

Oedipus of Sophocles is a scapegoat of fate or not?

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Abstract

Sophocles' Oedipus Rex has been proven to be one of the most ageless and finest dramas ever written. However, Oedipus plays a contentious role in the play. He murders his father and sleeps with his mother, ascends to the throne, and fulfils the prophecy. He should not, however, be considered a scapegoat because his life is ordained by God. Despite his efforts to flee his fate, he is ultimately unable to escape God's will.

Keywords: love, power, escape, mistake, complexity.

Introduction: Oedipus Rex delves into the origins of human life, the individual's balancing act between "one" and "many" identities, the discovery of one's actual self, and the quest to unravel the underlying mystery of individual selfhood. Oedipus Rex delves into the origins of human life, the individual's balancing act between "one" and "many" identities, the discovery of one's actual self, and the quest to unravel the underlying mystery of individual sublanguage. It dramatises Oedipus's lonely journey of self-discovery, in which he distinguishes his true self from a false self-definition provided by an oracle as a result of his power's external status, and retraces his journey from king to isolated wanderer, excluded by his father and mother, city, home, and even his name. The play examines how people interpret their existence, how their environment obscures the ultimate truth from them, the gods' mysterious aloofness, and the ambiguity of language. Furthermore, the drama raises the following question: if individuals knew what "truth" was, could they discover the end pattern guiding their lives' growth; would it provide hope or solace, or would it turn out to be a cruel joke? Oedipus is both free and regulated at the same time. He is capable of making decisions, but helpless in the face of previous decisions and circumstances he could not control, such as his origins. This begs the question of whether he is a tragic hero or an innocent man.

Character of Oedipus: Oedipus is a man of tremendous intellect and quick action. These attributes make Oedipus the King a good ruler who anticipates his subjects' needs, as we witness at the beginning of the play. When the residents of Thebes urge him to intervene in the plague, for example, Oedipus is one step ahead of them, having already dispatched Creon to Delphi's oracle for guidance. But, as we'll discover later, Oedipus's proclivity for responding quickly has a dark side. When Oedipus narrates the account of killing a group of travelers who tried to push him off a three-way crossroads, he demonstrates his willingness to act rashly.

Oedipus is overconfident at the start of Oedipus the King, and for good reason. He has almost single-handedly saved Thebes from the Sphinx's curse and ascended to the throne. "Here I am myself— / you all know me, the world knows my fame: / I am Oedipus," he says confidently, as if his name were a healing charm in and of itself (7–9). By the end of the play, however, Oedipus' name will have become a curse, to the point where the Leader of the Chorus in Oedipus at Colonus is afraid to hear it and exclaims, "You, you're that man?" (238).

Oedipus' quickness and confidence are seen throughout Oedipus the King. We witness him question Creon, summon Tiresias, threaten to exile both Tiresias and Creon, summon the servant who escaped Laius' attack, summon the shepherd who brought him to Corinth, rush into the palace to stab out his own eyes, and then demand to be exiled. He's always on the move, as if he's trying to keep up with his fate, which is well beyond his grasp. However, in Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus appears to have accepted that most of his existence is beyond his control. Rather than acting, he spends the most of his time sitting. Lines 825–960 are quite moving.

His determination to solve the riddle — and his pleasure in accomplishing this feat in front of the entire city — are shattered when he realizes that the object of his diligent search is himself. Oedipus explains his blindness to the chorus as his melancholy inability to ever look upon his loved ones again, but the violence also signifies his attack on that part of himself that cannot stop seeking out and discovering what is hidden, despite the tragic results.

Oedipus appears to be ready to find serenity once he has placed his trust in Theseus. After many years of exile, he has finally formed a link with someone and found a type of home in Colonus. Oedipus' purposeful departure

offstage to die is the single most important action in *Oedipus at Colonus*. The play's last scene contains the same rush and drive as the beginning of *Oedipus the King*, but this haste is toward serenity rather than terror for Oedipus.

