

# **CHAPTER 1**



Sophocles: *Oedípus the Kíng* 





#### The Author: Sophocles (c. 496 B.C.–c. 406 B.C.)

Sophocles was born in Colonus, Greece, c. 496 B.C. and died in Athens c. 406 B.C., a son of an armor manufacturer. He married a woman named Nicostrata and had two sons, Iophon and Agathon. He was a public official, a priest of the god Amynos, a healer, and most important of all, a dramatist, known as one of the three great ancient Greek tragedians, along with Aeschylus and Euripides.

Sophocles lived and wrote during an era known as the Golden Age of Athens (480–406 B.C.), famed for his flourishing political and cultural life. He learned a lot from the illustrious Aeschylus, 16 years his senior and later became his rival. He first defeated Aeschylus at the Great Dionysia in Athens in 468 B.C. when he was about 27. He won the first prize twenty times. Sophocles wrote a total of 123 plays, and only 7 from his middle and later years survived: *Ajax* (c. 450 B.C.), *Antigone* (c. 442 B.C.), *The Women of Trachis* (c. 440–430 B.C.), *Oedipus the King* (c. 430–426 B.C.), *Electra* (c. 425–510 B.C.), *Philoctetes* (c. 409 B.C.), and *Oedipus at Colonus* (c. 405 B.C.). Sophocles' plays have a strong contemporary resonance, and they are widely performed on stage in today's world. His influences extend to writers as diverse as Jean Anouilh, Bertolt Brecht, Eugene O'Neill, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Jean Paul Sartre and Timberlake Wertenbaker.

Sophocles' dramatic achievements and technical innovations have been credited by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Matthew S. Afterword summarizes his artistry as follows:

Sophocles used the painted scenery, which suggests color and the particularity of detail, and introduced the third actor. Prior to Sophocles, the backdrop of the theatre had been a fixed architectural façade, and the play consisted of two actors and a chorus. The introduction of the third actor extends a simple dialogue between two individuals enacting opposing views to a richer triangulated discourse which facilitates the exchange of a wider range of ideas and emotions on the stage.

The vivid language and imagery in Sophocles' plays demonstrate the poetic nature of the playwright. He is a master of language. He questions the instability of language in many of his plays: How words change or have multiple meanings depends on who uses them and who hears them.

Another influential innovation is to dispense with the connected trilogy—three plays linked to one another by plot and theme, so that he can focus on characterization and plot construction.

Sophocles is noted for the invention of the tragic hero. The harrowing vicissitudes of his heroes and victims provide insight into human nature. Critics claim that Sophocles wrote about humanity as it ought to be and Euripides as it was: the one excelling in the sublime and the majestic, the other in the tender and the pathetic. He has created some strongest and most intriguing women on the stage: Antigone is remarkable for her strength and nobility. Sophocles' plays explore at the heart the greatness of man and his limitations as well. The Sophoclean hero goes down fighting and through acknowledging the enormity of his defeat wrests a moral victory from ruin.

Sophocles has few peers in plotting. His plots are tight and taut, with logic flowing of even the most complex action. The playwright also excels at dramatic devices such as antithesis (the juxtaposition of speeches and contrasting views), foreshadowing and irony.

Aristotle acknowledges the importance of chorus in Sophocles' plays: "The chorus must be considered to be one of the actors, an element in the play, and it should take part in the action not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles." For Sophocles, chorus has a larger part in commenting on and even developing the plot. He increases the size of the chorus from twelve to fifteen people. The chorus is lifted to the level of the lyrical as opposed to the realism of episodes in the play. And it also serves the function of relieving the audience of dramatic tension which builds after each episode and introducing a new tension.

*Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone* are termed the Theban Plays. The three plays are in fact a part of a different tetralogy, whose other members are now lost. The Theban Plays deal with the fate of Thebes during and after the reign of King Oedipus.

*Oedipus at Colonus* is Sophocles' last tragedy. It is about Oedipus' exile life. Accompanied by his daughter Antigone, the banished Oedipus, dressed in rags and near exhaustion, arrives at Colonus, a suburb of Athens, and encounters King of Athens. It is some twenty-five years after he blinded himself. He knows about Creon's ill intention. After his death, his sons Polyneices and Eteocles start to contend for the throne. Oedipus' years of suffering have raised him to a holy dignity, typifying Sophoclean tragic hero.

Antigone won Sophocles the first prize at the Great Dionysia. It tells the story of Oedipus' daughter Antigone who buries her brother Polyneices against the order of her uncle, Creon, the King of Thebes after Oedipus' exile, because Polyneices is a traitor to the city. Antigone is sentenced to death for breaking the edict. The play ends with the death of Antigone, Haemon, her fiancé and the son of Creon, and Creon's wife Eurydice. Creon begins to rave, calling himself a rash, foolish man. It is a story that pits the law of the gods—"unwritten law"—against the laws of humankind, family ties against civic duty, and man against woman. Antigone is a representative of allegiance to family and tradition. Her defiance of Creon's edict shows her faith and sense of duty to her family. She personifies the belief that family and human relations should be placed above politics. Intended as a comment on social and political concerns of Sophocles' time, the play sends a message to the Athenian general, Pericles, about the dangers of authoritarian rule.

*Ajax* is Sophocles' earliest extant play, telling the story of the warrior Ajax who thinks of himself being unfairly treated, as Agamemnon and Menelaus award Achilles's armor to Odysseus

after Achilles's death. Ajax is furious and plans to kill the Greek army, when Athena intervenes and deludes Ajax into killing the cattle and the herdsman.

