

Section I: "Odysseus the most cunning man in the world."

Odysseus, son of Procris and Cephalus of the Royal House of Athens, played a major role in the Trojan War. However, the legends of Odysseus do not begin until after the great war. At the end of the war he was separated from the rest of the Greek armies and was forced to wander for ten years until he was reunited with his family. His journeys in those ten years were very similar to Jason's journey in his search for the Golden Fleece. Also, in the course of Odysseus' adventures, he proved himself to be not only a great hero but also a cunning and resourceful man, worthy of the title the most cunning man in the world.

There are many similarities between the adventures of Jason and those of Odysseus'. Both heroes proved themselves to be mighty warriors; Jason,

when forced to battle against the soldiers of the dragon teeth and Odysseus during the long battles of Troy. Both heroes showed extreme courage in the face of danger and neither shied from doing what was necessary to complete their quest. Both men were also very modest and were able to except help when needed, either form gods or from other mortals. Jason did not hesitate to ask for help from the princess Medea. Odysseus accepted help from a simple sheep herder in order to reclaim his home. Although these two heroes had similar adventures and shared similar qualities, they were very different.

The first difference we notice between these two heroes is their lineage. Like most Greek heroes, Jason was a direct descendant of the gods. Odysseus on the other hand was not. He was a member of the Royal House of Athens and not divine as were many of his peers and relatives. Odysseus

was also more compassionate than Jason. Jason used people to his own end and then disregarded them. An example of this would be his relationship with Medea. She made him into the hero he was, saved his life many times, and left her homeland to follow her love Jason. Jason, however, upon reaching home with the Golden Fleece, decided to marry a princess to gain more political power. He made this decision with no thought towards Medea's feelings and her love for him. Odysseus, in contrast, was far more loyal to his family and followers. He placed their happiness and safety on an equal or greater level than his own. For instance, when he was on the island with Calypso, the nymph, it would have been very easy for him to abandon his desire to return home and live in perfect comfort forever. We see his concern again on the Island with the witch Circe. After the witch had turned all of Odysseus's companions into swine, Odysseus with little or no thought for his own safety, went to confront the witch to save his crew. However, the most notable difference between these heroes lies not in

they're adventures but rather in how they approached and dealt with their problems.

Jason, like most Greek heroes, felt that the easiest way to deal with a problem was to kill it. Odysseus, on the other hand thought of other possible solutions to his problems. He would try to use his intellect as well as his brawn to accomplish his goals. Throughout his adventures and as early as the Trojan War, we see Odysseus's cunning. It is he who is attributed with the idea for the Trojan horse (a large hollow horse filled with Greek soldiers). A second example was when he landed on the island of the Cyclops during his adventures. The Cyclops demanded to know who he was to which he answered "I am Noman" With those words he shot an arrow and blinded the Cyclops's one eye. During Odysseus' retreat, another cyclops approached the first and asked what happened to his eye. The first cyclops responded that no man had shot his eye. This ensured Odysseus's escape from

the island because the second cyclops didn't realize there were intruders.

A last example of his cunning is at the end of his adventures. Odysseus returned home and found all the suitors there. Dressed as a beggar, he had no trouble retaking his bow and then killing all of the suitors. So we see that Odysseus could rely on both his wit and his strength to save him from dangerous situations. This is why he was given the title " the most cunning man in the world."

Section II: Adonis

Sonnet, XVII.

Cherry-lipt Adonis in his snowie shape,  
Might not compare with his pure Iuorie white,  
On whose faire front a Poets pen may write,  
Whose rosiate red excels the crimson grape,  
His loue-enticing delicate soft limbs,  
Are rarely fram'd tintrap poore gazing eies:  
His cheekes, the Lillie and carnation dies,  
With louely tincture which Apolloes dims,  
His lips ripe strawberries in Nectar wet,  
His mouth a Hiue, his tongue a hony-combe,  
Where Muses (like Bees) make their mansion.  
His teeth pure Pearle in blushing Correl set.

Oh how can such a body sinne-procuring,

Be slow to loue, and quike to hate enduring?

R. Barnfield

A classical allusion can be defined as an indirect although not

accidental reference to a Greek or Roman legend. In this poem there are

three classical allusions all referring to Greek mythology Adonis, Phoebus

Apollo and the Muses. These references are intrinsic to the poem as

without them the poem would be meaningless and hollow.

The first allusion refers to Adonis, son of Phoenix and Alphasiboea, a

Greek hero. This allusion was used because this poem is an ode to Adonis

(the poem was written for Adonis). The second classical allusion we see in

this poem is to Apollo. Apollo is god of prophecy, music, and archery. He

is also known as the sun god. His name was invoked in this poem in order to show Adonis's beauty. It shows us that Adonis was so beautiful that the mighty Apollo had to dim the tint of Adonis's cheeks. The final allusion is to the Muses. The Muses were the goddesses who inspired artists. From this we can learn that they loved beauty. This is why they are used in this poem. They, like Apollo, are here to show us Adonis's great beauty. Due to the fact that Adonis is so beautiful, the Muses, patron of the artists, yearn to make their home on Adonis's tongue in order to surround themselves with his radiance.

These allusions add a sense of nostalgia to the poem a throw back to the days of gods and goddesses. The poet could have used less connotative words to tell us how beautiful he was. But Barnfield's use of the allusions gives us a better understanding of how magnificent Adonis must have been. By using the name of Apollo and the Muses, we see that he must



have been divine because no mere mortal could look that way, only a Greek hero.

### Section III: Thor Then and Now

There are very few differences between the Thor of the Norse mythology and Thor of today's comic book hero. Today's Thor is a muscular man who appears to be in his late 20's. He has blonde hair and wears a red cape. The old Thor had red hair and was a middle aged man. Although this Thor did not look very heroic, he had all the other trappings of Thor, Mjolnir (Thor's hammer), the iron gloves needed to hold Mjolnir and Thor's belt which doubled his strength. All of these accessories are present in the comics as well. In the comics, Thor has the ability to change into a regular man, with a walking stick, by tapping Mjolnir on the ground. When

this "normal" man then taps his walking stick on the ground, he once again becomes the mighty Thor. The final difference between the comics and the legend is Thor's brother Balder. According to legend, this god was killed by a blind god (with the help of Loki god of mischief) and the gods begged Hela, goddess, of death to spare Balder the beloved. Hela refused and Balder entered the land of the dead. In the comics Odin, the all father (Zeus), was able to save his son by sacrificing a part of his power, creating the Odinshield to preserve his son. Other than these few differences the Thor you read in Marvel comic books is the same one as in the legends. He still protects the people of midguard (earth) and waits for the day of Rangorak (Doom's day) where Thor will battle Jormungandr (the snake circling midguard) and the two will kill each other and destroy the world in the process. While today's version of Thor barely resembles his Greek counterparts, he very much resembles his roots in the Norse

mythology.