Odyssean Wonder: Reckless Irreverence or Prudent Piety

Odysseus is famous for his prudence, but the keen mind that fosters this virtue also makes him susceptible to a desire for knowledge that can be inordinate and impractical. Moreover, his superior *metis* disposes him to impiety resulting from a false sense of self-sufficiency. Wonder is the thread that ties these two dangers together, for it is the passion that is instilled by knowledge of one’s ignorance of the causes of things as well as by the gods and their actions.¹

As such, the passion can spur one to seek knowledge of the impractical or inspire reverence for the gods. The diverse consequences of these two ways of responding to wonder are seen throughout the *Odyssey*. Ultimately, Homer shows that when divorced from piety and united with a false sense of self-sufficiency wonder leads to a potentially destructive passivity, but when allied to piety and a proper estimate of one’s own abilities the passion can both incite one to practical action and be instilled in others to impel them to act for the sake of one’s practical ends.

In order to fully benefit from his *metis*, Odysseus must learn how to respond properly to wonder, a lesson taught to him by Zeus throughout the adventures he recounts in Books 9-12.² These adventures are more or less framed by two wonders produced by the god. After Odysseus first loses some of his men at Ismaros, “Cloud-gathering Zeus raised a North Wind against the ships / In an immense storm, and covered land and ocean alike / Over with clouds” (9.67-9). The same lines occur during the crew’s first night on Thrinacia, where the slaughtering of Helios’s

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¹ See Jenny Strauss Clay’s discussion of Homeric wonder in *The Wrath of Athena* (167-70).
² Instruction in regard to wonder seems to me to be one aspect of the lesson in “the costs of impiety” which John Alvis maintains that Zeus teaches Odysseus by means of his wanderings (115-19). Darrell Dobbs argues similarly that Odysseus’s travels serve as a lesson in regulating reason to piety, concluding that “Odysseus’ heroic excellence, which truly sets him above the other Achaian kings, consists in his combination of godliness and resourceful intelligence” (505). Dobbs, however, focusing on the episode at Thrinacia and on Odysseus’s decision to conceal his identity at Ithaca, does not address the hero’s experience of wonder.
cattle will lead to the deaths of the remaining crew (12.313-5). The adjectives describing the storms, rendered *immense* in Book 9 and *tremendous* in 12 by Albert Cook, are derived from \( \text{θεσπσιος} \), which connotes that something is more than human, awful, or marvelous and is used to describe many of the wonders Odysseus encounters on his journey. The destructive power of the storms forces Odysseus and his men to react quickly in a most primal and practical manner to preserve their lives, but only Odysseus responds piously to them. He acknowledges that they are caused by Zeus, and after the second storm forces the men to beach on Thrinacia he abstains from Helios’s cattle. Divinely caused, the storms are exemplary objects of wonder, and Odysseus’s pious and prudent response to them is likewise exemplary as well as lifesaving. Throughout the adventures framed by these storms, Odysseus learns that a pious response to wonder is a practical response.

Zeus employs the Cyclopes as well as their land and its nearby island for Odysseus’s second lesson. The nearby island is uninhabited, a fact Odysseus considers strange since it is well suited for habitation. He observes that “it is not really bad, and would bear all things in season” and that there are meadows ideal for fields and vineyards (131). While hunting, Odysseus and his men are supplied with mountain goats by “the nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus” (154). Since sustenance is provided by the gods, life on this island requires little or no foresight. Not even landing a ship is difficult: Odysseus and his men land in the middle of the night in the island’s “sheltered harbor…where there is no need of a rope / Or of throwing out anchor stones or fastening cables” (136-7). With no work to be done, the men can sit “dining on the endless meat and sweet wine” (162). It is appropriate, then, that they “wondered at the island and traveled all around it” (153). Acknowledging that it is sustained by divine providence, they respond to its wonderful nature by utilizing its abundant resources.
The Cyclopes can survive with little effort because their land is similarly favorable for crops and herds. Odysseus describes the Cyclopes as an overweening and lawless people who trust in the immortal gods to the point that they “do not sow plants with their hands and do not plow / but everything grows for them unplowed and unsown, / wheat and barley and vines that produce a wine grape / of large clusters, and a rain from Zeus makes them grow” (107-11). Since their sustenance is providentially provided, the Cyclopes have little concern for practical affairs. This is all the more the case because they remain in families isolated from one another. They give no thought to national, much less international, affairs. Polyphemus’s life seems to consist in the same feasting on endless meat and wine that Odysseus and his men partake of on the island. Though his idyllic life is sustained by Zeus, Polyphemus seems no longer to realize this fact (if he ever did). Taking his sustenance for granted, he does not wonder at Zeus’s providence but boasts that the “Cyclopes have no regard for aegis-bearing Zeus, / or the blessed gods since we are mightier by far” (275-6). Viewing himself as self-sufficient, Polyphemus has no fear of Zeus, much less a little man such as Odysseus.

