

ΤΗΣ ΤΗΣΒΑΝ ΤΙΩΣ

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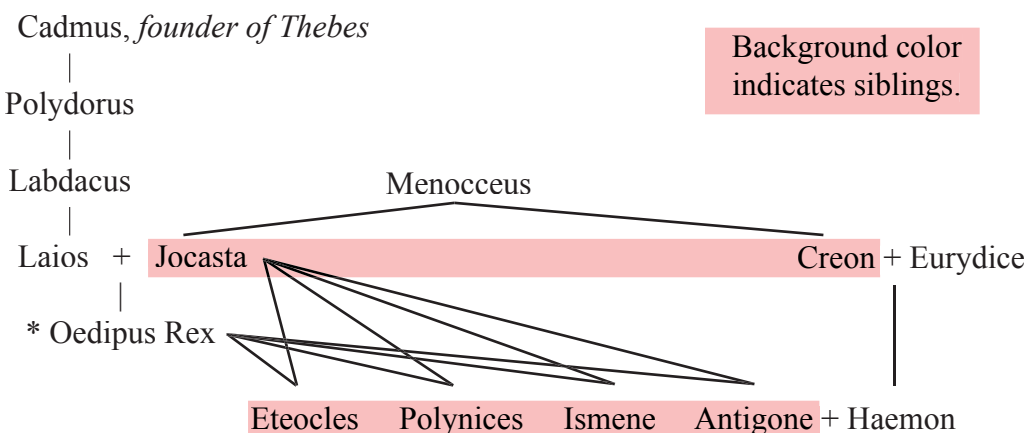
“Blind” Date with Thebes

The prophet Teiresias paid Thebes a special visit today. King Oedipus had sent Creon to bring Teiresias to Thebes. According to the royal sources, Teiresias as extremely reluctant to come. Furthermore, he angered the king so much that His Highness lost his composure. With Thebes still suffering from this mysterious plague, King Oedipus is asking for help from any sources. When Teiresias came to Thebes, he uttered some mysterious words that apparently angered the king. At first, he refused to say anything at all, stating: “Let me go home. Bear your own fate, and I’ll bear mine.” His Majesty refused to accept Teiresias’ plea and demanded Teiresias to speak. King Oedipus even pleaded to Teiresias to reveal the truth, but Teiresias was relentlessly silent. Losing his patience, Oedipus began calling Teiresias a “wicked old man.” He even began accusing the blind prophet of assisting in King Laius’ murder by keeping silent. In turn, Teiresias had the nerves to declare to King Oedipus: “You yourself are the pollution of this country.” He actually accused Oedipus of being the killer who brought this plague upon us. This angered Oedipus so much that he lost control and called Teiresias a “sightless, witless, senseless, mad old man.”

This was quickly turning into a verbal brawl. In order to avoid a worse confrontation with Oedipus, Teiresias started to leave. However, before he left, he uttered a strange prophecy that baffled both the royal court and Oedipus. He said: “The man you have been looking for all this time, the damned man, the murderer of Laius, that man is in Thebes. To your mind he is foreign-born, but it will soon be shown that he is a Theban, a revelation that will fail to please... And he will go tapping the strange earth with his staff, to the children with whom he lives now he will be brother and father-the very same; to her who bore him, son and husband the very same who came to his father’s bed, wet with his father’s blood.”

Nobody could make any sense of what Teiresias is saying. Teiresias’ prophecy is a cryptic one. After his fruitless meeting with Teiresias, Oedipus returned home, discouraged. Meanwhile, ten more unborn babies have died and whole herds of sheep are lying dead in the fields. The sheep will be burned early tomorrow morning. A special memorial for the babies is scheduled tomorrow night. The search continues for King Laius’ killer.

Could This Be Oedipus’ Family Tree?



Background color indicates siblings.

