

*Odyssey: Navigating Nameless Seas*  
Activity sheet suggested answers for students  
Recommended for ages 15 – 18

1. Odyssey is not only the name of the poem mentioned above, it could also denote a long wandering or voyage marked by many changes of fortune. What are other synonyms for the word 'odyssey'? List five of them:

Journey, voyage, expedition, pilgrimage, quest, traverse, sojourn, wanderings, trip, adventure, etc.

2. In his journey back to his hometown Ithaca, Odysseus had many opportunities to display his talent for deception and tricks, but at the same time, his courage, loyalty and generosity were evident. He was known to be an eloquent speaker and an ingenious and cunning man. What are some traits that may be helpful if one wishes to embark on an odyssey?

Free response

3. Is there someone you know who possesses such traits? In what ways can you learn from this person?

Free response

4. What is going on in the artwork? Name at least two materials used in this work.

Sand, air, water

5. The title of this artwork by Thai artist Pratchaya Phinthong is *Algahest*. Where do you think this landscape might be? Do you think there are life forms in this place? Why do you say so?

Free response e.g. a place devoid of living things, a desert, a place with harsh weather conditions, peaks resembles sand dunes etc.  
Free response e.g. no, as it seems devoid of life etc.

6. Now imagine you are able to travel out of this landscape. Give the frame a gentle push and observe the image at the back. What do you see?

Free response e.g. a large circular mass that has swirls of blue and greens, darkness everywhere else with spots of light etc.

7. What do you think you have just 'discovered'? Why do you say so?

Free response e.g. the circular mass appears to resemble Earth as the blue areas remind me of large bodies of water on Earth; outer space as there appears to be dots that resembles the galaxy etc.

8. Spin the frame again and brainstorm a list of five questions you may have about your 'discovery'.

Free response e.g. what if there were otherworldly beings also searching for life elsewhere just like us? Why does Man continue to search for life on other planets? How would existence be different if we knew where all things came from? Where is the beginning of life? When did life begin?

9. What you have just 'discovered' is Kepler-22B, a planet very far away that is very similar to Earth. Scientists have detected traces of liquid H<sub>2</sub>O on this planet. What is H<sub>2</sub>O and what does the presence of this element suggest?

It is the chemical makeup/ compound name for water and suggests the possibility of life on this planet.

10. Do you know the planets in our Solar System? List all of them here.

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto

11. What are some similarities and differences between Earth and Kepler-22B?

Similarities: appears to contain water, exists in the 'habitual zone'  
Differences: Kepler-22B is 2.4 times the size of Earth, average surface temperature of Kepler-22B is 22°C and that of Earth is 14°C

12. Imagine you were a scientist who had found a special way to reach Kepler-22B. What is your special mission to this planet? Upon successfully reaching this planet, what actions will you take? What does this say about human nature, or about you? Pen this down in your logbook entry:

Free response e.g.

Mission: to search for another planet which may be a sustainable dwelling place for human beings.

Notes: upon reaching this planet, I took samples of 'water' for testing and found high traces of oxygen and other new elements. Could this allude to presence of life forms on this planet? How can we make contact with this life form? Will they be interested in fair exchange and communication? These measures are necessary to ensure survival of the human species.

13. Observe a *certain portion* of this artwork in pairs. Make sure you and your classmates observe different sections of the artwork, and list down some of the things you see.

Bone, ship, skeleton

14. What are the materials used in this artwork?

Wood, iron, unfired clay

15. Throughout history, Man has always had an intrinsic relationship with animals. It may be argued that the technological progress of the Industrial Revolution has **exacerbated** the idea that Man is superior to animals. Do you agree with this **anthropocentric** statement? Why do you say so?

Free response

16. Man is also constantly inspired by nature. For example, the early designs for flight by the Italian **polymath**, Leonardo DaVinci, were adaptations of bat-like wings. Observe the size and length of the 'bones' in this artwork. What animal do you think the artist was inspired by in the invention of this vessel?