In a way not unlike that of the Cyclops, Odysseus soon takes the divinely provided resources of the nearby island for granted. Growing restless, he seeks an impractical challenge for his practical wisdom. With some of his men he ventures to the neighboring land. Inside Polyphemus’s cave they “gazed [ θηε µεσθα] at each separate thing” (218).³ What particularly catches Odysseus’s attention is the orderliness of the cave. All of Polyphemus’s lambs and kids “were divided in groups, / and confined; here the first born, there the middlers, / the dew-fleeced apart too” (220-2). At first glance, such a fact hardly seems a legitimate cause for wonder. Likely, the wonder is instilled more by the unexpectedness of such order than the orderliness

³ θηε µεσθα is translated “admired” by Lattimore and connotes gazing in contemplation, often with a sense of wonder.
itself. The ability to organize appears supernatural in a “monstrous wonder” such a Polyphemus (190). After all, why would such a monster, who, unlike “a grain-eating man,” obtains sustenance easily on a daily basis and lives “singled out from the others,” order his cave with such care? It is almost as though such housekeeping is a liberal art for the Cyclops. Polyphemus further displays his ability to instill order when he returns to his cave where he performs his chores “all in due order.” His wondrous ability turns deadly when slaughtering men becomes a chore.

Before he returns to his cave, however, there is time for the men to escape, but after seeing the orderliness of the cave Odysseus feels compelled to remain and see who instilled it. In contrast, the wondrous order instills in his men the very practical desire to flee. It seems that Odysseus’s impractical response to the wonder of the cave is caused by a false perception of self-sufficiency. This false perception is first indicated when he leaves the divinely sustained island to test his own wits even though his “bold spirit / sensed that a man would approach, clad in his great strength, / The wild man who had clear in his mind neither justice nor laws” (213-15). In the cave, he believes that his glorious reputation will suffice to earn him guest gifts from the wild man. As it turns out, his reputation means nothing to the Cyclops, who kills of six of his men.

It is only by means of the combination of metis and divine wonders that Odysseus is able to save himself and his remaining men. That is, besides using the name trick and crafting the weapon with which to gouge the monster’s eye, Odysseus makes use of two wonderful divine gifts: the wine supplied to him by Maron, a priest of Apollo, which is “a drink divine” and possesses a “marvelous [θεσπεσ η] fragrance” (205, 211), and the “marvelous [θεσπεσ οιο] wool” of the ram he grasps to escape (434). I hold that the latter is a gift of Zeus because in a land in which everything is sustained by the god it seems likely that this special ram received
some extraordinary provision from him. Odysseus seems to acknowledge this fact later when he sacrifices the ram to Zeus (552). Nevertheless, as he and his crew sail away from the Cyclopes’ land, he gives precedence to his own abilities, declaring to Polyphemus that it was he, Odysseus, who blinded him. The hero’s impiety in regard to these wonders and his false sense of self-sufficiency nearly lead to disaster, as his boasting provokes Polyphemus to throw stones at his ship.

Even if he does not immediately realize the efficacy or the origin of the divine wonders he utilized, Odysseus seems to have taken to heart the lesson about the danger of responding to wonder impiously before his next wonderful experience. The two potential reactions to wonder are again seen in Odysseus’s journey to the underworld, which is framed by the wonder instilled by the shouting of the shades. Odysseus recounts that after sacrificing the sheep Circe supplied, many souls gathered around the sacrificial pit “with a tremendous [θεσπεσ] shout. And sallow fear seized me” (11.43). Likewise, when the heroes begin to appear whom Odysseus wished to see, he says that the souls again let out “a tremendous shout, and sallow fear seized me / Lest noble Persephone send the Gorgon head / Of the dread monster from the hall of Hades against me” (633-5). In both cases, Odysseus makes use of terror instilled by the supernatural shouts. In the first case, the resulting terror incites Odysseus to guard the pit lest any other soul approach the blood before Teiresias, which would prevent him from learning how to get home. In the second case, the wondrous shout provokes him to flee before the appearance of the Gorgon’s head, which would result in his turning to stone and remaining in Hades eternally. In either case, the potentially devastating passivity resulting from wonder is seen. After the first shouts, his men must be shaken out of their stupor to act, and, after the second, Odysseus must prevent an inactive response similar to that which he committed in Polyphemus’s cave, for he again desires
to see something impractical. As it turns out, Odysseus’s prudent responses result from his piety. In the first instance he obeys Circe’s instructions to guard the pit (10.535-7), and in the second he displays proper reverence for Persephone. Mindful of the gods, he retains his foresight and uses wonder to ensure that he will achieve the practical end of returning home.

