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He analyses in painful detail his own situation and that of his children. His success in solving the riddle of the Sphinx seems to have further developed his inherent feeling of pride. Some of Oedipus's actions were fate-bound, but everything that he does on the stage, from first to last, he does as a free agent--his condemnation of Teiresias and Creon, his conversation with Jocasta leading him to reveal the facts of his life to her and to his learning from her the circumstances of the death of Laius, his pursuing his investigation despite the efforts of Jocasta and the Theban shepherd to stop him; and so on. Large numbers of dead people lie in the streets. The Delphic oracle has, therefore, a key position in the development of the plot. In fact the knowledge which he has in connection with the disease that has overtaken the city is a heavy weight in his mind. In Antigone when Creon is overwhelmed, it is by the natural recoil of his own acts, working themselves out through the mindless and vicious passions of Antigone and Haemon and we can see this in a natural justice. The acts of placeholders were not Oedipus' Recklessly, he comes to power through the exercise of his own will, from himself. But the somberness of life and the manner of his death are dramatically tragic, we can see enough pattern to tell us that there is a meaning in the whole. The Chorus extends the scope of its observations to include all mankind. "All the generations of mortal man add up to nothing." Then comes the messenger from the palace and he gives us a heartrending account of the manner in which Jocasta hanged herself and Oedipus blinded himself. The presence of some power or some design in the background is already suggested by the continuous dramatic irony. Aristotle refers to these and similar other emotions. The prophecy of the oracle, says Oedipus, has proved wrong and lied dead like Polybus. The Chorus also expresses its view in this song that all secrets of earth are known to Zeus and Apollo, but that no mortal prophet can claim to know everything. The pride and insolence of Oedipus have a disturbing effect on us, and we wonder what he will do. There are others who suffer, though not in the same degree, and we must take them into consideration also. As apparently hostile chain of circumstances combines, now with the strong side of his character and now with its weak side, to bring about the catastrophe. Sophocles means much more than this. Tragedy also satisfies in certain ways our love of beauty and of truth, of truth to life and truth about life. Oedipus speaks of his physical and mental agony, and the Chorus tries to console him. The Priest, describing the state of affairs, refers to a tide of death from which there is no escape, death in the fields, death in the pastures, death in the womb of women, death caused by the plague which grips the city. Sophocles wants us to treat Oedipus not as a special case except in the degree to which he suffers. In the last scene, we witness a vision of a man superior to the tragic reversal of his action and the terrible success of his search for truth, reasserting his greatness not this time in defiance of the powers which shape human life but in harmony with those powers. Sunday, December 5, 2010 Write a critical note on the themes of the Choroe Oedipus Rex. Irritated by Oedipus's false accusation, Teiresias bluntly says that Oedipus himself is the cursed polluter of Thebes. If he had not discovered the truth, he would have continued to live in a state of blissful ignorance and there would have been no tragedy--no shock, no self-blinding, and no suffering (assuming, of course, that Jocasta too did not discover the truth). Not content with Polybus's assurance he went to Delphi and consulted the oracle; and when the oracle, instead of answering his question repeated the warning given originally to Laius. The gods here manifest themselves not by means of any miracle but by a prediction which is proved true after a long delay. Loading PreviewSorry, preview is currently unavailable. Oedipus gained the heights of prosperity; he conquered the Sphinx; he became the honoured King of Thebes and proved to be a pillar of defence for the city; all Thebes felt proud of the majesty of his name. (P.U 2004) Crucial Events Pre-determined Oedipus Rex is, to a large extent, a tragedy of fate. The play also teaches us the greatness of man, and this greatness too is symbolised by the character and achievements of Oedipus. The happiness of any man is an illusion which is ultimately followed by disillusion. Sunday, December 5, 2010 Oedipus Rex - Character or Destiny? Oedipus, however, is still in the dark about the facts. The Greatness of Oedipus is the Prologue Oedipus has his defects and weaknesses but, in spite of them, he is portrayed from first to last as a man of heroic dimensions. Oedipus's Defects of Character Oedipus is not, however, a perfect man or even a perfect King. He undertakes to investigate the murder of Laius, saying "All praise to Phoebe!" The opening words of the entry-song of the Chorus thus refer to the message of the Delphic oracle: "From the Pythian house of gold, the gracious voice of heaven is heard." The entry-song of the Chorus is followed by a long speech from Oedipus proclaiming the punishment of banishment for the criminal. Creon is now the King and wields all the