Part I: Penelope's Noos

A) Odyssey 18.206-283: With these words she came down from her upper room, not alone but attended by two of her maidens, and when she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the hall, holding a veil before her face, and with a staid maid servant on either side of her. As they beheld her the suitors were so overpowered and became so desperately enamoured of her, that each one prayed he might win her for his own bedmate...

Eurymakhos then came up and said, “Queen Penelope, daughter of Ikarios, if all the Achaeans in Iasian Argos could see you at this moment, you would have still more suitors in your house by tomorrow morning, for you are the most admirable woman in the whole world both as regards personal beauty and strength of understanding.”

To this Penelope replied, “Eurymakhos, heaven robbed me of all my excellence whether of face or figure when the Argives set sail for Troy and my dear husband with them. If he were to return and look after my affairs, I should both be more respected [kleos] and show a better presence to the world. As it is, I am oppressed with care, and with the afflictions which a god has seen fit to heap upon me. My husband foresaw it all, and when he was leaving home he took my right wrist in his hand—’Wife,’ he said, ‘we shall not all of us come safe home from Troy, for the Trojans fight well both with bow and spear. They are excellent also at fighting from chariots, and nothing decides the issue of a fight sooner than this. I know not, therefore, whether heaven will send me back to you, or whether I may not fall over there at Troy. In the meantime do you look after things here. Take care of my father and mother as at present, and even more so during my absence, but when you see our son growing a beard, then marry whom you will, and leave this your present home.’ This is what he said and now it is all coming true. A night will come when I shall have to yield myself to a marriage which I detest, for Zeus has taken from me all hope of happiness. This further grief, moreover, cuts me to the very heart. You suitors are not wooing me after the custom of my country. When men are courting a woman who they think will be a good wife to them and who is of noble birth, and when they are each trying to win her for himself, they usually bring oxen and sheep to feast the friends of the lady, and they make her magnificent presents, instead of eating up other people’s property without paying for it.”

This was what she said, and Odysseus was glad when he heard her trying to get presents out of the suitors, and flattering them with fair words which he knew she did not mean in her mind [noos].

B) Odyssey 2.85-128: “Telemakhos, insolent braggart that you are, how dare you try to throw the blame upon us suitors? We are not the ones who are responsible but your mother is, for she knows many kinds of craftiness [kerdos]. This three years past, and close on four, she has been driving us out of our minds, by encouraging each one of us, and sending him messages that say one thing but her mind [noos] means other things. And then there was that other trick she played us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room, and began to work on an enormous piece of fine fabric. ‘Sweet hearts,’ said she, ‘Odysseus is indeed dead, still do not press me to marry her for his own bedmate…’

This is what she said, and we assented; whereon we could see her working on her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years and we never found her out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or no. The suitors, therefore, make you this answer, that both you and the Achaeeans may understand—Send your mother away, and bid her marry the man of her own choice; for I do not know what will happen if she goes on plaguing us much longer with the airs she gives herself on the score of the accomplishments Athena has taught her, and because she knows so many kinds of kerdos. We never yet heard of such a woman; we know all about Tyro, Alkmene, Mycenae, and the famous women of old, but they were nothing to your mother, any one of them. It was not fair of her to treat us in that way, and as long as she continues in the mind [noos] with which heaven has now endowed her, so long shall we go on eating up your estate; and I do not see why she should change, for she gets all the honor and glory [kleos], and it is you who pay for it, not she.
Understand, then, that we will not go back to our lands, neither here nor elsewhere, till she has made her choice and married some one or other of us.”

C) Odyssey 17.492-504: Now when Penelope heard that the beggar had been struck in the banqueting-hall, she said before her maids, “Would that Apollo would so strike you, Antinoos,” and her waiting woman Eurynome answered, “if our prayers were answered not one of the suitors would ever again see the sun rise.” Then Penelope said, “Nurse, every single one of them is my enemy, for they mean nothing but mischief, but I hate Antinoos like the darkness of death itself. A poor unfortunate tramp has come begging about the house for sheer want. Every one else has given him something to put in his wallet, but Antinoos has hit him on the right shoulder-blade with a footstool.”

D) Odyssey 19.106-161: “Lady;” answered Odysseus, “who on the face of the whole earth can dare to chide with you? Your fame [kleos] reaches the firmament of heaven itself; you are like some blameless king, who upholds righteousness, as the monarch over a great and valiant nation: the earth yields its wheat and barley, the trees are loaded with fruit, the ewes bring forth lambs, and the sea abounds with fish by reason of his virtues, and his people do good deeds under him...

