

# Greek culture-2



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The Relationship between the *Odyssey* and *Metamorphoses* and their Social Purpose in Modernity Homer's *Odyssey* and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid are ancient works that have a significant relevance to modern societies. Both works speak to the transitions of men, from youthful, carefree men, to responsible leaders of men and society. *Metamorphoses* is thwart with iconoclastic representations that serve to teach story morals intended to demonstrate the rewards and repercussions for choosing evil versus good, or wrong versus right. The number of scenario versus outcome for the potential and likely choices that men might make that cause them to be either moral or amoral men, is extensive, and even baffling that the authors were able to compact the many sins that mankind would be enticed to commit into single, albeit epic, poetics. There are relationships between the two works, such as the power of Perseus, in *Metamorphoses*, to turn his enemies to stone; and that of Poseidon coming to the rescue of the *Odysseus*, turning the threat of the seafaring ship that pursued them to stone. All of these representations speak to the issue of how men conduct themselves in society in ways that demonstrate their responsibility to themselves, and especially in service to others.

Each work uses the fulfillment of prophecy to serve as cautionary tales to the reader, to the communities within which the works would be offered and read by; to serve as guidance in the choices that the people of those societies made for themselves. There are instances of loyalty in both works, supporting the population's sense of loyalty to kingdom (society), and home (family). In the *Odyssey*, *Odysseus* is favored by the Gods, but he is dependent upon the loyalty of his mortal men who support him, protect him, and stand with him against the forces of evil. The slaves in his household are

loyal to the master, Odysseus, and work to support and protect his household from the suitors who would steal that most precious to Odysseus, his home, wife and property.

The social significance of these themes would be no different, really, in ancient societies than they are in modern societies. In order for men and women to prevent chaos, to lead quality lives, it requires loyalty and supporting one another in civic endeavors. To the extent that prophecy was an important and recurring element of ancient literature, is no different than in modern society where ancient, Biblical, and other ancient prophecies (Mayan 2012 calendar); impact the psyche of the population in compelling the population to make moral choices.

The ancient myths serve to remind modern societies of the perils and ills that befall mankind should man choose evil over good, or wrong over right. The ancient poems of the Odyssey and Metamorphoses bring to literary life the demons with which mankind wrestles, and serve to remind mankind that turning towards that which is greater than ourselves, God, or the Gods; serves to keep mankind focused on other than himself, and that which is tangential to the greater interest of mankind. Modern society is benefited from the works of the ancient societies, which expressed modern concerns through their poetry and storytelling.