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Research Project Report

《伊底帕斯王》的創生與創傷

Treating Pains in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*

學生姓名：許帛騰 撰

Undergraduate Student: Po-Teng Xu

指導教授：黃柏源 博士

Advisor: Bo-Yuan Huang, Ph. D

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## Abstract

Ancient Greek tragedian Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* has been, over the centuries, receiving much scholarly attention, particularly with Aristotle's *Poetics* in which he exemplifies the genre of tragedy by repeated references to the play itself, and with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis in which he coins the term "Oedipus Complex". However, sight and vision are recurrent theme in *Oedipus the King* in order to dramatize the vulnerability of an individual stricken by struggles between fate and free will, whereas seeing and knowing are often interrelated in the play.

This research project explores pains in different forms in *Oedipus the King*. It sets out to compare the power of foresight and hindsight between the prophet Tiresias and King Oedipus while the blindness of Tiresias and Oedipus' self-inflicted loss of vision serve as a sharp contrast. With Tiresias' daemonic blindness, auditory function is activated to replace the visual experience, creating a different dimension of senses for him. With Oedipus' wilful deprivation of sight, however, the arrogance in his own ability to see is quickly dismissed, and Oedipus' emotional vulnerability is immediately enabled when he hears the sobbing pains of his daughters. This project attempts to decipher the multifaceted feelings of traumas in both visual and auditory experiences represented in this ancient Greek tragedy.

**Key words:** *Oedipus the King*, pains, vision, auditory, perception

## 摘要

若干世紀以來，古希臘悲劇創作家索弗克里斯的《伊底帕斯王》備受學界矚目，尤其在亞里斯多德的《詩學》中，此作品內容的特點經常被提出來檢驗悲劇的定義；而佛洛伊德的精神分析更是藉由此劇，以「伊底帕斯情結」為戀母情結的別稱。此劇本中反覆以視覺與想像作為劇情的主題，並戲劇性地呈現出伊底帕斯的自我意志與自我命運掙扎且脆弱的一面，並展現「知覺」與「視覺」的相互關連性。

本計畫欲探討《伊底帕斯王》當中不同形式的傷痛。研究始於泰瑞西亞斯的先知先見與伊底帕斯的後知後覺。前者的目盲，相較於後者因自殘雙眼而失明，展現了兩者之間的視覺經驗落差。泰瑞西亞斯在超自然干預下的失明，使其聽覺的功能性取代了視覺經驗，他的感官因而展現了非視覺為主的立體經驗。而伊底帕斯自發性地剝奪自身的視力，則體現出他對自己能力的傲氣蕩然無存；而失去視覺後，聽見女兒的啜泣聲，則啟動了伊底帕斯的情感脆弱面。本計畫意在深度討論此悲劇中對於痛的視覺與聽覺感知的多重面向。

**關鍵詞：**伊底帕斯王、傷痛、視覺、聽覺、感知

## Treating Pains in *Oedipus the King*

### 《伊底帕斯王》的創生與創傷

#### Introduction

The brilliant vision on Sophoclean Oedipus's suffering is enlightened by "medical humanities." This concept is well defined in *Literature, Visual Culture and Medicine*—a cross-disciplinary exploration of medicine; this exploration aims at reconstructing a comprehensive figure of human from biopsychosocial perspective rather than degrading the natures of sufferers into an image of disease. Medical humanities effectively facilitate the bilateral conversation between the receptors of pains and the witnesses. (4) And in this effective communication, drama paves the way. Acting is based on the fact that can touch the shared memory among the participants in the play. It is occupied not only by the performers on stage but also by the audiences who read and watch the message from the play.

Drama delivers playwrights' message to audiences, yet it simultaneously highlights the audiences' biopsychosocial states by provoking their reactions; the pains in acts of the play pervert insidiously amid the public. The endemic of Thebes never bombards the community till the time to rule out the infectious source is up. And those stimulations never occur to people until the number of the diseased skyrockets. Those acts in the play can reflect the facts in the days then when the plague stroke Athens, as Kousoulis et al. argue (155), as well as Athenians' crisis that, as Josh Beer proposes, their political power will have been taken over some years later. (111) With the echoes between the illusion of the theatre and the reality from the days, as well as between the acts and the facts, these injuries in the shared experience unite both audiences and the performers into one

organism. Deborah Padfield and Joanna M. Zakrzewska's *Encountering Pains* also indicates, "Greek chorus in ancient drama enabled theatregoers to vicariously stand by the victims of violence or pain in the play." (34) By authentically witnessing the pains of others like Oedipus', the audiences get the second-degree traumatisation, meaning "the traumatisation of listener." (34) The feelings brought by pains through the traumatisation remind both sides—the performers and the audiences—of the potential injuries.

It, as a result, can be clearly understood that the distinction between performers of such characters and audiences is blurred, for both sides through the plots of the play get traumatised, which are defined as intersubjective events. (35) Whether on or off the stage, they share collective memory of pains, the agnostic stimulations. These reminders constrain them from re-examining and even adjusting their present biopsychosocial state, or deploy several immediate strategies to redeem themselves from the plight. (36) As Josh Beer observes, illusion in the play is realised through the vision of the audiences, and the participants in the performance of the play will solid the way they live, like crediting the real life to the gods. (111) This sort of narrative displays the time when the order and coherence in our life is drastically distorted, broken and contradicted. It also depicts how the heartless, capricious dominating power in the "kingdom of sickness" hovers around the inhabitants, as suggested in Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*. (2)

And the pains in Oedipus's kingdom of sickness cannot be portrayed more conspicuously with Sophocles' arrangement. Pains and the cures to pains, through Sophocles' narrative, intertwine delicately. Instead of direct exposition of Oedipus's identity, *Oedipus the King* commences on a dire, bleak, and mysterious endemic. All living beings are trapped in this dilemma. And that is seen and heard by Oedipus when his people mourn so painfully. At that time, vowing to unravel the mystery of the disease, Oedipus

vows to hunt the infectious agent. Hence, he turns to Apollo's oracle in Delphi for help, which later reveals that the infectious agent is in fact the murderer of the late King Laios who "poisons" the city-state, and the only way to subside or even terminate the epidemic is to banish the murderer from the land. What triggers Oedipus's action leaves a trace for audiences to witness how close the relationship is between a tyrant and his people under his reign.

Also, there are two critical arguments up to Greek theatre in effect that parallel with the clinical discovery from *Encountering Pains*: first of all, Aristotle believes that the actors in tragedy are distinguished by actions (praxis), not characterisation, as mentioned in *Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy*. (42) To further this idea, the speaking actors, instead of simply interpreting the characters (characterisation), must dedicate themselves to acting as the reciprocal beings too. They, on behalf of the audiences in Dionysia, react to the suffering, the experience of which can be too obscure to name. When the pains recur, they are also the target on stage to figure out the will of Nature. Secondly, Oedipus's preordained miserable ending and Thebes's infertility caused by the endemic leads him to the unseen and unknown.

