

Tennyson vs homer ulysses vs oddyseus essay sample

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



Although Ulysses and Odysseus share similar traits, Homer would not agree with Tennyson's portrayal of Odysseus in the poem "Ulysses". Whereas Odysseus wishes to complete his journey and find relief, Ulysses seeks to continue on a never-ending one.

Homer's *Odyssey* and Tennyson's "Ulysses" have different desires and their desires lead them on contrasting quests. The hero in Homer's depicts Odysseus as a hero in the process of completing a journey home. The portrayal of Ulysses is a hero that has already completed his journey, but he wishes to go back on another journey.

Odysseus's longing for his homecoming is wrought with temptation to swerve from his goal but he resisted it due to his desire to return home. He actually left the home of two beautiful goddesses in order to get to his ageing wife and son. He leaves what could be a luxurious home to go back to his home and to add to that, Odysseus also passes up immortality even though that would be a priceless prize. Resisting the temptation to become something near a god clearly shows that Odysseus's homecoming is still his only goal. "Stay here with me... and be an immortal... I myself know that all you say is true and that circumspice Penelope can never match the impression you make for beauty and stature." (Homer, the *Odyssey* Pg. 93 Ln. 93)

Odysseus's desire to go home even allowed him to become defenseless which is seen many times against his nature. Wearing no clothes seems to be a sign of vulnerability because there is nothing coming between him and the water, which the reader can understand, represents the unconscious.

<https://assignbuster.com/tennyson-vs-homer-ulysses-vs-oddyseus-essay-sample/>

With the last barrier taken away he takes one step closer to his journey. “
And stripped off the clothing which the divine Kalypso had given him”
(Homer, The Odyssey Pg. 98 Ln. 373).

Ulysses desires more than ruling his kingdom, which seems empty to him, he wants another journey. In Tennyson’s poem Ulysses laments on the lack of prosperity brought to one who has completed his journey. He speaks of the boredom of an inactive leader and the uselessness of implementing his rule on an unorganized and backward community. His reflection on this proves that he wants to go on another journey. “ It little profits that an idle king, by this still hearth, among these barren crags, matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole Unequal laws unto a savage race,” (Tennyson’s Ulysses, Ln 1).

Without the responsibility of kingship he would be able to carry out his desire of another journey so Ulysses declares that he will bequeath his kingdom and power to his son, Telemachus. Ulysses’s willingness to bestow his throne upon his son illustrates an effort to another goal the goal of leaving his home and not returning. “ This is my son, mine own Telemachus, to whom I leave the scepter and the isle... When I am gone. He works his work, I mine” (Tennyson, 24).

Ulysses sounds almost wistful with desire when he addresses the men who he had been with on his original journey as he speaks to them and says they still have strength left in them to seek yet another journey. Ulysses makes a metaphor of their life be comparing to a day, and in this day it is late and the

sun is setting. The reader can understand this as Ulysses saying that one is never too old to broaden their mental barriers and limitations through adventure. He speaks as if he has an admiration for death saying it is better to pass doing what they are great for than to die waiting for death; it is better to shine than to rust. In the final statements of his poem he speaks to his fellow crewmen and says that he intends to end his life striving forth and never stopping. "The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep... Come, my friends, 'T is not too late to seek a newer world...for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars, until I die. One equal temper of heroic hearts, Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" (Tennyson, Ulysses Ln. 55).

The similarities between the portrayal of Odysseus and the portrayal Ulysses are based upon their mutual thirst for knowledge and the possibility of going on another journey. Both Homer and Tennyson portray their hero's needing a second journey after their completion of the journey. Ulysses has not completed his understood journey the thirst for knowledge while Odysseus has, and Ulysses has now fallen into a state of indifference as a result of his desire for a second journey.

