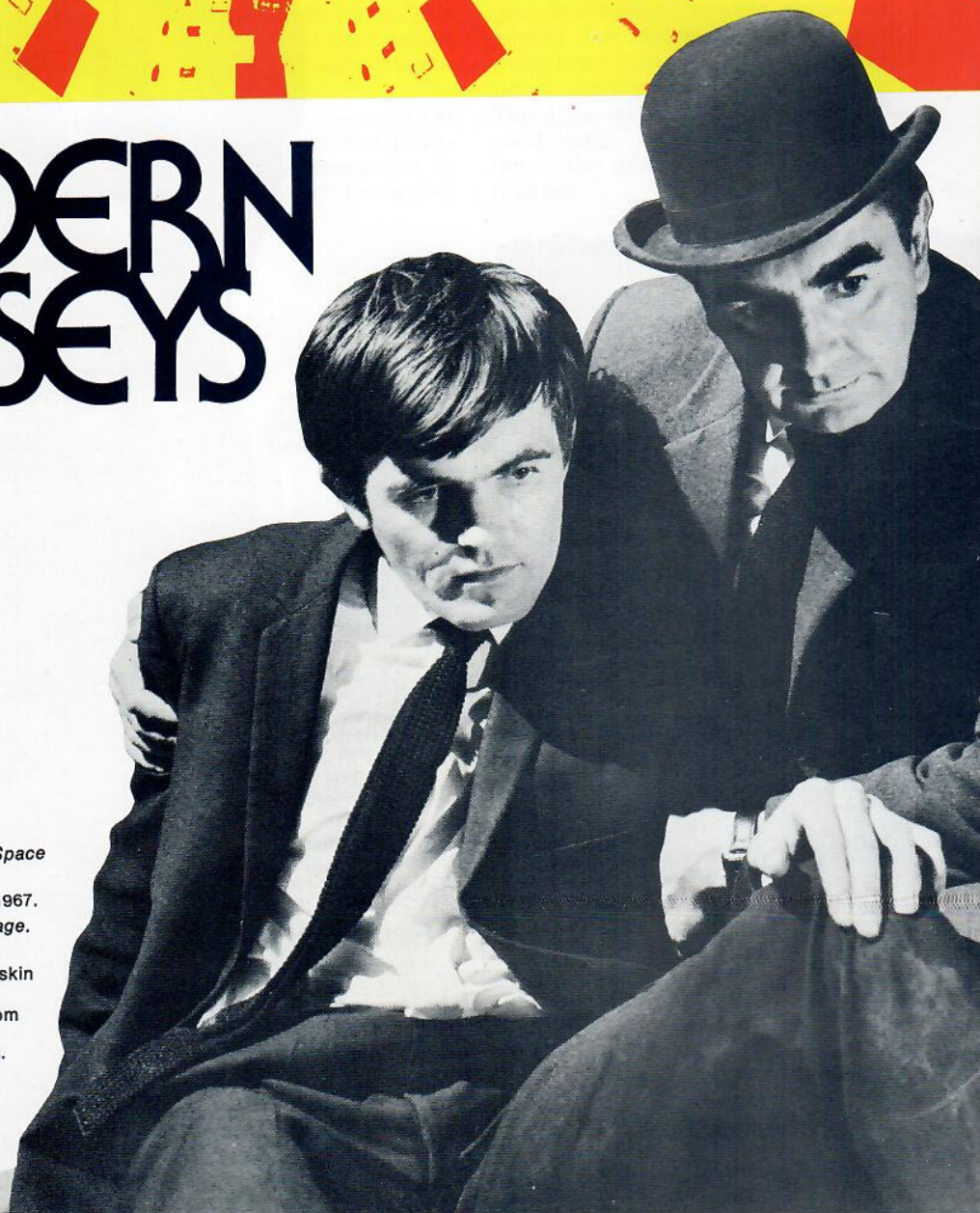


**“Odysseus went on board the ship in silence, and laid himself down...she cut swiftly through the waves, and she carried a man whose mind was as wise as the gods: Long years he had suffered great tribulation and sorrow of heart, wars on land and voyages over the stormy seas, and now he slept quietly forgetting all his troubles.”**

**—Homer, *The Odyssey***



# MODERN ODYSSEYS



ABOVE: Still from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968.

