The Oddity

A parody

[The shot is black and fades to show an aerial view of the ocean, the sun rising in the distance. The camera moves in across the water, speeding up as it gets close to the surface as the Narrator speaks.]

NARRATOR: There are many great stories told over time. But perhaps one of the greatest and most legendary stories ever told is that of the mighty hero Odysseus.

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[The camera pulls up suddenly and we are given a view of an island with mountains in the background. One of the mountain peaks reaches up into the clouds and the camera follows a path up the top to Olympus, the home of the gods. The scene is a large open area with polished marble floors and tall pillars all around. There is a large throne at the head of the room as various gods lounge about on couches.

ZEUS sits on the golden throne, overseeing the other gods. He very much fits the image of a king of the gods, a tan and muscular body and a full head of sleek, blond hair. He is wearing a simple white robe similar to a toga, wrapped around his waist and over one shoulder. He reclines in his throne, watching a few dancers and musicians in the center of the room. ATHENA, a very slender and petit goddess, enters from the left, making her way to ZEUS’ throne.]

ATHENA: (Urgently) Zeus!

ZEUS: (Looking over to ATHENA) Athena, my child, pull up a chair!

ATHENA: (Shaking her head) Mighty Zeus, I must protest on behalf of Odysseus, the mortal hero, lord of Ithaca.

ZEUS: (Obviously distracted by the dancers) Who?

ATHENA: (Rolls her eyes and stamps her foot, acting like a child) The man Poseidon’s been kicking around for these past ten years! He’s trapped on Calypso’s island and she won’t let him go.

ZEUS: (Exasperated) Again with the mortals, Athena. It exhausts me, child.

ATHENA: (Folds her arms) I’m sorry if I’d rather help them than smite them. They’re not all terrible, you know.

ZEUS: (Glances angrily at ATHENA) Look that last one was an accident, (Looks over to HERMES) Hermes! I’ve got a little errand for you to run.

[HERMES comes to ZEUS’s side and they speak with each other. ATHENA steps off to the side and the camera follows her.]

ATHENA: (Quietly) I just hope it’s not too late.

[The scene fades and is replaced with a view of a lavish room, PENELOPE at the windowsill looking morosely over the ocean. There is a knock at the door and TELEMACHUS enters. –NOTE: TELEMACHUS wears a black tunic with his hair brushed over one eye, similar to a modern ‘emo’ look-]

TELEMACHUS: Mother.

PENELOPE: (Sadly) Yes, my son?

TELEMACHUS: Mom, these suitors are getting on my nerves. They’re always drunk and eating up all our food. Isn’t it about time you just moved on already?! If you don’t like any of the suitors here, I can totally set you up an account on ErosHarmony.com.

PENELOPE: (Sharply) Telemachus! How could you speak to your mother that way?

TELEMACHUS: (Rolls eyes.) Nobody understands me, mom. I’ve spent my life without a responsible father figure; I can’t help it that I’ve grown into an angsty teen. Besides, we don’t even know if he’s alive.

PENELOPE: (Fearfully) Don’t say that! I know he’s still out there. (Places hands over her heart and looks wistfully out the window.) He’d never stop trying to make it back home to me.

[PENELOPE’s image fades as she looks over the sea. The scene changes suddenly, showing a casino like room. Girls in sequined costumes walk back and forth across the camera’s view, neon lights and fog in the room. Britney Spears’ *Womanizer* plays as the prominent audio. We see ODYSSEUS enter, smiling and flirting, walking through the room, a woman on each arm. –Camera moves to slow motion-CALYPSO looks on from a throne set aside, resting her chin on her a hand, a sly smile on her face. A MAID comes up to whisper in her ear. CALYPSO sits up and leaves the room. CALYPSO steps outside to what appears to be the mouth of a cave. HERMES is leaning against the wall.-NOTE: HERMES is dressed to be reminiscent of a ‘mobster’, pinstriped pants with a sports jacket and sunglasses, a fedora on his head with several feathers sticking out of the band. The heels of his shoes have the characteristic wings if the messenger of the gods.]

CALYPSO: Hermes. To what do I owe the pleasure?

HERMES: (Looks over the top of his sunglasses) Just business, love.

[The two are seen seated at a table set with golden silverware and dishes.]

CALYPSO: So what is it this time, Hermes?

HERMES: (Takes sunglasses off and motions with them to the next room) It’s your little boy toy Odysseus. Zeus says it’s time to let him go.

CALYPSO: (Angered) Zeus thinks he can just order everyone around, doesn’t he?

