

Odyssey Study Guide Book 1-8

English 9H/Mr. Tyler

by Sophocles pp. 890-899

- Answer your study questions in **complete sentences**, practicing the TS+CD+CM method (essay style) whenever possible. Be sure to cite your pages (a-la MLA) as well.
- If you use outside sources, **YOU MUST CITE THEM!**

Assignment 1: Book 1-4 Summary: Handout is separate from this page. Be sure to highlight key items and be prepared to take further notes on these during lecture times.

Assignment 2: Calypso, Laertes, and the Lotus Eaters (from pp. 890-899 or Books V and VIII)
(This assignment includes the Book 5-8 Highlighting Summary provided on a separate page!)

1) **Read the invocation (also on p. 890) and then answer the following: What does Homer tell you about the hero and about what is going to happen to him?**

[The invocation to the Muse, the gods discuss Odysseus and decide he should return; Athena goes to Ithaca to encourage Telemachus, speaks to him disguised as Mentis, offering advice about dealing with his mother and the suitors and suggesting he go on a trip to Pylos and Sparta; Penelope speaks to Phemius, the singer, asking him to change the song; Telemachus criticizes her; Penelope goes upstairs; Eurycleia carries the lit torches to escort Telemachus to his rooms.]

Muse, speak to me now of that resourceful man
who wandered far and wide after ravaging
the sacred citadel of Troy. He came to see
many people's cities, where he learned their customs,
while on the sea his spirit suffered many torments,
as he fought to save his life and lead his comrades home.
But though he wanted to, he could not rescue them—
they all died from their own stupidity, the fools.
They feasted on the cattle of Hyperion,
god of the sun—that's why he snatched away their chance 10
of getting home someday. So now, daughter of Zeus,
tell us his story, starting anywhere you wish.

The other warriors, all those who had escaped
being utterly destroyed, were now back safely home,
facing no more dangers from battle or the sea.
But Odysseus, who longed to get back to his wife
and reach his home, was being held in a hollow cave
by that mighty nymph Calypso, noble goddess,
who wished to make Odysseus her husband. 20
But as the seasons came and went, the year arrived
in which, according to what gods had once ordained,
he was to get back to Ithaca, his home—
not that he would be free from troubles even there,
among his family. The gods pitied Odysseus,
all except Poseidon, who kept up his anger
against godlike Odysseus and did not relent
until he reached his native land.

2) **(from Wiki)** An epithet (Greek and Latin; literally meaning 'imposed') is a descriptive word or phrase that has become a fixed formula. It has various shades of meaning when applied to real or fictitious people, divinities, objects and biological nomenclature. **Find at least three epithets in the sections we have read, or research a series of epithets from the Odyssey.** Discuss briefly the meaning of the epithets.

3) Read pp. 891-893 in the literature book and then discuss the conflict between the goddess Calypso and the hero Odysseus. After reading this section, or the entire chapter, read the following short essays and be prepared to answer questions (3A-3C) based on that reading. Include a quote from these readings in at least two of the three questions.

Jean Houston wrote:

"[Calypso] provides him with a regular daily life in which has no need for the cunning and wily qualities that saw him through the Trojan victory and his subsequent adventures. Instead, he must learn to use the qualities of sensory enjoyment and emotional relationship.

Most of the commentators.... (virtually all of whom are men) see an engulfment by the "instinctual female principle, physically vital, but intellectually and spiritually lifeless." For the hero adventurer, the apparent "effortlessness of existence" would always be a kind of living death. For only in action can he find his identity: only by struggle can he maintain his reality.... So this adventuresome hero must live without adventure for seven full years.

Odysseus faces the challenge of NO active challenge. On Calypso's isle, he has no way to be a hero. He is forced to live a vegetative existence, perhaps at first a welcome rest, but then a womblike entrapment. The name Calypso means "eclipse," and indeed, Odysseus' long stay on Calypso's isle is an eclipse of all that he has known of life...and also of his consciousness of himself as a warrior hero and shrewd initiator of action.

