

Oedipus the King: Does Oedipus Satisfy the Definition of a Good Man?

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Does Oedipus Satisfy the Definition of a Good Man? As a young man, Oedipus learned of his fate to kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus flees to a distant land to escape his terrible fate and inadvertently fulfills the prophecy. Unknowingly, Oedipus kills his father and enters the bed of his mother. Was Oedipus was a good man who happened to suffer an unfortunate fate, or was he a truly bad person, whose fate was only just? If we accept the Aristotelian views of good and bad, as expressed in *The Good*, Oedipus was indeed a good man by saving the city, ruling justly and searching for the truth although his anger could be seen as a flaw. In his first dealings with the city of Thebes, Oedipus found them under the curse of the Sphinx. He actually gained his position of King of Thebes by rendering unto the city a great service, namely the salvation of the city from the Sphinx's plague. Aristotle praised the type of cleverness and practical wisdom Oedipus exhibited in his solution to the riddle as being a component of overall goodness. If it were not for Oedipus virtuous action in saving Thebes, the citizens would have suffered untold disasters at the merciless hands of the Sphinx. After proving his worth as a good man and his concern for the citizens of what was seemingly a foreign city, Oedipus was well liked by the people of Thebes. The people of Thebes liked their ruler, and he in turn ruled over them

in a good and just way, trying to help them in their times of need. Aristotle believed that good in man existed in doing his job well. A good carpenter was one who worked with his wood and built things as best as possible; a good ruler presided over his people justly. Oedipus was a go..... middle of paperlege Publishers, 1999. Aristotle. " The Good." Dramatic Theory and Criticism. Ed. Bernard F. Dukore. Fort Worth: Harcourt, 1974. Benardete, Seth. "Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus." In Sophocles: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Thomas Woodard. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966. Dodds, E. R. "On Misunderstanding the Oedipus Rex." Twentieth Century Interpretations of Oedipus Rex: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Michael J. O'Brien. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 17-29. Harmon, William, and C. Hugh Holman. A Handbook to Literature. 8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999. Knox, Bernard M. W. The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy. Berkeley: U of California Press, 1964. Sophocles. "Oedipus Rex." An Introduction to Literature, 11th ed. Eds. Sylvan Barnet, et al. New York: Longman, 1997.

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