

Catching the Conscience of the King:
The Management of Guilt in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*

Allan Blondé

"Everything is already there, so it needs only to be extracted"
Schiller to Goethe on *Oedipus*, 2 October 1797

Introduction

While there have been periods of time in Western civilization when consciousness of the great achievements of the ancient Greeks has been set aside, since the time of the Renaissance and most especially with the popularizing of modern psychology in our own century, our understanding and appreciation of what Richard Sewall refers to as the Greeks' "radical response to the life situation" has been an essential source of focus in understanding the human condition.¹ Most especially, since the time when Freud focused on Sophocles' portrait of Oedipus the tragedy of *Oedipus, The King*, which won no prizes for its author when it was first produced more than two thousand years ago, but which Aristotle long before Freud used as the example par excellence of what the nature of tragedy is, has gained greater popularity than any other play written by the three great Classical Greek tragedians.

What Freud perceived in the drama, which gave rise to his theory of the Oedipus Complex, has been amplified by several other writers and used as a spring board to gain access to an understanding of both the Sophocles play and other products of the literary imagination. One need only refer to Frank O'Connor's short story "My Oedipus Complex," Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine* and to Ernest Jones' critical essay, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, to appreciate the wide variety of

responses both creative and analytic to which Freud's understanding of the play has led. In an attempt to maintain a psychological point of view yet to move beyond the Freudian focus to the tragedy Richard Hillman's diatribe against the typical psychoanalytic uses of the drama has opened the door to other ways of understanding the play.² Indeed, Hillman's principal tenant that the traditional psychoanalytic understanding of the play is excessively restrictive coincides with his understanding of the human psyche as a company of forces and 'personalities' whose ambiguous relationships do not allow for an easy integration into a single unit. Hillman, therefore, abandons the popular point of view of scientific reductionism and casts his understanding in favor of the current critical point of view which emphasizes that it is neither possible nor advisable to resolve away every ambiguity within the literary work. Any attempt to do so, like the peeling away of the fine layers of an onion, results in a transparent object no longer recognizable as anything particular and in a loss of richness that constitutes the real, more opaque object having an inside-outside, a this side-that side, a light side-dark side, as well as all the imagined possible permutations in between these polarities.

In my own readings of the drama I have also come to appreciate that one may maintain a psychological perspective to Oedipus, but at the same time perceive a variety of patterns that add to but do not supplant the Freudian understanding of the play and, thus, which possibly enrich our understanding and appreciation of the tragedy as one of the greatest efforts of the human imagination. One such possibility is to read the play as a revelation of the variety of ways in which it is possible to respond to feelings of guilt. In Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, the principal character, devises a play to "catch the conscience of the king" who has murdered his father. Hamlet correctly believes, when made to feel guilty for the murder of his brother the former king, the murderer is bound to respond in a significant way to those guilt feelings. While witnessing the play the

villain "Claudius" of course does respond, at first with an interruption to Hamlet's play, the dramatic stimulus to his guilt, and later with an attempt to resolve that guilt through prayer. In like manner, we can also search Sophocles drama as a series of scenes which give rise to "catching the conscience of the king" and to a variety of ways in which King Oedipus attempts to resolve those guilt feelings.

Oedipus and the Rejection of Guilt

We find the first of attempts to manage guilt feelings at work in the history of the principal character early in the play. Just before Oedipus was made king by successfully encountering the riddling Sphinx and subsequently wedding Queen Jocasta, he had murdered an old man, at a place where three roads meet, while traveling the road to Thebes. Once inside Thebes he must have learned about the death of the previous king, Laius, which occurred only a short time earlier, just about the same time as when he had killed the old man before entering the city. However, between that time and the time the play opens, which we can conclude has been a number of years enabling Oedipus to have growing children with Jocasta, and throughout the early part of the play during which Oedipus begins to investigate the murder of the previous king, he never once suspects any connection between the murder of Laius and that of the old man he had killed. Furthermore, as far as the audience knows from his appearance he entertains no remembrance of having done any violence against another. By convincingly acting as innocent as he does both at the start of the play and through most of the time it takes him to investigate the murder of Laius he is clearly exhibiting one of the most common responses to guilt, which is to completely eradicate from consciousness both the feeling and the memory of the matter that will cause the painful feelings of guilt to emerge into consciousness. It is this automatic and complete forgetting of the event which the psychologists call "repression" that Oedipus uses as his first

effort and defense to prevent the guilt feelings that are bound to emerge when consciousness of his crime takes place.