The Sirens present a similar scenario and one in which Odysseus is again in control of his experience of wonder. As with the shouts in Hades, the “voice of the marvelous [θεσπεσι ων] / Sirens” can lead to dangerous inaction (12.158-9). Once again he piously follows Circe’s advice (160) and retains his foresight. He is therefore able to listen to the Sirens’ wonderful (and impractical) song while continuing on his journey.

Odysseus’s encounters with wonders show that impiety in the face of wonder can lead to physical passivity coupled with psychical activity. Only once in the poem is such a combination not potentially destructive. The shades that inhabit the underworld have no practical concerns that can render inquiry into the causes of things dangerous. Thus, Achilles and Agamemnon can wonder upon seeing the souls of the slain suitors and ask Amphimedon about the cause without harm (24.101). For living men, this combination is a potentially fatal fault and one, in fact the only one, for which Odysseus admits his culpability to the Phaeacians (9.228).

During the events chronologically subsequent to those narrated in Books 9-12, we see an Odysseus for whom wonder is no longer a tempting distraction from returning home and who, in god-like fashion, instills the passion in others to accomplish this and other practical ends. The topographies and inhabitants of Ogygia and Scheria are similar to those of the land of the Cyclopes and its nearby island and help to showcase Odysseus’s abilities as well as the potentially debilitating response to wonder he now avoids.

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4 Odysseus’s immunity to the dangers of wonder may be in part the result of piety instilled by Teiresias’s prophecy that he will become an evangelist for Poseidon after returning home.
Like the other two lands, Ogygia is free from bread-earning men, in part because it, too, is so fertile that even if men were to live there they would not have to work to earn their bread. There is no suggestion that maintaining Odysseus’s fare on the island is difficult since the goddess supplies him with such abundance: “every sort of dish / To eat and drink, of the kind that mortal men eat” (5.196-7). Her island is also similarly isolated. Hermes complains of the distance, asking, “Who would willingly cross so much indescribable / Salt water? There is no city of mortals nearby / Who offer sacrifices and choice hecatombs to the gods” (100-3).

Without any need of foresight for food or in political dealings, Calypso spends her time weaving with a golden shuttle, which is as much a liberal pursuit for the goddess as shepherding is for Polyphemus. Fostering in its inhabitant a life devoid of practical concerns and, consequently, a sense of self-sufficiency, the island also promotes impiety. Hermes’ remark about the lack of sacrifices suggests this fact, and Calypso herself complains about the male deities who “jealous above all others…begrudge it to goddesses when they sleep with men / Openly, if one wants to make a man her dear husband” (118-20).

Because the island fosters a sense of self-sufficiency and impiety, the wonder provoked by it is potentially stupefying, especially since “even an immortal who might come there / would wonder to look and be delighted in his mind” (74-5). Hermes, in fact, is twice said to have wondered upon his arrival (76). Compelled by pious duty, though, he overcomes his wonder to deliver Zeus’s message. The god’s wonder is like that which Odysseus and his men experienced on the island near the land of the Cyclopes. Odysseus, however, is not said to wonder here, though it is possible that he did upon first reaching the land. Perhaps the passion waned slowly over the years as did his pleasure in love-making with Calypso. In any case, the wonders of the
island and the promise of immortality do not distract him from his desire to continue on his
journey.

