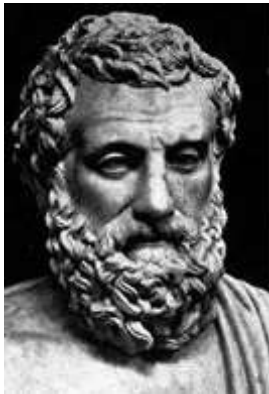


‘Oedipus Rex’ at Bloomsbury Theatre

On the 8th of February, our eager year 12 Classics class went to see the next best thing after a Broadway show, a Classics one. This particular play was called ‘Oedipus Rex’ starring the UCL Department of Greek and Latin at the Bloomsbury theatre. We had all thoroughly enjoyed the gory details of the play, having studied and imagined the protagonist, Oedipus, and his tragic downfall twisted with incest and fate. That being said, truly there is nothing more fascinating than seeing the characters you have analysed and discussed be portrayed so fantastically in real life. The play began slowly. I think we all had our own particular versions of the characters in our heads, therefore it was frustrating to see UCL put a different spin on it.



In the play by Sophocles, the chorus members were made up of Theban elders, who passionately supported their king despite the words of Tiresias, a clairvoyant. Whilst in UCL, the chorus were made up of plague victims, both dancing and singing in unison making the play unsettling to watch. I personally loved that UCL took a male dominated play and gave an integral role to the women as the chorus, who remained on stage for the majority of the time, showing the effects of Oedipus’ curse in a memorable way. My friend Hibah said, ‘I felt my interpretation of Oedipus was completely reversed when we saw the production.’ The play had taken the words written by Sophocles and created a sympathetic protagonist that was driven mad by the truth of his marriage and past.

The dramatic irony that came from Oedipus’ destiny created an immense amount of tension and suspense and I remember Pairahvi physically sitting on the edge of her seat as the play reached its climax. Oedipus’ heart wrenching scream after finding out the truth echoed around the entire theatre. At the end of the play we all agreed that the best part was the messenger speeches said by a dorky awkward traveller, who provided comic relief and a break from the depressing nature of Oedipus’ fate.

Also we had all learnt the importance of dramatic irony and all in all watching the play we studied in detail allowed us to investigate different interpretations and experience it similarly to an Ancient Greek audience during the City Dionysia. Ultimately these plays were written to be performed, thus simply reading it does not do it justice.



Alyssa, 12SEA and Santhana, 12NHO