Odyssey Poem Analysis of Themes and Literary Devices

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Odyssey is a Greek epic poem that is believed to have been written by Homer. In this epic, Homer presents a story revolving around Odysseus. Odysseus, husband to Penelope and father to Telemachus was a Greek hero (Nelson, 2022). After serving as a king of Ithaca and fighting many battles, Odysseus disappeared and lived in an unknown place for many years before coming back to reunite with his family and people (Currie, 2023). Before then, his son and apparent heir had to risk his life and look for him wherever he was. Homer wrote this poem to deliver a message on the themes of morality, heroism, courage, and many more (Payne, 2023). The purpose of this paper is to present a critical discussion on Telemachus' expedition in the epic.

Telemachus' Journey

In the epic, Telemachus features as a son, prince, and future king (Mellsop et al., 2023). He inherited his royal title position courtesy of his birth by King Odysseus and his wife, Queen Penelope. As a child, Telemachus knew he had a right to inherit his father's estate and throne. However, he was not as lucky as other children, who had the opportunity to benefit from the cherished parental love of both his parents. That was an unfortunate experience that he had to go through because his father was absent. Worse still, his mother, who had remained at home, appeared to be an irresponsible mother who did not care about the welfare of her son. As a responsible and ambitious son, Telemachus had to leave the comfort of his royal home to travel in pursuit of his father.

Soon after the disappearance of King Odysseus, his home became quite disorderly. People had assumed that the king had died; many thought they would use his absence as an opportunity to pursue his wife and inherit his property. However, this did not please Telemachus, who thought that it was not a good idea for his mother to marry another man and waste his rightful wealth, which he was supposed to inherit from his father. The numerous suitors who had expressed interest in his mother were wasting his wealth because his mother had been organizing extravagant and wasteful feasts for them (Homer, 2011). Because of this sad experience, Telemachus got inspiration from Athena, who had advised him to go on a journey to learn more about his father's disappearance and purported death. Telemachus trusted Athena because he was his friend and mentor. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge that Telemachus was compelled to travel around because he was in search of the answers regarding his father's mysterious disappearance.

Where the Journey led Telemachus and those who helped Him

The information from the epic demonstrates that Telemachus grew up a disturbed child. He was worried because of two things: the mysterious disappearance of his father and the suitors taking over his home. Like many other people in the kingdom, Telemachus was unaware of exactly what had happened to his father. The only information that was available to them was that King Odysseus had died during the Trojan War, during which he had been fighting in defense of his territory. However, many people doubted this claim because it had not been confirmed. Telemachus was also bothered about the many suitors who had defiantly expressed their intention to marry his mother even before establishing if his father had died or not. Hence, after getting encouragement from his mentor Athena, Telemachus set off on a journey.

As the story unfolded, we discovered Telemachus intended to travel to Sparta. His mentor advised him on how to organize his voyage and travel through the sea to Sparta so that he would get to know the truth about his father. At one point, Athena told him, “Telemachus,/you’ll lack neither courage nor sense from this day on” (lines 302-303). However, before then, he had to stop in Pylos (Homer, 2011). When Telemachus passed through Pylos, he intended to meet Nestor. He decided to visit him because he would help by providing him with useful information regarding the whereabouts of his lost father. He trusted Nestor because he was one of his father’s close friends who must have known his location. In Pylos, Nestor welcomed Telemachus and provided him with useful information on which he would rely as he continued searching for his father.

From Pylos, Telemachus proceeded to Sparta because Nestor had advised him to do so. According to Nestor, King Odysseus did not die as presumed. As one of his accomplices, Nestor believed that the king did not die in the war. Although he was not quite sure about him, he knew so well that he had not died. Because of this motivation, Telemachus went to Sparta where King Menelaos confirmed to him that his father was alive. Telemachus felt relieved when he learned that his father had successfully fought the Trojan War, still alive, but only stuck somewhere on Kalypso’s Island.

Telemachus was lucky to fall into the hands of good people who provided him with unending support during his entire journey. From this chronology, it can be deduced that if it had not been for people like Athena, Nestor, and Menalos, Telemachus would not have succeeded in his adventure. Each of these people contributed greatly to the trip’s success because, if it had not been for them, Telemachus would have failed. For instance, Athena conceived the idea and offered Telemachus guidance on traveling through the dangerous sea (Homer, 2011). Later, when he was still in Sparta, it was Athenas who informed him to go back home and escape the perilous sea. On the other hand, had it not been for the hospitality of the people like King Menelaos and Nestor, Telemachus would not have survived in Pylos and Sparta. At the same time, he would not have known anything about his father. However, apart from these leading characters, Telemachus also got support from people like Theoklymenos, Menelaus, and Helen of Troy.

Conclusion

Telemachus was compelled to travel to Sparta because he was searching for his father, whose whereabouts were unknown to anyone in the kingdom. Since he had a feeling that his father's absence had put his family in shame, he felt that, as a responsible son, he had to do something about it. Because of this sad experience, Telemachus got inspiration from Athena, who had advised him to go on a journey to learn more about his father's disappearance and purported death. Telemachus trusted Athena because he was his friend and mentor. During his trip, Telemachus encountered King Menelaos and Nestor, who provided him with the necessary support until he accomplished his mission.

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