

# Exploring the greek mythology through the 'odyssey'

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



Literary narratives such as the Greek and the Roman mythologies have played a great part on the development of societies around the world. Especially in the context of western civilization, the mythologies of the Greeks and the Romans significantly shaped the culture of this region. Aside from its culture, it also highly influenced its society in general. In fact, politics and religion are also explained in the light of the Greek and Roman mythologies.

In this paper, it will explore on the Greek mythology through the myth on the 'Odyssey'. More specifically, it will emphasize on its main character by the name of Odysseus or Ulysses. Through this character, this paper will be able to explain the role of myth on the changing cultural make-up of Greece. In particular, this myth will serve as an instrument in identifying the way Greeks perceive and use mythologies. Finally, this paper will also present the different key points of the myth.

The Odyssey is an epic of Homer about the adventures of Odysseus. Specifically, this myth is considered as the sequel to the earliest well-known surviving work in Western literature which is the 'Iliad'. In comparison to many sequels in the present era, the 'Odyssey' is considered to be distinct because of its originality and even stands as an independent work.

(Napierkowski, 1998a)

It has been said that its main character, Odysseus, has been a celebrated hero in the Greek mythology. Being the central character in the 'Odyssey', he is best known for his adventures during his ten-year journey home after the Trojan War. His journey to home on Ithaca took ten years because of the

anger of the sea god Poseidon. During his journey and adventures, the hero went to many wondrous and dangerous places. Along the way, he lost all his companions and the treasure he had gotten from Troy. Arriving home at last after an absence of 20 years, Odysseus had to defeat rivals trying to take possession of his wife and his kingdom. Then he had to prove his identity to his wife, Penelope. (Wickersham, 2000)

The adventures of Odysseus are highlighted by his achievement of victory in various challenges or struggles. Among this is the encounter with the Cyclopes, the Lotus-eaters, Polyphemus, Aeolus, the Laestrygonians, Circe, Journey to the underworld, the sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, the cattle of Helios as well as the Calypso and the Phaeacians. More importantly, one can also add the difficulties he acquired upon his arrival in Ithaca due to the suitors of his wife, Penelope. Eventually, all of these trials were conquered by Odysseus. Therefore, he was dubbed as a hero. Moreover, the qualities he manifested during his trials were considered as the qualities of a real or true hero.

Undoubtedly, the voyages and troubles encountered by Odysseus highlight the concept of heroism, loyalty, creativity and order. In addition, the 'Odyssey' is also famous for its use of symbolism as well as for the pace and variety of its action. With this, both the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey' set the standard by which epic poetry, if not all poetry of any kind, was judged in the past 1,500 years. More importantly, the story of the wanderings of Odysseus has remained a perennial favorite to the present day.

(Napierkowski, 1998a)

Basically, the appeal of the 'Odyssey' is derived from its nature as being able to present the Greek people as well as the way of life in ancient Greek society. In short, the story serves as an archetype to various societies and not just the Greek community. Particularly, the characters of Penelope and Odysseus serve as a role model to the multitude. Their way of life has been the idealized life of the many. Until today, the moral of the story has continuously been resonated to the people of any culture or ethnic group.

Furthermore, the theme of human condition is the most important theme in the 'Odyssey'. In the story, almost every aspect of humanity is depicted - good, bad, young, old, individuals and groups, the living and even the dead. Other themes also include love and loyalty, order and disorder, heroic craftiness, the nature of women, triumph over temptation, home, the epic journey, the God's involvement, revenge, heroism and, creativity, imagination and deception. (Napierkowski, 1998b)

Indeed, the story of Odysseus made a great impact on the society of the Greek people. In fact, even in the present day, the story on the adventures of this great hero is still related to many people around the world. In the contemporary society, people have created a modern version of the 'Odyssey' through the aid of media technology. This is evident on the animated version of this story in order to cater the needs of the children or the young generation.

## REFERENCES

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