Medical humanities inspire this research to reconstruct the perception of pains for both readers and audiences in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. Hence, the process of reconstruction firstly demands the lens on the relationship between the audiences and the classical performance of the play, as well as between the readers and the play. Also, the access to the vision of the pains is entitled via the narrative. The narrative covers not only the characters' emotional tension, but the communications and interactions among them. This arrangement of the story enhances effective conversation between the seers and the hearers as well as the characters. Eventually, the reconstruction of pains will illuminate the

contribution of *Oedipus the King* to the practise of medical humanities.

## **Goal**

Pains as a perception of agonies can hardly be demarcated with precision. This research, yet to explore the nature of the feelings in the story of Oedipus, finds a way to probe into the nature of pains with Anne Hunsaker Hawkins's anthropologic compilation of pathographical narrative. Hence, with the narrative of the story, the project aims to tease out the three life phases of a sufferer, Oedipus. As the chronological order of the narrative goes by, how Oedipus reacts to the unspeakable feeling also vary: first of all, he knows his foot as he shepherds Thebes. Second, his footing (as a monarch) is loosened at the moment that his other side of identity and atrocity is confirmed; and the biopsychosocial referent feature is on his swell-foot. Finally, his next steps become unknown when his intelligence is comprehensively awakened by both know-foot and swell-foot. Through sorting out the pains performed in the play, the project is to re-examine the relation between this work and audiences.

## **Part I: Know-Foot**

To digest the poetic description in accordance with the narrative, readers, who not only see and hear the performance of the narrative, perceive the pains through the device of metaphors. This sort of narrative is in the conversation with a biopsychosocial measurement of one's health. Close reading the metaphors, meanwhile, is almost synonymous with Susan Sontag's pursuit of the praxis of illness. It echoes Anne Hunsaker Hawkins's concerns about medical practise when she instructs the students in the medical field to read Oedipus tragedy. (x) Hawkins and Sontag alike dedicate themselves to the

multifaceted respects of one's sufferings.<sup>1</sup> Hawkins believes in metaphor devices that can validly represent a sufferer's voices and testimonies, for the identical urgency to perceive the complexity of suffering as it is. Hence, Hawkins' pathographical studies manifest (*patho-*, suffering experience; *-graphy*, record), in dynamic tone, the holistic perspective to see and to hear illnesses and pains. It encourages audience to closely read the details from the script as a pathography, including sufferers' metaphorical thinking like the participants in the performance of *Oedipus the King*.

This understanding vouchsafes the pathographical visions how Oedipus hurts, particularly to the extent of the metaphorical perspective. First, the collective pains of the city-state Thebes will be compared with Oedipus' personal pains. Second, Oedipus' own encounters of pains, when undergoing transformations, demands to be further addressed. Third, as the oracles and prophecy beyond one's ability transcend as a perceptible memory which turns visible and audible, the metaphorical power of oracles or prophecy should be examined in relation to regarding one's pains. And that is where the sound of pains emits—when Oedipus believes that he as a king knows his foot. And that is a moment when his belief is challenged by a disharmonious, conflicted endemic. His footing of knowledge and power is shaken, just like his swollen foot. And when encountering the facts is demanded, he self-consciously sees to the Apollo's messages and the mystery of the endemic. That betrays the sense of mess as well as the loss of the previous balance.

*Homeostasis*, harmonious interaction within every part of a biopsychosocial body, is an expected subsequence of a normative body. And pains as the messages remind the target

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<sup>1</sup> By sticking to the truth of one's illness, Sontag asks for the liberation of the suffering ones from being swamped in the polemically ideological imagination and lurid military metaphors induced to the common disease (*Illness as Metaphor* 3), but her criticism on metaphorical description about the suffering does cover few uses of metaphors.



of how one starts to lose the balance such as the injuries inflicted on a body. In this case, these stimulations indirectly assist this body in striking a new balance, in constructing a new normal. For the achievement, the power and the efficiency to wrestle over the crisis of a body are highly concerned, in both a personal and an interpersonal scale. That provokes competition amid the congregation in a theatre struggling with pains. And that competition also oscillates in the equivocality in the name of Oedipus. This name displays the double inner beings under the mask of Oedipus—*know-foot* and *swell-foot*. The first implication is about his present identity as a Theban King from other polis; the other is concerning his unknown identity as a native-born. Those implications juxtapose, for the “Oed” part of his name is ambiguous, as argued in *Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy*. (103)

Oedipus then must walk. He once by all means keeps himself away from committing immorality, but now his destination is to find the antidotes for the severe sickness of a community. Those purposes of walk indicate the longing for a broader scale of homeostasis in a community. The urgency from the pains keep him walking. He walks for the avoidance from Apollo’s oracles, for the escape from the miserable world too obscure to name, for triumph over the supernatural power, and for the autonomy to choose where he himself shall go. Despite myriad of purposes, he is still supposed to lift his own feet to achieve it. In this case, his story up to *know-foot* and *swell-foot* leads to the understanding of his pains. And with this understanding, those poetically descriptive scenes in the play become other media to the essence of his feeling in pains. In the following, this project, based on Sophocles’ construct of narrative, attempts to indicate where those perceptible pains start.

### **A Functioning Body**

Mourning for the diseased, clotted in darkness with hope dimmed, Thebans call upon the unknown power to deliver them from despair. Oedipus on his throne sees and hears that

bleak despair. He, with the trace of Apollo's oracles, considers himself to be another superior power to remove that despair from Thebes. This dejection is Thebes's pains, and the pains as these stimulations force Oedipus to walk. He must walk for the solutions of endemic. Still, this motivation needs to be clarified with three elements— the origin of his pains, the relation and connection between his journey and the Thebes's development, and the importance of know-foot concerning the truce of the endemic. With the gathering of these three elements, a primary clear picture of Oedipus falls into place.

In *Encountering Pain*, an interview between Maria Fitzgerald and Deborah Padfield introduces pains from a neurosurgical perspective. Biopsychosocially, pain is a phenomenal term to a reference of subjective emotion and reaction. And pain can trigger body's reflexes for survival. (17-28) So it is via the pains that Thebes realises its existence as a body. The stimulations from the past remind Thebes, this functioning body, of the urgent operation to deal with their present painful *status quo*. Every bit of haemorrhage sets them off to take the new action in order to maintain homeostasis; hence, the farther they journey, the further backward they shall see.

These pains construct Thebes in the size of a city-state, which sets off to strike the balance to stand in the seemingly heartless nature. Meanwhile, Oedipus's knowledge about feet leads to the mitigation of the collective pains while he himself explores the hidden intelligence of the past, which tells his true identity and atrocities. Moreover, memory such as the suffering experience, which shapes a body, keeps tracks of those collective pains. In the play, Thebes's pains originated from their silence of oblivion about the history of Laios' death, which is caused by Sphinx's arrival; Sphinx sang Apollo's dark oracles. (697) And she commands the citizens to rub off the past. However, this history now becomes the only way to treat the collective illness of a community. Each pain as an emotional stimulus of

Thebans presently assembles as a motivation to uncover its history. And there, painful memory connects each single city member into a peninsula, as *An Alchemy of Mind* points out: “our lives wouldn’t make any sense without personal memories pinned like butterflies against the velvet backdrop of social history.” (77) To be concise, the biopsychosocial subjectivity of Thebes is mingled with that of Oedipus into oneness.

