

Dreaming of Justice

By

Patrick Jameson Harrington

A Senior Essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Bachelor of Arts in the Integral Curriculum of Liberal Arts

Felicia Martinez

Saint Mary's College of California

April 13th, 2015

The purpose of this paper is to examine the *Odyssey* as a dreamscape and use Thomas Hobbe's *Leviathan* and Calderon de La Barca's *Life is a Dream* to view what that examination changes in interpreting the *Odyssey*, and specifically in determining if Odysseus acts justly. Interpreting the *Odyssey* as a dreamscape is important because it adds layers to the story; the people and monsters Odysseus encounters become symbols we can learn from as opposed to just parts of a story about a hero overcoming mythical monsters and obstacles. The *Odyssey* becomes a story about a normal human being who just wants to make it home and who seeks justice for the crimes committed against his family and household. Using *Leviathan*, I'll show how Odysseus' dreams are influenced by his fears and desires. As I show using *Life is a Dream*, the definition of justice is the same within dreams as it is within real life. I will show that this is not a case of mere revenge, this is a case of vengeance, and therefore Odysseus acts justly in the end of the story.

The importance of dreams was huge in Ancient Greek culture and the difference between false and true dreams are even explained by Penelope in Book 19 of the *Odyssey*. She is explaining to a disguised Odysseus that dreams can in fact serve as messages from the gods to people. This is very important as it shows that Odysseus can learn something from his dreams as I am claiming in this paper.

“Ah my friend,” seasoned Penelope dissented, “dreams are hard to unravel, wayward, drifting things-not all we glimpse in them will come to pass... Two gates are there for our evanescent dreams, one is made of ivory, the other made of horn. Those that pass through the ivory cleanly carved are will-o'-the-wisps, their message bears no fruit. The dreams that pass through the gates of polished horn are fraught with truth, for the dreamer who can see them.” (Homer XIX. 630-638)

The Greeks believed their dreams were filled with useful truths if they can learn something from them. Odysseus, too, will be able to learn something from his dreams even if he doesn't

recognize he is asleep. In my interpretation, just by learning something from the events of his journey shows that Odysseus can see the truth in the dreams. In fact, Penelope's reference to the gate of horn is linked to Odysseus' bow because it is also made of horn, something that I will explain later in the paper. I believe that Odysseus is having true dreams, filled with truth, if we are able to see it.

As readers, we gain significantly from considering the *Odyssey* as a dreamscape, although it is not vital to my reading to answer the factual question: Is Odysseus dreaming? What the idea of the dreamscape allows is an understanding of Odysseus that we normally wouldn't notice by using the encounters as symbols. These encounters serves as symbols for the lessons Odysseus must learn and the fears and desires he must overcome. It also allows us to judge his choices at the end of the story much more clearly as this story changes from a journey of adventure to a journey of character.

According to the *Leviathan*, imagination is composed of "decaying sense" and therefore memory and imagination are different names for the same thing: "The imaginations of them that sleep, are those we call *Dreams*. And these also (as all other Imaginations) have been before, either totally, or by parcells in the Sense. (Hobbes 90)" Memory is composed of your experiences, therefore your imagination is composed of your experiences, which means your dreams are composed of images of people you've seen and places you've been. Decaying sense means that our memories of events and things fade, the longer it's been since we've seen the things, the harder it is to remember it clearly. Hobbes also explains why you can dream of fantastical creatures that don't exist in the real world:

"Much memory, or memory of many things, is called *Experience*. Again, Imagination being only of those things which have been formerly perceived by Sense,

either all at once, or by parts at severall times; The former, (which is the imagining the whole object, as it was presented to the sense) is *simple Imagination*; as when one imagineth a man, or horse, which he hath seen before. The other is *Compounded*; as when from the sight of a man at one time, and of a horse at another, we conceive in our mind a Centaure. (Hobbes 89)”

Drawing from this idea of compounded and simple imagination, it is easy to see how the things and people Odysseus encounters here are based on people he knows. This explains the people and the things Odysseus encounters; they are based on people he knows. All the fantastical creatures he encounters are composed of other things, the cyclopes is simply the image of a giant human with only one eye, Circe and Calypso have aspects of Penelope, and the spirits he meets in the Underworld are people Odysseus has met or have heard of like Achilles, his mother and Agamemnon and the prophet is a famous historical figure.