Then Penelope answered, “ Stranger, the immortal gods robbed me of all excellence, whether of face or figure, when the Argives set sail for Troy and my dear husband with them. If he were to return and look after my affairs I should be both more respected [kleos] and should show a better presence to the world. As it is, I am oppressed with care, and with the afflictions which a god has seen fit to heap upon me. The chiefs from all our islands - Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus, as also from Ithaca itself, are wooing me against my will and are wasting my estate. I can therefore show no attention to strangers, nor suppliants, nor to people who say that they are skilled artisans, but am all the time brokenhearted about Odysseus. They want me to marry again at once, and I have to invent stratagems in order to deceive them... My parents are putting great pressure upon me, and my son chafes at the ravages the suitors are making upon his estate, for he is now old enough to understand all about it and is perfectly able to look after his own affairs, for heaven has blessed him with an excellent disposition.

E) Odyssey 19.164-250: Then Odysseus answered, “Lady, wife of Odysseus, since you persist in asking me about my family, I will answer... There is a fair and fruitful island in mid-ocean called Crete... it was in Crete that I saw Odysseus and showed him hospitality, for the winds took him there as he was on his way to Troy, carrying him out of his course from cape Malea and leaving him in Amnisos off the cave of Eileithuia, where the harbors are difficult to enter and he could hardly find shelter from the winds that were then raging. As soon as he got there he went into the town and asked for Idomeneus, claiming to be his old and valued friend, but Idomeneus had already set sail for Troy some ten or twelve days earlier, so I took him to my own house and showed him every kind of hospitality, for I had abundance of everything. Moreover, I fed the men who were with him with barley meal from the public store, and got subscriptions of wine and oxen for them to sacrifice to their heart’s content. They stayed with me twelve days, for there was a gale blowing from the North so strong that one could hardly keep one’s feet on land. I suppose some unfriendly god had raised it for them, but on the thirteenth day the wind dropped, and they got away.”

Many a plausible tale did Odysseus further tell her, and Penelope wept as she listened, for her heart was melted. As the snow wastes upon the mountain tops when the winds from South East and West have breathed upon it and thawed it till the rivers run bank full with water, even so did her cheeks overflow with tears for the husband who was all the time sitting by her side. Odysseus felt pity for her in his heart as she lamented, but he kept his eyes as hard as or iron withou...
admiration of all the women who beheld it. Furthermore I say, and lay my saying to your heart, that I do not know whether Odysseus wore these clothes when he left home, or whether one of his companions had given them to him while he was on his voyage; or possibly some one at whose house he was staying made him a present of them, for he was a man of many friends and had few equals among the Achaeans. I myself gave him a sword of bronze and a beautiful purple mantle, double lined, with a shirt that went down to his feet, and I sent him on board his ship with every mark of honor. He had a servant with him, a little older than himself, and I can tell you what he was like; his shoulders were hunched, he was dark, and he had thick curly hair. His name was Eurybates, and Odysseus treated him with greater familiarity than he did any of the others, as being the most like-minded with himself.” Penelope was moved still more deeply as she heard the indisputable proofs [sêmatê] that Odysseus laid before her.

F) Odyssey 19.268-307: Still, cease your tears and listen to what I can tell. I will hide nothing from you, and can say with perfect truth that I have lately heard of Odysseus as being alive and on his way home [nostos]; he is in the district of the Thesprotians, and is bringing back much valuable treasure that he has begged from one and another of them; but his ship and all his crew were lost as they were leaving the Thrinacian island, for Zeus and the sun-god were angry with him because his men had slaughtered the sun-god’s cattle, and they were all drowned to a man. But Odysseus stuck to the keel of the ship and was drifted on to the land of the Phaeacians, who are near of kin to the immortals, and who treated him as though he had been a god, giving him many presents, and wishing to escort him home safe and sound. In fact Odysseus would have been here long ago, had he not thought better to go from land to land gathering wealth; for there is no man living who is so wily [kerdos] as he is; there is no one can compare with him. Pheidon king of the Thesprotians told me all this, and he swore to me—making drink-offerings in his house as he did so—that the ship was by the water side and the crew found who would take Odysseus to his own country. He sent me off first, for there happened to be a Thesprotian ship sailing for the wheat-growing island of Dulichium, but he showed me all the treasure Odysseus had got together, and he had enough lying in the house of king Pheidon to keep his family for ten generations; but the king said Odysseus had gone to Dodona that he might learn Zeus’ mind from the high oak tree, and know whether after so long an absence he should return to Ithaca openly or in secret. So you may know he is safe and will be here shortly; he is close at hand and cannot remain away from home much longer; nevertheless I will confirm my words with an oath, and call Zeus who is the first and mightiest of all gods to witness, as also that earth of Odysseus to which I have now come, that all I have spoken shall surely come to pass. Odysseus will return in this self same year; with the end of this moon and the beginning of the next he will be here.”