HERMES: (Stands) King of the gods, love. (Slips his sunglasses back on) Take care of Odysseus. (Looks again over his sunglasses) Or Zeus will have to come down here and take care of you.

[CALYPSO looks away as HERMES leaves the room. We next see CALYPSO throwing open the curtains that lead to the next room, flooding it with light, ODYSSEUS and the girls complaining.]

CALYPSO: (Looking down at Odysseus) You. Out. Now.

[ODYSSEUS just stares dumbly. The scene switches abruptly to him being pushed out of the cave, extra clothes and tunics in hand. He stands dumbly on the beach for a few seconds before turning around.]

ODYSSEUS: Was it something I said?

[ODYSSEUS is seen rowing a small rowboat across the ocean. The camera closes in on his face as he mutters to himself.]

Odysseus: Stupid nymph...

[Camera zooms out so that ODYSSEUS and his boat disappear into the blue. Camera pulls up into the ‘sky’ and back to Olympus, where POSEIDON is watching. POSEIDON whirls away from his position looking below and turns to confront ZEUS, who is lying on a couch, sunbathing.

-Note: POSEIDON wears a Hawaiian t-shirt, khaki shorts, and flip flops-]

POSEIDON: (angrily) *ZEUS!*

ZEUS: (Lifting up his sunglasses) Poseidon! (Lets sunglasses fall back over eyes) What’s up, my brother?

POSEIDON: Odysseus is on his way home. You wouldn’t have had anything to do with that, would you?

ZEUS: (Shrugs) Athena asked me to. Do what you like, just don’t kill him.

[POSEIDON turns away and looks down to the sea below. He extends his right arm and starts to trace a circle in the air with his palm. Dark clouds stir up beneath him as he smirks. Below, ODYSSEUS is caught up in a sudden storm. The waves toss him from the boat and he drifts in the sea. The scene fades.

A new scene opens with a close shot of ODYSSEUS's face, unconscious on the beach. Waves and gulls are heard in the background, along with girls’ laughter. A volleyball suddenly hits ODYSSEUS in the back of the head and he wakes with a violent reaction, surprised to find himself on the beach.

NAUSICAA approaches, a young girl with dark hair, noticeably young, maybe college aged. They stare at each other for a moment.]

ODYSSEUS: (Leaning back on one elbow with a flirty smirk) Hi there.

[Scene changes again quickly, showing NAUSICAA leading ODYSSEUS into a great, open hall. Musicians play on lyres off to one side, a giant fire pit in the center with couches and recliners all around, guests lounging and eating. ALKINOOS sits on a throne at the head of the room.]

ALKINOOS: Nausicaa, my dear girl, where have you been?

NAUSICAA: I was down at the beach, father, and I found a man. He says he is Odysseus, hero of the Trojan War. (Steps aside to motion to ODYSSEUS behind her.)

ALKINOOS: Well, he’s certainly an improvement over the other men you insist on bringing home...

NAUSICAA: Father! (Pouting)

ALKINOOS: (Laughing, descending from his throne to stand before ODYSSEUS) So you are the one I have heard of! All these stories...come! You must tell me of your journey! We shall prepare a meal for you, a feast! (ALKINOOS snaps his fingers and a small SERVANT appears behind him with a tablet, carving a list as ALKINOOS speaks) We shall partake of fruit and wine and bread and meat, some pork maybe, a goat or two, and cheeses as well! And we shall have olives and pomegranates and shellfish, grapes...maybe some fig Newtons...oh, and of course we’ll need to make libations to the gods, so we’ll need-

ODYSSEUS: (Interrupting ALKINOOS’ rambling) Look, Your Highness, that all sounds great, but I really just want to get home already.

ALKINOOS: Well why didn’t you say so? (To the SERVANT) Never mind all that then. (SERVANT looks irritated, throws tablet behind him.) But while I am preparing a ship for you, you must tell me of your journey!

ODYSSEUS: (Faking reluctance and humility) Well, there’s not much to tell, I guess. We ran into some crazy people...I did fight a Cyclops, though.

ALKINOOS: (Fascinated) Truly?! That must have been incredible! What happened?

ODYSSEUS: Eeeeehh...

[Scene changes to a flashback of ODYSSEUS in the CYCLOPS den. CYCLOPS rears back screaming, having just been blinded by ODYSSEUS and his men.]

ODYSSEUS: Come on, men!

[They all run past CYCLOPS and out of the cave. One of the soldiers stops next to the CYCLOP’s feet.]

SOLDIER: Stupid Cyclops!!

[SOLDIER kicks the CYCLOPS in his massive shin. The SOLDIER is then immediately stomped on by CYCLOPS. Camera changes to show ODYSSEUS on his ship, looking back at the CYCLOPS flailing around on the shore.]

