Oedipus Rex in translation

Overall, this play is a good example of:
- Dramatic irony – audience knows more than actors
- Selective nature of dramatic episodes

The Freytag Pyramid
1. Exposition or Introduction
2. Complication and Development
3. Crisis or Climax
4. Falling Action
5. Denouement, Resolution, or Catastrophe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>Problem #1 Both the earth and the women are barren, as there is a plague. Problem #2: Murder of Laius, the former go, must go.</td>
<td>Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parados</td>
<td>Terror continues and the plague continues. There is an appeal to the goddess, Athena. Good gods versus bad goods seen in the elements of wind and lightning</td>
<td>Exposition – drama intensifies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe</td>
<td>This is the movement of the chorus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>Ironic: stranger is nearby (Oedipus)</td>
<td>Complication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creus leaves. Enter Tiresais, the prophet. Tiresias vs. Oedipus. T. says: “You are polluted.” Yet. Tiresias know Oedipus’ parents. Yet T’s riddle is evasive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stasimon 2</td>
<td>Choragos is a spokesperson for the chorus, which itself acts as a group-actor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe</td>
<td>“Man”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe</td>
<td>Conscience of Oedipus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe</td>
<td>Changes to be produced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 2</td>
<td>Creon to Choragos. “Why have I</td>
<td>Exposition extended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
been accused?” Oedipus vs. Creon: O. wants him dead or gone. Jocasta enters: What caused this dispute?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kommos or Dirge #1</th>
<th>Only exile should be given to Creon, Choragos urges.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Antistrophe 1    | Chorus talks to Jocasta                          |
| Antistrophe 2    | Jocasta, Oedipus and chorus continue with their historical narrative of Laius’ retinue and the surviving servant. Next, Oedipus mentions drunken man in at the Corinth feast, who tells him that his current father is not his real father. Also Oedipus mentions that he encountered a man (Laius, his real father, although he does not know this yet.) This man struck him, and he, Oedipus retaliated by killing him. |

| Stasimon 2       | This is on the chorus. A difficult read which centers on the need to respect the gods, so as to avoid unpleasant fates. |

| Antistrophe 1    | Good struggle                                      |
| Strophe 2        | Bad, hated person                                  |
| Antistrophe 2    | Gods’ power could wane                             |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode 3</th>
<th>Jocasta prays for gods’ help.</th>
<th>Complication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stasimon 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 1</td>
<td>Find the herdsman at the full moon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 2</td>
<td>O’s mother as a nymph.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 4</td>
<td>Missing herdsman is found. Oedipus and the messenger, too. The herdsman is like Jocasta; both do not want to tempt fate. The herdsman took pity on the baby Oedipus, but only delayed “the disaster.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe 1</td>
<td>Rise of Oedipus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 1</td>
<td>Oedipus is saved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe 2</td>
<td>Foreshadowing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>Second messenger: Jocasta is dead. Oedipus is very distraught; loses vision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kommos, Dirge #2</td>
<td>Oedipus calls the chorus a friend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 1</td>
<td>Imagery of nature again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe 2</td>
<td>Oedipus tells the chorus that Apollo is to blame.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antistrophe 2, very long</td>
<td>Oedipus wants the herdsman destroyed, like he wanted Creon. Enter Creon. Oedipus sad goodbye to daughters, Antigone and Ismene.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophe</td>
<td>Irony: This time Oedipus, not Creon is exiled. Creon now rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENGL 1102
R&J Ch 26 Dramatic Vision

Drama compared to other genres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unlike either</th>
<th>DRAMA</th>
<th>Like Fiction</th>
<th>Like Poetry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ a few characters</td>
<td>✓ situations through speech and action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ prose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ narration</td>
<td>✓ ancient plays and plays of 1500s-1800s in poetry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impersonation by actors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ various lengths</td>
<td>✓ various lengths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance as well as literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>open and closed forms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drama as Literature

Major aspects of drama are:

- **Text**
  - Plan for bringing a play into action
  - Monologue
  - Dialogue
  - Stage directions
    - Playwright’s instructions for
    - Facial and vocal expression
    - Movement and action
    - Gesture and body language
    - Stage appearance
    - Lighting
- **Language**
  - Dialogue tells us characters thoughts
  - Words’ imagery give layered meaning
  - Spoken language fits time, social class
ENGL 1102
R&J Dramatic Vision
Page two