authority of a King. Aristotle expressed the view that the tragic hero is a man, esteemed and prosperous, who falls into misfortune because of some hamartia or defect. His triumph over the Sphinx not only showed his great wisdom but enabled him to save the people of Thebes. People are suffering sorrows which defy description. Laius tried his utmost to avert the disaster which had been predicted by the oracle; he took, what were, in his opinion, effective steps to prevent his death at the hands of his son. However, Oedipus is still afraid of the other half of the prophecy and, when the Corinthian messenger tries to relieve his anxiety on this score, Jocasta receives the shock of her life on learning that Oedipus is no other than her own son who, she had thought, had perished as an infant. Oedipus Not a Puppet, But a Free Agent in His Actions on the Stage If Oedipus is the innocent victim of a doom which he cannot avoid, he would appear to be a mere puppet. Anthropologists and Psychologists find it useful as a reflection of an ancient myth and man's unconscious mind. Thus the Choric odes covered a wide range of subjects and emotions. If he is found guilty of any secret agreement with Teiresias, he would be ready to forfeit his life. At the end of the play, Oedipus is the polluted outcast, himself the cause of the city's distress, through crimes predicted by Apollo before he was born. The Chorus, indeed, exalts and deifies Oedipus. Thus, when Teiresias accuses Oedipus of being the murderer, Oedipus thinks that the prophet, prompted and instigated by Creon, is out to defame and slander him, but Teiresias knows the exact truth (and so does the audience). This moment comes for Jocasta at the end of the talk with the Corinthian messenger and for Oedipus at the end of the cross-examination of the Theban shepherd. Creon shows a desire to avoid the responsibilities of kingship because they are dangerous and painful. Being a man of a high intelligence, Oedipus was able, afterwards, to solve the riddle of the Sphinx. This supernatural power had pre-determined certain catastrophic events in the life of these human beings. In answer to a question by the Chorus, Oedipus says that, although Apollo had laid all this agony upon him, his action in blinding himself was completely his own. Tragedy affords us pleasure by exhibiting human endurance and perseverance in the face of calamities and disasters. Oedipus is, therefore, essentially an innocent man, despite his sin of pride and tyranny. Oedipus describes himself as "the shredder of father's blood, husband of mother, Godless and child of shame, begetter of brother-sons." The feeling of profound grief being expressed by Oedipus is experienced by the audience with an equal intensity. Creon argues that he would be the last man to desire Oedipus's throne and that the question of his plotting against Oedipus's life does not, therefore, arise. All the people of Thebes were proud of the majesty of his name. We might even lend universality to this formula by saying that here man (and not a man) matches wits with the gods. The presence of this power is most imaginatively revealed in the scene containing Jocasta's offer of a sacrifice. In the first Chorus speaks of the guilty man as a homeless outcast shrinking from men's eyes. The Role of the Chorus How can we ignore the role of the Chorus? In the last scene we see beyond the defeat of man's ambition the true greatness of which only the defeated are capable. Furthermore, Oedipus's fate shows that all human happiness is short-lived. And he repeats what he had previously said, "I do not speak beyond my knowledge." Creon's character may be summed up in these words: self-restraint, self-control, moderation, avoidance of excess of all kinds, and speaking from sure knowledge only. Even when blinded he draws the reproach: "Do not crave to be master in everything always." All this shows that Oedipus is not a man of a flawless character, not a man completely free from faults, not an embodiment of all the virtues. But the paricide and the incest--these were pre-ordained and for these fates are responsible. Whatever happens is the natural result of the weaknesses and the virtues of his character, in combination with other people's. The oracle's prediction was unconditional; it did not say that if Oedipus did such and such a thing he would kill his father and marry his mother. We meet Creon quite early in the play, in fact in the prologue itself. Jocasta is here denying the truth of oracles. This scene ends with a furious quarrel between the two men and the Chorus then sings a song in which it refers to the words of the Delphic oracle: "From the Delphian rock the heavenly voice denounces The shedder of blood, the doer of deeds unnamed. We have here a striking example of tragic irony. The play is based upon a myth, a myth which has its origin in the Delphic oracle. In short, tragedy arouses a multitude of feelings in us. But soon afterwards Jocasta hangs herself. As evidence in support of her view, she refers to an oracle given to Laius, not indeed from Phoebe, but from Phoebe's priests, that he should die by the hand of his own child to be delivered by Jocasta. Although there is no war being fought, yet the terrible cry of the fierce god of war rings in the ears of the people. As a reward for the service he had rendered to the city, Oedipus was joyfully received by the people as their King and was given Laius's widow as his wife. 