

ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY
TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
2011/2012 Season



Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage
October 20, 2011 – November 20, 2011

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WELCOME

This guide was created for teachers and students. It contains an overview of the play's story, conception, and production, as well as informative essays. The guide aims to provide background knowledge and critical ways of approaching the play that will yield fruitful discussion and foster an understanding and appreciation of the theatre arts.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the guide, please contact our group sales representative at 604.687.5315 ext. 253, or by e-mail at groups@artsclub.com.

The guide was written by Daniel Ralston, 2011 Marketing Intern.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Arts Club of Vancouver was founded in 1958 as a private club for artists, musicians, and actors. It became the Arts Club Theatre in 1964 when the company opened its first stage in a converted gospel hall at Seymour and Davie Streets.

Now in its 48th season of producing professional live theatre in Vancouver, the Arts Club Theatre Company is a non-profit charitable organization that operates three theatres: the Granville Island Stage, the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage, and the Revue Stage. Its popular productions range from musicals and contemporary comedies to new works and classics.

SYNOPSIS

In the depths of Hades, Penelope begins her story: one that is far different from the many legendary tales of Odysseus. Now dead, she is aware of the admiration that is accorded Odysseus for his guile and tricks, and the awe inspired by his accounts of fighting monsters and outfoxing men. It is this official version, wherein Penelope herself is the ever-faithful, teary-eyed, and helpless wife, that she loathes. A group of maids interject with a rhyme, accusing Penelope of deserting them to their deaths heartlessly. Penelope acknowledges that while she lived she turned a blind eye to anything that obstructed her way to a happy ending. However, she now resolves to weave her own, very different, version of the story, which she tells through a series of flashbacks.

Penelope sees her mother (a Naiad, or water nymph) and father, Icarius. An oracle foretells that she will weave a death-shroud for her father, who has her cast into the sea only to be returned by ducks—a divine omen.

The story jumps to her nuptials. Maids dress her, all the while drilling her on her sole wifely function: to bear children. Her hand in marriage—and large dowry—is to be won by the victor of a foot race, which the crafty Odysseus fixes and wins. Odysseus and Penelope are married and spend the night together happily. They tell stories to one another, Penelope learning of the identifying scar on his leg and that only he can string his special bow. Penelope, moved by his tenderness, falls in love with him.

Shortly after Penelope arrives in Ithaca, Odysseus's homeland, she has a son, Telemachus, who is whisked away by the long-serving royal maid, Eurycleia. Word arrives that Helen has run away with Paris of Troy; Odysseus, having sworn an oath, must go to war alongside Menelaus (Helen's husband) to get her back.

Penelope, despairing of the long wait for Odysseus's return, begins to take greater part in the management of Ithaca after the death of Queen Anticleia and King Laertes's withdrawal into the life of a hermit. After ten years news arrives: Troy has fallen. Yet still Odysseus does not return.



Mykonos Vase, detail of Trojan Horse
c. 670 BC
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

As word spreads that Odysseus has not yet returned and is assumed dead, suitors congregate in Ithaca to compete for Penelope's hand in marriage. Attracted by the prospect of continual feasting and the kingship that the union entails, they scorn the teenage Telemachus. Their insults and vulgar conduct push Penelope into action.

She creates a plan that will buy more time for Odysseus to return. As part of her scheme, she finally admits to the suitors that Odysseus can no longer be alive, but says that before she can pick a new husband she is duty-bound to weave a shroud for Odysseus's father, King Laertes, in anticipation of his death. The suitors relent and agree to wait for the shroud to be complete before demanding she choose a husband. But, each night, she and her twelve loyal maids unweave what had been completed during the day. The ruse works for a time, but the suitors grow restless, and Penelope asks the maids to distract them. Privately, she tells them that when Odysseus returns she will inform him of their devotion and that they will be rewarded. She does not tell Telemachus or Eurycleia, who are both disgusted with the disloyal conduct of the maids. Despite the maids' efforts, the suitors grow tired of waiting.



