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**Critical Essay on Odyssey**

The meaning of the Greek word "andra" is a man and what it exactly takes to be a man in society. This word is significant as it refers to a man and conceals his identity at the same time. It also signifies the actions or intuitions of a person that sets him apart from the crowd and qualifies him as a heroic figure. Moreover, it symbolizes the journey of a man to find his name and identity in the world full of trials and misfortunes.

Similarly, the other word “polytropos” comes after the word “andra” and is used as an adjective to modify the noun man. It symbolizes human fate and his vulnerable nature in front of powerful Greek gods and deities. Likewise, these two words "andra polytroops", when used together, signifies a man's life which is full of twists and turns. The use of this term directs the narrative of the epic poem towards describing a man’s life journey and how his personality develops throughout his life because of his actions.

The epic poem Odyssey, describes the life of Odysseus taking many twists and turns, through his cunning nature, concealing his physical attributes and strategically planning his defense against the wrath of his powerful enemies~~.~~ The characterof Odysseus is portrayed as a man of intellect and he relies more on his intellectual abilities and his intuition. Unlike other heroes in Greek tragedies or poems, he is not portrayed as a heroic figure. He employs the techniques of persuasion and storytelling to persuade the God of the wind and the underground to help him in reaching his home. After the battle of Troy, he is stranded in the sea and is unable to reunite with his beloved wife and his son. For instance, his journey in the sea is a difficult one because he faces the wrath of Poseidon, the god of seas and he knows that he cannot avenge the powerful Gods through his strength. He conceals himself on a shipwreck in the sea and at another instance when he encounters Cyclops, he hides his identity and asks for a “warm welcome, even a guest-gift, / the sort that hosts give strangers. That’s the custom” (Odyssey 9.301-2). The desire for wealth and worldly gifts blind him and represents the flaws of his human nature. He tricks Cyclops and escapes from his cave however his human weaknesses of ego and revenge soon took over him and while escaping, he reveals his true identity.

Moreover, his urgency takes over his meticulous planning at an instance and he shows the gift of winds to his peers which results in more chaos as the winds blow in different directions. When he safely lands at the shores of Ithaca, he finds himself caught between misty clouds that are sent by Athena. He blames his hosts, the Phaeacians, and questions their loyalty "Not entirely honest or upright, were they?" (Odyssey 8, 192) whereas it is him who tricks them through his made-up storytelling techniques. He does not trust his peers and his friends such as Athena and Phaeacians and ask them to reveal their hidden intentions that might harm him. However, to protect himself and his interests, he shifts his physical attributes or changes the narrative of his tales. His personality traits are full of twists and turns as he plans his moves carefully and always put his interests first than others.

Due to Odyssey's twisted habits, his companions also do not trust him and ask for seeing the gifts too and as a result, the winds wreck their ship and they once again face trouble in reaching their homeland. When he reaches home, he once again disguises himself as a beggar and plans to kill the suitors of his wife, Penelope. He lies to Penelope and this action leads her to stage an archery competition to recognize her husband through his archery skills. Although archery is played through an arrow, it cannot be considered as a heroic sport and Odyssey is a master at archery. When he wins the competition, he kills his wife's suitors and shows his tyrannical side to the readers.

Homer has developed the character of Odysseus through these twists and turns throughout the poem. His fate is driven by circumstances but it is through his personality traits and cunning behavior that he invites more hardships throughout his journey across the sea and then in the cave of Cyclops. His introduction as a man of twists and turns justify the multiple identities that he shifts overtime to protect himself from the potential threats and test his companions. He also establishes himself as a cunning man who lusts after wealth and riches and tricks the holy deities through his storytelling techniques. Although he is not portrayed as a heroic figure, he still manages to blind Cyclops after breaking the host and guest relationship. In another instance, he cannot save the lives of his companions while passing through the cave and the spirits devour them in the guise of sailors.

On the other hand, these qualities also show his human weaknesses and fears. He is a non-heroic figure and his journey also serves as the development of his character as a storyteller, a trickster, and a careful planner. In the light of all the above events and instances, his character develops as a person who cannot be identified through one attribute of his personality and is a man full of twists and turns.

**Compare & Contrast**

Odysseus represents human weaknesses of lusting after wealth and mistrusting his companions because of the circumstances and similarly, Job shows pessimism and despair when he faces trials and tribulations. Both of them suffer the loss of their wealth, status and familial ties. Odysseus keeps on increasing his troubles through the twists and turns of his personality and his idiocy, he nearly escapes death during his journey towards Ithaca. The cause of his troubles is undoubtedly, his weak personality traits and cunning habits. However, Job is a good and moralistic person by nature and wishes good for everyone. The nature of his hardships is of a trial because God wants to test his patience and perseverance in times of hardship because he always thinks highly of God in his good times. He does not inflict this trial on himself like Odysseus.

Both the characters are described as humans and their heroic portrayal has not described in *The Odyssey* and *The Book of Job* respectively. The identity of Odysseus keeps on changing as he loses the sense of morality and honesty for his survival. He disguises his identity, curses his hosts and mistrust the actions of his peers. Likewise, over time Job starts complaining because of the agonizing pain and tries to rebel against God by not remaining more patient.

Moreover, with time, Job starts complaining because of the agonizing pain and when Odysseus faces trouble, he through his intellect creates a gateway from the potential problem. Trials remain a constant part of Odysseus's life whereas Jobs face miseries in only one day and neither hides his identity nor does he resort to cunning ways for his survival. He does not possess any special skills such as storytelling skills like Odysseus instead he prays to God. He tries to accept his fate and doesn’t do anything practical to make his situation better. Morality and God, both acts as absent figures in the life of Odysseus whereas these factors remain a central part of Job's life.

Odysseus's circumstances are although fate driven but he through his actions, inflicts the wrath of Poseidon over him whereas Satan's jealousy plays an important part in Job's trial. The former tests the patience of the God of Sea by blinding his son Cyclops. Satan views Job's virtue of patience as a challenge and persuades God to keep on increasing his miseries and pain until he gives up. Satan plays a major role in inflicting trial on Job because Job does not do anything to increase his troubles. Furthermore, God interrupts and ends his pain and illness whereas, Zeus helps Odysseus on the request of Athena. The former even trick the God of Wind through persuasion.

These trials also develop the character and personality traits of both the characters. For instance, Odysseus turns into a more domestic person after landing at Ithaca but he does not give up his cunning ways. Whereas Job realizes the importance of God's plans the hidden good in his trials. His personality develops into a more patient and forbearing person however, Odysseus, does not morally correct himself instead he kills many suitors out of his fears. Although both the characters reunite with their family, Odysseus still puts his benefits and wants first before the needs of his family. Fate plays a great role in the circumstances of Job, on the other hand, Odysseus 's fate keeps on getting worse because he is a man of twists and turns. Job does not value wealth and worldly riches whereas Odysseus can deceive people and his companions for getting favors and wealth.

Job's personality is linear as compared to that of Odysseus's and although both of them face tragedies but Odysseus's status even after deceiving the deities and killing the suitors remain more of a tragic hero. His tragic flaw is undeniably his nature and the cunning attributes that identify him as a man who lives in society without any sense of having one identity.

**Works Cited**

Homer, Robert Fitzgerald. *The Odyssey*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.