Carson Stark

English 1

February 17, 2016

Oedipus Essay

Having pride is not necessarily a bad thing. The majority of people have at least some sense of pride. The real problem are the extremists. Having too much or little pride leads to problems. Oedipus and Creon display this perfectly.

In the play *Oedipus the king*, Oedipus begins with lots of pride in his accomplishments. He should have pride, considering he just saved an entire city-state from a sphinx and became their king. The problem only comes in when this pride gets in the way of other people telling you you are wrong. Oedipus is looking for the killer of the previous king, Laius, because the gods have cursed them for not finding the killer for five years.When Oedipus gets a prophet to come and explain what is going on, Tiresias tells Oedipus, “Let me tell you this. You with your precious eyes, you are blind to the corruption of your life, to the house you live in, those you live with-who are your parents?”

He is blinded by his pride. It has gotten to a point where his opinion is worth more than everybody else's because he is the respected ruler and you do not have as much merit because he is more important. His opinion is just worth more than your facts. Pride has a way of making people hard-headed until the evidence is blatantly obvious, and for Oedipus this was not any different. Jocasta realises way before Oedipus that she is his mother. She begs him to not look for his parents. To live in ignorance, it is bliss after all. He jumps to a completely different conclusion, that she is worried of his low birth. His hard-headedness leads him straight past her warnings and ruins his life. Her final line before she takes her life is,”Man of agony—that is the only name I have for you, that, no other—ever, ever, ever!”

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus learns from his pride. Creon, however, does not. He thinks he can do anything he wants. He is the king, after all. How history repeats itself with such short memory. Creon did not realise that power corrupts all, some more than others. Originally, Creon had a level head, but after gaining power he nearly instantly turns on family, trying to trick Oedipus into coming back to thebes to bring luck. Pride is only one of the terrible things power can bring. Corruption also follows, and while pride is good in small amounts corruption is never good. “ I take but what is mine.” says Creon to his brother in law, Oedipus.

Pride itself is not bad, but in extreme amounts it can be the downfall of someone. It is the extremists that are the problem, as with many things. Religion, political beliefs, and opinions are never good when taken to the extreme, and the same goes for pride. Not only is too much pride a problem, but too little pride can also be a problem. Self-esteem is important, and if you see everything you do as a failure, you probably are not going to be in a great mental state. Be proud in yourself and what you do. You did good.

In conclusion, the question of whether pride is good and normal or poisonous I say neither. Things are not black and white most of the time. Everything is fine in the right amount. As with most things, take it in moderation and you should be fine.