The *Leviathan* explains how the physical world affects the dreamscape. Hobbes states that dreams never seem absurd while asleep but upon waking the dreams seem absurd. He also explains that dreams are shaped by your body’s temperature and emotions: “And seeing dreames are caused by the distemper of some of the inward parts of the Body; divers distempers must needs cause different Dreams. (Hobbes 91)” In other words, the emotions Odysseus has during the day directly affects his dreams. If we apply this sense of dreaming to the *Odyssey*, the role of fear and desire and their effect on Odysseys becomes both apparent and important. In my interpretation, the monsters represent the fears he must overcome, and many of the people represent parts of his mind or his family back at home. Hobbes explains why Odysseus’s dreams appear to be a series of dreams, they are in fact parts of an unguided train of thought:

In which case the thoughts are said to wander, and seem impertinent one to another, as in a Dream. Such are Commonly the thoughts of men, that are not onely without company, but also without care of anything; though even then their Thoughts

are as busie as at other times, but without harmony; as the sound which a Lute out of tune would yeeld to any man; or in tune, to one that could not play. And yet in this wild ranging of the mind, a man may oft-time perceive the way of it, and the dependance of one though upon another. (Hobbes 95)

Viewing Odysseus' dreams as a whole, it seems as though they are not linked to each other, but when you view them independently, one after the other, the transitions between them become much clearer.

To briefly summarize, drawing from Hobbes, I take a dreamscape to be imagination during sleep. Dreams are influenced by sense and the emotions you experience during the day. In my interpretation, the emotions Odysseus has during the day, such as missing his wife and his various fears, directly affect his dreams. Now I must turn to de la Barca's *Life is a Dream* in order to discover how to interpret *The Odyssey's* notion of justice. *Life is a Dream* is a play about a prince in exile who has never known the world outside the tower in which he lives. During the course of the play he "leaves" the tower twice but doesn't know if he is dreaming or awake during either journey because he is tricked into taking the first journey. The themes of the play are the conflict between fate and freewill, the difference between dreams and reality and the conflict between father and son. Segismund cannot differentiate between reality and dreams, and this leads to an important discovery about how to act. Odysseus, on the other hand, simply cannot tell that he is in fact dreaming, and the conflict between free will and fate makes an appearance several times in the *Odyssey* in the form of the will of the gods and prophecies.

Segismund, the dreamer, explains that it is best to act in accordance with goodness in life, because sometimes we can't tell if we are dreaming or awake. He is told that he must curb his wild passions and his selfishness; this is not something he already knows because he

spent his entire life as a prisoner in a tower interacting with only one person. As he learns: because we cannot always differentiate between reality and dreams we must assume that we are always awake and be just. We don't lose anything by this assumption (Life is a Dream 274). This means that justice should always be our aim; if we cannot differentiate between dreams and reality we must always assume that we should not be ruled by our desires.

Segismund, like Odysseus, is initially a creature of desires; he kills a courtier because he upsets him, he is ruled by his desires, and makes a terrible ruler. Segismund believes that because he is in a dream he can act however he desires. But during his second journey out of the tower he learns that because we often cannot tell the difference between a dream and reality, we must always act if we are awake. He learns to control his desires and becomes a just and wise leader at the end of the play.

From Segismund's lesson we gain insight into how to consider Odysseus's dreams. Because Odysseus believes he is awake the entire time, we do not have to worry about Odysseus questioning the dream; instead we must consider if Odysseus acts justly. Odysseus goes through a journey of learning, similar to Segismund's, to control his desires with some important differences. Odysseus comes to the conclusion about justice and proper behavior through his encounters in his dreams, but no one tells him how he should act. He initially allows his cleverness and pride to control his actions, but by the end of the journey he learns to control his ego and this is very important as it allows him to withstand the terrible treatment the suitors give him.