When Ajax comes to his sense, he is overwhelmed by shame. After making arrangements for his son, Ajax commits suicide. Odysseus insists on giving Ajax a proper funeral against the order of the two kings, remarking that even one's enemy deserves respect in death. Ajax represents both the uncompromising nature of the noble warrior and the failings of excessive pride, or hubris. This classical drama inspired contemporary British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker to create a modern epic of heroism, love and homeland in 2013, entitled *Our Ajax*, drawing on interviews with contemporary servicemen and women and based on current wars, set in a British army base. This dramatic reworking resonates with wars, and genocide prevailing in the contemporary world.

#### Generic Context

#### Tragedy

Tragedy originated in ancient Greece. The word, of Greek origin, means "goat song" and may possibly refer to archaic performances in which dancers either competed for a goat as a prize or were dressed up as goats. Drama competition was enacted at the Great Dionysia, an annual religious and cultural festival held in honor of the god Dionysus, the god of wine. As part of the festival, four plays of each playwright—three thematically connected tragedies and a satyr play—were played and judged.

The classic Athenian tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides developed from the choral lyric. Tradition held that tragedy was born when a certain Thespis (c. 535 B.C.) first separated the leader of the choral songs from the group (the chorus) and gave him a speaking role (as an actor). From this beginning, tragedy developed quickly, with Aeschylus adding a second actor and Sophocles a third. The dialogue was enhanced, while the linguistic and metrical complexity of the choral passages as well as the proportion of the play devoted to them were gradually reduced. Within about seventy years, tragedy reached its full flowering. As tragedy was the perfect medium for enacting and negotiating the tensions and ambiguities of the Athenian democracy at the time of intellectual, social and political transition, Greek tragedy occupied a central place in civic observances.

When giving his famous definition of tragedy in *Poetics*, Aristotle has in mind Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* as the perfect specimen. His definition of tragedy goes like:

Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions (Catharsis).

Aristotle thinks that every tragedy must have six parts, namely plot, character, diction,

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thought, spectacle and song (in the order of importance), of which plot is of the utmost importance, the soul of tragedy. And the personalities of the character are unfolded in the process of dramatic action. Actors usually wear masks to enlarge their expressions and gestures. The most striking feature of tragedy is the alternation of dramatic episodes with choral passage. The chorus acts as a group, gives advice to the leading characters, expresses the community's point of view, and functions as an "ideal spectator". But the masks, music, dance, and chorus which feature the ancient Greek tragedy are lost today.

From the definition, we can see tragedy concerns, in an elevated, poetic style, man who is larger than life. His suffering as the victim of destiny renders him a tragic hero, lifting him to the level of grandeur and nobility. A tragic hero cannot be a villain, because a villain repels instead of effecting empathy among the audience; a tragic hero should be a good man with a hamartia or a "tragic flaw", frailty, which causes his tragic fall.

For centuries, great playwrights and thinkers, such as Shakespeare, Marlowe, Goethe, Lessing, and Nietzsche have enriched the idea and practice of tragedy. Shakespeare's four great tragedies—*Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear*—are a theatrical must and have seen numerous revivals.



#### **Appreciation of the Play**

#### Guided Reading of *Oedipus the King* (c. 430–426 B.C.)

The Theban Trilogy of the downfall of the House of Oedipus draws upon the ancient story of Oedipus, King of Thebes. The sources for Sophocles' version of this legendary tale presumably include Book XI of Homer's *Odyssey*, two ancient epic poems entitled *The Oedipodeia* and *The Thebais*, and four plays by Aeschylus, including *Seven Against Thebes*.

Sophocles first produced *Oedipus the King* (also known as *Oedipus Tyrannus* or *Oedipus Rex*) in Athens (c. 430 B.C.) at the Great Dionysia, where it won second prize. Consisting of prologue, epilogue, choral odes, choral dialogues and episodes, the play focuses on the dilemma and suffering of a single central character King Oedipus.

Sophocles dramatizes Oedipus' painful discovery of his true identity, and the despairing violence the truth unleashes in him in this great tragedy. It starts in the midmorning with a priest and suppliants coming to Oedipus' palace to beseech him to cure the city of its woes, as Thebes is ravaged by famine, fire and plague, causing widespread suffering, death and destruction. Oedipus expresses his deep sympathy and says that he has already sent his brother-in-law Creon to Delphi

to receive the Oracle of Apollo, in order to gain some guidance. Just then Creon returns with the Oracle that the assassin of the late King Laius should be punished in order to end the woes of the city. Through the investigation, Oedipus finds to his horror that he himself was the one who unknowingly killed Laius, his biological father, and married his own mother, Jocasta, and bred four children with her. Such a revelation leads to the suicide of Jocasta and Oedipus' blinding of himself. The play ends with Oedipus' heart-breaking farewell to his two daughters and banishing himself.

