

# Oedipus: arrogance and destiny

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Oedipus: Arrogance and Destiny Oedipus: Arrogance and Destiny Oedipus is one of the most popular and outstanding pieces of ancient writing. Written by Sophocles, Oedipus depicts the life of a king, whose destiny and pathway have been originally predetermined by gods. Fighting with his own fate and looking for the truth, Oedipus also fights with his arrogance; the latter is actually a distinctive feature of his character. The story of Oedipus is a story of a lifelong fight between fate predictions and the human striving to change the destiny. It would be fair to say that in a person blinded by fate and circumstances, arrogance is both inevitable and inescapable. In Sophocles' Oedipus, the arrogance of the king is his destiny, which blinds him but eventually allows him to alleviate the burden of ambiguity burdening his heart. The role which destiny plays in human lives is one of the central themes of Sophocles' Oedipus. Oedipus is a bright embodiment of the tragic circumstances that predetermine human choices. Throughout his life, Oedipus is predetermined to follow a particular path, which changes his life and makes it impossible for him to avoid major difficulties. Oedipus seeks answers to the most problematic questions, which, in turn, push him to follow a particular path: " One clue might lead us far, With but a spark of hope to guide our quest" (Sophocles, n. d.). Oedipus realizes that his quest for answers may guide him far and he cannot change it. However, he does not know that, once having chosen this way, he will not have a chance to change his direction. In this sense, Oedipus is the reflection of the major traditions that shaped human choices in ancient times. At that time, one of the central beliefs was that individuals could not avoid their pre-defined destiny. Like many contemporaries, Oedipus will not be able to avoid the

prophecy until he meets the murderer of king Laius and answers his questions. Oedipus is well-known for his arrogance, and numerous passages of Sophocles' tragedy confirm these perceptions. Throughout his path to the end of life, Oedipus shows his self-centeredness and a belief in his own righteousness: " Well, I will start afresh and once again Make dark things clear. Right worthy the concern of Phoebus, worthy thine, too, for the dead; I also, as is meet, will lend my aid To avenge this wrong to Thebes and to the god" (Sophocles n. d.). Simply put, Oedipus assumes the central role of an oracle, a decision maker and an enigma solver. He believes he has the strength, endurance, wisdom and power to answer the major questions of life. His pride and self-centeredness lead him to imagine himself an oracle, who has vision and can do no wrong. In Oedipus's words, the reader sees the signs of boastfulness and self-concern, especially when the king claims he is the only one able to solve the prophecy enigma. Added to this is the fact that Oedipus wants to preserve his position and throne by all means: " Not for some far-off kinsman, but myself. Shall I expel this poison in the blood; For whoso slew that king might have a mind To strike me too with his assassin hand" (Sophocles, n. d.). In this passage, Oedipus implies that his enemies should not hope to eliminate him from the throne; he is powerful enough to fulfill his prophetic mission without losing his royal position. It is generally believed that Oedipus's arrogance is imposed on him by his fate; however, it would be correct to say that this arrogance is actually Oedipus's fate. Arrogance blinds Oedipus but eventually allows him to alleviate the burden of ambiguity in his heart and mind. Through arrogance, self-interest, and pride, Oedipus is guided by the gods. It is arrogance and self-interest that

drive Oedipus to find answers to the most problematic questions. Arrogance is an ever-present problem in Oedipus's life. It blinds him and distorts the knowledge of life he already possesses. His illusion that he is the oracle leads him down the pathway set by gods, until he is lost in his own fears and fails to realize that he himself is the solution he has been looking for. Most probably, without arrogance, Oedipus would have never set to follow the predetermined pathway. To a large extent, Oedipus's arrogance was used by gods to push Oedipus towards his logical end. Unfortunately, it is through arrogance and self-blindness that Oedipus finally begins to see the truth, and this is also the moment when arrogance turns into the most potent instrument of problem solving in Oedipus's hands. References Sophocles. (n. d.). Oedipus the King. Classic Literature. Retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html>