

Oedipus the King

A tragedy written by Sophocles. Aristotle used this play as an example for the excellent tragedy. This play provides an excellent example for what Aristotle considers essential elements in an excellent tragedy plot; recognition and reversal. Oedipus the King is a play about prophecies that were predicted to serve the same purpose and the ironical process of how the journey of escape from destiny, became the same road that eventually fulfills the same predicted destiny. Moreover, we have the character of Oedipus written under a psychological analysis of a man who had all and then lost everything because of the destiny he couldn't escape. There are also four important elements in this play: recognition, reversal, chance and irony.

Characters

Oedipus: king of Thebes
Priest of Zeus
Creon: brother of Jocasta
Jocasta: queen of Thebes
Teiresias: a seer
A Corinthian Shepherd
A Theban Shepherd

Elements of the play

Teiresias sets the emotion of the play towards one direction.

He knows the answers beyond time and space.

The two shepherds play an important role in this play. These two are the ones who will bring what initiates the recognition and reversal of the play. They are the ones who brought the important information that led Oedipus to discover the truth.

Jocasta seems to be the voice of reason; a rationalist in the play. She kept explaining to Oedipus how prophecies are not true using her own experience with an old prophecy that says her son will kill her husband and marry her.

She did not know that she was pushing Oedipus to his deconstruction. She made Oedipus more curious and skeptical at the same time.

It was until she heard the conversation between the two shepherds in which she knew the truth; that Oedipus is her son. She rushed into her room to hang herself.

How did Oedipus the king include the perfect ingredients of a tragic play according to Aristotle?

Sophocles's Oedipus the King to Aristotle outlined the characteristics of a good tragic hero. A good tragic must be "better than we are," a man who is superior to the average man in some way. In Oedipus's case, he is superior because of a social standing and because he is the only person who could solve the Sphinx's riddle, which shows how smart he is. A tragic hero must evoke both pity and fear in the viewers, causing the viewers to experience a feeling of catharsis. Catharsis, in Greek, means "purgation" or "purification"; going through these strong emotions will leave viewers feeling ecstatic, in "a good cry" to make one feel better. The best way to evoke catharsis to Aristotle is through making the hero flawed because a character with a mixture of good and evil is more compelling than a character that is merely good. Although Oedipus is a clever man, he is blind to the truth and refuses to believe Teiresias's warnings. Although he is a good father, he unwittingly fathered children in incest. A tragic hero suffers because of his hamartia "error in judgment." He is a character that thinks he can change fate or doesn't realize what fate has in store for him. In Oedipus the King, fate is an idea that surfaces again and again. Dramatic irony. Good tragedies are filled with irony. The audience knows the outcome of the story already, but the hero does not, making his actions seem ignorant or inappropriate in the face of what is to come. Whenever a character attempts to change fate, this is ironic to an audience who knows that the tragic outcome of the story cannot be avoided. In Oedipus the King. Its story revolves around two different attempts to change the course of fate: Jocasta and Laius's killing of Oedipus at birth and Oedipus's flight from Corinth later on. In both cases, an oracle's prophecy comes true regardless of the characters' actions. Jocasta kills her son only to find him restored to life and married to her. Oedipus leaves Corinth only to find that in so doing he has found his real parents and carried out the oracle's words. Both Oedipus and Jocasta thought they've overcome the trappings of fate, only to find that the oracles were right after all. Each time a