

## **Oedipus The Tragic Hero**

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### **Introduction**

The tragic hero, Oedipus is characterized by noble stature, a tragic flaw, and a fall which should bring a feeling of pity and fear to the audience. The essay shall examine how Oedipus satisfies the category of a tragic hero through his noble birth, his pursuit of the truth, hamartia, and the consequence in the end of his actions.

### **Noble Stature and Virtue**

This introduction that is given of Oedipus is that of a heroic character who saved Thebes from the Sphinx. His victory not only establishes him as a respected king, but it also exposes his commitment to his people. The play opens with Oedipus speaking to his people of Thebes, and in this way, Oedipus demonstrates that he truly is concerned about the fate of his people. He is also conveyed through his lineage; he is the son of Laius and Jocasta. This agrees with Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero: he has to hold a high social status and possess a virtuous character. Oedipus is first introduced as a wise and kind leader, and immediately the audience connects with him emotionally, which sets the stage for the unfolding tragedy.

### The Search for Truth

The quest for truth is at the core of Oedipus's persona. When the plague strikes Thebes, Oedipus vows to find out its origin, as if his people are indeed attached to him being a very great king. It is a quest which reflects not only his sense of responsibility but also his thirst for knowledge and understanding. Oedipus' determination to find King Laius' murderer culminates in the terrible revelation of Oedipus's identity: he killed his father and married his mother. This journey into discovery personifies that of the tragic hero because it will be fraught with the weight of conflict between knowledge and ignorance. Oedipus, in his determination to know, no matter the cost, shows his noble intentions yet foreshadows his own tragic flaw.

### The Tragic Flaw

This position of Oedipus's tragic flaw, or hamartia, was his hubris, a pride lifted beyond measure. This pride manifests in his confidence to defy the prophecies of the Oracle at Delphi, believing he can outsmart fate. His proud claim as to how he will rid Thebes of the plague further reveals his pride; he does not fear the god's power or the inevitability of fate. It is this hubris that makes him refuse to heed warnings from figures such as Tiresias and blinds him from the truth about his circumstances. Sadly enough, the overreaching ambition of Oedipus put him in the way of collision with fate—a course that would well depict how his relative strength was his most immense weakness. His determination to take the reins of his life portended his tragic fall.

## The Fall

With the mystery concerning his childhood, there is a feeling of deep catharsis amongst the audience. Also, the impact of his downfall was affected by the use of dramatic irony so continuous in this play; the audience was aware of Oedipus' fate for very long before he was. The fall of this proud and mighty king to a blind exile brings pity and fear, which are the essentials of tragedy. This marked the peak of his tragic arc, as it was the beginning of his tragic realization that he had fulfilled the prophecy he had tried to avoid. Oedipus' actions of self-blinding were symbolic of his inside and acceptance of his fate, reinforcing a theme of knowledge being a double-edged sword.

## Conclusion

Oedipus the King is an in-depth analysis of the tragic hero type, with the themes of fate, free will, and the quest for truth ingeniously intertwined. Indeed, by his noble ancestry, relentless pursuit of knowledge, and the tragic flaw of hubris, Oedipus is fully representative of a tragic hero.