

Blinding guilt trip – oedipus rex



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the play Oedipus Rex, the main character, Oedipus, gouges his eyes out after finding out a horrendous thing he had done. He was not interested in eliminating his pain, but rather his intentions were in never seeing, and therefore regretting, his transgressions. Oedipus had made some disastrous choices, and wanted to forget them. In the beginning of the play, Oedipus is talking to Teiresias. During their conversation, Teiresias says, " To the children with whom he will be brother and father - the very same; to her who bore him, son and husband - the very same who came to his fathers bed, wet with his father's blood. (p. 219, 440)

Teiresias is telling Oedipus that he is brother and father to his children. This means that Oedipus married his mother. When Teiresias says, " to her who bore him, son and husband," he is saying that Oedipus is the son and husband to his mother. Finally, when he says, " came to his father's bed, wet with his father's blood," he is telling Oedipus that he commit parricide on his father. After Teiresias told him about what he had done, the first thing he wanted to do was forget it. Oedipus told Teiresias that he was lying, and that he was in league with Creon. He is rejecting Teiresias and is in denial.

After more and more people tell Oedipus this same, disgusting story, he is convinced. When he finally believes these honest people, he is in a copious amount of pain. Knowing that he killed his own father, married his own mother, and had children with her; he just wanted to get rid of this pain. Committing suicide is the obvious response, however, Oedipus says, " I do not know how I could bear the sight of my father, when I came to the house of death, or my mother: for I have sinned against them both so vilely that I

could not make my peace by strangling my own life. ” (p. 257, 1318) This explains why he did not want to commit suicide.

He is saying that if he killed himself, once he was dead he would go to Hades. Both of his parents are in Hades, and he says that he doesn't know if he can bear the sight of his father. He would have too much shame and regret to look at his own father, or mother. After Oedipus accepted these facts and figured that he couldn't handle committing suicide, he contemplated what to do. Eventually he came to the conclusion that gouging his eyes out would eliminate his shameful sights of people looking down on him. He chose this because he didn't want to have to feel the shame when people looked at him.

He didn't want to see their eyes looking at him with such disgust. Another option he could have done was to only exile himself. He didn't need to gouge his eyes out. He could have exiled himself, and stopped there. He could have started a new life in another city. A city where nobody knew where he was from or what he had done. Oedipus gouged his eyes out because he never wanted to see again. This is because he didn't want people to look at him in disgust. He didn't want to feel the shame when people looked down on him. Everybody has let someone down, and felt ashamed to look at them, but very few have experienced that to this extent.