CYCLOPS: Nobody’s blinded me, Nobody’s blinded me!!

ODYSSEUS: Ha! You stupid Cyclops! My name isn’t Nobody, it’s Odysseus, son of Laertes, hero of Ith- WHOA! (Interrupted by a massive boulder flying over his head) HEY! That was uncalled for! I- Holy-!! (Interrupted by another near miss) Go go go go!

[Scene changes back to ODYSSEUS and ALKINOOS talking. ODYSSEUS shrugs.]

ODYSSEUS: No big deal. You know Cyclopes...

ALKINOOS: But what of the other dangers of the sea? The sirens? The massive whirlpool? And what of Circe, that sea witch?

ODYSSEUS: Hmm... (Rubbing his chin and looking thoughtfully)

[Scene goes to another flashback of ODYSSEUS on CIRCE’s island. He stands on the beach looking down at a bunch of pigs around his feet, all wearing Greek clothing and tunics.]

ODYSSEUS: (Running his hand over his eyes, sighing, exasperated) Really guys? I can’t leave you alone for ten minutes without something terrible happening, can I? I’m lucky if I can even leave the ship without losing a whole legion of men...

[Behind ODYSSEUS we see one of his ships suddenly overturned by a giant sea serpent, the men all falling off of the decks and screaming as the boat sinks. ODYSSEUS smacks his forehead with his palm.]

CIRCE: (Standing out of view of the camera) Is there a problem, noble sailor?

[ODYSSEUS turns to see CIRCE standing on a rock, hair and dress blowing about in the wind.]

ODYSSEUS: (Speaking as though narrating) Well, one thing led to another, and we ended up staying with Circe for about a year. When we finally got our senses back and left, we went to the underworld to see an old friend, only to find that we had to go all the way back to Circe. We miraculously made it past the Sirens and the whirlpool and sea monster, but then a massive storm came, and well, here I am.

[While he speaks, various scenes of these events appear in a montage, ODYSSEUS confronting a ghost who points back the direction they had come, the Sirens portrayed as a beach full of young bikini clad girls that wave as the boats pass by. ODYSSEUS, of course, wants to stop, but is dragged away from the side of the boat by his men.]

ALKINOOS: So you were the only one who returned? The only one alive? But...you had so many men under your control, so many ships! What happened?

ODYSSEUS: Well, a few were sunk, the whirlpool took out a couple, the Cyclops ate a couple of the men, then there was some nasty business with an island full of cannibals, one of the men got accidently made into bacon while on Circe’s Island, there was a sea monster, a couple of storms, and I’m pretty sure we even had one unfortunate fellow who got struck by lightning before falling into the sea to be eaten by sharks. What are the odds, huh?

[ODYSSEUS chuckles and claps ALKINOOS on the shoulder before rising and walking away. The scene changes to show a massive ship making its way across the ocean.]

NARRATOR: And so, Odysseus was finally on his way back home. (As the NARRATOR speaks, we see ODYSSEUS on a beach at Ithaca, waving to the ship as it recedes in the distance) But little did he know what still lay in store for him upon his return...

[The camera moves upwards to look at the sky where ATHENA and POSEIDON are looking down at the mortal world.]

POSEIDON: No! He can’t return home already, I won’t allow it!

[POSEIDON pulls back his and as if to throw something and ATHENA ‘accidentally’ bumps him. A giant laser beam fires from the sky, instead of hitting ODYSSEUS, it strikes the ship and turns it to stone. ODYSSEUS cringes before walking away nonchalantly. He makes it a few steps before ATHENA appears before him in a puff of smoke. She is in disguise, wearing a novelty mask with glasses, fake nose, and mustache.]

ODYSSEUS: Whoa! Who are you?

ATHENA: Odysseus, it’s me, Athena! I’m in disguise. Look, while you’ve been gone these years, your house has become a mess. There are a bunch of men in your house trying to get your wife to marry them, and Telemachus is too busy writing awful, dark poetry to do anything about it.

ODYSSEUS: So what do I do?!

ATHENA: I shall disguise you. Then, go to Telemachus and ready yourselves for battle! You shall strike at dawn.

[ATHENA takes her staff and touches it to ODYSSEUS' head. There is a puff of smoke and suddenly he is wearing a similar mask to disguise himself. The camera moves up above him to focus on the sky, which fades into night. ODYSSEUS is seen outside his own palace, the courtyard of which still glows as the suitors drink well into the night. He throws a few pebbles at an upper window, the first few hit around the sill, the last one sailing through to strike the occupant of the room. TELEMACHUS sticks his head out of the window, glaring down below. Seeing ODYSSEUS hiding in the shadows, he disappears from the window and steps outside to meet him.]

