

Oedipus and hamlet

Literature



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Heroism of Oedipus & Hamlet: A compare and contrast study In general, heroism is a popular theme among the world renowned playwrights. Within the context of the play Oedipus the King, Sophocles provides ample importance to the existential quest and heroism of the protagonist, Oedipus. On the other side, in the play Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, William Shakespeare unearths the scope of heroism in the character of Hamlet. Later, Oedipus realizes the fact that fate is the real villain in his life. On the other side, Hamlet is able to find out the real villain and punishes him. Thesis statement: The compare and contrast study of Oedipus & Hamlet in the plays Oedipus the King by Sophocles and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark by William Shakespeare prove that heroism in the protagonists is indebted to their mission to uncover and punish the real villain behind the death of their kings.

Compare and contrast study:

The Compare and contrast study examines the element of heroism in Oedipus and Hamlet and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses.

Comparison:

In the play Oedipus the King, Oedipus is presented as the embodiment of heroism because the playwright was aware of the fact that heroism can convince the hero's tragic downfall in the end. But his killing of Laius (say, his father) cannot be considered as a heroic deed. Still, Oedipus' attempt to question the authority (king) can be considered as the by-product of heroism. In the play Oedipus the King by Sophocles, Oedipus points out to Creon that, " The grief I feel for these citizens is even greater than any pain I feel for my own life" (10). One can see that Oedipus's attempt to solve the puzzle/problem of the Sphinx by answering the question proves that he is

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aware of the ups and downs in human life. Besides, heroism is evident in Oedipus' attempt to free Thebes from the Sphinx. Similarly, Hamlet in the play Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is portrayed as the embodiment of heroism. But his heroism is overshadowed by his aim to take revenge of his father's death. In the play, Hamlet considers that his duty is to uncover and punish the real villain behind the death of his father. So, one can see that Hamlet's heroism is indebted to duty-mindedness towards his father, the king.

Contrast:

From a different angle of view, both the heroes (Oedipus and Hamlet) are different in their temperament. For instance, Hamlet is aware of the consequences of his attempt to murder his uncle, the murderer of his father. In the play Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Hamlet pointed out that, " 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out" (61). On the other side, Oedipus later came to realize that Laius is his father, but for no use. So, both villainy and heroism is inherent in Oedipus's character. One can see that Hamlet is aware of his strengths and weaknesses as a hero. On the other side, Oedipus is aware of his strength (adventurous attitude towards life), not weaknesses (short-temperedness, and action without evaluating the consequences). So, both the characters can be considered as heroes with same aim but they made use of different ways to attain their ultimate aim.

Summing, the ultimate aim of Oedipus and Hamlet is same, to find out the real villain behind the death of their kings. In the play Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, the protagonist was able to find out the real villain and take revenge of his father's murder. On the other side, the protagonist in the play Oedipus the King is portrayed as a puppet in the hands of fate. To be

specific, Hamlet was able to fulfill his aim, but was forced to sacrifice his life. On the other side, Oedipus was in search of the real villain behind the death of his king. But he was not able to take revenge because fate transformed him into a villain and hero. Still, Oedipus cannot be criticized because he was not aware of his fault. In short, both the protagonists are real heroes, aiming to punish the real villain.

Works Cited

Sophocles. Oedipus the King. Virginia: RicherResourcesPublications, 2007. Print.

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet: Prince of Denmark: Easyread Edition. US: ReadHowYouWant. com, 2008. Print.