

OEDIPUS THE MONSTER IN SOPHOCLES' *OEDIPUS* *TYRANNUS*

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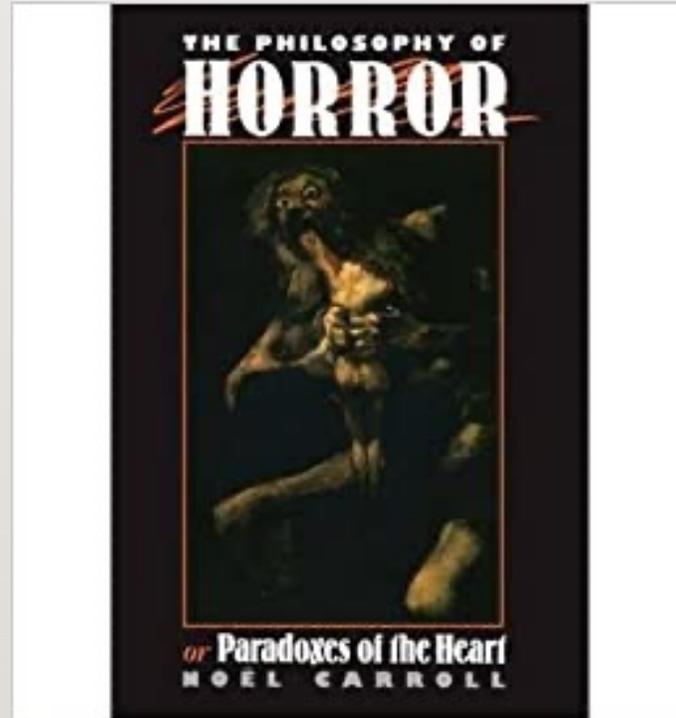
[ABSTRACT FOR THIS TALK](#)

THE CHORUS EXPERIENCES *PHRIKE*: OT 1297-1306

- ὦ δεινὸν ἰδεῖν πάθος ἀνθρώποις,
ὦ δεινότατον πάντων ὅσ' ἐγὼ
προσέκυρσ' ἤδη. τίς σ', ὦ τλῆμον,
προσέβη μανία; τίς ὁ πηδήσας
μείζονα δαίμων τῶν μηκίστων
πρὸς σῆ δυσδαίμονι μοίρα;
φεῦ φεῦ δύστην', ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐσιδεῖν
δύναμαί σ', ἐθέλων πόλλ' ἀνερέσθαι,
πολλὰ πυθέσθαι, πολλὰ δ' ἀθρῆσαι·
τοίαν φρίκη παρέχεις μοι.

- O suffering terrible for humans to see, the most terrible of any I have yet encountered! What madness has come upon you, wretched one? Which god was it that with a leap longer than the longest has sprung upon your miserable fate? Ah, ah, unhappy one, I cannot even bear to look on you, though I wish to ask you many questions and to learn many answers and perceive many things; such is the *phrikē* you inspire in me.

NOËL CARROLL. 1990. *THE PHILOSOPHY OF HORROR:
OR, PARADOXES OF THE HEART.*



OEDIPUS THE IMPURE: OT 96-99

- Creon: ἄνωγεν ἡμᾶς Φοῖβος ἐμφανῶς, ἄναξ,
μίασμα χώρας, ὡς τεθραμμένον χθονὶ
ἐν τῆδ', ἐλαύνειν μηδ' ἀνήκεστον τρέφειν.
Oedipus: ποίῳ καθαρωῶ;
- Creon: Phoebus clearly ordered us, lord, to drive out from the land a pollution,
one nourished in this land, and not to nourish it until it cannot be healed.
Oedipus: With what kind of purification?

OEDIPUS THE IMPURE: OT 138; OT 353

- Oedipus: ἀλλ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ τοῦτ' ἀποσκεδῶ μύσος.
- Oedipus: I will drive away this pollution for my own sake.

- Tiresias: ...ὡς ὄντι γῆς τῆσδ' ἀνοσίῳ μιάστορι.
- Tiresias: ...because you are the unholy polluter of this land.

OEDIPUS THE IMPURE: OT 821-823

- Oedipus: λέχη δὲ τοῦ θανόντος ἐν χεροῖν ἐμαῖν
χραίνω, δι' ὧν περ ὤλετ'. ἄρ' ἔφυν κακός;
ἄρ' οὐχὶ πᾶς ἀναγνος;
- Oedipus: And I am polluting the bed of the dead man with my hands, through
which he perished. Was I born evil? Am I not entirely unholy?

OEDIPUS THE IMPURE: OT 1227-1229

- Messenger: οἶμαι γὰρ οὔτ' ἂν Ἴστρον οὔτε Φᾶσιν ἂν
νίψαι καθαμῶ τήνδε τὴν στέγην, ὅσα
κεύθει
- Messenger: For I think that neither the Ister nor the Phasis could cleanse this house
with purification, so many evils does it hide.

