STUDY QUESTIONS

ODE 1 AND SCENE 2

As you read Ode 1 and Scene 2, answer the following questions. We will use this work to begin our class discussion.

1. As ode 1 begins, what does the chorus remind the audience in strophe 1 and antistrophe 1?

2. In strophe 2 and antistrophe 2, the chorus reveals its astonishment at Teiresias’s claims. What claim shocks them?

3. When the chorus, in antistrophe 2, debate whether to believe Oedipus or Teiresias, with whom do they side? Why do you suppose Sophocles has the chorus voice this opinion?

4. How does Sophocles connect Ode 1 to Scene 2?

5. Why is it significant that Creon appears without Oedipus as Scene 2 opens?

6. What character trait of Oedipus is revealed by the fact that Oedipus accuses Creon of treason without first hearing his side?

7. What rational argument does Creon use to convince Oedipus that he has no intentions to take the throne of Thebes?
8. When the argument between Oedipus and Creon breaks into irrational verbal parrying, who intercedes to remind them of their responsibility to act rationally? How is this scene reminiscent of Scene 1?

9. What seems to be the role of the Choragos? In responding to the Choragos, what evidence of hubris do we see in Oedipus?

10. Why does Oedipus release Creon?

11. What is prophetic about Creon’s speech?

12. How do we see Oedipus’s hamartia in this scene?

13. What is the function of the dialogue between Jocasta and the Choragos?

14. What proof does Jocasta offer to support her opinion that mortal man is incapable of divination?

15. What detail from Jocasta’s story of Laius’s murder prick’s Oedipus’s memory?

16. What eyewitness to the murder of Laius still exists? What is foreshadowed by the servant’s request to leave Teiresias as soon as he discovers Oedipus on the throne?
17. Compare Oedipus’s version of his oracle with the oracle given to Jocasta and Laios about their son. Why does Sophocles reveal “both oracles” in the same episode?

18. What is revealed about Oedipus’s personality by his description of the encounter he had with the old man where the three roads met?

19. Oedipus begins to suspect the truth and clings to the hope that Laios was killed by a band of marauders. If not, he wonders, who could be more miserable? Who in Scene 1 issued essentially the same statement about Oedipus?

20. How does the Choragos respond to Oedipus’s despair?

21. What is foreshadowed when Oedipus states that the one detail of the Shepherd’s tale is the only hope left to him?

22. Why is it important to encounter the Choragos throughout the entire scene?