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Odysseus' Journey to Self

The *Odyssey* by Homer is an epic about Odysseus' journey home to Ithaca. However, it is not merely a story about a voyage by sea. Odysseus changes throughout the epic, acquiring new character traits and pondering a lot upon the choices he has made throughout his life. By the end of this journey, Odysseus successfully manages to finish his soul-searching. Yet, the question remains: what happened to Odysseus and made him transform into another person?

To begin with, Odysseus is extremely prone to temptation at the beginning of the epic. An episode with the Sirens is a perfect example. The ears of the members of his crew are plugged for their own safety. Nonetheless, Odysseus longs to hear the Sirens' sweet song, and the only thing that saves him is the fact that he is tied to the ship's mast. The problem is that Odysseus usually gets in trouble because of his undisclosed desires. Apart from that, he is generally very cunning. Finally, the main character manages to deceive Polyphemus and successfully gets out of the cave, safe and sound. Odysseus also seems to be able to solve any problem. He is smart, and he is not afraid to use his intelligence in every tricky situation. He understands that his physical strength is of no help, and it becomes obvious that relying on his mind is much wiser. Yet, Odysseus is also awfully proud of himself. When he and his crew

escape the cave of the Cyclops, he reveals his real name to Polyphemus. This mistake leads to suffering Poseidon's wrath:

Cyclops, if anyone asks you who it was that put your eye out and spoiled your beauty, say it was the valiant warrior Odysseus, son of Laertes, who lives in Ithaca (Homer).

Such behavior shows his unshakeable thirst for glory, which is usually the reason Odysseus gets into trouble. In addition, he is not the only one who suffers. His crew members pay the price as well, and their numbers decrease every minute.

However, Odysseus demonstrates completely different personality traits at the end of the epic. Firstly, he finally becomes more reasonable. This can be perfectly illustrated by the following situation: Disguised as a beggar, he comes to Eumaeus and pretends that he is from Crete. This fact shows that Odysseus is cautious and does not want to rush into things. He chooses to wait for an opportunity before taking action. Secondly, Odysseus becomes wiser. When he enters his own house, he is still dressed like a beggar. At this point, even his wife cannot recognize him. There is some logic to it, and it is a well-thought-out decision because women are sometimes too emotional. He anticipates that Penelope could have accidentally ruined the whole plan. Finally, Odysseus becomes more patient at the end of the story. He does not run to his home right away. He knows that this is where the suitors who are longing to marry Penelope are staying. Instead, he decides to act prudently. Odysseus waits for the perfect moment to reveal his secret. Consequently, the suitors fall into his traps, and he gains victory.

Taking everything into account, Odysseus' character changes completely because of the difficulties he had to overcome on his journey home to Ithaca. A bloodthirsty warrior becomes

an epic hero. The journey has helped him to not only find the way home, but also to realize what kind of person he really is.

Works Cited

Homer. *"The Odyssey"*. Penguin, 1999.



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