



## Structuralism and King Oedipus

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### Abstract

Structuralism is a way of decoding and studying aspects of human conduct, tradition, and love that relates factors of a conceptual system that reflects patterns underlying a superficial range. King Oedipus is King Laius' biological son who he neglects at birth to prevent a prophecy by the Oracle that he would kill his father and marry his mother. He is adopted by a royal family in Corinth but later returns to Thebes and fulfills the prophecy mystically. He later finds out and pops his eyes out and his led out of the city by his daughter The French social anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied the structuralist outlook to cultural phenomena like mythology and kinship relations. To interpret the Oedipus myth, he placed the specific story of King Oedipus within the context of the whole cycle of tales connected with the city of Thebes. Concrete details from the narrative are seen in the framework of a wider structure and the overall system of elementary dyadic bigger structure is seen as pairs with obvious symbolic, thematic and archetypal resonance.

**Keywords:** structuralism, human conduct, tradition, love

Inside the Oedipus fantasy, Oedipus is assigned to solve the riddle of the Sphinx, which he resolves and is diagnosed as a hero. He is married and ascends the Throne. However, he is also the false hero and the villain since he murdered his father in the manner to Thebes and married his mom the queen. The tragic fantasy of Oedipus calls for the substitution of 'mom/queen and husband' for 'princess and her father'<sup>1</sup>.

One person can play numerous roles, or several characters can play an identical function.

Oedipus is the hero for aiding in keeping off Thebes' plague through solving the riddle. He is also the false hero and the villain. King Oedipus of Thebes sends his brother-in-law Creon to look into the cause of the mysterious plague that has struck the metropolis. Creon reports that the plague may be lifted if the person who killed King Laius is brought to justice. Queen Jocasta doesn't trust Tiresias when he says Oedipus is the murderer. This is because an oracle told her that her husband could be killed by their baby and also because according to her that hasn't come pass. She doesn't believe Tiresias because to prevent her infant from killing her husband; she had left the child to die on mount Cytherion. Oedipus suspects that he might be that abandoned baby. When he first arrived in Thebes, he met and killed a person along the road who later turned out to be Louis, the king. He then fell in love with the widowed Jocasta after he met her and who is his very own mother. A messenger and a servant affirm the story, and Jocasta hangs herself out of shame. Oedipus discovers her frame and uses the pins of her brooches to stab out his own eyes.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, the structuralist anthropologist, analyses the Oedipus delusion in the way of pure structuralism in use of the linguistic model. He calls the units of fantasy mythemes. They may be prepared in binary oppositions just like the fundamental linguistic gadgets. The general competition underlying the Oedipus myth is among two perspectives of the foundation of people. First being that they're born with the earth and the second one that they may be born from coition.

Several my themes are grouped on one side or the opposite of the anti-thesis between the overvaluation of kinship ties. This takes place when Oedipus marries his mother. This is entering Thebes by solving the riddle which leads to him being honored by Creon, Jocasta's brother and uncle, who served as a brief king after Laius' death. Creon had stated that the person who could kill the Sphinx would be crowned king and would marry Jocasta. Consequently, the second part of the prophecy turned into fulfilled and Oedipus rose to the throne of Thebes, marrying his mother<sup>2</sup>. Overvaluation of kinship ties is also seen when Antigone pleaded to Creon, the successor to the throne to bury Polynices, his brother. Creon did not allow it since Polynices was considered a traitor. As a result, Antigone buried her brother herself, leading to her arrest and in the end, Antigone is incarcerated and buried in a tomb.

The undervaluation of kinship ties is also another mytheme. It is shown by Oedipus killing his father. He was on his way to Thebes running away from Corinth to keep away from gratifying the prophecy for seen and relayed to him by

<sup>1</sup> Carroll, Michael P. "Lévi-Strauss on the Oedipus Myth: A Reconsideration." *American Anthropologist* 80, no. 4 (1978): 805-814.

<sup>2</sup> Griffith, R. Drew. "Oedipus Pharmakos? Alleged Scapegoating in Sophocles' Oedipus the King." *Phoenix* 47, no. 2 (1993): 95-114.

the oracle when he came across King Laius, his real father. He was on a chariot headed to pay the Oracle a visit. Oedipus and Laius' charioteer commenced quarreling over who had the right to have the way. The feud ended up with Oedipus killing the charioteer and his father, for that reason unknowingly fulfilling the primary half of his prophecy.

This is additionally visible after the loss of the life of Oedipus and both of his sons Polynices and Eteocles become the new rulers of the kingdom. Oedipus had got enraged at them for the disrespectful treatment they gave him within the past and cursed them to die under the hands of each other. Because of the curse, the shared rule become not, in particular, easy. Eteocles ended up having control of the throne for himself and forcibly sending Polynices far away from the kingdom. Polynices became annoyed by his brother and gathered together his military and launched an attack to the town. As a result of the fight they both died in the battle as their father had foretold them, Eteocles was buried with honor within the city since he was the ruler at the particular moment. However, his brother being a traitor his body was left to rot and decompose on the battlefield. Their sister later made efforts to bury Polynices in a proper manner but towards the desire of the new king of the kingdom her uncle Creon had her throne to prison.

