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Exploring the Production
For the past twenty years, Frank Galati has been a member of the Artistic Collective at the Goodman Theatre. His work as an actor, writer, and director has been celebrated in Chicago and throughout the country. What makes his work so unique? After you’ve learned a bit more about him and seen Oedipus Complex at the Goodman, you should be able to decide for yourself.

Frank Galati was born in Highland Park in 1943. He studied theatre at Western Illinois University in Macomb and then transferred to the Speech Department at Northwestern in 1962. Even as he began his teaching career in Florida, Galati continued to study Interpretation (now Performance Studies) at Northwestern, earning his Masters’ Degree in 1966 and Ph.D. in 1971. In addition to his academic work, Galati participated in numerous university theatre productions, serving as an actor, director, writer, and set designer. Interpretation courses at Northwestern in the ’60s focused on finding innovative ways to perform literary works; Galati continues to practice what he learned during those years in Evanston.

His acting, writing, and directing work has taken him all over the country—Oedipus Complex, for example, was first performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival—but until recently he chose to make his home in the Chicago area. He has earned numerous awards, including 2 Tonys, 9 Joseph Jefferson Awards, an Oscar nomination for his screenplay The Accidental Tourist, and 1967 Teacher of the Year at the University of South Florida. He now resides in Florida year-round when he isn’t traveling for work.

As a lifelong educator, Mr. Galati has left an indelible mark on American theatre. His Northwestern students include Mary Zimmerman, David Schwimmer, and Jessica Thebus. In addition to inspiring the founders of the Lookingglass, Redmoon, and Lifeline Theatre companies, Galati served as a mentor for the fledgling actors of Steppenwolf. He joined their ensemble in 1986 and one year later became a member of the Artistic Collective at the Goodman. As a director and teacher, he continues to nurture new talent in Chicago and around the country.

Frank Galati gives direction in a recent Oedipus Complex rehearsal.

ACTIVITY
Proper Citation

Below is a list of plays that Frank Galati has written and/or directed over the past 30 years. The titles in bold type are adaptations from existing literary sources (just like Oedipus Complex). Do some research to identify the original title, author, and publication date of the literary work on which one adaptation was based. Make a few notes about the plot and any notable stylistic concerns involved in adapting the work for the stage.

º The Pirate Queen (2006)
º The Snow Queen (2006)
º after the quake (2005)
º Homelands (2003)
º The Royal Family (2002)
º The Visit (2001)
º Valparaiso (2000)
º Morning Star (1999)
º Ragtime (1998)
º Everyman (1995)
º As I Lay Dying (1995)
º Cry, the Beloved Country (1993)
º The Good Person of Setzuan (1992)
º Earthly Possessions (1991)
º The Winter’s Tale (1990)
º Breathing Lessons (1989)
º A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1989)
º The Grapes Of Wrath (1988)
º Passion Play (1988)
º She Always Said, Pablo (1987)
º Born Yesterday (1987)
º Aunt Dan And Lemon (1987)
º The Government Inspector (1985)
º You Can’t Take It With You (1985)
º Heart of a Dog (1985)
º Winnie the Pooh (1974)
º A Confederacy of Dunces (1984)
º Boss (1973)
º Miss Lonelyhearts (1972)

I began to understand from him that the truly sophisticated position isn’t to dislike things, but to like things. And that the truly sophisticated theatre-goer understands the essential virtue of everything he or she sees. Not what’s stupid and bad about it. Frank always saw the love and the effort in everything he went to. He could find the affirmation and the joy in the silliest little nothing thing. He could see that it was remaking the world in its own little way.

—Mary Zimmerman speaking about her professor and mentor Frank Galati in PerformInk, May 2000.
THINK ABOUT IT

Frank Galati has staged all kinds of performances, from two-person plays in small studio spaces to large-scale Broadway musicals and even operas. Do you think this makes him a better director of all three forms? How might his work in opera help prepare him to stage a play like *Oedipus Complex*? Think about artists you like who work in many different media, what does this variety do for them? For example, how do Beyoncé's film roles make her a better musician? How does her singing career help inform her acting?