G) Odyssey 19.535-558: “Listen, then, to a dream that I have had and interpret it for me if you can. I have twenty geese about the house that eat mash out of a trough, and of which I am exceedingly fond. I dreamed that a great eagle came swooping down from a mountain, and dug his curved beak into the neck of each of them till he had killed them all. Presently he soared off into the sky, and left them lying dead about the yard; whereon I wept in my room till all my maids gathered round me, so piteously was I grieving because the eagle had killed my geese. Then he came back again, and perching on a projecting rafter spoke to me with human voice, and told me to leave off crying. “Be of good courage,” he said, “daughter of Ikarios; this is no dream, but a vision of good omen that shall surely come to pass. The geese are the suitors, and I am no longer an eagle, but your own husband, who am come back to you, and who will bring these suitors to a disgraceful end.” On this I woke, and when I looked out I saw my geese at the trough eating their mash as usual.”

“This dream, lady,” replied Odysseus, “can admit but of one interpretation, for had not Odysseus himself told you how it shall be fulfilled? The death of the suitors is portended, and not one single one of them will escape.”

And Penelope answered, “Stranger, dreams are very curious and unaccountable things, and they do not by any means invariably come true. There are two gates through which these unsubstantial fancies proceed; the one is of horn, and the other ivory. Those that come through the gate of ivory are fatuous, but those from the gate of horn mean something to those that see them. I do not think, however, that my own dream came through the gate of horn, though I and my son should be most thankful if it proves to have done so. Furthermore I say—and lay my saying to your heart—the coming dawn will usher in the ill-omened day that is to sever me from the house of Odysseus, for I am about to hold a tournament of axes.”

Part II: The Ends of the Odyssey
A) Odyssey 23.143-296: Then Phemios took his lyre and set them all longing for sweet song and stately dance. The house re-echoed with the sound of men and women dancing, and the people outside said, “I suppose the queen
has been getting married at last. She ought to be ashamed of herself for not continuing to protect her husband's property until he comes home." This was what they said, but they did not know what it was that had been happening. The upper servant Eurynome washed and anointed Odysseus in his own house and gave him a shirt and cloak, while Athena made him look taller and stronger than before; she also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she shed kharis about his head and shoulders just as a skilful workman who has studied art of all kinds under Hephaistos or Athena—and his work is full of kharis—enriches a piece of silver plate by gilding it. He came from the bath looking like one of the immortals, and sat down opposite his wife on the seat he had left. "My dear," said he, "heaven has endowed you with a heart more unyielding than woman ever yet had. No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much. But come, nurse, get a bed ready for me; I will sleep alone, for this woman has a heart as hard as iron."

“My dear," answered Penelope, “I have no wish to set myself up, nor to depreciate you; but I am not struck by your appearance, for I very well remember what kind of a man you were when you set sail from Ithaca. Nevertheless, Eurykleia, take his bed outside the bed chamber that he himself built. Bring the bed outside this room, and put bedding upon it with fleeces, good coverlets, and blankets." She said this to try him, but Odysseus was very angry and said, "Wife, I am much displeased at what you have just been saying. Who has been taking my bed from the place in which I left it? He must have found it a hard task, no matter how skilled a workman he was, unless some god came and helped him to shift it. There is no man living, however strong and in his prime, who could move it from its place. For it was wrought to be a great sign [sêma]; it is a marvelous curiosity which I made with my very own hands. There was a young olive growing within the precincts of the house, in full vigor, and about as thick as a bearing-post. I built my room round this with strong walls of stone and a roof to cover them, and I made the doors strong and well-fitting. Then I cut off the top boughs of the olive tree and left the stump standing. This I dressed roughly from the root upwards and then worked with carpenter's tools well and skillfully, straightening my work by drawing a line on the wood, and making it into a bed-prop. I then bored a hole down the middle, and made it the center-post of my bed, at which I worked till I had finished it, inlaying it with gold and silver; after this I stretched a hide of crimson leather from one side of it to the other. So you see I know all about this sign [sêma], and I desire to learn whether it is still there, or whether any one has been removing it by cutting down the olive tree at its roots."

When she heard the sure proofs [sêmata] Odysseus now gave her, she fairly broke down. She flew weeping to his side, flung her arms about his neck, and kissed him. "Do not be angry with me Odysseus," she cried, "you, who are the wisest of humankind. We have suffered, both of us. Heaven has denied us the happiness of spending our youth, and of growing old, together; do not then be aggrieved or take it amiss that I did not embrace you thus as soon as I saw you. I have been shuddering all the time through fear that someone might come here and deceive me with a lying story; for there are many people who plan wicked schemes. Zeus' daughter Helen would never have yielded herself to a man from a foreign country, if she had known that the sons of Achaeans would come after her and bring her back. Heaven put it in her heart to do wrong, and she gave no thought to that transgression, which has been the source of all our sorrows. Now, however, that you have convinced me by showing that you know all the proofs [sêmata] of our bed (which no human being has ever seen but you and I and a single maid servant, the daughter of Akto, who was given me by my father on my marriage, and who keeps the doors of our room), hard of belief though I have been, I can mistrust no longer."

