

Jill Ferris

Responsive Essay #1

Core 151 L/Martin

“Thoughtful Telemachos” (Book I, Line 213) is used to describe Odysseus’ son, who is often portrayed as contemplative in regards to how to handle difficult situations such as his missing father and his mother’s suitors.

“Circumspect Penelope” (Book I, Line 328) refers to the prudence of Odysseus’ wife, who very shrewdly made decisions in her husband’s absence to maintain order and balance, especially amongst her suitors.

The Achians are described as “strong-greaved” (Book II, Line 72) due to the hardships they have endured following the Trojan War. Their king and many of their men went to fight, and have not returned even ten years after the war ended.

“Haughty suitors” (Book II, Line 209) refers to Penelope’s suitors who compete against one another in an effort to gain her hand, assuming that Odysseus is dead.

“Godlike Odysseus” (Book II, Line 364), the hero of the story, often challenges the gods directly, and is not afraid to stand up and fight by himself.

“Dark-haired Earthshaker” (Book III, Line 6) refers to Poseidon; his powers earned him the name Earthshaker which is repeated frequently.

Telemachus encounters “Nestor the Gerenian horseman” (Book III, Line 102) in an effort to find out what happened to his father.

“Glorious Menelaos” (Book IV, Line 2) informs Telemachos of Odysseus during the war; Menelaos is now a beloved ruler.

“Shining Lakedaimon” (Book IV, Line 313) is where Nestor resides.

“Ever-truthful Old Man of the Sea” (Book IV, Line 384) is the name of Proteus who informs of the actions of the gods following the Trojan War.

“Shining goddess Kalypso” (Book V, Line 77) is a nymph who traps Odysseus but eventually helps him build a ship to leave her island.

The “proud Phaiakians” (Book VI, Line 55) are a nation of people upon whose shores Odysseus washes up on. He meets with their king and queen and they hold a series of games for him.

“Nausikaa of the white arms” (Book VI, Line 101) is the daughter of Alkinoos the Phaiakian king; she finds Odysseus.

“Limpid olive oil” (Book VI, Line 215) is given to Odysseus to anoint himself.

“Clear-voiced lyre” (Book VIII, Line 254-55) is used by Demokodos to offer his lyrics about the Trojan War.

“Great Alkinoos, pre-eminent among all people” (Book VIII, Line 375) is the Phaiakian king who hosts Odysseus in his palace. Alkinoos is very perceptive and well-revered.

“Cloud-gathering Zeus” (Book IX, Line 67) refers to the great powers of the Greek God of gods. He is often associated with weather, including the traditional lightning bolt.

In a very busy, chaotic society, characters often fall into a “sweet sleep” (Book IX, Line 333), usually at the encouragement of a god or goddess.

“Strong-benched ships” (Book IX, Line 544) are the vessels that Odysseus and his men traveled in.

“Circe of the lovely hair, dread goddess” (Book X, Line 135-36) was a witch who unsuccessfully tried to seduce Odysseus who had been aided by Hermes.

Gathered round the fire on this clear dark night

We sit here as so many have in years before us;

Eighty years of campfires on the **shore of Lake Ontario**.

Now here we sit under a **blanket of stars** making our own memories.

Tell us, **Great Program Director**, of that counselor who so long ago

Sat here on these same benches and sang our same songs.

Tell us of the girl to whom this place meant so much,

The one who earned the name “J. Ferocious.”

And so the Great Program Director, putting her hand to her lips

And raising one arm high in the air brought a hush

Over the crowd gathered round that fire under the blanket of stars.

“She first came to the spirited Camp Kenan on a **proud, sunny day**,

Her clothes packed tightly into her **oversized yellow suitcase**

Like the **nervousness bottled** tightly into that eight year old body.

Her conscientious mother spread out the **pink sleeping bag** on a top bunk and left;

‘I know she’s in good hands,’ the mother thought.

The girl was called Jillian then – a bigger name for a smaller child –

But she still had the **fiery energy** that allowed her to truly relish the camp atmosphere.

In a cabin of girls several years her senior, the wide-eyed Jillian stood out

Especially when flanked by her friends Katie and Erin, both a foot taller.

At age eight, however, these differences mattered little;

Instead, Jillian found herself too busy to even miss home.

She spent hours in the craft lodge making leather bracelets,

Boondoggle key chains and a ceramic bunny for her sister at home.

At meals and evening activities **wide-eyed** Jillian shouted, **sang and stomped her feet** –

She took part in the very same traditions years ago

That you have experienced this week at the spirited Kenan.

On the Wednesday of her weeklong stay there on the shore of Ontario,
The camp celebrated the appearance of Walt Disney – it was Disney Week, after all.
After a busy day in the sun preparing for his long-awaited appearance,
The camp celebrated at night, holding a dance in his honor.
The counselors, who by day had been replaced by characters from Disney’s past movies,
Once more returned, and they celebrated to the music of Ace of Base and Boys II Men.
Jillian danced and danced, a smile stretching across her face
As the moon arched its way across the night sky.

