

# Sight and blindness in oedipus rex assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Both definitions hold a significant role in the play, not only for more obvious characters such as Oedipus and Terrifies, but also for locate, whose true character is rather questionable engendering her reactions to the events of the play, however, one can only speculate. With these themes in mind, one can see how Sophocles portrays each character to suit these themes and communicate his own definition of the term " sight. " When Oedipus calls on Terrifies to reveal the identity Of King Laics' killer, Terrifies reveals the murderer is Oedipus and Oedipus himself reacts in anger, rage, and denial.

The chorus as well as Oedipus himself refuses to believe this, understandably. Instead of assessing the situation with level- headiness and a clear mind open to all possibilities, his anger blinds him as o what truly could have happened and, in his rage, he accuses both Croon and Terrifies of plotting against him. Oedipus was blinded from the start, ignorant to his true origins, thus, causing him to trigger the unavoidable chain of events that would lead to the fulfillment of the prophecy. He could not have made a conscious, well-informed decision on how to avoid the prophecy because he lacked the insight to do so.

However, even if he had known beforehand, fate itself is unavoidable, rendering insight useless. The irony here lies within the themes of sight and blindness when applied to Terrifies n comparison to Oedipus. Oedipus, with both his eyes, as well as his knowledge and comprehensive skills, could not see the true nature of his actions in killing the man, who he soon discovered was King Alias, and his company, as well as taking the throne in Thebes and lying with his wife, soon to be revealed to him as his mother, and having children by her.

Terrifies, however, with no eyes to see with, sees most clearly and knows the truth about Oedipus' past, supporting the idea that sight, in the literal sense, holds little significance in the genre of Greek tragedy, and cannot, alone and without insight and the open-mindedness to truly consider the many possibilities, understand the truth. There are also certain particularities in the process in which locate and Oedipus uncover Oedipus' past. Why is it that both locate and Oedipus initially fail to recognize the similarities between the prophecy given to Alias and that which was given to Oedipus himself?

Also, why is it that Oedipus does not recall the marks on his ankles after hearing locate describe how she had her child's ankles bound before he was left to die on Katharine? Though these questions cannot be answered definitively given the text, interpreted their failure to make these connections as a representation of their desperation and denial of the truth. It seems as if they both had unconsciously chosen not to recognize these clues and use them to make the connections to the facts to discover the truth.

In doing so they blinded themselves, putting covers in front of their eyes to further delay Oedipus' fate. This sort of delay can also be seen in lactate's reaction when the messenger from Corinth reveals more about Oedipus' past. She reacts saying: " For God's love, let us have no more questioning? / Is your life nothing to you? / My own is pain enough for me to bear" (55). After doing so, she leaves the scene in passion and sorrow, seemingly as if she already knows the truth and simply wishes not to speak it.

She seems to know more than she's letting on, as if this truth were a dark secret she's been keeping hidden all these years, though, given the text, one can only speculate. If this were the case, she too had contributed to Oedipus' ignorance and blindness, and, if it be otherwise, she'd be doing the same, but only delaying the inevitable. Another significant moment in which these themes play a major role would be the scene when Oedipus discovers his wife, who seems to have hung herself, in their room.

After taking her down from the rope, he mourns her death, and, in such a state of sadness and feeling of loss, he takes her golden brooches to gouge out his eyes with them. It is in this state of blindness that he finally realizes his fate, the true nature of his birth, and gains the same insight that he accused Creon of falsely possessing. He finally understands the truth. However, the moment he initially realizes this is at the end of scene iv when he says: "" Ah God! / It was true! All the prophecies! / - Now, / O Light, may I look on you for the last time! " (62). That very last line indicated to me, when reading it literally, that he may have had already planned to gouge out his eyes before he had done so and that this gruesome act was not one of impulse alone. Whatever the case, the irony that it is only when Oedipus is physically blinded that he sees the truth suits well with the themes of sight and blindness and further contributes to Sophocles' definition of sight.

Near the end of the play, Creon speaks to Oedipus saying: " Think no longer / That you are in command here, but rather think / How, when you were, you served your own destruction" (77). In saying this, Creon is basically saying that it is no one else's fault but Oedipus himself for the position he has found himself in. However, is it fair to say that Oedipus brought about his own  
<https://assignbuster.com/sight-and-blindness-in-oedipus-rex-assignment-essay-samples/>

destruction and that he was responsible for bringing misfortune upon his family?

Although one could argue so, saying that he alone had pronounced the edict stating that no one is to speak or communicate in anyway with the murderer, and that he, whoever he may be, must answer to his crime through exile or death, I think it's fairer to say that he was powerless to change the fate that the gods had already decided for him and that this fate was left only to be discovered and realized. When the play begins, the prophecy, which said that Oedipus would kill his father and lay with his mother, had already been fulfilled and all that was left was for Oedipus to discover the truth.

With his free will obstructed, it hardly seems fair to blame him for anything. Sophocles' definition of sight is one that is familiarized with other Greek tragedies and not Oedipus Rexes alone. Sophocles does not simply write about seeing with your eyes, but with your mind, with intuition, and insight. In Oedipus Rexes, he shows the limitations of simply seeing with your eyes, jumping to conclusions based only on what you have seen, and closing your mind off to other possible conclusions, as can be seen when looking at the way in which Oedipus finds himself in Thebes to discover what he had truly done and how he pursues this truth.

In contrast, he also presents how Terrifies sees with much more, possessing insight into the future as well as the past and clarity to consider the possibilities. Sophocles' definition of sight is one that relies less on the eyes and more on the mind and maintaining clarity and an unbiased disposition to open your mind to all possibilities.