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take a closer look at the character of Oedipus, the tragic hero of the play. There is a moment of reverent silence, which is broken by the arrival of the cheerful messenger from Corinth. Yet in a few moments he is arguing stubbornly with him. These feelings are the result partly of the felicity of the language employed and the music of poetry, but mainly the result of the spectacle of human greatness which we have witnessed side by side with the spectacle of human misery. What causes his ruin is his own strength and courage, his loyalty to Thebes, and his love of truth. One reason why Sophocles introduces the children towards the end of the play is that Oedipus may say to them what he does actually say: "What a life must yours be! Who will admit you to the gatherings of the citizens and to the festivals? An awful sin is committed all innocence, children are born to a life of shame, and virtuous intentions go wrong. Teiresias now says that the murderer of Laius is here in Thebes; that the murderer, regarded as a foreigner, is actually a Theban by birth, that the murderer came to the city with eyes that could see but will leave the city with blind eyes, that the murderer is rich now but will be a beggar afterwards, and that the murderer will prove to be both a brother and a father to the children whom he loves, and both the son and the husband of the woman who gave him birth. But Teiresias, as a person, stands no comparison with Oedipus. The Chorus reiterates its faith in Apollo and in the Delphic oracle: "Pheobus, our Lord, be this according to thy will!" Then comes the discovery for Oedipus, which shows that the entire prophecy of the Delphic oracle has been fulfilled in every particular. Oedipus gave evidence of his high intelligence by solving the riddle of the Sphinx. The Theme of the Third Ode The third song begins with an expression of the reverence which the Chorus feels for the laws framed by the gods. Such is Apollo's reputation and such are the gods. It has been suggested that the catharsis of the city does not become implicit in the perfection of its form. The Purpose of the Choric Odes The Chorus used to be an important ingredient in a Greek tragedy. The shock for Oedipus comes after his questioning of the Theban shepherd in the scene that follows. It may be said that if he had not been hot-tempered, he might not have got entangled in a fight on the road and might thus have been guilty of murdering his father. As a moderate man, he desires nothing more. The middle portion of the song describes the man who is born of hubris or pride, such pride as displayed by Oedipus and Jocasta. Man is certainly vulnerable; man suffers a terrible defeat at the hands of fate or destiny or gods or circumstances or whatever other name we might choose to give to them. The truth of the matter is that the gods rule the universe. The utterances of Teiresias fill us with terror. Sunday, December 5, 2010 The action in Oedipus the King rises to one great crescendo, kindling a sense of great tension and tragic feeling. Afterward, the scene becomes quiet again, as the story Jocasta once again turns her thoughts upon the oracles. The truth of the matter is that the murderer is obvious. His crime, when Teiresias arrives, is a state of suspense because Oedipus now comes to discover who is the identity of the murderer. Where is the murderer? Because of her Jocasta's "I am not willing to face the truth," she is unwilling to face the truth, while Oedipus is not only willing but determined. His chief error is not for himself but for the people of the State. This drama of revelation extends over five hundred lines or so. Oedipus, as we see him on various occasions, appears to be intelligent, determined, self-reliant but hottempered and too sure of himself. The theme is as old as Homer, who tells this story to illustrate it in the sixth book of the Iliad. Oedipus learns that he is not the son of Polybus but the circumstances in which Oedipus as an infant fell into the hands of the Corinthian have to be explained by the Theban shepherd who handed over the child to the Corinthian. But that is not all. Let the gods become vigilant! Critical Comments This ode is indicative of the importance which religion held in those days and the reverence which was, in general, paid to the oracles. For instance, the Chorus dissuades Oedipus from carrying out the sentence of banishment against Creon. In this way, the Chorus not only represented the feelings of the audience but also reinforced them, sometimes providing a kind of guidance to them. Under the influence of Jocasta, he grows sceptical of the oracles. Thebes honoured him by making him its King. The speech that Creon makes in his self-defence shows his transparent honesty and loyalty even though Oedipus is at this time blinded by his prejudice. As soon as Jocasta gave birth to a son, Laius had him chained and handed over to a trustworthy servant with strict and precise instructions to the effect that the child be exposed on. Sophocles does not try to make us feel that a relentless destiny or a hostile god is guiding the events. In the matter of the plague this hidden power is definitely stated. Nobody ever won greater prosperity and power than Oedipus did. The Chorus's Regret at the Loss of People's Faith in Oracles The Chorus now sings