Look No Further Than Yourself: Seneca's Oedipus, Deoculation and the Futility of Introspection

Christina Franzen franzen@marshall.edu

1. Subitus en uultus grauat profusus imber ac rigat fletu genas— et flere satis est? hactenus fundent leuem oculi liquorem. sedibus pulsi suis lacrimas sequantur: hi maritales statim fodiantur oculi.'

Оед. 952-7

Suddenly, oh, a heavy downpour makes my cheeks heavy with tears - and is it enough to weep? My eyes will shed trivial liquid no more. Let them, pushed from their sockets, follow the tears; let this husband's eyes be dug out immediately.

2. ...Dixit atque ira furit:
ardent minaces igne truculento genae
oculique uix se sedibus retinent suis;
uiolentus audax uultus, iratus ferox
iamiam eruentis; gemuit et dirum fremens
manus in ora torsit. at contra truces
oculi steterunt et suam intenti manum
ultro insecuntur, uulneri occurrunt suo.

Oed. 957-64

He spoke and he rages with anger. His cheeks, menacing with savage fire, burn, and his eyes scarcely hold themselves back in their sockets. The face of the man who is digging out his eyes is violent, daring, angry, fierce. He groans and, roaring savagely, he twists his hands into his face, but his eyes stay fierce and they track their hand intently; they rush to meet their wounds.

3. Scrutatur auidus manibus uncis lumina, radice ab ima funditus uulsos simul euoluit orbes; haeret in uacuo manus et fixa penitus unguibus lacerat cauos alte recessus luminum et inanes sinus saeuitque frustra plusque quam satis est furit.

Oed. 965-70

He greedily probes his eyes with his hands as hooks. He rolls out the orbs, plucked from their deep roots from their foundation; his hands cling in the empty space and deep inside; with his nails, he tears at the eye's deep cavities, and he rages in vain; he is maddened more than is enough.

Select Bibliography

Bartsch, Shadi. 2006. The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire. University of Chicago Press.

Boyle, A.J. and Seneca. 2011. Oedipus: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary. OUP.

Dressler, Alex. 2012. "Oedipus on Oedipus: Sophocles, Seneca, Politics and Therapy" in *A Companion to Sophocles*. Ed. Kirk Ormand. Wiley-Blackwell: 507-22.