Use Of Peripeteia, Hamartia And Catharsis In Oedipus Rex

The tragedy, Oedipus Rex written by Sophocoles conveys that being way too confident can be a problem.Is it good for Oedipus to know about his past or not?”I would not have known of what nonsense you would speak or I would have hardly have sent for you (450-451). Oedipus is very arrogant and does not know who he really is or ought to become. In what cases are peripeteia(sudden reversal of fortune), hamartia(fatal flaw leading to the downfall of the hero), and catharsis(releases all emotions) used throughout the book?

Peripeteia is used in Oedipus rex in numerous ways showing the truth of Oedipus’s whole life. The tragedy shows as soon Tiresias tells Oedipus that he knows is the truth “This day will bring your birth and your destruction”(499). The quote shows how Oedipus will be brought down and how there will be a sudden reversal of fortune that will put him in his misery. It attempts to show that everything that leads to Oedipus’s downfall happens from the start! The quote emphasizes his “birth”, which is the moment that leads to losing his power and the people wish that he had never been their ruler, they never even wanted to meet him. This was absolutely traumatizing for Oedipus. It would be good for Oedipus to not know about his past because nothing would lead to the loss of his status. Hence, he can strive to be a mature leader and would still be taking care of his people! His fate relies on the shepherd who felt regrets for him and did not kill him, but at the same time, this leads to his expel as well as resulting in the reality to be overturned. Oedipus’s true downfall(when he is exiled and all his power is taken away from him) is as soon as teresius comes in and starts exposing the truth after Oedipus angers him.“curse myself as well…if by any chance he proves to be an intimate of our house”. (peripetia) (284-285)He takes full responsibility and in a way ends the suffering During the story, people see Oedipus as a great person who saved their city from the sphinx and stopped all the chaos. However, Oedipus and his people don’t know who is the starter of this chaos! When the people find out they wish they never knew who Oedipus is and take away all his power. Oedipus is distraught and can take no pressure. Oedipus accepts the truth being certain of what is proved Oedipus unintentional wrongdoings have to lead to losing his kingdom resulting in him to be overthrown(peripeteia) resulting in hamartia (reversal of fortune) which we will see.

Hamartia shows the major flaws of Oedipus which is another point of his downfall which is fatal “I must sleep with my mother and find paternal blood on my own hands”(1011-1013)(hamartia). Oedipus is basically saying that he can not handle the truth of sleeping with his own mother and having kids with her and this overwhelms in a way that leads to him being exiled! The characteristic of Oedipus being so arrogant makes him not realize that he doesn't even know what he is doing. He thinks he knows everything just because he saved Thebes from the sphynx. He is being foolish in a way without even realizing it which will only lead to his own faith and no one else’s! Oedipus unbelievably found out that he was sleeping with his mother and this resulted in a lot of pain. For him, it proves that the prophecy was no lie and he could not bear it and in anger gouges out his own eyes! “What good were eyes to me? Nothing I could see could bring me joy”(1471-1472). Oedipus has accepted his fate as shown in the quote and he believes that he is done with his life and it is just going to be more miserable from here and that there is nothing he can change. He has accepted His reversal of fortune and it stayed this way until the end! He is basically traumatized by the whole situation and is no longer functional! It would have been better for Oedipus to not find out about the true faith he has not done

anything He does not want his eyes anymore and he thinks that he does not have anything to live for anymore. This leads to catharsis(the process of releasing emotions).

Catharsis is when Oedipus accepts the truth and releases his emotions for good. Oedipus releases a lot of anger when he finds out he killed his own dad (Lais) and slept with his own mother (Jocasta). This is overwhelming for him to handle and this leads him to gouge his own eyes out and making him very traumatized! “Pride breeds the tyrant violent pride, gorging, crammed to bursting with all that is overripe and rich with ruin—clawing up to the heights, headlong pride crashes down the abyss—sheer doom!” -Chorus(936-937). Chorus is trying to get Oedipus to figure out and when he does Oedipus releases his anger and this turns into forgiveness for his own children whose lives have ruined! “I count myself the son of Chance, the great goddess, the giver of all good things—I'll never see myself disgrace (catharsis) (1188-1190). He gets more in-depth and said he is the son of chance saying whatever happened was probability and happened for a reason. Oedipus releases all of his emotions, he has nothing left to release he seems to be lost. Oedipus thinks this was all random and not decided by the Gods he does not blame anyone for his fate. It would have been better if Oedipus had never found out the truth he would have still been a fine ruler who would have done anything to save his own people! All the power he once had has been taken away from him which makes him feel very overwhelmed he has no idea what to do! Finally, he is exiled from the land and has no emotions to give.