The idea of heroism is also portrayed in structuralism and Oedipus indicates this too when he met a monster known as Sphinx, who plagued the vicinity of Thebes destroying plants and killing travelers who did not solve its riddles. The Sphinx requested Oedipus the same question it required other travelers. The first was what walks on four toes in the morning, two within the afternoon, and three at night? Nobody had ever answered the question successfully before, and the Sphinx had killed and eaten all of them. Oedipus noted carefully and in the end gave the suitable solution as a man who crawls on all fours as a child then walks on legs as a grown up and needs a walking stick while old. The Sphinx, not bearing that its riddle has been responded effectively, killed itself by way of falling off the rock it was sitting on.

In the myth of Oedipus, we find some other concept of structuralism that is the supernatural or predestined. This is portrayed after Laius the king decides to go and consult the Oracle to study if he and his spouse might ever bear children at any time. A prophecy was given stating that if a son was to be born out of that marriage, he could kill his parents. Sometimes later Jocasta was pregnant and bore a baby boy. With an intention to evade the prophecy the king asked his servants to stop the infant from ever crawling by piercing his ankles. Thus the name Oedipus was given to the infant which meant a swollen foot. Later his mother gave him to one of the shepherds and told him to leave the child in the mountain so that he could die there<sup>3</sup>. The shepherd was not able to try this. Therefore, he passed the toddler to another shepherd who delivered it at the docket of the court of King Polybus and Merope her wife Queen of Corinth Still, after taking this kind of cautions, the prophecy comes to pass.

Lévi-Strauss isn't interested in the narrative series as an alternative inside the structural sample which offers the myth which means he looks for the phonemic shape of fable. He believes that this linguistic model will find the fundamental structure of the human mind – the structure which governs the manner people shape all their establishments, artifacts and sorts of expertise. Structuralist Theories of A.J. Greimas also gives an elegant streamlining of Propp's principle. Even as Propp centered on a single genre, Greimas pursues to arrive at the prevalent grammar of narrative by applying to it a semantic evaluation of sentence structure<sup>4</sup>. In the vicinity of Propp's seven spheres of motion, he proposes three pairs of binary oppositions which include all six roles or actants. He requires a subject or object, sender or receiver and a helper or opponent. The pairs describe three fundamental styles which possibly recur in all narrative which can be preference or aim giving subject or object, communicate giving us a sender or receiver and auxiliary guide or predicament to offer us a helper or opponent. If we observe those to Oedipus the King, we arrive at a greater penetrating analysis than with the use of Propp's classes.

After Oedipus is disregarded by his actual mother and father and is adopted by another royal family. He grows up underneath their parenting, however, someone tells him that Merope and Polybus who he knew as his dad and mom were not his actual father and mother<sup>5</sup>. Figuring out to analyze this reply, Oedipus went to Delphi to seek advice from the Oracle who said to him that he was destined to kill his dad and marry his mother. On listening to this Oedipus had in mind that the prophecy intended Merope and Polybus and thought of not going back to Corinth. In its place, he commenced a journey to the town of Thebes when he met his actual father and killed him. He was on the run to keep away from killing his father but unearths himself doing it unknowingly making him both the object and the subject Davidson, J. F. "Erich Segal (Ed.)," *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*." *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language Association* 64 (1985): 248<sup>6</sup>.

Apollo's oracle predicts Oedipus sins. Also Teiresias, Jocasta, messenger and the herdsman, knowingly or unknowingly verify its fact. The play is set on Oedipus false impression of the message. Teiresias and Jocasta attempt to save Oedipus from discovering the murderer. The messenger and the herdsman unwittingly assist him in the search. Oedipus himself obstructs the best interpretation of the message. According to Greimas point of view of structuralism, all the

<sup>3</sup> Griffith, R. Drew. "Oedipus Pharmakos? Alleged Scapegoating in Sophocles' Oedipus the King." *Phoenix* 47, no. 2 (1993): 95-114.

<sup>4</sup> Willner, Dorothy. "The Oedipus Complex, Antigone, and Electra: the woman as hero and victim." *American Anthropologist* 84, no. 1 (1982): 58-78.

<sup>5</sup> Segal, Charles. "Pentheus and Hippolytus on the couch and the grid: psychoanalytic and structuralist readings of Greek tragedy." *The Classical World* 72, no. 3 (1978): 129-148.

<sup>6</sup> Davidson, J. F. "Erich Segal (Ed.)," *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*." *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language Association* 64 (1985): 248.

above characters take part in verbal exchange as senders communicating differently to Oedipus who's the receiver of the message. They also acted as helpers to help him avoid the prophecy.

When Oedipus went to consult the oracle and was advised that he could kill his father and marry his mom, the Oracle turned into appearing as auxiliary support trying to assist him to avoid the wrath of his future. The journey of going to Thebes acted as a hindrance to changing the prophesied future.