If we examine Odysseus' journey as a dreamscape, we are better poised to ask if he acts justly. These dreams serve as a method to explore Odysseus' character and his growth

through his journey home. *Life is a Dream* explains how dreams are influenced by the dreamers themselves. Two different characters note how this is possible. Clotaldo states: “Talking of eagles made you dream of empires, but even in your dreams it’s good to honor those who have cared for you and brought you up. For Segismund, even in dreams, I warn you nothing is lost by trying to do good.(Life is a Dream 267)” As Segismund says "And now experience shows me that each man dreams what he is until he is awakened. The king dreams he’s a king and in this fiction lives, rules, administers with royal pomp.(Life is a dream 267) ”

Odysseus’ dreams are similarly a reflection of the reality that he is in danger of never returning home and that he will be a guest in his own home. Taking this as my inspiration for thinking about Odysseus journey, my sense of his character grows if, as Segismund says, I think of Odysseus as dreaming “what he is.” The symbols I discover then become aspects of his greatest fears and desires, and the journey more than a journey of monsters and danger, but of man undergoing self-examination, even if he is unaware of it. With this is mind it is easy to see why Odysseus dreams he’s on a journey home and also why he must overcome trials before he can return home, because returning home is his greatest desire. He is nevertheless afraid of the problems he will encounter when he finally returns home, knowing that Penelope will be courted by suitors who refuse to acknowledge the limits and laws governing guests set out by the gods. He states his worried to the ghost of his mother. Saying: “Tell me of father, tell of the son I left behind: do my royal rights still lie in their safekeeping? Or does some stranger hold the throne by now because men think I’ll come home no more? Please, tell me about my wife, her turn of mind, her thoughts... still standing fast beside our son, still guarding our great estates, secure as ever now? Or has she wed some other countryman at last, the finest prince among them?” (Homer XI 198-205)”

Turning to the themes of Odysseus' dreams. Understanding these themes allows us to understand the emotions Odysseus is feeling and thus allows us to better understand his growth of character. There are two themes that appear in a majority of Odysseus' dreams. The first is his love for his wife Penelope. He even chooses her over a goddess. "Ah great goddess," worldly Odysseus answered, "don't be angry with me, please. All that you say is true, how well I know. Look at my wise Penelope. She falls short of you, your beauty, stature. She is mortal after all and you, you never age or die... Nevertheless I long- I pine, all my days- to travel home and see the dawn of my return. (Homer V 236-241)" This devotion to Penelope is one of things that drives Odysseus to return home. It also influences the dreams themselves. Circe appears as a representation of Penelope's intelligence, Calypso appears as a representation of her role as a wife and the Phoenician princess appears as a representation of her as a youth, but none of these are enough for Odysseus.

The second theme is Odysseus' fear of returning home and discovering that it is no longer his home, which appears in several of his dreams, including the episode with the Cyclopes, the encounter with Circe and the incident with the Sun god's cattle. As Odysseus states "So nothing is as sweet as a man's own country, his own parents, even though he's settled down in some luxurious house, off in a foreign land and far from those who bore him (Homer IX 38-41)". These fears are represented by many things including the cyclopes ignoring the laws governing the proper treatment of guests, Circe turning his men into pigs represents the loss of his household and his possessions being gobbled up by the suitors.

As I have just illustrated, Odysseus' love for his wife appears in his time spent with Calypso and the encounter with Circe. These two women serve as representation for aspects

of Penelope that Odysseus finds desirable, which is what makes them so dangerous. The dreamscape allows me to interpret Odysseus' fears and desires by having them shown as encounters with people and monsters. By viewing these encounters as symbols of his desires and fears it allows me to explore his growth and prepares me to understand his final actions and the story's sense of justice.

I will now turn my investigation of Odysseus and his dreams to a chronological account, beginning with the Lotus Eaters and the Cyclopes, in an attempt to discover the purpose behind these dreams. I believe they serve as a series of ordeals that Odysseus must endure and grow from before he is ready to return home.