TELEMACHUS: Who are you?! And why are you throwing rocks at my window? Do you have any idea what time it is?!

ODYSSEUS: Telemachus, I am your father!

TELEMACHUS: What?

ODYSSEUS: (Realizing he still has the mask on) Oh, right. (Removes mask.)

TELEMACHUS: Dad!

ODYSSEUS: Son, we have a job to do.

[The next shot shows the sun rising over the courtyard. The doors of the courtyard fly open to reveal ODYSSEUS and TELEMACHUS side by side, armed for battle.]

SUITOR: Hey look, it’s the kid and some weird guy!

[ODYSSEUS removes his mask]

SUITOR: Oh no! It’s Odysseus!

ODYSSEUS: For NARNIA! (Elbowed by TELEMACHUS) I mean, ITHACA!!

NARRATOR: (battle montage as the NARRATOR speaks) And so, father and son charged into battle, taking back that which was rightfully theirs. Odysseus had finally made it home to his family.

[Shot of TELEMACHUS and ODYSSEUS standing amongst the slain SUITORS. PENELOPE enters the room and looks at the gore and destruction.]

PENELOPE: I’m not cleaning up this mess.

NARRATOR: And so the day was saved and they all lived happily ever after. Except for the suitors, who, of course, were dead.

END

*The Odyssey* by Homer

. .Homer’s life is a shadow in the mists of ancient history. All that we know for certain about him is that he composed two of the greatest epics in world literature, [*The*](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/The%20Iliad.html#Iliad)[*Iliad*](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/The%20Iliad.html#Iliad) and [*The Odyssey*](http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Odyssey.html#Odyssey), as well as several hymns to the gods. .Scholars conjecture from scraps of evidence that Homer was a blind poet who may have been born on the island of Chios (also spelled in English as Khios) in the Aegean Sea; in Smyrna, a seaport in western Turkey; in Colophon, near Ephesus, Turkey; on Rhodes, an Aegean island; in Salamis, Cyprus; or in Athens or Argos on the Greek mainland. Because of the dearth of information about him, it is not possible to determine specific details about his life: where he lived, whether he was married, when he died. In fact, it is not even possible to determine whether he was one person or several. .Homer probably composed his works between 700 and 800 BC, according to linguistic, geographical, and historical evidence in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Rather than writing his compositions, he probably recited them. For this reason, it is said, he called himself a “singer” rather than a writer. (Although “sing” connotes music, it can also refer to spoken words that describe or narrate, usually in verse.) After his death, others kept his works alive by reciting them as they traveled from place to place. In Athens, the tyrant Pisistratus commanded these traveling rhapsodists, as they came to be known, to recite them in their entirety at a yearly festival in honor of Athena. Eventually, scribes wrote them down. Civilization owes a great debt to these anonymous rhapsodists.

Cummings, Michael J. "Homer: Master Storyteller in the Ages of Myths." *Free Study Guides for Shakespeare and Other Authors*. 2003. Web. 06 Oct. 2011. <http://cummingsstudyguides.net>.

*The Oddity* by Dylan Hart

Dylan Hart is a new face in the world of film, the *Oddity* being his premiere work as a screenplay writer. While very little is known about this young author, he shows a lot of promise in the industry. Coming from humble beginnings, much of Hart’s background is still largely unknown as he has managed to stay out of the press as much as possible. Born in a small town with little to no background in writing or film and little more than a high school education, not much is known about this young and promising young face.

While the Oddity is currently still in the process of being filmed, however, there is much debate as to whether or not young Hart wrote the screenplay himself. Several sources have claimed that his work was not purely original, but the result of a collaboration of many. Hart claims that he was at a dinner party when he overheard a conversation that spoke of many of the things that appear in his screenplay, he was simply, as he says, “the one who was lucky enough to hear it and actually write it all down”. Regardless of the origins of the story, Hart has potential to become one of comedy’s greatest playwrights.

The *Oddity* focuses on parodying the *Odyssey* as a whole rather than one specific scene or aspect of it. It makes an effort to focus on character interactions and personality traits that are sort of hinted at in the *Odyssey*. Below are a few scenes that appear in the *Oddity*, the first being Telemachus’ encounter with Athena. While the two in the parody never meet, the original text portrays Telemachus as moody or brooding, a trait that is exaggerated in the parody. Also parodied heavily are Odysseus’ interactions with Calypso. The parody is meant to take a completely opposite take on how Odysseus is portrayed in the true text.

