

Sight and blindness in oedipus rex assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

We feel that in Oedipus Rexes, blindness separates the knowledgeable, those who see the whole situation and in return are not punished, and the tragic figures, those who can't see or won't see and suffer the consequences in return. Physical blindness in the play serves a contrasting meaning. In life, physical blindness usually represents an inability or handicap, and those people afflicted with it are pitied. But in this case, physical blindness is somewhat of an asset. It eliminates the distractions of the outside world and allows the characters to gain insight or focus on what they receive from the gods.

Also in Oedipus Rexes, blindness serves as a punishment for rebelling against the gods. One other thing we notice about the physically blind characters in Oedipus Rexes is that they live in isolation from the rest of the community, which is also common in actual life outside the play. The seer throughout the piece and Oedipus living out his punishment represents physical blindness in the play. The seer is physically blind and is the character we feel most benefits from it, because he is the one chosen by Apollo to relay his message to the people of the earth. The seer already knows all because Apollo reveals it to him.

Therefore, although he is blind he still is knowledgeable and sees all things. In the play, Chorus states, "This is Terrifies, this is the holy prophet in whom, alone of all men, truth was born" (Scene 1, line 82). Another quote is when Oedipus was imploring Terrifies for his help saying, "Terrifies: seer: student of mysteries, of all that's taught and all that no man tells, secrets of Heaven and secrets of the earth: Blind though you are..." (Scene 1, line 84).

This acknowledges that Oedipus along with his people knows that the seer has a injection to the gods, and knows all though he is physically blind.

In the case of Oedipus, blindness was a punishment for his neglect of the truth. Oedipus finally came to the realization of his ignorance, and his self-mutilation is, in a way, memorizing his past intellectual condition. But even in this, Oedipus feels that blindness will become somewhat of an asset to him in the after life. “ This punishment that I have laid upon myself is just. ” says Oedipus, “ If had eyes, I do not know how I could bear the sight of my father, when I came to the house of Death, or my mother... (Scene 4, line 139).

In this statement Oedipus tells the reader that his blindness is a punishment he inflicted on himself, but also that it will guard him from the pain of having to kick upon his parents who he has shamed and who have shamed him. Many of the characters in the play suffer from intellectual blindness. They don't see the truth and refuse to accept it. This is a common condition in most people in real society. It's a very human reaction used in order to deceive ourselves in thinking something disturbing isn't the way it seems.

Although possessing his flaw may humanism a character in our eyes, it doesn't rectify their actions or make them commendable. One character that suffers from intellectual blindness is Oedipus' mother Estate. After realizing she has committed incest with her son, the same son she and her husband tried to rid themselves of many years ago, she still refused to accept what was staring her in the face. “ No. ” says Estate, “ From now on, where oracles are concerned, I would not waste a second thought on any” (Scene 2,

line 330). This quote is her submitting to her intellectual blindness and refusing to heed re warning from Apollo.

Here Estate dares to denounce the gods. This reaction is a prime example of human emotion. But as we all know, denying something doesn't make it go away. In her refusal and anger she begs of Oedipus to stop asking questions, mainly because she already knows the answer. " 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. " (Scene 3, line 138) is what Sockets says to Oedipus. At this point she has become desperate. In the end she finally stops trying to deny her sin and very cowardly thing by commits suicide.

Terrifies represents the contrary to intellectual blindness. As discussed earlier, he knows all there is to know about Oedipus' situation. But one thing to be said about knowledge in the case of Terrifies is that it is difficult to possess, because " Ignorance is bliss". It is easier to blind yourself to the vulgar facts of life than to accept them and try to work through them.

Terrifies even refuses to speak what he knows to Oedipus saying, " You are all ignorant. No: will not tell you what I know. Now it is my misery... " (Scene 1, line 112).

Even for a seer, the truth can be a difficult thing and he says " How readers knowledge of truth can be when there is no help in truth! Knew this well but did not act on it; else should not have come" (Scene 1, line 101). Here Terrifies admits his grief and points out a truth that with power comes responsibility, because although the truth is hard it is still his job to tell it.

But in the same case as Estate, Oedipus initially refuses to see his fate. " But

I say you, with both eyes, are blind: you cannot see the wretchedness of your life... " (Scene 1, line 196) says the seer openly, telling Oedipus of his own blindness.

As a defense to Terrifies' accusations, Oedipus tries to place blame on Akron, his brother-in-law. As the story goes on you began to pity Oedipus more for his helplessness. A reason this may be the case for Oedipus and not his mother is because although the truth may be scary for him, he still presses on towards the truth in the end. " Tell me who made these fine discoveries? Akron? " (Scene 1 line 161 This quote exposed his foolish tendency to jump to conclusions instead of stepping back and thinking things through, which WOOL_SLD broaden his view and allow him to analyze and see his situation.