I should interrupt the principal thread of my argument here to mention that quite a lot of attention has been paid to the question of whether or not Oedipus is indeed guilty of anything. Usually the question is clothed in the language of Aristotle's *Poetics* and posed as an inquiry about whether or not Oedipus has a "tragic flaw." While the focus of this paper is not to debate this question, for me there can be no question about it. Rather than approaching the problem as others have done by attempting to identify the specific nature of Oedipus' flaw, and get entangled in a web of speculation about Oedipus' consciousness of right and wrong, his intentions and his ability to make free decisions, I find it a more profitable and infinitely less complicated task to look at the psychological effect of his actions as it clearly appears in the play: namely, that Oedipus, when he eventually finds out that he is the murderer of Laius and, later, that he is married to his mother, does indeed feel guilty about it.

Sophocles also makes clear, as Chaucer was to do far later in his remarkable tales of confession and redemption, an important aspect of the nature of guilt. As Chaucer says, "Murder will out," that is, an evil action can not be hidden indefinitely from consciousness. Guilt, which persistently bores its way into consciousness, cannot be interminably denied. This is made clear in the play, when although a great deal of time has elapsed between the committing of the crime and the time of the opening of the play, a plague, a symptom of the repressed guilt impresses itself upon the characters and most of all, as Oedipus himself says, upon himself who is most guilty. "You suffer," he says to the people who have come to petition him to save them, "and yet not one among you suffers more than I."³ Furthermore (to return to my argument), as I have already indicated we are aware that guilt feelings existed in Oedipus even prior to the time the play opens because they can be

inferred by the presence of repression, a case of unreasonable forgetting, which in light of the dramatic nature of the events about which they are concerned, cannot be sufficiently explained in any other way.

Oedipus' repressive technique is so complete as to not even allow him to entertain why Thebans have come to petition him at the start of the play. When approached by the people he seems oblivious to why they might have come to supplicate him. "What is it, children...?" he says.

Why do you sit as suppliants crowned with laurel branches?
What is the meaning of the incense which fills the city?
The pleas to end pain? The cries of sorrow? . . . Has
something frightened you? What brings you here? Some
need? Some want? (p.3)

Why, indeed, does he need to ask all these questions? Certainly as ruler of Thebes and therefore most responsible for its well being he must be aware of the current plight of the city and of its people. The plague has ravaged its way across farm and family. The priest who responds to Oedipus' questions assumes, as it is reasonable to do so, that Oedipus is well aware of why they have come to petition him. "You see yourself," he says,

how torn our city is, how she craves relief from the
waves of death which now crash over her. Death is
everywhere in the harvests of the land, in the flocks that
roam the pastures, in the unborn children of our mothers'
wombs. A fiery plague is ravaging the city, festering,
spreading its pestilence wasting the house of Cadmus,
filling the house of Hades with screams of pain and fear.
(p.3)

Why, then, if the people of Thebes are so aware of the

problem is Oedipus unaware of their needs, unless, of course, there are repressive forces at work within him that prevent him from consciously entertaining any matter that might lead directly or indirectly to acknowledging his own guilt?

We must pause here a moment to note what other possible interpretations there might exist for Oedipus' strange behavior at the opening of the play. It would I believe be erroneous to cast his actions in a moral light and interpret his ignorance as feigned, as the result of free and conscious deliberation. Surely Oedipus would be more intelligent than to feign ignorance in the face of such widespread calamity and expect his people to retain their faith in his sincerity. Only one other possibility exists and it is one that takes us outside an analysis of the psychology of the characters to question the competence of Sophocles as playwright. Could it be that Sophocles used the opening scene merely as a vehicle for the exposition of the drama without regard for the inconsistency it posed for the character? Some might be inclined to think so, applauding his dramatic ingenuity at the expense of a realistic portrayal of his characters. But I prefer to think not. As with instances in other masterpieces of the literary imagination I prefer to assume that when difficulties like this arise while reading some understanding of the character can be reached without inculpating the author for his inability to provide us with an integrated creation, that is, one in which character, setting, dialog, and plot, while each keeping its independent perfection, all work together to produce one integrated dramatic effect. Time and public response are on my side. If indeed Sophocles tragedy is the masterpiece that generations have claimed it to be, then the reader is urged to look beyond any facile indictment of a weakness in the form of the work to explain the odd behavior of the characters and, instead, to probe more deeply into what possible meanings are embedded in the text in which no less a person of stature than Schiller claimed to be able to find "everything."