Penelope and the Suitors
John William Waterhouse, 1912.
Photo credit: Aberdeen Art Gallery

The suitors, who had been angrily wondering how the weaving of the shroud was taking so long, seize the teasing maids and rape them. Meanwhile, Telemachus has secretly taken a ship to seek his father, though he soon returns. While away, he learns that Odysseus is still alive, but trapped on an island by a goddess. The next evening, as the maids and Penelope destroy her previous day's work, the suitors burst in and force her to choose one of them in the morning.

The following day Odysseus, in the guise of a dirty beggar, arrives at the palace. Telemachus doesn't recognize him, but Odysseus soon reveals his true identity to son, with the condition that no one, including Penelope, can know he is there. Penelope knows it is him instantly—his short legs give him away—but says nothing. In a cryptic conversation neither Penelope nor Odysseus reveals that they know the other.

Penelope plans to tell her maids the next day that Odysseus has returned, and to ready his special bow. However, Eurycleia, acting on Odysseus's command, puts Penelope to bed and locks her into her room so she will be away from the next day's combat.

In the morning, Eurycleia presents the bow of Odysseus to the suitors. They all attempt to string it, but none can manage. Odysseus, still disguised, steps forward and strings the bow easily. His arrows fly towards the suitors, and aided by Telemachus, he dispatches all of them. The maids are called to clean up the resulting carnage. Odysseus, saying that he knows of their dishonourable acts, orders Telemachus to kill them and leaves. Protesting at the thought of killing so many, Telemachus is advised by Eurycleia to kill the twelve youngest and prettiest ones—the ones who had most helped Penelope. Despite their pleas, Telemachus, goaded by Eurycleia, has them hanged.

Eurycleia wakes Penelope to tell her that Odysseus has returned and that the suitors have been killed. Immediately hoping to find the maids and tell them their ordeal is over, Penelope finds out, to her dismay and shock, that they have been hanged. In Hades, the maids furiously vow to harass Odysseus wherever he goes.

In Hades, Penelope is swiftly deserted by Odysseus, who, although he loves her, cannot bear the presence of the ghostly maids. The maids do not speak to her, and only run at her approach, though their "still-twitching feet don't touch the ground."

CHARACTERS

Penelope

Daughter of the rulers of Sparta, married to Odysseus. Her resourceful schemes—that take advantage of her maids' loyalty to her—afford Odysseus time to return before she is wrongly remarried to one of her boorish suitors. However, she is haunted by the maids, who are unjustly hanged, because she refuses to see herself as at least partly responsible for their deaths. Her unwitting abuse of the maids, and failure to recognize it, torment her throughout the story.

Odysseus

Sweet-talking husband of Penelope, son of the royals of Ithaca, Laertes and Anticleia. After his marriage he voyages to Troy to fight with the Greeks in a war to retrieve Helen, who has eloped with Paris. He spends ten years fighting in Troy, but after its defeat his return to Ithaca is delayed by capricious gods. When he finally returns he slays Penelope's suitors and commands that the maids who have acted dishonourably be killed. He later realizes his wrongdoing and does penance, though he cannot bear to be with Penelope in Hades, haunted as she is by the maids' spirits, and escapes to be born again.

Telemachus

Son of Odysseus and Penelope, heir to the throne of Ithaca. He spends little time with his mother throughout his childhood, and is coddled and tended to by Eurycleia and the other maids. He grows into a spoiled and self-important teenager, derisive of his mother's actions, but still capable of moments of tenderness. Despite his protest and request to consult his mother, Odysseus and Eurycleia compel him to hang the maids.

Eurycleia

Long-serving maid of the Ithacan royal house, Odysseus's childhood nurse. She is familiar with all of the routines of the palace and rails against what she sees as the wanton disloyalty of the twelve maids Penelope has told to distract her suitors. She hates their gossip, which she feels is directed against her. Vindictive towards the maids to the end, she pushes Telemachus to fulfill his father's execution orders.