Aristotle praises the play as the exemplar of tragedy, with well-constructed plot and the strong catharsis effect (inspiring pity and fear in its audience). The woesome fate of Oedipus strikes the audiences through the ages. Who is Oedipus? This is the riddle of the play. In pressing for an answer, Oedipus unwittingly plunges into his catastrophic fate. Oedipus solved the sphinx riddle in the past, and he is sure of solving this one, too. Yet he fails to grasp the gods' Oracles. Perhaps confidence and arrogance are his hamartia. This persistent probing into the mysterious death of Laius forces him to face the dark side of his nature. Oedipus demonstrates the duality of man: a wise king who has saved Thebes from Sphinx, and a vicious one as well who makes Thebes a cursed city. He pays heavily for his quest. When he assures his people that the investigation will finally bring him the light, he ironically foresees his future. Physically he loses his eyesight, but metaphorically he gains a clearer vision of himself, acquiring the knowledge of who he is and what his responsibility is. Oedipus is a man of resolution and determination, of courage and wisdom. He makes his choice and faces the consequence. He confirms that the greatness of man lies in his self-reflection and self-inquiry. It is man's nature to thirst for knowledge. He represents the man with self-consciousness.

The play is also about incest and patricide. Modern psychoanalyst Freud perceives in Oedipus' fate the fate of human beings. Oedipus Complex, the incestuous desire a son has for his mother, becomes the label of human nature. And there are various literary variations on this theme in classics, like *Hamlet, Sons and Lovers*.

The Greek chorus plays a significant role in Sophocles' plays. Formally, the choral ode has a tripartite structure: the strophe, the antistrophe, and the epode, with various and complex metrical structures. As to content, the choral odes bring an additional viewpoint to the play, usually broader and more socio-religious than what is offered by individual characters. The Chorus of Theban Elders in *Oedipus the King* is a remarkable element in the play. They are representative men of Thebes who honor and respect the king and the gods. Their odes reveal both a strong attachment to the king and a grounding in religious culture.

*Oedipus the King* is featured with dramatic irony. Dramatic irony arises from the difference between what an audience knows and what the characters onstage know. Audiences familiar with the Greek myth know from the start that Oedipus has committed the horrible crimes of killing his father and marrying his mother. Thus, Oedipus' slow but inevitable progress toward this terrible self-knowledge creates the tension of the play.

The play chosen for this selection is taken from *Sophocles: The Complete Plays* translated by Paul Roche. Close Reading of the play includes Fourth Choral Ode, Fourth Episode, Fifth Choral Ode, Epilogue and Choral Dialogue.

#### DExcerpt from Oedipus the King with Notes

#### **Oedipus the King**

CHARACTERS

OEDIPUS, King of Thebes A PRIEST of Zeus CREON, brother of Jocasta CHORUS of Theban elders TIRESIAS, a blind prophet JOCASTA, wife of Oedipus MESSENGER, from Corinth OLD SHEPHERD PALACE OFFICIAL PALACE OFFICIAL PALACE ATTENDENTS AND SERVANTS CITIZENS OF THEBES ANTIGONE ISMENE BOY

# FOURTH CHORAL $ODE^1$

[The elders, forgetting for the moment JOCASTA's ominous<sup>2</sup> withdrawal,<sup>3</sup> anticipate<sup>4</sup> the joy of discovering who OEDIPUS really is. Ironically, they imagine themselves already celebrating his remarkable origins]

# STROPHE<sup>5</sup>

If I am a prophet with sapient<sup>6</sup> eyes, Cithaeron<sup>7</sup> you, my mystical<sup>8</sup> mountain, Tomorrow before the moon's full rise, Shall shout out your name as the nurse and the mother,

- 2 ominous: 不祥的, 坏兆头的
- 3 withdrawal:退出,撤退
- 4 anticipate: 预料, 预感, 预见
- 5 strophe: 古希腊歌队唱的歌; 首节
- 6 sapient: 贤明的, 睿智的
- 7 Cithaeron: 西塞隆山(位于希腊东南部)
- 8 mystical: 神秘的, 神奇的

<sup>1</sup> choral ode: 合唱颂歌

欧美戏剧选词

Then shall we weave our dances around you<sup>9</sup>; You who have showered our princes with graces. Ayay, great Apollo<sup>10</sup>! May't please you, ayay! ANTISTROPHE<sup>11</sup> Who was your mother, son? Which of the dryads<sup>12</sup> Did Pan<sup>13</sup> of the mountains have? Was he your father? Or was it Apollo who haunts the savannas<sup>14</sup>? Or perhaps Hermes<sup>15</sup> on the heights of Cyllene<sup>16</sup>? Or was Dionysus<sup>17</sup> god of the pinnacles<sup>18</sup> Of Helicon's hilltops<sup>19</sup> where he abides<sup>20</sup> Presented with you by some Heliconian Nymph<sup>21</sup>, among whom he frequently frolics<sup>22</sup>?

# FOURTH EPISODE

[A figure, old and roughly clad<sup>23</sup>, is seen approaching] OEDIPUS: Look, elders,

if I may play the prophet too,

I'd say-although I've never met the man-

there's the herdsman<sup>24</sup> we've been searching for.

He's old enough and matches this old man.

