millionth reflection on Sophocles's Oedipus Rex. For this I can offer but one excuse: that this reflection will not be focused on that extraordinary, monstrous, and unique thing that Oedipus did, but, to the contrary, on the very regular way (I was even going to say ordinary way) in which this thing was brought to light by Oedipus and for Oedipus. In other words, what I would like to present—in a somewhat haphazard way, as a kind of textual commentary and nothing more, so that we might discuss afterwards—are a few reflections on how Oedipus's wrong-doing and truth-telling are tied together in Sophocles's play. In other words, it is not so much Oedipus and his interdiction or malediction that I would like to study, but rather his verdiction.

I will try to explore this question of verdiction in different forms of either judicial practices or cultural experiences. Oedipus—I mean Oedipus Rex, the play by Sophocles—is, as you know, a foundational representation of law. Naturally, in saying this I am repeating a platitude and a truism. Everyone knows that in Greek tragedy, the theme of representing law—of the foundational representation of law—is essential. Whether it be Aeschylus through Prometheus or Oresteia, or Sophocles with Antigone and Electra, the problem of the confrontation of rights, the confrontation between the law of the family and the law of the city, the problem of the foundation of the law, the original institution of the tribunal, or the question of vengeance—all of this constitutes a theme which, if not universal, is at least constant throughout Greek tragedy.

Moreover, it seems to me that, generally speaking, in most societies we would refer to as Indo-European, or at least from the theater of Greece to that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this question of the representation of law in theater was a constant. After all, the central problem in Shakespeare—or in the political plays among Shakespeare's works—it seems to me, is the question of the foundation of sovereign right: How [. . .] can a sovereign succeed in legitimately exercising power that he seized through war, revolt, civil war, crime, or violating oaths? It seems to me as well that classical French theater—I am thinking especially of Corneille, of course—tackles on and represents these problems of public law. It also seems to me that the question of law and of representing the foundation of law through theater was essential for Schiller as well. It could be interesting, I think, to study the entire history of theater in our societies from the perspective of this question of the representation of law. One has the impression—or at least, it seems to me this is something that would merit further study—that from the time of Greek theater up to at least the end of the eighteenth century, one of the functions, although certainly not the sole function, of theater in European societies was to be the place or a stage for debating the problem of the law. This was unlike the novel, but not, perhaps, unlike the epic or the American Western, which, after all, also presents a problem of law, of the confrontation of rights, of the confrontation of law and vengeance, of the right of conquest. It seems to me that there is an entire side to the institutions of representation—of the representative arts—in European societies that are organized around this question of the foundation of law and whose significance and meaning is to manifest, in one way or another, the fundamental problems of law. But let's leave that question under the heading of possible areas for further study.

In any case, Oedipus Rex is clearly a representation of law since it involves a crime, a crime in the double sense of an infraction of fundamental law and a religious sullyings—two aspects that are inseparable in ancient Greek thought and culture. It is equally a question of discovering who is responsible for the crime and, finally, a question of how to punish the criminal—a problem that remains unresolved in the play. Let's say in very schematic terms, for example, that in the case of Electra or Antigone, the problem was that of knowing how to make room for the law of the family within the law of the city, how they should confront one another, and how they should be coordinated. In the case of Oedipus, a more straightforward juridical problem is posed: the question of discovering the identity of the unknown murderer. The question of what procedure to employ in order to uncover the unknown murderer was a well-known question not only in classical Greek law, but also in classical Greek philosophy. For example, while book 9 of Plato's Laws, section 874a, does not evoke Oedipus explicitly, it discusses precisely his general situation. Plato writes of a clear case of assassination, where the murderer remains unknown in spite of the investigators' best efforts. We have, then, a very simple juridical situation which is far less complex than the case of Electra or Antigone; a crime has been committed and the perpetrator, whose name and identity remain unknown, must be found. That being said, from the very start and throughout the play, the text contains a series of technical and precise juridical terms which were completely comprehensible for a Greek audience and which reveal that the play unfolds in the form of a trial. It is not, of course, a total and exhaustive representation of a trial, yet there is a
perfectly clear judicial paradigm organized around the question of how to discover the guilty party whose crime has been established, but whose identity remains unknown.

By way of orientation, I will indicate a few of the elements of this general paradigm. For example, take the very beginning of the text, when Oedipus sends Creon to ask the oracle of Delphi why Thebes has been afflicted with the plague. Creon returns with the response, and Oedipus asks him: “Now, of what murder is Apollo informing us?” The Greek text uses the verb ménúei, which the French translation’s readers by suggesting that Apollo indicates the crime as the cause of the plague. In fact, the verb ménúei is a technical term that designates a precise form of judicial process. In classical Greek law, there were two ways of denouncing a crime: either before the council, the boule, or before the assembly. One procedure, the exangelesia, could only be heard if the denouncer was a citizen. When the denouncer was not a citizen and could not present his denunciation in that form, he followed a different procedure called ménusis—to which this denunciation corresponded. For indeed, Apollo was not a Theban, so he does not have to follow the procedure of exangelesia as if he were a citizen. He introduces a ménusis—which is the technical term employed here. So this is a case of a noncitizen who denounces a crime committed on the city’s territory. What is interesting is that Apollo’s ménusis, his denunciation, takes two forms: it takes the form of the plague, the plague that was sent in response to an impurity, as a consequence of the impurity provoked by the crime; and this denunciation, it is also the oracle that was delivered and that Creon brought back. The procedure—the judicial procedure, named by the text—is perceived as embedded within both divine action (Apollo’s vengeance) and the religious ritual of prophecy (the oracle).

Oedipus responds to this ménusis, to this denunciation by Apollo, as would a chief justice: “Because there has been a denunciation, I am going to start over”—I am citing the French translation—“I am going to start everything from the beginning.” This corresponds exactly to the procedure, which is also well defined juridically, that must follow the denunciation of the crime once it has been accepted either by the council or the assembly. Investigators, the stëtaoi, are designated and charged with investigating the affair from the beginning to determine the truth of the denunciation. In order to mark the judicial character of the procedure that he has set in motion, first Oedipus promises a reward to anyone who discloses information; then he curses those who hide what they know; and third, he absolves those who would testify against interest.

Naturally, through the extraordinary density and complexity of the text and the echoes that resonate throughout the play, we know well that the curse on those who hide their knowledge and the absolution of those who would testify against themselves, all of this is going to take on a dramatic meaning—or rather a tragic sense—that we know so well. But it is also important to recognize that these are not simply dramatic effects within the larger economy of the play. Oedipus’s famous curse on the unknown criminal that ricochets back onto him is also a well-documented judicial procedure in classical Athenian law. For example, in the famous sacrilege trial of 415 (415 was a few years after Oedipus, if indeed the play was staged in 420), in this famous sacrilege trial recounted by Thucydides and then Plutarch, there are accounts of this type of procedure, in which a reward was promised to those who could provide information, just as impurity was ensured for those who would testify against interest. Oedipus’s famous curse against the unknown criminal, who turns out to be himself, directly echoes, even in its very terms, a religious and judicial practice that was common during the period and to which Plato attests. In book 9 of the Laws it is written, precisely in the case of the unknown murderer: “If someone is found dead and the murderer is unknown and remains undiscovered by investigation, proclamations against the murderer must be made”—which Oedipus does—and the herald must proclaim in the public market that the murderer, whoever he is, must not set foot in any sacred place in his own country or that of the victim.” Oedipus says exactly this. In such a case, “if he does this and it is discovered, may he be put to death and thrown outside the frontiers without burial.” This too is precisely what is discussed at the end of Sophocles’s play.