another song, this time deploring the loss of people's faith in oracles, and this is clearly an answer to Oedipus's and Jocasta's doubt about the oracles. The messenger brings the news that Polybus is dead. It is in terms of the interest of the city that he states his desire for exile. If Zeus does not punish people's disbelief in oracles, all religion will become meaningless. The "Catharsis" in the Perfection of Form These minor tragedies, of the children and the shepherds, are in harmony with the major one. He believed in prophecies before and he believes in them now; his reverence for the oracle suffers no decline. The Chorus's Strong Faith in the Delphic Oracle In the scene between Oedipus and Teiresias, there is hardly any reference to the Delphic oracle, apart from Oedipus and the prophet seeking the city of Thebes, says Oedipus, appealing to him to save the city and its people. This person is no other than Jocasta, the Queen. In spite of the evidence to prove Oedipus a free agent in most of his actions as depicted in the play, we cannot forget that the most tragic events of his life—his murder of his father and his marriage with his mother—had inevitably to happen. But this does not mean that life is chaotic. Dead babies lie on the ground, un-pitied and unburred, infecting the air with pollution. He wanted to win the king's favour because, besides the news of Oedipus's succession to the throne of Corinth, the Corinthian is completely autonomous, and yet in his coming the hand of the god is visible. The account of the self-murder and the self-blinding is extremely horrifying; the lamentations of Oedipus show him for a while to be a helpless and pathetic figure, but soon his original imperiousness and pride reassess themselves and he insists on having his own way though he cannot. The Chorus now sings a song which has an ironical ring because the Chorus imagines Oedipus to be the offspring of the union of a god and a mountain-nymph. Our entire attention is focused on a single theme—the investigation made by Oedipus into the murder of Laius and the discovery of the truth. What was foretold by the oracle must inevitably happen. Invoking three deities, Athena, Artemis, and Phoebe, the Chorus seeks the three-fold power to save the city of Thebes from the fire and pain of the plague which is raging there. But the curse, that Oedipus utters upon the unknown criminal and upon those who may be sheltering him, also terrifies us by its fierceness. If we agree, we shall have to support the view that the play is didactic and that Sophocles is a teacher; for what the Delphic maxim just quoted amounts to is a warning to cultivate sophrosyne, a word best translated as modesty or self-restraint. There is no doubt that Oedipus offends him with his tone of authority and command, but we should have expected a certain amount of moderation in a man who is spiritually so great as to know the minds of the gods and to be able to read the future. We are hardly in a position to speak a word on account of the intensity of the feelings, mainly of pity and fear, which we have been experiencing from the very opening scene of the play onwards. Sunday, December 5, 2010 The Question of a Moral Lesson in the Play "Oedipus Rex" Oedipus Rex is a play of inexhaustible interest. Creon would like to explain his point, but Oedipus hardly lets him speak. That is why we can say that the perfection of form implies a world-order. Similarly, a tragedy, by arousing pity and terror, cures us of these very feelings which always exist in our hearts. A tragedy, therefore, affords emotional relief and the spectators rise at the end with a feeling of pleasure. There is no villainy to be condemned in the play. As for his sincerity and truthfulness, Oedipus can himself go to Delphi and verify if the message brought by Creon was genuine or not. Pity and Fear in the Last Scene But the feelings of pity and fear do not end here. At the entries of Jocasta and the Chorus, Oedipus certainly withdraws the sentence of death against Creon, but does not cease to suspect him of treason. His position and authority seem to be leading him to become a tyrant. The scene of this quarrel is highly exciting to the reader or the spectator. In his dialogue with Creon at the end, Oedipus cites the authority of the Delphic oracle in demanding banishment as his due. The whole play in that case becomes a tragedy of destiny which denies human freedom. Soon an attendant comes and announces the self-murder of Jocasta and the self-blinding of Oedipus. The anagnorisis means the realisation of the truth, the opening of the eyes, the sudden lightning flash in the darkness. The circumstances, too, are natural, even inevitable, once we accept the characters. A Multitude of Feelings Aroused by Tragedy This is, however, a limited interpretation of the function of a tragedy. Believing Polybus and Merope to be his parents he fled from Corinth in order to prevent the possibility of his killing his father and marrying his mother. The Climax of Pity and Terror in the Scene of Discovery In the scene with Creon, the feeling of terror is considerably less, arising mainly from Oedipus's sentence of death against the innocent Creon, which, however, is soon withdrawn. It was not Apollo who instigated the Corinthian to come. The Responsibility of fate and the Responsibility of Character What is our conclusion, then? The sons of the Chorus immediately