



## Penelopean Pause

### Marianna Vogt

This paper will use the figure of Penelope and her act of weaving, unraveling and re-weaving to explore the tension between moving forward and staying with.

I live in this tension myself. I feel the pull of the protestant work ethic, over-define myself through work, succumb to fiscal anxiety and fear of failure. I know the value of slowness. I ask my clients to pause and stay with a feeling or an image. I remind my supervisees not to work too much. It's advice I would do well to take myself. Yet I want to add presenting this paper to my list of obligations.

Why? Because I want to celebrate Penelope. Penelope is my hero because she isn't on a quest. And also because she's a weaver.

For much of the Odyssey, Penelope seems to do little but weave and cry. But this apparent inaction is a powerful protest against the expectation to move forward. With her famous shroud-trick, Penelope says no. Each night she unpicks her weaving to buy more time in liminality.

I too use textile work (sewing and knitting) to find stillness in chaos. It was while unraveling and restitching my own work that the idea for this paper grew. I kept wondering, 'What's so great about hyperactive Odysseus?' 'We need Odyssean drive, but we live in a culture that over-celebrates it, and disdains non-productivity. Odysseus needs to return to Penelope so he can rest. Penelope needs Odysseus to return to her so she can act. We, as individuals or as a society, need a happy marriage between these opposing archetypes within ourselves. Stitching and unstitching is one way to get closer to Penelope and calm the inner Odysseus.



## **Biography**

**Marianna Vogt** is a dramatherapist and supervisor based in London. She works primarily in private practice with individuals, couples and groups. Additionally, she teaches Group Dynamics on the Drama and Movement Therapy MA and runs a process group for the MA Movement Teaching and Direction, both at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

## **Recent Publications**

Vogt, M. **Playing the Role of Supervisor: Reflections on Supervision.** *Dramatherapy vol 43.* Pages 42-48.

Vogt, M. **Mythic Place.** *Dramatherapy: Reflections and Praxis.* Pages 203-2016.