Whale's spine

17. What are some similarities between the 'bones' and the vessel?

The spindle-shaped and tapered ends of the boat mimic the streamline shape of the whale, the base of the boat with its ridges is akin to the whale's spine etc.

18. What are some differences between the boat and the animal that inspired its design? How has Man adapted the design of the boat to mimic characteristics of the animal?

Whereas whales have tails to propel them forward, Man has fashioned oars for this function. Whereas whales have a blowhole for breathing, Man has made the boat light enough to float above water, yet sturdy enough to withstand harsh conditions, etc.

19. The suffix '-ologist' is used to replace '-ology' at the end of nouns in order to form other nouns that refer to people who are concerned with a particular science or subject. Can you guess these professions?

A SOCIOLOGIST is one who specialises in the science of society, social institutions, and social relationships; specifically the systematic study of the development, structure, interaction and collective behaviour of organised groups of human beings.

An ANTHROPOLOGIST is one who studies the science of human beings; especially the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environment and social relations and culture.

An ONTOLOGIST is one who studies or maps reliefs, especially of mountains.

An OLFACTOLOGIST is a medical specialist in the sense of smell or the study of smells.

20. What are the two main colours in the artwork? How many shades can you identify?

Yellow and black  
2 shades of yellow – yellow ochre and taupe

21. What is the material of this artwork?

Wood, charcoal and beewax

22. What do you think the artist is trying to depict?

The beeswax allude to whales' earwax which is an indicator of the health of the whale and the ocean. The chemical profiles uncovered by analysis of the whales' earwax reveal internal hormonal changes which could have been induced by human activities.

23. What does this imply about our relationship between man and nature/animal?

Free response. E.g. Human actions leaves an indelible mark on nature; mankind is dependent on nature for food, medicine, shelter, clothing and other necessities; preserving nature for aesthetic and recreational purpose; spiritual connection in wilderness; as human culture changes from hunter-gatherer to agrarian to industrial to social complexity and professional specialisation to cultural and technological phase, wildlife went from being of a divine power, to symbolic of a divine power, to the antithesis of a divine power, to a commodity for sale, to a precious, irreplaceable source to be protected

24. Can you think of any forms in nature that exhibit such an intrinsic relationship between Man, nature and the surroundings?

Hint: you see many of them lining the streets of Singapore.

Rings on a tree trunk not only tell one about the age and physiology of the tree, but also the current environmental processes and conditions.

25. What is the title of this artwork?

The Exquisite Pirate (Odyssey)

26. What do you think are some characteristics of female pirates that Smart is trying to portray?

Strong, courageous, a mind of her own, business-minded, powerful, shrewd

27. Smart uses the metaphor of female pirates to explore issues of gender identity, and to subvert the historical perception of piracy as a male domain. Are there any professions that seem to be dominated by one gender?

Male dominated: politics, architecture, construction workers, builders etc.  
Female dominated: nursing, teaching, physiotherapy, clerks, admin etc.

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28. Why do you think it is so? What are some general differences between the male and female dominated industries you have listed above in terms of economic, financial and social status?

Free response

29. Apart from the imagery of female pirates, the imagery of ships is also of importance. What do you associate with the image of ships in this context?

Plunder of land and resources, spirited away of treasure, enslavement of captives

30. What else do you think the image of the ship can represent today?

Hint: in what situations will people need to travel by ship across continents?

Refugees/immigrants escaping hardship at home, asylum seekers escaping political strife, human trafficking

31. What do you understand about the term piracy in today's cyberspace era?

Software piracy is the illegal copying, distribution or use of software; online piracy such as downloading of illegal software; copyright infringement

32. What are some similarities between cyberspace piracy and maritime piracy?

Similarities: both include theft of some form

33. What is the title of this artwork?

Passage III: Project Another Country

34. The husband-and-wife team, Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, and their five children moved from the Philippines to Australia in 2006. What do you think the ship here represents with reference to the artwork title?

Symbolic of their migratory experience from the Philippines to Australia; the uncertain idea of 'home'

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35. How does this representation differ from that of Sally Smart's *The Exquisite Pirate*?

