

## **It is chance that destroys Oedipus not human failing. Do you agree?**

“Chance rules our lives, and the future is all unknown”. Some people think that fate is an unavoidable part of every character's life. Every creature has to die; it is either sooner or later. No matter what fate is destined for someone, human wilfulness is like a virus that can make a life end faster than it should. Yes, fate contributes to the end but the wilfulness also can bring a person's life to an end. End is equal to destruction. At the same time, the end for Oedipus also represented discovering his own self-knowledge. Destiny of Oedipus is equal to the truth. Theban legend believed strongly in the inevitability of fate. Throughout the course of king Oedipus's life he was destined one day to kill his father and to become his own mother's husband (this prophecy made by Apollo) seem inescapable. Surely, fate put him in the certain places, at certain times. However, it's his choices and action that ultimately lead to his downfall.

People have free will but fate also plays a part in human life. Sophocles, in this play demonstrates how fate and human choice are closely linked. Oedipus had been told about his unavoidable prophecy however he tried to use his free will and choice to determine his destiny. He loved his parents Polybus and Merope, and so used his free will to choose to flee to avoid fulfilling the prophecy. Again fate plays a part driving him towards Thebes and it is fate that means he meets Laius. However, it is not fate but Oedipus' temper and pride (his human failing) which forces him to murder his own father “I was angry and every man of them there I killed.” If only Oedipus could control his temper, perhaps he could alter the course of his life.

“I Oedipus, whose name is known afar”... “I grieve for you my children”, clearly it is his excessive pride that gives him power to search for a “polluter of the land” also searches for his own identity. He acknowledges that “I will fight for Laius as if he was my father” ... “If anyone of you knows whose hand it was that killed Laius, let him declare it fully now to me” this is a strong dramatic irony provided by Sophocles that makes our audience laugh in tears and yet feel pity for Oedipus who about to set the destruction for himself. Since Oedipus is unaware of his self-knowledge which eventually leads to his own banishment “his fate will be nothing worse than banishment”. He is constantly told by Jocasta “In God's name- if you want to live, this must not go on”... “Doomed man! O never live to learn the truth!” Teiresias “You are living in ignorance of your own undoing” and the Shepherd “by all the Gods, master, ask me no more!” not to continue with his search. Oedipus is stubborn “I must pursue this trail to the end, till I have unraveled the mystery of my birth” and does not care what the consequences will be of finding out his true identity. Oedipus is obsessive about the truth. Once he finds out the truth Oedipus blinds himself as punishment. This tragic destruction is the fault of Oedipus's strong human faults not the word of Gods.

“Oedipus believed that he is the son of the unreachable Gods, also he had the power to do every thing as the Gods require. “I count myself the son of chance”... “What the gods required upon my honor it shall be done”. Here he has not seen himself as a mortal (a normal human being), he is still dreaming that he's the “great and glorious”, which he challenges himself to fulfill the word of gods. The moment he takes duty of the Gods to help the people of Thebes, and willing to search for the murder of Laius. This is also the end of the road for Oedipus where he can't run or hide from his fate no more “what will be will be”... “Fate has come to me”, he traps, collapses and transforms back to his real self (real image) which is “your enemy is yourself” and “bring (his) death” of his own destruction.

Also, we have Jocasta who is distrustful of the oracles until the end of the play. Firstly, she challenge the gods by killed her very first son with the hope to avoid the terrible fate. How can a mother have the heart to do such thing? Surely, Sophocle had treated her very unfairly. Why did Sophocle created such person with no humanity, by the moment that her husband disappeared from Thebes, she had not keen enough to show her love to her husband by “ bring everything into light”, instead she just marriage to a new hero ( Oedipus) to continues with her royal life. Even the last minutes she still denies her family fate, where we saw her chose the easy way which commits suicide “Count no (mankind) happy until (they) die... Which is against what Gods want her to do: to live with Oedipus forever in an ultimately relationship. Her refusal to face life with the knowledge of her family arrangements was weak. By dying she left Oedipus to deal with the shame and humiliation on his own. Her human failings play a major part in the destruction of Oedipus.

Fate does play a part in Oedipus destiny. However it is Oedipus' hamartia, (his moral fail ing) made up of obsession, anger, aggression and hubris which lead to his destruction. Bringing out the true when combined with the human weaknesses and failings Jocasta, Oedipus now no longer rules and he was banished from Thebes. Oedipus rose above the power of the Gods and took charge of his own life. The audience of this play will always see the hero in Oedipus but with failings all humans possess.