More than any other land, Odysseus’s next stop, Scheria, is a land of wonders. Though
Odysseus remains undeterred from his mission, the Phaeacians offer the most dangerous
example of the union of the passion with impiety and a false sense of self-sufficiency. As on the
other islands, the inhabitants of Scheria are self-sufficient because of the fertility of the land.
Like the Cyclopes’ land, theirs is explicitly stated to be sustained by the gods. One of “the gods’
glorious gifts to Alcinoos’ house” is a garden which bears fruit that “never perishes and never
leaves off / in winter or summertime, all the year round. But always / a blowing West Wind
makes some grow and ripens others” (7.117-9). With fruits continuously in various states of
ripeness, the Phaeacians possess “unfailing abundance,” so there is little need for foresight (99).
Appropriately, then, Odysseus wonders at the garden as he did at the island near the Cyclopes’
land and as Hermes wondered at Ogygia: “As he stood there, godly Odysseus, who had endured
much, marveled [ον τε σατο]”; “He…marveled in his heart at everything” (132-4). Scheria is also
isolated, and the Phaeacians’ distrust of strangers (not unlike the Cyclopes’) is noted several
times, so the practical concern of international relations is also absent here.

Like the inhabitants of the other lands, therefore, the Phaeacians are free to pursue
impractical arts, though theirs are much more wonderful than any Odysseus has seen. Their
ship-building and architectural skills are particularly impressive to him: he “wondered at the
harbors and the balanced ships, / the meeting places of the heroes themselves, and the walls, /
long and lofty, fitted with stakes, a wonder to behold” (7.43-5). On either side of the door of
Alcinoos’ home “were gold and silver dogs / that Hephaestus with his skillful faculties had
formed / to watch over the house of great-hearted Alcinoos; / They were immortal, and ageless
for all their days” (91-94). If the phrase “the gods’ glorious gifts to Alcinoos’ house” in line 132 refers to everything mentioned after line 82, then the artifacts not explicitly said to be produced by Hephaestus are still in some way from the gods. This reading accords with Jenny Strauss Clay’s observation that “the gods…instruct mortals in weaving, metallurgy, and all other arts,” which is why “even man-made objects can inspire wonder” (168). In these cases, then, the artificial wonders are produced by the conjunction of human and divine action. The Phaeacians’ other awe-inspiring skills, dancing and weaving, are conceivably produced in the same manner.\footnote{Odysseus wonders at the Phaeacians’ dancing (8.265), and Nausicaa says that her mother’s skill with the distaff is “a wonder to see” (6.306).} All such skills are, for the Phaeacians, essentially useless. Their clothing serves an inessential function, dancing, and, judging by the number of garments apparently in Nausicaa’s room, there is an overabundance of clothing in Scheria. Even ship-building is not pursued for any useful end such as war or trade. When Odysseus explained that the Cyclopes did not build ships, he was noting their isolationism. Remarkably, the Phaeacians have been able have to remain isolated by turning sailing into a liberal art.

The Phaeacians serve as a negative example of how to respond to wonder. Their wholly god-given wonders along with those they have created in conjunction with divine aid have fostered in them a sense of self-sufficiency which is ultimately false. In fact, their neglect of useful arts has weakened them. Odysseus, though having suffered much, is able to defeat their youths in contests. They also possess a mistaken notion of independence from the gods because of their wondrous ability to travel the seas at the speed of thought. Alcinoos says that his people possess no fear that their ships will ever “suffer harm or be lost” (8.561-2). One is unsure whether the Phaeacians give credit to the gods for any of their arts. Though Alcinoos suggests that they possess an intimate relationship with the divinities, claiming that the gods appear

\footnote{Odysseus wonders at the Phaeacians’ dancing (8.265), and Nausicaa says that her mother’s skill with the distaff is “a wonder to see” (6.306).}
plainly to his people (7.201), none except Athena is present and she is never recognized by them. Moreover, Alcinoos seems to neglect their patron’s warning about the eventual shipwreck, and his people eventually suffer from this act of divine retribution.

The dangers of the Phaeacians’ response to wonder are somewhat obscured because, isolated, they are able to remain safe from enemies, and Odysseus does not witness Poseidon’s revenge. Therefore, the wonders of Scheria are the most perilous he experiences. Unlike at sea, in Polyphemus’s cave, or in Hades, there is no immediate danger to disrupt his admiration. Unlike at Ogygia, one may guess, habituation does not exhaust his wonder. Living with the Phaeacians promises diverse (and human) company, kingship, and the ability to satisfy his curiosity by traveling with ease throughout the world, which neither goddess offers. Nevertheless, Odysseus is able to divest himself of wonder and to remain undeterred from his journey home.

