

Theseus or Hercules?

Theseus is most worthy of emulation. He was a great hero in Athens. "Theseus was, of course bravest of the brave as all heroes are, but unlike the other heroes he was as compassionate as he was brave." (p. 159). Theseus also was a man of bravery, intellect and bodily strength. Hercules on the other hand was what all Greece except Athens most admired. He was very strong but wasn't too smart. Hercules never thought of the consequences that his actions would bring about before he followed through with them.

First, Theseus was very strong. He fought many terrible horrendous monsters such as the Minotaur, "...a monster, half bull, half human.." (p.151), and went on many great ventures such as the Quest for the Golden Fleece. Theseus showed his great strength in adventures such as the one with the Minotaur. Hercules was also involved in many great adventures in which his great strength was shown. Hercules was much stronger than Theseus, but Theseus made up for this small loss in other ways.

Second, Theseus was very smart. Because of his great intellect the Athenians, people who valued thought and ideas, chose him and not Hercules as their hero. Theseus escaped from the Labyrinth and killed the Minotaur. Neither of these tasks were easy and required someone with aptitude unlike Hercules. Theseus always thought things through and made good decisions. Hercules' foolishness was shown on many occasions such as when he killed his family and his music teacher. Theseus' intellect is one very valuable quality which makes him more worthy of emulation.

Third, Theseus was very brave. In fact he went on so many great excursions that a saying grew up in Athens "Nothing without Theseus!" (p. 149). When it was time for Theseus to seek his father he would not go by water " But Theseus refused to go by water because the voyage was safe and easy." (p. 149). Theseus insisted to take the way by land. His idea was to become a hero as quickly as possible, and he accomplished his goal by ridding the land of all the banns to travelers on his way to find his father. Theseus had many other adventures. He was on the Argo, in the Caledonian hunt, as well as many others. Hercules also had many adventures but his were often the result of his own stupidity. The "labors of Hercules", one of his greatest adventures, were all a result of his own folly in killing his wife and children even though Hera supposedly brought the madness upon him.

In conclusion, Theseus is most worthy of emulation. He was strong, brave and most importantly smart. If Americans had to choose between Theseus and Hercules, Theseus would be chosen. Theseus' great intellect makes him a better person for Americans to choose. Of course Theseus would only be chosen if Americans suddenly became qualified to make such a decision.

