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Ms. Giraudo

English 1 H period 1

Oedipus Study Guide

1. Consider that many of the events in the traditional story of Oedipus (killing his father, solving the riddle of the Sphinx, marrying his mother, etc.) have already occurred when the play opens. Why? Why does Sophocles concentrate on the life of Oedipus after his becoming king of Thebes? First, by making it happen after the killing of his father gives the reader more secrecy. The reader does not know that he killed his own father or marrying his mom. Finally, it happened after the riddle because it is a tragedy of Oedipus down fall so he must be at the peak of his time to have a dramatic fall.

2. How would you describe the character of Oedipus? What sort of a person is he? Consider how Oedipus sees himself (as seen for example in the play's opening speech and his later dialogues with Creon and Tiresias). What character traits and dispositions are dominant in his personality?

Oedipus at first seems as the “perfect” king. He is smart, assertive, and keeps the people in mind. As the play progress he tends to make brash decisions and has a short temper. Overall, he is a leader as he seems to always be in control of the situation even if it is just an illusion.

3. What is the effect of Oedipus's insistence and promises regarding the hunting down and punishing of the murderer of Laius? What does this suggest concerning his character as well as the meaning of Sophocles’ play?

It suggest that he is very stubborn and a determined man. This may seem to be good traits but can be fatal too. It suggest that Oedipus will drive himself insane finding the main who murdered Laius.

4. What may be the purpose and significance of the interactions between Oedipus and characters like Tiresias and Creon?

There is tension between Creon and Oedipus. Creon is probably jealous of Oedipus. Tiresias tries to hold everything together unsuccessfully.

5. Why does Tiresias hesitate to tell Oedipus the truth of his identity?

Tiresias hesitates to tell Oedipus the truth of his identity because she is afraid that he will throw a fit and possibly kill her as he is a powerful man.

7. What is the significance of the physical blindness of the prophet Tiresias? Is blindness an important and repeated symbolic motif in the plain?

It shows that blindness does not keep one from being aware of life. Yes it is as Oedipus is blind of his own faults and actions.

8. In what ways are we sometimes as “blind” as Oedipus to the truths in our own lives?

We like to tell ourselves that we are the best or we only believe in a certain way harming our growth of knowledge.