But you no doubt can better judge than I:

- 15 Hermes: 〈希神〉 赫耳墨斯,古希腊神话中的商业、旅者、小偷和畜牧之神,也是众神的使者,奥 林匹斯十二主神之一。是宙斯与阿特拉斯之女迈亚的儿子,罗马又称墨丘利。
- 16 Cyllene: 库勒涅山,赫耳墨斯的生长地,在阿尔卡狄亚东北部。
- 17 Dionysus: 〈希神〉 狄俄尼索斯,酒神,护佑着希腊的农业,奥林匹斯十二主神之一,即罗马神话中的巴克斯(Bacchus)。据说他是宙斯与珀耳塞福涅之子。古希腊戏剧源自酒神祭祀的丰收庆典。 尼采认为日神阿波罗代表理性,酒神代表感性。

21 Heliconian nymph: 赫利孔仙女

- 23 roughly clad: 衣着粗陋
- 24 herdsman: 牧人

<sup>9</sup> weave our dances around you: 围着你载歌载舞

<sup>10</sup> Apollo: 〈希神〉太阳神阿波罗, 奥林匹斯十二主神之一, 宙斯和勒脱之子, 古希腊神话中的光明、 预言、音乐和医药之神, 消灾解难之神, 同时也是人类文明、迁徙和航海者的保护神。

<sup>11</sup> antistrophe: 对照乐节; 次节

<sup>12</sup> dryad: 森林女神

<sup>13</sup> Pan: 〈希神〉潘(阿尔卡狄亚的半人半羊的山林和畜牧的神),赫耳墨斯之子,好色。

<sup>14</sup> savannas: (美国东南部的)无树平原(savanna的名词复数); (亚)热带的稀树大草原, 此处指原野。 阿波罗曾为阿德墨托斯牧过羊, 他可能在原野上同神女们有往来。

<sup>18</sup> pinnacle: 顶峰; 顶点

<sup>19</sup> Helicon's hilltops:赫利孔山顶。赫利孔山在波奥提亚境内,酒神的居住地。

<sup>20</sup> abide (in): 居住, 逗留

<sup>22</sup> frolic: 嬉戏, 嬉闹

You've seen the man before. CHORUS: We know him well. Laius never had a better servant. [The SHEPHERD enters, ill at ease<sup>25</sup>. OEDIPUS surveys him and turns to the MESSENGER] OEDIPUS: First question then to you, Corinthian: is he the man you mean? MESSENGER: The very man. OEDIPUS: Come here, sir, and look me in the eyes. Tell me straight: were you ever Laius'? SHEPHERD: Yes, sir, born and bred, sir-never bought. OEDIPUS: And what was your job? How were you employed? SHEPHERD: Chiefly as a shepherd, sir. OEDIPUS: A Shepherd where? What was your terrain<sup>26</sup>? SHEPHERD: [hedging<sup>27</sup>] Sometimes...the slopes of Cithaeron and sometimes...thereabouts<sup>28</sup>. OEDIPUS: Good, then you've run across this man before? [The SHEPHERD desperately tries to avoid looking at the MESSENGER] SHEPHERD: How'd he be there, sir?...What man do you mean, sir? OEDIPUS: The man in front of you. Did you ever meet him? SHEPHERD: Not to remember, sir...I couldn't rightly say. MESSENGER: And no wonder, sire! But let me jog his memory<sup>29</sup>. I'm sure he won't forget the slopes of Cithaeron where for three half-years we were neighbors, he and I; he with two herds, I with one: six long months, from spring to early autumn. And when at last the winter came, We both drove off <sup>30</sup> our flocks<sup>31</sup>, I to my sheepcotes<sup>32</sup>, he back to Laius' folds<sup>33</sup>...

Am I right or am I wrong?

- terrain: 地形, 地势; 地面, 地带 26
- 27 hedge: 回避, 避免
- 28 thereabouts: 附近; 左右
- jog one's memory:唤起某人的记忆 29
- drive off: 驱赶 30
- flock: 兽群; 大量。此处指羊群。 31
- 32 sheepcote: 羊栏, 羊圈
- 33 fold: 羊栏

ill at ease: 局促不安 25

# 欧美戏剧选读

SELECTED READINGS IN EUROPEAN & AMERICAN DRAMA

SHEPHERD:  $[sullenly^{34}]$  Aye, you're right. But it was long ago. MESSENGER: Now tell this. Do you recall a certain baby boy you gave me once to bring up as my son? SHEPHERD: What're you getting at?<sup>35</sup> What're these questions for? MESSENGER: Take a look, my friend. He's standing there, your baby boy. SHEPHERD: Damn you, man! Can you not hold your tongue<sup>36</sup>? OEDIPUS: Watch your words<sup>37</sup>, old man! It's you who ought to be rebuked<sup>38</sup>, not he. SHEPHERD: Great master, please? What have I done wrong? OEDIPUS: Not answered this man's questions on the baby boy. SHEPHERD: But, sir, he's rambling nonsense<sup>39</sup>. He doesn't know a thing. OEDIPUS: You won't talk for pleasure? Then perhaps you'll talk for pain. [OEDIPUS raises a threatening hand] SHEPHERD: By all the gods, sir, don't hurt a poor old man. OEDIPUS: Here, someone twist the wretch's hands behind his back. [A PALACE GUARD steps forward] SHEPHERD: God help me, sir! What is it you must know? OEDIPUS: The baby he's been speaking of-did you give it him or not? SHEPHERD: I did...I did...I wish I'd died that day. OEDIPUS: You'll die today, unless you speak the truth. SHEPHERD: Much sooner, sir, if I speak the truth. OEDIPUS: This man, it's clear, is playing for time<sup>40</sup>. SHEPHERD: No, not me, sir! I've already said I gave it him. OEDIPUS: Then where's it from? Your home or someone else's? SHEPHERD: Oh, not mine, sir! I got it from another. OEDIPUS: Someone here in Thebes? Of what house? SHEPHERD: By all the gods, sir, don't ask me any more! OEDIPUS: If I have to ask again-you're dead. SHEPHERD: Then...from Laius' house...that's where it's from. OEDIPUS: What, a slave? Or someone of his line<sup>41</sup>? SHEPHERD: Oh, sir! Must I bring myself to say it?