Maids

Palace servants, playmates, and playthings of the nobles. Seen by the nobles as mere household accoutrements, the maids constantly clean and toil. They are expected to entertain and amuse any who ask, and are exploited by Penelope to delay the suitors' demand that she

marry. Angered by her disregard and inability to see any fault of her own in their deaths, they haunt her, forever reminding Penelope of her culpability.

Helen

Cousin of Penelope and wife of Menelaus, the most beautiful woman in the world—and well aware of it. She elopes with Paris of Troy, and an oath sworn at her marriage forces all the Greeks to go to war to retrieve her. Dismissive of Penelope, she basks in the attention that she so craves; her immense ego requires constant affirmation of her loveliness, even in Hades.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A Canadian literary icon, Margaret Atwood has published widely. Best known for her poetry, prose, and critical essays, Atwood has been awarded several prestigious prizes. She is a two-time winner of the Governor General's Award (1966, 1985) and a winner of the Booker Prize (2000), and has been nominated for numerous other awards.

Atwood was born in Ottawa, Ontario. Her family moved between northern Québec, Toronto, Ottawa, and Sault Ste. Marie early in her life, and she only began to regularly attend school in grade eight. Her reading as a child was always broad and varied, and by the age of 16 she had decided she wanted to write professionally.

She graduated from the University of Toronto, eventually completing her master's at Radcliffe College, Harvard. While in Toronto she studied with the renowned critic Northrop Frye, whose influential teachings on the mythical and the archetype influenced her early poetical work. This has been a recurring theme in Atwood's oeuvre; she has treated female figures of Greek mythology prior to her writing of *The Penelopiad*. Notably, her 1974 work, *You Are Happy*, includes a retelling of *The Odyssey* from the viewpoint of a different female character, Circe.

Many of Atwood's writings draw attention to the female perspective and the power structures that surround the roles of women in society. Her work often also addresses the limited capacity of language to express meaning, issues of social inequality, and the philosophical problems of identity. In her most famous works, including the novels *Alias Grace* and *The Blind Assassin*, Atwood employs a complex design that weaves together these themes across multiple narrative planes.

Her carefully rendered prose lends itself to dramatic adaptations: *The Edible Woman* was adapted for the stage by Dave Carley in 2000, and *The Handmaid's Tale* recast as an opera. Atwood herself has written several television screenplays and librettos; the script of *The Penelopiad* is a reworking of her 2005 novel of the same name.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

It was conceived as a composition for two voices—the voice of Penelope herself, and the collective voice of the twelve maids—or slaves—who are hanged at the end of *The Odyssey*. The hanging of these maids bothered me when I first read *The Odyssey* as a teenager, and it bothers me still, as it is so excessive in relation to anything they actually did.

Both voices—that of Penelope and that of the Maids—speak from the Greek Underworld, where Penelope is free to tell the story from her point of view. Many events that stretch credulity in *The Odyssey* (would Penelope really not have recognized Odysseus when he turns up disguised as a beggar? Would she not have noticed when Odysseus almost strangles Eurycleia?) are best explained by wilful silence on the part of Penelope, or by motives not explored in *The Odyssey*, though the possibilities for them can be found in it.

The chorus of Maids is in part a tribute to the use of the chorus in Greek tragedy, in which lowly characters comment on the main action, and also to the Satyr plays that accompanied tragedies, in which comic actors made fun of them. The Maids in *The Penelopiad* do such things, but also they're angry, as they still feel they have been wrongfully hanged.

As to the main characters: Penelope herself—although somewhat weepy—is resourceful and brave, and, as befits the wife of Odysseus, master trickster, she's a good liar. Some have made a comparison with *Desperate Housewives*, but that's a case of convergence, because Penelope is perhaps the first desperate housewife to appear in art. (Absent husband, teenage son giving lip and breaking curfew, louts gobbling up the foodstuffs, a servant problem—who wouldn't be desperate?)