So the very instruments of the inquiry are put in place. And once again this inquiry unfolds in a very recognizable juridical form. First there is Tiresias—Tiresias the seer, as you know—who comes, and comes entirely as a witness. The text states as much: “He came,” “thiselithas—eierchomai means “to appear before” in the technical juridical sense of the term. “I have come,” Tiresias says, “because you have called me,” kaléis—here again a juridical term. And Tiresias is going to act as a reluctant witness who is under threat, while Oedipus finally puts an end to his testimony by dismissing him with another ritual saying, apthes—“be
gone." After Tiresias leaves, the chorus discusses his testimony just as a jury would discuss a witness's testimony. Creon follows Tiresias, but not as a witness. To the contrary, he comes to complain before the chorus, before the jury, that he has been the victim of Oedipus's slanderous accusations. To which Oedipus replies with another accusation. The specific term used in his accusation, *kakōtechna,* is a juridical term which generally means a "deceitful maneuver" or may mean, in more specific circumstances, "suborning of a witness" — and indeed this is precisely what Oedipus accuses Creon of doing. He accuses him of having suborned the oracle as witness and having falsified the oracle's meaning. At least this is Oedipus's complaint against Creon. And finally the last scene which leads to the revelation of the truth and to which we will return for a closer reading, is clearly a judicial scene of testimony and investigation — of interrogation, of extortion of an avowal under threat of torture, and ultimately avowal. Thus, the general framework of the play is a procedural one that is easily recognizable. Once again, it does not reproduce a trial exactly, but rather a judicial paradigm that would have been perfectly comprehensible and recognizable to a Greek audience and spectators.

So, after this slightly belabored and technical introduction, it is time to home in on the central question that I would like to pose: What exactly is being represented on this stage, in this judicial scene?

Since Aristotle, everyone knows — that is, those who are familiar with Aristotle know — that Greek tragedy traditionally rests on two elements: the peripety that reverses the good fortune of the characters and transforms happiness into misery or luck into misfortune; and on the other hand, the other great technique is recognition, in which the real identity of some hitherto unknown or misknown person is revealed. Indeed, most Greek tragedies rely on these two mechanisms and, in general, the peripeteia — that is, the reversal of the situation — allows one to recognize the truth of each. *Oedipus Rex* has the peculiarity of being among the very rare, if not the only, Greek tragedies in which the *peripeteia* — that is, the transformation of events or of the fortune of the characters — does not reveal the truth. It is the revelation of truth, the *anagnorisis,* the recognition of the character's real identity, that constitutes the peripety that leads to Oedipus's fall and turns this envied man, with what appeared a most desirable fate, into a man doomed to abomination and endless misfortune. It is thus a play built entirely on the mechanism of recognition, of *anagnorisis.*

In fact — and here is where I would like to situate my own analysis with regard to the more common ones — it seems to me that there are two *anagnorisis,* two moments of recognition in *Oedipus Rex.* On the one hand, there is the axis stretching from Oedipus's own ignorance or lack of awareness of himself to his obligation to recognize who he is. This is the axis of individual recognition, the axis of Oedipus as the subject of an action he does not remember — or rather, for which he had neither the keys to, nor the possibility of, understanding the significance — but that is revealed at the end of the play as one that he not only committed, but committed as the son of the one he killed and the son of the one he married. So there is this individual *anagnorisis,* the emergence of truth in the subject. And then there is another axis, and this is the one that I would prefer to focus on: the axis of establishing the truth not in the eyes of Oedipus but in the eyes of the chorus, a character that I believe to be absolutely central, as it is in all Greek plays. For if indeed Oedipus is searching for the truth, he is doing so precisely so that the chorus can recognize it — the chorus, that is, the citizens, the people in assembly, or what is constituted as the judicial body with the responsibility for discovering, establishing, and validating the truth. How does Oedipus's truth establish itself in the eyes of the chorus? This is the axis I would like to study: the establishment of truth in valid and legitimate juridical terms.

There is indeed one thing that is striking in the play: that is, while it is true that until the end Oedipus is the one who does not recognize himself for who he is, nevertheless we must recognize that the truth, the truth of what he is, is known not only to the spectators before the beginning of the play — but what's more, the entire play is punctuated with elements reminding them that they know this truth. And the fact is, this truth is produced explicitly at least three times in the course of the play.

This truth that is so difficult to know and that Oedipus refuses to recognize, this truth is told entirely, completely, and exhaustively for the first time by two characters — for it is always two characters, coupled together, who produce this truth through their complementary dialogue. The first couple that produces this truth is Apollo and Tiresias. Apollo indicates why there is the plague, and Tiresias states who is guilty. This is the first manifestation of truth, the first production of truth, the first verdict, which, for a number of reasons that we will need to study, does not work, does not stick, is not accepted, is neither validated nor legitimated. Then there is a second production of truth, which is once again the work of
two complementary characters, Jocasta and Oedipus. They recount their memories, providing all the necessary information to recognize Oedipus as his mother’s husband and his father’s assassin. This second veridiction, this second alethurgy, once again remains suspended and is not accepted; it is not validated, it remains surrounded by an element of uncertainty. It is only the third time, with the third alethurgy, when a new couple appears, that the truth is finally, not produced, because this had already happened, but this time accepted and validated, and can finally produce the judicial and dramatic effects that we expect of it. And this third couple that speaks the truth, this third couple of veridiction, this third wave of alethurgy, is presented by the messenger from Corinth and a slave, the shepherd of Cithaeron; together, once again combining the elements of their knowledge, they produce the truth. There is, then, Apollo and Tiresias on the level of the gods, Oedipus and Jocasta on the level of the kings and chiefs, and the messenger and the shepherd on the level of the slaves and servants. And it is the slaves and servants who produce the veridiction that the kings and the gods were unable to produce or, in any case, were unable to produce in such a way that they could be recognized as valid by the juridical institution. Three manifestations of truth, three alethurgies, three types of veridiction — this is precisely what I would like to study. 78 How did each of these veridictions unfold? How did each of these alethurgies unfold? And why is it the third that, in some way, worked? Why is it the third that effectively produced the truth?

So, turning to the first alethurgy, the first couple: the god and the seer. You will recall what has happened. The plague is raging in Thebes, and Oedipus has sent Creon to consult Apollo. Creon has returned from the oracle, and what has the oracle said? First, the plague will be vanquished through purification. “And why is purification necessary? Purification of what?” Oedipus asks. “Purification of a murder.” But what murder then requires purification? The oracle’s response, brought by Creon, is: “It is the murder of Laius.” But who committed this murder? “Someone who is in this very country, who is in Thebes.” 79 Such is the oracle’s response, and not a word more is said because — as it is stated in the text — the god only says exactly what he sees fit to say. 80 We could say that we have, in one sense, half the story with this response from the oracle, because it is simply a denunciation by the god of a murder that was committed and whose victim is known to us. We know that it was this murder and this victim that brought on the plague. What remains is the other half, which

in one sense must be discovered — namely, the half which is the assassin’s identity. We know the victim; now we must learn who the assassin is.

Tiresias, who was also called as a witness by Oedipus, appears at this moment. Tiresias is in one sense Apollo’s double, the god’s double. He is his other side: blind, while of course the god sees all. And he is the one who is capable of interpreting what the god said and completing it with a complementary discourse, of saying who is the true assassin. Tiresias is interrogated in the juridically acceptable form of a reluctant witness. And since he refuses to tell the truth he knows, we see Oedipus’s threats and how he reacts to the witness’s refusal to say what he knows. Oedipus first blames him for the harm that has been inflicted upon his fellow citizens by his refusal to tell the truth — that is his first reproach. The second reproach is graver still: “You have insulted the city and as a result not only have you wronged your fellow citizens, but the life and very existence of your city may be compromised by your attitude.” 81 And finally, third, Oedipus reverses this refusal as he turns towards Tiresias, who refuses to speak, and makes an accusation against him: he suspects him of having committed the crime because he does not want to speak, or because he is speaking in a way that prevents proper understanding of what he is saying and whom he is accusing. 82 So when the seer is faced with Oedipus’s accusation, he says everything. He tells all. He says: “Who committed the crime? It is Oedipus.” 83 He even goes further and adds in the course of the discussion: “Not only did you assassinate Laius, but you also married your mother — Jocasta was your mother.” 84

So the truth has been spoken — the entire truth has been spoken, and in one sense the play could end here. Or rather, the problem arises of knowing why this truth, told in this way and by no small authority (after all, it comes from the oracle and a seer, and the text has insisted that they are never mistaken and always speak the truth), why this truth may very well be said under those conditions, and yet cannot be received. Of course it is not received by Oedipus; and we may well imagine that Oedipus’s conduct is justified, since he would be accused, indeed he is the one accused by both the oracle’s and the seer’s responses. But what is more interesting, and what I would like to focus on, is the following: it is that the chorus and the chorus itself refuse the oracle’s verdict. Or, in any case, they explicitly refuse to accept Tiresias’s divination. For example, when Tiresias and Oedipus confront one another during the interrogation and Oedipus refutes Tiresias’s accusations, the chorus says: “Anger has gotten the best
of both of you, Oedipus and Tiresias." And once Tiresias retreats, the chorus says: "I cannot believe what Tiresias has said. I can neither believe it nor refute it. What can I say? I do not know." That is to say that the chorus and the chorus refuse to take sides between the two. Why do they refuse to accept the words of such sacred authorities? I believe that if we look at the way these words are presented in the play, we can understand why they are unacceptable for the chorus and the chorus.

