Dakota Furton

5th hour

ODYSSEUS: EPIC HERO

Epic heroes are strong and brave protagonists throughout literature. Hercules, for example, is an epic hero. Odysseus from Homer’s epic *The Odyssey*, is a good example of an epic hero. Odysseus is a strong person and incredibly brave. In spite of some arguments, he is also a strong and responsible leader for his crew.

Odysseus proves that he is epic hero material trough his brave deeds. Odysseus risks is own life to shove a burning stake into the Cyclops’ eye to free his crew. Homer wrote, “I drew it from the coals and my four fellows gave me a hand, lugging it near the Cyclops as more than natural force nerved them; straight forward the sprinted, lifted it, and rammed it deep in his crater eye” (IX 656). The above section from the poem shows that Odysseus stabs out the Cyclops’ eye, even though it s dangerous. He could have left his men to do his dirty work for him, but instead, he comes up with the plan and carries it out with the help of his men.

Another way Odysseus shows his epic hero side is when it comes to his strength. When Odysseus returns home to Ithaca and reveals himself to the Suitors, he slaughters them all with no problem at all. Odysseus even threatens, “You forced yourselves upon this house, fight your way out, or run for it, if you think you’ll escape death. I doubt one man of you skins by” (XXII 701). Odysseus is so strong; he can actually live up to his terrifying threats. He does not just gloat; he acts on the words he says. After he challenges the Suitors, Odysseus completely slaughters every single one where they stand, just as he said he would.

Some people challenge Odysseus’ epic hero title, and claim he is not a hero, because he is not a responsible leader. His actions in *Scylla and Charybdis* prove otherwise, though. Odysseus says to his men, “Friends, have we never been in danger before this? More fearsome, is it now, than when the Cyclops penned us in his cave? What power he had! Did I not keep my nerve, and use my wits to find a way out for us?” (XII 672) An irresponsible leader would not have rallied the men, and helped them carry on, even if they were all scared of the creatures ahead of them. He helps them stay brave through their troubles and perils, no matter what.

In conclusion, Odysseus is indeed a good example of an epic hero. He proves countless times that he is a brave and strong person. Some may argue that he is not a good leader, but he squashes those accusations down quickly, just as he does to anything that gets in his way.