



How successful is the “*Telemacheia*” as an introduction to the events of the rest of the *Odyssey*?

The *Telemacheia* structurally is undoubtedly made of Telemachus and his conflict with suitors, his travels and general impotence. The poet of *Odyssey* immediately establishes the story as ethical and theological basis for his story. Since a speech of Zeus and assembly of gods, introduces this, almost in the first lines of *Odyssey* and in relatively abstract language by using: “What a lamentable thing it is that men should blame the gods and regard *us* as the source of their troubles. When it is their own transgression...” which mainly emphasise on human responsibilities. The gods do not enter in human scene to affect the action. To put it in perspective, in earlier books, after describing the full setting, then the first speech in both assemblies is made by an important person, expressing an important issue, which in this case it would be Zeus and Telemachus. Who both are then confronted with people who may got different opinion as they are expressed themselves clearly afterwards. Yet both issues seem to be the same, about Odysseus, but how each group react to it, is a different story. How gods react to this matter is more seem to be blaming Odysseus, and how gods are crossed with him as, one of them says;” That is why, ever since Polyphemus was blinded, Poseidon the Earth-Shaker has kept *Odyssey* in exile.” Which shows the gods reactions during the assembly. As in contrast, we got this reaction after Telemachus’s speech, of one of the suitors, which is: “So you’d put us into shame, would you, and fix the blame on us? You are wrong. We suitors plead “Not guilty.” That lights up the difference of men more becoming of their own affairs and suffers more in proportion to their own mishandling of them.

In creating of Telemachus, Homer has managed a sophisticated narration. While focusing on Telemachus as the hero of this small adventure, the poet frames it with an image of suitors so as to join it immediately to the greater issue of *Odyssey*’s returning home. As Athene just identified him as *Odyssey*’s son by their striking physical similarities, so she says: “How you have grown! You certainly have his head and fine eyes...”and how Telemachus replies is;”My mother says I am his son, but of course I wouldn’t know. For no one really knows his own parentage.” Which shows his feelings towards *Odyssey* and his way of parentage.

At the story’s onset, Telemachus can be seen as inactive young hero. When the challenge rises, yet, Telemachus himself rises to meet them. He tries to challenge the suitors with his divinity and though not effective. His lack of confident though didn’t make him really persuasive, as he tries to mention his dad’s name and his wishes for him. He says;” Perhaps he heard of an army’s approval and wishes to tell you as the early news...!”Which gives us an image of him being frustrate. Yet he surprised them with a great deal of his authority.

Now to observe suitors, in their stupidity, they are also sensual and prefigure the behaviours of *Odyssey*’s crew who are destroyed through their lack of selfcontrol. They are more portrayed as highly selfish and illereberal group of people who has not always meet with favours, as they say;” So we will not return to our own state nor go anywhere else, until she makes her choice and marry one of us.” Which clearly shows their rudeness and how they’ve been ruling in *Odyssey*’s house.

Their aim is mainly to get power and wealth but nothing else, as Telemachus tell them;” If you feel angry about this then quite and go and feast somewhere else...” which not only shows them being irreverence, but making an image of Telemachus, finding his inheritance being destroyed by them.

The second theme of importance that appears on the suitors is their disrespectiveness, yet they think of one things and say another, as we got;” That Telemachus wants to cut our throats!”



Which simply shows their rudeness and taking a mickey of Telemachus, but yet being powerful.

Although, suitors are a model of egoistic and swagger men in *Telemacheia*, but still not characterized. In bolder manner, Homer created “Anitinous” to symbolize suitor’s behaviours. He tried so many ways to portrait him as a hypocrite man, always interfering in other people’s business; as he says;” It sounds as if our well-courted Queen is going to give us a wedding, little does she know that he son’s death has been arranged.” Which frames him and the suitors as violent and stubborn men.

In other hand, in story in which intelligence and awareness play so great, women are always mentioned. However in Homer’s time, it was unusual to give women a high place, yet Homer succeeded to prove his point. How he treats women, is more like sympathy than dirt, as he tries to describe their appearances in very detail. Helen for example, her commanding presence has already established in the elaborate detailed description of her entrance; as her style has been descried as “her lofty perfume room” or” With her golden distaff”, which gives us an impression of Homer drawing not only Helen as a noble women. Helen is indeed an extraordinary women who now is seeing her errors of her ways, but still confident in her own judgment, as she says with her entrance; ...”When you Achaeon came to Troy with love in your heart for my sake, shameless creature I was!” Which still shows her being disgraceful and shamefaced, but her elegance and royaltiness is never in doubt.