According to Goodman Artistic Director, Robert Falls, Frank Galati's direction is characterized by “grace, clarity, and artistry.” Most often his work plays with the conventions of theatre and veers away from strict realism. This means that things that cannot happen in real life (and probably wouldn't happen in most movies) are entirely possible on Galati’s stage. In the innovative theatrical world he creates, Freud can lead both a lecture and a Greek chorus at the same time.

**ACTIVITY**
**Design It Yourself**
We know from the stage directions that the action of the play begins in a surgical theatre. We also know that Sophocles’ original play was staged in the theatre pictured on page 13. Keeping these two different presentation spaces in mind, imagine what the set for *Oedipus Complex* will look like. Try to decide if (and how) the space might need to change throughout the performance. Remember that lighting effects can be used in addition to set pieces to alter the appearance of your design. Make a quick sketch of your ideas, and when you come to see the play, check your sketch to see if you shared the designers’ vision of the set and the lights.
ACTIVITY—GROUP THINK
One of the challenges of *Oedipus Complex* is that the chorus members must move and speak in unison. Each person must always be conscious of the entire group and try to keep his own movements and speech in line with the others. In some ways it seems that the chorus breathes as one body. To get a better sense of how this collective consciousness works, try to count to 20 with your classmates. There should be no leader and no previously determined order, but only one person can say each number. If two people speak at once, start over from the beginning. It might take a while, but as you get a feel for the “group mind,” you should be able to get all the way to 20 using only your intuition.

THINK ABOUT IT
Can you think of other examples of the kinds of ensembles listed? Which of these definitions applies to *Oedipus Complex*? Could more than one apply in this case?

ACTIVITY—Human Set Pieces
In many kinds of theatre, the ensemble gives a sense of time and place to the piece (in much the same way that sets and costumes do). The ensemble members’ actions can tell the audience a lot about where the story is located, about the passage of time, and even about which characters are supposed to be sympathetic. Experiment with these ideas by trying to tell a simple story, like “Goldilocks and the 3 Bears,” as an ensemble piece. Work together to come up with ways that the entire group (not just those playing the main characters) can help shape the story. Switch roles a few times so that everyone has the chance to experience what it’s like to be part of the ensemble and what it’s like to play a principal character.

THINK ABOUT IT
There are more than 20 people in the cast of *Oedipus Complex*. Have you ever been part of a group that large in which all are working toward a common goal? What about a smaller group project? What did you gain from that experience? What were some of the challenges of working collaboratively?

In theatre the word *ensemble* usually means one of three things:

- the supporting cast—not the principal actors—of a piece (like the chorus singers in a musical)
- the entire cast, which has worked together to create the piece (SNL is a sketch comedy ensemble)
- a piece in which each of the characters is equally important (like the movie *Oceans 11*).
Exploring the Text
**Vocabulary**

If you don’t understand the speeches in the script, everything can seem like Freud’s description of his own early writing: “Convoluted sentences . . . strutting with their oblique words.” Figuring out the meaning of some of the words on this list will make it a bit easier to read *Oedipus Complex*; hopefully you’ll find yourself doing less “squinting at ideas.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abyss</th>
<th>dervish</th>
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<td>insatiable</td>
<td>obscenity</td>
<td>psychical</td>
<td>turmoil</td>
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<td>convoluted</td>
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<td>ominous</td>
<td>quench</td>
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**ACTIVITY**

**English to English Translation**

1. Choose five words from the list that you don’t know, and find them in your *Oedipus Complex* script.
2. See if you can figure out what each of your words means based on context clues in the script.
3. Look each of your words up in a thesaurus. When you find synonyms that you recognize, try replacing the original words with their synonyms in the script. (You might have to try a few different synonyms to find one that really makes sense in the original context.)
4. Use a dictionary try to figure out if there are any subtle differences between the word used in the script and the synonym you found to replace it. Are the two words really interchangeable?
5. Share your findings with your class. Read the original line from *Oedipus Complex* and the line with your synonym substitution. Explain to your classmates what the word means and what the line from the play is saying.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The translation of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* that Galati used to write *Oedipus Complex* was written by Diskin Clay—a classical scholar—and Stephen Berg—a contemporary American poet. Think about the job of a translator. Why might a poet (whose knowledge of Greek is minimal) be a good collaborator for a task like that? What special considerations and expertise do you think Berg brought to the project?
The Practice and Purpose of Adaptation

All ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources.
—Jonathan Lethem*

*http://www.harpers.org/TheEcstasyOfInfluence.html

add · app · TEY · shun—a composition rewritten into a new form

—www.m-w.com

ACTIVITY
Promiscuous Materials

Jonathan Letham, the novelist quoted at the top of the page, has this to say about adaptation:

I like art that comes from other art, and I like seeing my stories adapted into other forms. My writing has always been strongly sourced in other voices, and I'm a fan of adaptations, appropriations, collage, and sampling.

Letham has posted a few short stories and poems on his website and encourages aspiring filmmakers, playwrights, and musicians to use them for their own purposes. Take a look at the site, and if you find something that inspires you, write a script or a song. Or feel free to use another source for your work (perhaps a favorite story from your childhood or a scenario from your favorite video game).

http://jonathanlethem.com/promiscuous_materials.html

As you are writing, pay attention to the differences between creating an adaptation and working on an original piece (without a previously existing source). Is the adaptation process easier or more difficult? Why?

Types of Adaptation

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<td>movie</td>
<td>play/musical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book</td>
<td>movie</td>
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Frank Galati on his adaptation:
So I found myself thinking, what if Oedipus was seen through Freud’s lens, as if our contemporary audience were putting on his glasses? There were circuits of electricity flying back and forth between Freud’s and Sophocles’ worlds. . . . Oedipus himself is his own patient, just as Freud was his own patient.

THINK ABOUT IT
In a way, Oedipus Complex is a third generation adaptation. Sophocles based his tragedy on Greek legend; Freud based his work on Oedipus Rex; and Frank Galati based his play on Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex and Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams. Do you think there are any completely original ideas? Are there any NEW stories to tell? Or just new ways to tell old stories?

What does an adaptor look for?
There is no specific formula for creating an effective adaptation. But there are certain elements that generally make a staged story (whether it is a new work or an adaptation) better. These include compelling characters, imagery, and plot. The Oedipus portions of the Galati play are based on a dramatic text that has survived for thousands of years. Find examples in the Sophocles-based sections of language that is rich with imagery and of characters who go through significant growth or change. Take a look at the Freud story in Oedipus Complex. What about that story is compelling? How does it fit in with Oedipus Rex? What element do you think most inspired Frank Galati to include Freud in his version of the Oedipus story? What evidence did you find in the script to support your conclusion?
Frank Galati began his work on *Oedipus Complex* by looking at Sophocles’ 2500 year-old tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*. In fact most of the script you’re reading in class is Stephen Berg and Diskin Clay’s direct translation of Sophocles’ text. As you read Galati’s adaptation it may help to know a bit more about the original play and playwright. Scholars believe that he wrote more than one hundred plays, but only seven tragedies survive.

**Did You Know?**
Every year Athenians held a festival to celebrate the god Dionysus. The most important feature of this festival was a competition of plays. Sophocles won twice (in 468 and 409 B.C.E.) for his tragedies. *Oedipus Rex* earned him second place in 427 B.C.E. The festival is still held annually in the Greek city of Delphi.

**Father of Drama**
Theatre was still a relatively new form when Sophocles was writing his plays (check out the next page for more on the evolution of the drama), so many of his ideas actually helped shape the art. Two of Sophocles’ major innovations involved character. He was the first playwright to add a third character, and thus reduced the importance of the chorus significantly. (Imagine what it must have been like before!) He also did more work than his predecessors to clearly define his characters, which made them more relatable to the audience.