OEDIPUS THE CATEGORICALLY INTERSTITIAL: OT 457-460

- Tiresias: φανήσεται δὲ παισὶ τοῖς αὐτοῦ ξυνῶν
ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς καὶ πατήρ, κάξ ἦς ἔφυ
γυναικὸς υἱὸς καὶ πόσις, καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς
ὀμόσπορός τε καὶ φονεὺς.
- Tiresias: And he will be revealed as both a brother and father to the children he lives with, and a son and a husband to his mother, and a wife-sharer and a murderer to his father.

OEDIPUS THE CATEGORICALLY INTERSTITIAL: OT 791-793

- Oedipus: ...ὥς μητρὶ μὲν χρεῖη με μειχθῆναι, γένος δ' ἄτλητον ἀνθρώποισι δηλώσοιμ' ὄρᾱν, φονεὺς δ' ἔσοίμην τοῦ φυτεύσαντος πατρός.
- Oedipus: ...that it was fated for me to have sex with my mother, and I would produce children that humanity cannot bear to look upon, and I would be the murderer of the father who bore me.

OEDIPUS THE CATEGORICALLY INTERSTITIAL: OT 1249-1250

- Messenger: γοᾷτο δ' εὐνάς, ἔνθα δύστηνος διπλῆ
ἐξ ἀνδρὸς ἄνδρα καὶ τέκν' ἐκ τέκνων τέκοι.
- Messenger: She wept over the bed where in double misery she gave birth to a husband
from her husband and children from her child.

OEDIPUS THE CATEGORICALLY INTERSTITIAL: OT 1357-1364

- Oedipus: οὐκ οὐκ πατρός γ' ἄν φονεὺς
ἦλθον, οὐδὲ νυμφίος
βροτοῖς ἐκλήθην ὣν ἔφυν ἄπο.
νῦν δ' ἄθεος μέν εἰμ', ἀνοσίων δὲ παῖς,
ὁμογενῆς δ' ἀφ' ὧν αὐτὸς ἔφυν τάλας.
- Oedipus: I wouldn't have come to be the murderer of my father, nor would men call me the groom of the one from whom I was born. But now I am godless, the child of the unholy, a sharer in my father's marriage bed.

NOËL CARROLL. 1999. “HORROR AND HUMOR”.

- Our emotional response to horror fictions involves not simply fear, but revulsion because such monsters are portrayed as impure – where impurity can be understood in terms of the problematization, violation, transgression, subversion, or simple jamming of our standing cultural categories, norms, and conceptual schemes.

NOËL CARROLL. 1999. "HORROR AND HUMOR".

- We can say that we are horrified when the monsters who are the particular objects of our emotional state are thought of as harmful or threatening (i.e., they are fearsome) and they are also thought of as impure (i.e., they are revolting or disgusting), where making these categorical assessments causes certain feeling states in us – like shuddering, trembling, chilling (as in "spine-chilling"), a sensation of creepiness, of unease, and so on.

NOËL CARROLL. 1990. *THE PHILOSOPHY OF HORROR: OR, PARADOXES OF THE HEART.*

- Norman Bates, in virtue of his psychosis, resembles the impure beings at the core of the concept of art-horror. He is *Nor-man*: neither man nor woman but both. He is son and mother. He is of the living and the dead. He is both victim and victimizer. He is two persons in one. He is abnormal, that is, because he is interstitial. In Norman's case, this is a function of psychology rather than biology.

OEDIPUS THE GORY: OT 1275-1279

- Messenger: τοιαῦτ' ἐφυμνῶν πολλάκις τε κούχ ἅπαξ ἦρασσ' ἐπαίρων βλέφαρα. φοίνιαι δ' ὁμοῦ γλῆναι γένει' ἔτεγγον, οὐδ' ἀνίεσαν.
[φόνου μυδώσας σταγόνας, ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ μέλας ὄμβρος †χαλάζης αἵματος† ἐτέγγετο.]
- Messenger: Repeating such things, he lifted up his eyes and many times – not just once – he struck them. And at the same time the bleeding eyeballs stained his cheeks, and they didn't stop. [Dripping drops of gore, but at once a dark shower of blood soaked him like hail]

OEDIPUS, RECOGNIZING THE MONSTER: OT 1384-1386

- Oedipus: τοιάνδ' ἐγὼ κηλῖδα μηνύσας ἐμὴν
 ὀρθοῖς ἔμελλον ὄμμασιν τούτους ὄρᾶν;
 ἤκιστά γ'.
- Oedipus: When I revealed that such a pollution was on me, was I to look upon these
 with steady eyes? Never!

THANK YOU!

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