

Oedipus The King Full Text

Oedipus the King
Sophocles
Translated by David Grene

CHARACTERS

OEDIPUS, King of Thebes
JOCASTA, His Wife
CREON, His Brother-in-Law
TEIRESIAS, an Old Blind Prophet

PRIEST

FIRST MESSENGER
SECOND MESSENGER
A HERDSMAN
A CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF THEBES

PART I:

Scene: *In front of the palace of Oedipus at Thebes. To the Right of the stage near the altar stands the PRIEST with a crowd of children.*
OEDIPUS emerges from the central door.

OEDIPUS: Children, young sons and daughters of old Cadmus,¹

why do you sit here with your suppliant crowns?²
the town is heavy with a mingled burden
of sounds and smells, of groans and hymns and
incense;

5 I did not think it fit that I should hear
of this from messengers but came myself,—
I Oedipus whom all men call the Great.

[*He returns to the PRIEST.*]

You're old and they are young; come, speak for them.
What do you fear or want, that you sit here
10 suppliant? Indeed I'm willing to give all
that you may need; I would be very hard
should I not pity suppliants like these.

PRIEST: O ruler of my country, Oedipus,
You see our company around the altar;
15 you see our ages; some of us, like these,
who cannot yet fly far, and some of us
heavy with age; these children are the chosen
among the young, and I the priest of Zeus.
Within the market place sit others crowned
20 with suppliant garlands³, at the double shrine
of Pallas⁴ and the temple where Ismenus
gives oracles by fire⁵. King, you yourself
have seen our city reeling like a wreck

¹ Cadmus n. mythical founder and first king of Thebes, a city in central Greece where the play takes place

² suppliant crowns wreaths worn by people who ask favors of the gods.

³ suppliant garlands branches wound in wool, which were placed on the altar and left there until the suppliant's request was granted.

⁴ double shrine of Pallas the two temples of Athena.

⁵ temple where Ismenus gives oracles by fire Temple of Apollo, located by Ismenus, the Theban river, where the priests studied patterns in the ashes of sacrificial victims to foretell the future.

already; it can scarcely lift its prow
25 out of the depths, out of the bloody surf.
A blight is on the fruitful plants of the earth.
A blight is on the cattle in the fields,
a blight is on our women that no children
are born to them; a God that carries fire,
30 a deadly pestilence, is on our town,
strikes us and spears us not, and the house of Cadmus
is emptied of its people while black Death
grows rich in groaning and in lamentation.⁶
We have not come as suppliants to this altar
35 because we thought of you as a God,
but rather judging you the first of men
in all the chances of this life and when
we mortals have to do with more than man.
You came and by your coming saved our city,
40 freed us from the tribute which we paid of old
to the Sphinx,⁷ cruel singer. This you did
in virtue of no knowledge we could give you,
in virtue of no teaching; it was God
that aided you, men say, and you are held
45 with God's assistance to have saved our lives.
Now Oedipus, Greatest in all men's eyes,
here falling at your feet we all entreat you,
find us some strength for rescue.
Perhaps you'll hear a wise word from some God.
50 perhaps you will learn something from a man
(for I have seen that for the skilled of the practice
the outcome of their counsels live the most).
Noblest of men, go, and raise up our city,
go,— and give heed. For now this land of ours
55 calls you its savior since you saved it once.
So, let us never speak about your reign
as of a time when first our feet were set
secure on high, but later fell to ruin.
Raise up our city, save it and raise it up.

⁶ lamentation n. expression of deep sorrow

⁷ Sphinx winged female monster at Thebes that ate men who could not answer her riddle: "what is it that walks on four legs at dawn, two legs at midday, and three legs in the evening, and has only one voice; when it walks on most feet, is it weakest?" Creon, appointed ruler of Thebes, offered the kingdom and the hand of his sister, Jocasta, to anyone who could answer the riddle. Oedipus saved Thebes by answering correctly, "Man, who crawls in infancy, walks upright in his prime, and leans on a cane in old age." Outraged, the Sphinx destroyed herself, and Oedipus became King of Thebes

Oedipus the King full text is a timeless piece of literature that has captivated audiences for centuries. Written by the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles, this tragedy explores profound themes of fate, free will, and the human condition. The play tells the story of Oedipus, the King of Thebes, who is fated to kill his father and marry his mother. This article delves into the significance of the play, its major themes, and the impact of its full text on literature and society.

Understanding Oedipus the King

Oedipus the King, also known as Oedipus Rex, is one of the most famous works of Greek tragedy. It was first performed around 429 BC and is part of Sophocles' Theban plays, which also include Antigone and Oedipus at Colonus. The play is structured in a way that

showcases the dramatic irony of Oedipus's situation, where the audience is aware of his tragic fate long before he is.

