

Chris Plough
Writing Assignment #1
THEA 100

Oedipus Rex

My staging of Oedipus Rex will attempt to portray the play in such a way that the audience feels how dark Oedipus's tragedy is. I also want to show the play in a way that will interest newer generations in viewing it, because I feel that extreme pride and anger are eternal evils, present at any time in history, especially today. Finally I want to this version of the play to portray how in society our leaders and the ones we bow down to are not always right or just and are far from perfect. I do this to encourage others to think for themselves, rather than to blindly follow others simply due to their "ranking" in society.

The stage and scenery of this play will attempt to enhance its despair and tragedy, while adding in a bit of originality. To start off, my version of Oedipus will be staged on a proscenium stage with a bit of an apron. The stage will be set up to look like an old sewer. The walls will be made to look as if they are made of large gray stones, covered in moss and algae. Lighting on the stage will be just a bit dimmer than it ordinarily would be, to help enhance the effect of being underground, shunned from sunlight. The stage lighting will consist of imitation torches on the walls, which flicker slightly for effect, though not enough to distract the audience. A couple of overhead lights will also be rigged so that the light coming from them appears to be coming through a grate or hole in a manhole cover to finish up the effect. Lastly, different locals will be shown by having different props upon the stage, rather than changing the stage

scenery itself. Entrances and exits will be made from the wings on either side of the stage.

The sound of water lightly dripping and echoing through the tunnels will be constant in the play, to add to the atmosphere. Music during the play will be subtle and used to heighten the audiences emotion in crucial parts of the play, i.e. when Oedipus is ranting about finding the killer of Laio, when Iocaste commits suicide and Oedipus blinds himself, and in the end when Oedipus is pitied, to name just a few. The music will be a mixture of primal instrumental sounds (drums, rattles, and other ancient percussion instruments) and purely instrumental music by Nine Inch Nails. The music will not be overly strong nor distracting, it will simply lay in the background and enhance the emotion of the play. During the chorus, the music will become slightly more prominent and will accompany the chorus who will sing between each scene. During such time, the stage will be dark to allow the movement of props, while an unseen chorus sings. I decided to use an unseen chorus to symbolize the masses of people that are ruled over, yet never seen by their rulers (in this play Oedipus). At the end of the play, while the cast is bowing to the audience and until the audience is gone, songs by Rage Against the Machine, such as *Darkness* and *Take the Power Back* and *Killing in the Name* will be playing because I feel they share a theme with the play and would help to strengthen it.

The costumes will reflect the different levels in our society and also tell a bit about the character wearing them. Also, masks will not be used, because I feel that being able to see the emotion on each character's face adds to realism and to the audience's emotional involvement in the play. The messengers and

the Shepherd will be robed in rags which are dirty and full of holes, patches and the like. They will be wearing jeans and T-shirts, with a tattered flannel, jean jacket, or other shirt worn loosely over their T-shirts. Their shoes will look like they have been drug to hell and back. Telmessas will wear an old blue and silver robe; that could have once been very fine, yet now is a sad sight. His eyes will be covered with a blindfold made of an old black rag and he will walk with the assistance of a gnarled cane. Choragos will wear a simple shirt and jeans, nothing too tattered, yet nothing spectacular. Creon will be clothed in a worn and dirty pair of slightly oversized corduroy slacks along with a collarless semi-formal gray shirt worn open over a white tank-top undershirt. The priest will wear the cleanest garments, hardly tattered or stained. He will wear a robe of gold ornamented with ancient writings and symbols done in black. Locaste will wear an off-white plain dress that is only dirty near its bottom. Finally, Oedipus will wear a dark charcoal suit with a loose and shoddy crimson tie. I do this to contrast him with Locaste and show his supposed "high stature".

In all of the scenes, until his downfall, Oedipus will be staged in such a way as to draw more attention to himself, to help show how great his pride is. For instance, in the Prologue, Oedipus will be standing on some kind of base that will put him above the priest and others. Each scene will be staged rather simply and ordinarily, other than that Oedipus will be the center of stage attention. One exception to the normal staging, is when the second messenger is telling Choragos about Locaste's suicide. During this part, both the messenger and Choragos will be down left on the stage. The stage will be unusually dark, except for a gray filtered light on the messenger and Choragos.

Then, once the messenger starts talking about how Iocaste killed herself, a bright white light will beam down onto right center on the stage, to illuminate Iocaste, soundlessly playing out her actions, as the messenger says them. A noose will be hanging near her, and you will see her put her head in it, then her light will go out. You will then hear Oedipus yell, and the light will go on again, to see him holding her and crying. You will then see him take broaches from her dress and lunge them towards his eyes. At that exact moment, there will be a bright flash of white light upon the stage then all will go dark, except for the light illuminating the messenger and Choragos, who continue to talk, uninterrupted by any of this. When Oedipus enters later, he will be wearing the same black blindfold that Teiresias was wearing, and will be using the same gnarled cane. He will be humbled and pitiful. His staging will no longer set him as the center of attention, but rather portray his new humility and sadness.

While there are some details I have left to iron out, i.e., the shepherds talking about tending their herds and walking upon the mountain, most of the play has been considered. All I can say on the shepherds is that possibly the lower class does not stay underground all the time, and journey into the perilous "over-world". Perhaps this would symbolize how those in power can be blind to parts of the world while those who are lower, constantly live in it all. Either way, I feel this interpretation of Oedipus Rex will be successful and powerful. Maybe some day I'll get to see it put into action.

(A+)

Excellent

A+ 45 pts