

## Oedipus and his Heroic Counterparts

We often think of Oedipus as a mythological exemplar. This Theban king is an isolated and solitary figure, polluted and exiled from society because of his unspeakable crimes (Girard 1977, 2004). For German idealist philosophers, Oedipus has become a paradigm of tragic heroism (Leonard 2015). For Jean-Joseph Goux (1993) Oedipus' extraordinary biography makes him an atypical philosopher. The parricide, incest and answering the riddle of the Sphinx turned this aberrant tragic hero into a universal model of subjectivity, the main protagonist of psychoanalysis (Rudnytsky 1987; Armstrong 2005 and 2012). Due to his forceful characterization in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus can be seen as a powerful foil to other characters in these plays. Hence, Oedipus' singularity is dramatically shaped through his insoluble conflicts with Tiresias and Creon. Yet there are other, less familiar but still remarkable instances in which Oedipus is paired in some way with another hero in works of literature or in theoretical discussions. These different pairings might be read as instructive synergies; their union might be harmonious or contentious.

In the proposed panel we argue that a discussion of Oedipus and his different counterparts is essential for rethinking the fascinating relationship between intertext and narrativity as well as between intertextuality and psychoanalysis. Studying different instances of a relational conception of Oedipus throughout the long reception of the myth will help to reframe his transgressive exemplarity. The three papers look at different case studies in which Oedipus and another heroic figure share similar experiences. The panel thus aims to provide a commentary on the meaning of literary analogy in the context of both classical literature and psychoanalytic thought. The analogy between Oedipus and Odysseus that concentrates on childhood trauma and

memory will point at Homeric narrative as an important source for fashioning Oedipus' tragic pathology. The analogy between Oedipus and Theseus focuses on the connection between present and past acts of violence and will thus investigate the relationship between these two heroes' visual and haptic experiences within the world of one epic poem. And finally, the analogy between Oedipus and Hamlet suggests that the famous Freudian Oedipal complex is founded on the fusion between Oedipus and his Shakespearian counterpart. The panel presents Oedipus' relations to his heroic counterparts as fundamental for deciphering ancient and modern notions of the self.

#### Bibliography

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