- 34 sullenly:不悦地, 绷着脸, 忧郁地
- 35 What are you getting at?: 你是什么意思? get at: 暗示。
- 36 hold your tongue:住嘴
- 37 watch your words: 注意你的言辞
- 38 rebuke: 非难, 指责; 惩戒
- 39 ramble nonsense: 胡说八道
- 40 play for time: 拖延时间; 泡蘑菇
- 41 line: 家系, 家族

OEDIPUS: And I to hear it. Yes, it must be said. SHEPHERD: They say it was...actually his own. But the queen inside could probably explain. OEDIPUS: She, she gave it you? SHEPHERD: Just that, my lord. OEDIPUS: With what intention? SHEPHERD: To do away with it. OEDIPUS: The child's own mother? SHEPHERD: To escape a prophecy too horrible. OEDIPUS: What kind of prophecy? SHEPHERD: A warning that he'd kill his father. OEDIPUS: In heaven's name, what made you pass him on to this old man? SHEPHERD: Only pity, sir. I thought he'd take him home and far away. Never this—oh, never kept for infamy<sup>42</sup>! For if you are the one he says you are, Make to mistake: you are a doom-born<sup>43</sup> man. [OEDIPUS stares in front of him, then staggers<sup>44</sup> forward] OEDIPUS: Lost! Ah, lost! At last it's blazing clear<sup>45</sup>. Light of my days, go dark. I want to gaze no more. My birth all sprung revealed from those it never should, Myself entwine with<sup>46</sup> those I never could. And I the killer of those I never would. [OEDIPUS rushes into the palace]

# FIFTH CHORAL ODE

[*The elders, seeing that the cause of* OEDIPUS *is lost, break into a desperate lament*<sup>47</sup> *for the insecurity of all human fame, so bitterly exemplified*<sup>48</sup> *now in the fall of the once-confident king.*]

# STROPHE I

Oh, the generation of man! His life is vanity and nothingness. Is there one, one

- 42 infamy: 声名狼藉, 臭名; 丑恶; 恶行
- 43 doom-born: 生来受苦, 厄运缠身

- 45 blazing clear: 大白天下, 一清二楚
- 46 entwine with: 缠绕, 盘绕
- 47 break into a desperate lament: 陷入绝望的哀悼
- 48 exemplify: 例示, 举例证明

<sup>44</sup> stagger: 蹒跚

Who more than tastes of, thinks of, happiness, Which in the thinking vanishes? Yours the text, yours the spell, I see it in you, Oedipus: Man's pattern of unblessedness.

#### ANTISTROPHE I

You who aimed so high! Who hit life's topmost<sup>49</sup> prize—success! Who—Zeus<sup>50</sup>, oh, who— Struck and toppled down<sup>51</sup> the griffin-taloned Death knell witch<sup>52</sup>, and like a saving tower<sup>53</sup> Soared<sup>54</sup> above the rotting shambles<sup>55</sup> here: A sovereign<sup>56</sup> won, supremely blest<sup>57</sup>. A king of mighty Thebes.

# STROPHE II

Caught in the end by Time

Who always sees, where Justice sits as judge,

Your unwed wedding's done,

Begetter and begot—O son of Laius!—

Out of sight what sight might not have seen!

My sorrow heaves, my lips lament<sup>58</sup>,

Which drew their breath from you and now

Must quiver<sup>59</sup> and be still.

53 saving tower: 抵御死亡的堡垒

- 55 rotting shambles: shambles: 〈口〉 混乱; 毁坏 (景象)
- 56 sovereign: 君主, 最高统治者; 独立国
- 57 supremely blest: 至高无上的祝福
- 58 My sorrow heaves, my lips lament.: 我为你哀伤、悲痛。
- 59 quiver: 微颤, 抖动

<sup>49</sup> topmost: 最高的, 最上面的

<sup>50</sup> Zeus: 〈希神〉 宙斯,古希腊神话中的众神之王,奥林匹斯十二主神之首,统治宇宙万物的至高无 上的主神,又是霹雳之神。罗马神话中称其为朱庇特(Jupiter 或 Jove)。

<sup>51</sup> topple down: 推翻, 颠覆; 倒塌

<sup>52</sup> the griffin-taloned death knell witch: griffin: 〈希神〉狮身鹫首的怪兽。talon: (尤指猛禽的)爪; (如爪般的)手指。Knell: 丧钟声。这儿指的是狮身人面的斯芬克斯,那个出谜语、长弯爪、带来 死亡的女妖。