- Characters
  - Become alive through action and speech
  - Intense episodes, not all of life
  - Types
    - Protagonist
    - Antagonist
    - Round/dynamic/developing
    - Flat/static/ fixed
    - Realistic (individualized)
    - Nonrealistic (symbolic, though others can be symbolic)
    - Stereotype or stock
      - Shrewish wife (“Taming of the Shrew”)
      - Clever male servant (“Volpone”)
  - Ancillary
    - Foil (Laertes and Fortinbras in “Hamlet”)
    - Choric (Horatio in “Hamlet”)
      - Raisonneur/commentator

- Plot
  - Sequential and related incidents connected by chronology
  - Controlled by conflict
  - Main plot and Subplot (mechanicals in “A Midsummer’s Night Dream”)

- Structure
  - Arrangement of five stages
    - Exposition
    - Complication and development
    - Crisis
    - Falling action
    - Resolution

- Point of view
  - The focus of the play NOT the voice of the speaker as in fiction

- Tone
  - Create mood with
    - Dramatic (situational) irony
      - Characters have limited understanding
      - Audience has complete understanding
    - Diction (short sentence in “Hamlet”)
    - Stage gestures and Vocal ranges

- Symbolism
  - Cultural (skull in “Hamlet”)
  - Contextual (vestibule in “Mulatto”)
  - Allegorical (sustained symbols as in “Dollhouse”)

- Theme or meaning
• Ideas the play dramatizes (anger stronger than love in “Before Brkfst”)

ENGL 1102  
R&J Dramatic Vision  
Page three

**Performance**

Major elements of performance are:

- **Actors**
  - Interpret characters
  - Move about stage in patterns called **blocking**
  - Use gestures or movements called **stage business**

- **Director**
  - Most significant person in the dramatic production
    - Works with the producer (financial person)
    - Works with the actors (artists in the performance)
    - Works with the specialists
      - Technical crew (gaffers, soundmen and women)
      - Set designer
      - Musicians

- **Stage**
  - Proscenium
    - Picture frame
    - Curtain represents a missing wall
  - Ampitheatre
    - half circle
      - audience members are closer
      - audience members are more involved
    - thrust or apron stage
      - goes closer to the audience
      - like platform stage at Globe Theatre
  - Theatre-in-the-Round
    - Very lively
    - Actors and audience use same doors

- **Sets**
  - Fixed sets
    - Room in a house, throne room,
  - Unit set (“Death of a Salesman”)
  - Nonrealistic or realistic (naturalistic)
  - Scenery
    - shows place and time
    - Indicates level of reality
  - Props
    - Mark scene changes
- Types = furniture, equipment

ENGL 1102
R&J Dramatic Vision
Page four

- Lighting
  - Daylight for ancient and medieval plays
  - Artificial light for indoor renaissance through current times
    - Before electricity: lanterns, gaslight and limelight lamps
    - After electricity: lights above, below and to the side
      - filters, spotlights, scrims
    - Current lighting can create different acting areas

- Costumes and Make Up
  - Establish
    - Time period
    - Occupations
    - Social class
  - Enhance
    - Age and Facial conditions

- Audience
  - Witnesses to the action
  - Common bond of interest
  - Respond communally
  - Provide instant feedback
    - “... drama in the theatre is the most immediate and accessible of the literary arts” (1174).

- History of Drama
  - Starts in the 6\textsuperscript{th} century b.c.e. in Ancient Greece
    - Religious festivals for Dionysus, god of wine
    - Choruses of male singers
      - Chanted long songs (dithyrambs)
      - Interpreted dance
      - Impersonate or act like the hero (one person)
    - Individual Actors, as focus away from chorus
  - Thrives in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century b.c.e. in the golden age of Greek tragedy
    - Greatest Athenian dramatists
      - Aeschylus
      - Sophocles
      - Euripides
    - Old Comedy
      - Aristophanes
      - Bawdy free speech
  - Changes in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century b.c.e. decline of Athenian military power
    - Middle Comedy
      - Social, discreet, international
    - New Comedy [Menander]
- Situation, plot, character