The first danger Odysseus encounters is the dreamscape itself. Odysseus and his men encounter a nation of Lotus-Eaters, a nation of people who sit around and do nothing except eat more lotus. Odysseus says: "Any crewmen who ate the lotus, the honey-sweet fruit, lost all desire to send a message back, much less return, their only wish to linger there with the Lotus-eaters, grazing on lotus, all memory of the journey home dissolved forever. But *I* brought them back, back to the hollow ships, and streaming tears- I forced them, hauled them under the rowing benches, lashed them fast and shouted out commands to my other, steady comrades: 'Quick, no time to lose, embark in the racing ships!' - so none could eat the lotus, forget the voyage home (Homer IX 106-110). This is an encounter with the dreamscape itself; Odysseus is tempted to leave behind his earthly life and to live in the dream. This desire to forget about home and just eat the lotus symbolizes the danger of getting lost in the dream and never waking up. He is tempted by the aspect of the dream itself. This is a danger Odysseus must face over and over again, he must curb his wild desires and focus on returning home or

he will never wake up from the dream. These trials and tribulations strengthen Odysseus. As I state later in the paper, Odysseus uses his experiences to withstand the treatment from the suitors. “Bear up, old heart! You’ve borne worse, far worse, that day when the Cyclopes, man-mountain, bolted your hardy comrades down. But you held fast- Nobody but your cunning pulled you through the monster’s cave you thought would be your death. (Homer XX 20-24)”

The dream involving the Cyclopes is rife with symbols, including the Cyclopes himself. Polyphemus is even descended from Poseidon, the god who represents the greatest obstacle for Odysseus, the sea. He is a monstrous figure who devours Odysseus and his crew and refuses to honor the law of hospitality representing one of Odysseus greatest fears, the loss of his own household and returning home as a guest. His further descriptions of the type of society the Cyclops live in, further describes his fears. “They have no meeting place for council, no laws either, no, up on the mountain peaks they live in arching caverns- each a law to himself, ruling his wives and children, not a care in the world for any neighbor.(Homer IX 125-128)” The Cyclopes’ single eye represents single mindedness, representing Odysseus’ determination to return home. Odysseus manages to escape with his crew, by blinding the Cyclops. By blinding the Cyclops Odysseus is in fact blinding himself to his single mindedness. Odysseus also loses and recovers his identity during this dream, foreshadowing the loss and revival of his identity at home. This represents two things. He fears the loss of his identity, because of his journey and the extended amount of time away from home. He is a stranger in a foreign land, his identity is tied to his homeland and also the journey ahead of Odysseus, and he must regain his identity in order to return home.

The next dream, the encounter with the witch Circe, serves as a test of his love for Penelope and another reminder of his fear of returning home and being treated as a guest in his own household. Circe is one of the women that represents an aspect of Penelope, in this case her intelligence. “My very word, and despite their pride and passion they believed me. So by day I’d weave at my great and growing web- by night, by the light of torches set beside me, I would unravel all I’d done. Three whole years I deceived them blind, seduced them with this scheme.(Homer IXX 165-170) ” Penelope uses her cunning to trick the suitors, she tells them that she must weave a burial shroud for Laertes her father-in-law before any of them can court her, but every night she unravels the shroud so that it would never be complete. Penelope is the focus of all of Odysseus desire to return home, but her aspects that appear in the dreams also serve as distractions. Circe, as an aspect of Penelope, serves as a healing and calming influence, but Odysseus becomes so relaxed that he forgets of his desire to return home. Odysseus spends a year in the dream with Circe, until the rest of his brain finally manages to remind Odysseus that he needs to return home. Hermes appears in this dream because he is considered one of the guardians of the Greeks involved in the Trojan War and is the great grandfather of Odysseus. Odysseus probably grew up with stories of his noble ancestry which would explain why he would dream up Hermes during this encounter. The meaning behind Circe turning Odysseus’ men into swine is twofold, it represents Odysseus household being eaten up like a herd of pigs it also represents the possibility of Odysseus being taken hostage and being used as a slave. Odysseus overcomes these initial trials but falls victim to the temptation of Circe until he is reminded of his desire to return home. By overcoming these obstacles Odysseus begins to show that he has the resilience to return home and do the things necessary in order to retake his home.

