

How far do you think  
ulysses is a  
celebration of old  
men



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How far do you think Ulysses is a celebration of old men? Tennyson presents Ulysses as an unreliable narrator that is resentful of his life as an old man that has lost his sense of purpose due to his inevitable ageing. As a result of this, he reflects on the courageous things he has done in his youth in an attempt to justify parting from his home on Ithaca. He revels in thought to consume as much glory as he may until his death. In proving he should leave his realm, he exclaims that he will offer a greater legacy for himself in his death but through his own selfishness he doesn't consider the suffering he will inflict on others through his absence. Brave as he may be, Ulysses appears oblivious to the concept of his duty and thus he may be interpreted as a recklessly obstinate individual.

Refusal in conforming to the system of aging in mind and being appears to be a consistent theme in Ulysses' monologue. Ulysses refuses to allow his life to halt before it has come to its natural end. He cannot abide the constraint that old age provokes in people and so he is adamant that he shall continue living, "I will drink life to the lees, To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!" passionate on this topic, Ulysses delivers his opinion with such enthusiasm and wisdom and illustrates how he feels. He feels bored and impotent, yearning to truly understand and engage with what is left of his life.

1. Tennyson uses punctuation for effect when confessing his fervent desire to venture into the depths of the unknown: "Vext the dim sea: I am become a name: for always roaming with a hungry heart" exemplifies this as the caesura forces the reader to pause. Tennyson's emphasis on the fact Ulysses has become a name to highlight his need for significance in

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life. He does not want to waste his years away and be quickly forgotten, but extend his eminence after death to make his mark in history. His name should have significance, even if associated with poor leadership and neglect of responsibilities. Unlike his aged wife, it could be argued Ulysses desires adventure so that he can become a name through noble work, rather than attend to his kingdom. Tennyson presents Ulysses as a man that has faults; he is not depicted as a perfect being that always chooses the right course and is abstinent in selfish deeds but quite simply the poem is a monologue told by a man. Ulysses is not a man that is superior to all beings although his achievements might suggest he is.

Ulysses even expresses himself he has fought ??? with my [Ulysses??™] peers???. ??? Peers??? are friends and equals to Ulysses and the reader can respect a man for saying so. ??? Tennyson shows the reader a very human Ulysses rather than a legendary or larger-than-life epic hero???. 2, the reader empathises with Ulysses on a certain level as he is like the audience in the sense that they find a connection with the attributes Ulysses possesses??™; he is not immaculate, he is human. Indeed Ulysses has achieved greatness in his lifetime and his will and determination to seek knowledge is admirable but can that justify his indulgence in fame He reveals an admiration of himself for his accomplishments and seems almost addicted to glory.

Despite this, the way Tennyson has applied very human faults to Ulysses allows the reader to identify with the man and see him as not just an idyllic creature that is flawless but someone who makes selfish decisions and attempts to justify it because he feels adamant in his own opinion. Ulysses can be described as an idolised old man because of his fearlessness and <https://assignbuster.com/how-far-do-you-think-ulysses-is-a-celebration-of-old-men/>

blind curiosity. But his disregard as to anything other than his own selfish desires shows Ulysses to be a greedy and ignorant person. Bibliography1

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