The Plot Overview

The plot of Oedipus the King unfolds as follows:

1. **The Plague in Thebes:** The play opens with Thebes suffering from a plague. Oedipus sends Creon, his brother-in-law, to the oracle at Delphi to determine the cause.
2. **The Oracle's Revelation:** Creon returns with the news that the plague is a punishment for the murder of the previous king, Laius. Oedipus vows to find Laius's killer and save the city.
3. **The Investigation:** As Oedipus investigates, he learns from a blind prophet, Teiresias, that he himself is the murderer he seeks.
4. **The Truth Unveiled:** Oedipus's relentless pursuit of the truth leads to the shocking discovery that he has killed his father, Laius, and married his mother, Jocasta.
5. **The Aftermath:** Overcome by horror and despair, Jocasta takes her own life, and Oedipus blinds himself in anguish.

Thematic Exploration

Oedipus the King is rich in themes that resonate with audiences even today. Some of the most prominent themes include:

Fate vs. Free Will

One of the central themes of the play is the tension between fate and free will. Oedipus is prophesied to kill his father and marry his mother, and despite his efforts to avoid this destiny, he ultimately fulfills it. This raises questions about the extent to which individuals can control their own lives and the role of destiny in human affairs.

Blindness and Sight

The motif of blindness is significant throughout the play. While Oedipus is physically sighted, he is blind to the truth of his circumstances. In contrast, Teiresias, who is blind, possesses the insight that Oedipus lacks. This theme serves as a metaphor for knowledge and ignorance, suggesting that true understanding often lies beyond what is visible.

The Nature of Truth

Oedipus's quest for truth drives the narrative forward. However, the play suggests that the truth can be painful and destructive. Oedipus's determination to uncover the truth leads to his downfall, highlighting the idea that some truths may be better left undiscovered.

The Importance of the Full Text

Having access to the **Oedipus the King full text** is essential for a deep understanding of its themes, characters, and historical context. Here are a few reasons why the full text is invaluable:

- **Literary Analysis:** The full text allows scholars and students to engage in detailed literary analysis, examining Sophocles' use of language, structure, and character development.
- **Performance Studies:** Understanding the complete script is crucial for actors, directors, and educators involved in staging the play, as it provides insight into the nuances of the dialogue and stage directions.
- **Cultural Context:** The full text also offers a glimpse into ancient Greek society, including its values, beliefs, and social norms, enriching our understanding of the play's significance within its historical context.
- **Comparative Literature:** The availability of the full text allows for comparisons with other works of literature, both ancient and modern, that explore similar themes of fate, identity, and moral dilemmas.

Oedipus in Modern Culture

The themes and motifs in Oedipus the King continue to resonate in modern culture. The play has inspired countless adaptations and interpretations across various mediums, including film, literature, and theater.

Film and Television Adaptations

Several films have drawn inspiration from Oedipus the King, translating its themes into contemporary settings. For instance, the film "Oedipus Rex" (1967) directly adapts the play, while modern retellings often explore the psychological implications of the Oedipus complex, a term coined by Sigmund Freud.

Literary References

Oedipus's tragic story has influenced numerous writers, including T.S. Eliot, who incorporated themes from the play into his poetry. The concept of the tragic hero, as exemplified by Oedipus, has become a staple in literature, informing character development in works spanning various genres.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the **Oedipus the King full text** is a crucial resource for anyone interested in exploring one of the most profound tragedies in Western literature. Its exploration of fate, free will, and the human condition continues to resonate with audiences today. The play not only serves as a reflection of ancient Greek society but also as a timeless commentary on the complexities of human existence. By studying the full text, readers and scholars alike can gain a deeper appreciation for Sophocles' masterful storytelling and the enduring impact of this classic work.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find the full text of 'Oedipus the King'?

The full text of 'Oedipus the King' can be found on various websites like Project Gutenberg, Internet Archive, and many educational resources that provide access to classic literature.

What are the main themes explored in 'Oedipus the King'?

The main themes include fate vs. free will, the nature of truth, blindness and sight, and the consequences of pride and hubris.

Who is the author of 'Oedipus the King'?

'Oedipus the King' was written by the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles.

What is the significance of the oracle in 'Oedipus the King'?

The oracle plays a crucial role as it foretells Oedipus's tragic fate, highlighting the theme of fate vs. free will and the inevitability of destiny.

How does Oedipus's character change throughout the play?

Oedipus evolves from a confident and determined king to a tragic figure who recognizes his flaws and the truth of his circumstances, leading to his downfall.

What literary devices are prominent in 'Oedipus the King'?

Prominent literary devices include dramatic irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing, which enhance the tragedy and depth of the narrative.

