

Women portrayal

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



In Jean-Pierre Vernant's, *The Universe, The Gods, and Men*, women are primarily portrayed as seductresses. These women create problems for Odysseus in Homer's story, *The Odyssey*. Some examples of this would be through women like Calypso, who held men against their will, Circe, a dangerous woman who practiced sorcery and the Sirens, who lure men to their death. All together these women caused many problems to Odysseus and other men. Throughout the *Odyssey*, women are used as a symbol of temptation and seduction. Odysseus finds himself trapped on an island Ogygia by the nymph, Calypso. Life on Calypso's island is paradise to Odysseus but, after seven years of Odysseus being caught in Calypso's seductive ways, the gods began to pity Odysseus. Hermes tells Calypso that she must release Odysseus and that his real wife was waiting for his arrival. However, Calypso desperately uses her seductive methods to convince Odysseus to stay with her forever by preparing a big feast of food. Although the big feast does not work on Odysseus and she let him go as Hermes had told her to do. Right before Odysseus is about to leave Ogygia, Calypso asks him why he chooses his wife over her and Odysseus says that she "is his wife, his life, and his country" (Vernant 114). Although Odysseus is given everything by Calypso, he still has more love for his wife. In the end Calypso's way of suppressing men from going home did not work and Odysseus's journey home continues. One of the most seductive, yet dangerous sorceresses in the *Universe, the Gods, and Men* is Circe. After Odysseus escapes from Calypso's island, Odysseus has to deal with Circe, another seductive woman. Circe drugs Odysseus men and turns them into swine, making them forget about their home. But with the help of Hermes,

Odysseus is immune to Circe's drug. When her tricks do not work on Odysseus, she lures him into her bed. Meanwhile, Circe continues to use her feminine charm, which distracts Odysseus and his men from their journey for a year. Some accounts of Odysseus enjoying Circe's company, "Odysseus and Circe had children, they loved each other, and Odysseus and the shipmates enjoyed Circe's singing" (Vernant 101). Circe is a seductive woman who held Odysseus against his will and kept him away from Penelope, her drugging methods causes Odysseus and his men to remain away from home again. The most dangerous of all the Greek women in the Universe, the Gods, and Men, are the Sirens. The Sirens attract the sailors who sail by their island with their voices in hopes that they will crash onto their island. Before Odysseus and his crew sail by the island, he gives everyone ear wax to put into their ears so that they will not be tortured by the Sirens' songs. His men had tied him to the ship so that he would not jump overboard to hear what these seductive women were saying. When Odysseus's ship sails past the Siren's island, his naked ears are tortured by the sweet song of the Sirens. This song drives Odysseus mad with the temptation and the desire of what the sirens are singing. Moreover, if it were not for his men, the Sirens would have caused Odysseus to crash his ship on the rocks and perish. "...on the island of Sirens there are bodies of men who heard the Sirens' voice and crashed on their island" (Vernant 104). Countless men sail past the Sirens Island but when they sailed they heard the Sirens' voice causing them to crash. "The Sirens are both the appeal of the yearning for knowledge, erotic attraction-they are the essence of seduction-and death" (Vernant 104). When men sail past their island, this is what they

would sing of, driving men to go crazy to hear more of what they were saying. Although the Sirens cannot move, their seductive voices amplified all over the oceans and cause men to crash on their island. In conclusion, in Vernant's *The Universe, The Gods, and the Men*, women in were portrayed as seductress. They are also portrayed as seductress in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus has to face Circe, Calypso, and the Sirens. Three dangerous women who can hold men against their will, Calypso, one who practiced sorcery and women who, Circe, and lure men to their death, the Sirens. Many women are portrayed differently in each cultural, but in Greek Mythology, women are seductress.