



University of Tikrit

College of Education for Women

English Department

First year/Introduction to Literature

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Oedipus The King

When the play opens, Thebes is suffering a plague which leaves its fields and women barren. [Oedipus](#), the king of Thebes, has sent his brother-in-law, [Creon](#), to the house of Apollo to ask the oracle how to end the plague. Creon returns, bearing good news: once the killer of the previous king, Laius, is found, Thebes will be cured of the plague (Laius was [Jocasta's](#) husband before she married Oedipus). Hearing this, Oedipus swears he will find the murderer and banish him.

The Chorus (representing the people of Thebes) suggests that Oedipus consult [Teiresias](#), the blind prophet. Oedipus tells them that he has already sent for Teiresias. When Teiresias arrives, he seems reluctant to answer Oedipus's questions, warning him that he does not want to know the answers. Oedipus threatens him with death, and finally Teiresias tells him that Oedipus himself is the killer, and that his marriage is a sinful union. Oedipus takes this as an insult and jumps to the conclusion that Creon paid Teiresias to say these things. Furious, Oedipus dismisses him, and Teiresias goes, repeating as he does, that Laius's killer is right here before him - a man who is his father's killer and his mother's husband, a man who came seeing but will leave in blindness.

Creon enters, asking the people around him if it is true that Oedipus slanderously accused him. The Chorus tries to mediate, but Oedipus appears and charges Creon with treason. Jocasta and the Chorus beg Oedipus to be open-minded: Oedipus unwillingly relents and allows Creon to go. Jocasta asks Oedipus why he is so upset and he tells her what Teiresias prophesied. Jocasta comforts him by telling him that there is no truth in oracles or prophets, and she has proof. Long ago an oracle told Laius that his own son would kill him, and as a result he and Jocasta gave their infant son to a shepherd to leave out on a hillside to die with a pin through its ankles.

Yet Laius was killed by robbers, not by his own son, proof that the oracle was wrong. But something about her story troubles Oedipus; she said that Laius was killed at a place where three roads meet, and this reminds Oedipus of an incident from his past, when he killed a stranger at a place where three roads met. He asks her to describe Laius, and her description matches his memory.

Yet Jocasta tells him that the only eyewitness to Laius's death, a herdsman, swore that five robbers killed him. Oedipus summons this witness.

While they wait for the man to arrive, Jocasta asks Oedipus why he seems so troubled. Oedipus tells her the story of his past. Once when he was young, a man he met told him that he was not his father's son. He asked his parents about it, and they denied it. Still it troubled him, and he eventually went to an oracle to determine his true lineage. The oracle then told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. This prophecy so frightened Oedipus that he left his hometown and never returned. On his journey, he encountered a haughty man at a crossroads - and killed the man after suffering an insult. Oedipus is afraid that the stranger he killed might have been Laius. If this is the case, Oedipus will be forever banished both from Thebes (the punishment he swore for the killer of Laius) and from Corinth, his hometown. If this eyewitness will swear that robbers killed Laius, then Oedipus is exonerated. He prays for the witness to deliver him from guilt and from banishment. Oedipus and Jocasta enter the palace to wait for him.

Jocasta comes back out of the palace, on her way to the holy temples to pray for Oedipus. A messenger arrives from Corinth with the news that Oedipus's father Polybus is dead. Overjoyed, Jocasta sends for Oedipus, glad that she has even more proof in the uselessness of oracles. Oedipus rejoices, but then states that he is still afraid of the rest of the oracle's prophecy: that he will marry his mother. The messenger assures him that he need not fear approaching Corinth - since Merope, his mother, is not really his mother, and moreover, Polybus wasn't his father either.

Stunned, Oedipus asks him how he came to know this. The messenger replies that years ago a man gave a baby to him and he delivered this baby to the king and queen of Corinth - a baby that would grow up to be Oedipus the King. The injury to Oedipus's ankles is a testament to the truth of his tale, because the baby's feet had been pierced through the ankles. Oedipus asks the messenger who gave the baby to him, and he replies that it was one of Laius's servants. Oedipus sends his men out to find this servant. The messenger suggests that Jocasta should be able to help identify the servant and help unveil the true story of Oedipus's birth. Suddenly understanding the terrible truth, Jocasta begs Oedipus not to carry through with his investigation.