From Book I

Telemachus saw her long before anyone else did. He was sitting moodily among the suitors thinking about his brave father, and how he would send them flying out of the house, if he were to come to his own again and be honoured as in days gone by. Thus brooding as he sat among them, he caught sight of Athena and went straight to the gate, for he was vexed that a stranger should be kept waiting for admittance. He took her right hand in his own, and bade her give him her spear. "Welcome," said he, "to our house, and when you have partaken of food you shall tell us what you have come for."

From Book 5

Calypso knew him at once- for the gods all know each other, no matter how far they live from one another- but Odysseus was not within; he was on the sea-shore as usual, looking out upon the barren ocean with tears in his eyes, groaning and breaking his heart for sorrow. Calypso gave Hermes a seat and said: "Why have you come to see me, Hermes- honoured, and ever welcome- for you do not visit me often?

On this he took his leave, and Calypso went out to look for Odysseus, for she had heard Jove's message. She found him sitting upon the beach with his eyes ever filled with tears, and dying of sheer home-sickness; for he had got tired of Calypso, and though he was forced to sleep with her in the cave by night, it was she, not he, that would have it so. As for the day time, he spent it on the rocks and on the sea-shore, weeping, crying aloud for his despair.

Analysis

*The Oddity* works to parody the entirety of *The Odyssey* by abbreviating much of the epic, exaggerating character personalities and interactions, and portraying it in a fashion and storytelling medium that our modern society can relate to. Rather than recite the epic, it is presented as a screenplay as though it were prepared for an upcoming film, but in order to, in a sense, retell Odysseus’ entire journey back to Ithaca, many things had to be left out of the parody. Odysseus and his men never face Scylla and Charybdis or find themselves on Helios’ Island. Likewise, the Lotus Eaters, cannibals, and adventures with the bag of wind are never mentioned. The suitor’s plot against Telemachus was cut, as well as the many interactions between Telemachus and Athena. Many scenes of Penelope are left out, Telemachus never goes in search of news of his father, and upon Odysseus’ eventual return to Ithaca, he is quickly disguised before heading straight to, his home to find Telemachus rather than staying with the swine herder as he does in the original text. Many scenes, such as the trials at Circe’s Island, traveling to the Underworld and Odysseus’ stay with Alkinoos is also considerably shorter than the original as it was needed to keep the story moving.

It focuses in particular on specific character traits and is meant to conflict with some of the aspects of certain personalities that are presented in the original texts. For example, Telemachus’ brooding and Athena’s ability to disguise herself are greatly hyperbolized to the point of being comical. On the other hand, Odysseus, originally portrayed as this hero returning home from war, is turned into this character who is portrayed openly as a womanizer and indifferent to the loss of so many of his men. This contradiction of his original character is specifically meant to make the audience stop and reconsider their idea of this hero. While *The Odyssey* gives the audience the feeling that Odysseus isn’t as faithful as he should be, the parody almost blows this out of proportion to further satirize and emphasize the fact that, hero or not, Odysseus is truly only human. While the main purpose of a parody is often to entertain, it is often also used to mock, expose a weakness, or criticize. This is especially true for Odysseus as he appears in the *Oddity*. The parody also works to teach the audience about the interactions of the gods. In many polytheistic cultures, the gods are presented as this all powerful and unreachable force that must be appealed to from the realms of man. Greek and Roman gods and goddesses break this preconceived notion that the gods have their realm and the humans have their own by having gods make a conscious effort to interact with man, often to the benefit of a favorite. Greek and Roman deities also are portrayed as openly displaying emotions and acting, sometimes rashly, upon them. A god will lose their temper and react out of anger, much to the despair of some poor mortal. These heavenly temper tantrums and mood swings are another aspect that are emphasized in *The Oddity* to show that, as far as Greek culture is concerned, the gods were simply powerful beings as subject to various emotions and fits of rage as any mortal man.

The Oddity is portrayed as a humorous parody greatly influenced by the style of the Arthurian legends parody, *Monty Python and the Search for the Holy Grail*. As today’s culture is so vastly different than that of thousands of years ago, it is often something that is hard to wrap the mind around. Presenting such a serious and epic tale in a comical fashion is often a way to simply make the serious or tragic elements of the stories lighthearted and easier for the audience to follow. Parodies in general tend to present serious information in a way that the modern movie goer (or audience in general) will enjoy and be open to. Today’s culture embraces humor and the quirky film much more readily than a historical documentary. Perhaps the most impressive ability of a parody is to take an age old, timeless story and present it to a new audience that will be receptive to it.