

Consider the description of Calypso and Calypso's island of Ogygia, the former a beautiful and desirable woman, the latter a natural paradise. Yet Odysseus is not content, rejecting even the offer of immortality. Why not? Outside of his understandable desire for his wife and son, what else does he want that he cannot find on Ogygia? What does he find lacking in this otherwise perfect set-up? (Consider that Calypso's name means "concealer.")

- After fighting in the Trojan War for so long, Odysseus misses the life he used to live in Ithaca. He longs for civilization, which satisfied his more complex desires like the desire for community and social belonging, expressed through family, intimacy, and friendships, as well as the desire for entertainment. Moreover Odysseus is careful and cunning by nature, so he doubts the reality of Calypso's utopia, as it most likely isn't what she makes it out to be and is hiding something.

What is Odysseus' first reaction to offers of help from Calypso and Ino/Leucothea? What does this tell us about Odysseus? (Consider Calypso's response.)

- Odysseus is very cautious and critical of the offers of help as he expects there to be some sort of exchange where he must give up something valuable or do something for them in order to receive the help. When there is little semblance of an exchange in their offers of help, he grows suspicious. This tells us that Odysseus is very analytical and considers all the aspects of a situation before making a decision. In the absence of information, he can predict that Calypso and Ino have malicious intentions.

Notice Odysseus' carefully worded response to Calypso's question about whether she or Penelope is more beautiful. Also notice that despite his exhaustion, Odysseus faithfully returns Ino's veil before seeking rest. What do these incidents tell us about Odysseus?

- These incidents show that Odysseus is an honourable and loyal man who cleverly dodges the question by saying that what she says is true and that Penelope "falls far short of you, / your beauty, stature. She is mortal after all / and you, you never age or die..." (239 - 241). By saying this, Odysseus makes the comparison invalid by stating that beauty is dependent on mortality, which means that comparing Penelope and Calypso would do an injustice to Penelope. Returning Ino's veil shows that Odysseus is honourable and loyal.

What seems to be Nausicaa's prevailing concern? Why, then, is Odysseus' opening speech to her so clever?

- Nausicaa's prevailing concern is that Odysseus has suffered a great deal and should be given the help he needs, mainly motivated by her infatuation with him. Nausicaa's infatuation with Odysseus is made clear when she says, "Ah, if only a man like *that* [Odysseus] were called my husband, / lived right here, pleased to stay forever..." (270 - 271). This quote affirms that if she could choose any man in the world to marry, it would be Odysseus, confirming her infatuation for him. Odysseus' speech is so clever as he exploits her infatuation by implying that he, too, is infatuated with her.

He does this to coerce her into giving him the supplies he needs to reach home, knowing that, through this royal individual, winning her heart will allow him to receive what he needs to get to his destination.

When Odysseus is taunted by the Phaeacian youths about his ability at sports, he effectively silences them by throwing a huge weight farther than anyone, and by mentioning his experience at arms during the Trojan War. What contrast between Odysseus and the Phaeacians is implied by this incident, and in Alcinous' subsequent apology?

- The contrast implied here is between the breadth of experience Odysseus possesses but does not seem to possess, as he is a stranger and an outsider to Phaeacia, and the inexperience the youth possess.

What sort of people are the Phaeacians? What are their interests and way of life?

- The Phaeacians are a very good-hearted people who have an optimistic view of the world. Their society is far more advanced in technology and riches than many other cities and so Phaeacians have the time and resources to develop culture. The Phaeacians are interested in and take pride in their athletic abilities. They are not focused on battle and cross the seas for exploratory and recreational purposes. Many Phaeacians are quite opinionated, as many looked down on Nausicaa for speaking with and guiding Odysseus, a man, around the city. They are hospitable to a certain degree to strangers.

The gods and other immortals intervene for both good and bad in Odysseus' efforts to return home. Which gods help Odysseus, and which hinder him, and how?

- There are a variety of instances where the gods intervene for good and bad in Odysseus' efforts. Athena is the goddess who most often aids Odysseus, by changing her appearance to look like a little girl to guide Odysseus in Phaeacia, to getting Nausicaa to meet and tend to Odysseus. Poseidon however, does not share the same fondness for Odysseus and hurls large waves and storms at Odysseus as he leaves Ogygia. Ino helps Odysseus by giving him a sash to stay afloat,