**SOPHOCLES**
Sophocles is best remembered as a playwright; during his life he was a celebrated tragedian, but he made many other noteworthy contributions to Greek life. He was born in a rural community and won awards for wrestling and music in his youth. He led a choral performance to celebrate the Greeks’ victory over the Persians when he was only 17 years old! He went on to hold important positions in the government and military and was elected to three separate public offices. When he died, at age 90, two plays were written and performed to commemorate his accomplishments.

*(Sometimes) It’s Good to Be King . . .*  
... other times the king accidentally kills his dad and sleeps with his mom. The main characters of Greek tragedies are usually royal figures with great wealth and power. Through the various twists and turns of plot, they are reduced to almost nothing. Most often these great falls are the result of *hubris*, which *Merriam Webster* defines as “exaggerated pride or self-confidence” and which, in the ancient Greek sense, usually means believing you are smarter than the gods.

**Think About It . . .**
Think about what happens to Oedipus in the play. When the play begins, he is King of Thebes, and he ends up wandering blindly and alone. How does Oedipus try to outsmart the gods? Is he the only one who does so? Find examples of Oedipus’ “exaggerated pride” in the script. How much of Oedipus’ pride stems from his position as king? From where else might that pride spring?
Evolution of Tragedy: From Thespis to Theatre

ACTIVITY:
The Choral Majority

In his 1995 movie Mighty Aphrodite, Woody Allen imagines what a Greek chorus might add to his daily life. With your classmates write a quick scene in which one person is facing a problem and the rest of the group (chorus) collectively advises him or her. The chorus can speak any way you choose (rhymed verse or song might be particularly effective), but try to keep in mind the conventions employed by classical Greek playwrights: they should act as one body without clearly defined individual personalities, their movements should be precisely choreographed, and they must heighten the dramatic action (so for example, they might make the main character’s decision of what to eat for breakfast seem like a great internal struggle weighing the relative merits of pancakes and eggs). Use the chorus to set the scene and mood, to comment on society, or to get a laugh.

Goat Song?
Strange as it may sound, the English word tragedy comes from two Greek words: tragos, meaning “the goat,” and odia, which means “song.” These early choral performances were likely religious in origin, and they probably sounded like a group of people reciting poetry in unison.

Stepping Out
According to legend, Thespis was the world’s very first actor. His bold step out of the chorus enabled a dialogue between the chorus and a single character. Actors have been called thespians ever since. Thespis was originally the leader of the chorus; when he stepped to the front, he won the first ever award at Athens’ annual theatre festival.

City Dionysia
At the annual festival to celebrate the god Dionysus in Athens, playwrights were invited to submit their work for competition. Both comedies and tragedies were showcased during the competition, but tragedies were more prestigious.

Aristotle’s Poetics
Sometime between 335 and 323 B.C.E. a philosopher named Aristotle began to write about what made dramatic works work. In his essay, The Poetics, Aristotle speculates that the effectiveness of drama depends on plot, characters, and language, and that plot is the most essential of these elements. The Poetics also introduced the idea of catharsis, which refers to the power of art to purge emotions and relieve tension.

THINK ABOUT IT:
Theatrical performances in Ancient Greece always took place outside, during the daytime. During the hottest months of the year, the temperature in Greece can go well over 100° Farenheit. How do you think this affected the audiences and performers?

WHAT ARE THESE CHORUS PEOPLE HANGING AROUND FOR ANYWAY?
According to Oscar G. Brockett’s History of the Theatre, the ancient Greek chorus served at least six separate purposes:

1. as a character in the play, the chorus gives advice, asks questions, and expresses opinions
2. to establish the ethical or social framework of the events (giving context to the action of the play)
3. as an ideal spectator, the chorus reacts to the events and characters as the playwright hopes the audience members will.
4. to set the overall mood of the play and the tone of particular scenes, and to heighten dramatic events
5. the playwright can use the chorus to add movement, spectacle, song, and dance to the performance
6. the interludes of the chorus give the audience time and space to reflect on the dramatic action

