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**Possible Interpretive Positions**

These are possible interpretive positions that students can take in response to the debatable issue in our unit on *Oedipus Rex*. If they do not find a position here that they wish to take, students can formulate their own position, but they should have that position reviewed to be sure it will work for our purposes.

**Oedipus Is a Failed Leader**

**Because he is impulsive, self-centered, and unreliable, Oedipus is thoroughly unable to fulfill the**

**weighty responsibilities of kingship.**

**Oedipus Is Benighted**

**The most defining flaw in Oedipus’s character is that he is benighted – unknowledgeable,**

**uncurious, unwise – which makes his end so poetically fitting and admonitory.**

**Oedipus Is Violent**

**Sophocles depicts Oedipus as violent and murderous, folding his ending approximately into the**

**epigram, “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”**

**Oedipus Actually Harbors Wrongful Desires**

**Underneath the appearance that he committed his crimes unintentionally, it is actually a more**

**credible reading to conclude that Oedipus had a hidden desire to murder his father and wed his mother.**

**Fate, not Oedipus, Is Culpable**

**Oedipus has his flaws, but nothing he does justifies the extremely cruel conditions that Fate in the**

**play crushes him under.**