Odysseus is a famous hero—but by *hero* the Greeks did not mean a Superman-like creature who always behaves well. He was known to the ancients as a shifty fellow—a charming smooth talker and inventor of crafty dodges, who shaped himself to circumstance. I have tried to do justice to these attributes.

Telemachus is an adolescent boy raised in a household of doting females who is then confronted by a hundred and twenty challengers. No wonder he's surly.

The ancient myths remain fertile ground. Who knows what might sprout from them next?

From Margaret Atwood, "Author's Introduction," in *The Penelopiad*. London: Faber and Faber, 2007.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Vanessa Porteous has a diverse and highly acclaimed career in the theatre arts. She studied drama at the University of Toronto, receiving a B.A. before continuing to the University of Alberta, where she completed a B.F.A. in acting. Over the course of her career she has directed, acted, taught, and dramaturged. Her recent direction credits include several world premieres, among them Eugene Strickland's *Queen Lear*, *Don Coyote*, and *Don Juan: The Greatest Lover in the World*. She was Festival Dramaturg at the yearly playRites Festival from 1998 to 2006, playing an integral role in the development of more than 30 new Canadian plays.

Porteous is currently Artistic Director of Alberta Theatre Projects, and has been nominated for twenty-five Betty Mitchell awards, winning for Outstanding Direction in her production of *When That I Was* with The Shakespeare Company. The range of her work is broad, though centred largely in the contemporary. Her work has embraced diverse styles: she directed *La Divino* and *Le portrait de Manon* with Calgary Opera, and has also directed puppetry and musical theatre.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

What drew you to *The Penelopiad*, and did you have an immediate vision or purpose?

I was drawn to the piece after a workshop in Toronto at Nightwood Theatre. It was a women's directorial workshop and showcase: ten directors were invited to direct around 15 minutes of *The Penelopiad* after a short rehearsal period. It was done so simply, with twelve cubes—a bare-bones feel—and the magic of the play came through with such a minimal set. It was about the performers, which is how I like to tell a story: inviting the audience to understand and empathize with the actors.

How will the set and lighting design translate from the Martha Cohen Theatre in Calgary to the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage?

We'll be keeping the main elements simple, yet because of the mythic scale of the piece there will be elements that get at the grandeur of the play. Since almost the whole play takes place in the Hades populated by the maids and Penelope—in a sort of limbo in the fields of asphodel—the set will reflect the characters' own lives. We've been talking about a "maid-inflected Hades" as a way to shape our design.

Atwood's adaptation from book to script reduces the information the audience is given. What do you think of the adaptation? How would you compare the experience of reading the book with seeing the play?

I think the stage version is the essence of the book. I read the book after having seen the stage production. In the play the dialogue between Penelope and the maids creates a relationship, whereas in the book the two can be read as quite separate. The conflict and relationship come out in the play, and though you may lose the lengthy written descriptions (like the anthropological lecture chapter), you still arrive at an understanding—in theatre a little goes a long way. In the play, you get the sense of a female society being crushed with the return of the male, without having to have it spelled out for you.

You've said before that the audience doesn't need to know Homer to enjoy the show. Do you think that someone who has read or knows the story of *The Odyssey* will derive a different experience from the play?

They'll get bonus experience! I found myself surprised by Atwood's subtlety; she didn't make a one-dimensional satire of Homer or anything like that. The play tries to explain the maids' behaviour and asks whether they deserved to be hanged or not. Comparing Atwood's and Homer's versions of the story, you see a similarly rich and interesting character in Penelope, not the weak Penelope that came out of nineteenth-century interpretations of *The Odyssey*. Atwood isn't attempting to rewrite *The Odyssey*, but to add to it, keeping the main events—like the Trojan War—offstage. I think Homer would have a good time at the show.

