

Humanities 1
Professor John Hoon Lee
Winter 2014

Writing Assignment #3: Greek Tragedies

Choose one of the two following essay topics:

1. In the tragic works that we have read, the Greeks seem to emphasize personal responsibility for action--that is, at least for male characters. Are female characters, in their role as wife, mother, sister, and daughter, portrayed differently in this regard? What are the consequences for female characters who take action in response to their circumstances? Using Aeschylus (The Oresteia), and Sophocles (Antigone) - write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the way the authors treat the role of women on the Greek idea of taking personal responsibility for action.

2. Teiresias says:

The truth is what I cherish
and that's my strength.

(Oedipus the King, 357-8)

Seeking the truth may be the most important quest for humans. How do Aeschylus and Sophocles approach this concept of striving for truth? Do our authors have the same view of the truth's value? Would our authors agree with Teiresias that the truth indeed equals strength? Do they share a view of the ability of human beings to apprehend the truth? Do they share an idea of how knowledge of the truth is acquired? Using the aforementioned authors, write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast your authors on the significance of the truth.

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!