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### Question 3: Ancient Women

The women in *Odyssey* are unique in their personalities and intentions towards others and life. Although the women in the epic are different, they all help to define what an ideal Ancient Greek woman is like.

In Homer's epic, *Odyssey*, women are highly influential in Odysseus's journey home. According to the epic women are to be trusted, feared, and cherished, however, not to be treated as possessions. The women in epics are powerful and generally kind, however if they are abused, in any way, they can be very revengeful. Odysseus' wife, Penelope, plays a major female role in the *Odyssey*. She is loyal to her husband even though she does not know if he will ever come back (Homer 16.38-9). Another exemplar woman is Eurykleia, the nurse. Even though she is of age, she puts effort into serving Penelope and Odysseus with loyalty (19.510-530). Also, there is Athena, the goddess of wisdom, war, and justice. Book 6 delineates how Athena, through divine intervention, appears in dreams, changes appearances, and gives strength, all so that Odysseus is able to make his way home without obstacles. These women and their actions demonstrate their power and how valuable they are. Their thoroughness, strong willingness, and wisdom show that they deserve to be treated with respect and seriousness, and they can be dangerous as their knowledge has the potential to help or ruin, depending on how they are approached. Often in

ancient epics, women are portrayed in the same way. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, women, also, represent not only great wisdom and power but danger. Ishtar, goddess of love and war, is a great example of it. She becomes angered when Gilgamesh rejects her marriage proposal. However, Ishtar gets revenge on Gilgamesh by killing his friend, Enkidu, as they killed Bull of Heaven and shamed her by tossing the bull's thigh at her (Anonymous Tablet VI. line 140-150). Ishtar's actions demonstrate that, just like the women in the homeric epic, they are to be trusted, feared, and cherished, not to be treated as possessions.

Work Cited

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