

During this quarter we have seen two divine appearances, Athena in the *Odyssey* and Herakles in *Philoctetes*. While these two appearances at the end of each respected novel seem to be very similar they actually possess more differences than similarities in their separate appearances. The similarities are much more noticeable than the differences. Both of the divine presences help their character out, both have been in the story prior to the appearance at the end, and both of them appear at the end in order to just solve a problem for their character. While these similarities might seem overwhelmingly convincing there are even extreme differences in how the similarities are carried out.

Even though both Herakles and Athena had been in the story prior to their big finish Athena was the only one who was ~~there~~ through the entire story. Athena "helps" Odysseus throughout the whole story and makes several appearances during his times of need. Herakles on the other hand is simply in the beginning of the story when he gives Philoctetes a bow in order to kill birds to survive on the island and then doesn't appear again until the end of the novel. Both of the divine have been in the story before the conclusion, even though Athena has been a more constant part of Odysseus' journey compared to Herakles. When it comes to "helping" the men they sponsor Athena and Herakles differ extremely in this as well.

Herakles sponsors Philoctetes by giving him his bow so that Philoctetes can shoot and kill birds for food in order to stay alive on the island. Other than that Herakles isn't present in the story until his appearance at the end. Athena, on the other hand, constantly involves herself in returning Odysseus to his home. Every time Odysseus begins to find himself in some sort of trouble Athena's guiding hand somehow manages to help his situation and save him from whatever dangers he was faced with. The twist in this whole situation is that while Herakles provides Philoctetes with a way of surviving on this island he doesn't help Philoctetes to escape the island. When it comes to Athena, she is always "helping" Odysseus to get out of trouble, yet his escape from one danger always seems to put him in another tough situation or another dangerous situation that continuously prolonged his journey.

While both appearances at the end seem to be because the author "wrote themselves into a corner" the attitudes of the god/goddess seem to be contrasting as well. As the reader I found Athena's appearance to be more "high and mighty". It seemed that Athena was there more for the glory of "saving the day" than she was to actually help Odysseus. I got the feeling that Athena seemed to be more concerned with showing off her power and being marveled at than actually helping her sponsored character. The image of Athena standing over the crowd of suitor's fathers and Odysseus was more like Athena wanting to be praised rather than it was her wanting to help. That was the image I saw when reading the final scene in the *Odyssey*. Herakles on the other hand seemed to be more sincere in his approach of Philoctetes. Even though he hadn't appeared to him at every possible moment Herakles came when it was important and seemed to give sincere advice to his sponsored character even though it was initially questioned by Philoctetes. So which god/goddess was a better sponsor to their character?

While on the surface it at first seems that Athena is the better sponsor it is actually Herakles who is superiorly the better sponsor for his character. Athena is constant throughout Odysseus' journey back home. At the same time problems seem to be constant for Odysseus as he makes his adventure. While Athena makes sure that Odysseus doesn't die on his voyage home she continually gives him problem after problem during his return. Herakles on the other hand helps Philoctetes survive his horrible experience on the island without giving him any extra problems or obstacles during his time there. While it may seem more beneficial for Odysseus to have Athena constantly appearing it was actually more detrimental to the goal he had in front of him. While Philoctetes was stuck on an island in the middle of nowhere not doing anything Athena has Odysseus running around everywhere not doing anything. While Herakles seems to not be helping Philoctetes by not immediately appearing whenever a tough time comes about he isn't hurting him like Athena is to Odysseus. Even though Herakles seems less involved and not as willing to help his sponsored character he is actually the one who provides more and takes care of his character more than Athena.

Well argued,  
but your sentences  
need work. See  
the sample papers,  
I send me a rough  
draft next time.

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