The hero in a Greek tragedy I want to compare with the hero Dante in the *Divine Comedy* is Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. Concerning their respective process of self-knowledge acquisition, we find some differences: their original recognition of "self" is dissimilar, and so are their method and result of self-pursuit.

First, Oedipus and Dante have different perceptions of "self." In *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus confidently knows who he is and where he comes from—a exiled wanderer saving the Thebans from the Sphinx. On the contrary, in Canto 1 of the *Inferno* in the *Divine Comedy*, the author/the protagonist Dante gets lost in the forest of darkness, a symbol of human vice. He is in the dark and perplexed at who he is. Comparing with Oedipus the Greek hero who daringly does his will (he believes human intelligence can compete with God), Dante the Christian hero rather hesitates about himself and thus follows the guide Virgil.

Second and accordingly, their method to explore self-knowledge is different: Oedipus does this with human reason whereas Dante with pious belief in God. Oedipus does not intentionally pursue self-knowledge, but just tries his best with intellect to find the truth one after another about the murderer (himself) of the then king Laius— which can be seen as his process to find self-knowledge. Contrarily, through a sacred journey, Dante acquires self-knowledge by following Virgil and Beatrice, and in person seeing the sins and punishments in the Inferno, the redemption in the Purgatory, and the Providence in the Paradise. Paradoxically, the way for Oedipus to gain self-knowledge (truth) drives him into affliction when he step by step gets to know his identity—a patricidal murderer and the cause of plague while Dante acquiring self-knowledge knows that the happiness of eternal life lies in true faith and Providential Love. While Oedipus' self-truth is acquired from his downfall (the physical blindness), Dante the protagonist's self-knowledge is sublimated into a will in contact with God.

All in all, as a tragic hero in search of self-knowledge, Oedipus reflects reason and humanity. It is because in the 5th century B.C., the Sophoclean age, people questioned the nature of everything with reason and thereby faces the dilemma of believing human reason or praying God. But in the theocentric Middle Ages, as a Christian hero,

Dante, whose thinking and conceptions are based on religious beliefs, resorts to God's Infinite Mercy to find self-knowledge and the meaning of life.