Odysseus has been severely traumatized. Year after year of war, fighting for his life, and losing the male friends with whom he bonded throughout harrowing adventures -all the while being cut off from nurturing relationship with the feminine - he has regressed to a lower level of functioning. He can no longer free himself from the challenges he is facing through brawn or brain. The only way out is to surrender.

According to Jean Houston, his experience is a hibernation, a kind of halfway house for post-traumatic stress survivors, a seven-year stay in a healing sanctuary of recuperation - and integration.

In The Hero and the Goddess, Houston also wrote:

It feels like an utter engulfment in which one has a hard time relating to anything else because the self is so deeply buried in something else. It is not the dark night of the soul. Rather, it is the necessary hibernation period presaging a fundamental renewal or restructuring of personality. How vital the long resting place is to the soul's development... those loose and mindless places where one can go to relax and vegetate... Sometimes, however, these places are so hidden, even from us, that we feel our lives are being wasted and we long to get back where the action is. Yet the "action" may very well be going on - in the internal realms - with our state of external routine providing the stable conditions necessary for the reflection and reweaving of our own possible human.

During his stay on Calypso's isle, Odysseus is never able to fully accept his situation. His body is alive, but only in regard to sensuality. Calypso holds him so tightly in her embrace, that he is not free to embrace her in turn. And because of his unresolved grief and trauma, his heart remains closed. In book nine of the Odyssey, he says of both Calypso and Circe, "They never won the heart inside me, never."

But at the same time, Odysseus is also compelled to surrender. Only in surrender can another part of himself emerge and lead him forward once again. Only in surrender can he feel and release the deep grief he has been carrying all these years, and own the feminine energy within himself. And by the seventh year, he is ready to move into the next stage, what Houston refers to as the stage of active longing. He weeps ceaselessly, for Ithaca and for Penelope.

The waters are his own now - his tears. The island is his own making - his loneliness. The feminine is within him now - his own deep feeling. At this point, he begins to own and express his own anima and in this emerging wholeness, a new voice, which encompasses both the masculine and feminine can begin to exert its authority.

What voice? The voice of Zeus. The king of the gods, the ruling power of his own psyche commands that he be released from the engulfing feminine both within himself and outside himself, and helps provide him the means and power to resume the journey home. And now both his inner feminine and the outer feminine - Calypso - are ready to listen, so that he may continue his journey by water.

For Odysseus now, the male is no longer repressed or expressed in its lowest dimension. Nor does the female need anymore to be projected, or to be encountered in its most primitive manifestation. The feminine within is transformed by grief and lets go, as Calypso lets go. Odysseus awakens again to his heroic, adventuresome self. But this self has only one focus - to unite with the feminine energy in its most positive form. To go home, home to Ithaca, home to Penelope.

Even the lure of immortality cannot entrap him now. His pride, which has led him to continually prove his superhuman capabilities, is no longer his primary source of motivation. The heroic in him now is directing all his energies toward the journey toward both inner and outer home.

Alicia LeVan wrote:

The hero masters his masculinity with Circe, and then unites with his feminine psyche with Calypso. Through coming to know both aspects of universal/ individual duality, he becomes whole.

Now Odysseus is ready, having discovered a manhood which can confront the inner and outer waters, to face the full wrath of Poseidon's waves. Only now can he fully surrender to the sea, to the vast and powerful feminine, and be reborn.

Only then does he arrive in the land of the Phaeacians, naked as a newborn, but able to now suppress and gain command over the sexuality which so recently dominated his existence - as he covers his private parts with a leaf. For now he meets the feminine in a virgin, youthful form. Nausicaa is an expression of his own virgin and developing anima. He treats her with dignity, grace, self-control and respect. And in honoring her, he also honors himself.

Question 3A: Why does Calypso want Odysseus to stay with him?

Question 3B: Why does Odysseus need to move on? How is not able to be a hero because of this situation?

Question 3C: What is the motive of the gods (through Hermes) in releasing Odysseus?