The Knowledge In Oedipus The King Essay, Research Paper

Knowledge in Oedipus the King

In Oedipus the King the knowledge that some characters in the play possess is very crucial in developing the plot. The knowledge in the play is the basic foundation of Oedipus? future, either to remain as the King of Thebes or to be sentenced to death or exile forever. The ironic outcome of the play is tragic. One mans attempt to escape his unfortunate fate leads him into the hands of what he dreaded the most. Every man is born with a predestined future. No matter how hard you try to avoid it one way or another it will come back to haunt you. The play takes place in Thebes; the plot of the play thickens as Oedipus is trying to rid the city of a terrible plague that infects the streets and homes. In order to do so he must find and avenge the killer of the late King Laios.

One of the characters in Oedipus the King who possesses this gift of knowledge is the profit Teiresias. Teiresias is a wise, old man who has supernatural powers to interpret the past and predict the future. He is somewhat like a modern psychic, gifted in the art of foretelling things to come. He knows what the god Apollo knows. The fact that Teiresias is blind makes his visionary abilities even more mysterious. At the start of the play Oedipus sends his brother-in-law Creon to call upon Teiresias so he could tell about the murderer of Laios. Teiresias knows of the destiny that Oedipus was born with. He was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. When he was called upon to share what he knows about Laios? murder, Teiresias refuses to answer Oedipus’ questions about the prophecy. When he was threatened with death he finally revealed what he knew using riddles and slogans, which confuses even the brilliant Oedipus. He then blames Creon and Teiresias for the murder of Laios, saying that they conspired to kill Laios, and now they are trying to steal the thrown from him by accusing him of such a horrible act.

Jocasta is the current wife of Oedipus and the widow of Laios. When her husband was murdered she was in a very vulnerable position. It was hard to rule Thebes by herself so she asked her brother Creon to help her. When Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx she was very happy, so she married Oedipus and made him king of Thebes. She was not aware of the fate that Oedipus was born with, but her and Laios did have a son who was destined to kill his father and marry his mother. To make sure he never lives out his fate they sent a shaped to leave their son on a mountain to die. In search of the cure for the plague Oedipus demands to see the shaped who witnessed the murder of Laios, Jocasta agrees without hesitation. Innocently, she has no reason to suspect that Oedipus is her son until the herdsman reveals the truth. When horrible truth finally came out Jocasta couldn?t take the pain of what she had done, and she killed herself.

The appearance of the shaped in the play is the final turning point in the plot. The job of the shaped was to take the ill-destined son of Jocasta and Laios to the mountains and leave him there to die. But instead of following directions he pitied the baby and gave him to another herdsman who gave the son to another king who was unable to have children. This shaped was called upon to find out the exact truth and discover if the accusations that Teiresias made at the beginning weren?t made up lies. At first he did not want to reveal what he knew, he wanted to prevent whatever pain he would cause with the news. But after much discussion he finally revealed that Oedipus was in fact the son they once banished and Jocasta was his wife/mother and his children were also his brothers and sisters.

Every man is born with a predestined future. No matter how hard you try to avoid it one way or another it will come back to haunt you. Knowledge is very strong when one possesses it. It can change the way of life of a person either towards the bad or the good. The saying ?what you don?t know won?t hurt you? is very true. If Oedipus or the people of Thebes had never found out who the murderer of Laios really was, or who Oedipus was, Jocasta would have still been alive and Oedipus would have not have to live the rest of his life in suffering and pain exiled from the city he loves. But then again they would have never gotten red of the plague in Thebes. Oedipus? fate could never have been changed, if something is meant to happen it will find a way to happen. But the knowledge of it made it more effective.