Then Odysseus in his turn melted, and wept as he clasped his dear and faithful wife to his bosom. As the sight of land is welcome to men who are swimming towards the shore, when Poseidon has wrecked their ship with the fury of his winds and waves - a few alone reach the land, and these, covered with brine, are thankful when they find themselves on firm ground and out of danger - even so was her husband welcome to her as she looked upon him, and she could not tear her two fair arms from about his neck. Indeed they would have gone on indulging their sorrow till rosy-fingered morn appeared, had not Athena determined otherwise, and held night back in the far west, while she would not suffer Dawn to leave Okeanos, nor to yoke the two steeds Lampos and Phaethon that bear her onward to break the day upon humankind...

...Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Eurynome and the nurse took torches and made the bed ready with soft coverlets; as soon as they had laid them, the nurse went back into the house to go to her rest, leaving the bed chamber woman Eurynome to show Odysseus and Penelope to bed by torch light. When she had conducted them to their room she went back, and they then came joyfully to the rites of their own old bed.
B) Odyssey 24.191-202: “Happy Odysseus, son of Laertes,” replied the ghost of Agamemnon, “you are indeed blessed in the possession of a wife endowed with such rare excellence of understanding, and so faithful to her wedded lord as Penelope the daughter of Ikarios. The kloes, therefore, of her excellence shall never die, and the immortals shall compose a song that shall be told to all humankind in honor of the constancy of Penelope. How far otherwise was the wickedness of the daughter of Tyndareus who killed her lawful husband; her song shall be hateful among men, for she has brought disgrace on all womankind even on the good ones.”

C) Odyssey 24.226-247: As he went down into the great orchard, ...he found his father alone, hoeing a vine. He had on a dirty old shirt, patched and very shabby; his legs were bound round with thongs of oxhide to save him from the brambles, and he also wore sleeves of leather; he had a goat skin cap on his head, and was looking full of grief. When Odysseus saw him so worn, so old and full of sorrow, he stood still under a tall pear tree and began to weep. He doubted whether to embrace him, kiss him, and tell him all about his having come home, or whether he should first question him and see what he would say. In the end he deemed it best to be crafty with him, so in this mind he went up to his father, who was bending down and digging about a plant. “I see, sir,” said Odysseus, “that you are an excellent gardener - what pains you take with it, to be sure. There is not a single plant, not a fig tree, vine, olive, pear, nor flower bed, but bears the trace of your attention.”

D) Odyssey 24.502-548: Then Zeus’ daughter Athena came up to them, having assumed the form and voice of Mentor. Odysseus was glad when he saw her, and said to his son Telemakhos, “Telemakhos, now that you are about to fight in an engagement, which will show every man’s mettle, be sure not to disgrace your ancestors, who were eminent for their strength and courage all the world over.” “You say truly, my dear father,” answered Telemakhos, “and you shall see, if you will, that I am in no mind to disgrace your family.” Laertes was delighted when he heard this. “Good heavens,” he exclaimed, “what a day I am enjoying: I do indeed rejoice at it. My son and grandson are vying with one another in the matter of valor.”

On this Athena came close up to him and said, “Son of Arceisius - best friend I have in the world - pray to the gray-eyed damsel, and to Zeus her father; then poise your spear and hurl it.” As she spoke she infused fresh vigor into him, and when he had prayed to her he poised his spear and hurled it. He hit Epeithes’ helmet, and the spear went right through it, for the helmet stayed it not, and his armor rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Meantime Odysseus and his son fell the front line of the foe and smote them with their swords and spears; indeed, they would have killed every one of them, and prevented them from ever getting home again, only Athena raised her voice aloud, and made every one pause. “Men of Ithaca,” she cried, “cease this dreadful war, and settle the matter at once without further bloodshed.”

On this pale fear seized every one; they were so frightened that their arms dropped from their hands and fell upon the ground at the sound of the goddess’ voice, and they fled back to the city for their lives. But Odysseus gave a great cry, and gathering himself together swooped down like a soaring eagle. Then the son of Kronos sent a thunderbolt of fire that fell just in front of Athena, so she said to Odysseus, “Odysseus, noble son of Laertes, stop this warful strife, or Zeus will be angry with you.” Thus spoke Athena, and Odysseus obeyed her gladly. Then Athena assumed the form and voice of Mentor, and presently made a covenant of peace between the two contending parties.