

How does oedipus exhibit weakness of character? essay

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Oedipus, the King of Thebes was married to Jocasta. At the start of the play, he was not aware that he had slept with his mother or that he had murdered his father. Eventually, he came to terms with the fact that he was the one who was betraying his kingdom and felt very guilty, to the extent of blinding himself using a brooch.

As a tragic hero, Oedipus had an apparent tragic flaw which resulted into his humiliating and sorrowful fate. Through his pride, he disbelieved the gods and looked after the source of plague rather than his inside self. However, Oedipus tragic flaw was not very evident- since it was reported that his sins took place before the onset of the play.

In a vigorous tempter, one of Oedipus' sinful acts happened when he killed a man in cold blood. Eventually, Oedipus weak character that saw him dismiss Teiresias' judgment together with the case of the Oracles' prophecies led to punishment from gods. He suffers because of a blasphemous act which was reported by Sophocles as follows:

Ha! O dear Jocasta, why should one believe in prophecies? Why look to the birds screaming overhead. They prophesied that I should kill my father! But he is dead and buried deep in the earth. And I stand here never having raised a hand against him. The oracles, they are worthless (930).

In the play, the main character was presented as someone who thought of himself as better than someone else or rather better than something else. When he wanted to make certain decisions, he often committed an error in

judgment. These attributes are also known as tragic flaws, which lead to overconfidence, excess pride, and weakness in making verdict.

It is such attributes that led Oedipus into self-destruction and downfall. He often plunges himself into situations that he can hardly escape from. Furthermore, when he chooses to get angry, he ends up choosing to kill (Hogan 255).

In another incident, Oedipus decides to free from his homeland and deserts his father and mother. He also turns a blind eye to the city and fails to recognize the reality. Incidentally, Oedipus is portrayed as a very tempered character, something that lands him into destruction and downfall.

No matter the challenges he undergoes, Oedipus does not seem to be perturbed by his fate. He is instead quick to make unwarranted judgments and is very quick to get angry. He convinces himself that Teiresias is ignorant to the city and lacks feelings. This is evident when he says “ Indeed I am angry. You must be a conspirator in the deed. If you had eyes, I would have said that you alone murdered him!” (Sophocles 780).

Oedipus is symbolized by the importance of family and governing power. That is actually why he refuses to listen to the prophet Tiresias’ warning, something that made him discover the awful covert that resulted into his blindness, and on the worst, cursing his children.

His fate resulted from his adamant silencing of the words of the prophet. His tragic tale shows that his mighty as a king does not elevate him above the

gods. Indeed, all his life is full of doom, since the time he killed his father and wedded his mother. He is completely unable to defy his fate and hence unable to succeed in most of what he does.

Apparently, Tiresias can be understood as a very righteous character as he is a servant of the gods, and has the ability of seeing what others cannot be able to see. Considering that Oedipus had denied Tiresias prophesy and frustrated his efforts, then it can be concluded that he is the villain in the play.

Oedipus is warned by Tiresias, “ you are the curse, the corruption of the land” (Sophocles 787). That is how the tragic fate is assigned to Oedipus for his villain character. Oedipus uses his family as the price that occasions his disastrous defiance. In a bid to find out the person who had killed Laius, Oedipus sent his children to disgrace and his wife to grave, though unknowingly.

Weber puts forward, “ Oedipus Tyrannus reminds us that the family has always been a significant framework more through its fragility than its stability” (par. 1). Oedipus destroyed his own legacy through his mistakes. This is because the society considers continuation of family trees as the developers of legacy.

Essentially, it can be argued that it was folly for Oedipus to have ignored the power of Apollo, and worse still, having continued his pursuit unstoppably. After discovering the reality about his complications, Oedipus realized where he had gone wrong. His case was rather a very disturbing twist of fate.

Instead of waiting for the gods to punish him, Oedipus demands voluntarily “that he be cast from the city, self-cursed and loathsome to himself, his countrymen, and his family” (Hogan par. 1). The manner in which Oedipus seals his own punishment even after creating his own tragic fate is extremely ironical.

Hogan, James C. “A Commentary on the plays of Sophocles.” Galileo: University System of Georgia Libraries, GA, 2005. Web. 17 Dec 2011.

Sophocles. “Oedipus the king” *Literature and writing process* (2002): 776-818. Print.

Weber, Samuel. “Family Scenes: Some Preliminary Remarks on Domesticity and Theatricality.” *South Atlantic quarterly*, summer 3(1998): 335-66. Web.