First, the word of the god and the word of the seer are words that are only pronounced if the god and the seer desire it. This is emphasized on a number of occasions: no one can force the god to speak if he does not want to do so. And when Oedipus presses Tiresias, the seer, to speak, he responds: "But you do not command me, only the god does. I am the servant of Lookias and thus I will speak if I want to." The refusal to speak, legitimated by the fact that the god is the god, and by the fact that the seer is the god's servant, is entirely typical. He refuses the political-judicial authority that could and will, as we shall see at the end of the play, legitimately extract an avowal, testimony, or declaration. Within the judicial order, one is obliged to speak. And if one has the right to say during the interrogation, "I refuse to speak because I am not forced to obey you," then at that moment the judicial machine cannot work. So first, this word is only spoken if it wants to be spoken.

Second, it is a word that has a curious or strange relationship to the truth, or that is not in any case the relationship that an ordinary witness would have with the truth. Tiresias says as much: "The force of truth resides in me." And the chorus responds to the prophecy of the god by saying: "It is shining and brilliant, the word gushes forth from snowy Parnassus." That is, we are dealing with a word that has authority in itself, that decides for itself to speak or not, and that carries the truth by natural right. It holds the truth in itself: truth dwells within it, or it dwells within the truth. There is a bond of belonging between the word of the god, the word of the seer, and the truth. It is for this reason that they use the verb phemi—I pronounce, I affirm. When it is used in the strictest, emphatic sense, phemi means: "When I speak, I affirm that what I say is true." The affirmation, and the fact that I affirm it, is sufficient to constitute the law, the assurance, and the guarantee of this truth.

Third, the third aspect of this word is that it justifies itself through a seeing, but a peculiar form of seeing, naturally. First, of course, because as far as the god Apollo is concerned, he sees everything—there is, in fact, no difference between what Apollo sees and what he wants: he wants what he sees and he sees what he wants. It is sufficient that he see it for it to become effectively, sooner or later, truth and reality. On the other hand, the seer also has a peculiar relationship to what is said and what is seen—first of all because he is blind (and Oedipus does not miss the opportunity to remind him: "You are a blind man whose ears are as closed as his eyes. You live in darkness"). And at the same time, the seer, who sees even though he is blind, sees the future as he does the present and the past (so the seer says to Oedipus: "You do not see what misery you find yourself in at this moment. You cannot anticipate the flood of disaster that is going to ravage you and your children"). Which is to say, everything that humans cannot see (because it lies in the future and has not yet happened), the seer sees in an atemporality that is characteristic of his relationship to the truth.

It is entirely understandable why Oedipus does not recognize himself in this word—in such a prophetic, oracular, or divine word. He cannot recognize himself in these accusatory words. And he says as much to the seer: "You speak nothing but foolishness." You speak in vain." The words are empty. Nor can the chorus recognize such words, or rather, it cannot recognize the validity of its own words. What I would like to emphasize, then, is that throughout this play there is a perpetual correlation between Oedipus's recognition of who he is and the chorus's recognition of the juridical validity of the truth. Oedipus will only be able to recognize himself once the chorus has recognized the validity of what is said. Oedipus cannot recognize himself in the words of the seer and the oracle of the god, and neither can the chorus recognize their validity. I believe that the chorus that is sung at this moment, after Tiresias's departure, is important because it shows the chorus's function throughout the play: the chorus is the body that tests, accepts, or refuses, and establishes the truth told. And no sooner has Tiresias left than the chorus begins its chant.

This chorus is very interesting and merits close study. There are two parts to the chorus. The first part is dedicated to the oracle and oracles in general. The chorus says the following: "Yes, the oracles tell the truth. When the oracle pronounces its word, we can be sure that what it says has happened, is happening, is going to happen. The arrow has been released, and the one who is targeted had better hurry and run quickly because the arrow is already behind him and will get to him no matter what. He runs and he should run, but he is condemned nonetheless. The arrow was released out of the flames and lightning."
course a world of fate, which is a world of brilliance and of light, which is therefore the world of the truth and the world of the inevitable.

And yet—this is where the second part of the chorus begins—the chorus says: "Yes, but this does not apply in my case." It isn’t said exactly like that; it reads, "The arrow has been released amidst the flames and the lightning—but as for myself, my opinion drifts in the wind. I can neither believe nor deny what Tiresias has said. I see nothing, neither in front nor behind me." In counterpart and in opposition to the world of fate, atemporality, pure light, and the brilliance of the lightning that manifests the truth and guarantees destiny, the chorus asserts its right not to believe, not to know—its right to remain in the dark and only see precisely what is presented. Nothing beyond, in the realm of the future (or rather, for the Greeks, in the realm of the future, which is situated behind oneself), and nothing in the past (or what is in front of oneself). It only has access to the imminent, and the chorus makes this explicit in stating: "Zeus and Apollo are divinities, they are learned in the destiny of mortals, but humans? Humans?" And the chorus then poses the question of Tiresias, the seer. It states: "Can the seer tell the truth?" Well, it says, "Can one truly claim that, among men, a seer possesses gifts superior to mine?" And obviously, the very fact that it asks the question implies a negative response: "The seer does not have talents superior to my own," it says, "and if it is true that there are some men who know more than others, then they still must provide proof."

I believe we have two important elements here. First, no one has talents superior to the chorus—that is, in the order of truth of this moment, there is no body that is superior to that of the just or of the assembly, to the power that, in the form of the tribunal, decides what is true and what is not, who is guilty and who is not. Consequently, this judicial body is superior. Second, this judicial body must function through proof, and in this context the chorus continues to speak of Oedipus, stating that he has provided proof. He has given proof of his wisdom and of his love for Thebes (of course, this is a reference to the Sphinx and to Oedipus’s victory over the Sphinx). Since he has provided proof, only proof may count against him: "Before having seen," ἵδοινι, says the text, "justification of the god’s spoken words, I cannot approve them." ἵδοινι, φάνερα: this entire series of words suggests that we are in the order of seeing, but no longer a seeing that is of divine light, that both brings things forth and seals one’s destiny. It is no longer the divine sight that cuts through time and is atempo-

ral. What the chorus demands, and what prevents it from accepting what was so clearly spoken in the oracular veridiction, what it wants are visible elements, proof, a demonstration. The truth of seeing, seeing for oneself, seeing that constitutes proof—that is what the jury demands. This is what the chorus and the chorus seeks. And this is why the first veridiction—in spite of the fact that everything was said—is refused, is sidelined.

Thus begins—I will skip a certain number of elements, in particular the episode with Creon that we may return to in the discussion later—thus begins the second alethurgy, the second wave of veridiction. This alethurgy takes place not on the level of the god and the seer, but on that of the kings, between Jocasta and Oedipus. Following Tiresias and Creon’s departure, Jocasta is the first to intervene, and she picks up precisely where the chorus ended: that is to say the problem of prophetic and divine veridiction. Jocasta affirms, "If the god wants to reveal things, he can do so perfectly well and he knows perfectly well how to do so himself." As for the seer, she says, "You’ll see," addressing Oedipus, "that no human creature has ever possessed the art (technē) of predicting." I will return in a few moments to this problem of technē, but I think that Jocasta’s first intervention situates the problem or the question well. Can there be a technē of prediction? And if there is not a technē of prediction, can there be another technique to produce the truth? On the basis of this refusal of divine and divinatory veridiction, Jocasta says: "That the seers do not possess the art of predicting, of that I am going." Jocasta says to Oedipus, "to give you the proof.""