Oedipus replies that he swore to unravel this mystery, and he will follow through on his word. Jocasta exits into the palace. Oedipus again swears that he will figure out this secret, no matter how vile the answer is. The Chorus senses that something bad is about to happen and join Jocasta's cry in begging the mystery to be left unresolved. Oedipus's men lead in an old shepherd, who is afraid to answer Oedipus's questions. But finally he tells Oedipus the truth. He did in fact give the messenger a baby boy, and that baby boy was Laius's son - the same son that Jocasta and Laius left on a hillside to die because of the oracle's prophecy.

Finally the truth is clear - devastated, Oedipus exits into the palace. A messenger reveals that he grabbed a sword and searched for Jocasta with the intent to kill her. Upon entering her chamber, however, he finds that she has hanged herself. He takes the gold brooches from her dress and gouges his eyes out. He appears onstage again, blood streaming from his now blind eyes. He cries out that he, who has seen and done such vile things, shall never see again. He begs the Chorus to kill him. Creon enters, having heard the entire story, and begs Oedipus to come inside, where he will not be seen. Oedipus begs him to let him leave the city, and Creon tells him that he must consult Apollo first. Oedipus tells him that banishment was the punishment he declared for Laius's killer, and Creon agrees with him. Before he leaves forever, however, Oedipus asks to see his daughters and begs Creon to take care of them.

Oedipus is then led away, while Creon and the girls go back in the palace. The Chorus, alone, laments Oedipus' tragic fate and his doomed lineage.

Oedipus the King

Jocasta is both Oedipus' wife and mother, though, she is unaware that she has married her son. When she learns that her son was not killed, and was in fact her husband, Jocasta takes her own life.

5. Oedipus' attempt to avoid fulfillment of the oracle is an example of his deliberate and thoughtful action. Confronted with Apollo's terrible prophecy, he exiles himself from Corinth forever and later marries Jocasta, thus conclusively nullifying the or

The origins of this play in the Oedipus myth (see 'Oedipus and Myth') create an compelling question about foreknowledge and expectation. The audience who knew the myth would know from the start far more than Oedipus himself - hence a strong.

Oedipus Rex

Oedipus blinds himself, because what he has metaphorically seen (i.e. realized) leaves him unable to face his family or his parents in the afterlife). The Chorus, meanwhile, wishes it had never seen Oedipus. Not only has he polluted his own sight.

Oedipus The King, Questions and answers

1-What is the main message of Oedipus the King?

The main idea of Oedipus the King by Sophocles is that one cannot defy the gods without suffering severe consequences. The play is about Oedipus, the king of Thebes, who inadvertently kills his father and ends up marrying his mother. Even when the terrible truth is revealed, he remains in denial.

2-What is the problem in Oedipus the King?

The problem in Oedipus Rex is the king's refusal to accept the truth which Tiresias brings him: Oedipus himself is the cause of the plague because he is the murderer of the previous king of Thebes.

3-Who killed Laius?

Traveling toward Thebes, Oedipus encountered Laius, who provoked a quarrel in which Oedipus killed him.

4-Who is to blame in Oedipus the King?

In Oedipus Rex, Oedipus blames the god Apollo for his fate, though he says that he alone is responsible for his reaction in blinding himself, which he does not regret

5- Is Oedipus good or bad?

As a young man, Oedipus learned of his fate to kill his father and marry his mother. ... If we accept the Aristotelian views of good and bad, as expressed in The Good, Oedipus was indeed a good man by saving the city, ruling justly and searching for the truth although his anger could be seen as a flaw.

6-What does Oedipus symbolize?

Oedipus's injury symbolizes the way in which fate has marked him and set him apart. It also symbolizes the way his movements have been confined and constrained since birth, by Apollo's prophecy to Laius.

7-Why does Oedipus choose to blind himself?

Oedipus chooses stab out his eyes as a way of punishing himself for his hubris and ignorance.

8- Is Oedipus a tragic hero?