Under the vision of a functioning body, it is reasonable how Apollo’s advice to engage the investigation of Laios’s murder parallels with the crux of Oedipus’ identity. Thebes can be treated as a functioning body whose dominators are by their neuron system, which imposes them on the pains, and which also constitutes their petition and engagement on the solution. And Oedipus is the one that triggers this functioning body to feel painful and to react. So put it shortly, Thebes can be regarded as a model for Oedipus’s biological body.<sup>2</sup> Day by day, there are increasing breathless flesh laid. His selfhood including the memory of a community’s history changes all the way as the time when under the endemic, his functioning body are the prey before the face of the unknown. This event continues to enhance his reaction to this painful memory. In this level of biopsychosocial interaction, the distinction among lives, pains and death becomes blurred. Death does not quench the pains but instead it deepens that collective misery. Death does not only mean the loss of self but a rebirth of selfhood; for Oedipus, his selfhood is painstakingly transforming and reforming. This mechanism works while his painful memory pins into a peninsula of Theban history, which includes the declination of each single soul in Thebes. This transformation of selfhood<sup>3</sup> is to manage to regenerate the being of Thebes and himself.

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<sup>2</sup> We are social beings, even on the cellular level where active neurons cement their mutual bonds, forming “little cliques, or social clubs, within the brain,” as the neurosurgeon Frank Vertosick puts it. (*The Alchemy of Mind* 90)

<sup>3</sup> The details regarding the variation throughout this functioning body will be later extended in the section of

Via this functioning body of Thebes, Oedipus in his prime consolidates his monarchical footing, as he knows feet in the Hellenic society. Serving as a king, to shepherd Thebes to walking forward to the unknown, he tells the way to go incomprehensively; by no means does he know that his swollen feet—which remains his original identity—waits for the exposition. And the chronic pains in Thebes’s memory at the same time leads him to explore the cause to his swollen feet. Hence, in *Oedipus the King*, the readers not only see and hear the singularity of individual suffering, but the collective pains motivating a body to move forward with their pathography.

### **Chronic Pains, When a Body Recalls Its Past.**

The investigation commences after the chorus’s prayers to gods finish. Yet, it is inevitable that Oedipus’s shortcoming imposes more and more pressure on him—his social identity. He labels himself as a foreigner growing up in Korinth, who now lords the children of Cadmus in Thebes. Before his prime in monarchy, his infancy, the period to strive desperately for survival, causes his urgency to strike the balance in a society.<sup>4</sup> That is the reason why he always keeps an eye on foot. In other words, obtaining the understanding concerning how people walk, he establishes the social bond with others. His altruism based on the social codes manifests his quality to be a leader. And when his knowledge of feet in his time at Korinth reaches to sophisticated interaction with others, he knows how to practise social codes in Thebes. For instance, how people walk through their life, which time they stand still, to what extent they let their right foot in the front, left on the back as they confront the challenge before their faces, where they are running from, or

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“acute pain”.

<sup>4</sup> Being born with a large, immature brain was advantageous, but it also left us with an urgent need for others, a social bond so compelling that we suffer tragically when it’s broken and panic if it’s threatened. (*The Alchemy of Mind* 140)

what they are chasing for. And even his marriage with Jokasta can be considered to be the purpose to inherit the throne legitimately. So if his socially-recognised figure gets challenged by any evidence of the immorality, his exposed weakness will threaten his social bond with Thebes, loose his monarchical footing and even ruin his self. That is the reason why he must claim his purity and simple alibi to the past events of Laios' death.

The urgency to establish the social bond with others comes from not only his potential to grow as a king but his disability—swell-foot. Inflicted swell-foot enhances his possibilities to note others' feet. Also, his concern vis-à-vis the social bond with Thebes connects with three conditions: first, as this project suggests from a psychosocial perspective, his value, which is rooted from the construct of a Hellenic society, prevents him from the contradiction against the social codes. Second, he identifies himself as a foreigner, by contrast with the native-born citizens. And the third condition, the scar is biologically linked to his swell-foot; if exposed to the air, the cut and the reason of that cut will traumatise more painfully the participants in the performance of this story. However, swell-foot and the curse brought by Laios's death alike are the chronic pains. These pains demand long-term care like perceiving, and tracking the change of a body and close observation of its causes. As a result, the dire declination of Theban souls, as the seers and hearers shall perceive, motivates people to trace back the murders or the causes to Laios's death, which accompanies Oedipus's swell-foot.

Accordingly, his oath to root out the infectious source and his pity toward the late king, Laios, centre around his deficiency—he is blind to the truth. This deficiency enhances the situational irony while he declares that he will fight for Laios as for his own father and he shares the seed of theirs with the identical woman, Jokasta. His ignorance about immediate investigation of Theban history before the outburst of endemic testifies

how Thebans, who seem in the symptom of oblivion, remain avoiding the past, even though the pains from endemic provokes their reflexes for survival. However, as a functioning body is supposed to take the praxis for a new balance, Oedipus, stimulated by the externalised pains, which are considered the outburst of endemic, must walk. And the realisation of praxis, which relies on the awareness and power of a body redefines the process of forgetting as a preparation for new action, rather than that the collective memory declines.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of forgetting the past, this body recalls it through their pains on endemic. Oedipus, who takes another step, is exposed to his ignorance of the past regarding Laios's death and his swell-foot alike, for his swell-foot carries his chronic pains. These pains are engraved within the unknown side of his self—he is a native born of Thebes. At this point, what he sees does not appear equal to what he knows. And that mysterious part foreshadows itself through the argument between Oedipus and Tiresias on three points: first, does sight, the symbol of human reasons and sensitive awareness as well as the aggressive power to probe into the reality, exclusively occupy the sheer vision of the truth? Secondly, does disability mean the hindrance of social development? Or is it a body distinct from normative one but inseparable to the healthy improvement of a community? Last but not least, does brilliant discovery on the truth end in the positive progression? These questions are made more prominent by the quarrel between Oedipus and Tiresias, who in the dialogue of play have two different psychosomatic states.

Chronic pains, contrasting acute pains, serve as a far insidious reminder to inform a body of a long, constantly forgetting history that must be teased out, for the agility and

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<sup>5</sup> Forgetting isn't the absence of remembering; it's memory's ally, a device that allows the brain to stay agile and engaged. (*An alchemy of Mind* 89)

engagement on the recovery. A functioning body for the homeostasis is anticipated to remove itself from a long-term impact. And these pains transform into the motivation to detect Laios's death, when Oedipus's sight cannot reach to the origin of that mystery. And it is the first time he should acquiesce futility of his acute sight, and hear the oracles from Apollo. Eventually, for the investigation, Oedipus requests Tiresias, the blind prophet, who fathoms Apollo's will to meet with him.

