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**Oedipus Tyrannus the Tragic Hero**

Oedipus Tyrannus should not be considered as a tragic alone but there is nothing heroic about himat the end. Instead, he exhibits the qualities of a tragic hero, a tragic hero is someone who brings his downfall and destruction through a judgment error as defined by Aristotle. These qualities include excessive pride, the moment of an important discovery, the irreversibility of fate and tragic flaw which leads to the hero’s downfall. All these qualities fit the description of a tragic hero in every way. I am going to elaborate on each trait with evidence from quoted texts of the play.

The irreversibility of fate is depicted early on in the play when Oedipus himself proclaims,

Strange, he's late, he's gone too long. But once he returns, then, then I'll be a traitor if I do not do all the god makes clear (FAGLES).

He had sent Creon, his brother-in-law, to find a solution from the prophet on how to stop the plague that has befallen Thebes kingdom. In this statement, he is sealing his fate without knowing, this is because all the problems that have befallen Thebes are because of his own doing. The fate of him also killing his father, Laius, had been envisioned by the prophet long before his birth. As a result of this, Laius had tried to persuade his wife, Jocasta, to kill Oedipus when he was still an infant but she couldn’t. Instead, she dumped him and was found by a shepherd who later took him to be raised by childless King Polybus of Corinth. He later learnt that he was not his biological father and set off. It is on the road that he meets Laius and kills him in fulfilment of the prophecy from the prophet. This confirmed by the prophet, Tiresias, when he is summoned by Oedipus to Thebes, he tells him

I say you are the murderer you hunt (FAGLES).

You cannot imagine . . . I tell you, you and your loved ones live together in infamy, you cannot see how far you've gone in guilt(FAGLES).

It is also in this setting that the prophet reveals to him that he is married to his biological mother, which is a prophecy that he had told him would happen a long time ago.

Oedipus shows excessive pride from the beginning of the play when he was addressing the crowd of people who had gathered at the royal house to complain about the ravaging plague that had hit Thebes kingdom by proclaiming,

Here I am myself— you all know me, the world knows my fame: I am Oedipus (FAGLES).

His excessive pride and arrogance are further exhibited when he is interrogating the prophet,Tiresias, to tell him who murdered King Laius for him to avenge his death and avert the curse as ordered by the gods. He utters the following words in response to Tiresias telling him to let the matter go,

If I thought you would blurt out such absurdities, you'd have died waiting before I'd had you summoned (FAGLES).

Yes, take him away. You're a nuisance here. Out of the way, the irritation's gone (FAGLES).

The moment of important discovery happens to Oedipus when Tiresias first hints to him of the enormous flaw he might have by saying,

Revealed at last, brother and father both to the children he embraces, to his mother son and husband both—he sowed the loins his father sowed, he spilled his father's blood! (FAGLES).

It would later be confirmed to Oedipus that he indeed murdered King Laius by his wife Jocasta. It is at this moment that he realizes that his brother-in-law and prophet was right, the prophet had vision despite his blindness. In this realization, he tells his wife,

Oh no no, I think I've just called down a dreadful curse 820 upon myself—I simply didn't know!(FAGLES).

Oedipus would later send out for the shepherd who is said to have witnessed the murder of Laius and would the key to ending all doubts. It would later emerge that the same shepherd is the one who had given out Oedipus out to the house of King Polybus when he had found an abandoned child. It is at this point that Oedipus realizes all that he has done and as fate would have it, the prophecy of the prophet had come to pass.

In conclusion, the above-discussed traits of Oedipus exclude him from being a hero as he does perform any heroic deeds in the end but rather as someone whose fate had been predetermined long ago by the gods. The gods who spoke to the prophet, Tiresias, had sealed his fate when the prophet revealed to Laius that his downfall would be as a result of his son. He tries the best he couldto change fate but as it would emerge later in the play; fate cannot be cheated. This meant that both the fate of Laius and Oedipus were intertwined and Oedipus will be the downfall of his father and himself. It becomes a tragic heroic because of the ending which ends with Oedipus taking his sight as a symbol that he cannot bring himself to seeing the misery that he has caused Thebes Kingdom and its people. He is disgraced and seeks to be exiled from Thebes and even begs his brother-in-law to take his life and asks him to take care of his two daughters he has had through incest with his biological mother.

Work Cited

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