

Homer in book 9 of the odyssey

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The Duality of Odysseus: an Odyssey of the Mind As William Makepeace Thackeray once said, "bravery never goes out of fashion." This theme is evident both in modern day life and ancient literature. As America found out this past August, men will go to all ends to prove their masculinity. William Lawson, of Louisiana, is among the more recent examples of this. Years after leaving the Marine Corps as a grunt, without fighting experience, he masqueraded as a Marine Corps General. His deception lasted for decades before his story unraveled. Similarly, men throughout time have come up with ways of cloaking their foolishness with a deep blanket of machoism. Such is the tale of Odysseus, of Homer's Odyssey. As Book Nine of the Odyssey reveals, Odysseus' tactful nature belies the many mistakes he makes. From the onset, Odysseus's behavior clearly shows his tactful nature. From the opening scene of Book Nine of Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus uses his cunning to win the respect and honor of the Phaiákians and their king, Alkínoös. Immediately, the reader sees how Odysseus uses charm to win over the Phaiákians: Alkínoös, king and admiration of men,/how beautiful this is, to hear a minstrel/gifted as yours: a good he might be, singing!/There is no boon in life so sweet..." Clearly, Odysseus knows he must win the favor of his hosts in order to secure their help for passage to his beloved Ithaka. Furthermore, Odysseus lathers his story with drama, thus further increasing his chances for a safe journey home. While a more modest man would have given a straight forward account of his plight, Odysseus creates drama by elaborating on his schemes to free himself of his troubles. One potent example is where Odysseus provides great detail of the sacking of Troy to Polyphamos, yet he fails to mention in much detail why he is not home yet.

Furthermore, early on in Book Nine, Odysseus makes it a point to add to his already burgeoning masculine identity: " Men hold me/formidable for guile in peace and war" (19). While not completely false, Odysseus manages to create for himself a falsely strong leader-figure. For a man of great ingenuity and the blessings of Athena, Odysseus makes an incredible number of mistakes. Among the gravest of his mistakes is following his own sense of adventure. Upon sighting the land of the Kyklops, Odysseus feels a sense of foreboding in the upcoming events: " for in my bones I know some towering brute/would be upon us soon-all outward power,/a wild man, ignorant of civility" (). This forage, as the reader comes to know, highlights both Odysseus' ingenuity and stupidity. His stupidity is showcased when he allows himself and men to go and stay in the cave of the Kyklops, which eventually leads to the death of many of his crewmen. His ingeniousness, however, is demonstrated in his cunning debilitation of the Kyklops and the ensuing escape from the Kyclops' lair. However, Odysseus' rashness soon eclipses his guile. When he and his boat are still within shouting distance, Odysseus instigates the blinded giant, and thus almost ends the lives of his entire crew when Kyklops hurls a boulder at his boat. Even though it misses, the aftershocks of its splash push Odysseus almost into the Kyklop's reach. This and many other instances show how Odysseus' rash behavior overtakes his williness. Like many, if not most, of mankind, Odysseus exhibits a certain duality in his nature that defines his persona. In Book Nine of his Odyssey, Homer poignantly illustrates both sides of Odysseus: The guile, crafty raider of cities, and the rash warrior in search of home and glory. Like pseudo-

Marine General Lawson, Odysseus will eventually realize the error of his ways, and eventually, his karma-ic punishment by the Gods will cease.