Odysseus then ventures into the underworld, a place that obviously represents death and the afterlife in his dream. The ghosts he encounters in the underworld represent the friends and family whose deaths he needs to accept. His mother represents his continual desire to return home and also his acceptance that not everyone at home will still be alive when he makes it back. The ghosts of his comrades from the Trojan War represent his past that he must put aside in order to return home. The ghost of Tiresias, the Theban prophet, represents Odysseus' conscience telling him something he already knows. Tiresias warns Odysseus: "A sweet smooth journey home, renowned Odysseus, that is what you seek but a god will make it hard for you- I know- you will never escape the one who shakes the earth, quaking with anger at you still, still enraged because you blinded the Cyclops, his dear son. Even so, you and your crew may still reach home, suffering all the way, if you only have the power to curb their wild desire and curb your own, (Homer XI 111-119)" and he even foreshadows what Odysseus fears, that he will have to fight to reclaim his throne, it also reaffirms my explanation of the Cyclops eye. Without Odysseus single-minded determination, he is vulnerable to his desires and will be forced to wonder until he can regain his single mindedness. "And even if *you* escape, you'll come home late and come a broken man- all shipmates lost, alone in a stranger's ship- and you will find a world of pain at home, crude, arrogant men devouring all your goods, courting your noble wife, offering gifts to win her. No doubt you will pay them back in blood when you come home! (Homer XI 129-137)" Once Odysseus encounters his mother, he is quick to ask his mother about his fears regarding his family and the state of his household at home. But all she's really doing is stating information that Odysseus already hopes is true, that Penelope waits for him faithfully and that his son has assumed many of his responsibilities.

Odysseus' next encounter shows exactly what happens when his wild desires are not curbed. Odysseus chooses to engage in them, again and again. First with the Sirens, instead of blocking up his ears like the rest of his crew does, he has them lash him to the mast so he could listen to them and engage his curiosity. They tempt his curiosity but Odysseus doesn't fully indulge his wild desires here but he is losing focus on his single mindedness. Instead of focusing on returning home to his wife he chooses to try and indulge his curiosity. His crew, who also represent Odysseus, refuse to free him from the mast and continue past the sirens as quickly as they can. Next along his journey, Odysseus faces a lose-lose situation in Scylla and Charybdis. These two monsters represent the hard choices Odysseus must learn to overcome, he cannot use his cleverness now, and he has no choice but to sacrifice members of his crew in order to save the crew as a whole. He has to learn that he cannot always win and must take the advice of other people. Initially he ignores Circe's advice and tries to fight Scylla until he realizes that it is a futile task. The final encounter Odysseus has before he learns to curb his wild desires is dealing with the island of the Sun. Odysseus and his crew land on the island despite several warnings to avoid it at all costs. Odysseus warns his crew: "Listen to me, my comrades, brothers in hardship, let me tell you the dire prophecies of Tiresias and Aeaean Circe too: time and again they told me to shun this island of the Sun, the joy of man. Here, they warned, the worst disaster awaits us. Row straight past these shores- race our black ship on! (Homer XII 294-298)" But Odysseus gives into his desires once again, here represented by his crew, and ignores all the warnings and he is shipwrecked and forced to live on Calypso's island for seven years.

Calypso's island is described as paradise, even Hermes who's used to Olympus is even impressed with how beautiful it is. This description of beauty is to invoke the sense of

home to Odysseus. Calypso is the domestic aspect of Penelope. She comforts him and takes care of him during his stay on her island.

“A great fire blazed on the hearth and the smell of cedar cleanly split and sweetwood burning bright wafted a cloud of fragrance down the island. Deep inside she sang, the goddess Calypso, lifting her breathtaking voice as she glided back and forth before her loom, her golden shuttle weaving. Thick, luxuriant woods grew around 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. Hermes the guide, the mighty giant-killer, stood there, spellbound... (Homer V 65-84)”

Even the gods are impressed with how beautiful Calypso’s home is. This is a true symbol of paradise and serves as a temptation for Odysseus to give into his desires. But Odysseus is finally able to resist his desires, all he truly wants is to return home to his wife. “In the nights, true, he’d sleep with her in the arching cave- he had no choice- unwilling lover alongside lover all too willing... But all his days he’d sit on the rock and beaches, wrenching his heart with sobs and groans and anguish, gazing out over the barren sea through blinding tears.” Odysseus is finally allowed to return home as he receives permission from the gods. It’s still not a straightforward journey for Odysseus as Poseidon takes his last bit of revenge and wrecks his raft and Odysseus washes ashore on the island of Phaeacians. This yet another paradise that he has found, but like Calypso’s island, the only thing on his mind is returning home to his family. These paradises represent the dangers of the dreamscape itself. Odysseus must repress the desire to remain in the dream, much like the danger of eating the Lotus. These are more dangerous than the lotus as they also represent his home. As I noted earlier Calypso represents the domestic and beauty aspect of Penelope and that is why it takes

Odysseus so long to break free of his desire to remain with her, because she is the closest thing to Penelope he has encountered. It is only through Odysseus intellect, here represented by Athena, goddess of wisdom, sending Hermes, a trickster and god of travelers, to free Odysseus from Calypso.