Some have insinuated that men might not enjoy the show. What do you make of those claims?

I think that is based in a cartoon stereotype of Margaret Atwood. Homer himself has the suitors as entirely irredeemable characters; they represent the violence and aggression that can arise in a power vacuum. They are not representations of all men, but of a very specific and war-torn reality. The caricature of Atwood that presents her as an angry feminist is entirely wrong. She really only wrote one book that sets men as highly negative: *The Handmaid's Tale*, which is really about the strictures of an oppressive society.

How did you manage the often-changing roles of the performers?

This came back to my original response to the workshop. The idea of the actresses as both maids and suitors was important. They get shot by Odysseus's arrows as the suitors, and then die, only to be reawakened as the maids, who then have to clean up the blood from the suitors' deaths. I thought that would be an incredible theatrical moment—there would be no sleight of hand, no tricks—the audience watches their transformations occur. The maids are ghosts that constantly return to the moment of their deaths to re-enact their greatest trauma right in front of the audience. We thought that the production shouldn't have any tricks or theatrical conveniences: by not skipping the difficult parts—like the constant role-switching—we hide nothing from the audience.

SLAVES AND WOMEN IN GREEK SOCIETY

The Penelopiad, while not a faithful historical rendering, deals with the roles of women and slaves in antiquity. Ancient sources reflect their male, upper-class authorship: slaves and women are rarely discussed directly, and much has to be inferred. However, though the historical record is scanty, the importance of women—both aristocratic and lower-class—should not be underestimated.

Earlier historical accounts emphasize the seclusion of Greek women within their homes, hidden away from men and public life. However, recent work suggests that the separation was



The Greek Slave. Hiram Powers, 1844.
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

not as pronounced as has been presumed. At any gathering of men the only women permitted were musicians or entertainers; aristocratic women could not be present. Likewise, public events were the province of men alone. Men had a great deal of control over their wives, who were often married to them at a young age. The marriages were arranged, and always entailed the delivery of a dowry to the husband. Yet within the home women had a great deal of sway, certainly when their husbands were away, and likely when they had returned as well. Although they probably could not leave the home unaccompanied, women did visit each other. When a woman gave birth, friends and midwives came to her home. Women usually directed the running of the home, organizing and supervising, if not doing themselves, the maintenance, cleaning, and cooking. The labour was provided by slaves.

Slavery was an accepted part of ancient Greek society. The aristocracy of the important city-states could not have enjoyed their leisurely lifestyle without the constant toil of servants. Various and still poorly understood categories of slaves performed all sorts of tasks and labours, though the majority were employed in the home. Sources suggest that the average Athenian family in the classical period possessed at least one slave for domestic assistance; indeed, a citizen who did not own a slave was

considered very poor. Slave ownership was seen as a necessity, both because it allowed Athenians to avoid menial labour and because the institution of slavery was so ingrained in ancient Greek society.

The practice of slavery was so widespread mostly because it was so cheap. The price of a normal slave was about what the owner could expect to pay each year for the slave's necessities—a very good deal. It has been argued that the ancient Greek economy functioned

so near subsistence levels that the leisure of the aristocracy would have been impossible without the abundant supply of such low-cost labour. Defeated enemies and far-flung territories provided ample numbers of potential slaves; whether bought or conquered, they formed an important part of ancient Greek society.

THE GREEK THEATRICAL TRADITION AND *THE PENELOPIAD*

Both as a novel and a script, *The Penelopiad* consciously echoes Greek theatrical traditions. When recasting the book as a script for the stage, Atwood set out to emphasize the similarities between it and a classical Greek play. The story, though a modern interpretation, is told in a way that the ancient Greeks would recognize. This linkage—between past and present, ancient and contemporary—profoundly shapes the presentation and meaning of Atwood’s tale.