In fact, he uses wonder for the sake of his practical ends. Upon seeing Nausicaa he acts as if he cannot tell whether the princess is a goddess or human, saying, “Awe holds me back as I look” and “I wonder at you, and am stunned” (6.161, 168). Such awe is almost surely feigned, however, for when he first saw Nausicaa he “wondered [μερην ρηξεν] / whether he should grasp the fair-faced girl’s knees in prayer / or supplicate her where he was at a distance, with soothing words, / To show him the city and also to give him clothes” (141-4).6 Though Cook translates μερην ρηξεν as “wondered,” the verb conveys no sense of awe, but means “to ponder” and can even connote devising or contriving. Odysseus’s first reaction to Nausicaa, therefore, is not awe, but calculation. He considers how best to obtain food and clothing. Yet it is not merely his flattering speech that incites the princess to aid him. Athena “made him / Bigger to look at and stouter, and on his head / Made his hair flow with curls, like the hyacinth flower” (229-31).

6 Lattimore translates μερην ρηξεν as “debated” and James Huddleston as “pondered.”
After seeing the result of the transformation, Nausicaa “marveled,” gave him food, and led him into the city (237).

In the Phaeacian court, Odysseus instills wonder in others by means of his own speech as well as his divinely bestowed appearance. While he recounts his adventures, his audience is twice said to be “hushed in silence” and “held in rapture through the shadowy halls” (11.333-4, 13.1-2). The wonderful tales make the teller appear god-like and justify the Phaeacians’ reaction to them. When defending himself to Laodamas, Odysseus explains that the sort of man whose speech is crowned with grace by a god is looked upon like a god (8.170, 173). Not surprisingly, Odysseus seems like a god to the enraptured Phaeacians, fulfilling Zeus’s prophecy that they would “honor him most heartily as a god” (5.36). His appearance also instills wonder in the Phaeacians. Both Nausicaa and Alcinoos say that Odysseus appears like a god (6.243, 7.199), and when, upon his entrance into Alcinoos’ house, Athena removes the divine mist that she had shed about him, the onlookers “grew silent though the hall when they saw the man / And wondered to behold him” (7.143-5). His miraculous appearance, then, has the same effect as his speech. Ultimately, both spur the hosts to action conducive to his goals: they give him gifts and conveyance home.

Unlike in his encounter with Polyphemus, this time Odysseus acknowledges divine aid. Before recounting his tales, he credits the gods for graceful speech, and when speaking to Athena upon arriving at Ithaca, he acknowledges her help at Scheria (8.170, 13.322-3). The Phaeacians, however, though they do act on the wonder instilled by Odysseus (and Athena), do not acknowledge the divine source of wonders, particularly their patron’s, until it is too late. Remarkably, Poseidon uses a wonderful transformation to punish them. The petrified ship will
always remind the Phaeacians of the great wonders worked by the gods and that the gods are in fact the source of all wonders produced by human skill.\footnote{Mark Buchan considers the petrified ship a “sublime object” and hypothesizes the effects of the wonder it will instill in future Phaeacians (72-88).}

Once Odysseus returns to Ithaca, he must confront the suitors who, not unlike the Phaeacians, ignore divine wonders and consequently act in ways that are far from practical, but that lead to their destruction. Though they twice wonder at Telemachus, after he is inspired with confidence by Athena and promises divine retribution (1.382) and after the goddess “shed[s] a divine grace around him” (2.12-3), they do not heed such warnings that the gods are on Telemachus and Odysseus’s side. Likewise, they wonder at the birds that Zeus sends after Telemachus’s speech in the assembly, yet they ignore Halitherses’ warning (2.154). Irreverent toward divine wonders, the suitors become more firmly resolved to court Penelope and usurp Odysseus’s kingdom. Though they are amazed at Telemachus’s journey (4.638), which is inspired by Athena, and Mentor’s apparent bilocation (4.655, 658), they nevertheless plot to ambush Telemachus as he returns from Pylos, an action that will help to ensure their eventual doom upon Odysseus’s return. Like the Phaeacians, the suitors wonder at the instruments of the divine retribution enacted against them. As Penelope considered how “Zeus might bring about deeds of retribution,” Telemachus, about whom “Athene shed a marvelous grace,” walked through the hall carrying a spear instilling wonder in them (17.60-4). Similarly, they wonder as Athena fills out the limbs of the disguised Odysseus as he prepares to fight Iros (18.69-71). The relatives of the slain suitors make the same mistake. Though they wonder at the appearance of the two survivors, Medon and Phemios, those who follow Eupeithes ignore their miraculous survival and Medon’s subsequent warning that the slaughter was the will of the gods and some of them pay the same price (24.441-9).
In contrast, on three occasions in Ithaca Odysseus prevents wonder from sidetracking him and those loyal to him from practical concerns. On the night before the killing of the suitors, Athena provides light for Odysseus and Telemachus to remove the suitors’ helmets, shields, and spears. Telemachus wonders at the light, but is rebuked by his father and told to remain silent, presumably so that they will not be discovered by the suitors or deterred from their divinely sanctioned task (19.36-46). Similarly, the loyal servant Dolios is amazed upon seeing his master, but Odysseus quickly rebukes him and makes the wearied servant eat (24.392-4). Soon after, the old man and his sons will join Odysseus in battle.