ENGL 1102
R&J Dramatic Vision
Page five

- 3rd century B.C.E. - About 500 C.E. – Greek and Roman dramas continue
- 5th-10 centuries of C.E... – no classical dramas or organized theatre
- In the 10th century C.E., presentations with the mass
  - Re-emergence of drama, reminds of initial Greek religious rites
  - Tropes or dramatic interludes within the Christian mass
    - Easter trope
      - Chanted to the monks and priest, not people
      - Called Visit to the Sepulcher Visitatio Sepulchri
      - Whom are you seeking? (Quem Quaeritis)
    - First European drama
      - It involved impersonation, as well as ritual
      - “The heart of the trope is that the Angel at the tomb [of Jesus] announces the resurrection to the three Marys, who then leave to proclaim the news” (1176).
- In the 11-12 century C.E.
  - The Easter trope becomes more complex
  - The Christmas trope is added
- In the 14th century C.E.
  - Corpus Christi (transubstantiation)
    - Analogous to Greek’s religion begets drama
    - Organized by guilds
      - “mystery” plays
- In the 15th century C.E.
  - Corpus Christi cycles are ubiquitous
    - Lavish to simple styles
    - English emerging as literary language
  - Miracle play
    - Lives of saints
  - Morality play
    - Instruction to faithful
- In the 16th century C.E. (Renaissance)
  - Secular conflicts
  - Greek and Roman dramas rediscovered
  - New Drama: merge of traditional medieval drama with the ancient literature.
    - Shakespeare created new works from old tales
- Post-Renaissance 18-20th C.E.
  - Types, some used by Shakespeare, but carried forward to the modern era, include:
    - Tragicomedy/Farce (class issues)
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R&J Tragic Vision

Tragedy =
- A drama in which “a major character undergoes a loss but also achieves . . . a new perspective . . . most elevated literary form . . . religious and cosmic implications” (1247).
- Public-private aspect of religion/religious festivals (precursors of theatre) in ancient Greece (1247 footnote)

The Origins of Tragedy

- Dionysiac Festivals
  - Important ones
    - Lenaia
    - City Dionysia
  - Choral ode called a dithyramb
    - Tragedy develops from this
- Prehistoric stories
  - Divine-human relations
  - Myths of heroes
    - Hubris (hybris) – pride
      - Results in bad behavior
- Origin of the word, “tragedy”: two theories
  - Tragos (goat) + oide (song, ode)
  - Tragoidoi (billy goat singers)
    - Young military men (ephebes)
      - Precise movements in the choral
      - Young, like billy goats
- Origin of the word, “actor”:
  - Hypocrites (new speaker)
    - A choral member separates as the tragedy evolves
    - This choral member impersonates (assumes a role)
      - Hypocrites as a hero, for example
      - Chorus as elders
      - Most famous hypocrites – Thespis (thespian)

Ancient Competitions in Tragedy

- At the Dionysiac festivals, tragedies became part of the competition:
3 tragedies (trilogy) + 1 burlesque (satyr)

Prize for best three submissions given by city magistrate (archon)

ENGL 1102
R&J Tragic Vision
Page two
Greatest Athenian Tragic Playwrights

- Most Famous
  - Aeschylus (525-456 bce)
    - Added second actor
  - Sophocles (496-406 bce)
    - Added a third actor (484-406 bce)
  - Euripides

- Facts about them
  - 300 plays
  - 33 survive today
  - Popular initially for 800 years after 5th century
  - Unpopular during Christianity
    - Considered pagan works
    - Papyrus scrolls gave way to vellum
      - Vellum only for Christian works
  - Revival of Ancient Greek Literature
    - 9th century Byzantium effort to copy/preserve
    - 14th century scholar in West finds some scrolls

[part on Aristotle, pp 1252-1258 at the end of these notes]

Ancient Athenian Audience and Theatre

- Finances
  - Actors paid by the government
  - Production underwritten by wealthy sponsors, the choragus
  - Women, as well as men, in the audience

- Locations
  - Dionysus altar in the middle of the marketplace (agora)
  - Dionysian sacred area at the base of the Acropolis is where the half-circle outdoor theatre (theatron), the Theatre of Dionysus was, with a round area called the dancing place (orchestra) and the altar near it. Behind was a tent (skene) in front was a platform (proskenion)
    - held 14,000 patrons
    - good acoustics
    - chorus sang odes and danced to a double-piped flue (aulos)
    - no curtain
    - crane to raise the actors (theos apo mecanes or deus ex machine)
• “artificial or illogical” way to end a play