Oedipus fulfills the three parameters that define the tragic hero. His dynamic and multifaceted character emotionally bonds the audience; his tragic flaw forces the audience to fear for him, without losing any respect; and his horrific punishment elicits a great sense of pity from the audience.

9-What is the conflict between Oedipus and Tiresias?

The main conflict is when Tiresias tells Oedipus that he is responsible for the plague, and Oedipus refuses to believe Tiresias. The point of attack is when Creon returns from the Oracle at Delphi with the message that the source of the plague is the murder of the old king, Laius.

10-Did Oedipus know he married his mother?

He kills Laius in a scuffle at a crossroads, not knowing he's his real father. Later, he wins the throne of Thebes and unknowingly marries his mother, Jocasta, after answering the riddle of the Sphinx.

11-Who saved Oedipus as a baby?

When Oedipus is born, Laius ties his hands and feet and leaves him on a mountainside to die. A shepherd rescues Oedipus and brings him to the king of Corinth, who raises Oedipus.

12-Why does Jocasta tell Oedipus about her baby?

That is the moment that Jocasta realizes that Oedipus is her son and the murderer of King Laius. The child was from the palace of Laius and he was told to get rid of it by Jocasta. This is because of the prophecy that the boy would kill his father.

13-Did Oedipus know he killed his father?

He does not even know that the man he has killed was his own biological father.

14-Who tells Oedipus the truth?

Tiresias tells Oedipus to learn the truth about his parents and then forecasts Oedipus' downfall

15-How did Oedipus become blind?

He was metaphorically blind to the truth of his birth for much of his life; when Oedipus finally learned the truth, he physically blinded himself by poking out his eyes with the long gold pins from his dead wife's brooches.

16-Who is Creon's wife?

Eurydice

17- Is Oedipus to be blamed?

While the gods and fate have a part in the prophecy of Oedipus growing up to kill his father and marry his mother, Oedipus is ultimately the blame. He killed his father because of a lack of self control. Truly, Oedipus is responsible for his actions as a grown man. He did not have to murder anyone.

18-Who is most responsible for Oedipus downfall?

The character who bears the greatest responsibility for his tragic fall is Oedipus himself. His overweening pride, or hubris, kept him from taking the valuable advice that was offered to him. Two other key figures in the tragedy are Oedipus's parents, Jocasta—who later becomes his wife—and Laius

19- Is Oedipus victim of fate or his own actions?

Oedipus is a victim of fate in Oedipus Rex because it would have been impossible for him to avoid the destiny predetermined for him by the gods. However, it could be argued that Oedipus is a victim of his own actions when he murders Laius because he succumbs to his own hubris.

20- Is Oedipus a hero or a villain?

Oedipus shows both traits of a hero and that of a villain. To the people of Thebes, he begins the play as a hero, although his underlying crimes and the decisions he made to do so cause him to behave like a villain. His characteristics and arrogance are factors that cause his downfall and the realization of his truth.

21-What is Oedipus's hubris?

Many scholars point out that Oedipus' greatest act of hubris is when he tries to deny his fate. The Oracle of Delphi told him long ago that he was destined to kill his father and sleep with his mother. ... Ironically, it was this action that led him to kill his real father Laius and to marry his mother Jocasta.

22 -Is Oedipus a king or a tyrant?

Oedipus then defeats the Sphinx by solving a mysterious riddle to become king. He marries the widow queen Jocasta not knowing she is his mother. Oedipus came to power by killing the previous king, To prevent the prophecy, which makes him a tyrannical ruler.

23-What bad qualities does Oedipus have?

Oedipus' most famous character trait is also his tragic flaw: hubris, or excessive pride.

24-Who pierced Oedipus feet?

Oedipus's feet were pierced on the orders of his birth father, Laius. Laius had just received a disturbing prophecy that his son would one day grow up to kill him. To make sure that the prophecy wouldn't come true, Laius ordered that the infant Oedipus be left on a mountainside with his feet pierced.

25-Why does Oedipus ignore Jocasta's final desperate warnings?

Oedipus' decision to blind himself is very symbolic. Because of his hubris, he was blind to all of the warning signs about the path he was travelling. He refused to see. In the end, when all is brought to light, he blinds himself, so he finishes the play literally as blind as he figuratively was throughout.

Original text

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