Both yearn for learning and wish to gain wisdom through adventure, they both wish to expand their minds. Ulysses, like Odysseus, would rather use his mind than use his muscles. "And this gray spirit yearning in desire to follow knowledge like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bound of human thought." (Tennyson Ln. 30) This is a link to the modern hero, because

Odysseus and Ulysses both seek to constantly renew themselves, Ulysses through words and Odysseus through actions. The only problem is that Ulysses goes about it the wrong way, he seems to be reflecting more than acting and Odysseus does exactly the opposite. Odysseus is the complete representation of the ideal hero, while Ulysses seems somewhat similar to the hero; he doesn't exhibit the type of submission to others and himself that is required of a hero. "The hero is the man of self-achieved submission" (Campbell "Myth and Dream" 17).

Homer in his epic tale has Odysseus meet the prophet Teiresias. This blind prophet tells him that after he achieves his homecoming he will need to take yet another journey in which he teaches the lessons of his journey to people who do not know of it. Odysseus admits later to his wife that he doesn't want to go on the journey but he needs to. This directly contrasts Ulysses's need because his is not based upon desire. This fact does not change Odysseus's desires because his reluctance shows that he still strives for home. "Then you must take up your well-shaped oar and go on a journey until you come where there are men living who know nothing of the sea, and who eat food that is not mixed with salt, who never have known ships whose cheeks are painted purple, who never have known well-shaped oars which act for ships as wings do" (Homer, The Odyssey Ln 21)

The depiction of Ulysses's impending journey shows the necessity of constant renewal. Tennyson explains that Ulysses is home after achieving his homecoming however he feels that he needs to take another journey in which he will reach renewal again. "And this gray spirit yearning in desire to

follow knowledge like a sinking star, Beyond the utmost bound of human thought"(Tennyson, Ulysses Ln 30). Even though he has gone through a journey of renewal he must constantly repeat this act in order to battle past his own limitations and achieve his true prospective. " Only birth can conquer death, birth not of the old thing again, but of something new...there must be if we are to experience long survival-a continuous ' recurrence of birth' (palingenesia) to nullify the unremitting recurrences of death" (Campbell, " Myth and Dream" 16).

Odysseus once finding the knowledge he seeks shares it while Ulysses is too caught up in his reflective desires to do so. Ulysses declares that he will give away his kingdom and power to his son Telemachus. The reader can interpret Ulysses willingness to give away his burden to another as an illustration that Ulysses is not self reliant in fact he is the opposite, he would rather have another individual deal with the problems bestowed on him by lineage in this case the ruling of Ithaca, than face the problems himself. " This is my son, mine own Telemachus, to whom I leave the scepter and the isle...Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill This labor, by slow prudence to make mild A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees Subdue them to the useful and the good... When I am gone. He works his work, I mine" (Tennyson, Ulysses Ln 43).

One comprehend that the Homer's Odysseus was bound to his home while Ulysses seems to gain contempt for his home once it is reached. This difference between Homer's Odysseus in the Odyssey and Tennyson's Ulysses show that Homer would not approve with Tennyson's version of his

hero. The two heroes' goals oppose each other; Odysseus wishes to return home while Ulysses wishes to remain far from home. Although they obviously have similar characteristics like their intelligence and wit, they are at different points of their journey. Odysseus, by the conclusion of his epic story, has been reborn to some extent, and is back in the conscious teaching others how to also experience rebirth. Ulysses, on the other hand, knows he desires to travel all the while teaching others of rebirth, but it does not seem that Ulysses has reached rebirth himself because he does not seem to have achieved complete universality.

He still is focusing on the conscious although he aware of the unconscious. The fact that Ulysses has completed a journey yet in years for another means he never completed his first, and that makes all the difference. So Homer while creating the Odyssey and Odysseus portrays the necessity of ones first journey and the thirst for knowledge, while Tennyson is portraying the irony of ones ill contempt after the completion of the journey and ones return to self-absorbance once he his finally reached and passed his homecoming. The contempt he shows for those he has met after he has reached his final goal, contradicts the notion that a hero must go out and teach after he submits himself. Ulysses's failure to do this would be a huge disappointment to Homer.