## **Part II: Swell-foot**

Certainly tantamount to "man" as the accurate answer to Sphinx's riddle, Oedipus's self-conscious performance on seeking the answer to end the endemic sounds like the infancy of a man, a toddler. His words pour out from the unsteady spirit in an aspect of sudden attitude change from respect to rage to mockery—"for god's sake, if you know something/ don't turn your back on us, we're on our knees." (676) Swell-foot, mobility impairment recurs to him when the pins penetrated through his feet. As an infant's praxis is ridden by emotions, Oedipus's unreasonable outburst of emotional reactions toward Tiresias's unwillingness to speak out the truth testifies how Thebes in what circumstance go through the mysterious endemic. Their urgent prayers toward gods also emphasise the limitedness on their mobility and their dull sight when Thebans come to a dilemma, which harbours frail hope.

Plague, as Thebes in the most breathless menace, pumps the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling toward this sublime natural murder. They believe that problem can be conquered by the pure wisdom, which is ultimately the power of reason; Athena is the embodied image. (*Mythology* 30) In addition, pains, which to some degree belong to the singularity of individuality, distinguish this functioning body within a line, curved with the emotion of awe and hatred. This line emphasises the same painful memory as a solid social

bond; therefore, Artemis, whose throne is in the heart of Thebes, and Bakkhos, the native-born demi-god serve as the symbols of their identity. And by contrast with Artemis and Bakkhos, Ares is rejected and expelled from the singularity of this functioning body. He is hated, for his existence is considered as a carrier of the catastrophe. As for Apollo, they take this most masculine figure as a media to probe into the meaning of the endemic and into the essence to the construct of Hellenic civilisation, which is said as an extension of Zeus. (671-3) Hence, their prayers is a consequential record in a metaphorical pathography. Pains in these prayers show themselves as the voice from the mortal. And Thebans without the intelligence of the origin of the pains pray for the wisdom to interact with the unknown situation. The understanding of the pains is also beyond the knowledge of the mortal. That voice comes from a sorrow a community cries out; and that voice also comes from the pins implanting through a body on its knees, which makes the body walk on four limbs like an infant. This pathography provides several fragmented images of pains, which need seers and hearers to combine them into a complete picture. In this picture, they find them as dull-sighted, so they walk for the survival unstably and self-consciously. Voices like the oracles from Apollo, and mourning from Thebes take place; meanwhile, they catch the body's attention to alleviate or even solve the pains, in case that the health of this functioning body worsens. Their voices as a metaphorical pathography links with the image of swell-foot. Swell-foot originally is Oedipus's stigmatised mark, for he is a contradiction against the development of Thebes. It is also a scar, which represents Oedipus's paralysis for his survival in a duration of his infancy. And the image of swell-foot embodies among Thebans, who without any choice must surrender to the sky-rocketing loss of souls at the same time. More and more surges of bloods inundate in their history seemingly coerces Thebans to live on their knees as their infancy again. This sense of powerlessness, notwithstanding is interrupted with the rendezvous between



Tiresias and Oedipus. When they come into the same stage, the truth starts to crack its light with the pathography progressing.

### **Sight and Insight**

Oedipus's ambition clearly performs itself on the stage. That is to entitle the functioning body to stand in its prime as before again. Yet, little does he know that, to establish a new normal, this functioning body needs insight to a brand-new world. In lieu of repeating the grace and glory in the past, this body must accept the uncertainty toward the future. In the construct of a new normal, ability and disability are not opposite dichotomous traits in a functioning body; both of them are the essence under the light on the stage of the world. However, when Oedipus's ambition collides with Tiresias's silence toward the truth, prejudice blocks the body from effectively reaching homeostasis. Meanwhile, Sophocles' arrangement of their argument reveals his idea of healthy-mindedness<sup>6</sup> regarding a social development, and an effective, alternative pharmaceutical treatment toward a traumatised body. This medical practise is not about the concise skills, as this project supposes, but the attitude and conception toward the realisation and praxis of homeostasis; that is the new normal.

Tiresias's intelligence on "oracle" comes from the indication of Apollo in Delphi. He instructs people to follow the truth, at least the truth he believes, when through the journey of life they walk. Under the light, the people's king steers the whole city-state into the future, while a speaking rock from Delphi sees them through the tangible way. As for Oedipus, whose knowledge on "man" originates from his experience in feet, he is said as

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<sup>6</sup> As one might expect, there is a mythic component in the allure of many kinds of alternative medical therapies—a constellation of attitudes and beliefs that might be called healthy-mindedness. (*Reconstructing Illness* 127)

the competitor, who bests at contesting gods. Notwithstanding, capricious dire health condition forces him to admit his blindness at the root of it. He cannot use the power of the sight to probe into the truth. Hence, he must be in all ears on others' voices. He performs his thirst for the knowledge dropped from a blind. This dilemma seems to even diminish his self-esteem, humiliate himself, for the power of sight steps down his original gracious masculine status within a functioning body. In other words, he is being emasculated. His arrogance, in this case, is provoked, and his ignorance on his swell-foot is exposed, when he mocks Tiresias as featuring blind eyes, ears, and brain. (677)

He would rather believe his imagination on the false accusation of Tiresias when Oedipus's power of sight can hardly fathom the purpose of Tiresias's sound of silence, which leaves the subtle testimony of truth's being. And as soon as Oedipus constantly lets his pride and prejudice rampage, Tiresias breaks his silence. The truth, however, tortures Oedipus more in the wake of Tiresias's supposition regarding hideous nakedness of Oedipus's transgression. Oedipus pains and threats camouflage as his rage after the truth spread amid the atmosphere from the palace. And the truth at that time does not enlighten Oedipus's first aid to rescue this city-state and himself. Instead, the truth breaks his social bond with Tiresias and Creon, as he takes them a pair of accomplices, who orchestrate to dethrone him. Oedipus's reaction, his despair, his rage, and his sense of detachment toward the truth is a self-mechanism process to protect the completeness of the functioning body. This completeness of a functioning body includes social recognition regarding each community member's identity, and a rejection against external intervention on the communication of one's singular individuality. However, his self-defence does not prevent the truth from concisely speaking out itself and brutally splitting out the traumas from the body.

The urge of protection originates from the reliance on the power of sight, since the swell-foot is a clear image on his sight but an obscure symbol on his mind. To be further, his purpose of appalling charge and arrogance is to find everything reasonable and logical. Yet, the dependence on pure reasons and logic makes the whole body bog into the ignorance about the next step to save them from the miserable world. To be brief concluded, what makes them unescapable from the dilemma is their paranoia toward the reasons and logic while they believe that Athena is the first to ask for help. As for Oedipus, his ignorance is hidden from him by the full knowledge of the social codes, which is know-foot. Therefore, the insight on the animated body and the sight on the vivo shall be adjusted into even. Messages, or stimulations from both sight and insight toward a functioning body must be valued if a new normal validates and realises.