<sup>54</sup> soar: 高耸, 屹立

## EPILOGUE

[A PALACE OFFICIAL hurries out from the palace] OFFICIAL: Listen, lords most honorable of Thebes: forget the House of Labdacus<sup>60</sup>, all filial sympathy<sup>61</sup>, if you would stop your ears, hide your eyes, not break your hearts against appalling<sup>62</sup> pain. No rivers—even Ister<sup>63</sup>, even Phasis<sup>64</sup> could flush away<sup>65</sup>, I think, the horrors hidden in these walls, where now other evils, courted<sup>66</sup> evils self-incurred<sup>67</sup>, Will bring to light<sup>68</sup> the perfect agony<sup>69</sup> of self-inflicted pain<sup>70</sup>. CHORUS: Stop. What we've seen already is unbearable. What further agony will load on us<sup>71</sup>? OFFICIAL: I'll tell it quickly and you can quickly hear: Jocasta's gone, the queen. CHORUS: Dead? Poor lady! How? OFFICIAL: She killed herself. You cannot apprehend<sup>72</sup>, you who were not there, how horrible it was. But I was there and what I tell you now is stamped upon my memory<sup>73</sup>: Oh, the struggles of that lost princess! The moment she had burst into the palace,

running through the doors demented<sup>74</sup>,

- 64 Phasis:法息斯河,从小亚细亚流入黑河。
- 65 flush away:冲掉
- 66 court: 招致
- 67 self-incurred: 自己招致的
- 68 bring to light:暴露在光天化日之下
- 69 agony: 大的痛苦; 苦恼, 烦闷
- 70 self-inflicted pain: 自己招来的苦难
- 71 load on sb.: 使某人承受
- 72 apprehend: 理解
- 73 stamp upon my memory:印在我的记忆里,难以忘却
- 74 demented: 疯狂的,精神错乱的

<sup>60</sup> the House of Labdacus: 拉布达科斯的家室。拉布达科斯是卡德摩斯之孙, 拉伊俄斯之父, 忒拜的国王。

<sup>61</sup> filial sympathy:孝心,指效忠族群

<sup>62</sup> appalling: 骇人听闻的, 令人震惊的; 可怕的

<sup>63</sup> Ister: 伊斯特尔河, 多瑙河的古名。

欧美戏剧选词

she made for<sup>75</sup> the bridal bed<sup>76</sup>, plunging her fingers through her hair<sup>77</sup> and slamming shut the door behind her $^{78}$ . We hear her sobbing our<sup>79</sup> Laiu's name (so long dead), Recalling the night his love had bred his murderer And left a mother making cursed children with her son. "Unhappy bed!" she wailed<sup>80</sup>. "Twice wicked soil! The father's seedbed<sup>81</sup> nurtured for the mother's son!" And then she killed herself. How, I do not know. The final act escaped our eyesall fastened now upon the raving<sup>82</sup> Oedipus, who broke upon<sup>83</sup> us, stamping up and down<sup>84</sup> and shouting out: "A weapon, quick! Where is the brideless bride? Find me that double breeding ground where sown the mother, now has sown the son." Some instinct of a demigod<sup>85</sup> discovered her to him, not us near by. As if led on, He smashes<sup>86</sup> hollering<sup>87</sup> through the double doors, Breaking all its bolts<sup>88</sup>, and lunges in<sup>89</sup>. And there we saw her hanging, twisted<sup>90</sup>, tangled<sup>91</sup>, from a halter<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> make for: 走向, 前往; 冲向

<sup>76</sup> bridal bed: 婚床, 新床

<sup>77</sup> plunge her fingers through her hair:双手抓着头发

<sup>78</sup> slam shut the door behind her:砰地关上门

<sup>79</sup> sob out: 哭诉

<sup>80</sup> wail: 哭叫, 哀号

<sup>81</sup> seedbed: 苗床; 〈喻〉温床, 发源地

<sup>82</sup> raving: 说胡话的; 疯狂的

<sup>83</sup> break upon: 突然出现

<sup>84</sup> stamp up and down: 横冲直闯

<sup>85</sup> demigod: 半神半人, 受崇拜的人, 小神

<sup>86</sup> smash: 打碎; 撞击

<sup>87</sup> holler: 喊出(某事物), 叫喊

<sup>88</sup> bolt: 门闩

<sup>89</sup> lunge in: 闯入

<sup>90</sup> twist: 扭曲身体, 扭动; 旋转

<sup>91</sup> tangle: (使)缠结

<sup>92</sup> halter: 缰绳

A sight that rings from him a maddened<sup>93</sup> cry. He frees the noose<sup>94</sup> and lays the wretched woman down, then—Oh, hideous<sup>95</sup> sequel<sup>96</sup>!—rips from off<sup>97</sup> her dress the golden brooches<sup>98</sup> she was wearing, Holds them up and rams the pins right through his eyes<sup>99</sup>. "Wicked, wicked eyes!" he gasps<sup>100</sup>, "You shall not see me nor my crime, not see my present shame. Go dark for all time blind to what you never should have seen, and blind to the love this heart has cried to see." And as this dirge<sup>101</sup> went up<sup>102</sup>, so did his hands to strike his founts of sight<sup>103</sup> not once but many times. And all the while his eyeballs gushed<sup>104</sup> in bloody dew, no oozing<sup>105</sup> drops—a spurt of black-ensanguined rain like hail beat down<sup>106</sup>. A coupled<sup>107</sup> punishment upon a coupled sin: husband and wife on flesh in their disaster-Their happiness of long ago, true happiness, now turned to tears this day, to ruin, death, and shame; No evil absent by whatever cursed name. CHORUS: Poor man! What agony!