Odysseus next washes ashore on the island of the Phaeacians where he is finally treated with the proper respect due to a guest. This island also represents yet another paradise temptation for Odysseus. “And he marveled now at the balanced ships and havens, the meeting grounds of the great lords and the long ramparts looking, coped and crowned with palisades of stakes- an amazing sight to see... (Homer VII 49-53) It becomes even more of a temptation as he views even more of this beautiful island.

“Outside the courtyard, fronting the high gates, a magnificent orchard stretches four acres deep with a strong fence running round it side-to-side. Here luxuriant trees are always in their prime, pomegranates and pears, and apples glowing red, succulent figs and olives swelling sleek and dark. And the yield of all these trees will never flag or die, neither in winter nor in summer, a harvest all year round for the West Wind always breathing through will bring some fruits to the bud and others warm to ripeness —pear mellowing ripe on pear, apple on apple, cluster of grapes on cluster, fig crowding fig. And here is a teeming vineyard planted for the kings, beyond it an open level bank where the vintage grapes lie baking to raisins in the sun while pickers gather others; some they trample down in vats, and here in the front rows bunches of unripe grapes have hardly shed their blooms while others under the sunlight slowly darken purple. And there by the last rows are beds of greens, bordered and plotted, greens of every kind, glistening fresh, year in, year out. And last, there are two springs, one rippling in channels over the whole orchard — ^the other, flanking it, rushes under the palace gates to bubble up in front of the lofty roofs where the city people come and draw their water. Such the gifts, the glories showered down by the gods on King Alcinous' realm. And there Odysseus stood, gazing at all this bounty, a man who'd borne so much ... Once he'd had his fill of marveling at it all. (Homer VII 129-157)

This is very important as this is the last dream before he wakes up back home, it serves as both his last lesson and last temptation. He controls his desire to stay and gains a promise from the Phaeacians to transport him home. Odysseus learns exactly how guests

should be treated, even beggars. “This is no way, Alcinous. How indecent, look, our guest on the ground, in the ashes by the fire! Your people are holding back, waiting for your signal. Come, raise him up and seat the stranger now, in a silver-studded chair, and tell the heralds to mix more wine for all so we can pour out cups to Zeus who loves the lightning, champion of suppliants- suppliants’ rights are sacred. And let the housekeeper give our guest his supper, unstinting with her stores. (Homer VII 189-197)” As this is the last dream it is fresh in his mind when he returns home. The contrast in how he is treated when he returns home is very important. Odysseus knows exactly how guests should be treated and act, as he was very recently treated like a guest and he acted exactly how a guest should act. Odysseus even covers his face during the songs that remind him of home so that his weeping doesn’t disturb the party. This is very different from the suitors gorging themselves and destroying his household. Odysseus doesn’t even want to compete in the contests of skill until he is very rudely challenged. Only then does he decide to compete and wins every competition he competed in. This shows that Odysseus has gained humility. The Phaeacians promise him that they will take him home on one of their ships, no matter the distance.

Odysseus is dropped off on a beach on Ithaca, still asleep, by the Phaeacian crew: “Up from the benches, swinging down to land, first they lifted Odysseus off the decks- linen and lustrous carpet too- and laid him down on the sand asleep, still dead to the world. (Homer XIII 131-134)” This is the moment where Odysseus truly wakes up, this is where the story transitions from being a series of lessons for Odysseus to a story about justice. Odysseus is disguised by Athena as a lowly beggar. This symbolizes one potential future for Odysseus and also shows his desire to take back his household. Athena advises Odysseus to find the swineherd, Eumaeus, in order to begin plotting his vengeance against the suitors. The

interactions Odysseus has with Eumaeus help to provide us with the evidence to prove that Odysseus is in fact acting justly. Odysseus appears as a guest to Eumaeus who explains the laws handed down by the gods protect beggars and guests. “It’s wrong, my friend, to send any stranger packing even one who arrives in worse shape than you. Every stranger and beggar comes from Zeus and whatever scrap they get from the likes of us, they’ll find it welcome. (Homer XIV 64-68)” This is in direct contrast to how Odysseus was treated by Polyphemus, the cyclops, he also explains exactly how Odysseus will be treated by the suitors. The story Odysseus makes up reinforces the idea of proper treatment of guests, that even a former enemy who becomes your guest must be protected or you will suffer the wrath of Zeus.