following the discovery arouses our deepest sympathy at Oedipus's sad fate. The pattern may hit the life of the individual cruelly, but at least we know that it exists; we feel assured that piety and purity are a large part of it. In fact, every great tragic play emphasizes the essential nobility of man, while at the same time representing man's helplessness in the face of circumstances and forces (known and unknown). His greatness and beauty arouse in us a pride in their magnificence which is inseparable from and increased by our sorrow over their imminent death. The door must suffer. Jocasta tries to make light of Oedipus's fear which has been aroused by the prophet's allegation. Logical and Convincing Sequence of Events It is evident that everything proceeds in a logical and convincing manner. Hamlet, Lear, Tess, the tragic heroes of Ernest Hemingway—they all illustrate the greatness of human beings in spite of their defeat at the hands of society or circumstances or fate or their own follies, or a combination of all these. The soul has become unproductive and women are giving birth to dead babies. Teiresias, however, tries to evade giving straight answers to Oedipus's questions with the result that Oedipus completely loses his temper and insults the prophet. His wanderings took him to Thebes the people of which were facing a great misfortune. Here the responsibility of fate cannot be denied. The Contrast with Creon This trait in Creon contrasts him sharply with Oedipus who suffers from the pride of knowledge. The Moving Last Scene The final scene of the play is highly moving. Oedipus's speech too is full of tragic irony, because he is not in the least aware that he has already, though unknowingly, committed those very deeds which had been predicted by the Delphic oracle and which he had endeavoured to avoid. Oedipus himself, Teiresias, Creon, Jocasta, and the two shepherds are all perfectly lifelike characters, and so are the remoter characters who do not appear on the stage—the hot-tempered Laius at the cross-roads and the unknown Corinthian who insulted Oedipus by saying that the latter was not the son of Polybus. This temple was situated in a deep rocky cleft near Mt. Parnassus in Phocis. The discovery by Oedipus is the culminating point of the play and of the excitement it produces. This is how Jocasta's prayer has been answered! But how does the god answer the pitiable prayer of Jocasta? When asked by the Chorus why he has taken this extreme step against himself, Oedipus replies that he had no desire any more to see any sight in this world. And now Polybus has died a natural death, and not by any act of Oedipus's. His resurgence in the last scene of the play is a dramatic vision of a defeated Athene which will rise to a greatness beyond anything she had attained in victory. Creon's Able Reasoning: His Defence of Himself We next meet Creon after Oedipus has had a quarrel with Teiresias in the course of which Oedipus has expressed his suspicion that Creon has, in collaboration with Teiresias, hatched a conspiracy against him. The Chorus is, therefore, faced with a dilemma and cannot come to a conclusion. He does have the necessary knowledge, but it would not be wise for his part to disclose what he knows. The sins of Oedipus were committed unknowingly; in fact Oedipus did his utmost to avert the disaster. The tragedy lies in the discovery of the guilt and not in the guilt itself, and so the feeling of pity and fear reach their height with the discovery by Oedipus. He returns from Delphi whithen he had been sent by Oedipus to seek the oracle's guidance. The Chorus was not just a spectator but a commentator. There is not a single dissentient voice so far as the authority of the Delphic oracle is concerned. The people look upon him as their saviour. In Electra the vengeance that at last falls on the murderers is linked to their crime by the natural chains of cause and effect. The entry-song of the Chorus which follows the prologue, heightens the feelings of pity and fear. He is adored and worshipped by them. But Oedipus was resolute. A sinner like Oedipus must not expose himself to public view, says Creon. When Oedipus loses his temper, Teiresias is not in the least scared. Thus the action moves on two planes at once. The Chorus asks the identity of the man who did the horrible deeds mentioned by the prophet. But greater than any other quality in him is his love of truth. While the Chorus supports Creon what he has said, Oedipus rejects Creon's plea and says that he will punish Creon's treason not in the least. There is in him a failure of pity even though he is forced to everything happens naturally, the only exception being the arrival of the Corinthian messenger at a time when Oedipus is investigating the murder of Laius. The Chorus tries to soothe him by saying that Oedipus spoke the offence worse in a fit of anger. The authorship of the play is thus reassessed by the Chorus, and we are made once more conscious of the great prestige enjoyed by Oedipus. Neither Oedipus nor the Chorus knows the truth but they both think him to be A Good and Straightforward Man. The Birth of a Masterpiece He Teiresias with his son, Oedipus, may be described as the true servant of the State. In this matter, he shows a high sense of duty as a king and a high reward for his own conscience as a man. The Chorus next utters a prayer that a man, who is prompt in word