Character of Jocasta: Jocasta is the late king of Thebes Laius's wife. After her husband's death, Oedipus is crowned King of Thebes as a prize for rescuing the city from the clutches of the monstrous Sphinx, who tossed a riddle at every Theban who went by her and devoured him if he couldn't solve it. Oedipus is also married to Jocasta, the queen of Thebes, with no one knowing that Jocasta was Oedipus' mother. The Delphic oracle declares that the killer of Laius must be avenged when the city is afflicted by a plague. As a brave follower of truth, Oedipus sought the truth and discovered that he was the murderer of his own father.

Jocasta, like Oedipus, seems as a tragic figure, but she lacks the resolve to confront reality that Oedipus does, therefore she commits herself when the truth is exposed. King Laius was told by the Delphic oracle that a boy born to Jocasta would murder his own father and marry his mother. When her child was born, she allowed Laius give it to a servant, who was told to leave it on the mountain with its ankles riveted, exposed to the elements and to die there. She did so because of her faith in the oracle and her love for her spouse.

She couldn't stop the prophecy from coming true in the end. She married her own son, despite the fact that she was completely unaware that Oedipus was her own son. She appears to be a kind and affectionate partner as a wife. She tries to ease his worries and anxiety whenever he appears to be disturbed. When Oedipus expresses fear about the prophesy coming true as the secret is gradually revealed, Jocasta assures him that predictions have never come true in the past and will never come true in the future. The prophecy should not disturb Oedipus' sleep.

She may win Oedipus' affection and confidence via her devotion to him. When Creon inquires, "And she is your equal partner in rule and passion?" says Oedipus. "All that she can desire is her by right," Oedipus responds, his face lit up with love. When Jocasta notices Oedipus becoming irritated while disputing with Creon, she intervenes and tells him, "Come in, my husband; and Creon, go home." You're making a big deal out of a minor annoyance." As a result, she calms Oedipus and Creon's fury.

When the Corinthian messenger informs Jocasta and Oedipus of Polybus' death, they are both relieved that the predictions will be proven false. But half of the prophecy — Oedipus' marriage to his mother — still makes Oedipus suspicious. Jocasta tries to persuade Oedipus not to pursue the investigation any further. "Doomed man! O never survive to learn the truth," she tells Oedipus. Her bravery appears to be eroding at this point; she is terrified to confront reality. She commits suicide once she has confirmed Oedipus' identity as her son.

Jocasta has attributes that are similar to those of a queen, yet she lacks Oedipus' bravery. In this way, she is pretty feminine.

Role of Chorus: In traditional tragedies, the chorus plays a crucial part. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle attributes the origins of tragedy to choral chants and hymns chanted in honour of numerous gods, especially Dionysus. It is the chorus that, through time, evolved into tragedy, and the choral songs that were inserted into them progressively evolved into dialogues. Later tragedies included speech and action, but the chorus continued to play an important part, though it faded as time passed. The chorus appears to have been utilised differently by Sophocles and Euripides, although it is nonetheless present for the audience to see and hear at all times. The Chorus in Roman dramas only gave statements in the intervals between acts. In several Shakespeare plays, the Chorus plays a role.

The Chorus appears to be strongly knit into the fundamental framework of *Oedipus Rex*, as it is in other Greek plays. The tragedy begins with the chorus's assertions after the prologue. The chorus, like the opening scene of *Hamlet*, establishes the play's mood and certain expectations, as well as a sense of suspense. The fact that choric odes are used to separate different episodes demonstrates the chorus' structural importance. Each ode, in addition to remarking on what has occurred, appears to guess on what is likely to occur next. Exode, or the exit song, is used to clearly indicate the end of a Greek tragedy. As a result, the chorus makes observations about the numerous happenings and piques the audience's interest.

In Greek tragedies, the chorus, dressed as an actor, is occasionally seen conversing with the principal characters. The chorus even gives the characters advice and hints about the appropriateness of their acts and words. We may get the impression that the chorus's assertions are nothing more than our own interpretations of the tragedy's events. At times, it appears as if the Chorus is voicing the dramatist's point of view, especially when we consider its thought-provoking reflections on events and people, as well as its contribution to the creation of mood.

Chorus has an equally important role in *Oedipus Rex*. The chorus's Parodos, or entrance song, undoubtedly generates an aura of terror as a result of the plague that has afflicted the inhabitants of Thebes. The people of Thebes' suffering has been brutally and poignantly conveyed. The Chorus appears to offer a sympathetic ear to my pleas for the afflicted Thebans. In reality, all of the odes say things that should have been said earlier in the play.