Swell-foot activates Oedipus's sight on answering Sphinx's riddles; that is, his chronic pains cultivate the knowledge of feet (know-foot), which consolidates his political talents. Tiresias's insight takes the place of the eyes to fathom the voice of the truth, his reputation and ability compel Oedipus to the sequel of the essential equal importance. Both of them do their crucial parts in the presence of the public. For one issue or one challenge, Oedipus and Tiresias, certainly like different organs in a body, do their own functions. Yet, Oedipus's then paranoia brought by fanatic pursuit of the truth makes this functioning body lose its balance in the surge of the endemic. His merit on know-foot enhances his arrogance during the conversation in vivo of Thebes as well as ignorance about his inflammation on swell-foot in vivo of his. His self-importance on power of sight explains the risk at sole dependence on charismatic authoritarian judgement, polemic belief, elites' assumption and oligarchical management for the health of a society. And under a microscope of the conflict, this provokes a healthy-mindedness of a body. To maintain the homeostasis, besides the assistance of the authority or the authorities, people should listen

to the message circulated among every part of a body, rather than miss in any part of his sense and any vital role in a pharmaceutical practise. However, without the failed negotiation between them, Sophocles' blueprint to cease the biopsychosocial pains cannot be released out. Their conflict sheds a light on the point of Thebes's pathography, and eventually indicates what, verily, is against the body.

### **Antibody and Anti-Body**

“Anti” as a prefix of a word clearly manifests its praxis on being against the signified target. Antibody is the determinant to secure its lord's soma from the attack and any potential destructive factors. As for anti-body, it becomes a subject to threaten the health of what anti-body is entitled to escort in the lord's journey of life. These two subjects provoke its sense of otherness on the issue of Oedipus's swell-feet. Like yin and yang, one stands on the opposite side to the power of the other in the game of survival. And during this game of survival, the emotional reactions might be boosted, when the damage turns into a perceivable messages circulating within the target soma:

When we damage a part of our body or tissue in some way, for example by spraining an ankle, nociceptors send a pain message to the brain to ensure that we do not cause further damage to the injured part of our body. For example, we may now hop! The endogenous local chemicals that are released into the damaged area sensitise the nerve endings so that any stimulus becomes more painful. For example, placing weight on the injured ankle would now hurt a lot. The chemicals also act on local blood vessels to cause swelling. Although it may not seem like it at the time, this is an important part of our eventual recovery as it allows immune cells to leak out of the plasma and prevent infection. (*Encountering Pain* 359)

Inflammation on the feet, as *Encountering Pain* suggests, is for the immune system wiping out the infectious source in the progress of recovery. During the process, a body receives more stimulations to remind the autonomic nervous system of next commandment toward

other psychosomatic parts to react in their ways. The same models of circulation happen to the conversation in a community such as Thebes. Oedipus, as a leader of the functioning body, features swell-foot. He is the person guiding Thebans into a new normal. In the play, his sympathy is connected with the pains which people cry out. Hence, he prompts the antibody within this functioning body to isolate the “anti-body”. And he is even to remove out the anti-body for the altruism purpose, if their damage on the body is found as endosomatic.

His judgment on the execution depends on the identity of the groups, which reveals the perspective of an aggressive revolutionary. This dichotomous idea segregates a body from the other in a community. One is the body with antibody’s assistance, and the other is an anti-body mechanism against the body. These two bodies must be in a constant battle. Their truce is made only when winner takes all. As for the loser, the access to the equal social status will be exploited. And this social engagement parallels with a psychosomatic operation when a body encounters the pains with inflammation. As Oedipus’s monarchical footing trembles with the unavailability to fumble the clues for the truth, this social engagement is brutalised. It is a transformation to a functioning body from the setback at stake at unlocking the mystery of endemic to an indiscrimination attack like accusing Tiresias and Creon of committing treason.

The myth of battle is firstly shown at the time when Oedipus unravels with Sphinx, he believes his know-foot will break through the dilemma of Thebes’s and his. He is anticipated to be a father who dispenses the life within the functioning body, as well as to be a king who maintains the order and homeostasis in the city-state. In other words, the community under his reign is supposed to be regenerated, vitalised, and animated day by day. Yet, the perfect blueprint is leaves a huge stain on it, and his effort on governmental

effectiveness somehow manifests his dysfunction in the end. Under the surface of Oedipus, he turns out to be the counterpart of Sphinx as an anti-body, who is a beast consuming Theban souls massively, and a ragtag poison far beneath the lowest class in a social hierarchy, who must be exiled.

This military metaphor also befalls on the picture that he champions Laios. Oedipus by chance confronts his biological father in the period of his pilgrimage. That is a voyage to chase his innocence and escape far from the crime which does not realise yet. His footing when upon the ignorance up to swell-foot, is bobbing up and down. He supposes that the progress of homeostasis is required by the fighting spirit, rather than the praxis with the encountering problems. Both in rages extend their power to fight with one another severely. And eventually, Oedipus believes that he is the survivor and winner in this wheel of fortune and fantasy. The idea that illness is a battle enhances his dignity, self-esteem, and active participation in the therapy, he takes his biological father as a foreigner to overwhelm (*Reconstructing Illness* 66); he, notwithstanding, is victimised in the myth of battle as his ignorance about his original lineage is exposed, and his arrogance humiliates his self eventually. His knowledge and his ignorance, when showing themselves at the same time, constitute a clear picture of his issue of serious bias. From the pathways in Oedipus's mind, hardly is the discovery covered that the same rationale occurs as his self-mechanism against the reliability of Tiresias's prophecy. Although he believes himself as a qualified solution for the social depression, altruism still tends Oedipus's bias that a blind prophet is supposed to speak out the truth. This bias, though, when challenged by Tiresias's silence, bombards within a functioning body. As the tragedy continues, the provocation stirs up Tiresias to expose the antibody in act is anti-body.

So it is understandable that when encountering the chronic pains, Oedipus places

himself as a saviour to match with the supernatural will rather than identify himself as a victim. And he is an actual prosecutor in the disguise of a man who has the supremacy in challenging gods. He who knows feet also considers the power beyond him as his acquaintance. Until his footing ends in being destroyed like the wreckage in the sea, chorus mourns for him, who once in an aggressive revolutionary spirit has located himself in the position of a struggling winner. That is enormously ironic with a group of bards embracing the thickest nostalgia, and they praise for the greatness and prosperity of one's civilised organism— man or humanity is the prime to rescue people from the mysterious catastrophe. This contrast eventually dismisses the seemingly perfect military metaphorical illusion in the illusion of the play. However glorious the knowledge of humanity radiates before, this knowledge always solely occupies a small piece of a mundane society. Hence, as the tragedy continues, instead of more debates and arguments launched by the king, the pristine reactions of a man with other parts of cosmos is shown— fury and fear. In reality, what hides behind his battle spirit, his rage, and his fanatic pursuit of the brilliant truth is his phobias, his forgotten skeleton from the past, which coerces this functioning body to escape from the vision constructed by oracles—patricide and incest will contaminate in his life. In this plot under several complex skirmishes, Oedipus is sailing soon into the hurricane of two emotional fiercest wars. One is his fury, the aggressive energy to attempt to earn back his glory. The other is his fear, which is an instinctual power counteracting against the preordained crisis. Hence, the generation of this hurricane hits him by the most painful act and fact. That drops both of his antibody and anti-body into the pit of misery.

