

Eng 105

Mid-term paper

Part 1

### Two relationships between Odysseus and Athena

The relationship in the *Odyssey* was about Athena having control to the point where it was more negligible, where as in *Ajax*, Odysseus was more independent, but it was limited. In the *Odyssey*, Athena convinced Odysseus' son to go after him and bring him home, which seems to not have reason because she ends up convincing her father, Zeus, to make Kalypso let Odysseus go from the island. Even after Athena calls Odysseus' bluff about him being stuck on the island and wanting to go home. She knows what is going on at night between Odysseus and Kalypso. A couple things that are not explained in the book, but are left up to the reader's imagination is that Athena may have left him on the island so long because she knows he is miserable during the day, but eventually gets him off the island because she sees that he is happy at night. Other instances in the *Odyssey* that reflects her power over him is when Odysseus goes into town she tells him how to disguise himself and what he should do, as apposed to him figuring this out on his own.

In *Ajax* Athena humiliates Odysseus and then is caught bragging about it, but he catches her and, so out of disrespect to her he refuses to have a proper burial for Ajax. This is the ultimate disrespect for a human life, even though Ajax and Odysseus were enemies I think the only reason he refuses is to make Athena mad because of what she did to him. I think that Odysseus knows that Athena does have to power to make him do thing her way, but he tests her will power to make him do the things he doesn't want to do, like burying Ajax. Even when he does try to show his independence from her, he is still dependent on Athena, which he says in the beginning of *Ajax*, where he says she always comes to him when he needs her, and that she knows he will always need her for something. This tells the readers that no matter how many times he tries to defy her, he will constantly need her help and guidance.

Because she is a god and he is a mortal she will always have control over Odysseus even when he thinks he is making his own decisions, she can make him do what ever she wants. This shows in both the books because he gets himself into different situations where he needs the help of a god, and she is his sponsor. It is also evident that she cares for him deeply and wants him to return home to rule the island of Ithica because Telemakhos is having so many problems trying to rule. The suitors are ruining the island,

Org & nize!  
What's the  
bars of  
control?  
Absolute  
control  
(Ajax) v.s.  
limited  
independence  
(Odyssey)  
Say = o!  
Then go  
to  
scenes.

Did  
you & I  
read  
the same  
play?

but don't know any better because most of the men who were to teach them were killed at Troy, so they have no manners or sense of dignity. But I think that Athena helps bring him home because she knows even after he does return to Ithica he will want to leave again because it isn't fulfilling his want for adventure and other women.

Overall I think that Athena exercises her power over Odysseus in both books and she is well aware that he cannot live with out her and her help. Odysseus knows this but tries to fight it because he doesn't want her to think she has all the power, even though she is a god. Odysseus does try to defy her power event though she could make his life more miserable, but I think that because he knows she cares for him, she won't harm his life to the point of no return. They both care for each other but want to prove that the other one cares more about them, but it seems this emotional battle between them will keep going on until Odysseus dies, or he gets to old that Athena gets tired of having to bail him out all the time and doesn't want to spend time with such an old man. Since she is a god she can always find another mortal to control and have then care so deeply for her.

This is  
very  
hard  
to  
follow.

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