The chorus' role in calming Oedipus and Creon is particularly noteworthy; it is a moderator's function. However, before taking on this role, the chorus supports Oedipus in his dispute with Teiresias.

The chorus in Oedipus Rex appears to play a significant role in the main action. Oedipus confronts the chorus with the topic of who killed Laius. It also tells the king to dispatch Teiresias, though the king claims to have already done so. Creon requires the chorus' testimony after learning that he has been accused of treason. On this case, the chorus' response is balanced and moderate. The chorus's role, albeit indirect, in persuading Jocasta to reconcile Oedipus and Creon is particularly noteworthy. When Jocasta rushes into the palace after learning the truth, the chorus expresses its veiled apprehension once more.

Role of Teiresias: Teiresias isn't exactly a good person. He may be fully aware of the truth, but he intends to conceal it at first. He admits that his fury causes him to change his mind and tell the truth. He is truly symbolising the gods' universe. In the pattern of knowledge, he stays in the farthest circle. 28 At first, the prophet concedes that he knows the truth, but refuses to tell the king. As a result, Oedipus urges Teiresias to tell the truth, and the latter responds angrily that Oedipus is the murderer of Laius and must be to blame for the plague. He betrays those who are considered the king's offspring. On a supernatural level, Teiresias' refusal to divulge who the murderer is for the same reason that Apollo's: they don't need to speculate. On a political level, his refusal to tell the truth reveals that he would rather maintain the current situation than the truth and the fading Thebes. Teiresias recognises that saving the royal family is more important than saving the people of Thebe. Because he is unaware of the truth of the oracle's allegation, Oedipus' attitude to Teiresias is justified. Teiresias has ruined Oedipus' reputation instead of providing much needed assistance when he asks for it.

The Plague: People begin to believe a prophecy about someone causing the calamity in Thebes, and that if this person leaves Thebes, the epidemic will go. 21 As a result, Oedipus becomes obsessed with discovering the truth about who murdered Laius. He promises his people a prize if they tell him the truth, as well as brutal treatment and exile for the murderer, even if he or she is a member of his family. 22 At the same time, the blind Teiresias arrives in Oedipus' mind, possibly because he is the only person who can tell him who the killer is. Oedipus is still unaware of the reality, the links between his past and present, until he agrees to meet the prophet.

God's Plan

While Apollo does not force Oedipus to accept his fate, he also does not attempt to save him from it. He doesn't exactly answer his inquiry regarding his origin, for example. It may be hard for the gods to reveal themselves to humanity without destroying them, which pertains to the fundamental difference in power between people and gods. This is why Apollo refuses to compel Oedipus and does not provide him with a clear answer. 16 Furthermore, Oedipus' scars on his feet, which always perplex him, and the reality revealed by the inebriated stranger, which may be known by many people and which Polybus and Merope do not totally deny. These clues appear to reveal that no one is telling the truth.

The Mistake

Oedipus' murder of his father is an unintentional act because he is unaware of his actual identity. Oedipus would not have killed his father and married his mother in ignorance if he had recognised Laius as his natural father, or if Laius had recognised Oedipus as his son, or if he had passed the crossroads without harming Oedipus. Oedipus has two fathers, Laius and Polybus, according to Sophocles, who verifies the prophecy with an uncomfortable literalness. He assassinates the person who gave birth to him. As a result of his prophecy, the individual is also the man who is selected not to nurture Oedipus. The drama reveals a tragic element that is linked to time: in a tragic universe, everything has already happened.

Conclusion: In conclusion, even if Oedipus has no purpose of causing the worst devastation, it is apparent that he is tortured by it. All of his troubles stem from the prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother. Because of the prophecy, Laius decides to kill his son in the hopes of escaping his doom. The prophecy prompts Oedipus to travel to Thebes in the hopes of preventing him from completing the prophecy. Jocasta commits herself as a result of the research into Laius' murderer and Oedipus' origin. Finally, Oedipus chooses blindness and exile from Thebes, both of which are brought about by the probe. When Oedipus receives more information about the perpetrator, he is much closer to his history.

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