The sphinx which was considered to be a female existed in Greek mythology. She was the daughter of Orthus, and both Echidna or Chimera. Apart from the human head and the frame of the lion, she additionally had wings of an eagle and a tail of a snake. As per the existent myth, she dwelt outside the town of Thebes and requested a riddle to all travelers to let them bypass<sup>7</sup>. The riddle asked at that moment was a well-known riddle one that's the creature that has one voice but has four toes in the morning two toes within midday and three toes at night time? All who struggled to reply failed to answer correctly and were eaten by the monster, but Oedipus controlled to answer adequately. He responded the man, that is he crawls on all fours when young, walks on two as a grown up, and uses a strolling came when old.

It appears that evidently there was a second riddle following the first which was there are two sisters, one gives birth to the other, who in turn gives birth to the first. Who are they? The correct solution is day and night two phrases which might be each female inside the Greek language. After Oedipus efficiently responded each question, the Sphinx killed herself by throwing herself off the rock on which she rested. This appears to be the literary manner in which the ancient Greeks transitioned from the old spiritual practices, represented via the Sphinx, to the brand new ones and the established order of the Olympian deities, represented via Oedipus. This shows that the Sphinx was used as a hindrance in the myth although Oedipus answered it clearly.

According to structuralism, the false hero who in this example is Oedipus is given a different look. Oedipus performed the fake hero through even cursing whoever killed Laius, asking Tiresias the prophet to discover the identity of the killer. Tiresias found out that Oedipus was the one who had killed the previous king and he also was not aware who his actual mother and father had been. Creon and Oedipus went right into having an argument and Jocasta intervened and stated the tale of her son's supposed death. That second, a Corinth messenger entered the courtroom and informed everybody that Polybus had died<sup>8</sup>. Oedipus was relieved because he thought that Polybus was his actual father and the prophecy had not turned out to be real, but he did not want to attend the funeral so as not to meet his mom and maybe inflicting the other part of the prophecy to materialize. But the messenger then defined that he was in reality adopted, so Merope and Polybus were not his birth mother and father. This became a moment of revelation for each one of them<sup>9</sup>. Oedipus realized that the man he had killed on his way to Thebes was his real biological father and the woman he was married to was his mother. He turned into now not a hero but a fake hero.

The next step is punishing the villain after publicity. After he realized that he had tied knots with his mom. Oedipus went to try to locate Jocasta who had run away moments in advance, just to determine that she had hanged herself to avoid shame. He, in turn, takes a brooch from her robe and with the use of the pin he removes his eyes going blind. He ran away from Thebes with assistance from his daughter Antigone and reached the home of King Theseus of Athens, who welcomes them well, and that's where he is later at the time of his death

The myth of King Oedipus ends with a tale of the battle that broke out after Oedipus left the town of Thebes and his two sons Eteocles and Polynices gained control over the kingdom. They at first agreed to percentage power and ruled alternatively but after Eteocles' reign ended, and now it was time for Polynices' to rule, Eteocles could not allow him and sent his brother away<sup>10</sup>.

Polynices ran to Argos and made himself a military that was led by seven people, Tydeus, Adrastus, Capaneus, Amphiarus, Parthenopeus and he himself<sup>11</sup>. Throughout that battle, his army has been confronted on the seven Thebes gates with the aid of an equal range of defenders led by Polyphontes, Megareus, Melanippus, Actor, Hyperbius, Eteocles and Lasthenes. Just before Eteocles faced his brother on the 7th gate, he remembered that his father had cursed them to divide the dominion via a sword. With that in mind, he went out through the gate to fight his brother. In the next part of the play, a messenger seemed to be announcing that those who had attacked had been drawn away and the two brothers' corpses were brought to the stage. That's where our story ends.

## Conclusion

Finally the structural study of King Oedipus structuralism instantiates the fact that when spiritual faith is giving way to rational inquiry, so long as their relics a tension between these two mutually exclusive discourses, deductions regarding the most fundamental questions of life and death are impossible. The specific new agreement that is yet to appear may

<sup>7</sup> Carroll, Michael P. "Lévi-Strauss on the Oedipus Myth: A Reconsideration." *American Anthropologist* 80, no. 4 (1978): 805-814.

<sup>8</sup> Edmunds, Lowell, and Alan Dundes, eds. *Oedipus: a folklore casebook*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Willner, Dorothy. "The Oedipus Complex, Antigone, and Electra: the woman as hero and victim." *American Anthropologist* 84, no. 1 (1982): 58-78.

<sup>10</sup> Edmunds, Lowell, and Alan Dundes, eds. *Oedipus: a folklore casebook*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1995

<sup>11</sup> Davidson, J. F. "Erich Segal (Ed.)," *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy*." *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language Association* 64 (1985): 248.

rely upon tolerating the knowledge that from now on the interpretative procedure will know no conclusion. Oedipus the King entices its gathering of people with such a prospect.

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