

Odyssey essay

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



Odyssey Essay Hospitality The greeks put a large emphasis on the importance of traditions. One important example of a tradition is to show hospitality and respect strangers as well as to hosts. If this tradition was broken, punishments were to be dealt out. Usually, the punishments were not specific. What happened after the God's traditions were disobeyed, a series of bad events usually occurred. After the God's traditions were followed, a series of positive events usually occurred. There were multiple examples of this in the epic poem The Odyssey. The suitors and Polyphemus have extremely bad luck after dishonoring the God's traditions, whereas Penelope honors the God's and demonstrates how good hospitality is rewarded.

 To begin, at the start of the epic poem, the suitors respond greatly to the hospitality given to them by Penelope. The suitors continue to be treated kindly throughout Odysseus' many years away from home, but towards the end of their stay in Odysseus' home, they begin to become disrespectful. They refuse to leave when asked upon, they plot to kill Telemachus in order to rid of the only man left in the house, they disrespect Penelope, Telemachus, and there home, etc." Then the haughty suitors came in, and all of them straightway took their places in order on chairs and along the benches, and their heralds poured water over their hands for them to wash with, and the serving maids brought them bread heaped up in the baskets, and the young men filled the mixing bowls with wine for their drinking. They put their hands to the good things that lay ready before them. But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking, the suitors found their attention turned to other matters, the song and the dance; for these things come at the end of the feasting." Telemachus shows the proper

way to act, the suitors show just the opposite. The suitors' actions are not acceptable, and it is practically destined for them to suffer the consequences. Not only do they lose their lives in the end, but they also lose all chances with Penelope. This is also because none of them were able to pass her many tests. The results of these tests were to determine who Penelope was to marry.

Next, Polyphemus also suffered due to his poor habits of hospitality. Odysseus and his men were in great danger while stranded on the Cyclops' island. Polyphemus trapped Odysseus and his men in a cave. The entrance was being blocked by a huge boulder. In the beginning, the Cyclops was unaware Odysseus and his men were in the cave, but after seeing the one-eyed giant and gasping in shock, they gave away their hiding place. Polyphemus then began to eat Odysseus' men along with drinking an excessive amount of alcohol given to him by Odysseus. " Drunk, hiccuping, he dribbled streams of liquor and bits of men. " Being as clever as he is, Odysseus thought up a plan. This plan not only resulted in his escape, but it also punished the Cyclops for his poor acts of hospitality. After getting the Cyclops drunk, Odysseus blinded, and told him his name was " nobody". When asked who had hurt Polyphemus, he would reply with " nobody", and that led the other Cyclopes to think he was okay. Without his vision, Polyphemus was completely oblivious as to what was going on. When he went to let out his cattle, he was unaware Odysseus and his men tied themselves under them. Polyphemus released his cattle along with Odysseus and all of his men, and this is how they escaped. Polyphemus' lack of hospitality led to his loss of vision and men.

Lastly, the traditions of hospitality were not always disobeyed. For example, Penelope continues to

honor the God's tradition, and is rewarded in the end. By continuing to house, feed, and clothe the suitors for Odysseus' many years of absence, Penelope shows a great sense of hospitality, not necessarily only with the suitors. "“ But come, handmaidens, give him a wash and spread a couch for him here, with bedding and coverlets and with shining blankets, so that he can keep warm as he waits for dawn of the golden throne, and early tomorrow you shall give him a bath, anoint him, so that he can sit in the hall beside Telemachus and expect to dine there; and it will be the worse for any of those men who inflicts heart-wasting annoyance on him; he will accomplish nothing here for all his terrible spite ..." This example shows the readers Penelope's reaction when finding out a beggar (really Odysseus disguised) was going to be in her home. Penelope was nearly always treated badly by the suitors, but she chose to keep a healthy guest-host relationship. On the flip side, when Odysseus was treated badly by the Cyclops, his reaction only costed him more complications and time stuck on Polyphemus' island. Although both Penelope and Odysseus deserved to react in a poor manner, Penelope had it much easier because of how she dealt with the situation. In the end, by Penelope honoring the God's tradition of hospitality, Odysseus came back to her, and her family was once again reunited. In conclusion, the suitors and Polyphemus have extremely bad luck after dishonoring the God's traditions, whereas Penelope honors the God's and demonstrates how good hospitality is rewarded. The suitors lost their lives, and Polyphemus lost his eyesight all because they made the decision to disobey the God's wishes. By following the tradition, Penelope and her family were reunited, and she was finally able to be rid of the suitors. The

importance of the tradition of hospitality is great and should always be followed, even if you have to face hardships along the way.