LEE H. SALISBURY THEATRE

APRIL 1, 2, 8, 9 @ 8:15 PM
APRIL 3* & 10 @ 2 PM

* (FOLLOWED BY Q & A WITH ACTORS AND DIRECTOR)

PUBLIC LECTURE MARCH 28 SALISBURY THEATRE 5:30 PM

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The Chorus

There is always a Chorus in Greek tragedy; in fact, tragedy began with choral songs to which actors were added. Almost always present, the Chorus fulfills a number of functions. The splendid poetry of many of the odes or songs contribute to the spectacle of performance, the continuity of theme and the emotional effects of the play. It is like another actor, showing us the communal background of the action.

Greek tragedy assumed that no life is entirely private and that the community's fortunes are linked with the individual and vice versa. Because Greek tragedy is a public art form, the chorus reflects on such issues as the nature of authority, justice, the worship of the gods and the pull between civic responsibility and individual desires.

Although the major divisions of the plays are not indicated in most English translations, the choral odes are set apart. The Chorus was usually divided into two groups, giving a balanced visual effect on stage. The first lyric they sing is called the "strophe" (movement) and the second the "antistrophe" (countermovement). The afterpiece is called the "epode" and an exchange or lamentation between the chorus and an actor is called a "kommos".

In "Oedipus Rex" the chorus assumes the role of wealthy, prominent men of Thebes. They have been living there since Laius' day, so they know the past, but are not necessarily old. Their first impression is one of uncertainty and a desire for truth about the plague that is wasting them. The sufferings they face are not just personal, but affect the whole city. Thus, they are portrayed as responsible leaders and representatives of the citizens

of Thebes and their songs use military metaphors. The exchanges with Oedipus are like a consultation between a concerned ruler and his counselors, a cooperative effort in a search for answers. Following the confrontation between Creon and Oedipus, the chorus continues to express their concern for the city and display their reliance on reason, evidence and common sense.

As advisor to the king, the chorus assists in the progression of the drama, but Sophocles also uses it to establish a contrast with the king. He seems to compare the chorus' plodding common sense with Oedipus' brilliant intuition, its caution with the king's bold passion. Members of the chorus are loyal to the king, but when Oedipus begins to veer from his civic responsibility to his personal fate, it is their duty to remind him - and the

audience - of the consequences. As representatives of the body politic, they say at the end of their final ode, "from you I drew breath [of life] and through you I have closed my eyes [in death]".




About the Playwright

Sophocles was born in Colonus, a part of Athens, about 495 or 497 BC. He died about 406 BC, his life having spanned nearly the entire fifth century in Athens.

During his lifetime Pericles became leader of Athens; the Parthenon was built; the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta was fought (431-404 BC), and democracy took root and flourished.


As the son of a wealthy weapons-maker, Sophocles studied poetry, music, dancing and gymnastics - subjects regarded as the basis of a well-rounded education for a Greek citizen. This early schooling prepared him to serve as a leader in all aspects of public life, including the military, foreign policy and the arts. Sophocles lived during the Greek Classical Period (500 to 400 BC), a time of transition when political and cultural events were changing and reshaping Athenian culture. As a dramatist, Sophocles played an important role in the creation of this civilization, which included looking backward to ancient tradition and the works of Homer, which greatly influenced him. Sophocles also studied under the Greek playwright Aeschylus whose plays had won prizes at the Festival of Dionysus.

Over the years Sophocles actively participated in Athenian political and cultural life, often in positions of responsibility. In 443 BC, Pericles chose him to be treasurer of the Delian Confederation as a sort of tax collector. In 440 BC, Sophocles served as a general at the siege of Samos, an island that challenged the authority of Athens. Despite all his public service, though, Sophocles remained first and foremost a dramatist. Upon his death a national cult dedicated a shrine to his memory.