To return, then, to our argument which assumes that

inconsistencies in the drama can be explained by a more thorough examination of the characters, having banished all recollection of his own foul deed and being apparently ignorant of his responsibility to confer with his people in the matter Oedipus is able to maintain a self image less tainted by the shadow of guilt and, thus, to present himself to the petitioners as their ready benefactor. Thus, once acknowledging why they have come to see him he shows great largess, claiming "I'll help you all I can." (p.3)

It is interesting to note that his repressive technique allows Oedipus to make turns of consciousness in such a way as to hide his last steps from himself. As quickly as we "forget" our dreams after waking, once reminded by the people of the plague that now inflicts the city he makes a one hundred and eighty degree turn in consciousness and gives no consideration to or explanation of the ignorance he claimed only a moment earlier. Without regard for the questions he raised he tells the suppliants

I know well the pain you suffer and understand what brings you here. . . . No, I am not blind to it. I have wept and in my weeping have set my thoughts on countless paths, searching for an answer. (p.4)

For the time being, then, faced with the people's cry for help, repression becomes an unviable strategy for dealing with his guilt. However, later in the play Oedipus will once again use the same technique to manage his guilt. Tripped up by the story which Jocasta tells him about where and how Laius, the former king, was killed, Oedipus suspects himself of having done the foul deed. He approaches a moment of cathartic self-realization. "O God," he cries, "what have you planned for me?" (p.17) Then he recounts how he killed an old man at precisely the same place where it was reported that Laius met his death. Now with ample evidence about the nature of his

crime, the probability that the two actions are one and the same becomes apparent to Oedipus. Indeed, having been told by Jocasta that Laius died just after Oedipus fled from his home to avoid the Oracle's prediction that he would kill his father and with the additional information that Laius "was tall and that his hair was lightly cast in silver tones, the contour of his body much like" Oedipus', the possibility exists that Oedipus has already begun to realize a consciousness of the whole situation. (p.18) Nevertheless, in an act of desperation akin to clutching at straws, Oedipus readily, yet without much plausibility, accepts the Chorus' idea that he must have "hope" that he did not murder the late king until he has further evidence to that effect from the one eyewitness. "Blind hope" I believe is what Milton called it in "Samson Agonistes" and rightly so, since it amounts to nothing more than another instance of repression of the facts as presented along with repression of the logical conclusions that can be drawn from them. Admittedly, at this late stage in the development of Oedipus' consciousness the use of repression as a technique to deal with guilt is short lived and less effective than it was earlier and as such might be seen as a last ditch effort to eradicate the guilt from consciousness before being forced to abandon repression for another mode of managing it.

These are the outstanding instances of Oedipus' management of guilt via the technique of repression. Living in a state of managed ignorance since the time of his arrival in Thebes, ignorant of the details of Laius' death, ignorant of considering the crime of murdering an old man and his company on the way to Thebes, and, considering his attempts to ignore the oracle who told him that he was to kill his father and marry his mother, ignorant even before then that he was not the all powerful being who would be able to resist its own fate. Commenting to this effect Harold Bloom has noted that

The startling ignorance of Oedipus when the drama begins

is the given of the play, and cannot be... disallowed. Voltaire was scathing upon this, but the ignorance of the wise and the learned remains an ancient truth of psychology, and torments us everyday.⁴

However, long before the scene (pp.16-18) in which Oedipus uses repression as an immediate follow up to a cathartic awareness of his guilt, it is possible to find Oedipus engaged in another form of guilt management. Soon after the people petition him for help he learns from Creon, his brother-in-law, whom he sent to consult the Oracle of Apollo about the matter, that in order to appease the gods and dissipate the plague they must seek out and punish the murderer of Laius. At the suggestion of Creon his first steps in following the advice of the Oracle is to send for the prophet Teiresias. When Teiresias appears Oedipus begins the encounter in an extremely conciliatory manner by proclaiming Teiresias as seer and savior:

Teiresias, all things are known to you---the secrets of heaven and earth, the sacred and profane.... My Lord Teiresias, we turn to you as our only hope. ...Save all of us. (p.9)

However, when he finds Teiresias at first resisting to divulge any information about the matter and, as the interview proceeds at Oedipus' urging, directly accusative of Oedipus as the murderer, Oedipus quickly changes his assessment of Teiresias. Without any evidence to base a new assessment of Teiresias on other than the guilt he must be feeling as a result of Teiresias' accusation that he is the murderer Oedipus becomes pejorative and insulting: "You, you cripple! Your ears are deaf, your eyes are // blind, your mind---your mind is crippled!" (p.10)