‘Are you two sisters?’ someone asked Jillian as she danced with Tammi;

In the glow of the evening the only compliment that meant more

Than a perceived sisterhood with her favorite counselor was Tammi’s response:

“We’ve only known each other forever!”

Those counselors – her childhood heroes, her **shining beacons** – left a lasting impression

On the wide-eyed girl spending her first week away from home.

Jillian’s conscientious mother returned at the end of the week,
Rolled up the pink sleeping bag and packed it into the car with the suitcase.
They rolled out of the camp gates and the mother asked about the wide-eyed girl’s week.
As the oversized yellow Suitcase now held an explosion of clothing due to being lived
out of for the week, so too was the wide-eyed girl an explosion of energy and emotion

As she recounted the story of her week at camp to her ever-conscientious mother.

The wide-eyed girl grew swiftly; every summer she found herself here
On the shore of Lake Ontario, shouting, singing and stomping her feet:

‘Rolling home by the light of the silvery moooooon!

Happy is the day when the COUNSELORS GET THEIR PAY

As we go rolling, rolling home!’

She progressed through the ranks of camper-hood: cadet, junior, senior
Until finally, on a very proud, sunny day, she arrived at camp for her first staff training.
Passing through their gates she once more felt the nervousness bottled inside of her.
The anxiety set off bottle rockets in her stomach, a million elephants on a trampoline.
She unpacked the car, the oversized yellow suitcase and pink sleeping bag long since
Been retired from service; in their place she carried a plastic trunk and Coleman sack.
But soon found that little had changed at her spirited Camp Kenan.
Despite the transition from camper to counselor, little else changed.
She shouted, sang and stomped her feet just as before,
But this time she had twelve eyes watching her every step she made.
Still, gathering around the campfires under the skies blanketed with stars,
She knew that this was where she was most at home.

As her staff summer wore on, she took on every day with that fiery energy.
She took her kids kayaking, swimming, on hikes through the woods.
They boondoggled key chains and told stories at night.
The counselor, her name now shortened to Jill, set her sails according to the
Shining beacons of her past counselors, those great role models of her past.

Her colleagues noted that fiery energy and gave her the name “J. Ferocious”;
Willing to mount challenges both big and small.

One day at mail call **the ferocious one** received a **pink-enveloped letter**;
An array of childish handwriting and glittering stickers adorned the outside,
Inside was a letter that brought **salty tears** to her eyes.

‘Dear Jill,

Thanks for our talk, without it I wouldn’t have made it through the week.

I don’t ever get homesick; I only ever get **camp-sick**.

I will see you next summer...I can’t wait!

-Allie’

That pink-enveloped letter was evidence of a new shining beacon burning bright.
A fire had been lit by the spark of her counselors, and now shone on,
Lighting the way for a new age of campers; a perpetual cycle of inspiration.

But every summer is like a campfire; it dies down into the glowing embers of fall
From which a new camp-fire is rekindled after the cooling of winter.
One night in late winter, she got a call like a shock of **cold wind** that still lights a fire.

‘Jill, Lori died today.’

A shining beacon extinguished; a counselor of hers had died.

In a blur, the wake then the funeral – a tragic loss, a cold wind of mourning.

The **untouchability** of her camp world was shattered. Each salty tear cut away

At the untouchability of her world; the reality of life had struck.

But even as that cold wind blew, it stirred up a new fire and zest in the ferocious one.

The pink-enveloped letter, the death of a friend, the salty tears of joy and pain:
All of these combined like searchlights focused on a single target.

The spirited Camp Kenan was her passion; it was home in the safest of terms.

In the bleakness of winter she was camp-sick; in the heat of summer she thrived.”

The Great Program Director’s voice grows quieter, the intensity still in her eyes,
The dying fire bouncing light off of her graying hair.

We sit unmoving, still under her trance; a story by firelight in hushed tones captivates.

“Camp was her passion; camp still is her passion. She still lives it, even now.”

The Great Program Director sits, but we know there is more; an untold side to the story.

The fading firelight cannot hide her salty tears – the tears of a pink-enveloped letter

And a friend, long since gone.

Book 13:

In this book Odysseus leaves the land of the Phaiakians and is returned to Ithaka by Athena while in a deep sleep. Athena then comes to him disguised as a young herdsman to welcome him to Ithaka, however Odysseus will not give up his lies and deception, claiming to have heard of Ithaka while on Crete. Athena then reveals herself and calls Odysseus out on his lies, and instead encourages him to plot against his wife's suitors. She then disguises him as an old man and sends him to meet with the swineherd while she returns to Lakedaimon to retrieve Telemachos.