To look at Helen in other ways, she is a women who also wants to be rich and her preference to rich things has been also shown as: ”His wife gave Helen beautiful gifts for herself, including a golden...” which shows her popularity and respect in friendship.

Odyssey is fulfilled with the mixture of women; such as Penelope, who surely plays a great rule through the poem. She’s more characterizes as an isolated, but miserable women; as she prays to Athene;” Save my dear son for me, and guard him from harm at the hands of ...” which portraits her, simply as a virtuous women. Yet she is a woman who remained loyalty to he husband and surely her intelligence is doubtless. She says:”Now my beloved son, for whom I grieve more than his father...”Which portrait her not careless, but a loyal and responsible women.

Homer still keeps in view, the characterization of Eurycleia, an old maid of the house, who is always royalty to the family, as she says to Telemachus in his departue:”stay here where you belong. There is no call for you to go looking for trouble all over the bare sea...” which shows her responsibility to take care of Telemachus, as his second mother, due to her love and care. We’re also aware of her confident and how Telemachus put his trust in her for leaving Ithaca, as he says to her;” But you must swear to me that you won’t tell.” that shows her strong bond with Odyssey and his family and how Telemachus put his trust in her.

As a chorally to the power of women, men are seen as their victims. The suitors as I have suggested, are some the of victims of Penelope, as we hear from the suitors:” It is your own mother, that incomparable schemer, who is the culprit.” Which shows their misery, and still blaming Telemachus.

For Odyssey, his home island of Ithaca has been visualized as a country that has lost its leader. A country, which seems to be underneath some of its wealth and power, being used by suitors, not Odyssey. A country that it can be seen as good as Pylos, only by Odyssey’s leadership, as Penelope mentions:” If ever Odyssey on his wisdom burnt the fat thigh or a sheep to honour you in his palace.” Which clearly shows Odyssey’s absence is only left with some swaggers who their traditions seems to be only drinking and dancing, instead of sacrificing and obeying gods; as Telemachus says;” They feasts themselves. ...Though for all the weak this is being wasted.” Which gives us an image of Ithaca being devastated.



Moreover, the people of Ithaca seem to keep quiet because of their fear of suitors, and they are also in doubt of Odysseus's return.

Consequently, as we are informed in Pylos, the rules and tradition are always the essential facts. As we get the image of Pylos at the beginning of book 4, by: "They found him entertaining a huge company of relatives in his house to celebrate a wedding," which surely gives us an example of a country with its great leader "Menelaus" and his wealth and traditions, to compare with Ithaca.

In Odysseus, we have Homer using flashbacks in his poems, which assists the reader to visualise the story by giving them background information of what happened before. This has been mainly expressed by different characters such as Nestor who set Orestes as a young hero to guide Telemachus, as he advised him; "be as brave as Orestes." Which makes us to understand the fact, that Telemachus should treat the suitors as Orestes treated Agamemnon and his mother.

However, Menelaus more concentrates on the stories of the Troy and the heroism of Odysseus. As he says; "he was indeed a well-loved friend, the friend who undertook all these heroic tasks for my sake, and now his son came to my home!" which simply shows us that, he tries to concentrate on the sad part of his memory, which made not only Helen and Nestor's son cry, but made our young hero Telemachus to break his maturity and express his feeling. As we got: "When he heard about his father, he let the tears roll down..." which shows us Telemachus's faith in his father.

Another distinguishing mark of the Odysseus is the use of irony, which draws the reader's attention more to the suitors, as Antinous mentions: "It must be the gods teaching you ..." which directs us to mainly Athena assisting Telemachus. However, other protagonists aren't really aware of it. What is more to irony, is the fact that suitors seem to behave from the highest to the lowest point in audience's mind, so as their power till the end. But on the other hand for Telemachus, they seem to fall from the lowest to the highest.

Homer uses more interesting techniques before Odysseus appears in the story, he has been described by Menelaus, that he always used to disguise himself, as he says; "He slunk into the broad street of the enemy city, disguised himself as a beggar..." which gives us Odysseus's capacity to disguise himself and to control himself and the others. This technique also foreshadows Homer's description of Odysseus's description of himself and his adventures, as Menelaus says; "For all the Achaeans who strove at Troy, it was Odysseus who strove the hardest and achieved the most." Which clearly turns audience's attention to Odysseus back in Troy. Not only that we get the suspense from Telemachus, by keep mentioning his father as; "If my father was here..." which means we get not only factual and characterising material, but also emotional responses to the hero as well.

To put "Telemacheia" in perspective, I must say Telemachus's conflict with his mother's suitors, his general impotence and his travels which gave the reader a full background, made it a very successful preparation which has been carefully mixed with continuous action, which again made this story not only appealing, but motivating and out of the ordinary.