Here we find Oedipus engaged in using a second method of guilt management, which the psychologists have named "transference." Proceeding as typically as a textbook case

history, having been accused of the murder of Laius, Oedipus turns the tables on Teiresias and his correspondent, Creon, and projects his guilt upon them where it can be freely despised with justification and, thus, without feeling any personal discomfort. Oedipus accuses both Teiresias and Creon of being conspirators in the murder and, as much to further protect the integrity of his good self-image as to indict Teiresias of being useless as a seer, he recounts how it was he alone who was able to solve the puzzle of the riddling Sphinx many years earlier despite the fact that Teiresias was present in Thebes at that time.

Thus with a bilateral approach to the problem which for the modern reader is reminiscent of the Nazi's transference of guilt upon the Jews in our own century, Oedipus protects himself from having to admit his guilt by both aggrandizing his own position as a superior being and by degrading that of his accuser as an inferior.

With the using of "repression" and "transference" Oedipus exhausts the type of guilt management that is perhaps most common and which might be termed 'non-recognition.' In the first instance, that of repression, knowledge of one's guilt is projected out of consciousness into the inner core of the unconscious; in the second instance, that of transference, guilt is projected across the other border of consciousness, outward, and most appropriately, as is the case here, onto that person or object that has been a stimulant of the guilt.

As can be readily seen in the play, in neither case is this type of guilt management that rejects the guilt adequate. In the first case, where guilt is repressed, it retains its existence and what's more, as Jung often remarked, it gathers strength in the isles of the unconscious where it combines with other repressed energies, and eventually returns symbolically in the form of a symptom, to plague the individual until either an admission of the guilt to consciousness is achieved or the personality is multiplied to form multiple personalities characterized by information

tight compartments that do not allow each of the 'persons' to know the others or what the others know.⁵ While there is no evidence in the play that we are dealing with a psychotic personality of this type the more typical neurotic reaction is present. The occurrence of the 'plague' in the play is a dramatic symbol for the psychological symptom which, in turn is a kind of disguised revision of Oedipus' deeds. To wit, the plague which has blocked progeny of any kind is a substitute of the fact that Oedipus has convoluted the natural lines of generation and productivity by murdering his father and marrying his mother and, as such, is an appropriate symptom of the guilt that is present for having done those deeds.

In the second case, that of transference, the drama indicates that problems also exist which prevent it from being an adequate way to manage guilt. Once the transference has been made a rebuttal of one kind or another from the person onto whom the guilt has been transferred is likely to occur, stimulating in turn a recurrence of the entire process, more transference more rebuttal and so on. Thus, in the drama, Oedipus accuses Teiresias and Creon who, in turn, accuse Oedipus who, in turn, accuses them and the characters become caught in an interminable argument which only subsides at the intervention of Jocasta who is an uninvolved party. In addition to this, in a more subtle form of self-corruption, transference meets with a reemergence of guilt that comes as the result of an apparently free associating of other events to the situation; and this acts as a trigger mechanism catapulting the individual into an even greater consciousness of his guilt than he had experienced prior to the transference. Such a situation is symbolically present in the play when Jocasta, in an attempt to ease Oedipus' conscience after his arguments with Creon and Teiresias, relates to him the story about where and how Laius died. Ironically, although meant to alleviate anxiety as a result of the counter attack from Creon that Oedipus' transference produced, it is that story by which Oedipus will arrive at full consciousness, if

only temporarily, that he is, indeed, the murderer he has been seeking.

Thus, in both of Oedipus' responses to guilt which we have examined so far we find that the solution is at best only temporary and that it inevitably leads to greater guilt-producing suffering and to a greater need to manage the guilt in some other way.

Oedipus and the Acknowledgment of Guilt

Consciousness will not be denied; with unbounded egotism to assert itself as the all-knowing power, it is the ego's principal and strongest wish. The rejection of guilt, which throws the ego into a kind of two front war which, at once retreating from or resisting both the repressed material in the unconscious and from the counter-accusative social world outside the personality, allows it to function only temporarily.

