

Women in the odyssey

Literature, Russian Literature



I will be writing on how women are depicted in The Odyssey, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and Othello. In these three texts, you will learn how the women in these texts will be treated with no respect, seen as property, and is being sexualized. Although these are women they have every right to be treated with respect just as the men are. Throughout the three texts, I have chosen three women from each text and how they are depicted and treated.

The Odyssey is written in a time when women were seen in an obsequious position to men, their job was dedicated mainly to just to have kids and take care of their duties around the house. The females in The Odyssey exhibited features that men in the book could have not done. Women in The Odyssey actually had a personality and have a relationship with men in the book. The Odyssey women are seen as strong, but they were also seen as being sexualized. In this particular story, you have three main type of women; the goddess Athena, the seductress Calypso, and the wife of Odysseus, Penelope. Every woman in this story is unique in their own way.

The goddess Athena is an example I will use because she is wise, brave, and intelligent. She plays a controlling role in this story but she is a very good leader. Athena helps Odysseus multiple times throughout the story on his journey back home. She helps Odysseus disguised as a beggar so that he could confront the suitors.

The seductress Calypso is another example I will use, she seduces Odysseus with her singing and keeps him on her island for many years. Calypso wants Odysseus to marry her. She just longs for guidance and care from a guy so she tries to get that from Odysseus. Whenever she can not convince him to

marry her she turns him into her sex slave. Calypso refuses to let him leave her island.

Another example that I will use is Penelope, the wife of Odysseus. In this story, she is kind of seen as the prize because everybody wants her.

Although Odysseus had been gone for many years she remained loyal and faithful to him. Although all the suitors showered her with gifts she tested all of them to see if they could string and shoot an arrow through an ax because she knew they could not do it. After the beggar which was Odysseus strings the bow and shoots it between the ax she still did not want to believe it was him because he had been gone for so long and she wanted to be sure it was him before she just welcomed him back with open arms. After testing him with what was the secret to their bed and he knew what it was, it was like he was winning the prize which was her.

In the book of The Epic of Gilgamesh, there are three more women that I will discuss how they were being used. In this story, you have the Harlot, Ishtar, and Shamhat. Their roles have similarities and differences from The Odyssey. The women in the Epic of Gilgamesh are basically being sexualized too.

First, we the Harlot who is being used to take away Enkidu's innocence and purity. She is seen as a sex toy or even a prostitute. She moves him from being pure to experienced. She was basically being used to seduce Enkidu. Although she was mainly there to seduce him, she taught him how to dress and feed himself like a man.

Next, we have Ishtar who was basically trying to get Gilgamesh after his journey but once he said he did not want her she got angry and tried to slay him with the Bull of Heaven. Ishtar is promiscuous. Ishtar is seen as crazy because when she found things wrong with her lover she turned him into a creature instead of trying to work things out. She is clearly very arrogant and does not know how to take the word no for an answer.

Next, we have Shamhat who is a very important female in this story because she helps him break his innocence and helps him get into the world. She is more of a helper and helps Enkidu develop a great friendship. She also helps him on his track to immortality. Although she is a prostitute she plays a major role in helping Enkidu.

In the book, Othello women were viewed as sexists and they were given very little respect throughout the story. Women were seen as objects and treated as if they were owned by men. In Othello, women were meant to marry and do their responsibilities. The women were expected to obey the males in their life. In the book of Othello, we will discuss Emilia, Bianca, and Desdemona.

First, we have Emilia, the wife of Iago who I see as being a strong character because she does not let people push her around. Although Iago treated Emilia as she was a piece of property she still remained faithful and loyal to him. Emilia was quiet but she spoke up for herself and sometimes even for Desdemona. She insists that she is equal to men.

Next, we have Bianca who is the mistress of Cassio. Bianca is a prostitute who likes Cassio but has no idea that Cassio does not really care about her.

She is not respected at all by any of the guys. She believes that Cassio really love her but in reality, he is just there for the pleasure she is giving him.

Next, we have the wife of Othello, Desdemona who is basically seen as a property. Desdemona was treated like property to her father first and when she went against her father and married Othello her father said he had been stolen from her like she was a piece of property and like that she just belonged him. When she married Othello she was treated as his possession also. No matter what the situation was she stayed obedient and faithful to her husband. I see Desdemona as being submissive and never speaks up for herself because she is terrified of hurting other people's feelings. Although Othello could be mean and rude and even put his hands on Desdemona she still remained loyal to her husband. Even when Othello had basically killed her and she was blaming it on herself to save him.

Throughout The Odyssey, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and The Odyssey all the women were disrespected and felt worthless at a time in each of these stories. They are all controlled by men in their life. In all of the stories, each female has been put down and always seen as less than a person and most of the time saw a property to the males in their life. In each of the stories, each woman could have been strong independent women in these stories if they would have been giving a chance.