Odysseus, himself, only wonders once after returning home: at Athena’s transformation of Laertes. This incident takes place after he discovers his father in a field and is the fourth time in the Odyssey in which there is a lengthy description of terrain juxtaposed with the experience of wonder. Like the other lands, Ithaca is provided for by Zeus (24.344). Nevertheless, it differs from them in an important respect: its land requires hard work and cultivation. Odysseus finds his father in “the fine, well-worked field...that Laertes had once / acquired for himself when he had toiled very hard” (206-7). In the fruitful and “well-laid” vineyard, Laertes is “digging around a plant,” wearing “a dirty tunic...a sorry patched one. And greaves of oxhide were bound / in patches on his calves to keep him from getting scratched. / He had gloves on his hands on account of brambles” (226-30). Unlike Alcinoos’ trees, Ithacan fruits ripen only “whenever the seasons of Zeus weigh them down from above” and require the skill and care Odysseus observes in his father (344). Because the cultivation of Ithaca’s crops requires the conjunction of human and divine action, there is no way a laborer like Laertes could take Zeus’s gifts for granted or possess an inflated sense of self-sufficiency. The same sort of conjunction is seen again when

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8 Disguised as the beggar, however, he does say that “it is a wonder” that Argos lies in his own dung, though this seems to be a way of obtaining more information about what occurred during his absence than his genuine reaction to the neglected dog (17.306).
Laertes is washed by a servant and transformed by Athena. Odysseus wonders at this dually caused transformation and gives credit to the gods: “surely one of the ever-living gods / Has made you better to look on in form and stature” (373-4). Laertes’ miraculous transformation soon leads to practical and pious action, as the renewed patriarch, aided by Athena, throws the spear that kills Eupeithes. The reunion scene, then, displays the need for men to respond both practically and piously to divine gifts and wonders.

It is perhaps paradoxical to think that the more piously one responds to wonder, the more practical the results, for it seems that acknowledging the divine source of a wonder would restrict one’s ability to act. That is, one might expect the awe-inspired person to be frozen, unable to act or, at best, able to act only in the interests of the gods or those who benefit from their worship. Likewise, a pious response to the passion can prevent one from seeking further knowledge of something wonderful, which seems to place adverse restrictions on one’s intellect. In the Odyssey, however, such a response to wonder restricts the pious only in the sense that it prevents them from acting in a way that is destructive or impossible for any human to act, for it ensures that they realize their own limits, particularly in relation to the gods. Thus, they will act in a way that accords with human ability and is not doomed to failure, and they will not seek knowledge of the impractical that can divert them from considerations necessary for their survival.
Works Cited


A famous Christian preacher, John Wesley, who himself rose every morning at 4am, was fond of preaching the dignity of labour. In 1786 he wrote a sermon called ‘The Duty And Advantage of Early Rising’ in which he claimed that lying in bed was physically unhealthy, comically using quasi-scientific terms to drive home his argument: “By soaking so long between warm sheets, the flesh becomes soft and flabby, and the nerves, in the meantime, become less taut.” Late rising is for the independent of mind, the individual who refuses to become a slave to work, money, ambition. As that famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes knew. Reclining in his smoking jacket, puffing his pipe, Holmes would sit and ponder for hours on a tricky case. She became famous the world over for starting the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India. She began this work in 1950 and for over forty years, she looked after the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her humanitarian work. Agnes developed an interest in helping the less fortunate at a very young age. She was fascinated by stories of people who dedicated their life to help others. She decided to become a nun when she was 12. She joined the Sisters of Loreto as a missionary when she was 18. She initially went to Ireland, to learn English. She arrived iThat was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown “places.” Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. This way people have of lining-u on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she’s not going to get well.