

The flaws of odysseus

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



In the book "The Odyssey" by Homer, the main character Odysseus could be defined as being a strong, noble, and courageous man who is confident as well as a heroic phenomenal athlete. His quick intellect helped him overcome many intricate and strenuous situations while his conning and articulate speech could win over any audience without a dilemma. With all these great characteristics he possessed, one might question did this majestic man have any blemishes throughout the story at all. Could it be possible that if this man was indeed so perfect, then why was his voyage back to Ithaca after the Trojan War so prolonged over the years? Surely a man with qualities such as these should have no difficulty returning himself and his shipmates back to their dwellings. Unfortunately, Odysseus as well as his crew members had some flaws that are common to all humans. These certain characteristics not only made their quest for home much longer than intended, but also made it tiresome and convoluted. One of Odysseus' major flaws was his pride as well as his overconfidence in himself. One might argue that pride is a good thing to have; however, in the case of Odysseus he had a tad bit too much. This gets him into major trouble with Poseidon, the ruler of the sea and the God of earthquakes. After outwitting the Cyclops and blinding him, Odysseus, feeling boastful about his narrowly escaped victory, unintelligently boasts about his daring act. This enrages the Cyclops and he flings boulders into the sea, almost sinking the ship. When Odysseus and his men are a great distance away that the rocks could not strike the ship, he gets carried away in his pride and unwisely bellows out "Cyclops-if any man on the face of the earth should ask you who blinded you, shamed you so-say Odysseus... Laertes' son who makes his home in Ithaca!" (Book 9 558-562).

Unfortunately for him, the Cyclops is really the son of Poseidon. The Cyclops then asks his father to punish the man who had harmed him, begging him to make sure Odysseus never reaches home, and if he does, then let him be a “broken man-all shipmates lost, alone in a stranger’s ship-and let him find a world of pain at home! ” (Book 9, 593-595). Poseidon hears his son’s cry and grants his plea. This incident hurt Odysseus more than losing a few of his shipmates because Poseidon made the crew’s quest for home very extensive and strenuous. If Odysseus had only ignored his need to boast and put aside his pride, neither the Cyclops nor Poseidon would have known of his daring escape, allowing him to return to his home of Ithaca much sooner than he did. Another one of Odysseus’ deepest flaws was his inability to resist certain temptations. For instance, one situation that could have had a negative outcome was when he and his crewmates were sailing in the sea of the Sirens. Odysseus was previously warned about the dangerously alluring song of the Seirenes and the disaster it causes, yet he was very tempted to know of its sound. After sticking wax up the ears of all the crew members so they couldn't listen, Odysseus insists upon being attached firmly to the mast so he could not follow the perilously seductive song. Even though there were no consequences from his actions, Odysseus still jeopardized the crew for his own personal satisfaction. All the blame cannot be placed upon Odysseus for the delay of his return to Ithaca after the Trojan War. Odysseus’ crew was disobedient, greedy, inquisitive, and at times mutinous. An example of the crew mutinous behavior having a severe consequence is shown in Book 9. Odysseus tells his listeners of a tale of how the crew disobeyed his orders to not drink after they ravaged the city of Ciccone. He warns his crew that the

Ciccones are bound to come back in numbers to seek revenge. The crew does not listen and decides to drink and rest anyway. This resulted in the Ciccones doing exactly as Odysseus had predicted, causing a shameful defeat and death of many of Odysseus' crew members. Another example of how the crew delayed Odysseus' journey to Ithaca is given in Book 10. Upon leaving the Aeolian island, Odysseus was given an ox hide sack by Aeolus, the god of the winds. The sack contained wind that would help the crew reach home. Aeolus had given the sack to Odysseus with strict instructions not to open it. However, curiosity overcame the crew, thinking that Odysseus was hauling gold and silver back home to Ithaca, they opened the sack when they were miles away from their homeland, causing the winds to release from the sac and blow the boat far away from Ithaca and off course. In conclusion, Odysseus possesses many qualities superior to those of most men, yet he remains recognizably human through his flaws and weaknesses, making him an epic hero. Throughout the story, it is proven that no matter how many great features Odysseus contains, it was some of his and his crew mates' character flaws which prevented them from returning home in a timely manner after the Trojan War. However, one good thing about Odysseus was that no matter how many weaknesses that appeared before him, he was able to overcome them all and eventually reach his goal to return home to Ithaca.