

“UNDERSTANDING UNKNOWN”: LOVE AND ETHICS IN SOPHOCLES “EDIPO KING”¹

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, we intend to analyze the Greek tragedy of Sophocles “Edipo King” by verifying how such a theatrologist worked on it a conception of love and ethics. We problematize the following: What are the links between these two notions used for an orientation of everyday Greek life? For this, we highlight the context in which it was created and the social place (CERTEAU, 1991) of its producer. For the Greeks, fate is something that cannot be changed, their life is already written and nothing that was done would change history. Happiness is something that can only be said, happy life is linked to death. Love and ethics would be mixed in this narrative as elements of the divine and honor for the man who follows them, but other factors separated them. Anyway, Edipo king is an ancient work that motivates us to reflect on the present.

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INTRODUCTION

In this research we intend to analyze the Greek tragedy of Sophocles “Edipo King” verifying how such a theatrologist worked in her a conception of love and ethics. We problematize the following: What are the links between these two notions used for an orientation of everyday Greek life? For this, we highlight the context in which it was created and the social place (CERTEAU, 1991) of its producer. For the Greeks, fate is something that cannot be changed, their life is already written and nothing that was done would change history. Happiness is something that can only be said, happy life is linked to death, because living presupposes an aptitude to fall into a tragedy and to discover that everything that was fought in life was nothing but lies and illusions. Love and ethics would be mixed in this narrative as elements of the divine and honor for the man who follows them, but other factors separated them. Anyway, Edipo

king is an ancient work that motivates us to reflect on the present, for example, issues involving freedom and discipline.

Thus, understanding how this society was organized and the influences that these works sought to generate in that society are important - given that the Western world owes much to Greek society and to understand a little more about its myths, political organization, forms Trying to control the masses helps us a lot to think about the current state of our society.

Initially, we will contextualize Greece, to know the influences suffered in the construction of his works. Moreover, historiographical research is created in a place of socioeconomic, political and cultural production. It is through this place that the methods, the thoughts are formed, that the documents and questions that will be proposed to them are organized, that is, the author is influenced by his society, his social status, his theoretical perspectives, be it a teacher, student, doctor and others. (CERTEAU, 1991, p. 66)

Thus, we must pay attention to the social place (CERTEAU, 1991) of Sophocles, so that we can understand the

ideas of the text, the reasons why it was created, the author's intentions, that is, the influences suffered in the construction of this work.

DECIPHERING PUZZLES

The text of the Sofoclian work leads us to reflect on current issues such as issues involving freedom and discipline. These topics that are so talked about today, but that most of the time society in general does not seek to think. Therefore, in this paper, we intend to discuss the conceptions of love and ethics in the work Edipo King of the Greek teatrologist Sophocles, having as problematic the following: What are the links between these two notions used for an orientation of everyday Greek life?

In this research we conducted a literature search, reading works that could help us understand the historical context of Greece and the social place (CERTEAU, 1991) of Sophocles. In addition, to understand the work we also read several translations from Greek to Portuguese, being used mainly those

of Trajano Vieira, from the Perspective publishing house 2011 edition, João Baptista de Melo e Souza, from the classics Jackson published in 2005, and Mario da Gama Kury, by publisher Jorge Zahar of 2001 in its 5th edition. Thus, it was also necessary to understand a little more about the main theories of translation, since when a work goes through this process it loses much of its original meaning, with some points being exalted and others diminished or even lost. For this, we read the article “Theories of Translation: An integrated view” by author José Pinheiro de Sousa. In addition, it was also necessary to read some articles in order to understand a little more about the Greek tragedies, how they were presented, how they were organized, the number of characters, the change in footwear, the production and presentation of the works, and the influences suffered by the other contemporary teatrologists of Sophocles.

Considering that when passing through the translation process, much of the strength and original idea sought by the author is lost, because some characteristics are sometimes diminished, sometimes exalted or even lost, even in the best

translations. We then decided to use different translations from Greek to Portuguese so that we could better interpret and analyze the work.

Moreover, there is no unified theory about the concept of translation, for there are two main types of thoughts about it, some that believe that a literal translation should be made and the other side that a free translation should be made while maintaining meaning, unlike the other perspective that is made word for word. For Sousa (1998), the limits and possibilities of translation even make some aspects deny the possibility of translation.

In the tragedies produced by Sophocles to different subjects in which we can reflect and think the present. In this part of the work, we verify the links between the conceptions of love and ethics in the work Edipos King, perceiving love not in a romantic and idealized way, but as different conceptions, among them Philia which is commonly translated as love, but can also be translated as friendship. In addition, there is also love as Eros that would be passion, conjugal love.

According to Várzeas (2005) in the Sofoclian works, *Philia* has a very broad sense, not necessarily needing to have some affective bond between those involved, because basically it would be “to give a benefit in exchange for another received” (VARZEAS, 2005, p. 20), that is, they can be considered as *philoí* not only friends, but also family, war partners, politicians, among others.

According to Várzeas (2005), love as *Eros* is more related to desire, the passion itself, that is, it is an irrational impulse, an overwhelming feeling that can lead to disastrous consequences, because it blinds the individual who is possessed by this feeling, due not to see beyond appearances.

Thus, the links between these conceptions and ethics, allow us to understand how the two orientated the Greek daily life, in addition they would be mixed in this narrative as elements of the divine and honor for the man who follows them, but other factors as well separated. Therefore, Ethics comes from the Greek ethos which means conduct, despite being influenced by culture

and society, are individual principles, that is, it is based on self-knowledge. (MARIGUELA, 2005, p. 5)

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From this analysis of the work Oedipus King and taking into account the social place (CERTEAU, 1991) of the author, we can see that the relations between Sophocles and Pericles are linked in the construction of their works, because Edipos is the ideal, the example of man perfect for Sophocles, a god-blessed hero, wise and strong, yet he was also vulnerable to the power of the Gods, as well as all other inhabitants, for being human means being prone to suffer misfortune to fall into tragedy, as it was believed that the power of the gods were unimaginable, so they should be respected and revered. For this reason, this identity is what was trying to be built in his work, heroism, devotion to the city and the gods.

In this sense, the works of Sophocles worked with the true function of controlling the minds and actions of the Greek

citizens. Of course, this cannot be stated with certainty, but there are several authors and researchers who portray that this may have occurred. Moreover, this kind of discussion is quite considerable, because Sophocles was also a religious priest and Pericles a strategist. So it is very likely because of their closeness that they tried to bring both parties together so that they could influence the individuals of their society more easily.

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