I am going to give you the proof of this." This scene of the proof, of the demonstration that the art of prediction is unfounded, this demonstration unfolds throughout the scene by means of an intervention by Jocasta, of a dialogue with Oedipus, and finally of a monologue or account by Oedipus. There are three elements, then: Jocasta, the dialogue between Jocasta and Oedipus, and Oedipus’s monologue-account.

The initial element (that of Jocasta) and the terminal one (Oedipus’s monologue): these two elements correspond to one another—they are absolutely symmetrical. In her first intervention, Jocasta demonstrates that predictions do not tell the truth by explaining to Oedipus what she did to prevent her own son from killing Laius in spite of them. At the end of the scene, in continuity with the demonstration that the seers do not tell the truth, Oedipus explains how, in spite of the prediction that he was to kill Polybus—in spite of the prediction that he was going to murder
his father—he succeeded in not killing the one whom he believed to be his father, namely Polybius. We have here, with these two elements, initial and final, the deployment of human processes through which, first, one escapes the seers' predictions, and second, one may thereby show that the predictions of the seers do not tell the truth.

In between these two elements is a long dialogue between Oedipus and Jocasta that unfolds, once again, in the form of questions and answers, like in testimony. Oedipus interrogates Jocasta and asks her a number of questions. He interrogates her like a witness. Based on what? Based on what she has learned about the death of Laius: what she was told, public rumors, her memories, Laius's physical bearing, the number of people who accompanied him, and whether anyone survived or not. In short, it is an entire inquiry based on what Jocasta may have known or learned. And naturally, the truth is uncovered and is practically told through this game of questions and answers. It is almost told and yet it is not accepted—neither by Oedipus nor by Jocasta, who refuse to hear truly what they are saying. They are not going to draw the final conclusions that would allow them to identify and recognize themselves in the episodes that they themselves have just told. So they escape.

How do they escape? Well, first they escape because an element is missing in this story they tell; or rather there is an ambiguous element in their story, which is the number of people who killed Laius. The reported testimonies, the public rumors, and all the information that Jocasta could gather suggest that Laius was killed by several persons. Yet Oedipus, himself, who fears and is almost certain that the person he killed was Laius, knows full well that he was alone when he killed him. So this element provides a degree of uncertainty through which they may escape this hint of this truth that they are in the process of discovering. And then, they also escape the truth they have discovered by convincing themselves that one can escape destiny and that human technique allows one to pass through the web spun by the gods. Laius could not have been killed by his son, since he took all the precautions necessary to prevent it from happening.

The truth is told, then, but it remains unacknowledged by Oedipus. It is a truth in which Oedipus does not yet recognize himself, even if he is the one who formulated it. At this point the chorus intervenes for a second time. This intervention is also of capital importance because it is both very similar—very symmetrical to the one I evoked earlier, after the first wave of veridiction—it is at once similar and symmetrical and at the same time much less clear. First of all, this intervention is a reverse image of the first. In the first, you'll remember, the chorus began by affirming the omnipotence of the gods. It made reference to the arrow of the gods that always hits its target. But in the face of this, because it could see neither into the future nor into the past, it had asked for solid proof. In the chorus that follows the discussion between Oedipus and Jocasta, things, the unfolding of the text itself, is reversed. First, the chorus opens strangely with a curse against tyranny and excess, against the arrogance of tyrants who believe they are at the height of their fortune and then fall to the deepest depths. After this curse against tyranny, they speak once again of this famous question of oracles—ores about which it was stated in the first chorus that while their declarations were true, of course, something else was necessary. Here in this second chorus, the question of the oracles comes to an end, and what is proclaimed is the necessity of respecting them. They were insufficient in the first chorus, but now they must be respected absolutely; and cursed be those who refuse to accept the lesson of these oracles, who refuse to accept what is said by the oracles. There is then something slightly enigmatic that we must try to explain.

Why on the one hand do Jocasta and Oedipus speak the truth, but remain incapable of recognizing themselves in it? And how is it possible, on the other hand, that the chorus, without of course saying that it recognizes the truth of what has been said, nevertheless cease to take Oedipus's side directly? The chorus has an ambiguous and strange attitude when it criticizes tyranny and celebrates the oracles. As in the previous situation, where it was a question of asking ourselves what was exactly this divine veridiction (what was its form, and why was it unacceptable from the point of view of justice), I believe that here too we have to examine Oedipus's veridiction. How did he speak the truth and what did he know? In other words, instead of investigating Oedipus’s ignorance, as we usually do, I would like to take a quick look at what he knew and how he knew it, because he knew quite a bit. Oedipus is full of knowledge. In the course of Oedipus and Tiresias's discussion, there is a remarkable passage: it is when Tiresias pits an accusation against Oedipus that the latter believes (and truly believes) to be false. Oedipus exclaims abruptly: "O πλούτο και τυραννίς τεχνῆς—what jealousy you incite." "O πλούτο τυραννίς τεχνῆς," oh wealth, oh tyranny—power, sovereignty, 'crown'" in Mazon's translation—and "teχνῆς," supreme art. By evoking the three elements of wealth, tyranny, and supreme art, Oedipus
naturally is attributing them to himself. If Tiresias is envious of him, it is because Oedipus has wealth, power, and *technê*. That power be accompanied by these two attributes seems important to me. The coupling of wealth and the exercise of power, of wealth and sovereignty, of wealth and tyranny (with all the ambiguity this last word implies), this coupling is classic and commonplace: one exercises power because one is rich, or one becomes rich because one exercises power—in any case, the joining of these two things poses no problem. On the other hand, what is this *technê*? This supreme art or supreme knowledge, which constitutes the third element in the trilogy and symmetrically joins tyranny and wealth? It is rather remarkable, I think, because in the ancient texts, while power and wealth are always associated, *power* is never associated with the notion of *technê*. *Power* is never associated with the idea of technical knowledge or a particular art. On the other hand, it is a theme that is, as you know, absolutely capital and important in philosophical and political discussions of the fifth and fourth centuries. The entire discussion among the Sophists, Socrates, and Plato turns around this question: can the exercise of political power be considered a *technê*, a technique that can be learned, that can be taught, that can ensure that the political man exercise power just as it ensures an architect the ability to construct a house? This expression of *technê* is important precisely because later on it becomes the traditional expression for designating government—not only in the global general sense of a political art, but also, as you know, in the sense of the government of individuals by one another, the government of souls. The expression *technê* will be used all the way up through the Christian pastoral to designate the manner—and therefore the art, the technique—that allows for the government of souls and for their guidance toward salvation.

Let’s return to Oedipus’s notion of *technê*. What is Oedipus’s *technê*, and why is he able to evolve *technê* in speaking of himself and his power? I believe that here Oedipus should be compared to two other characters who are specifically lacking in *technê* even though they exercise power.

First, with Creon—Creon who is of course his brother-in-law, the brother of Jocasta, and whom Oedipus sent to Delphi to consult the oracle. Creon returns and reports what the oracle says, and Oedipus accuses him of having falsified the oracle’s response. Oedipus then accuses him of being one of Tiresias’s accomplices and of trying to seize his power. Creon responds to this accusation by saying: “But you know very well that I could not be jealous of you, nor do I have the desire to take your place and exercise power in your stead, because I have a good life.” This line of reasoning takes the form of a defense and is typically Sophist: in order to dismiss an accusation, one shows how implausible it would be (such a technique can be found in Antiphon, for example) to do that of which one is accused. Thus, “It is completely implausible that I would want to take your place because I have a good life.” And what is this good life that Creon describes? Well, he says, it is “the life of a king.” It is “the life of a king in which I am given gifts, I am solicited, one seeks my favor, and I am surrounded spontaneously by honors. All of this, thanks to my birth. As a result, I have no worries. The people give me gifts and you, Oedipus, shower me with kindness.” In other words, Creon’s own description of himself is that of someone who lives like a king without being a king, or rather, without himself governing. He has arché, the highest rank. He has dynastês—in other words, power. And he does not have *technê*, he does not have tyranny—that is, he does not individually and personally exercise power. Everything comes to him from his status. Everything comes to him from his prerogatives. Everything comes to him from this precedence. Therefore, he does not need *technê*; he does not need art, knowledge, or savoir-faire to have his place or benefit from it. This is why he will be able to use a very important word in speaking about himself; he will say that he is *sôphrôs*, that he is wise, that he is thoughtful, that he is tempered. As he does not exercise power and does not need *technê*, the virtue that he is going to practice is good measure. This will allow him to avoid being either arrogant or excessive with regard to others while all the same exercising his precedence and prerogatives. The fundamental virtue of these aristocratic prerogatives is to be *sôphrôs*. And thus, there is no *technê*.

