Oedipus, The King And Allegory Of The Cave – Comparative Analysis Essay Essay, Research Paper

In Sophocles? play, Oedipus, the King, there are various instances where Oedipus tries to escape his destiny?enlightenment?only to discover the truth that he cannot. Similarly, in Plato?s ?Allegory of the Cave? the prisoner travails to understand and adjust to his newly visited environment. In both works, the men first had to realize their ignorance before they could begin to acquire knowledge and true understanding of the complexities of the human condition. Specifically, in Oedipus, the King, it was Oedipus? illusion of himself as a man unequaled in leadership whereas in ?Allegory of the Cave? it was the prisoner?s initial refutations of enlightenment being shown him until he realizes its intellectual, spiritual, and social significance.

In both articles of literature, there are places where their ignorance and eventual achievement of enlightenment is highlighted. In Oedipus, the King it is when he is accusing Creon of conspiring against him, calling him a ?murderer? and supposedly having exposed him as a ?robber attempting to steal?[his] throne.? Here, he does not yet realize that not only has not Creon attempted to overthrow him, but also that he is not the man who has already figured everything out about humanity as he thinks. He later does, fortunately, discover that he was not the true ill-fated man who never learned anything because he knew everything too soon. He discovers, after piercing out his eyes, that he has finally ar-rived at the truth of his life and that he now has a responsibility to share his story with his children, ex-tended family, and citizens so that they can live lives that are true?both to themselves and to the far greater universe; the best example of this is when he comments to the chorus ?The evil is mine; no one but me can bear its weight.? As for Plato?s ?Allegory of the Cave,? the prisoner?s difficulty discovering the truth lies in his unfortunate constricted life within the dark cave. Because of his imprisonment from early childhood in the unknowing darkness, he struggles not to come up toward the light?knowledge and understanding?when he is being lead to it; he has to be dragged. There, however, he grows ac-customed to the new sights and sounds and realizes that what he knew to be his reality were only those things that he saw through a medium?a silhouette. In that place, as Plato put it, it would first be easiest for him ?to make out the shadows, and then the images of men and things reflected in water, and later on the things themselves.? Then, ?easier to watch the heavenly bodies and the sky itself by night, looking at the light of the moon and stars rather than the Sun and the Sun?s light in the day-time.? Next, after realizing those things, that he had a responsibility to return to his old darkness, but this time to tell of the things he knew and to struggle towards new ends: as Plato said to Glaucon, ?to watch over and care for the other citizens.? Moreover, and more importantly, to lead his inferiors in the knowledge of truth to-wards his position.

Oedipus, in Oedipus, the King, and the prisoner, in ?Allegory of the Cave,? both fight internal battles to arrive at enlightenment?truth. However, their commonality not only lies in this. It is also within their similarity in thinking, particularly in their initial refusal to acknowledge that there is only one truth and that they have allowed themselves to become infected with the thought patterns of their public. And consequently, have voluntarily revoked their right to think and make decisions on their own, until those beings above them have re-shown them the correct path to take.

After reading both works, the reader should come to some thoughts on the significance of the works to society. Among them, he ought to take in that both works convey the idea that it is necessary for all those who become educated and taught the ways of the academic and knowledgeable world that they must not allow themselves to be corrupted by hubris and the overwhelming negative influence of the general population. In addition, to remember always, as Henrik Ibsen said in his play, An Enemy of the People, ?The public is only the raw material from which a people is made,? and that those who come into power have a responsibility to everyone to ensure their well-being?physically, intellectually, and socially.