

Telemachus- odysseus father son relationship



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Throughout the last few books of the *Odyssey*, Homer explains to the reader how Odysseus reestablishes his relationships with his family and friends of Ithaca. It's possible the restoration of his relationship with his son, Telemachus, is the most significant event of all. This reconnection carries out three main purposes. First, it serves to characterize Telemachus' likeness to his father in the virtues of wisdom, humility, patience, and organization. Secondly, it enables Odysseus a chance to coach Telemachus on how to be a powerful ruler like he is.

Lastly, Homer uses the reconnection to highlight the importance of a healthy family structure to a society. To be able to understand the impact this meeting had on Odysseus and Telemachus, it is essential to first look how Telemachus has matured since their last meeting when Telemachus was a newborn and Odysseus was a man (and how their relationship has changed from a man to child relationship to a man to man relationship). Their father-son relationship must be reestablished without any past history in a short amount of time, and they must complete/ "realize" Odysseus' journey.

Of the abundant evidence of Telemachus' development, three are sufficient to render an accurate narration of what virtues he obtained or blossomed. The attained virtues expressed in the books are courage, wisdom, and prudence. An example of Telemachus' courage is displayed when Telemachus decides to avoid Nestor's house rather than proceeding through it, Nevertheless Telemachus sails out to sea knowing that an ambush may await him. This wisdom is demonstrated in his knowledge that if he stops, Nestor's *xenia* will hinder him even more.

And prudence is made obvious in Telemachus' adeptness to control his lust for tranquility in Nestor's house and his decision to cope with hardship at sea. Next, Telemachus' self assurance and xenia are expressed when he adopts Theoklymenos (the prophet). In the start of the poem Telemachus is not confident enough in his ability to offer xenia to Athena disguised as Mentor, but now Telemachus is glad to provide the prophet with shelter. Another piece of evidence that shows Telemachus' virtues is his confidence in ordering his mother and her maids to abide by his will; their compliance shows us that he is worthy of honor.

Thus Telemachus has the virtues necessary to be a ruler: courage, wisdom, prudence, confidence, and xenia. Now we return to the re-encounter of the father and the son. They spend twenty years apart from each other undergoing trials and hardship that poise them for their final confrontation. Telemachus and Odysseus both arrive on the island of Ithaca within more or less the same time period. And they both, out of prudence and devotion, seek safety in the swineherd's security; in this they are analogous.

Odysseus' restraint is shown when he abstains from revealing his identity to his son until Eumaeus has exited. Before father and son first recognize each other, and before Telemachus knows that he is talking to his father, an interesting phenomenon occurs in which both father and son demonstrate their humility and likeness to each other. The event involves Odysseus offering his seat to Telemachus and Telemachus refusing the offer. The significance of this event is that Odysseus, who is in disguise as a beggar, is a more dominant man than Telemachus and modest enough to offer his seat.

Telemachus in turn knows that he is a better man than a beggar but refuses chivalrously to take the beggar's seat. The following day Odysseus reveals himself to his son. When Telemachus realized that he is in fact standing in front his father, they hug. At this time Homer uses a simile to describe the increased effusive emotions of the situation, Homer says that Telemachus and Odysseus embrace one another and cry out in the same way baby birds cry when they are separated from their parents. Likewise war had deprived Odysseus of his son. Odysseus and Telemachus now focus on the task at hand: killing the suitors.

Although Telemachus has been told of his father's great deeds all his life, he still doesn't believe that it is possible to defeat so many suitors. But Odysseus tells him by saying that the gods are in their favor. We see here how Odysseus has become a religious man and trusts the gods, and trusting the gods is a display of maturity. Odysseus lays out the plans and suggests going around and testing all his field hands and house servants for trustworthiness before taking back their house, but Telemachus shows wisdom in proposing an adjustment to the plan: kill the suitors quickly because they are spending all of their resources.

This adjustment is accepted when Odysseus tells Telemachus he is almost as good as planning as himself. thereby Odysseus' relationship with his son is rebuilt and Odysseus is able to watch over Telemachus' further education guaranteeing that he will one day be a good successor. Finally we come to the last purpose of the re-encounter. Homer realizes that an durable family is of great importance to a society since it is through family that values and education are best handed down from generation to generation.

Odysseus' family is portrayed as one that can endure anything, after having been split from the patriarch of the family both Penelope and Telemachus stay loyal to their family. This spirited family gives Odysseus confidence that he will always have people on his side in good times and in bad times, all the members of the family and the residents in general are likewise assured this confidence. And so the event of Odysseus' reunion with his father serves the three purposes of showing Telemachus his likeness to his father, providing Odysseus with a chance to be a father, and demonstrating the importance of family.