ACTIVITY
Look at some of the chorus lines from Oedipus Complex (start with the ones on pages 10, 27, and 65-6 in your script) and try to decide which of the six functions the chorus is performing with those lines. Remember that they may be serving multiple purposes at once. Ask yourself why Galati chose to include these particular lines at all and why he chose to put them where he did in the play. Discuss your findings as a class.
Focus on Freud

With his focus on the inner-workings of the human mind, Sigmund Freud helped to usher in a new era of curiosity and conviction. His work asked questions that had never been considered and convinced people that these questions had definite, attainable answers. These pages will explore some of his revolutionary inquiries and controversial conclusions, especially those posed in his groundbreaking work *The Interpretation of Dreams*, on which Frank Galati based his adaptation, *Oedipus Complex*.

**Sex and the Psychoanalyst**

Freud was a pioneer in the field of mental health, and many of his ideas sparked heated debate—some still do. He is most famous for his claims that human behavior is driven entirely by sex and violence. These claims are illustrated in *Oedipus Complex* in Freud’s assertion that all men instinctively feel—to varying degrees—violent impulses toward their fathers and sexual impulses toward their mothers (corresponding impulses in women are often referred to as the Electra Complex). Another controversial Freudian concept is that of penis envy; the belief that women are born with a feeling of inferiority, and that they fervently wish to be men. While it’s understandable that 19th and early 20th Century women would resent omnipresent male power, most contemporary thinkers believe that women, then and now, actually desire social and political equality not different reproductive organs.

**How did Freud Interpret Dreams?**

In 1900 Sigmund Freud published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which he explored the idea that our dreams provide unique windows into our psyches. He begins by detailing the previous studies of dreams conducted by scientists, writers, and philosophers, and then explains that the only important elements of dreams are the images and corresponding thoughts that occur to us during sleep. He writes that decoding these slumbering images and thoughts (which might appear nonsensical at first) can provide useful clues to our own behavior and motivations in waking life. By breaking down complicated dream narratives into a few basic components (one or two recurring images or the recollection of a strong feeling, for example), Freud is able to determine that all dreams fall into two categories: wish fulfillment dreams that expose hidden desires and anxiety dreams that expose hidden fears.

Sigmund Freud was born in what is now the Czech Republic in 1856. He was the oldest of 6 siblings and his mother’s favorite; she pushed for him to receive the best education possible. When Freud was a young child, his family moved to Vienna to avoid the anti-Semitic atmosphere brewing in his hometown. When he was 30, Freud married his wife, Martha; together they raised 6 children. Freud spent most of his life studying, working, and writing in Vienna, which was a hotbed of cultural and intellectual activity at the time; but he and his family were forced to flee to England at the beginning of WWII. He died in London in 1939, at the age of 83.

**ACTIVITY:**

**Interpret Your Own Dreams**

Most psychologists frown on cut-and-dry dream dictionaries, but they can be a fun place to start thinking about what your dreams might mean. Use the following ideas and the website below to start analyzing your own dreams.

A key represents opportunities, access, control, secrets, or responsibilities.

Unhealthy teeth can represent guilt over a lie you’ve told or forewarn trouble in your health or business.

Crossing a bridge signifies an important decision or a critical juncture in your life.

Dreaming that you are naked (or wearing very little clothing) usually signifies that you are feeling exposed, unsafe, or unprepared.

For more info on dream meanings, check out this site: [http://www.dreammoods.com/dreamdictionary/k.htm](http://www.dreammoods.com/dreamdictionary/k.htm)
Before Freud began practicing in Vienna, there was very little focus on the condition and treatment of those suffering from mental illness. Doctors believed that hysteria (characterized by symptoms of paralysis, visual impairment, and paranoia) was a physical disorder somehow related to the female reproductive system. Hysteric patients were treated with dangerous rounds of electro-convulsive therapy (in which electric currents are applied to a patient’s brain) and with ineffective mineral baths. Some patients were subjected to lobotomies (during which a portion of the brain tissue is removed in hopes of ridding the patient of disease). Most mentally ill patients not diagnosed with hysteria were removed from their families and sent to live in asylums. Many patients suffered more in the hands of their doctors than they did before seeking treatment.

