

Analyze the  
relationship of three  
heroes to their gods:  
odysseus and  
athena, oedi...



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Greek mythology is filled with wondrous and powerful gods with heroes trying to impress, challenge or face them. One such example is that of Odysseus in "The Odyssey" and his relationship with Athena, the goddess of war. She portrays a strong relationship with Odysseus throughout his journey always helping and taking action on his behalf. For example, in the beginning of the poem we see her begging her father Zeus to let her help him so he can return safely to his family. She even helps Odysseus to change his appearance so that the princess Nausikka will be sure to aid him in reaching home. Athena takes immediate steps to protect him once he reaches the city shown to him by the princess. For example, she protects him with a surrounding fog and herself appears in the form of a young girl to lead him to the palace. Finally, when Odysseus reaches his home, and beloved city Ithaca, Athena appears to him and confirms that she is always with him in times of danger and protects him in battle. It is clearly seen, that just like Odysseus is a man of exploits and bravery, Athena too, is a goddess of counsel, protection, and wisdom for him. Another example of a relationship between a mortal and a god is that of Oedipus and Apollo. Here we see that even with the god's help in prophesying and enlightening Oedipus, it still leads to his ruin and disgrace. For example, Apollo's prediction pushes Oedipus on a perilous journey in trying to find the truth which ultimately destroys him. The oracle's words, though revealing the inevitable, are disguised and shrouded in mystery, causing Oedipus to realize too late the curse hanging over him. For example, in the beginning, Oedipus rejoices at the mention of Apollo, emphatically crying out "O King Apollo! may his joyous looks. Be presage of the joyous news he brings!". Through out the play Oedipus looks upon Apollo as the god for answers. However, as his

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journey progresses, he soon realizes the terrible truth Apollo's words signify while at the same time admitting that it was he who brought it all upon himself; " Apollo, friend, Apollo, he it was That brought these ills to pass; But the right hand that dealt the blow Was mine, none other". From the above examples it is seen how Oedipus's relation with Apollo proves to be a tragic one, eventually resulting in his downfall. Lastly we see the relationship between Antigone and Zeus where, Antigone epitomizing loyalty and justice, still experiences a tragic end. Zeus, the king of heaven, is the protector of justice and morality in this play. He is repeatedly portrayed as hating pride and arrogance by the chorus; " For Zeus hates excessively the boasts of a great tongue" (Antigone, 125). Despite her strength and strong will, Antigone laments at the endless episodes of tragedy befalling them: Ismene, my dear sister through common blood, do you know of any evil from Oedipus Zeus will not perform on us who still live? For I have seen nothing—nothing painful, nothing mad or shameful or dishonorable (Antigone, 1-10). Here we see that after the death of her father and deterioration of her family, she has to deal with yet another evil. That is, the refusal of Creon to bury Polynices and later his punishment of death for Antigone because of defying him. However, she is still seen to stand firm and champion the laws of the gods by proclaiming to Creon that his words are nothing compared to the everlasting decree of Zeus. Even though, Antigone meets a tragic demise, her loyalty and devotion to Zeus is clearly seen through her strength and courage.

Works Cited " Antigone." Classics. mit. edu. Web. 12 Apr. 2011 " Oedipus Rex." Ancient-mythology. com. Web. 12 Apr. 2011