

**Save Ancient Studies Alliance**

**Summer 2021 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group**

# **Queering Myth: Oedipus in Antiquity & Today**



Why is Oedipus by Sophocles an essential reference today?  
How is Oedipus represented in today's world?  
Can we read and recognize a homoerotic desire in Oedipus?

Oedipus' character in Sophocles' play represents both human abilities and limitations. Oedipus has become an example of reason and impulse at the same time. Human, like Oedipus, thinks to know what truth is, though he is far away from knowing the hidden sense of existence. As a character who is intelligent and impulsive, rational and violent, Oedipus makes us confront ourselves. His excessive trust in his abilities brings him from arrogance to tyranny. Current authors, like Law Chavez, use this Greek myth to keep asking questions about violence, human impulses, sexual desire, among other topics.

In this reading group, we will comment on how Oedipus represents both rationality and animality. We will first read and talk about *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles, then we will study *Señora de la Pinta* by the Chicano author Law Chavez. We will discuss the homoerotic perspective of the Oedipean myth presented by Chavez. We will analyze Chavez's concept of "dramatic bitch" within his plays and through specific characters.

Our main goal is to have a closer reading and understanding of the Sophoclean play as well as to know and comprehend the contemporary and homoerotic versions of this millenary myth used to talk about current issues.

**Your SASA Educational Ambassador:**

Dr. Yoandy Cabrera, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Classics at Rockford University

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**Dates (3 weeks):**

Mondays @ 11am EDT (English)

\*Spanish Group @ 4pm EDT

-Session 1: July 26th

-Session 2: August 2nd

-Session 3: August 9th

**Location:(Provided by SASA)**

Zoom Meeting Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89940906068?pwd=SkhhRGJWFNZbURsNGhTMmxLdVQ5QT09>

Zoom Meeting ID

899 4090 6068

Zoom Meeting Password

636875

## **General Structure:**

Every session will consist of a debate from the participants' questions, comments, and perspectives after having read the play. The educational ambassador will have some questions prepared to guide the conversation and will introduce historical and mythological explanations when necessary.

### **Week 1 (*Oedipus the King* by Sophocles)**

Link to the text: [Oedipus the King by Sophocles](#)

Possible questions for the first session:

- How is Oedipus seen by the Theban people?
- How does Oedipus treat other people? Is he impulsive?
- Why did Oedipus kill his father?
- How is human wisdom represented in this play?
- From your perspective, is Oedipus guilty?

### **Week 2 (*Señora de la Pinta* by Law Chavez, read Act One)**

Link to the text: [Señora de la Pinta by Law Chavez](#)

Possible questions for the second session:

- Why is this play titled *Señora de la Pinta*? Why a title in Spanish?
- What historical event is used as general context in this play?
- How is religion represented?
- How are gender roles represented?

### **Week 3 (*Señora de la Pinta* by Law Chavez, read Act Two)**

Link to the text: [Señora de la Pinta by Law Chavez](#)

Possible questions for the third session:

- How is the homoerotic desire introduced within the mythological plot in this play?
- Who are the queer characters of this play? How are they represented and described?
- What are your considerations about the language used in this play?
- Law Chavez explains: "I have long wanted to write a gender-bending play that would explore performative gender codes on stage as a concept that asks questions about ourselves and how we view the sexuality of others. The course of action in *Señora de la Pinta* tells a man's story about the complexities of love. However, I ached to write a bitch that came with unanswerable questions of sexuality and gender using cross-dressing as

a “front” to exemplify society’s confusion at the core of sexual minorities.” Having these ideas in mind and after reading the play, what characters do you think can be considered as “dramatic bitches”?

#### **Additional Readings and Resources:**

- Ali Triana, Jorge. *Edipo alcalde*. Quimera Films, 1996.
- Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim*. Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Chavez, Law. *What a Bitch: The Complexities of Gender in Playwriting*. UNM Digital Repository, 2012, [http://digitalrepository.unm.edu/thea\\_etds/22](http://digitalrepository.unm.edu/thea_etds/22).
- Fundora, Carlos. “Edipo Gay”. *Comedias sin lente*. Ediciones Alarcos, 2006, pp. 75-101.
- Hall, Edith. “The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy”. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*. P. E. Easterling (ed.). Cambridge University Press, 1997. (Kindle Edition).
- Misemer, Sarah. “Sergio Blanco’s *Kassandra Complex*”. *Theatrical Topographies. Spatial Crisis in Uruguayan Theater Post-2001*. Bucknell University Press, 2017, pp. 179-93.
- Omobono, Carlos. *Edipo Gay*. Fundarte, 1999.
- Palmer, David. *Visions of Tragedy in Modern American Drama*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.
- Powers, Melinda. *Diversifying Greek Tragedy on the Contemporary US Stage*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Sergent, Bernard. *Homosexuality in Greek Myth*. Beacon Press, 1984.







Picture from the representation of *Señora de la Pinta* by Law Chavez:

