Greek play

Sophocles intentions in Antigone and Oedipus was to demonstrate the role of fate and absence of free will.

The Oedipus Rex and Antigone reflect the greatest tragedies of time that struggles consistently for the power of free will and the power of Gods. The character of Oedipus depicts his woeful fate as he becomes the murderer of his father. The character of Oedipus depicts selfishness that results in his ignorance. Oedipus kills his father to marry his mother and represents a self- obsessed character. Antigone accepts her fate and considers her tragedy as a divine will. The story of Antigone revolves around the struggles of the young woman who battles for justice. The concept of fate is used by Sophocles on both plays to dictate the actions of the characters.

The concept of fate and divine will is deeply rooted in Greek philosophy. The myth and tragedy of Oedipus the King portray divine will. It has a significant role in human actions that develop considerable ramifications and an individual's responsibility. It also reflects autonomy regarding actions that lead to future events. The interpretation of Oedipus's actions reveals human behaviors as a result of predetermined existence or God's decisions. The role of misfortune remains visible in the story of Oedipus Rex that allures the impotence of human actions. The role of fate minimizes the choice of human actions and leads to his corruptness. The involvement of destiny in Oedipus’s life does not put the blame of his actions entirely upon him. Divine logic reflects the ambiguity drawn by Theban that emphasizes more on fate and defeats human intentions. Fate controls Antigone’s life in the same way including her lineage. She is a daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta, cursed from the moment of her birth.

The tragedy writers use the Latin term ‘Deus ex Machina’ to resolve the conflicted and unsolvable situations. The phrase indicates “God from the machine” and highlights the power of God. In the Greek play, ‘Sophocles Oedipus Rex’ Deus ex Machina reflects the presence of God who resolves the tragedy of human. Dues ex Machina is a literary device incorporated to resolve the hidden mystery. In Oedipus, Deus ex Machina is visible in the character of Tiresias. Tiresias plays the role of blind seer and discloses the reality to Oedipus. The play creates separatism at the arrival of Tiresias. His appearance in the play portrays a dramatic scene that displays him without eyes. Tiresias has no eye, but his supernatural power allows him to determine the future of Oedipus. The play displays the supernatural power of Tiresias as he appears fearless in front of Oedipus. The resolution comes from the character of Tiresias who reflects authority and power. Tiresias is not afraid of Oedipus’s power and status that makes him distinct from other humans (Sophocles, 2014). Life of Antigone is dictated by fate, depicting the absence of free will. She seals fate by accepting laws of God. Her act of burying confirms that she lacked free will. She mentions, “with military honors, gave him a soldier’s funeral, And it was right that he should” (Sphocles & Roche, 1961).

Divinity and fate controlled the actions of Oedipus and blinded him to assess the repercussions of his actions. If Oedipus had the power to control his will, he would not return to the kingdom to fulfill the said prophecy. The nobleness of Oedipus’s actions reflects when he first tries to escape his fate and left the kingdom. Oedipus failed to deny the power of destiny and returned to kill his father and marry his mother “behold what a full tide of misfortune swept over his head” (Sophocles, 2014). Divine will illustrate that anything that happens is due to God's decision. The Greek Gods had a great influence on the lives of Greeks. Fate is visible in Oedipus Rex by Sophocles as the plague takes place in Thebes as a result of Laius’s murder. Antigone didn’t resist against fate as she mentions, “For the curse on Oedipus. I cannot imagine any grief” (Sphocles & Roche, 1961). She doesn't grieve on anything because she accepted every action as a result of God's will.

The life of Antigone like her father is the product of fate and divine. However, she acts differently from Oedipus that lessens her pain and sorrow. Antigone knew from the beginning about her life and tragedy, but she didn't deny or intend to test her free will. Oedipus blames destiny and states that Apollo gouged his eyes to blindness. Creon says that Apollo plagued Thebes and predetermined revenge through Laius’s murder. The plays portray fate during a discussion between Creon and Oedipus. Creon tells Oedipus about the prophecy “then I will tell you what I heard at Delphi in plain words. The God commands us to expel from the land of Thebes an old defilement we are sheltering. It is a deadly thing, beyond cure we must; not let it feed upon us longer”. He again tells Oedipus about getting rid of the plague “by exile or death. Blood for blood. It was a murder that brought the plague- wind on the city”. The explanation of destiny reveals Deus ex-machine “my lord: long ago lauis was our king before you came to govern us. He was murdered, and Apollo commands us now to take revenge upon whoever killed him” (Sophocles 97-111). The phrase also reflects decisions of supreme authority that leads humans to un-decidable conditions and their actions are results of the destiny. Fate remains visible through the play of Oedipus Rex as he remains the victim of divine will.

The story of Oedipus depicts that he remains unaware of the innate flaws taking him towards the path of destruction and demise. He is unable to see the unforeseeable mistake taking him to his self-deterioration. The scene in the play justifies his role as a tragic hero when he is informed about his fate. His vows in the play to search the killer of his father represents the intensity of his tragedy. Oedipus, the character's curiosity takes him towards his downfall, visible in his eagerness to find the murderer of his father. In the case of Oedipus, his destruction is the result of judgmental errors. The scene when he cross-examines the shepherds and Jocastas begging to quit investigations, the begging of Theban shepherd explains the tragedy.

The intentions of Sophocles in his plays is to prove the existence of divinity and fate. He has constructed the characters to test fate against free will. Fate is equally visible in ‘Oedipus' and ‘Antigone.' The purpose of Sophocles is to integrate the concept of Greek mythology that considers fate as the strongest thing, capable of controlling people's lives. The plays depict that free will is non-existent in the human world that brings them to the situation of accepting or rejecting fate. The destruction of both characters is the result of nature not personal choice. Oedipus and Antigone were unable to escape their tragedy due to the power of fate.

Work Cited

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