Book 14:

Odysseus comes to the swineherd, Eumaios in this book, disguised as an old beggar. The swineherd tells Odysseus of the state of affairs since his beloved master left; he names the servants who have been loyal and points a finger of disloyalty at the haughty suitors. Odysseus makes note of the information he receives from Eumaios and offers information that he has heard the beloved master is on his way home at that very moment; Eumaios, however, is reluctant to believe this information.

Book 15:

Telemachos is told by Athena that it is time for him to return home, so he appeals to Menelaos to allow his leave. The king hosts a dinner in his honor and soon Telemachos sets sail on a ship as per Athena's directions so as to avoid the evil suitors poised to kill him. Meanwhile, Odysseus continues to speak with Eumaios who tells of his capture by Phoenicians and sale as a slave; he also offers Odysseus news of his master's parents. Telemachos finally arrives and conveys his ship to the city while he seeks out Eumaios himself.

Book 16:

Odysseus reveals himself to Telemachos in this book; together they plan to kill the suitors and take back their household. Telemachos at first is unbelieving that his father has reappeared, instead claiming him to be a deity, however Odysseus persists and soon Telemachos accepts. Meanwhile, the suitors once more plan to murder Telemachos. Penelope hears of the plan and confronts the men on it, however they lie to her about their plans.

Book 17:

Telemachos returns home in Book 17 and is greeted warmly and happily by Penelope. Meanwhile, Eumaios leads Odysseus, once more disguised as the old beggar man, to the household where Odysseus meets and interacts with the suitors. Antinoos, the lead suitor, becomes rather violent with the old beggar man which disturbs Telemachos. Penelope, meanwhile, hears of the old man and requests his presence so she can be told of her long-lost husband.

Book 18:

Odysseus gets into an altercation with Iros in the beginning of this book; he beats the man enough to gain a small amount of prestige amongst the suitors, however they still believe that anyone of them, being a better man than Iros, could beat up the old man. Penelope also reveals herself to the suitors, but soon leaves and Odysseus sends the women in to attend her. The suitors continue to insult Odysseus.

Book 19:

Odysseus meets with Penelope in this book and gives her "news" of her husband. She is reluctant to believe him but orders one of her servants to bathe the man's feet; Odysseus'

former nursemaid is chosen for this task. She recognizes his scar and is overjoyed to find that her master has returned, however Odysseus demands that she keep the information of his return to herself. Penelope also reveals her new challenge to keep the suitors at bay: she will wed the first suitor able to string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow straight through twelve axes.

Book 20:

Preparations are made in this book for the feast which is to follow that night. The female servants are set to work cleaning out dishes, sweeping the floor and readying the rest of the household. Eumaios returns, driving in pigs for the feast, along with several of the other man servants and they converse with Odysseus as the old man. They determine that the only servants who should remain in the household are those who are loyal.

Book 21:

Penelope sets her task for the suitors, telling them of her challenge to string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow straight through twelve ax heads. All of the suitors try and fail; she implores the beggar to try, however Telemachos is stern and sends her inside to do her work. Odysseus also reveals himself finally to Eumaios and another of his man servants, asking for their loyalty if called upon to fight. Returning inside, Odysseus strings the bow and shoots the arrow straight, accomplishing Penelope's prerequisite for marriage.

Book 22: Odysseus takes his bow and quiver and immediately shoots Antinoos dead; the other suitors believe him to have misfired on accident, however they soon realize that indeed it is Odysseus who has returned for revenge. One suitor begs for his life, blaming the deeds on Antinoos, however Odysseus is set on total revenge. He sends Telemachos to arm his ox and swineherds to join in the battle and soon all of the suitors are dead, despite a flaw in keeping the door to the store of weapons and armor open. Still, finally Odysseus allows his nursemaid to enter the room and she rejoices at the sight of the dead suitors. The women servants are then made to help stack bodies and clean up the mess made in the house.

Book 23:

Odysseus reveals himself at last to Penelope. The nursemaid goes and tells her that her husband has returned to the house and killed the suitors; however Penelope does not believe her. Finally, however, she tests Odysseus by causing him to describe in great detail the bed he built for her using an olive tree as a post. She is thus shown that her husband has returned and they shortly retire to the bed Odysseus had crafted, where after making love, they tell each other their stories from the past two decades of their lives. The next morning Odysseus decides to go visit Laertes, his father.

Book 24:

Book 24 begins with a conversation in Hades between Achilles and Agamemnon; they are soon joined by one of the suitors who relates the courting of Penelope and return of Odysseus to these former colleagues of Odysseus. Meanwhile, Odysseus returns to the orchards of Laertes where he is reunited with his father and a servant, Dolios. They can hardly believe he has returned, but as they are catching up, the relatives of the dead suitors gather and plot revenge against Odysseus. Soon they arrive, armed and ready to fight; Telemachos and Odysseus prepare to defend themselves, however Athena intervenes and makes them swear an oath to stop the combat, which he does willingly.