Telemachus is reunited with his father and also reinforces why the suitors are guilty and deserving of vengeance; they refuse to acknowledge the proper limits of guests. They’re far too abusive, reckless, know no limits. (Homer XVI 96)” Because they are abusing the hospitality of Odysseus’ household and this behavior is punishable by death according to Zeus. Odysseus claims that they are assisted by Athena and Zeus themselves. He states that the suitors will not change their behavior and that they are doomed to die. Their treatment of Odysseus further damns the suitors. “And now Athena came to the side of Laertes’ royal son and urged him, “Go now, gather crusts from all the suitors, test them, so we can tell the innocent from the guilty.” But not even so would Athena save one man from death. (Homer XVII 396-399)” Athena is clearing Odysseus of any possible guilt, not only are the suitors guilty of violating the rights of guests but the gods themselves have decreed that they must die. Also there is an omen as well, Penelope warns the suitors: “No, there is no man like Odysseus in command to drive this curse from the house. Dear god, if only Odysseus came back home to native soil now, he and his son would avenge the outrage of these men- like

that! At her last words Telemachus shook with a lusty sneeze like a thunderclap resounding up and down the hells. The queen was seized with laughter, calling out to Eumaeus winged words: “Quickly go! Bring me this stranger now, face-to-face! You hear how my son sealed all I said with a sneeze? *So* let death come down with a grim finality on these suitors one and all not a single man escape his sudden doom! (Homer XVII 598-609)” Now we have our reason why the suitors must die, they didn’t observe the limits and laws regarding guests and thus have insulted the gods. Throughout the next couple chapters there are continual reminders that the suitors are violating the laws of the gods and will therefore be punished for it. “And so, I say, let no man ever be lawless all his life, just take in peace what gifts the gods will send. True but there I see you suitors plotting your reckless work, carving away at the wealth, affronting the loyal wife of a man who won’t be gone from kin and country long. I say he’s right at hand- and may some power save you, spirit you home before you meet him face-to-face the moment he returns to native ground! Once under his own roof, he and your friends believe you me, won’t part till blood has flowed.(Homer XVIII 163-171) ” But despite these several warnings the suitors refuse to leave, some don’t care about the laws while others are forced to stay by Athena in order for them to face their punishment. “Even then Athena had bound him fast to death at the hand of Prince Telemachus and his spear. (Homer XVIII 178-180)” The gods themselves have decreed that the suitors must die for their crimes, there is no escape for them.

All the punishment Odysseus endured was to prepare him for the continual abuse the suitors would throw onto him. “But he struck his chest and curbed his fighting heart: that day when the Cyclops, man-mountain, bolted your hardy comrades down But you held fast- Nobody but your cunning pulled you through the monster’s cave you thought would be your

death. So he forced his spirit back into submission, the rage in his breast reined back- unswerving, all endurance. (Homer XX 19-27)” All the lessons he learned from his encounters were to ensure he wouldn’t act too hastily during his plan to kill the suitors and avenge the injustice they had committed against his house. This shows that the dreams were important to Odysseus’ development as a character as I suggested earlier.

Odysseus’ identity is finally restored during the archery contest when he draws back the bow and defeats the suitors at the contest. Odysseus links his identity to his cleverness and his skill with the bow throughout the story. So a combination of a clever plan and winning an archery contest would allow Odysseus to regain his sense of identity. It’s also suggested that Penelope is crucial to this revival of his identity.

