

Oedipus as Victim of Fate and Human Psychology: The Fatal Curiosity

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Abstract : Oedipus in Oedipus Rex is necessarily a victim of fate and his own psychology. His curiosity brings about his downfall. Ancient Greek plays weren't just portrayals of some obscure tale but were insights into human nature. Oedipus, although a victim of circumstances, digs his own grave by curiously unravelling his past. Jocasta foresees his doom and begs him to stop, but to no avail. The curiosity of Oedipus forces him, almost like a drug, to explore the mystery regarding his birth. This curiosity is not something extraordinary in Oedipus - it is an intrinsic attribute of human nature. Knowledge is not always desired - whether it is Adam or Oedipus, their curiosity caused their eventual downfall. Oedipus was ill-fated since birth. He did not know that Laius was his biological father and therefore killed him. He arrived at Thebes, solved the riddle of the Sphinx, and married Jocasta without knowing that she, in fact, was his biological mother. He begot children and was living happily with his family when a sudden calamity struck Thebes. The calamity, though at first seemed public in nature, but later proved to be very personal for Oedipus. It drives home the fundamental truth about uncertainty of human life. That Laius was slayed by his own son, even after many precautions, proves the helplessness of humans in front of the designs of fate. Oedipus's mutilation of his eyes is also fated. It was committed by him in the heat of the moment and was certainly not a rational decision. It is evident to any modern reader that Oedipus does not have justice. Destiny treats him unfairly. Oedipus, in fact, defends his actions in Oedipus Rex in its sequel Oedipus At Colonus. The research paper discusses the unhappy fate of Oedipus and the role of destiny and his own curiosity in achieving it.

Keywords : ancient Greek drama, Oedipus Rex, Sophocles, destiny

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