

Odysseus Is Not A Hero

A hero is "a man noted for his special achievements" according to the dictionary, but if you ask most people what a hero is, you will get the same general response. They will probably say "someone who does something for other people out of the goodness of his heart." Odysseus, who is the main character of the book "The Odyssey" written by Homer, would fit the dictionary's definition of a hero; but if you go deeper, looking at what people feel a hero is, he doesn't even come close. In the book, Odysseus does nothing out of the goodness of his heart. Even if Odysseus fought in the Trojan War, he is not a hero because he is self-centered and ignorant to other people's values and needs.

There are multiple examples of Odysseus being self-centered, such as not taking people's advice. Odysseus was given advice from Circe that said not to try to fight Scylla even when she takes six of your men, but Odysseus tried to fight her and he lost three more men than the six he already lost. He also neglected to take the advice from his crew member, Eurylochus. Eurylochus told Odysseus not to send men to see what was on Circe's island and because he sent them anyway, they ended up being turned into pigs. Odysseus also neglects other people's lives when he takes action; such as when he tried to fight Scylla after strictly being told not to. Because of this ignorant action, he lost three more men on top of the other six. He also sacrificed men when he waited at the Cyclops' home for "gifts." Odysseus was very self-centered where real heroes are not.

Odysseus also lacks the part of the hero profile which includes having a good heart. Odysseus definitely does not have this because he kills people without giving them a chance. Odysseus killed every one of the suitors in cold blood when most of them didn't commit a crime suitable for the death penalty. He also killed all of the maids who were raped by the suitors as if they had a choice in the matter. Odysseus also doesn't care about his crew members. When Elpenor fell off the roof at Circe's house, Odysseus didn't even bother to bury him. He doesn't support up for his crew members either. At the Cyclops' house he didn't try to defend his crew members who ended up being killed and eaten. Being cold-hearted definitely is not a characteristic of a hero.

Being disloyal is not characteristic of a hero, but Odysseus was. While he was on his journey, Odysseus had affairs with other women. When he stayed at Calypso's Island, he had multiple encounters with her despite his marriage to Penelope. He also had multiple encounters with Circe when he stayed at her island for a year's time. While Odysseus was being disloyal, his wife, Penelope, stayed completely loyal despite the suitors urging her hand in marriage. She still stayed loyal even when Odysseus was thought to be dead. Therefore, Odysseus had no reason to be disloyal to his loving wife. Disloyalty surely doesn't belong on a hero's record.

Although a war hero, Odysseus is not a hero in other respects. This is so because he is self-centered which is clear because he doesn't value other people's lives. He also is cold-hearted which is proved by his unlawful killing and his lack of support for his crew members. As well, he lacks the loyalty of a true hero as shown by his affairs with other women even though his wife remained faithful. A hero is someone who does something for other people out of the goodness of his heart, Odysseus clearly is not this.

Outline

I) Introduction

- A) The average definition for a hero
- B) What Odysseus is like compared to the definition
- C) Odysseus isn't a hero

II) Odysseus is self centered

- A) He doesn't take people's advice
 - 1) Circe's advice about Scylla
 - 2) Eurylochus's advice about Circe

- B) He doesn't Consider other people's lives
 - 1) Got crew members killed at Scylla because he tried to fight her.
 - 2) Got crew members killed at Cyclops¹ because he was being greedy.
- III) Odysseus is cold-hearted
 - A) He kills people without giving them a chance
 - 1) Suitors
 - 2) Disloyal maids
 - B) He doesn't care about people
 - 1) Elpenor didn't get buried
 - 2) Doesn't try to prevent deaths of crew members
- IV) Odysseus is disloyal
 - A) He had affairs with other women
 - 1) Calypso
 - 2) Circe
 - B) Wife didn't betray him
 - 1) with suitors
 - 2) even though he was thought to be dead
- V) Conclusion
 - A) Odysseus is self-centered
 - B) Odysseus is cold-hearted
 - C) Odysseus is disloyal