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Title: The downfall of Oedipus and Othello

“The downfall of Oedipus is the work of the gods; the downfall of Othello is self-inflicted.”

Sophocles’ Oedipus was written before the birth of Christ while Shakespeare’s Othello was inscribed during the 1600s. Both the tragedies have huge time differences, and are completely different in terms of their cultural background. However, different similarities and dissimilarities can be noted among both the pieces of literature. After reading and analyzing both the plays, I completely agree that “The downfall of Oedipus is the work of the gods; the downfall of Othello is self-inflicted”.

Speaking about Oedipus, the protagonist of the tragedy by Sophocles was not a self-standing hero. The character of Oedipus was placed in a universal paradigm to convey the story regarding the laws and rules of universe. The audience was pretty much familiar with his fate and that fate is completely ruled by God and not by humans. Oedipus challenges God’s will in the tragedy and showing his power as a mortal man but he remained unable to change his fate according to his dogmas as demonstrated in the play. On the other hand, Shakespeare’s Othello is a creation of Renaissance shared an entire view of people’s role on the earth. Renaissance is the period that considers humans as the most perfect creature of God, who are given the opportunity to make their decisions and choices. From the opening of the play, it is demonstrated that despite some dark forces were against Othello yet he took his decision of a secret marriage (Shakespeare). Despite the social resistance, Othello is able to make some choices and God is not angry at all.

From Oedipus, it is clear that humans do not have an unlimited range of choices and therefore people approach oracles to know their fate and try to change it. They also get punishment for their pride and self- confidence. Despite being so powerful, man was a toy in the hands of God. Oedipus and the audience were familiar with his fate and his choice to blind himself was merely his own choice. Jocasta and Oedipus were familiar with the fate but refused to accept that “So don’t concern yourself with prophecies. Whatever gods intend to bring about they themselves make known quite easily” (Sophocles). It can be said that Oedipus’s fall was a plan of gods and he was not responsible for that himself. In the end he says, “But wherever my fate leads, just let it go” (Sophocles). On the other hand, Shakespeare’s tragedy clearly reflects that Othello shaped his fate himself. Though some dark forces were against him it was not godly forces was responsible for his choice to murder his wife for the sin she never committed. Shakespeare’s play reflects that it is a person’s choice impacts his life, more than fate. According to Bhattacharyya, “Othello lives all his life by faith, not by sight” (Bhattacharyya).

To sum up, it is true that both the tragedies have so many things in common but since they belong to different epochs, the ideas and perceptions are different. Renaissance literature and earliest Greek perception share a different view on fate and a person’s control over his choices. Sophocles’ tragedy reveals the strong idea that gods have complete control over the life of humans and it is an acquaintance of fate that makes the story tragic. Despite the efforts, Oedipus remains unable to compete with fate. While Othello is a slave of his strong emotion of jealousy and perceptions (Shakespeare). It can be clearly seen that his final choice is not based on god’s will and his collapse is self-inflicted.

**Works Cited**

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