Under continued duress and continued bombardment from both directions Oedipus seeks another way to ease his guilty conscience. The plague, the symptom of his repressed guilt, made all the more pressing by the supplication of his people and his egotistic readiness to find a solution to the problem and to once again be a savior of the people, have prompted him to undertake the investigation that will bring all things to light and, thus, to at least a partial acknowledgment of his guilt. Second, Oedipus' attempts at transference, accusing Teiresias and Creon of the crime, has only been preceded by and met with their accusations of him as both guilty of the murder and of being a tyrant. Now in an attempt to ease his anxieties Jocasta, loving wife-mother that she is, tells him a story to prove that no mortal has the power of divination:

An oracle came to Laius once from the Pythian priests
 ...that he would die at the hands of his own child, his
 child and mine. Yet the story that we heard was that
 robbers murdered Laius in a place where three roads

meet.... And Laius' fears were unfulfilled—he did not die by the hand of his child. Yet these had been the prophecies. You need not give them any credence. (p.17)

But Jocasta's story does not have its intended effect. Instead, Oedipus becomes more disturbed. "What is it? What makes you so frightened?" pleads Jocasta. "Your statement—that Laius was murdered in a place // where three roads meet. Isn't that what you said?" asks Oedipus. "Yes," replies Jocasta. "That was the story then; that is the story now." Whereupon Oedipus first begins to inquire further about what Laius looked like and with what entourage he was traveling. After hearing the answers to these questions he becomes even more troubled; and the discomfort is only eased by Oedipus telling another story, his own story, the story of how he met an old man at a place where three roads meet on his way to Thebes and how he killed him, and then killed all who were traveling with the old man. (pp. 17–19)

After telling the story a certain calm takes hold of him. In the act of story telling Oedipus eases his guilt by admitting it to consciousness. At least for the moment he abandons the more typically used devices of repression and transference to become aware of the possibility that "I am the one for whom my curse was meant." (p.19) This new way to manage guilt, which Aristotle and later Freud called "catharsis," an occasion of self-understanding, takes the form of a story whose divulgence has not been a matter of choice any more than the repression and transference that preceded it had. Oedipus indicates the compulsory nature of the event when he prefaces the tale he tells Jocasta by indicating that "I must tell you—now." (p.18) Like repression and transference the partial admission of guilt, still once removed from the whole truth by Oedipus' own re-remembering of the occasion, that is, putting it together as he unconsciously wishes, has occurred automatically. Via a process familiar to psychotherapy called free association, Oedipus divulges

his own remembered story when he hears Jocasta's story and by so doing he expresses his guilt in a new form, manageable at least in part by the created form which his remembering gives it. And, ironically, all this came about as the result of another story which was intended to prove his innocence, Jocasta's story, which provided the necessary relaxation of Oedipus' ego defenses and allowed the free association necessary for a catharsis to take place.

In the world of Sophocles' character study, as well as in the world of real personalities, first admissions of guilt to consciousness are often immediately revoked to protect the ego which is unable to view the truth so precipitously. For this reason Oedipus' admission of guilt that he was unable to solve the problem he faced on the road to Thebes in no more satisfactory way than by killing Laius, the old man that would not give way to him on the road, does not sit well with Oedipus' egocentric self-image as the great problem solver and savior of men. He believes that he was the one who was able to circumnavigate the prophecy of the oracle that he would kill his father and marry his mother; and he was the one who, without laying a hand on her, was able to cause the life threatening Sphinx to kill herself and by her death to free the city of Thebes from the then impending doom. For that reason the truth of the story that Oedipus tells Jocasta is cushioned by his prefatory remark that he is the one who must be the one to pay the penalty "if" the stranger he killed "had any tie with Laius." (p.19) Thus, like all confessions, all 'artificial' stories, Oedipus' story both reveals and conceals the admission of guilt.

Because of this ambiguity which reveals Oedipus' ambivalence about accepting his guilt he has not yet been completely successful at finding a method to manage the guilt; and the pain that he suffers as a result of that guilt is not yet concluded. The ambivalence he feels about admitting his guilt to consciousness is further apparent when, as I have already indicated earlier, after telling his story he immediately returns to the technique

of repression, this time in the form of hoping that he is not the murderer until he has spoken with the servant who was the eye witness to the event. Resisting his new self-knowledge it is Oedipus' hope to be blinded to the implications of Jocasta's story, that Joacasta's story that robbers killed Laius will be validated by the eye witness and so be a self-contained story that has nothing to do with Oedipus.

