



# People and Themes in Homer's Odyssey (Routledge Library Editions: Homer)

*Agathe Thornton*

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Published in 1970, this important work interprets the poem with a focus on the idiosyncrasies of its originally oral composition.

In part I, the main themes of the *Odyssey* such as 'guest-friendship' and 'testing' are investigated. The incorporation of these and other themes, such as 'omens' and the 'homecomings of the Achaeans', into the dramatic construction of the whole epic is also examined. In Part II, the main characters of the *Odyssey* are described: the Suitors, Telemachus, Odysseus and Penelope. So too are Theoclymenus and Laertes, whom traditional criticism has maligned or disregarded. The analysis of the characters tries to illumine features which are challenging for the contemporary reader. In the conclusion, the 'plan' of the *Odyssey* is reconstructed. The author argues that it would probably have been performed over the course of three days: two sessions each day, with each recitation maintaining its own artistic unity.

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