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Reflections & Contemplations

1. What is the relationship in this play between fate and free will?
2. The people of Thebes turn to Oedipus to save them again by ridding them of a terrible plague. Sophocles may have written this play shortly after a great plague which struck Athens; Thucydides. History presents a powerful depiction of this plague. Compare the two and how they function in each text.
3. The people of Thebes call upon the Healer Apollo. What does Apollo have to do with healing? Why should Oedipus consult this god's oracle?
4. Consider: does Oedipus strike you as arrogant?
5. After Creon enters and tells the words of Apollo, note the discrepancy between the number of outlaws in the account of each character. Why do you think Oedipus says "thief" while Creon says "thieves"? This will happen again later.
6. The Chorus calls on a series of gods for help. Why invoke these gods in particular?
7. Find at least three instances of dramatic irony. Why does Tiresias refuse to help Oedipus?
8. Why can't Oedipus understand the information Tiresias gives him?
9. Read carefully Jocasta's account of her loss and then Oedipus' reaction to it. Does anything in his reaction strike you as strange? Consider this especially in light of the almost identical story he tells later in the same scene. Why doesn't Oedipus make a connection?
10. Why is the connection between Oedipus' name and his ankles so important?
11. At what point do you think that Jocasta begins to suspect the truth?
12. When the Shepherd arrives, why won't he talk willingly?
13. When Jocasta runs off stage, Oedipus thinks she is afraid he will be proven a peasant. Why does this idea make him so happy? And how does Jocasta seem to you now?
14. Aristotle believed this was the finest tragedy because the protagonist's recognition of the truth coincides with the reversal of his fortunes. Where, exactly, does this occur in the play?
15. What was Oedipus trying to do when he finds his wife-mother dead?
16. Is blinding an appropriate punishment? Why doesn't he commit suicide?
17. How would you describe Oedipus' state of mind and attitude? Does anything surprise you about the way he views his disaster?
18. Think about the Chorus' near panic about him, its complete inability to respond coherently to his presence.
19. Is Creon fair to Oedipus? Consider especially his admonition.
20. Why are Oedipus' daughters in particular so special to him?
21. What effect has blindness had on his knowledge?

The Oedipus Myth and its Interpretations

In Ancient Greece, myths were a living part of the consciousness of the average person who felt perfectly comfortable with them. Thus, writes C. M. Bowra, “myth provided the framework of drama, which illustrated in a highly concrete and cogent way some important crisis or problem...”

The first mention of Oedipus is in Hesiod’s “Works and Days” (740-700 BC?) where the author refers to the struggle between Oedipus’ two sons for the throne of Thebes. A later account of the myth occurs in Homer’s “Odyssey”. Odysseus, recounting his adventures, tells how he saw Jocasta in the underworld. He describes her as beautiful but “in the ignorance of her own mind had done a monstrous thing and married her own son”. The most important treatment of the myth before Sophocles is Aeschylus’ trilogy of 467 BC which was comprised of “Laius”, “Oedipus” and “Seven Against Thebes”. In these plays, Aeschylus told the story of the kidnapping of the young Chrysippus by Laius and the curse brought on the house of Laius by Pelops, the boy’s father. For the first time in drama, Aeschylus uses the self-blinding of Oedipus along with the killing of his father and the incestuous marriage. In Sophocles’ play the plague is mentioned for the first time and may have been influenced by the Athenian plague of 430 BC. Sophocles also adds the element of Laius piercing the baby’s feet (hence the name Oedipus which means “swollen feet”) and this action brings with it the Herdsman and the Corinthian messenger, both necessary to Sophocles’ focus on the search for a hidden truth about the hero’s identity.

The riddle of the Sphinx is an important part of the Oedipus myth. The Sphinx, possessing wings, paws and a human face, is herself a living riddle, and so the appropriate figure to stand over the confused movement of Oedipus’ life. Sophocles presents his hero struggling with riddles and these are important to Sophocles’ interpretation. The answer to the Sphinx’s riddle is both “Man” and “Oedipus”. Oedipus gives the first answer to the Sphinx in events before the play begins and he gives the second answer to the audience within the play. But both answers are intertwined, as “Oedipus and man’s fundamental nature is always to be a riddle to himself and never to be reducible to a single, sure meaning”.