The ship in Smart's *The Exquisite Pirate* symbolises colonialism and the plunder of resources; the ship by the Aquilizans calls to mind ideas of home, a new future, migration, place and displacement, transcendence, hope and tragedy

36. What is the ship supporting? How do you feel looking at the artwork?

Many houses all made of the same material, yet each house is of different shape, size and has their unique identity

37. Pick two houses that are opposite of each other. How are they different or the same?

Free response

38. Compare the house you have chosen to the home you live in now. If you were to relocate to this place, how will your home express your **cultural identity**? Draw or write it here:

Free response

39. What is the material used here? Why do you think they chose this material?

Used cargo boxes and wood  
Free response e.g. cardboard is easily available; cardboard boxes are often used in moving

40. The 7 members of the Aquilizans family were each given a **balikbayan** box to pack all their belongings into for their relocation to Australia. The use of everyday objects in this artwork reflects their own experience. If you were to build your own dwelling, what recycled materials would you use?

Free response

41. What are some recurring themes and ideas in this artwork? Observing the magnitude of this artwork, what do you think the artist duo is saying about community?

Search for home, displacement, migration, camaraderie in community, home, highlighting plight of the marginalised etc.  
That the migrant community is strong in numbers



### Discussion Time

The Badjao people often live in impoverished circumstances and the Philippine government has been trying to relocate them into land-based communities. What are some pros and cons of the Badjao resettling to land-based communities?

Pros: possible access to education, healthcare, social services, more stable income

Cons: loss of tradition and culture; being Stateless (not belonging to any official state or having any official nationality); loss of lifestyle in living freely and independently on the sea, away from rules and restrictions that bind those who live on land

42. Observe the skeletal structure of this artwork. What animal in nature does this artwork resemble?

Fish, sea creature, dolphins

43. What is the Ultima Mudfox made up of? What does it appear to be doing?

Metal, machinery, CPU board, motor, light bulb, sensor  
Appears to be floating, flying etc.

44. What do you think this artwork resembles?

Flowers

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45. The artwork is titled *Una Lumnio Callidus Spiritus*. Una Lumnio means “illuminate together” and *Callidus Spiritus* means “crafty soul” in Latin. Walk closer to the artwork and observe what happens to the light. Describe your observations here in this logbook:

Scientific Name: Anmopista avearium cirripedia Uram

Shells: yes/ ~~no~~ \*

Type: flowering/ ~~non-flowering~~ \*

Weed: yes/no \*

Native: yes/ no \*

Colour: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of petals: \_\_\_\_\_

No. per colony: \_\_\_\_\_

Short description: The ‘flowers’ widen and light up at intervals. \_\_\_\_\_

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\* delete accordingly

46. Why do you think this happened?

The ‘flowers’ are programmed to react to each other and will stop lighting up when there is no movements in the gallery.

47. How did you feel when interacting with the artwork?

Free response.  
E.g. awestruck, at peace, serene, mesmerised

48. According to Choe, these entities have the same form and movement as that of the sea acorn. Observe these units carefully and describe their components and how they work?

A robotic flower-like entity made of motor, CPU board, LED, with the ability to absorb light from surroundings.

49. What do you think the artist is trying to express through his work?

Choe believes that machines are evolving much faster than human beings and that humans will one day be consumed by their desire for technological advancements.

50. What are some technological gadgets you use daily?

Free response

51. What are some other technological gadgets you or your parents and elders have used in the past 5 years? How have they evolved over the years?

Free response

E.g. they have evolved to become smaller, yet are able to carry even larger quantities of data

52. Are there any technological gadgets or apps you feel you are unable to live without?

Free response

53. Spend some moments to reflect on the extent of your dependency on technology in your life today. What are some pros and cons of advancements in technology?

Pros: global innovation; easy access to information for educational purposes; widespread networking and communication through social media

Cons: distraction, data collection and exploitation, non-biodegradable e-waste, easy access to vices

54. Choe believes that machines are evolving much faster than human beings and that humans will one day be consumed by their desire for technological advancements. If this were to materialise, how will you envision humans in future? Sketch or write your idea here:

Free response