

Humanities 1
Professor Stanley Chodorow
Winter 2014

Writing Assignment #3: Greek Epic and Tragedies

Choose one of the two following essay topics:

1.

But great words of haughty men exact
in retribution blows as great
and in old age teach wisdom.

(Antigone, ll. 1422-24)

While the Greek gods seem to despise “prideful” or “haughty” men, pride is a common trait of the central characters in Greek texts. Do our authors – Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides – portray this trait as a negative or positive? How does pride affect the main characters in the works? Using two of the following texts -- The Odyssey, Agamemnon, Oedipus The King, and Antigone, and Hippolytus -- write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the two texts on the concept of pride.

2. We have explored the idea of justice throughout the course. In the Greek texts, there is a distinction between human and divine justice; all of the main characters in the works of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are judged both by the gods and by the members of their societies. How do these Greek authors define human justice? Are Odysseus, Clytaemnestra, Oedipus, Antigone, and Hippolytus portrayed as having acted justly in human terms? Using two of the works by these writers, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the two works on the concept of human justice.

Thesis: Make sure that your claim meets the standards outlined in the “Thesis” handout.

4 tests for a good thesis:

1. Is it an explanation, not a fact?
2. Can someone argue against it?
3. Is it too obvious to be worth defending?
4. Is it precise?

Evidence: Make sure your argument shows just how the textual evidence supports the thesis.

Length: 4-5 pages.

Due: After lecture, Tuesday 11 March. Late papers will be penalized by the subtraction of one-third letter grade per day. Finally, don't forget [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com)!