

Oedipus the King Composition Essay

“Know thyself” is a phrase that was inscribed over the entrance to the temple of Delphi. As a tragic hero, Oedipus is completely unaware of how wrong he is about his entire life and lives thinking he’s innocent to all he does not recall. He does not “know himself”. Though he may be King of Thebes and lives a wealthy life, he’s classified by Tiresias as having the worst of them all, which is living a life of deception. Tiresias’ then talks of how “blind” Oedipus is to the truth though he has his vision while Tiresias’ is physically blind but can see the truth clearly. Because of Oedipus’ stubbornness, he refuses to believe Tiresias’ prediction about him being the cause of Laius’ death and the fact that he is indeed the child of Laius and Jocasta. Oedipus then claims Tiresias’ as being the “blind” in all ways, because of his lack of understanding in who caused the great tragedy.

“Why so it has

Except for you; it is not so with you;

Blind as you are in eyes, ears, and mind!”

-Oedipus

Refusing to believe the truth, Oedipus’ stubbornness then kicks in, and he ends up concluding, with no proper proof, that Tiresias’ is conspiring against Oedipus with Creon so that Creon can take his rightful place as King of Thebes.

“Are these inventions Creon’s work, or yours?”

-Oedipus

Now all can see clearly that Oedipus is a man who believes any person who defies him is of no good due to his stubbornness. He believes that he does know himself. Blissfully unaware of his real birth parents and the real trouble he had already caused, he causes more trouble and just continues to fulfill the oracles. He believed that the oracle was untrue because he thought Polybus and Merope of Cornith were his real birth parents. Thus his exile from Cornith.

From what the story has given, many can see that Oedipus' stubbornness is the reason for all his problems. His stubbornness blinds him from the truth by making him believe that something like that is not possible. For example, right after Tiresias finally told Oedipus that Oedipus killed Laius, he automatically concluded that there was a conspiracy being formed against him.

“Not without chastisement

Shall you, twice over, utter words!”

-Oedipus

Oedipus only started to believe that the oracle when Jocasta, his only ally at that time, told him of her experience with oracles. After coming to realization that he also killed a man where three roads meet and was also told that he would kill his father and mate with his mother. He then sends for the man that had witnessed Laius' death.

“God of Heaven!

What would'st thou do unto me!"

-Oedipus

After learning of his true fate, Oedipus blinds himself. Now knowing everything about himself, he wishes to suffer for everything; to be banished from Thebes. Oedipus is a true tragic hero. In blinding himself, he states that he wishes not to see or know anymore about himself. At this point, we can assume that knowledge really does play a large role in life.

"Out of this country cast me with all speed,

Where I may pass without accost of men."

-Oedipus