Freud was dismayed by the lack of attention paid to patients in clear need of help. He was inspired by the revolutionary work done by Jean-Martin Charcot at a mental hospital in Paris. Along with his friend, Josef Breuer, Freud began to modify Charcot’s hypnosis technique and to develop his own psychoanalytic method. By the end of Freud’s life, treatment of the mentally ill had come to include talking sessions as the most basic therapy. Electroshock treatment and lobotomies were far less common.

Evolution of Psychology: From Shock to Talk Therapy

Think About It
What’s Therapeutic?
Merriam-Webster defines therapy as “treatment especially of bodily, mental, or behavioral disorders.” If you do a quick Google search of the word “therapy,” you will find nearly 200 million hits, including sites about physical therapy, family therapy, speech therapy, and music therapy. You will also find quite a few advertisements for products that claim to provide “therapy” for things like chapped lips and numerous references to “retail therapy” (the idea that shopping can make you feel better). Freud chose his words with precision, and so do advertisers. Think about the definition of therapy; is it an appropriate way to talk about chapstick or face cream? Why do you think it is used so often to sell us things? What does the word imply? Why is it so powerful?

Did You Know?

Early in his career, Sigmund Freud was a vocal proponent of the health benefits of cocaine. He later changed his opinion when he saw the harmful effects of the drug on a friend to whom he had prescribed it, but many people speculate that he continued to use cocaine himself. These critics suggest that some of Freud’s more controversial ideas stem from his addiction to the stimulant.

Father of Modern Psychology

When Freud began studying the human mind, most abnormal behavior was diagnosed as hysteria, which doctors at the time considered a physical problem. Treatment of hysterical patients often ignored the possibility of psychic (mental or emotional) trauma. Freud was one of the first to try to find psychological reasons for hysterical behavior. He asked patients to talk about their families and their childhoods, delving deep into the patients’ memories to find any possible link between past experience and present condition. Freud believed that everything that happened to a person stayed with her in some way, whether she remembered it or not. He also found that people often force themselves to forget (or repress) particularly painful events. Freud worked with his patients to bring these repressed memories back into conscious thought. This process of psychoanalysis was often called “the talking cure” because Freud found that once his patients had identified the cause of their symptoms, the symptoms themselves ceased. While many of his ideas are disputed even now, Freud’s concept of the conscious and unconscious mind and his belief that listening is the therapist’s most important function continue to be major components of contemporary mental health practice.
Activity: Go Galati!

Frank Galati wrote *Oedipus Complex* by imagining the intersection of a fictional character, Oedipus, and a historical figure, Sigmund Freud. Freud himself explains in *The Interpretation of Dreams* that his thinking was in fact influenced by Sophocles’ tragedy, and Galati takes that one step further by placing Freud at the head of the chorus, forcing him to interact with the tragic hero. What would happen if other fictional characters were able to talk to real people? Think about the characters you’ve read or seen onstage this year. For this activity it will be best to choose a big personality. Try to imagine a meeting between that character and a person you have learned about in history class or who is in the news today. What if King Lear met George W. Bush? What if Scrooge met Oprah? Harmond Wilks and Barack Obama? Izzy from *Rabbit Hole* and Britney Spears? What would they say to each other? Would they get along? Could they learn anything from each other? How might each of their stories have turned out differently if that meeting had occurred?

NOTE: these examples are just jumping-off points. Try to imagine a meeting between two people (one fictional, one real) who intrigue you and who you think could help each other. If you think that your mother could really teach Goneril a lesson, write that scene. If there’s something you think you could learn from Tiny Tim, imagine that conversation.
Exploring the Context
WHO'S WHO IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

As you can probably tell from reading *Oedipus Complex*, the gods and goddesses governed every feature of ancient Greek life. The Greeks used stories about the divine inhabitants of Mount Olympus to explain every aspect of their world—from creation to the existence of echoes (that's a cool story, look it up!). In the play mortals like Oedipus and Kreon consult the oracles of the gods, blame them for the famine plaguing Thebes, and attempt to please them with offerings and incense. So who are these all-powerful and eccentric immortals?