Interpretations of and viewpoints on the Oedipus myth cover the centuries. Plutarch (552 BC) in his book On Curiosity writes that Oedipus is too curious and that this quality is his greatest misfortune. Hegel, a 19th-century German philosopher, saw in the myth the terms of the development of human consciousness, and in Oedipus he saw the dawning of man’s moral and intellectual awareness. On the other hand, Friedrich Nietzsche viewed the myth as man’s guilt about his power to dominate nature. Solving the riddle of the Sphinx is solving “the riddle of nature”, but the unnatural acts of incest and patricide do violence to nature. Sir James Frazer in his book, The Golden Bough, sees in Oedipus the remnants of an ancient fertility god. The old king has to be killed and replaced by a younger and more potent successor.

The most influential and controversial reading of the myth in the late 19th century came from Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis. For Freud, the oracle that Oedipus receives about his parents contains the repressed wish of the unconscious. In his The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud writes: “It is the fate of us all, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that this is so.” These words, of course, are the basis of the “Oedipus complex” - the theory that each child must somehow come to terms with the repressed infantile hatred and desire so he can mature into an emotionally healthy adult. While the Oedipus complex theory has been discussed, debunked and discussed again, Freud makes some insightful remarks on the process of discovering unconscious knowledge. “...The work portrays the gradual discovery of the deed of Oedipus, long since accomplished, and brings it slowly to light by skillfully prolonged inquiry, constantly fed by new evidence...” This “inquiry” is the foundation of psychoanalysis, the “talking cure”.

Synopsis

The people of Thebes have been stricken by a terrible plague, and in prayer and supplication, they go to their king, Oedipus. He assures them that he has already moved to discover the cause of the affliction and has sent Creon, his brother-in-law, to the oracle at Delphi to learn what should be done. Creon soon returns with the message that the plague will vanish as soon as Thebes finds and casts out the murderer of the late king, Laius. Oedipus then consults the blind prophet, Tiresias, who is hesitant to speak. After much urging and threatening by the king, Tiresias announces that Oedipus himself is the cause of the scourge and is furthermore guilty of both incest and patricide.

This accusation enrages the king and he accuses Creon of plotting with Tiresias to discredit him. Only the intervention of the queen, Jocasta, prevents further rashness and hostility among the men. In this most famous of Greek tragedies and one of the most skillfully plotted plays ever written, a man tries to defy fate by the power of his own personality, and in doing so, discovers the truth about himself.



Valuable Coupon!

Good for tickets to any performance of “Oedipus”.
Come see the show, or give this to a friend!

Friday & Saturdays, April 1, 2, 8, 9 @ 8:15pm
Sundays, April 3 & 10 @ 2:00pm



1

off any ticket

(except in conjunction with a group discount ticket).
Redeemable only at the Theatre UAF Box Office -
Great Hall / Fine Arts Complex



Coming up in the Salisbury:

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April 22: **Fairbanks Film Club Festival**

April 30 & May 1: **Famous for 15
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Check out

www.uaf.edu/theatre/season
for more information!

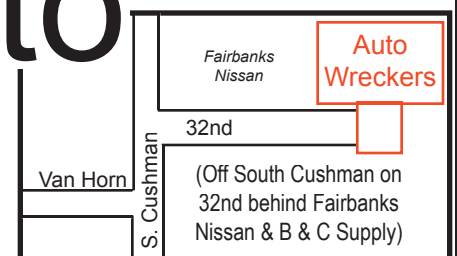
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THR F215 **Dramatic Literature** 3.0 CR

Cross-Listed with: FLM F215

75367 F01 TR 09:45A-11:15A THEA 101 Antohin, A

Studies of drama and forms of plays such as tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, tragic comedy. Reading plays of the classic theatre designed to give basic knowledge of masterpieces of world drama.

THR F254 **Costume Design and Construction I** 3CR

75369 FE1 M 06:30P-09:30P THEA 107 Maginnis

Introduction to theory and practice of costume design for the theatre, methods used to make costumes out of a variety of media. Projects include simple hatmaking, maskmaking, stenciling, hot gluing and body padding.

The next three meet: Core upper division writing intensive requirement and Humanities degree requirement.

