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| Key Motif: Xenia, Continued |
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| |  | | --- | | **Prereading Questions**  Throughout human history, groups have defined some people (usually themselves) as “civilized” and other groups (usually unfamiliar groups or people whose ethnicity, race, religion, or appearance was strikingly different from that of the first) as “savage.” In other words, “we” = civilized; “they” = savage.  1. What are the traits or qualities you yourself define as “civilized”?  2. What are traits or qualities we think of as “savage”? |   **Lecture Points – Xenia**  RECAP THE EARLIER NOTES ON XENIA   * Xenia – Gives us the word “xenophobe,” one who is afraid of or who hates foreigners * Xenia referred to the sacred bond between hosts and guests * Xenia was a survival issue – there were no Motel 6s in ancient Greece. * RULES: You had to provide hospitality without asking who your guest was or what business he or she was on. * A visitor could be a god in disguise, checking on his “employees” * Obviously, you didn’t take advantage of your host. * You treated him and his family and possessions with respect. * XENIA IS CRUCIAL TO A SENSE OF US vs. THEM in the Odyssey. * The “civilized” characters observe rules of xenia; the bad ones don’t. * However, Odysseus is on both sides of the law. * Trojan War based on violation of xenia * Odysseus must restore xenia in Ithaca * The violation of xenia with the initial raid on Ismarus * They are still in “warrior mode” – no way for a man to go home. * Not unlike having PTSD or problems reintegrating with society, as in Vietnam   TRANSITION TO NEW FOCUS ON ODYSSEUS   * However, Odysseus is on both sides of the law. * Trojan War based on violation of xenia * Odysseus must restore xenia in Ithaca * The violation of xenia with the initial raid on Ismarus * They are still in “warrior mode” – no way for a man to go home. * Not unlike having PTSD or problems reintegrating with society, as in Vietnam   **Focus passage: Cyclops**  Read the scene with the Cyclops that follows. Then answer the “Reader Questions,” referring to the text to support your claim.  1. Why does Odysseus confess this act of piracy to the king of Scheria – who is, after all, his host?  2. Were Odysseus’ actions violating the laws of xenia?  3. Did the Cyclops have a right to defend his home?  4. What elements in the narrative make Odysseus’ actions forgivable?  5. How does Homer craft the text so we do not see Odysseus as a villain here? |