“Now, the lustrous queen soon reached the hidden vault and stopped at the oaken doorsill, work an expert sanded smooth and trued to the line some years ago, planting the doorjambs snugly, hanging shining doors. At once she loosed the thong from around its hook, inserted the key and aiming straight and true, shot back the bolts- and the rasping doors groaned as loud as a bull will bellow, champing grass at pasture. So as the key went home those handsome double doors rang out now and sprang wide before her. She stepped onto a plank where chests stood tall, brimming with clothing scented sweet with cedar. Reaching, tiptoe, lifting the bow down off its peg, still secure in the burnished case that held it, down she sank, laying the case across her knees, and dissolved in tears with a high thin wail as she drew her husbands weapon from its sheath... (Homer XXI 49-67)”

This description of Penelope retrieving the weapon that Odysseus made his reputation with is extremely similar to the description of Odysseus competing in the archery competition. The description of how she unlocks the door is identical to the description of Odysseus shooting an arrow during the competition.

With the stage set, it is finally time for Odysseus to take vengeance against the suitors who had been violating the laws of hospitality. Odysseus finally becomes himself again when

he takes up the weapon that helped shaped his legend and win the archery contest. Even the gods themselves announce their support of Odysseus.

“so they mocked, but Odysseus, mastermind in action, once he’d handled the great bow and scanned every inch, then, like an expert singer skilled at lyre and song- who strains a string to a new peg with ease, making the pilant sheep-gut fast at either end- so with his virtuoso ease Odysseus strung his might bow. Quickly his right hand plucked the string to test its pitch and under his touch it sang out clear and sharp as a swallow’s cry. Horror swept through the suitors, faces blanching white, and Zeus cracked the sky with a blot, his blazing sign, and the great man who borne so much rejoiced at last that the son of cunning Cronus flung that omen down for *him*. He snatched a winged arrow lying bare on the board- the rest still bristled deep inside the quiver, soon to be tasted by all the feasters there. Setting shaft on the handgrip, drawing the notch and bowstring back, back... right from his stool, just as he sat but aiming straight and true, he let fly- and never missing an ax from the first ax-handle clean on through to the last and out the shaft with its weighted brazen head shot free! (Homer XXI 451-471)”

This description of Odysseus defeating the suitors is very similar to the description of Penelope opening the vault where the bow was stored. This further strengthens the links between the two characters. This bow serves as a physical representation for the gate of horn that true dreams come through. It reminds the readers that Odysseus’ dreams contain messages of truth for Odysseus to figure out. I take these messages of truth to be the lessons and ordeals that Odysseus must suffer through in order to be prepared to return home. It also emphasizes that his desire to return to Penelope was his greatest desire inside the dream as she is the one who retrieves the bow from the vault. This is also the moment that Odysseus regains his identity and reveals himself to the suitors.

All of the trials Odysseus goes through affects his development as a person as well as provides us with symbolism in order to determine if Odysseus acts justly. Odysseus gains control over his desires as shown by his ability to leave the paradise his dreams show him with Calypso’s island and Circe. He, like Segismund, learns that giving into your desires only

leads to bad decisions. His loss of identity and his single mindedness during his encounter with the Cyclopes is regained during his scheming against the suitors. His identity is regained when he reveals himself to the suitors after he shoots the arrow through the axes in the challenge. Odysseus is shown to act justly as Athena praises his actions and protects him from retaliation from the relations of the suitors. We have come to see that Odysseus has always had an understanding of what justice is, but he wasn't ready to carry out justice; these lessons were necessary in order to prepare Odysseus to carry out vengeance against the suitors. We learn that justice transcends the dream, just as it does in *Life is a Dream*. But unlike Segismund's lesson in *Life is a Dream*, Odysseus' journey was towards character development, fulfillment of self and life and home. His character development and fulfillment of self occurs from his growing from the trials he overcomes and the lessons he learns. The aspects of life and home occur frequently throughout the dreams as I previously stated. Unlike Segismund, Odysseus' understanding of his journey as a dream is not important. Odysseus learns the same lessons if his journey was a dream or if it actually happened. But as readers we learn that justice transcends both the physical and the imagination, justice should always be our goal as Segismund teaches us earlier in the essay.

If you do not enjoy my simple play, I humbly beg your pardon. As Segismund says in *Life is a Dream*: I “[Ask] (for noble hearts are prone to pardon) Pardon for faults in the actors or the play (Life is a Dream 292).