- 95 hideous: 令人惊骇的, 可怕的
- 96 sequel: 续篇; 结局
- 97 rip off: 摘下
- 98 brooch:别针
- 99 ram the pins right through his eyes:举起别针朝着眼睛狠狠刺去
- 100 gasp: 喘着气说出
- 101 dirge: 哀歌; 悲叹
- 102 go up: 响起
- 103 founts of sight:眼睛。fount:泉。
- 104 gush: 喷涌, 迸出
- 105 oozing: (浓液等)慢慢地冒出,渗出
- 106 a spurt of black-ensanguined rain like hail beat down:许多黑色的血点,如冰雹般降下。spurt:
   (液体)突然喷出。ensanguined:满身染血的,血染的。hail:冰雹。
- 107 coupled: 连接的; 成双的

<sup>93</sup> madden: 使狂怒, 使发狂

<sup>94</sup> noose: 套索; 束缚; 绞刑

OFFICIAL: He shouts for all the barriers to be unbarred<sup>108</sup> and he displayed to all of Thebes, his father's murderer, his mother's...no, a word too foul<sup>109</sup> to say... begging to be cast adrift<sup>110</sup>, not rot<sup>111</sup> at home as curser and the cursed.
His strength is gone. He needs a helping hand, his wound and weakness more than he can bear.
But you will see. The gates are opening. Look: a sight that turns all loathing<sup>112</sup> into tears. [OEDIPUS, *blinded, enters and staggers down the palace steps*]

# CHORAL DIALOGUE

CHORUS: Oh, most inhuman vision!
A world of pain outsuffered and outdone<sup>113</sup>.
What possession in full flush<sup>114</sup>
has swamped your brain<sup>115</sup>?
What giant of evil<sup>116</sup> beyond all human brawn<sup>117</sup>
pounced on<sup>118</sup> you with devil's doom?
Oh, the pity and the horror!
I cannot look—and yet so much to ask.
so much to know, so much to understand.
I cannot look for shuddering<sup>119</sup>.
OEDIPUS: I am deserted<sup>120</sup>, dark,
And where is sorrow stumbling<sup>121</sup>?
Whence flits<sup>122</sup> that voice so near?

108 unbar:拔去门闩,打开
109 foul:邪恶的;下流的
110 cast adrift:随波逐流;流放
111 rot:(使)腐烂,(使)腐朽
112 loathing:厌恶,憎恨;怀着强烈反感的
113 outdo:胜过
114 in full flush:萌发;茂盛
115 swamp your brain:淹没
116 giant of evil:邪恶的巨人
117 brawn:强壮的肌肉;强健的体力
118 pounce on:突然袭击;猛扑
119 shuddering:战栗,发抖
120 deserted:被抛弃的,被遗弃的
121 stumble:跌跌撞撞地走,蹒跚
122 flit:轻快地掠过

Where, demon<sup>123</sup>, will you drive me? CHORUS: To a doom no voice can speak, no eye regard<sup>124</sup>.

# STROPHE I

OEDIPUS: Aah! a nightmare mist<sup>125</sup> has fallen Adamantine<sup>126</sup> black on me— Abomination<sup>127</sup> closing. Cry, cry, oh, cry again! Those needle pains: The pointed echoes of my sinning. CHORUS: Such great sufferings are not strange Where a double sorrow requires a double pang.

#### ANTISTROPHE I

OEDIPUS: Oh, you, my friends! Still friends and by my side! Still staying by the blindman! Your form eludes<sup>128</sup>, your voice is near; That voice lights up<sup>129</sup> my darkness. CHORUS: Man of havoc<sup>130</sup>, how Could you hate your sight so? What demon so possessed<sup>131</sup> you?

#### STROPHE II

OEDIPUS: Friends, it was Apollo, spirit of Apollo. He made this evil fructify<sup>132</sup>. Oh, yes, I pierced<sup>133</sup> my eyes, my useless eyes, why not?

- 124 regard: 凝视; 留意
- 125 nightmare mist: 噩梦般的迷雾; 黑暗之云
- 126 adamantine: 非常坚硬的; 坚定不移的
- 127 abomination: 嫌恶; 令人憎恶的人或事物; 可憎恶的或卑劣的习惯或行为
- 128 elude:理解不了;抓不到。此处指俄狄浦斯眼瞎后,虽看不见人,但能听见声音。
- 129 light up: 照亮; (使) 变得喜悦
- 130 havoc: 大破坏, 浩劫; 大混乱, 大骚动
- 131 possess: (鬼魅、邪念等)缠住,迷住(人)
- 132 fructify: 结果实
- 133 pierce: 刺穿, 刺破

<sup>123</sup> demon: 魔鬼, 恶魔

When all that's sweet had parted from<sup>134</sup> my vision.
CHORUS: And so it has: is as you say.
OEDIPUS: Nothing left to see, to love,
No welcome in communication<sup>135</sup>.
Friends, who are my friends,
Hurry me from here,
Hurry off the monster:
That deepest damned and god-detested<sup>136</sup> man.
CHORUS: A man, alas, whose anguish fits his fate<sup>137</sup>.
We would wish that we had never known you.

# ANTISTROPHE II

OEDIPUS: Yes, rot that man's unlocking<sup>138</sup> my feet from biting fetters<sup>139</sup>. Unloosing<sup>140</sup> me from murder to lock me in a blood-love. Had I only died then, I should not now be leaving All I love and mine so sadly shattered<sup>141</sup>. CHORUS: Your wish is also ours. OEDIPUS: Then I should be free, Yes, free from parricide<sup>142</sup>: Not pointed out as wedded To the one who weaned<sup>143</sup> me. Now I am god-abandoned, A son of sin and sorrows All incest-sealed<sup>144</sup> With the womb that bore me. Oh, Oedipus, your portion<sup>145</sup>! CHORUS: But how can we say that your design was good? To live in blindness? Better live no longer.

