

Oedipus – a true leader is born

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A leader is like a guide; because others depend on him, he must be confident in his own abilities and be able to direct his followers towards their goal. While anyone can be a leader, a true leader is born, not made; although certain qualities can be taught, a natural-born leader possesses the intrinsic skill to command respect in a way a taught leader cannot. In Sophocles' Oedipus the King, Oedipus shows himself to be a true leader. He is a great king and leader, as shown through the eradication of the Sphinx and the cleansing of the city's miasma.

While Oedipus is ultimately the source of the city's woes, he still did all he could to find and purge the pollution from the city. Unlike Oedipus, Moses was not a natural-born leader. Moses did not possess faculty of commanding others; rather, his capacity for leadership was endowed upon him by God. Before his life-changing encounter with God, he was a meek man, aware of the injustice of the world but incapable of doing anything about it. Thus, in comparison with Oedipus, Moses cannot be called a true leader. Their difference lies essentially in the source of their powers. Oedipus is born to be a leader; he is completely self-reliant.

No divine involvement bestows his abilities upon him. More than anything, the gods are against him. Since his father violated the sacred pact between the guest and host, he has been cursed and doomed to a tragic end. Despite this, Oedipus' innate skills are still able to bring him to his high status. With his intellect, he correctly answers the Sphinx's riddle that countless others failed to solve, thus saving Thebes from the Sphinx and becoming king. Oedipus also possesses great resourcefulness. With all of the problems plaguing Thebes, he is not foolish enough to try to do everything by himself.

He always knew the right people to ask for help. For example, he sends Creon to ask the Oracle of Delphi the reason behind the plagues. Also, after hitting a dead-end, he sends for the blind prophet, Tiresias, to aid in the investigation of Laius' murder. Moses, on the other hand, is not a born leader. While Moses killed an Egyptian in defense of a Hebrew, he only wanted to pretend it never happened. He was incapable of leading the Hebrews in rebellion; the only thing he could lead was sheep. He even admits his inability, making excuses to God and imploring, "'O my Lord, please send someone else. '(Ex. 4: 13). It was only with God's instruction that Moses was able to become a leader with the power to free the Hebrews. Compared to Oedipus, who relies on his own powers, Moses pales in comparison, as everything he does is reliant on God. God commands Moses to free the Hebrews; He allows Moses to perform miracles; He sends the ten plagues and parts the Red Sea. Moses just uses His words and power, essentially acting as His puppet and the bridge between Him and His people. The distinction in strength between the two leaders is apparent through their respective relationships with their followers.

Like a true leader, Oedipus has an overwhelming presence and commands the respect of his followers. When Oedipus says he will find and bring to justice Laius' murderer, the citizens never waver or question him. Whether or not Oedipus has proof of god to support him does not matter to them; in fact, they even believe in Oedipus over Tiresias, saying, But that a mortal seer [Tiresias] knows more than I know--where Hath this been proven? Or how without sign assured, can I blame Him [Oedipus] who saved our State

when the winged songstress came, Tested and tried in the light of us all, like gold assayed?

How can I now assent when a crime is on Oedipus laid? (Socrates) Although Moses is also a successful leader in that he reaches his goal, his relationship with his followers is frail. When Moses goes up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God, problems arise following his absence. Without his presence, his followers stray from the right path and begin worshipping a golden calf, which contradicts their covenant with God. Moses can not hold the complete faith of his followers like Oedipus can. While anyone has the potential to become a leader, a true leader is one that is born.

Without God, Moses would be nothing more than another of the Hebrews oppressed by the Egyptians. In reality, God could have chosen any of the other Hebrews and led them to the same result. Moses cannot be called a true leader because, although he leads the Hebrews, he is nothing more than an intermediary for God. The true leader is actually God. He is Moses' guide and the perpetrator of the liberation of the Hebrews. Oedipus, on the other hand, proves himself to be a true leader. He achieves everything—defeating the Sphinx, becoming king, saving Thebes—through his own abilities and controls the complete respect of his followers.