As for Tiresias, can we say that he too has a *technê* like Oedipus? The word *technê* in Sophocles’s text is mentioned three times with regard to Tiresias, but each time in an entirely ironic sense. Oedipus uses the term *technê* twice with regard to Tiresias. First, when Oedipus says to him, “But, at the moment when the Sphinx was ravaging the Theban lands, were you already exercising your *technê*?” This is a way of saying, “If you, Tiresias, you had *technê*, what were you doing with it and why did you not apply it at the moment when the Sphinx was destroying Thebes? You did not have *technê* then, did you?” In the same way, a little later, Oedipus tells him: “But with all of your *technê*, or your so-called *technê*, something
that could be considered a technique, you were incapable of solving the enigma." And finally, Jocasta uses the term tekhnē a third time with regard to Tiresias when she says, in the passage that I brought up earlier, "No mortal has ever possessed the mantike tekhnē, the art of divination." That is, the seer does not have tekhnē and the idea of a mantike tekhnē, a divine art, cannot be sustained."

The gods [inaudible] are certain; men simply have tekhnērion—they have the sign, they have the trace, they have the mark." The word tekhnērion can also be found in Aristotle to mean proof—it is what allows for demonstration. In the text of Oedipus Rex, it seems to me that tekhnērion is used above all to designate a knowledge trajectory; it allows one to go from what one doesn't know to what one does know (and to constitute oneself as a subject who knows, even though one is ignorant) through a number of trajectories that stretch from the present to the past, the past to the present, from presence to absence, or from absence to presence. From the present to the past: Oedipus explains that it is necessary to uncover every moment of what happened the famous day that Laius was killed, on the basis of what we have now before our very eyes—on the basis of witnesses who still exist, for example. Inversely, tekhnērion is also what allows us to return from the past to the present: this is what Jocasta would like to do, and what she criticizes Oedipus for not doing. Starting from what has happened—that is, from the fact that up to now it has been possible to escape the predictions of the seers and the oracles of the gods—it must be assumed that this possibility still remains open now, and that we are not subject to predictions because we have been able to escape them thus far. Tekhnērion allows for the passage from presence to absence—that is, by hearing the witnesses who are actually present, to try to uncover what escaped and continues to escape understanding. It is a question of going from the absence of those who merely heard or know that someone saw something, to presence or witnesses who actually saw, heard, and were there.

I believe that Oedipus's tekhnē is this art of discovery that uses signs, traces, and marks, that allows us to go from what we don't know to what we do know by piecing together material elements that lead from one to the other with high probability. And this art of discovery, Oedipus's art, what does it shed light on? Certainly not the decrees of the gods, because these are known to people like Tiresias in whom the power of truth dwells. Certainly not the laws, those laws that the chorus says were born on Olympus and that no mortal could bring forth. Rather, Oedipus's tekhnē allows for the discovery of what he calls—"he who calls himself son of Tyche"—it is what allows for the discovery of the meeting, the event, of what happens: the intersection between what happens to men—or the understandings of men, the aspirations of men—and the gods' decrees. It is an art of discovering, through clues, the event. To be more exact, we have here an art, tekhnē, which is attached—and Sophocles's text explains this clearly—to two other tekhnēs of the same type: medicine, which is mentioned twice, and the art of navigation, which is mentioned once. Sophocles's text associates Oedipus's tekhnē to these two other arts. This trilogy—the art of governing, the art of healing, the art of navigation—this trilogy, you know well, would remain absolutely essential to political thought up to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the West. During Sophocles's time, this classic trilogy made an analogy between
the political leader and the doctor and the pilot, demonstrating that there was a type of knowledge that was proper to the exercise of political power, and that this knowledge could not be reduced or summarized, nor could it really be based on what was said prophetically by the seers or by the gods. A knowledge that was proper to the exercise of political power—that knowledge had the technical form of a discovery of truth through material elements that are interrogated for their meaning or for their referents by means of a technique that was proper to the exercise of this knowledge.

This was of course an entirely novel idea at the time, an idea that was debated and in which one could recognize the idea that Oedipus was the man of technē technē. For a Greek audience of the period, this was a perfectly contemporary discussion that was being articulated here and evoked in this way: philosophers and sophists discussed the very possibility of this new science of government, this new science that Oedipus laid claim to in connection with the exercise of political power or, more precisely, in connection with the exact form of the exercise of political power that was tyranny. Tyranny, of course, with the ambiguous meaning that it had in this period: tyranny which meant both the exercise of personal power by someone with the status of a hero and a privileged relationship with the gods that allowed him to give laws to the city, but tyranny as well—and this was the obverse side of the tyrant—as the man of excess or abuse who used his power beyond rule or measure. This in effect is what happens to Oedipus’s technē: through his technē, Oedipus unleashes a series of investigations that ultimately uncover the truth by using the interplay of all the signs and signposts, all the tekmeria, that can be found. At the same time, though, with this same technē Oedipus believed he could escape the gods’ decrees, and it is in this excess that he meets his doom. It is all very well that the technē of political power be sufficiently precise, sufficiently informed, sufficiently rational to discover the truth of things; but that one attempt to oppose the god’s decrees with this technē, this is something that is inextricably linked to the very abuse of tyrannical power. This is how one may understand the chorus that brings the second alethurgy, the second veridiction, to a close when Oedipus and Jocasta, following the god and the seer, tell the same truth again.

The chorus may now be understood. First, the celebration of the laws, the nomoi, which, according to the chorus, all words and acts must obey: these nomoi are born on Olympus and no mortal gave birth to them. Second, in this chorus, the denunciation of the immoderation of the tyrant, who has his ups and downs and who, precisely, tries to escape what was fixed by the gods and by the laws in the exercise of his power; and a curse on those who display their pride, look only for wealth, and violate that which must not be violated. And lastly, the final point of the chorus, the elegy of the oracles that must be respected: with these tyrannical, violent, and excessive characters, who consider null and void and pretend to abolish the oracles brought to the old Laius, Apollo is deprived of all honor and, as a result, all respect for the gods disappears. The enigmatic chorus may be understood if its functions are placed in the context of the concluding scene between Oedipus and Tiresias. In that first chorus, it was a question of saying why the truth of the oracle was unsatisfactory. In the second chorus, now, after the second veridiction, it is a question of challenging Oedipus’s knowledge or, rather, of picking up on the only part that conforms to nomoi and, instead of condemning, of putting a misdirection on that part of the technē that served to nourish the excesses of his tyrannical power.

Thus, the last alethurgy, the last production of truth, the last veridiction may begin. It is presented as being neither that of the gods (which was challenged for the reasons I mentioned) nor that of the kings (which was useful and fecund, but also had its excesses and its dark side). The veridiction that will be recognized is that of the servants. There are then two characters: the messenger from Corinth who comes to announce that Polybius is dead, and the shepherd of Cithaeron who Oedipus, with his technē and in search of tekmeria, went to find in the depths of his woods. These two characters, the messenger who arrives spontaneously and the shepherd who is summoned, are brought face to face. And at this point, of course, the truth appears through this confrontation. The chorus, for that matter, announces it in advance. Assuming in a paradoxical, almost ironic way the position of the prophet, it says: “If I am a good prophet, if the light reveals the truth to me, yes, by Olympus”—this is an explicit reference, at the moment when the truth is going to appear in the very mouths of the servants, to the oracle of the gods and the authority of the divine word—“yes, by Olympus, as early as tomorrow, you will see that the Cithaeron has become one of Oedipus’s compatriots and the truth of Oedipus’s birth will be known.”

