

Oedipus tyrannus

Literature



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Lecturer Fate, Destiny and Free Will Q1 Fate, destiny and free will have and will always be intertwined; free will is the capability to come up with choices, which are free from certain issues while fate and destiny decides the actions beyond man control. Therefore, one can view them, as inclusive of one another, while man seems to be a victim or puppet of fate and destiny, he is not coerced to take actions that lead to the outcome. Free will always dominates because man has been given the freedom to choose his actions and be responsible for the result; therefore, man is a product of fate and destiny or the sum of his choices and actions. In the story of king Oedipus, there is a prophecy that dominates and seems to set the path for the unfolding of events; therefore, the prophecy is told to Laius before the birth of his son Oedipus. It is said that Laius' fate is to die at the hands of his son; moreover, the other part of the prophecy is then revealed by Oedipus, and it states that as a child Oedipus was fated to have an incestuous relationship with his mother and to bring forth a generation that is cursed. The prophecy made to Laius is unconditional and inevitable therefore removing the responsibility of the actions and the guilt thereof from Oedipus because regardless of the action that he could have chosen to take, he would still have committed the act as it had been written. Oedipus can be viewed as a puppet that is being controlled by greater forces of life; he is doomed from the beginning with no tangible reason other than the gods and fate. Despite the fact that this is a one-way view, it is important to note that despite the fact that prophecies are meant to be fulfilled, they do not orchestrate the events that lead up to the main outcome. Free will, fate and destiny are not mutually exclusive, but they can lead up to self-fulfilling prophecies, in that the prophecy will set in motion the events that will transpire to reach the

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fruition of the said prophecy. Due to the prophecy on Oedipus' life, a series of events and free choices are made by Oedipus, which results in the killing of his father and marriage to his own mother. Oedipus heard a rumor that he was an adopted child to his parents, and he decided to ask his parents about it, of which they denied the allegations. He was then told that he was destined to shed the blood of his father and mate with his own mother, a statement that made him decide to run away from home so that he cannot cause any harm to his parents because he actually believed that they were his biological parents. On his way, he meets his real father although unknown to each other, and after a disagreement on who has the right of way, his father, King Laius, moves to strike him with a scepter, but Oedipus manages to throw him down from his chariot and in the process, he ends up killing his father. He is then given the hand of his mother, Queen Dowager Jocasta in marriage without knowing her identity after solving a riddle that culminates in the death of the Sphinx thereby freeing the land from her curse. Oedipus is responsible for his decision to flee from Corinth just as he is choosing where to go, the decision to kill his father and to marry Jocasta his mother, which are none of the choices he makes are predetermined. His mother and his wife are not left out as well and neither is his father as the story is told, his father, Laius, told his mother, Jocasta to kill Oedipus as a baby after hearing the prophecy that he would be the cause of his death and would have a forbidden relationship with his mother when he grows up. This is their way of ensuring that the prophecy does not happen, and Jocasta could not bring herself to do it; therefore, she gave him to a servant to kill, but he abandoned him to die of natural causes; however, Oedipus was later rescued and adopted by a family that raised him as their own. It can be

argued that fate caused the death of his father through Oedipus' hands, but it would on the other hand be said that Laius started the fight at the crossroads that led to his death after being thrown of his carriage. His mother and now wife also exercised her own free will by letting Oedipus out of her hands alive and agreeing to marry him later in life without finding out his real identity.