- 136 detest: 憎恶, 嫌恶, 痛恨
- 137 a man whose anguish fits his fate:这个人的感觉和他的命运同样可怜。anguish:痛苦,苦恼,伤心。
- 138 unlock: 开锁; 开启
- 139 biting fetters: 残酷的铁链
- 140 unloose: 解开; 放松; 释放
- 141 shatter: 使碎裂; 使……成为泡影
- 142 parricide: 杀亲罪, 杀尊长罪
- 143 wean: 使断奶
- 144 incest-sealed: 注定陷入乱伦
- 145 portion:一部分;一份遗产。此处指俄狄浦斯应当承担的苦难。

<sup>134</sup> part from: 使抛弃

<sup>135</sup> communion: 交流, 恳谈; 共享

[End of strophic pattern] OEDIPUS: Enough of this! Enough of your advice! It was a good design. Don't tell me otherwise. My best design! What kind of eyes should I need to gaze upon my father's face in Hades<sup>146</sup> or my unhappy mother's: Those twin victims ruined by me for whom I should be hanged? Or eyes that could be eyes to stare into my children's faces? Joy? No no, a sight of pain Engendered<sup>147</sup> from those loins<sup>148</sup>. Or even eyes to view again citadel<sup>149</sup> and tower and holy idoled shrine<sup>150</sup> I cast away<sup>151</sup>? Most cursed I, the prince of princes here in Thebes and now pariah<sup>152</sup> self-damned and self-arraigned<sup>153</sup>: The refuse-heap<sup>154</sup> of heaven on display as son of Laius, parading and self-dyed<sup>155</sup> in sin. What? Eyes to lift and gaze at these? No, no, there's none! Rather plug<sup>156</sup> my ears and choke that stream of sound, stuff the senses of my carcass<sup>157</sup> dumb<sup>158</sup> glad to stifle<sup>159</sup> voices with my vision, and sweet to lift the soul away from hurt.

- 150 idoled shrine: 偶像神社
- 151 cast away: 抛弃
- 152 pariah: 被社会遗弃者; 〈史〉贱民
- 153 self-arraigned: 自我指责
- 154 refuse-heap: 垃圾堆
- 155 self-dyed: 自我沾染
- 156 plug: 以(塞子)塞住
- 157 carcass: 躯体; 骨架
- 158 dumb: 哑的; 不说话的, 无声的; 沉默的, 无言的
- 159 stifle: (使)窒息; 扼杀

<sup>146</sup> Hades: 〈希神〉 冥府; 冥王哈德斯, 是古希腊神话中的冥界之王, 同时还是掌管瘟疫的神, 他曾经 使忒拜城邦染上致命的瘟疫, 直到两个少女墨提娥克、墨妮佩自愿献祭, 瘟疫才停止。

<sup>147</sup> engender: 产生; 造成; 引起

<sup>148</sup> loins: 腰与腿之间的部分; 腰

<sup>149</sup> citadel: 城堡, 要塞; 大本营

#### 欧美戏剧选读

SELECTED READINGS IN EUROPEAN & AMERICAN DRAMA

Pity you, Cithaeron, that you gave me harbor<sup>160</sup>, took me in and did not kill me straight; that you did not hush<sup>161</sup> my birth from man. Pity you, Polybus<sup>162</sup> and Corinth<sup>163</sup>, age-old home I called my father's: What fair skin you housed around what foulness<sup>164</sup>! A prince of evil all revealed and son of sin. And you three roads and dell<sup>165</sup> concealed, you copse<sup>166</sup> of oak and straitened<sup>167</sup> triple ways<sup>168</sup>! I handed you my blood to drink, the chalice<sup>169</sup> of my father's. What memories have you of my manners then, or what I did when afterwards I came here? You batch<sup>170</sup> of weddings! Birthdays breeding seedlings<sup>171</sup> from their very seed: fathers, sons, and brothers flourishing in foulness with brides and wives and mothers in a monstrous coupling ... unfit to tell what's too unfit to touch! My load is mine, don't fear; no man could bear so much. CHORUS: Wait! Here Creon comes to hear your pleas<sup>172</sup> and deal with your designs<sup>173</sup>. He takes your place

- 164 foulness: 卑鄙, 卑劣
- 165 dell: 小谷, 幽谷
- 166 copse: 小灌木丛, 杂树林
- 167 straitened: 困苦的, 拮据的; 变窄的
- 168 triple ways: 三岔路
- 169 chalice: 高脚酒杯; 圣餐杯
- 170 batch: 一批
- 171 seedling: 秧苗, 幼苗
- 172 plea: 恳求,请求;借口,托辞;请愿
- 173 design: 计划; 意图, 打算

<sup>160</sup> give me harbor: 收留我

<sup>161</sup> hush:不让(事件等)张扬,遮掩

<sup>162</sup> Polybus: 邻国的国王波吕波斯,他和王后十分同情牧羊人送来的俄狄浦斯,给他治好了脚,并收养了他。

<sup>163</sup> Corinth:科林斯湾(靠希腊伯罗奔尼撒半岛北岸);科林斯地峡(希腊中南部)(在伯罗奔尼撒半岛东北端)。