How does this last alethurgy unfold? Well, it unfolds—entirely and exhaustively—like a true judicial interrogatoire that follows all the procedural rules.
First, there is the interrogation of identity. When the shepherd of Cithæron arrives, Oedipus, in his role as chief justice, poses the question: “Is this shepherd who has been brought to us truly the one who the messenger from Corinth once knew and who gave him the famous child who was to be Oedipus?” So Oedipus asks the question, and he gives a first element of response. He says: “I do not know him; I cannot even know if he is the same. But I recognize the servants that brought him and those servants are mine.” At this moment the choragus completes the point, saying: “I recognize the shepherd. He is indeed the one who was in the service of Laius.” And the Corinthian, the messenger from Corinth, brings the third element of recognition. Indeed, he says: “This man who I now see before me is indeed the one of whom I spoke” and who in time past gave me, handed me the child in question.”

After this interrogation of identity, the shepherd is questioned about what he did and what happened. The shepherd, naturally, resists sharing as much of his knowledge as possible. First, he refuses because he committed the fault of not killing Oedipus as Laius and Joçaeta had asked of him, and then because he knows full well that what he is going to say will set off a catastrophe. But while the god could say at the beginning of the play, “I only speak when I wish to do so,” or in any case this is what was said of the god, the god only speaks when he wants to; and while Tiresias could say, “I do not obey you, because I am not your servant, I am the servant of Loxias”; here, the shepherd will be obliged to speak. He is reminded that he must speak. And since he is still reluctant, he is threatened with torture: “Bind his hands,” says Oedipus, “I will make you speak or you will be killed.” The threat of death punctuates the entire interrogation—this was clearly stated in classical Athenian law: that is, to obtain an avowal, torturing a slave was acceptable on the sole condition that it be authorized by his master. Now this was precisely the case here: Oedipus himself, as the one who has power, who exercises power over the servant, threatens him with execution, and consequently the servant is going to be forced to tell the truth, to tell this truth, the truth of what he did. He is going to be obliged to avow. And the interrogation, in effect, unfolds around a precise point: what the witness himself did. It is no longer a question of prophetic words. It is no longer this great vision that cuts through time. It is not this light that comes from a released arrow. It is a question of what the witness himself might have done. “Do you remember that I told you this?” says the servant of Corinth. “Who gave you the child? What was your intention in doing this or that?” And the servant’s response is grammatically very distinct. Each time the servant responds: “Yes, I myself found this child in the Valley of Cithæron. Yes, I was keeping a herd. Yes, it was I who released your two feet.” “Yes, I am the one to whom Joçaeta handed you.” “It is I who did not kill him—autos.”

I believe that we have here the very blueprint—and the introduction onto the stage—of this procedure of avowal, which is also characterized in the play by the acceptance of the chorus as being that which, as opposed to the other forms of veridiction, effectively produces an incontestable truth. For the truth to be juridically acceptable, it is not necessary that the gods speak. For the truth to be accepted, it is not necessary that it be produced by kings—because, if indeed they use the wise method of tekmeria, of signs, they may also use it to escape the destiny of the gods. With the slave, we have truthful speech [une parole de vérité], a truthful speech that does not even necessitate a consideration of the more or less probable signs that allow one to pull what one wants to know from what one doesn’t know. This is a speech that is entirely true because the one who speaks may say: “Yes, I did that. Yes, I am the one, autos. I saw it. I heard it. I gave it. I did it.” And with this word, despite the fact that it emanates from the mouth of a slave who is threatened with execution, Oedipus’s truth will appear. The chorus recognizes and accepts this truth. It alone ensures justice. And once this truth is effectively recognized, or rather, the very moment this truth is recognized by the chorus and by everyone—and by the spectators—at that moment, Oedipus recognizes himself. He recognizes himself as the one who did it all.

While all the elements of truth that he had already spoken, while all the predictions around him already told him, and had already told him on multiple occasions what had happened, Oedipus could only recognize himself when faced with an avowal—an avowal that, you will note, did not come from himself. Oedipus does not avow. What would he avow, in any case? Oedipus does not avow. The avowal comes from the slave. And it is when the slave produces this avowal, by means of this procedure, that Oedipus is able to say—recognizing himself and inhabiting in some sense this character that was designated by the slave’s avowal—Oedipus is able to say: “In this way, all will be true in the end! I reveal myself to be the son of the one of whom I should not have been born. I reveal myself to be the
husband of the one I should not have married. I reveal myself to be the murderer of the one I should not have killed.* In turn, Oedipus is finally able to say "I" about all his crimes.

Please excuse this somewhat long and, in any case, very partial reading of Sophocles's play. Do not think for a moment that I wanted to present anything like a global or exhaustive interpretation of Oedipus Rex. Nor should you think I wanted to present you with a chapter on the legal history of the emergence and establishment of avowal in Greek penal procedure. I simply wanted to show you how this procedure of avowal that was, if not recent at the moment when Sophocles wrote Oedipus Rex, at least a part of the judicial apparatus, part of a judicial practice that classical Athens was both proud of and celebrated but also questioned— it seems to me that it is interesting to see how avowal introduced itself with such solemnity into something as culturally and politically important as this ritual representation of law that the city of Athens gave itself.

I would like to underscore as well that Oedipus's realization advances exactly in step with the chorus's validation—or rather, what is discovered in himself, which is where most of the commentaries and analyses will end, this discovery of the self by Oedipus is fundamentally nothing more than the obverse side of the legitimate production of truth that is juridically acceptable and that is effectively accepted by the chorus. This legitimate truth is the one that is produced neither in the form of a prophecy nor in the form of a deduction through clues, but in the form of the interrogation of witnesses, the interrogation of oracular witnesses who are ultimately forced to avow what they have seen themselves, said themselves, done themselves.

Finally, what I wanted to emphasize is that, as you see, Oedipus, because he is a man of techné, finds himself placed between the prophetic word and the testimony of avowal. In one sense, we have Oedipus, with his techné and his tyranny as well, to thank for this procedure of searching out witnesses. He is the one who challenged the prophetic and oracular form of veridiction. He is the one who also wanted the interrogation of witnesses. He is the one who sent someone in search of the shepherd of Cithæron. In this sense—and this is the good aspect of the tyrant—at this point he is still the savior of the city; he is still the one who righted the city; he is still the good pilot. And it is even thanks to this, thanks to this truth that is produced, that the city will possibly be saved. But—and this

is the other side, that of tyrannical immoderation—in wanting to use the techné against the decree of the gods in order to escape them, he simply tightens destiny's grip to the point of sealing the condemnation that had been spun for him.

In this sense, Oedipus was necessary for the truth to appear. He was necessary for the creation of this well-regulated form of the judicial machine that is capable of producing the truth. But he was eliminated, as a kind of "excess," now, by the very judicial machine he brought forth. And from the perspective of the foundation of law, the lesson of the tragedy is that the veridiction obtained by the correct procedure—while it did not take the same path as the word of the gods, even though one cannot dispense with it because the gods had spoken—this indispensable veridiction could do nothing but confirm, if properly done, the prophetic word of the gods. Oedipus's drama was his desire to escape the prophetic word of the gods precisely by establishing a procedure of veridiction. Once veridiction was obtained through the correct procedure—once the judicial machine functioned so well that it could extricate the most essential truth from the lips of the most unessential character (the slave)—at that moment, the truth that appeared through this purely human procedure in conformity with nomos and the law, this procedure only confirmed the prophetic words of the gods. This veridiction, thus developed and regulated in this way, does not obey the tyrant's excess: rather, it conforms with nomos, with the law, the law that comes from Olympus. And it is this law and fidelity to nomos that allows the truth-telling of the slave who saw to guarantee for the chorus the truth-telling of a seer who was blind. The public square that stages the judicial institutions assures, guarantees, and confirms what has been said through the flash of divine prophecy.

So this is how Oedipus Rex may serve not, once again, as a direct testimony of Athenian judicial procedure, nor as a direct testimony of its true history, but rather as the first dramatic representation of this relatively new judicial practice (relatively new at the time) that made avowal and all other regular procedures of avowal an essential piece of the Judicial system.

Well, I have been a little long, so if you have any questions . . . . *

* One question is asked. It is inaudible. The recording ends.