RIGHT: Still from *Ulysses*, 1967.

FAR RIGHT: *Myth of a Voyage*.  
Photograph Martha Swope.

BACK COVER: Leonard Baskin  
(b. 1922). *Greek god*.  
Reprinted by permission from  
Homer *The Iliad* ©1963  
University of Chicago Press.

Do the stories of Greek mythology have any meaning for us today, or are they simply charming, fanciful entertainments to be read and enjoyed in the same spirit, say, as Grimm's fairy tales? Some myths, yes. Yet it is surprising how many Greek myths have survived because they express ideas that hundreds of generations, including our own, have recognized as truth. Perhaps the most notable example is *The Odyssey*, which has inspired numerous writers and artists of this century to create new works that parallel Homer's masterpiece. For *The Odyssey* is more than an adventure yarn whose hero outwits monsters, witches, and other magical creatures. Odysseus' 10-year journey is, for him, a great learning experience, an intellectual as well as a physical adventure. When Odysseus finally returns home to Ithaca, he sees it through new eyes, eyes now opened by the wisdom he has acquired during his epic voyage.

What has Odysseus learned from his visits to strange lands and his encounters with gods, mortals, and monsters? Among other things, he has learned that human intelligence is better, and more godlike, than brute force. He has learned, too, the importance of justice and morality. He knows that "Zeus has ordained this law for men, that fishes and beasts and winged fowls should devour one another, for right is not in them, but to mankind he gave right which proves far the best." When Odysseus taunts the blinded Cyclops soon after his voyage has begun, he boasts of himself as "Odysseus, the wrecker of cities." Yet when he returns home nearly 10 years later, he expresses remorse that once he "gave way to violent passions and did reckless deeds." Above all, Odysseus has learned that a man's fortune is what the gods allot to him, and that, good or bad, he must endure it patiently.

The theme of *The Odyssey* still persists in our current literature and art. James Joyce's famous novel, *Ulysses* (the Roman name for Odysseus), describes a 24-hour odyssey in the life of Leopold Bloom, an Irish Jew. Bloom has been lonely and unhappy ever since the death of his young son, and is constantly searching for another. In the course of various adventures in Dublin one day, he develops a friendship with a young writer, Stephen Dedalus, whom he hopes will become his spiritual son and bring fulfillment to his life. The novel, which strongly parallels Odysseus' quest for his home and his son, Telemachus, was published in 1922. It was made into a motion picture in 1967 (film still, bottom, left).