### **Acute Pains**

In Oedipus and Jokasta's rendezvous, the premier display of Oedipus's fear in the dialogue clearly takes place. Jokasta as a people's queen in the functioning body of the

city-state, and as a wife of Oedipus, attempts to redeem a biopsychosocial status quo from the destructive rage, which fractures Oedipus's social bond with others. She attempts to amend the rapport when Oedipus inhibits himself from trusting the self-vindications of Creon and Tiresias. She, notwithstanding, becomes an ignorant prosecutor stirring up Oedipus's deepest dread. Her praxis with the intention to mitigate the rage once and for all profoundly terrorises Oedipus, which cannot be reversed. That fright swims up to the surface of consciousness, when Oedipus's rage is effectively calmed with Jokasta's appearance.

And when the rage recesses and the distraught advances in the tug of war, what jeopardises this functioning body is now on the spotlight. The target, which Oedipus reacts to, in wrath and in terror verily is the subject to imperial Oedipus so harshly. This hurricane swirling around the agony and the scruple is the consolidated testimony to reaffirm the whereabouts of the contagion in the journey of life of one functioning body. Presently, Oedipus is compelled to be persuaded that he is the source of infection before his case is confirmed by the messenger and Korinthian shepherd. The neuro-system of this functioning body keeps alarmed by the nag of Oedipus's reactions. As the time when he knows his origin of swell-foot, his atrocity to murder Laios, which does not bother him before the endemic, degrades his old selfhood into nothingness. That is the time when the know-foot collides with swell-foot. That is also the time acute pains strike him to the extremity. What brings those strict unusual pains to his vision is nothing but from the realisation of the oracle that he is the accursed native-born man, who is the terminator of the previous homeostasis hold by the late king, Laios. These acute pains feel more unattainable than what external injury imposes on the sensation, for this is the hurt which deteriorates from inside of the functioning body. Besides, these pains sometimes reside; still sometimes the stimulations feel far more conspicuously notorious than any language



expression to reach. Those feelings are falling and rising like ebbs and tides. And Sophocles with the most effort to use the words poetically illustrates the transit from the chronic pains to the acute ones. And the descriptive pathway of these pains are quiet tantamount to the theory of neuropathic pain:

The nature of the pain that arises from a nerve injury is unlike an everyday pain. Neuropathic pain can be spontaneous, meaning present in the absence of a peripheral stimulus, or it can be triggered by a stimulus. Spontaneous pain is notoriously difficult to manage and can be either constant or intermittent (episodic). Most patients with neuropathic pain describe having both a constant burning pain and an intermittent shooting or electric shock-like pain. For neuropathic pain, patient's pain triggered by stimuli is often allodynic. That is, peripheral stimuli which do not usually cause pain (cooling, gentle touch, movement or pressure), now evoke pain. In other situations, stimuli that are normally painful are now perceived to be even more painful, and this is known as hyperalgesia. People with neuropathy also often report abnormal sensations like crawling, numbness, itching and tingling. (*Encountering Pain* 361)

The neuropathic pains realise on the functioning body not only in metaphors but also in its romanticised reality. Oedipus's nature of acute pains embodies as the viewable praxis of a man. Those actions extend themselves in two points: the first point is regarded in the realisation of the prophecy that he will commit patricide and incest. That vicious power of the natural phenomenon does not manifest its notorious hands on the functioning body in most of Oedipus's prime years till their plague descends. That dark truth with its fulfilment stirs up the severity of one's emotions. And the severity is externalised after the body feels it. To perceive the power of the curse, Oedipus, who encounters with the acute pains, cannot tolerate more external stimulations. Hence, those actions, on the second point,

display themselves on how he interacts with the stimulations. He locks himself in a private room to segregate his selfhood in the most grief from the air of outside. Tiresias's prophecy, Jokasta's failed assistance and her subsequent suicide, as well as the messenger's and shepherd's testimony ultimately arise the atmosphere on the fray, which shrouds Oedipus. He eventually recognises himself as the vulnerable part of the functioning body, which cannot bear more stimulations. No matter how trivial the next stimulation is, the body in its extremity hides its performance of collapses from otherness. That is a functioning body in its *hyperalgesia*.

In addition to seeing the transit from chronic pains to acute pains, the reactions of *hyperalgesia* which can be heard results from the end of the acute pains. The pains scream when Apollo's oracles explicate itself in the result of Thebes's crisis. And when his confession that his life screams in pain proves that Oedipus's understanding reaches the screaming (700), the memory of *hyperalgesia* brought by the curse of Kadmos comes up with this functioning body in its neuropath. This functioning body also hears their sense of detachment. The reasons of that detachment include Oedipus's myth that he has unfamiliarity with Laios's death, as well as Thebes's misunderstanding that their tyrannous has the quality of the mediator to negotiate and even challenge against all the biopsychosocial powers. With all senses of the vivo considered, the sound of the truth deprives the functioning body off its initial balance. And the innate endemic, which oscillates with the sound of the truth puts the whole body in an ostensible "abnormal sensations." They are in numbness toward the death of their late king. They are crawling like their infancy of civilisation. Eventually, they in the climax of the acute pains find the truth as a brutally and massively destructive treat on the sickness of a community. That is where the curse realised, and where the curse terminates, or still continues.

From another perspective, the truth is insidious in their oblivion of the past, which gets Oedipus compactible in the development of Thebes. That oblivion about the past, maintains the agility of a body, assists in acting and reacting to the challenge in Oedipus's prime years. For the oblivion occurs, Oedipus is capable of growing with the development of a community before the endemic. Yet meanwhile forgetting is one more time proved as the booster for the mnemonic progress and reactions. Now as soon as the forgetting past alarms the body, what lays at Oedipus's and Thebes's feet becomes the barbaric transgression—his patricide and incest, which is banished based on Hellenic doctrine. And what lays at the feet is nothing but the improbable emotions submerging the body, including their self-doubt on their identity, which is unable to locate, and their blind on the future, which loses its navigation. Hence, with the collision between Oedipus's know-foot and swell-foot, he after short-term recovery from the deepest sorrow on-spot demands the determination to deal with the severity of that truth. That is to let Apollo, the embodiment of truth, advance himself into his biopsychosocial body—Jokasta's brooch penetrates into his eyes. The outcome sees the cracks in everything, and these cracks are where the light gets in. He is emasculated eventually by the most masculine Hellenic figure.

