

The Play Oedipus Rex Essay Example Essay

Introduction

A great Greek by the name of Sophocles wrote Oedipus Rex. The whole play revolves around the irony of fate. Oedipus is the main character in the play. He is confident, a great leader, and he is strong willed. Once he sets his mind to something, he makes sure he sees it through to the very end. His downfall is attributed to the character traits that make him a great person. In the very end, he dies by his sword. This write-up discusses the types of irony that are contained in this play. It also explains the effect of irony on the overall theme of the work. It examines how Sophocles uses irony to affect the reader's mood and attitude towards Oedipus, Tiresias, and Jocasta.

Types of Irony in Oedipus Rex

There are three types of irony presented in the play, Oedipus Rex. These ironies are dramatic, situational, and verbal irony. Let's begin with dramatic irony. Dramatic irony refers to the situation in a play where the audience knows an absolute truth which the protagonist does not know. In this case, the audience knows the truth about Oedipus. However, he is entirely ignorant about his past. He does not understand that the parents that raised are not his birth parents. Moreover, he does not know that he killed his father and married his mother (Theodoridis). However, the readers know the whole truth. Dramatic irony is the tool used by the author in this scenario. The entire play revolves around dramatic irony.

Situational irony is the second category to analyze. It comes up when something unexpected happens, and it is mainly associated with a fatalistic view. It helps bring out the issue of fate and people not escaping fate. In the play, Oedipus character helps uncover situational irony. He is brought up by foster parents not knowing that they were not his birth parents. The oracle then foretells that his fate is to kill his father and marry his mother. In return, Oedipus runs away from his foster parent thinking that he would escape fate. However, he runs into his biological father and kills him. He later marries his mother, and together they have children. He runs away not to fulfill the prophecy but ends up fulfilling that specific prophecy. This is situational irony.

Verbal irony occurs when one character says one thing but a different character interprets what they meant in a completely different manner. In the play, there is a conversation between Tiresias and Oedipus. Tiresias tells Oedipus that he would not tell him what he knew since it would bring grief to him. Oedipus mistook that to mean that Tiresias knew of a particular danger that was about to occur to him and the city but refused to warn him. He thought Tiresias would betray him and the city. However, Tiresias was talking about the truth he knew about Oedipus. He was referring to the grief that would befall Oedipus when he knew that he was the one that killed his father Laius (Zachrisson).

Moreover, verbal irony is displayed when Oedipus talks to the people after their king dies. He tells them about how much he sympathizes with them and understand they are going through a lot. He also tells them that he realizes they are sick and they wish to find the murderer of their king.

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