

Odysseus on calypso's island



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Homer's Odysseus is one of the most outstanding characters among epic heroes due to his contradictory and complicated personality. He differs much from other famous epic heroes, usually conducted by one idea. Their life is devoted to one goal and they play the role of presentation of this idea or fulfilling the mission that they are destined to.

The character of Odysseus, as the main hero of the famous story, is revealed through the scope of various situations, his personality is shown in the process of its development and one of the episodes important for understanding and estimating the changes that occurred deep inside of his soul, is the episode that describes the life of Odysseus with Calypso, the nymph, who turned his friends to pigs and made him the captive. Unlike the stereotypical epic hero, Odysseus is motivated by several distinguishing traits, and his personality experiences collapses and changes while the story goes. Odysseus is famous for his reason.

He is an intellectual; he demonstrates the logic and curiosity, being ready to pay for the knowledge he obtains. Odysseus is self-assured, very self-disciplined; he knows his conduct presents virtue, as he understands it, so he just follows his way. He listens to his own reason and - what is the most surprising- don't often asks Greek gods for help or advice - he is clever enough to solve his problems himself.. He is deep and complicated, and the dynamic of his personality development can be best viewed in the context of his adventures, where Odysseus' life on Ogygia occupies a remarkable place.

As it has been said above, Odysseus' life with Calypso can be regarded as the necessary point that greatly influenced his outlook and the notion of the mission he held on. As far as the understanding of impact of hero's

discoveries and Odysseus character change is concerned, there are several possible ways to estimate the role Calypso played in Odysseus' life, as the role of woman in man's life is always judged differently from various, sometimes contradictory, angles of vision. Calypso's home is an island, isolated from the rest of the world.

Homer describes her island as a symbolic embodiment of Calypso's nature - seductive, sensual and full of delight. Its rich natural environment turns out to be a kind of charm that Odysseus has to withstand and to save his personality. For many years Odysseus lived in a world that addressed mainly his male self - he lived in the atmosphere of war, violence, killing, raping and surviving. This atmosphere possessed him and motivated his behavior, and he almost lost the part of his personality that is traditionally regarded as a female - comprising feelings of love, mercy, cooperation, devotion, sensitivity, patience and non-aggression.

The world that Calypso offers him in his caverns has nothing in common with the life he had before, and this change provides big changes deep inside him. He obeys Calypso as a kid that obeys his mother; the Nymph turns out to be a mother and a woman at the same time, healing his soul with the mother's care, and helping to reveal his male self as the embodiment of his sexual desires. Thus, Calypso's cavern can be regarded as the place where Odysseus is reborn.

His life on Ogygia made it clear for him that his remarkable journey was nothing else but his way home. However, this episode can be regarded from quite different angle of vision and add some questions as to estimation of the episode that describes Odysseus relationship with Calypso. Calypso is a

loving woman and a goddess at the same time, and as the example of loving woman with strong character and power, she tends to possess the man her heart chose. He is compelled to surrender, and it contradicts with his male nature and character.

He is the man who knows his mind and the situation when he is forced to obey a woman, embarrasses him and makes him long for home and his beloved family, " with his eyes ever filled with tears, and dying of sheer home-sickness"(The Odyssey, Book V, 149). This situation is also an important factor that leads to his rebirth, when he at last is free and ready to resume his journey to Ithaca. Except for the influence that is made by the necessity to obey a woman, Odysseus' interaction with Calypso doesn't only make him change.

It also reveals the traits of the character that were always natural to him, and shows his personality. Odysseus is honest and just, he doesn't hide his grief and loneliness. He is diplomatic with his compliments to Calypso's beauty, but he doesn't pretend that the paradise that Calypso created for him has become his home. "? though he was forced to sleep with her in the cave by night, it was she, not he, that would have it so"(The Odyssey, Book V, 150).

He withstands the charms of Calypso and the place she wants to make home for her lover: " Thick, luxuriant woods grew round the cave, alders, and black poplars, pungent cypress too, and there, birds roosted, folding their long wings, owls and hawks and the spread beaked ravens of the sea, black skimmers who make their living off the waves. And round the mouth of the cavern trailed a vine laden with clusters, bursting with ripe grapes. Four

springs in a row, bubbling clear and cold, running side-by-side, took channels left and right.

Soft meadows spreading round were starred with violets, lush with beds of parsley. Why, even a deathless god who came upon that place would gaze in wonder, heart entranced with pleasure. "(The Odyssey, Book V, 71-82) He enjoys all the pleasures that life with Calypso suggests him, but he is dreaming of his wife and home, and he doesn't lose his hope to come home again. This is the moment in narration when his motivation changes. All his behavior since he moved out from Ithaca was dictated by his wish of glory and this was the force that made him experience his adventures.

When he finds himself at the caves of Calypso, he starts to change his mind and he starts being captured by homecoming. Coming back home becomes his aim and his future code of behavior is set as to get it: " I am quite aware that my wife Penelope is nothing like so tall or so beautiful as yourself. She is only a woman, whereas you are an immortal. Nevertheless, I want to get home, and can think of nothing else"(The Odyssey, Book V, 202). One of the other remarkable features that Odysseus reveals in his relationship with Calypso is his understanding and appreciation of his human nature.

When the divine nymph offers him the immortality and herself with her eternal love, he rejects and chooses his humanity and his right to die as the human being. The offer is suggestive, but still he doesn't betray his wife. He comes back to Ithaca when he and his wife Penelope have already spent their youth, but this doesn't make Odysseus unhappy. He is happy to be a part of the society he was born in and he is eager to care about his family, being a mortal. In this episode Odysseus reveals his capacity to think and

make decision as the way to deal with the situation he faces, and this underlines his ability as the part of human nature.

Usually the subject of ancient myths and narrations was gods' and goddesses' life, but Odysseus has a life of a human being as the focus of the story, thus making Odysseus a hymn to human nature. He is the first and maybe the only character in the Greek mythology who doesn't owe the gods his reason, he has it by nature and this nature is human. One more important issue concerns the trait of Odysseus' character that was already mentioned above. He is intelligent and curious and he is always in need of new knowledge and information, which he cannot find at Calypso's paradise.

He is in need of some intellectual work, as well as the physical experience, and the lack of information makes him suffer. He lives a sensual life, with nothing new to learn and think over and thus he loses one of the aims of his journey which were important for him. He experiences a challenge of having no challenge at all. However, it would be wrong to regard Odysseus' life with Calypso as the time spent in vain. It is a long rest that leads to a soul revival and this period with mindless physical experience brought much to the restructuring of his personality.

The features of the Odysseus' character described above are regarded as the most vivid traits of his character that revealed during the period he lived with Calypso. This part of his journey made him change and step to a new level of his inner development. His notion and understanding of what is really important for him changed. He still possesses the same features of a leader: strength, a thirst for glory, nobility and courage, but he also feels. He is no

longer a warrior hero, he is a man who found his way and became ready to get to his point of destination.