Oedipus's masculine gracious face is laced with the shameful past, which is the inflicted with the nature of the pains. So blindfold as he accesses to the brand-new selfhood. He becomes as a feminised blind person who is deprived off the monarchical footing. However, this person sails to the new harbour to communicate with the cosmos. That harbour is his audibility—hearing and listening. This audibility enhances his intelligence on the adaption of his wreckage, his social identity, and his disability. As Diane Ackerman suggests, “when traumas don't get stored as memory they can stay alive in a brutal present of pure sensation. But as memory, they can enrich one's identity, since memory provides a renewable sense of self.” (*An Alchemy of Mind* 110) He in the end as a recognised

father-cum-brother spontaneously reveals his loving-care toward Antigone's and Ismene's sobbing. He has the insight on the plots of his story. He gains the more dynamic sensation on the emotions circulating in his journey of life. The new sense of self transvalues his approach to the truth. He previously has the pride and prejudice on supremacy in logic and reasons; he is now enlightened to extend his diverse and complex emotions to step into the new normal and even perceive more paranormal panorama of the truth. He previously owns advantage of aggressive sensation as sight and has the professionalism in performance of political rage; his audibility is now activated to comprehend the unknown as and spontaneously expresses the individual urgencies. Oedipus, whose energy in mobility through the acute pains is drained, now needs additional support to walk. That is the digression of his dichotomous ideology. He re-values his weakness, and sees his blind and swell-foot inseparable with the development of a man, a humanity. He under the sunlight still walks. It is Oedipus that presents himself as a non-normative person wearing a new mask on the stage.<sup>7</sup>

Oedipus through the acute pains with the new mask performs the transformation, and represents his functioning body as an exorcism like a priest's engagement (*Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy* 41), or reciprocal beings mentioned by the introduction of this report. In Dionysia gathering, ritual madness grants him with courage to escape from the old-self, and to walk into the unknown. (*Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy* 32) He expunges the accursed factors from the functioning body and

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<sup>7</sup> In *Oedipus Rex*, after Oedipus blinds himself, his mask is changed to a blind one and probably his costume is changed as well. We are told by the messenger who reports his blinding that Oedipus is covered in blood that streamed down him. He is both pitiable and wretched to see. Oedipus is no longer the great king, saviour of his people, but an accursed wreck of a man who has been the destroyer of his people. (*Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy* 43)

from the theatre. This exorcism also becomes as a therapy to the readers, who are in the second traumatised as the introduction of this report provides. (*Oedipus as an Exorcism* 255) Otherwise, at least, the memory of one's strict pains are diluted when Oedipus in the capricious heartless nature still has an unpredictable length and events of a journey to walk. That is synonymous with Diane Ackerman's indication—"if rude, shameful, or brutal memories can't be expunged, they can at least be deluted... By definition *life* is a fickle noun, an event to progress." (*An Alchemy of Mind* 78)

Oedipus is reborn via natural power as another Tiresias, and he is released from the trap of vision's limitation. In lieu of being an active investigator, he is emasculated as a passive receiver who is in want of light. And he is a person with insight. (*Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy* 112) He now has the understanding beneath the truth: when he tells chorus that Apollo is the god to be credited as this god removes the consummate evil from his life. (701) And he is acquainted with humanity while he says that the action to put out the eyes is done by his hands, instead of being caged in the pre-ordained supernatural operation. The acute pains get mitigated by the cracks on his vision. Furthermore, he and the functioning body step into the new normal, which is even the unknown. Continually with the brilliant insight, he walks.

### **Part III: Into the Unknown**

In the most of the metaphorical pathography, *Oedipus the King*, seeing does not mean comprehension. He knows feet when Oedipus observes people's feet. He is constructed as an altruism head of the effective monarchical administration system. Yet, such knowledge—which enhances the arrogance—does not entitle him to know the truth in his previous normal. He, who is cursed by nature, genetically inherits potential destructive power. He, who is well-nurtured by regarding others' feet, is legitimately being the next

incumbent of Sphinx to lord Thebes, which serves as the severe challenge against humanity. Nature and nurture are relatively the two sides of the making of Oedipus. In both of them, myth is formed for the amendment with the lack of knowledge concerning the praxis. That myth in this report includes the dichotomous speculation—antibody and anti-body. Originally, antibody and anti-body are the two sides of Oedipus.

He, notwithstanding, at last gains the insight, when he commences on striking the new balance between his sophisticated calculation and the unpredictability of the future. This unpredictability is based on the cracks of the vision. And that is a man on third feet, who is always in want of additional support, and who walks into the unknown future. As for the functioning body, their past dependence on pure reasons and logic is gone. Their future is also void, for their civilisation is located into mystery, while Oedipus steps down from the throne. Ismene's and Antigone's self-identities are also the parts of the mythical pathography. These biopsychosocially rampage among the personal values and interpersonal communications. The new normal is waiting to be reconstructed. Everything is in the dark.

Amid the crack and the darkness through the vision, Sophocles proposes that “insight” will stabilise the progress with sight. The initial access to the insight is not through the close speculations or eloquent speech to probe into the target, but through the simple comprehensive adaption of all possibilities. When in the end Chorus lets readers witness Oedipus's misery and wreckage, they also sing out the suggestion that humanity has its limitations and outlines. Hence, to maintain the new homeostasis, people are supposed to embrace everything that can occur to everywhere all at once; this gives the understanding that they will not take themselves as a know-it-all or gods' friends.

Chorus's conclusion seemingly echoes with the blind prophet Tiresias's proposal that

things may go easier if the silence of the truth maintains. And in the journey of the unknown, there always keeps the third option between two ends of the directions, which is comprehended by the balance between sight and insight. That is a man on three feet, which does not necessarily pin him in such a state permanently; it is entirely up to him to make the decision of using the additional support or not. To progress in the unknown, the unpredictability besides to fight or flight always vouchsafes the third possibility to human, as Jokasta's subsequent suicide distinct itself from staying or leaving from the stage.

The third option is settled in Oedipus three-folk roads: in addition to the ends of Korinth and Thebes, there is another place to achieve. The third possibility is also shown on Oedipus's fight against Laius. As he alleges himself as a struggling winner in that survival game, his sight does not reach to that third possibility. That possibility is the meaninglessness brought by the game. Whichever the presumed destination is, he in the journey of his life, still must walk. He can also turn blind eyes on Laius, and use his insight to cross over the situation of fight or flight. To be further, he not only walks into the unknown but also into Sphinx's riddle regarding "man" as the answer. Meanwhile, the unknown also implies that such an answer as man is also the riddle. And "pains," the abnormal complex phenomenal feelings, the stimulations receipt by the living things, motivate human to walk. When human walks in pains, humanity is found as just an element of man's journey of life. And those pains amid the path animate people. In the end, the life of a man has its face of humanity. Yet, its silhouette of the essence is more than the humanity, at which sight, logy and reasons can achieve. And the life of a man looks certainly like the body of Sphinx, whose existence is perceived with the participation of insight.

