

Hamlet and oedipus drama

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Elements of the play and thematic content of the tragedy Introduction The edifice of a play or tragedy is erected on its main pillars e. g. theme, conflict, character, plot and setting. All are interwoven in such a pattern that they become an organic whole in the form of a tragic play like Hamlet and Oedipus the King. Character and plot are integrated in such way that they show the main character in conflict with internal or external forces. The conflict and its resolution make the thematic content of the play and setting in the background alludes to the physical aspects of human life which become a context of the tragedy faced by the central character. Both Hamlet and Oedipus are dynamic characters as they show considerable development in their characters. Shakespeare's villains also show some sort of dynamism in them when they show some sort of goodness in them. The minor characters are mostly static as they remain same from the beginning till end. The virtuous Horatio, innocent Ophelia and simpleton Gertrude are the examples of static characters in Shakespearean tragedy. Similarly, Greek hero Oedipus, shows considerable development during the course of the play as he from the state of " spiritual blindness" is changed into a seer who can see the things in their true color. His physical blindness alludes to his previous blindness to truth and his adamant refusal of accepting the true presented to him by blind seer, Tiresias. All other character in Greek tragedy are somewhat static including Creon and Jocasta as they present only single side of their character, either goodness or badness. In both the tragedies, the initial blindness of heroes to reality and truth of their existence ends when they with the help of forces of nature come to know about the reality and their miserable plight in the scheme of being. Both find themselves

entangled into traps laid by forces of nature. Oedipus sees himself as a victim of hostile fate while Hamlet though firstly thought that he was incapable of carrying out the task but in later part of the play he admonishes himself for being lazy in taking revenge, the task assigned to him. Hamlet apparently a simple revenge play where a son has to take revenge of the foul and treacherous murder of his father, turns into a complex drama when our hero instead of carrying out the task assigned to him gets himself entangled in some complex issues regarding existence. Hamlet, who is mourning the death of his father, comes to know about the conspiracy behind the killing of his father in a strange way. The appearance of ghost is not just a plot element that is manipulated to reveal the plot of murder. To Hamlet , the appearance of ghost suggests many things: it shows disruption in cosmic order, a chaos in state affairs and rampantness of moral corruption in Danish society. The rational man in Hamlet at first questions the very identity of the ghost. Either it is a “ spirit of health or goblin damned” (Act 1 Scene 4), should be clarified by the protagonist. Hamlet here is not just a revenge taker, rather , he is now riddle solver like Oedipus who through his revenge will help restore the moral and political order of his state. The Greek king Oedipus is also faced with the same destiny. His kingdom is facing a strange calamity. The old king is murdered and perhaps due to his murder death and disease have afflicted the denizens of the city. The city is looking towards their “ riddle solver” and Mesiah to come to their rescue them from plague that has hit the city and its people. Oedipus Rex or Oedipus the King, is the tragedy of an aspirant man who represents the futile efforts of man to conquer unknown forces of nature. Oedipus mistakenly believes that human

resolve and wisdom is sufficient enough to challenge the forces of nature or gods and can even change the course of fate. But the predestined world of gods scorns at this effort of man and tries to defeat his every effort to challenge the forces beyond his control. Greek tragedy lays emphasis on the plot of the drama and the character's hamartia becomes an inevitable part of the plot and both the scheme of the story and tragic flaw of the protagonist become the cause of the tragedy. The social setting and time place of the story also enhance the effect of the tragedy and provide a context for the tragedy. The whole action of Greek tragedy, Oedipus the king , takes place before the palace of Thebes among the subjects of the kingdom. Hero's shame does not become personal shame rather it is the shame that is shared by the whole city. Athenian writer, Sophocles, set the action in Thebes and through the Theban setting made Oedipus's shame a public affair. The events of the play are beyond the control of the hero and he is thrown in a world where he is just a puppet in the hands of gods. We saw how " the breakers of misfortune swallow[ed] him!" The events of plot in Oedipus the King bring about the inevitable outcome of the curse faced by Lius' lineage. Conclusion Elizabethan tragedy, though seemingly a continuation of Greek tragedy departs from its model in some ways. The presentation of characters in Elizabethan tragedies of Shakespeare is different as the characters in these plays are the masters of their own destiny and they are not the innocent victims of fate like Greek heroes who became plaything in the hands of gods. Hamartia is more assertive in the context of Shakespearean tragedies and Shakespearean heroes show more dynamism than their Greek counterparts. The nature of conflict has become

internal rather external and the inner recesses of the hero's mind have become the battleground where the main action of the story takes place.

Works Cited Shakespeare, William, and Frank Guthrie. Hamlet. München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 1995. Print Sophocles, and R. D. Dawe. Oedipus Rex. Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1996. Print.