THR F334 **Movies and Films** 3.0 CR

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75372 F01 MF 02:15P-05:15P THEA 101 Maginnis

Explores rotating thematic topics in the art of classic cinema (films) and popular mass media (movies). Comparative analysis of classics and recent motion pictures is used to present elements of film language, analysis and criticism.

THR F412 **Theatre History II** 3.0 CR

76808 F01 W 02:15P-05:15P THEA 101 Maginnis

Theatrical form and practice from the English Restoration through the present.

THR F413 **Playscript Analysis** 3.0 CR

76810 F01 TR 02:00P-03:30P THEA 101 Antohin, A

Investigation of the structure of playscripts designed to develop skills in analysis and interpretation for performance.

These are just a sampling! Check out our award-winning website for more course offerings! www.uaf.edu/theatre

Sources:

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Images:

Cover/Photograph/Poster Design: Maya Salganek

Page 2 image: Oedipus and the Sphinx by Gustav Moreau

Announcing Outstanding Theatre Student of the Year 2005:

Robert C. "Chip" Brookes III

Chip was born in Jacksonville, Florida. His father was an officer in the U.S. Air Force and Chip moved regularly, growing up in Virginia, Texas, Louisiana, Alaska, Great Britain, and California. He graduated from high school in Texas in 1999 and returned to Alaska that fall to attend UAF as a theatre major.

While a student at UAF, Chip has been involved with 15 theatrical productions, as an actor, director, sound designer and sound crewperson. His classmates have recognized him three times with acting awards at annual end-of-school-year banquets. He has also worked professionally with Fairbanks Drama Association, the Palace Saloon & Theatre, and twice with Perseverance Theatre in Juneau. Chip has worked in University and community theatre in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, while on a nine-month exchange program.

In September 2005 Chip will begin an MFA acting training program through the University of San Diego and the Old Globe Theatre. He graduates from UAF cum laude, earning a B.A. in Theatre, this May.

Below: the outstanding
Robert C. "Chip" Brookes III



Sophocles' Oedipus Rex

Directed by **Anatoly Antohin**

Set design by **Timaree McCormick**

Costumes by **Tara Maginnis**

Lighting design by **Kade Mendelowitz**

Stage managed by **Mandara Nott**

PR by **Maya Salganek**

The cast stars

Levi Ben-Israel as Oedipus

By Valentine as Jocasta

Matt Krell as Creon

The Chorus is led by **Chip Brookes**.

Ensemble members include

Gerry Berman, Rachel Blackwell,

Jon-Keifer Bowne, Craig Brookes,

Ben Coffroth, Jenn Schlotfeldt, Brian

Smart, Ryan Staska, June Thiele, and

Molly Wilson.

Performances of Oedipus take place in the UAF Lee H. Salisbury Theatre of the Fine Arts Building on April 1, 2, 8, & 9 at 8:15 PM and on Sundays April 3 & 10 at 2:00 PM. A public panel discussion about Oedipus takes place on Monday March 28 at 5:30 PM in the Salisbury Theatre.

Tickets to Oedipus Rex go on sale on March 21 and are available at Hoitt's and the Theatre UAF Box Office, 474-7751. Advance tickets are \$5 for students, \$9 for seniors/military/UAF employees or alumni, and \$11 for general admission (all tickets \$1 more at the door). For photos of the cast and set, visit us online at www.uaf.edu/theatre/season.

Want to learn more?

www.uaf.edu/theatre/season

Theatre UAF will host a panel discussion on Oedipus Rex on Monday March 28 at 5:30 PM in the Lee H. Salisbury Theatre.

Admission is free and open to the public. For those that can't attend in person, the panel discussion will also be web-cast, with a toll-free phone number to take call-in questions. So far, the response to Antohin's website about this production of Oedipus Rex (<http://shows.vtheatre.net/oedipus/index.html>) has been very positive, and we expect to see heavy traffic to the site continue as researchers, teachers, and actors continue to explore Oedipus from the theatrical point of view. For more information about the web cast, please visit us online at www.uaf.edu/theatre/season.