or deed and who has the fear of justice, should be overtaken by utter ruin. Sophocles is famous for his use of tragic irony, and this play clearly shows the skill with which he has employed it. No moralist would present human folly in such bright colours and depict wisdom and temperance as dull. The essential goodness of Oedipus, Jocasta, and Creon is highly pleasing to us. The Chorus says: "With fear my heart is riven, fear of what shall be told. When the Chorus scolds him for having blinded himself, he replies with the old impatience and a touch of the old anger, telling them not to preach a lesson to him. Scenes Leading to the Final Revelation Then follow three scenes which lead to the final revelation—the scenes with Jocasta, the Corinthian messenger, and the Theban shepherd. Those, who seek dishonourable advantages and lay violent hands on holy things, can never be secure from the wrath of the gods. This song shows that the Chorus has, up to this point, not discovered the true identity of Oedipus. The Chorus speculates upon Oedipus's parentage and visualises a love-affair between a god and a mountain-nymph. Elucidate. Perhaps Sophocles here wishes to tell us that man is only the plaything of fate. By a coincidence he met Laius at the cross-roads and, as father and son were of a similar temper, a fight took place. Nor could this play have pleased humanists of the fifth century, who attached great importance to human intellect. The Priest refers to him as a noble, mighty, and wise man. In short, this oedipus has a moral and didactic quality,unday, December 5, 2010 The Character and Role of Teiresias A Man of an Established Reputation as a Prophet Teiresias, the blind prophet, appears early in the play. 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The Oracle Received by Laius A little later we meet the person who does not attach any importance to oracles or to those human beings who are credited with powers of divination. Contributions to Dramatic Irony Furthermore, Teiresias contributes to the tragic irony which is present throughout this play. These circumstances took the shape of a feeling of compassion in the heart of the Theban shepherd and his consequent handing over Laius's child to a Corinthian who passed on the child to the Corinthian King who in turn brought up the child as his own. The Thebans had made him their King and had given their widowed Queen, Jocasta, to him in marriage. Then follow into important episodes: Oedipus's quarrel with Teiresias, and his quarrel with Creon. Heroic at the End The play ends with a fresh emphasis on the heroic nature of Oedipus. When Apollo's word came, he could still have left the murder of Laius un-investigated, but his piety and his love of justice compelled him to start an inquiry. He is thoroughly decent in his way, but Oedipus with his boldness and intelligence and ease of command is a much greater personality. Both these traits of his character raise him in our estimation. (Teiresias lives on a different plane altogether.) But even more pleasing, though at the same time saddening, is the spectacle of human endurance seen in Jocasta and Oedipus inflicting upon themselves a punishment that is awful and terrible. Creon is a just man; he is even a kind man who brings the children in the last scene to meet Oedipus. He feels himself to be as eminent in disaster as he was in prosperity. This part of the oedipus obviously contributes to the atmosphere of awe and terror in the play by visualising the fate which the murderer of Laius will meet. In short, the play continues to be a subject of intensive discussion. Oedipus tried to match his wits against the gods and he was defeated. The importance of the Delphic oracle cannot, therefore, be underestimated. Things happen contrary to all expectation. Teiresias represents and defends the wisdom of the gods in his opposition to human folly. A man of a poor spirit would have tolerated the insult and remained safe in Corinth. Oedipus was able to solve the riddle and thus put an end to the monster. These words were then interpreted by a priest in the form of verses. The Universe Not Chaotic or Irrational It is necessary to add a word about Jocasta's sacrifice, and Apollo's swift and terrible answer. Oedipus is symbolic of all human achievement, his hard-won magnificence, unlike the everlasting magnificence of the divine cannot last and, while it lives, shines all the more brilliant against the sombre background of its impermanency. A peripeteia occurs when a course of action intended to produce a certain result actually produces the reverse of it. What strikes us most here is the orderly development of the plot. All these incidents belong to what has been called the middle of the play. Similarly, Oedipus runs headlong into the jaws of the very destiny from which he flees. Creon seems to have been stunned by the charge. In this particular scene, tragic irony is provided by the predictions which Teiresias makes. The temple achieved a very wide reputation and became extremely rich as a result of the gifts presented to it. Teiresias's Complete Lack of Humility While we certainly admire Teiresias for his foresight and his prophetic gift, we cannot reconcile ourselves to his arrogance, haughtiness, and feeling of self-importance. Critical Comments This song is intended by the Chorus as a tribute to Oedipus. 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