- Playwrights as Producers
  o Staged their works throughout the day: tragedies, satyrs, comedies
  o Wrote their works

R&J Tragic Vision
Page three

- Costumes
  o Sleeved robes
    ▪ Costume changes
    ▪ One actor for several roles
  o Boots (buskins with high heels)
  o Masks
    ▪ Linen and plaster
    ▪ 28 different types of people or emotions
    ▪ But identical masks for group roles - clever

- Dialogue
  o Conveyed time and location

- Structural Divisions of the Play
  o Prologue
  o Parados
    ▪ Entrance of the chorus into the orchestra
    ▪ Turns (strophes)
    ▪ Counterturns (antistrophes)
    ▪ Flute (aulos) plays at the same time
    ▪ Chorus sits downs as model audience
  o Episodes (4) – major action
    ▪ Acting Part
      • Actors in each episode
      • One-line interchanges (stichomythy)
      • Actors withdrew when action ended
    ▪ Choral Part (stasimon/-a)
      • Dance movements
      • Developed the action
      • Became less important over time
  o Exodos
    ▪ Resolution of the drama
    ▪ Exit of the actors
    ▪ Dance movement
    ▪ Exit of the chorus

- “In later centuries, dramatists dropped the choral sections completely, establishing a precedent for the five-act structure adopted by Roman dramatists and later by Renaissance dramatists” (1263)/
Aristotle and the Nature of Tragedy

- His Poetics = major critical work
  - Part one is on tragedy
    - Most of the work survived
    - Source of “rules” of tragic composition
  - Part two is on comedy
    - Only fragments survive

- His other works on literature
  - Parts of the Ethics
  - Parts of the Politics
  - Catalog of Greek tragedy

- Important Sections of the Poetics
  - IV.12 – Here “Aristotle states that tragedy grew out of improvisations related to dithrambic choral odes. He adds that once tragedy reached its ‘natural’ or ideal form it stopped evolving” (1253)
  - VI, 2 – Here “he states that tragedy is ‘an imitatin of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament . . .”(1253)

- Goal of tragedy – the purge of emotions like pity and fear
  - This purge is called catharsis
    - It brings emotional balance.
    - Other arts have catharsis
  - Aristotle’s defense against the disapproval of Plato

- The Tragic Plot
  - “arouses and shapes emotions” (1254)
  - The representation of a single, major action (1254)
    - Since art is an imitation not real life
    - Mimesis = representation

- The Tragic Response – three parts
  - Reversal is a surprise in the dramatic situation
  - Recognition is a change in the character’s awareness
  - Suffering is a “destructive act on stage” (1255)

- Additional Tragic Requirements
  - Seriousness
    - Elevate tone
  - Completeness
    - Beginning-middle-end
Balance
- the right dramatic length for comprehension

Aristotle and the Nature of Tragedy
Continued

- Enhancements in Tragedy
  - Verse “elevates the drama” (1256)
  - Song and Music “increase beauty and intensify” (1256)

- The Tragic Hero
  - XIII.2 the tragic flaw [hybris] of the protagonist (hero)
  - “Therefore, an ideal tragedy is fine-tuned to control our emotions exactly, producing horror and fear because the suffering protagonist is a person like ourselves, and pity because the suffering far exceeds what the protagonist deserves’ (1256)

- Tragic irony
  - Fate/gods interfere
  - Types
    - Situational and Cosmic
      - Hero’s actions can’t “reverse” his situation
      - Modern and ancient tragedies
        - Oedipus
        - Hamlet
        - Death of a Salesman” “Miller’s Hero, Wily Loman is gripped not so much by divine power as by time—the agent of destruction being the inexorable force of economic circumstances” (1257)
      - Dramatic irony
        - The audience is as omniscient (all-knowing) as the gods, knows more than the hero and other characters do
        - Reflects the uncertainty of life

- Tragic Dilemma =
  - “a situation that forces the tragic protagonist to make a difficult choice” (1257)
  - Related to tragic irony
  - Choices/decisions even if made freely have consequences that the tragic hero cannot escape from because of fate.
COMEDY::TRAGEDY