Furtherance of this hope is provided when some relaxation from the problem occurs as the result of the spontaneous appearance of a messenger from Corinth who arrives to proclaim that Polybus is dead and that the people wish Oedipus to return to Corinth and be made king. However, just as it occurred earlier when Jocasta told her story, as the messenger's story unfolds Oedipus discovers it includes information that further stimulates consciousness of his guilt. When asked by the messenger why he does not wish to return to Corinth, Oedipus says that he does not wish to be made guilty through his mother, Merope. Hearing this, the messenger, like Jocasta before him seeking to comfort the anxious Oedipus, tells him he has nothing to fear because Polybus and Merope are not his parents, but that he was given to him as a baby by a servant from the house of Laius. Thus, with the truth about Oedipus' birth implied, once again a story, seemingly unrelated to the cause of Oedipus' guilt, becomes the occasion for its exposure.

With further questioning of the messenger from Corinth and, after that, of the servant who was the eye witness to the death of Laius Oedipus learns the entire truth. Once fully conscious of the entire situation he is no longer able to effectively manage his guilt by simply repressing the information, or by projecting the blame onto others, or even by recollecting the events into a fabricated story, a work of art, that at once reveals and protects him from the truth. Instead, under the impetus of that painful consciousness he uses a final technique in an attempt to eradicate the guilt not only from consciousness but from his entire being. As an act of self-inflicted penance he

drags the golden brooches from the dress of his slain wife-mother, who has committed suicide after discovering that she is wed to her own child, and strikes them upon his eyeballs. As it is graphically reported to the audience by a messenger:

he struck his eyes over and over---until a shower of blood and tears splattered down his beard, like a torrent of crimson rain and hail. (p.29)

Thus Oedipus attempts to purify himself in a baptism of blood as he engages in a form of blood sacrifice by which primitive peoples reasoned that they could expiate their guilt and make themselves holy again by inflicting self-torture as a sign of their acknowledging their guilt and transforming the evil through suffering or some other other penitential self-denial.⁶ By freely paying a physical penalty for sins, the public action of which is the historical roots out of which emerged all drama known as tragedy, the story of the slain or injured king is a reminder and admission to consciousness in sublimated form of each man's guilt and, as such, is a spur to our own consciousness.

Oedipus' blinding himself has a double and once again an ambiguous meaning. On the one hand, it functions as all sacrificial acts do. In the last scene of the drama (pp. 30-33) it is a constant reminder to Oedipus of his guilt and that admission to consciousness has a calming effect upon him. In this scene we no longer observe him as a tyrannical know-it-all attempting to conduct the affairs of others with an absolutely controlling hand. Instead, a new Oedipus emerges from the house where he blinded himself, an Oedipus who is ready to be led away by others and who wishes to be sent away, to retreat from the society of men to a place where he might be free to contemplate the meaning of his own situation. Yet, on the other hand, by blinding himself Oedipus indicates a remaining readiness to repress the matter once again, to disable himself from seeing the truth and from allowing the full impact of that consciousness

to take its effect upon his psyche. At least in part he still wishes to retain his ego's heroic control of the situation. This is the meaning of Cocteau's insight when he said that "A certain infantile character is common to all heroic forms of life."⁷

To conclude, in the course of this drama Oedipus has illustrated four of the five major methods men have at their disposal for coming to terms with their guilt. By ending the drama at this point Sophocles indicates that Oedipus has not yet engaged in the one remaining and perhaps only completely satisfactory technique for the management of guilt. That technique, namely self-forgiveness, is the only one that allows for the integration of good and evil in the consciousness of a single "I." However, although Sophocles leaves Oedipus prior to the implementing of this final solution, beyond this drama there is another portrait of a wiser, indeed, a saintlier Oedipus. In his second Oedipus play, *Oedipus at Colonus*, Sophocles portrays the aging Oedipus in a different light, more the Teiresian blind seer, more integrated, less in need of the sense of sight by which to discriminate good from evil and himself from others. But that is another story which I shall leave for another time.

Notes

1. Richard Sewall, *The Vision of Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 25.
2. See Hillman's essay "Oedipus Revisited" in Karl Kerényi & Richard Hillman, *Oedipus Variations* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1987).
3. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, translated and edited by Lucy Berkowitz and Theodore F. Brunner (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), p.3. All further references will be to this edition.
4. Harold Bloom, "Introduction," *Modern Critical Views: Sophocles*, edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1990), p.4.
5. See Carl Jung, *The Symbolic Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), as well as a number of other writings which touch upon this subject.
6. The root meaning word sacrifice is "to make sacred."
7. As quoted in Kerényi, pp.75-76.