**Sphinx—Cycles of Humanity to reach the Next Homeostasis**

If the truth dominates the world, Sphinx will be, once in whether its absence or its presence, the symbolic of the dark truth haunting Thebes. If Apollo, the symbol of healing, truth, and enlightenment, leads humanity to the next generation, Oedipus in the play relatively represents as human to walk in the truth, which remains its improbity though the sight of human. The whereabouts of Sphinx will also stay in the rumours and legends, instead of being validated. As Oedipus believes himself as the struggling winner eventually, he takes man as the answer to unravel Sphinx. Thebans claim that he triumphs over Sphinx. And Sphinx's riddle is sensibly, reasonably, charismatically, legitimately replaced with Oedipus's pride and prejudice. However, Sphinx's praxis just stays on the dialogue in the play, rather than shows itself in the sight of readers. This "invisibility" of that living being remains a question to the readers— where is it now? Yet, when Oedipus is hailed as the counterpart of Sphinx, the question is not the gap, which is amended by readers' imagination, but the mark as Diane Ackerman's opinion: "Sophocles was right: 'Nothing vast enters the life of mortals without a curse.' The more we've outsmarted the environment by changing our way of doing things— designing antibiotics, for instance, or building houses with chimneys- the more we've created new problems (resistant bugs, pollutants) that must be solved." (141) Hence, if "man" is the answer to defeat Sphinx, Sphinx's riddles will also swallow "man" up in another invisible riddle. In other words, man is not only an answer but also the riddle. Oedipus who seizes the man as the answer, is also dominated by the mystery of "man" as a riddle. He cannot only be the winner to find the solution, but be the loser to lead the functioning body into other more egregious problems. He unravels with Sphinx, and Sphinx becomes a counterpart of his. Moore reconsiders the absence of Sphinx for several reasons. Especially from psychological perspective, Sphinx and Oedipus should be treated as twin-born, or a mirror image to one another ("The Beauty of the Beast" 2). Sphinx should be seen as the unknown self of



Oedipus, and the distinction between these two is blurred, for Sphinx who knows the answer of the riddle can claim Oedipus's right (7); in other words, as a daughter of Ortho and Chimera, Theban Sphinx through the illusion realises that the past always remains, and the lack of power to practise communitarianism in the presence of all (*Sophocles and the Tragedy of Athenian Democracy* 6). Therefore, it is futile to endeavour to scrub off the memory of the past for the grasp of one's fair-cum-foul situation, or absurdity.

And as Sphinx's invisible participation has its comprehensive crux toward the sheer metaphorical pathography, her somatic image will signify the shared traits with Oedipus: carnivorous beast torso indicates the severity to cause a city-state to haemorrhage. Sphinx's tax on people's life is equal to Oedipus's impulse on killing Laios and his impact of the plague on Thebes. This symbol of aggressiveness is also practised in Oedipus's political wrath and arbitrary actions against Tiresias and Laios. He accuses them of treason, which must put them into corporal sentence. And what lays upon the torso is the wings of Sphinx. And the wings can signify three conditions within the functioning body— romantic divinisation of the reign, the exclusiveness of their figure, and how abruptly they fall from remarkability of the throne to the invisibility of the barbaric identity. Oedipus as a human being is highly anticipated to perform his outstanding political power to be a saviour of Thebes. And temporary segregation between Thebes and other foreigners (*xenos*) is done by both. Sphinx with the riddles keeps the souls from foreign polis away from Thebes. Among the political systems, Oedipus, the tyrant who causes sickness of the functioning body boosts the sense of otherness for the brutal removal of internal menace within the functioning body. And when their praxis ends in the fulfilment of their motivation, their ending abruptly draws the veil on the glorious images.

As for the human head, maiden breast shows the prosperity of one's civilisation,

well-nurtured, and suffering of emasculation. As Oedipus knows the feet of others, he in his maturity can find “man” as the reasonable answers. He in his prime also manifests the delicacy of humanity like his eloquence in public speaking and his logical thinking, his professionalism in calculation. However, when nature propels his nurturing beyond the understanding from logic and reasons, he discovers himself as not self-possession. He needs additional support. (“Human Suffering and Divine Justice in the ‘Oedipus Rex’” 17). And as a manly man’s loss of sight to control his mobility befalls on Oedipus, he is Hellenistically considered to be a loss of manliness (“The Blinding of Paul and the Power of God: Masculinity, Sight, and Self-Control in Acts” 370), in which way it is also a process of feminisation. (379) Eventually, Oedipus’s self-blindness grants him a stick as the third foot to continue his life into the unknown. In addition to the weakness on mobility, his care (emotion) activated by ears, which is betrayed to his daughters Ismene and Antigone’s sobbing also indicates the decline of manhood (385). In other sense, his sight of reasons serves as a vicarious offering. He reconciles with his past, and integrates them with joined nature of Sphinx. This, from the Hellenic perspective, is a compound body with a part of human and a part of inhuman creatures. After he loses his monarchical footing, he adapts the reality that he is constituted with the life of emotion-ridden infant and an ignorant young whippersnapper.

## **Conclusion**

Oedipus’s success in surviving after the meeting with Sphinx and failures at fathering Thebes synchronously sprout in the sight of Theban Sphinx. Moreover, those fair-cum-foul moments recycle seemingly without reaching out breakthrough—his fear of confrontation against his parents and his hope to set his foot soundly upon the new land, his brilliant insight on men’s feet and his ignorance of knowing his feet. These ironic pains recur

between the vulnerability as well as the flexibility in one's life. This Sisyphean cycle examines the integration, resilience and flexibility of one's life and even of a polis's life. And there is nothing more obvious how tightly he is enmeshed with Thebes. He as a representative of central political system commands the functioning body what way to walk. This infusion of individuals into one bigger collective individual is to shoulder a burden, loosen it, take it, and put it down in an unending cycle. Yet, within the dynamic balance or homeostasis, pains are the energy for mobility.

With the conclusion of this piece of metaphorical pathography, it is easy to obtain the knowledge that Oedipus on his three feet into the unknown does not walk in other way than the next homeostasis, which is established based on the previous balance of a body. Man still has its three phases in the cycle of life journey. Man is the meaningful destination of one's life. Man is also the meaningless solution upon its self-evident riddle. Man keeps its mystery till the end of humanity. So in lieu of degrading the previous cycle into nothingness, biopsychosocial health in the humanity still advances into the new normal within the cycle, within three phases of a man. And in the cycle, man in health maintains its balance and walk with pains. That is where Oedipus goes and how Oedipus continues to walk by the interactions of know-foot and swell-foot. He now in the new normal of three feet owns the insight and the knowledge of sight. In the unknown, he walks. And readers, from the perspective of medical humanities, with that second-traumatisation including Oedipus's interactions with chronic pains and acute pains, after leaving the play and theatre, continue to walk in search of other new pains as the antidote of old ones.

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