Find other PDF article:

<https://soc.up.edu.ph/63-zoom/Book?docid=EvP94-8828&title=tsi-math-study-guide.pdf>

Oedipus The King Full Text

Oedipus - Mythopedia

May 15, 2023 · Oedipus, son of Laius and Jocasta, was a Theban hero and king, destined to unknowingly kill his father and marry his mother. He was also famous for defeating the Sphinx.

Tiresias - Mythopedia

Feb 27, 2023 · Tiresias, a famous blind prophet, played a central role in the mythology of Thebes. His knowledge, experiences, and abilities far surpassed those of ordinary mortals: Tiresias ...

Ismene - Mythopedia

Aug 23, 2023 · Ismene was one of the children of Oedipus and Jocasta. She tried to prevent her sister Antigone from burying their fallen brother Polynices, as this was against the law.

Eteocles - Mythopedia

Oct 2, 2023 · Eteocles was a son of Oedipus, though he and his brother Polynices were both cursed by their father for dishonoring him. When Eteocles failed to respect a prior agreement ...

Sphinx - Mythopedia

Mar 25, 2023 · The Sphinx was a hybrid creature, usually represented with the features of a woman and a lion, as well as (sometimes) the wings of a bird. The Sphinx plagued the Greek ...

Antigone - Mythopedia

Feb 15, 2023 · Antigone, at least in most traditions, was one of the children born from Oedipus' incestuous union with his mother Jocasta. She was a model of filial devotion, helping her ailing ...

Erinyes (Furies) - Mythopedia

Mar 9, 2023 · The Erinyes ("Furies") were terrifying sisters who acted as goddesses of vengeance and retribution. From their grim home in the Underworld, the Erinyes punished crimes that ...

Apollo - Mythopedia

Apr 11, 2023 · Apollo was one of the Twelve Olympians and the Greek god of prophecy, healing, art, and culture. He embodied the Greek ideal of masculine beauty.

Cadmus - Mythopedia

Jul 10, 2023 · Cadmus was the founder of the city of Thebes and served as its first king. At the end of

his life, he was transformed into a serpent as punishment for failing to honor the gods.

Zethus - Mythopedia

Oct 9, 2023 · Zethus was a son of Zeus and Antiope. He and his twin brother Amphion were Greek heroes and joint kings of Thebes, whose walls they built themselves. Zethus died of ...

Oedipus - Mythopedia

May 15, 2023 · Oedipus, son of Laius and Jocasta, was a Theban hero and king, destined to unknowingly kill his father and marry his mother. He was also famous for defeating the Sphinx.

Tiresias - Mythopedia

Feb 27, 2023 · Tiresias, a famous blind prophet, played a central role in the mythology of Thebes. His knowledge, experiences, and abilities far surpassed those of ordinary mortals: Tiresias ...

Ismene - Mythopedia

Aug 23, 2023 · Ismene was one of the children of Oedipus and Jocasta. She tried to prevent her sister Antigone from burying their fallen brother Polynices, as this was against the law.

Eteocles - Mythopedia

Oct 2, 2023 · Eteocles was a son of Oedipus, though he and his brother Polynices were both cursed by their father for dishonoring him. When Eteocles failed to respect a prior agreement ...

Sphinx - Mythopedia

Mar 25, 2023 · The Sphinx was a hybrid creature, usually represented with the features of a woman and a lion, as well as (sometimes) the wings of a bird. The Sphinx plagued the Greek ...

Antigone - Mythopedia

Feb 15, 2023 · Antigone, at least in most traditions, was one of the children born from Oedipus' incestuous union with his mother Jocasta. She was a model of filial devotion, helping her ailing ...

Erinyes (Furies) - Mythopedia

Mar 9, 2023 · The Erinyes ("Furies") were terrifying sisters who acted as goddesses of vengeance and retribution. From their grim home in the Underworld, the Erinyes punished crimes that ...

Apollo - Mythopedia

Apr 11, 2023 · Apollo was one of the Twelve Olympians and the Greek god of prophecy, healing, art, and culture. He embodied the Greek ideal of masculine beauty.

Cadmus - Mythopedia

Jul 10, 2023 · Cadmus was the founder of the city of Thebes and served as its first king. At the end of his life, he was transformed into a serpent as punishment for failing to honor the gods.

Zethus - Mythopedia

Oct 9, 2023 · Zethus was a son of Zeus and Antiope. He and his twin brother Amphion were Greek heroes and joint kings of Thebes, whose walls they built themselves. Zethus died of ...

Explore the Oedipus the King full text and uncover the timeless themes of fate and tragedy. Dive into this classic play and learn more about its significance!

[Back to Home](#)