

The idea of predestination in "oedipus rexes"

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



Every human being makes choices, but what leads us to make our choices?

Some may believe that everything in life is predetermined by God.

Predestination is the belief that whatever will happen in your future is already fixed. However others may believe that everything is a matter of free will. Belief in free will is the belief that your own choices lead you to your destiny. In Oedipus Rex the idea of predestination is the most important theme of the play.

The main characters Oedipus, Creon and Antigone all try to escape their destiny and take matters into their own hands but do not escape from their fate.

Oedipus speaks to the people of Thebes from his palace and tells them that there is nothing he can't do to save his city. He asks for the person who committed the crime to come forward. "Only banishment will be his punishment" (Page 31). When no one comes forward, Oedipus calls the prophet Teiresias in hope that he will disclose what he knows of the murder. The prophet is reluctant to tell the King what he knows.

Oedipus responds, "What? Something you know, and will not tell? You mean to fall us and to see your city perish?" (Page 35). Teiresias informs the King that it is better not to know. Oedipus will not take that as an answer so he continues to threaten the prophet until finally, Teiresias says, "Then hear this: upon your head is the ban your lips have uttered - from this day forth never speak to me or any here. You are the cursed polluter of this land" (Page 35). Oedipus believes that he is playing a trick and rejects Teiresias' testimony and begins to place the blame on Creon.

Eteocles replies, "Not Croon either. Your enemy is yourself" (Page 36).

Nevertheless, Oedipus has been doomed with fate and nothing he could have done would change his destiny. An example in the story that supports the idea of predestination is when Teiresias identifies the murderer of Laius as Oedipus. Also Teiresias foreshadows when saying, "A revelation that will fail to please. A blind man who has eyes now; a penniless man, who is rich now." This prophecy is saying that in the future there will be a man that is blind and poor, opposite of what he is now. He is talking about Oedipus.

The plot of the story leads up to show also that when Oedipus tries to run away from his prophecy, he actually runs into it. No matter what Oedipus does, he can't escape his fate. His actions don't alter the outcome of his fate; they just alter the way in which the predestination occurs. Oedipus, after discovering his dead mother and could no longer bear what he had done, he blinded himself. "Her dress was pinned with golden broaches, which the king snatched out and thrust, from full arm's length, into his eyes - eyes that should no longer his shame, his guilt. (Page 61) The blind Oedipus demands Croon, now king of Thebes, to banish him from his city, as he had earlier demanded because Oedipus had no idea this would be directed to him. It therefore proves that no matter what you do, there is no way to change your destiny once the gods have decided it. Oedipus' fate was determined, not by him, but by an unknown force. He and his family understood this by the end of the play, with these words being said, "Chance rules our lives, and the future is unknown" (Page 52).

It has been discussed how fate plays an important role in the lives and actions of King Oedipus. Evidence of predestined events can be found, beginning with the oracle's promise of the demise of Oedipus' father and the marrying of his mother, to Eateries' prediction of a blind and exiled man. All his life, try as he may to run away from his fate, Oedipus ended up running right into it. Oedipus realizes that, in the end, he could do nothing to change the course of the fateful events that made up his life.