

STUDENT

AP English III

Mr. Platt

9/25/07 Unfortunately, this paper is rather superficial. You point out an element that exists in both, yes, but you do not ever elevate your discussion to the level of purpose. What is the author doing with this element? How does the audience react differently to each? Do both plays follow through with the classical definitions of tragedy? Do they both deliver katharsis? Enlightenment in the reader? There were many directions in which you could go and didn't. You did, however, use language fairly well, and you demonstrate a grasp of an effective structure for this type of assignment.

B / B- / C-

#### Compare and Contrast

*Philoctetes* and *Oedipus Rex* were two plays written by the Greek master playwright, Sophocles. Both ~~classified as plays are~~ tragedies, and the two dramas ~~therefore portray many of the same demonstrate the~~ traits that define an Aristotelian tragedy. One of the ~~various~~ similarities between the two plays is the tragic element of the scene of suffering —which in dramas, presents itself as some “destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds, and the like.” This scene of suffering, though manifested in different forms, is present in both works of literature.

The suffering scene is clearly and undeniably ~~seen-present~~ in *Oedipus Rex*. After learning that he had indeed fulfilled the prophecy of the oracle at Delphi, Oedipus is distraught. After he discovers that he had unwittingly let his hubris blind him to the truth, Oedipus realizes the

**Comment [THS1]:** This is a good start, but you should express the purpose of suffering in each (this is the “so what”)

**Comment [THS2]:** If you use this term, you must at some point define it.

gravity of his ~~doomed-situation~~actions and gouges his own eyes with hairpins. The messenger describes the ~~situation-scene by saying~~when he reports that, “he raised [the hairpins] to strike into his eyes. At each, blood, From his eyes dropped to his beard, not releasing blood. Drop by drop - but all at ~~once.~~” Oedipus’ situation shows a scene of great suffering manifested in physical, bodily pain. He takes it upon himself to inflict this damage unto himself as punishment for being “blind” to all the warnings and signs that had been given to him.

**Comment [THS3]:** Why? Why does Oedipus blind himself? This is an important component to the tragedy of the play, so you must address it.

**Comment [THS4]:** Parenthetical citation—where does this occur?

Similarly, Philoctetes experiences his own suffering after he relinquished his bow to Neoptolemus, who has now left with Odysseus, abandoning Philoctetes with the remaining sailors. After being stranded on the island for many years, Neoptolemus was the only thing close to a “friend” that he had in years. Therefore, as a result of being deceived by Neoptolemus -- a man that he believed was pure of heart and was acting upon moral principles -- Philoctetes felt immense betrayal. Although he does not inflict bodily pain upon himself, the emotional wounds that these actions ~~had~~have upon him are ~~shown clearly~~clearly apparent as he woefully laments his cruel fate of being ~~deceived and tricked~~. Though not ~~physical~~of a physical nature, his emotional anguish fulfills the description of a scene of suffering as described by Aristotle.

**Comment [THS5]:** Redundancy. These things mean about the same thing.

**Comment [THS6]:** You need textual evidence in this paragraph. As it stands, your discussion is purely generalized.

**Comment [THS7]:** I would split this into separate paragraphs. I’m afraid your discussion of the purpose of suffering in each play is rather surface-level and generalized because you haven’t given yourself the opportunity to develop fully this aspect of your analysis.

Despite the presence of suffering in both plays, the outcome brought about by the torment varies in both plays. In *Oedipus Rex*, the blinding of Oedipus is immensely graphic and painful and represents his fall from power to nothing. Although he becomes more enlightened through his suffering, Oedipus falls into a bitter end – exiled ~~away~~from the city of Thebes. On the other hand, Philoctetes’ anguish is a ~~milder emotional manifestation~~ of the scene of suffering. He, like Oedipus, also realizes the follies of his old ways – which, in this case, was harboring bitter resentments against the Greeks-- but rather than meeting a tragic end, Philoctetes is promised by

**Comment [THS8]:** So? What is the author’s intention in this characterization? What are we, the audience, to gain from this depiction of suffering? Your discussion of the effects of suffering in each play is literal, and you do not address the significance—or author’s intention.

**Comment [THS9]:** Awkward

Heracles success and glory in Troy upon his return there. Whereas Oedipus falls after his scene of anguish, Philoctetes rises up in stature.

The presence of suffering is clearly seen in both plays, manifesting itself in the physical destruction as seen in *Oedipus Rex* as well as the milder emotional torment witnessed in *Philoctetes*. Oedipus had a reversal of fortune, hurling him from his position as king to a blind exile. Conversely, Philoctetes changed from a bitter, Greek-resenting outcast to a renowned hero for the siege of Troy.

**Comment [THS10]:** And this means what? Your discussion of purpose here is still just a summary of plot, and this is readily understood by the average reader. We need you to provide us with analysis.

**Comment [THS11]:** Again, so what?