2. This is possibly a reference to the interpretation of the tragedy proposed by Sigmund Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams (1899). Foucault had commented Freud's reading as early as 1971 in Leçons sur la volonté de savoir, where he referred to "Freud's error," as well as to that of "cultural theorists regarding Freud's error."—an allusion, according to Daniel Defert (in Leçons, pp. 193 n. 10), to Brecht's Mikhailovitch's book Le mensonge et sa représentation dans les œuvres primitives (Berlin: Ethos, 1939), pp. 1–29 (pre-edited in Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Oedipe et les Mythes [Boulogne: Éditions Complexe, 2006], pp. 1–29), see also Bernard Korn, Oedipus at Thebes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 4–5.


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NOTES


7. Sophocles, Oedipe Rex, verse 102, trans. P. Maizon (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007), pp. 10–11; English edition, Oedipus the King, ed. David Greene and Richard Lattimore (Chico: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 15 ("Who is this man whomse fate the God pronounces?") Note that the Greek word used here is ἐς τῆς; on the various significations of ἐς in the text of Sophocles's tragedy, see Korn, Oedipus at Thebes, pp. 170–82.


9. On the notions of minuans et minuatio, see Korn, Oedipus at Thebes, p. 81, on which, it would appear, Foucault tests his analysis here and in the following three paragraphs.

10. Ibid., p. 81.

11. Sophocles, Oedipe Rex, verse 152; Maizon p. 72–73; Grene and Lattimore, p. 30 ("I will bring this to light again").


17. Ibid., 874b, Dolis, pp. 26-29; Fungo, p. 269.
18. Sophocle, Oedipe roi, vers 315; Mazou, pp. 26-27; Grene et Lattimore, p. 25 ("What is this? How sad you are now you have come!"); cf. Knoe, Oedipe at Thebes, at 89 and p. 226 n. 130.
19. Sophocle, Oedipe roi, vers 427; Mazou, pp. 34-35; Grene et Lattimore, p. 29.
20. Cf. Knoe, Oedipe at Thebes, p. 88: "But when Oedipus's appeal to the prophet is followed by Tiresias's disturbing regrets that he has come, we find ourselves suddenly in a familiar ambiance, the examination of a reluctant witness."
21. Oedipus dismisses Tiresias by asking him to leave (see verse 431; Mazou, p. 34-35; Grene et Lattimore, p. 29: "apatrheus trope apel"); but he does not use the term aphares, which indeed means "be gone." Fould is probably citing Sophocles's text from memory. According to Knoe, Oedipe at Thebes, p. 84, aphares is in the technical term, in ancient Greek penal procedure, for release, acquittal, or dismissal.
23. According to Aristotle, histories are simple or complex depending upon whether the actions they imitate are simple or complex. An action that is in a new continuous whole is called simple, when the change in the hero's fortunes takes place without Peripety or Discovery; while a complex action is where the reversal takes place "when it involves one or the other, or both." Aristotle, Poetics, X, xvi. M. Maguvin (Parist Le livre de Poche, 2008), p. 100; English edition, Aristotle, Poetics, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1943), p. 1465.
24. Peripety, a reversal. Aristotle cites Oedipus as an example: "Here the opposite state of things is produced by the messenger, who, coming to deliver Oedipus and to remove his fears as to his mother, reveals the secret of his birth." Ibid., XI, ed. Maguvin, p. 101; ed. McKeon, p. 1465.
26. This is possibly a reference to Marcel Detienne, Les mythes de vérité en Grèce archaïque, p. 302.
27. The idea of truth being produced by two persons, in a couple, who speak in complementarity—what Fould refers to as "le savoir d'Oedipe" or "la law of halves" (p. 226)— refers both to the thematic of proof (Fould, "Le savoir d'Oedipe," p. 229; Lettres sur la volonté de savoir, p. 191), and in what Marcel Detienne called "the secularisation of speech" (p. 226)....
39. Ibid., verse 356; Mazou, pp. 28–29; Grene and Lattimore, p. 25.
40. Ibid., verses 473–75; Mazou, pp. 36–37; Grene and Lattimore, p. 31.
41. See, e.g., ibid., verse 362; Mazou, pp. 28–29; Grene and Lattimore, p. 26 ("I say you are the murderer of the king whose murderer you seek").
42. Ibid., verses 790–71 and 794; Mazou, pp. 30–31; Grene and Lattimore, p. 26.
43. Ibid., verse 413 and 424–25; Mazou, pp. 32–33; Grene and Lattimore, p. 28.
44. According to Jean-Pierre Vernant ("l'figuration de l'irréciable et catégorie psychologique du double: Le colombe", presentation at the conference on "Le signe et les systèmes de signes," Reuss, April 12–15, 1962), in Versaces, Myth and poetique chez les Grecs, Il (Paris: Masseron, 1974), p. 75 n. 32), the sea, like the colombe, "belong at the same time to the world of the living and to that of the dead. It's this ambiguity that is conveyed by the image of the Òmblin person who can see." Cf. Marcel Detienne, Les maîtres de mort dans la Gréce archaïque, p. 47.
50. Sophocles, Oedipus Rei, verse 419; Mazou, pp. 34–35; Grene and Lattimore, p. 29.
51. Ibid., verse 365; Mazou, pp. 28–29; Grene and Lattimore, p. 27.
52. Who is the man proclaimed by Delphi's prophetic rock as the bloody-handed murderer, the door of deeds that none dare name? ... For the child of Zeus leaps in arms upon him with fire and the lightning bolt, and terribly close on his heels are the Fates that never miss. [Antistrophe] Lately from snow Parnassus clearly the voice flashed forth, bidding each Theban track him down, the unknown murderer. In the savage forests he lurks and in the caverns like the mountain bull. He is sad and lonely, and lonely his feet that carry him far from the navel of earth; but its prophecies, ever living, fluster around his head. [Ibid., verse 462–63; Grene and Lattimore, pp. 30–31; Mazou, pp. 36–38.]
54. The augur has spread confusion, terrible confusion; I do not approve what was said nor can I deify it. I do not know what to say; I am in a flutter of foreboding; I never heard in the present nor past of a quarter between the sons of Labdacus and Polybus that I ought bring as proof in attacking the popular fame of Oedipus, seeking to take vengeance for undiscovered death in the line of Labdacus. [Antistrophe] Truly Zeus and Apollo are wise and in human things all knowing, but amongst men there is no distinct judgment, between the prophet and man—what of us is right. One man may pass another in wisdom but I would never agree with those that find fault with the king till I should see the word proved beyond doubt.
55. Ibid., verses 483–506; Grene and Lattimore, pp. 31–32; Mazou, pp. 38–39.
49. In his March 24, 1982, lecture in The Hermetics of the Sufferer, pp. 445–48 of the French edition and pp. 464–67 of the English translation, Foucault explains why, for the Greeks, one's back was turned to the future, so that one had to face in counsel and the future behind. This is helpful background to this intriguing passage. Thanks to Daniel Michanis for this useful reference.
50. Sophocles, Oedipus Rei, verses 497–99; Mazou, pp. 38–39; Grene and Lattimore, p. 31.
51. Ibid., verses 499–500; Mazou, pp. 38–39; Grene and Lattimore, p. 31.
52. Ibid., verses 502–6; Mazou, pp. 38–39; Grene and Lattimore, pp. 32–33.
53. Ibid., verses 504–6; Mazou, pp. 38–39; Grene and Lattimore, p. 32 ("... but I would never agree with those that find fault with the king till I should see the word proved right beyond doubt").
54. Ibid., verse 506; Mazou, pp. 40–41; Grene and Lattimore, p. 37.
55. Ibid., verses 724–25; Mazou, pp. 56–57; Grene and Lattimore, p. 42.
56. Ibid., verses 708–9; Mazou, pp. 54–55; Grene and Lattimore, p. 41.
57. Ibid., verse 710; Mazou, pp. 54–55; Grene and Lattimore, p. 41.
58. Insulcr breeds the tyrant, insulcr if it is glittered with a surfeit, unseasonable, unprofitable, climbs to the roof top and plunges shore down to the ruin that must be, and there its feet are no service. But I pray that the God may never abolish the eager ambition that profits the state. For I shall never cease to hold the God as our protector. [Sophocles] A man walks with haughtiness of hand or sword and gives no heed to Justice and the crimes of Gods despairs—may an evil doom emit him for his ill-starred pride of heart—if he reigns gains without justice and will not hold from impunity and his fingers itch for untouchable things. When such things are done, what man shall continue to shield his son from the shafts of the Gods? When such deeds are held in honour, why should I honour the Gods in the dance?
59. Ibid., verses 872–90; Grene and Lattimore, p. 48; Mazou, pp. 60–61.
60. Ibid., verses 896–91; Mazou, pp. 68–69; Grene and Lattimore, p. 49 ("The eludes concerning Laius are old and dim and men regard them not. Apollo is nowhere clear in honour, God's service perishes.")
61. You had already privileged the knowledge of Oedipus, rather than his lack of knowledge or unconscious, in "Le sourire d'Oedipe" (Foucault, Logos sur la volonté de savoir, pp. 234, 245, and 250–251). These themes concerning the will to know and Oedipus's knowledge are also developed by Vernant in his essay "Ambiguity and Reversal. Sur la structure énigmatique d'Oedipe-Roi," and by Knox in Oedipus and Thebes (see especially the index entries for "Oedipus" at pp. 176–77, including "the scientific spirit," "intellectual progress," "as investigator," "as questioner," "as revealer," "as teacher," "as discoverer," "as physician," and "as mathematician.")
62. Sophocles, Oedipus Rei, verses 365–66; Mazou, pp. 30–31; Grene and Lattimore, p. 27. [Ibid., verses 380–81; Mazou, p. 33; Grene and Lattimore, p. 27 ("Wealth, sovereignty and skill outmatching skill for the constiveness of an envied life! Great store of joyous fully your treasure chests... ").
63. Ibid.; verses 585–86; Mazou, pp. 46–47; Grene and Lattimore, p. 36 ("Not if you will reply as I do. Consider, first, if you think anyone would choose to rule and fear rather than rule and sleep undisturbed by a few power were equal in both cases.")
64. The reference here is either to Antiphon the Sophist, mentioned by Xenophon, or his contemporary, Antiphon the logographer, mentioned by Tauriscid. The latter Antiphon was born around 481, and started out by devoting himself to the oratorical arts and writing defense speech and speeches before playing a leading role in the oligarchic revolution of the Peer Hundred; brought to justice after the fall of the oligarchs, he was sentenced to death and executed in 411 for having contributed to the overthrow of Athenian democracy. See Antiphon, Epigraphic Antiphon; ou, Leçons sur l'art d'écrire des discours et des fragments extraits de nos poètes d'Attique, ed. Jules Nicolle (Genève: Sauter: Librairie Geo. 1907), at 12-14. The question of knowing whether Antiphon the sophist and Antiphon the logographer were the same person is discussed by, among others, Louis Gernet in his introduction to Antiphon, Discourses, followed by Fragments d'Antiphon et Sophiste: ed. trad. Louis Gernet (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1925), a work that Foucault probably knew, and later by Gerald Pendrick in his introduction to Antiphon, Antiphon the Sophist: The Fragments, ed. and trans. Gerald J. Pendrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
65. Sophocles, Oedipus Rei, verses 587–609; Mazou, pp. 46–47; Grene and Lattimore, p. 56.
("Il, at least, I was not born with such a fraticide penning to be a king—but to do what kings do... As it stands now, the princes are all alive—and without fear. But if I were the king myself, I must do much that went against the grain. Now every man's my pleasure; every man greets me; now those who are your suitors fawn on me,—success for them depends upon my favours. Why should I let all this go to win that? My mind would not be traitor if it were...")

