King Oedipus Essay, Research Paper

In King Oedipus, Sophocles shows that Oedipus? ignorant attitude is his major flaw, but through determination and pride, the King learns the truth about himself, which in the end makes him a better person. Oedipus says, ?And it is my solemn prayer that the unknown murderer, and his accomplices, if such there be, may wear the brand of shame for their shameful act, unfriended, to their life?s end.?(32) In his ignorance, Oedipus does not consider himself a suspect in the killing of Laius, but his determination to find the killer will unveil the truth. Oedipus will do whatever it takes to apprehend the malefactor. He says, I grieve for you my children. Believe me I know all that you desire of me, all that you suffer, and while you suffer, none suffers more than I. You have your several griefs, each for himself; but my heart bears the weight of my own, and yours and all my people?s sorrows.(27) Oedipus is a proud man and is empathetic of the people of his city. He feels the pain and anguish that his people are going through, and is determined to find the perpetrator who committed the act. No matter what the outcome is, he will get the truth. This is the start of the revelation that Oedipus goes through from ignorance to knowledge. Oedipus begins the investigation, and through a heated conversation with Teiresias, he is told that he is the killer . This outrageous comment sends a wave of anger over Oedipus. He claims that Teiresias is trying to overthrow him and take 2 over the throne for himself. The conversation comes to a quick and angry halt, and both parties go their separate ways. After the confrontation, Oedipus begins to feel a little uneasy, for the possibility that he could be the killer never entered his mind. He goes to Jocasta and begins to ask questions about how Laius was killed. She tries to tell him that Laius was killed by robbers outside the city of Thebes at a place where three roads met. The story worries Oedipus because he recalls killing a man, out of self-defense, at a place that sounds similar to the place that Jocasta describes. He is told by Jocasta that there is a messenger who knows the truth, and could give him the information that he needs, so the man is summoned. Through a conversation with the messenger, Oedipus finds out that he isn?t the son of Polybus, which he had been told all along. He can?t believe what he hears and he shouts, ?Let all come out! However vile! However base it be, I must unlock the secret of my birth. To the woman…is shamed by my low origin…I shall not be shamed …. I ask to be no other man than that I am, and will know who I am.?( 55) Oedipus is emphatic about finding out the truth about his birth and the murder case. He must know if he is the killer. The revelation continues to unfold. Oedipus is past the stage of denial, and is now in the stage of inquisition. He wants to know the facts, whereas before, he didn?t want to know because he thought he already had the answer. This revelation shows how strong his determination is and how it is starting to change him from an unenlightened man to an informed man. Now Oedipus is in dire need of the truth, and finally he gets the truth. He finds out that he is in fact, the son of Jocasta and Laius. Shocked at the magnitude of the crime that he has committed, he runs into the palace and screams, ? Alas, All out! All known, no more concealment! O light! May I never look at you again, revealed as I am, sinful in my begetting, sinful in marriage, sinful in shedding 3 blood!? (58). He takes full responsibility for his actions and is enraged about the acts that he has committed. His pride is now gone. All that he has accomplished is worth nothing to him anymore. The revelation is complete and Oedipus is now a knowledgeable man. Oedipus has changed for the better. His ignorant attitude led him to think that he could not have been the killer, but through his sense of pride and determination he discovered his true self. He thought that he had a perfect life, but after the truth was revealed, he realized that he had nothing at all. He showed this by saying to his children, ? Children, there is much that you will understand when you are older; you cannot bear it now, but in your prayers ask this; that you may live not more nor less than well, and so live better than did your father.? (67) Although Oedipus had lost the respect of his people he had gained self-respect and knowledge.