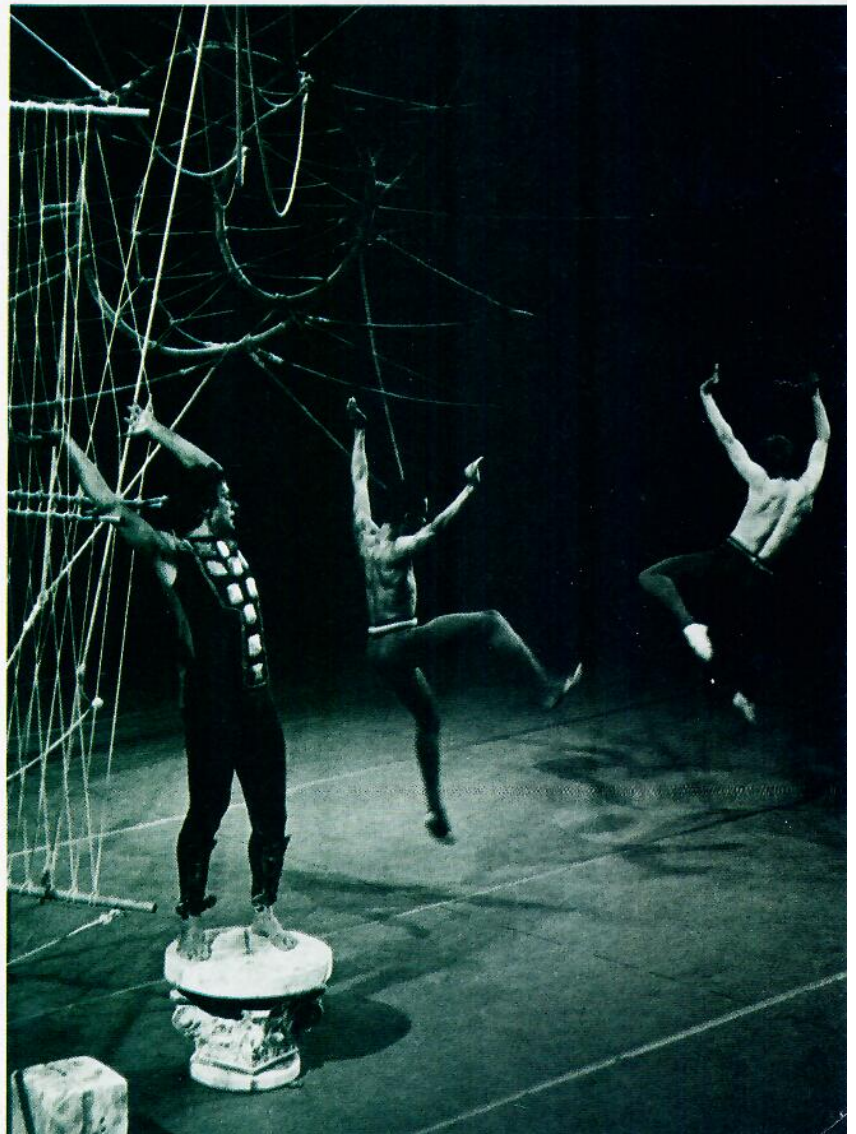
William Saroyan's play, *The Human Comedy*, which deals with a California family during World War II, also employs Homeric names and situations. Its locale is a town called Ithaca; the younger brothers of the boy who has gone off to war are Homer and Ulysses. Ulysses, the youngest, spends his time wandering around, observing everything, curious about life's meaning.

Another reworking of *The Odyssey* is the ballet *Myth of a Voyage* (right) by the celebrated choreographer, Martha Graham. This is both a humorous and a romantic treatment of Homer's story which reflects, perhaps, a fairly common

modern attitude. Her Odysseus is a dreamer who wants to chuck all responsibility and live on an island paradise with various temptresses like Circe and Calypso, before life passes him by. Eventually Miss Graham returns him to Penelope, and so keeps faith with Homer's original story.

The movies too have drawn a modern parallel with Homer's tale. In the spectacular film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a spaceship named *Discovery* makes a journey to the planet Jupiter, almost one billion miles away (top, left). In the course of this nine-month odyssey, the astronauts learn about mysteries of the universe never before even imagined by man. In one scene, space and time cease to exist, and the chief astronaut is able to see himself simultaneously as an old man, a corpse, and as a yet-unborn star-child. He has been transfigured by his journey into space, just as Odysseus was by his voyage into unknown worlds.

Painters and sculptors have also found in *The Odyssey* inspiration for modern adaptations. Leonard Baskin, a sculptor and printmaker, created the figure on the back cover of *Art & Man*. It is his image of a character from Greek mythology, possibly Odysseus, possibly Poseidon, possibly someone else. We do not know. But the actual identity doesn't matter: It is unmistakably a fresh vision of an ever valid theme—man's eternal quest for the meaning of life.





"I when the lots were shaken drew the grey sea to live in  
forever; Hades drew the lot of the mists and the darkness,  
and Zeus was allotted the wide sky, in the cloud and the bright air.  
But earth and high Olympus are common to all three. Therefore  
I am no part of the mind of Zeus. Let him in tranquillity  
and powerful as he is stay satisfied with his third share."

The God, Poseidon—Homer, *The Iliad*