66. Foucoulas is possibly making reference to the following verses in which these concepts are mentioned: 
*Antigone*, 
*Oedipus*. 
*Oedipus*. 
*Oedipus*. 
*Oedipus*. 
*Oedipus*. 
*Oedipus*. 

67. "Je ne sais pas où se trouve le désir d'oeuvrer [souvenir], mais bien avec celle de vivre comme un roi [vivre en roi]." (Ibid., vers. 587-89; Mason, pp. 46-47; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 56.)" (Ibid."

68. The text should appear in the dialogue between Oedipus and Tiresias in verses 357 and 389. The first time it is mentioned is in the following line: (Ibid., vers. 357, pp. 28-29; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 27.)" (And who has taught you truth? Not your profession surely!"

69. The text appears for a second time in the passage where Oedipus, after having deplored the deplorables generated by his wealth, power, and technical skill, calls upon Tiresias, who is blind to his art. (Ibid., vers. 389-92; Mason, pp. 30-31; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 27.)

70. Ibid., vers. 708-9; Mason, pp. 54-55; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 41.

71. According to Kroun (Oedipus at Thebes, pp. 222-23), this refers to a sentence of that of the god Zeus: "The gods have certainty, for men there is inference." (Ibid. at p. 225; see also, ibid., at p. 229.)

72. The word *teknos* does not appear in the text of *Oedipus Rex*. However, the term *teknos*, which is built from the same radical, is mentioned once by Jacosta. (Sokolove, *Oedipus Rex*, vers. 914-15; Mason, pp. 69-70; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 43. cf., Kroun, Oedipus at Thebes, p. 123.)

73. Sokolove, *Oedipus Rex*, vers. 1080-1081; Mason, pp. 82-83; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 38. (But I account myself a child of Fortune, beneficent Fortune, and I shall not be disdained.) On this identification, see Vernant, "Ambiguïté et renversements: Sur la structure dalogistique d'Oedipe Rex*. Note that Foucault had already cited this verse in "Le sémant d'Oedipe," where he referred to it in its characteristic synchrony (p. 230) and knowledge (p. 243), and in both cases associated it with Oedipus's pride.

74. Sokolove, *Oedipus Rex*, vers. 1087-1097; Mason, pp. 82-83; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 58-59.

75. Ibid., vers. 1110-16; Mason, pp. 84-85; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 59. (I'll guess one like myself who never met him may make a guess,—I think this is the household, whom we were seeking. His old age is consonant with the other. And besides, the man who brings him I recognize as my own servant. You perhaps may be in knowledge since you've seen the man before.)

76. Ibid., vers. 1117-18; Mason, pp. 84-85; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 58.

77. Ibid., vers. 1120-21; Mason, pp. 84-85; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 59.

78. Ibid., vers. 1142-43; Mason, pp. 86-87; Grenne and Lattimore, pp. 60 (The messenger from Corinth says: "Do you remember giving me a child to bring up as my foster child?")

79. Ibid., vers. 1154; Mason, pp. 86-87; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 81.

80. Ibid., vers. 2156; Mason, pp. 86-87; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 61.

81. On this point, see Louis Garnier, *Droit et société dans la Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Recueil

82. (p. 133), where he writes that "torture of slaves was commonly practiced in murder cases and there are many examples." Similarly, "the consent of the master" is necessary to ensure the appearance of the slave as witness because as "owner, he has the right of reparation." However, the text explains that "the faculty of witnessing excludes the use of torture. And yet, the torture of slaves was commonly practiced in murder cases and we have several examples..." (Ibid.) The law declared that a slave's testimony was acceptable. As a result, it was not forbidden to use another means of evidence. In other words, the slave would only testify if the adversary consented. The adversary could insist that the slave be tortured." See the chapter "Aspects du droit athénien de Punishment," pp. 97-98.

83. Sokolove, *Oedipus Rex*, vers. 1132-39; Mason, pp. 88-89; Grenne and Lattimore, p. 60 (The messenger from Corinth says: "That is no wonder, master. But I'll make him remember what he does not know. For I know, that he well knows country of Citharides, how he has two foals; I have one kept company for three years—each year half a year—from spring till winter time and then when winter came I drove my foals to our fold home again and he to Lacedaemon's steading. Well—am I right or not in what I said we did?"

84. The question is posed by Sokolove to the shepherd. Ibid., vers. 1163-74; Mason, pp. 88-89; Grenne and Lattimore, pp. 62-63.

85. These elements are given by the messenger from Corinth:

Oedipus: Was I a child you bought or found when I was given to him?

Messenger: On Citharides's slope in the twisting thickets you were found.

Oedipus: And why were you a traveler in those parts?

Messenger: I was in charge of mountain foals...

Oedipus: What aided me when you took me in your arms?

Messenger: That in your ankles should be witnessed.

Oedipus: Why do you speak of that old pain?

Messenger: I bound you, the tendons of your feet were pierced and fettered.