A prominent element of Greek theatre was the chorus. Performing a variety of functions, the chorus members danced and sang, supplementing and accenting the main action. At various times in antiquity the chorus was made up of fifty, twelve, or fifteen members. It is conjectured that the ancient beginnings of Greek dramatic tradition were rooted solely in the chorus, and that actors had been chorus leaders whose roles grew over time. However, in the majority of surviving plays the chorus plays a more minor, yet still vital role. Although the characteristics of Greek tragedy were flexible, the chorus was generally used in the same ways. Their dances and songs could foreshadow events to come, respond to onstage happenings, or create divisions between the mythological and the real. In the satyr plays—satirical diversions that were often performed at the end of a tragedy—the chorus was bawdy, poking fun at mythical heroes.

It is to the satyr plays that Atwood—in her prefatory notes—links her chorus of twelve maids. In *The Penelopiad* the chorus is a driving force: their songs and dances shape and critique Penelope’s experience—and the audience’s. However, they accomplish this not by merely adding shades of meaning to the plot (as in tragedy), but by accusing Penelope of treachery and recounting tales of their own lives in a way that is more closely related to the role of the chorus in a satyr play. On occasion, as with their sea shanty chronicling Odysseus’s deeds, they play a more traditional tragic role, yet they are more often the sources of a differing—sometimes humorous, sometimes tragic—perspective. The refocusing of the story to centre on the maids and their fates is accomplished by the prominence given to the chorus.



Theatre at Epidaurus, 4th century BC
Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

Atwood's awareness of the many roles of the ancient chorus and the way in which she employs hers add layers of meaning that complicate and deepen Penelope's interactions with the maids.

The stories in Greek theatre were mainly carried by the major characters. Their long speeches were interspersed with the chorus's interjections. Atwood uses this technique to similar effect. Penelope's speeches develop the plot and move the action forward, and minor characters add colour or lampoon the other characters. However, despite their individually small roles, the presence and centrality of the maids in Atwood's retelling is undeniable. Her melding of ancient forms with her own emphasis on the chorus of downtrodden maids creates a revised epic that resonates today, both because of its modern message and its connections to Greek drama.

THE TIES THAT LAST: ATWOOD AND MYTHOLOGY

Based on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Atwood's reworked tale has its roots in works that are among the most influential and enduring of Western literature. Nearly everyone has some inkling of the story of the Trojan War; whether through popular big-budget films or through various shortened and adapted versions, the story is familiar to all. This quality, the omnipresence of the myth, has made the essence of the story seemingly unchangeable today, despite the existence of so many versions of it. *The Penelopiad*, in its book form, was published as part of the Canongate Myths Series, an attempt to transform ancient myths for the modern world that was launched in 2005. Atwood exploits the audience's familiarity with the canonical epic, creating a far different alternative narrative, one that is all the more striking for its departure from the "official" version.

Atwood herself emphasizes the variable nature of myth, saying in her introduction to the book that "Homer's *Odyssey* is not the only version of the story," and that in ancient Greece "a myth would be told one way in one place and quite differently in another." In referring back to the original oral nature of myth, Atwood gives herself license to create a new and different take. Each retelling of a myth alters it, sometimes in small ways, and other times—as with *The Penelopiad*—in large ways. Atwood pays homage to a past historical translation, the classic 1726 edition of *The Odyssey* by the poet Alexander Pope, using an oft-quoted phrase of his to decry Euryycleia's spoiling of Telemachus: "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined." This acknowledgement of the many versions of the tale that have come before mark her awareness of the long history of interpretation and the small, but important, influence of each retelling.

Influenced by the important Canadian critic Northrop Frye, whom she studied under at the University of Toronto, Atwood has dealt with mythological subject matter before, in some of her early poetry. Frye's conception of myth, at its most basic, revolves around the idea that myths and the symbols within them form the underpinning of all literature. Therefore, symbols persist along with the meanings attached to them. Atwood recognizes the inherent power of myth, and casting her tale as one allows her to toy with the audience's expectations, which are so based in the well-known, "official" version.