- SIMILARITIES
  - TRAGIC ELEMENTS IN COMEDY
  - COMIC ELEMENTS IN TRAGEDY

- DIFFERENCES
  - “... TRAGEDY MOVES TOWARD DESPAIR OR DEATH, 
    WHILE COMEDY MOVES TOWARD SUCCESS, HAPPINESS 
    AND MARRIAGE” (1484).
  - DICTION
    - TRAGEDY – FORMAL
    - COMEDY – COLLOQUIAL

HISTORY OF COMEDY

- IN ARISTOTLE’S *POETICS*
  - IMPROVISATIONS LIKE TRAGEDY
    - BACCHANALIAN PROCESSIONS
    - LENAIA RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL HELD IN WINTER
      - NAME = KOMOS – SONG OF REVELS
      - STILL RELIGIOUS, THOUGH, LIKE ASIA
  - DEVELOPED AFTER TRAGEDY
    - NOT IN ATHENS, BUT MAGNA GRAECIA
    - BUT, IN ATHENS BY 486 B.C.E (GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE)
      - TIME OF STATE COMEDY COMPETITIONS
      - AUTHORS: CRATES, MAGNES, ARISTOPHANES
    - OLD COMEDY [ATTIC] 486 BCE
      - COMPLEX STRUCTURE AND CONVENTIONS
      - ACTORS AND CHORUS WITH MASKS
      - OUTRAGEOUS COSTUMES AND PROPS
      - BAWDY DIALOGUE
      - POLITICAL CRITICISM
  - MIDDLE COMEDY 390S BCE
    - AUTHORS: ARISTOPHANES (CONT.)
    - SIMPLER, LESS COMPLEX
    - NOT POLITICAL CRITICISM
    - CHORUS DECLINES
    - CHARACTER ACTORS, LIKE BRAGGART SOLDIER
NEW COMEDY  340S-290S BCE
- MENANDER (QUOTES)
  - HIS ‘GROUCH” REDISCOVERED
  - USED ROMANTICALLY RATHER THAN SATIRICAL ACTORS
  - USED STOCK CHARACTERS

ROMAN COMEDY  240S-180S BCE
- TRANSLATIONS OF GREEK “NEW COMEDIES”
  - ENDS BY ABOUT 29 BCE WITH THE ROMAN EMPIRE
- WRITERS =
  - PLAUTUS
    - “BRISK”
    - 20 PLAYS REMAIN
  - TERRENCE
    - “RESTRAINED”
    - 6 PLAYS REMAIN
- PLOTS
  - PLOT OF INTRIGUE
  - LOVERS AND BLOCKING AGENT (OBSTACLE)
    - LIKE ROMEO AND JULIET
1500 YEARS OF LITTLE RECOGNITION

RENAISSANCE COMEDY ’1500 AD
- TUDOR WRITERS USE ROMAN MODELS
  - UNITIES OBSERVER
  - FIVE ACTS
  - STOCK CHARACTERS
    - MECHANICALS IN MIDSUMMER’S …
  - PLAYHOUSE OUT OF TOWN LIMITS
• PATTERNS-CHARACTERS—LANGUAGE
  ○ CONTEXT MAKES SOMETHING “FUNNY”
  ○ EDUCATIONAL
• COMIC PATTERNS “GROW OUT OF CHARACTER AND SITUATION.”
  ○ REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS CAPABLE OF BEING RESTORED
  ○ “COMIC CLIMAX = “PEAK OF CONFUSION”
• CHARACTERS HAVE SELF-UNDERSTANDING
  ○ LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT
• TYPES OF COMEDY
  ○ ROMANTIC
    ▪ PLOT OF INTRIGUE
    ▪ AIM IS AMUSEMENT
  ○ COMEDY OF MANNERS
    ▪ WITTY DIALOGUE (1490)
  ○ SATIRIC, BEGAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY
  ○ LOW COMEDY
    ▪ HUMOR FROM COMPLICATIONS IN THE PLOT
    ▪ EXAMPLES
      ○ FARCE
      ○ COMMEDIA DEL ARTE
      ○ SLAPSTICK
  ○ CONTEMPORARY COMEDY
    ▪ TYPES
      ○ IRONIC
      ○ REALISTIC
      ○ ABSURD
      ○ SITCOMES
    ○ DIFFERENCE WITH OTHER COMEDIES
      ○ NO HAPPY ENDING