The Role Of Gods In The Odyssey

The gods in the story used their powers to change people’s fates. In the epic poem The Odyssey by Homer he shows that gods can do whatever they want to help or hinder people’s lives. In The Odyssey the gods chose to help or hinder the lives of people for a variety of reasons by using their powers. This is one of the most prevalent themes in the epic. There are multiple ways in which the gods showcased this theme.

The first ways they changed people’s lives is through force. The wind god Aeolus helps the soldiers get home after the battle at Troy. In lines 74-79 it says “Never once did the wind fail, once the god had set it blowing.”(74-79) The wind god Aeolus uses his wind powers to help the soldiers get home after the war against Troy. It helps the boat sail faster and safer. Another example of gods using force is when Poseidon makes Odysseus trip back to Ithaca difficult. In lines 528-536 Polyphemus says “Hear me, Poseidon who circle the earth, dark-haired. If truly I am your son, and you acknowledge yourself as my father, grant that Odysseus, sacker of cities, son of Laertes, who makes his home in Ithaca, may never reach that home.” (528-536). Poseidon acknowledges this and is now going to do everything in his power to make Odysseus trip back to Ithaca difficult. Overall, gods can use their powers to help or hinder people through force because they want to.

Another way they change people’s lives is through seeing the future and using their powers and authority to change the future. Zeus “'Odysseus shall come back by the convoy neither of the gods nor of mortal people, but he shall sail on a jointed raft and, suffering hardships.' (100-101). This shows that Zeus is using his authority to make it clear that in the future Odysseus will get back home to Ithaca. It doesn't matter what the gods do, no matter what Odysseus will get back home. Another example of god's helping people using the future is when Odysseus is informed by a goddess that he will suffer hardships. Odysseus says 'Ah me unhappy, what in the long outcome will befall me? I fear the goddess might have spoken the truth in all ways when she said that on the sea and before I came to my country I would go through hardships' (299-305). Odysseus knows that he will have to go through hardships. This motivates him even more to get back home. All of this wouldn't be possible without the goddess. In conclusion, knowing the future can help people because it will change their mindset to achieve their goal.

The third way god's help people is physically helping them in person. They show up in real life to help people. Athena shows up in person after Odysseus comes back home. She says 'But come now, let me make you so that no mortal can recognize you. For I will wither the handsome flesh that is on your flexible limbs, and ruin the brown hair on your head.' (396-403)Athena helps Odysseus by changing him into a beggar. Because he will be a beggar no one will know that the beggar is Odysseus. Athena talks to Telemachus in person. She says “Telemachos, you are to be no thoughtless man, no coward, if truly the strong force of your father is instilled in you; such a man he was for accomplishing word and action.” (267-272) She says this to motivate him to be like his father. She wants him to be heroic and do the right thing. In conclusion, gods can show up in person to help people out.

Gods or goddesses can help or hindered people's lives in many ways such using force, through

seeing future, or physically helping people in person. The first way gods or goddess helped people was through force. They would use their powers to do this. Secondly, they would see the future. When they see the future, they can change it or inform people so they can prepare for the future. Lastly, gods or goddess help or hinder people's lives physically in person. Often times they will dress up so people won't recognize them. In conclusion, I think that gods and goddess have a lot of power in what people do in the story. They can't do whatever they want when they feel like. Sometimes they will do something bad for the person or do something beneficial for the person.