The ancient myths have long been a source of inspiration; Atwood's tale springs from Homer's works, and she recognizes that retellings could well arise from *The Penelopiad* itself. Each text has an impact on others, and it is all but impossible to write something not influenced by other works. Intertextual relations—overt and subtle references to other works in a text—can govern the way an audience responds. In writing a story so deeply connected with myth, Atwood links her tale to the distant past, though what we expect is far from what we get.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. How is the traditional male narrative of Homer's epics subverted? How does this change the story and the audience's reception of it?
2. Consider Atwood's portrayal of Penelope's unwillingness to hold herself responsible for the deaths of the maids. To what extent was she at fault? Do you think that we often disregard the ethical consequences of our actions?
3. The actors constantly switch between roles, becoming other characters and taking on different personas. How do these changes affect the narrative? Does the ambiguity (if there is any) alter the telling of the story?
4. Consider the reasoning behind Atwood's decision to write a different version of *The Odyssey*. What might have affected her choice to do so?
5. How does the use of Greek theatrical traditions add to and develop the presentation of the story?

SOURCES AND WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

Books

Andrewes, Antony. *Greek Society*. Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1975.

A readable and concise overview of the socio-political structure of ancient Greece. Andrewes's sketches of the relations between slaves and their owners are particularly useful, and his investigation of slavery's implications for the ancient economy is insightful.

Dugdale, Eric. *Greek Theatre in Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

An informative summary of the major tenets of the various types of Greek theatre. Brief passages of narrative are illustrated with lengthy quotations from primary sources and a broad selection of images.

Russell, Ford. *Northrop Frye on Myth: An Introduction*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.

Bound to be as dense as its subject matter, this volume provides a comprehensive introduction to Frye and the heritage of his thought on myth, largely based in the work of the earlier thinkers Spengler and Frazer.

Websites

<http://neoenglish.wordpress.com/2010/12/01/myth-criticism-and-northrop-frye/>

Provides a short and relatively clear explanation of Frye's so-called "myth criticism."

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0000390>

The Canadian Encyclopedia entry for Margaret Atwood. Contains a lengthy record of published works and is a definitive biographical source.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A592922>

A shorter biography of Atwood, with a brief analysis of recurrent themes in her work.

<http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/atwood/atwood.htm>

An omnibus site on Atwood that has an extensive list of print and video interviews with the author, poems available online, and various biographical sources: an excellent resource.

<http://www.womenintheancientworld.com/greece.htm>

Several short essays with references taken directly from ancient sources. Varied themes are addressed, though the sections on the roles of women in the economy are particularly useful.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2005/oct/26/theatre.classics>

An interview with Atwood and Phyllida Lloyd (the director of the operatic version of *The Handmaid's Tale*) on the development of *The Penelopiad* into a work for the stage.

ATTENDING THE SHOW

Arriving at the Theatre

Please arrive at the theatre with 30 minutes before the show to pick up and distribute tickets. Buses may unload passengers in the loading zone in front of the theatre but engines must be turned off while doing so. Alternate parking for buses will be necessary for the duration of the show.

Theatre Etiquette

In order to ensure an enjoyable show for all audience members, please share these general theatre etiquette guidelines with students.

- Please turn off mobile phones and other electronic devices for the duration of the show. If you are concerned about missing an emergency call, please leave your name or device and seat location with an usher, who will alert you.
- No outside food or drink is allowed in the theatre.
- Please finish refreshments purchased at the concession in the lobby before entering the theatre.
- Please be modest with your use of fragrances so that audience members with allergies can also enjoy the performance.
- If you must leave the theatre during the performance you will be seated again at the intermission or another appropriate interval.
- Please respect your fellow audience members and the performers by refraining from talking during the performance.
- If you have a complaint about another guest, please tell an usher or the Audience Services Manager rather than approaching the person yourself. They will be happy to address your concerns.