

Journal Entry 2: The Odyssey Books 5, 6
Journal Prompt 2

Homer makes Odysseus seem heroic throughout Book 5 in his *The Odyssey* in regards of loyalty and suffering. In Book 5, Odysseus remains a captive on Calypso's island of Ogygia for seven long years. Through Homer's descriptions of Odysseus, the Greek hero displays heroism in terms choosing mortal suffering and imperfection over divine tranquility. Another aspect of Homer's descriptions of Odysseus's heroism is the Greek hero archetype of overcoming obstacles. In this example, Odysseus battles Poseidon's rage through a storm sailing on the ocean to reach the Phaeacians' island. Homer focuses on Odysseus's choice and overcoming challenges to return home to Ithaca for his reunion to Penelope and Telemachus.

On the episode of Ogygia in Book Five of Homer's *The Odyssey*, Hermes delivers Zeus's order to Calypso to free Odysseus from his captivity on her island. In the scenario, Calypso delivers Odysseus that she is sending him home leading to her oath of not harming him. For an example of Odysseus's heroism, Odysseus chooses to return home to Ithaca and be reunited with Penelope. Calypso details Odysseus that he will continue to suffer, and how Penelope is inferior to her as a goddess. She also asks Odysseus to stay with her and become immortal on Ogygia. However, Odysseus chooses to return home admitting Penelope is not as fair as her (5.32-102). In this context of Book 5, Homer depicts Odysseus's heroism by choosing to continue on his journey home to be reunited with Penelope. Odysseus performs the role of husband to Calypso by force because he cannot return home. With Zeus's order of Odysseus to return home, Homer empathizes Odysseus's loyalty to his wife Penelope and home. Calypso's offer of Odysseus staying on Ogygia and becoming immortal demonstrates the temptation of divine tranquility. Odysseus's choice to decline the offer provides the willingness for him to go through mortal suffering and imperfection for Penelope. Homer presents Odysseus's heroism by empathizing loyalty as this Greek hero's reason of overcoming challenges to return home.

Another aspect of Homer's depiction of Odysseus's heroism in Book 5 of *The Odyssey* is the obstacle which this hero must overcome to reach the Phaeacians' island. In Book 5, Poseidon sees Odysseus sailing on the sea for seventeen days while returning from Ethiopia. In his rage, Poseidon creates a terrible storm to cause Odysseus to suffer or drown. Odysseus is thrown from his raft by a gigantic wave and flown into the sea. The goddess Ino finds Odysseus and gives him a magical scarf making him immortal temporarily, to swim to shore, and toss the scarf back into the sea. Odysseus performs the task, while Poseidon sends another massive wave which Athena countered. Eventually, Poseidon decided that Odysseus has suffered enough and lets him go (5.288-420). Homer depicts these series of events to demonstrate Odysseus's heroism when faced with adversity. The adversity which Odysseus faced is with the ocean under the control of Poseidon. Poseidon is the antagonist in Homer's *Odyssey* detailing the challenges and trials Odysseus continues to face while traveling home to Ithaca. In Book 5, Odysseus faces a terrible storm and gigantic waves to overcome the last challenge for his journey home. In Greek Mythology, the Greek heroes continuously face adversity from gods, monsters, and obstacles to prove their heroism. These heroes includes Hercules, Perseus, and Theseus which Homer presents Odysseus as heroic among this tradition. Book 5 in *The Odyssey* continues the adversity them for Homer to prove Odysseus's heroic image.

In contrast to Homer's depictions of Odysseus's heroism, the Greek hero presents his own image as man of suffering from labor among the sea. Odysseus perceives himself as a man who is suffering among trials and tribulations because he lost all of his comrades and cannot return home. This image of Odysseus contrasts the heroic image of in Homer's *Odyssey*. In Book 5 of Homer's *The Odyssey*, Odysseus explains what kind of man he is during his conversation with Calypso about his choice of returning home. He explains that he suffers by laboring long and hard among the sea and war in (5.245-247). During the storm scenario in Book 5 of Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus explains that rather die an hero's death in battle during the Trojan War shared among his comrades, but will die wretchedly instead of having a hero's funeral (5.338-345). Odysseus explains among these two scenarios that his a man who suffers and does not receive a hero's fate in battle. These two occurrences reveals Odysseus's opinions about himself with direct opposition to Homer's portrayal of heroism in Book 5. Therefore, Homer depicts Odysseus as a Greek hero, but allows him to see himself as a suffering man instead.

Work Cited:

Homer, *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Group, Inc., 1996. Print.