Oedipus
The Difference of Right and Wrong

I believe that Oedipus has a definition for the term, "the right thing", that is similar or the same as the widespread belief of all people: Doing the right thing is doing what's best for other people or what's best for the whole. That you must put others before yourself, and you must insure their happiness, safety, or well being before your own. And by doing the right thing, in the end, everybody, or at least the many, can prosper.

Oedipus is a hero and a good man, there is no denying that. He saved Thebes from the Sphinx by solving her riddle, and vowed to find the killer of the old king, Laius, and bring him to justice. A man like Oedipus has to have a noble definition of good and bad, right and wrong, but we are never told what he thinks the meaning is behind the two words , so we have to infer what he thought for ourselves.

Most of Oedipus's actions in the story hail him as a man who is looking for the truth and to always do the right thing. In the beginning, he approached his people directly to hear their pleas and tried to console them and assure them that he was looking to cure the plague. While looking for the killer of Laius, he tries to obtain the truth through persuasion and kind plea instead of commands, at least at first, before Teiresias set off his temper. But even while he is yelling at Teiresias in his rage, he does so with the well being of Thebes in mind, saying in line 299, "Can you use Birdflight or any art of divination to purify yourself, and Thebes, and me. from this contagion? We are in your hands. There is no fairer duty than helping others in distress." These words lead me to believe Oedipus puts his people, friends, and family far before himself. He even insists on the court to throw him out of Thebes when he discovers the truth, which they refuse.

Throughout parts of the play, Oedipus has what can be considered a "dark side". There are points in the play where he does things that are often looked at as bad. This is mostly shown with his argument with Teiresias, which spans throughout several pages. Even though Teiresias is withholding information (this being a good call for Oedipus's sake, or a bad call for Thebes sake), a person shouldn't shout at and badmouth a blind old man like Oedipus does. The cruel names, such as a "child of endless night," or "this decrepit old man" goes past the line of rationality. Oedipus even goes as far as to accuse the seer of planning the murder himself. Starting at line 331, "And I'll tell you what I think. You planned it, you had it done, you all but killed him with your own hands. If you had eyes, I'd say the crime was yours, and yours alone." More irrational anger is with Oedipus when trying to question the Shepherd. Since Oedipus is close to solving the mystery of his origin and the plague, he does take hesitation from the Shepherd when he tries to withhold information. At the first sign of deceit, Oedipus orders the mans hands restrained and threatens to kill him if he doesn't tell him the truth. This finally pulls the truth from the man, and Oedipus learns everything.

I am sure that Oedipus, just like before, has the common thoughts about doing "the wrong thing." That doing the wrong thing, or the bad thing, hurts people. Be it one or many, if it causes someone or many people great despair with no accusable reason, its was the wrong decision. Sometimes people do the wrong thing because it betters themselves, and they believe that it is a good thing. But in that case, it always hurts someone else.

Oedipus has the good definition of "Good" that most people can agree with. It all about doing the right thing whether or not it benefits you. Its in the end were the many, if not all, can prosper from your sacrifices. Oedipus Rex is often used in example to show how a great use of dramatic irony, almost

completely coined by Sophocles, adds suspense to almost anything, be it a book, play, TV show or movie. But I think that Oedipus is a great example how a character's "code of honor" or thoughts and beliefs can make or break a piece of writing.