

EN201 Introduction to Literature

Short Paper #1

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Winds of The Past Blow Now to the Future

Being torn between the realities of one's past and present is nothing new to anyone who has been adopted. At some point in their life, they will wonder what could have been, what is, and what might be in the future. That is what brings the works of Sophocles and Derek Walcott together, even while written centuries apart. Sophocles wrote *Oedipus the King* approximately 496 B.C.E. about a man who had been adopted as a boy and became a king as a man. As he tries to be a noble man and do what is best for his kingdom, his old life's path catches up to him. He wants to know how he came to be where he is, even though that knowledge may lead to more heartache. He will never be complete until he knows the truth of his start in life and how it ultimately affects everyone else. In Derek Walcott's "A Far Cry from Africa" written in 1962, a man is describing his life in a way that shows his anguish over what he knows of the two worlds that make up his being, Africa and Britain. When he asks, "Betray them both, or give up what they give?" I could feel that he was struggling with his identity and how to take comfort in the cultures who made up who he was while also disagreeing with the travesties perpetrated by them both (759). I will further discuss the similarities of the two men in each story and how their plight relates to that of adopted people.

There is a longing to know where you came from if you are an adopted child. Why were you given away and is your life really better off than if you had not been adopted? You want to know about the lives of those who gave you away and if it was better for them as well. Oedipus