**ZEUS**—the king of all the gods. He was a god of battle, who fought his father for control of the universe and led the Athenians to victory in the Trojan War, but Zeus was also the supreme ladies' man (much to the chagrin of his wife, Hera). In fact, Zeus was credited with creating the first woman, Pandora, and with seducing numerous mortal women and goddesses to father more than 50 human and immortal children including each of the other deities featured in *Oedipus Complex*!

**APOLLO**—the god of healing and light. Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto and the twin brother of Artemis, goddess of the moon. He is always depicted as handsome and clean-shaven and often pictured with lyre, which symbolizes his musical talents. Like his father, Apollo had a number of mortal and immortal consorts and a vicious temper. He was a skilled archer and occasionally shot arrows of plague at those who displeased him. Apollo was also a prophetic god whose oracle at Delphi issues the prophesies that govern the action of *Oedipus Complex*.

**ATHENA**—the goddess of civilization, wisdom, and war strategy. Athena was the daughter of Zeus and Metis, and she was born in an unusual way. After Zeus swallowed the pregnant Metis (this odd behavior was inspired by a prophecy that his son would kill him—sound familiar?), he developed a splitting headache. After hours of excruciating pain, Athena sprung forth from her father’s forehead fully-grown, screaming and dressed for battle. She was said to have brought olives to Athens, in their gratitude Athenians named their city after the goddess.

**DIONYSUS (BACCHUS)**—the god of wine and theatre. Dionysus was the son of Zeus and Semele, and he was the only Olympian god with a mortal mother. While it is tempting to characterize Dionysus as a party god, Greeks also appreciated his civility and his love of peace. He was the patron of the most prominent Athenian religious festival, the City Dionysia, where Greeks celebrated all the gods through the presentation of comedies and tragedies.

ACTIVITY: Make Your Own Mythology

Ancient Greeks created their complex mythological system to offer explanations about the world around them. Do a little research to find a myth explaining the existence of spiders or the story of how man was given fire. Once you have found a good example of one of these classical myths, try to write your own.

You can write an alternative explanation for the phenomenon your classical myth describes, or you can try to explain a more contemporary mystery, such as:

- Why does green mean “go” and red mean “stop”?
- Why can’t the Cubs ever seem to win a World Series?
- Why are the floors at movie theatres always so sticky?
- Why can’t you ever get cell phone reception when you really NEED it?

With our contemporary focus on technology and innovation, it might be hard to believe that we can learn anything from people who lived thousands of years ago. But the ancient Greeks created a new world—basically from scratch—and many of their ideas are still with us today. You will definitely come across references to their mythology in literature and art, they invented the system of government under which we live, and if Mayor Daley gets his way, one of their greatest traditions will be revived in Chicago in 2016. These ancient people built the world we live in, and Western society will forever be indebted to their ingenuity.
GREEK GOVERNMENT

At the time that Sophocles was writing *Oedipus Rex*, Greece didn’t exist as a country the way we think of it today. The region we call Greece was divided into city-states (a city like Athens or Thebes and its surrounding rural areas). Each city-state had its own government, commerce, and military; some city-states forged trade agreements or defense treaties with neighboring regions, but there was also a series of rivalries and wars between the major powers.

In Athens, occupants of the city-state developed an innovative new system of government. Major decisions involving the legal system, economics, and military action were debated and voted on in the Assembly, a gathering at which all citizens (women and slaves were excluded) were expected to attend and contribute. And civic responsibility didn’t stop there. Government jobs and city leadership positions were assigned by lottery, so every citizen had his name in the hopper for public office. This was the beginning of democracy in the Western world (we get the word from the Greek *demos*, which means “people” and *kratos* meaning “rule”), and the system on which our own government is based.

the olympics

According to the official website of the Olympic Movement (www.olympic.org):

... the first ancient Olympic Games can be traced back to 776 B.C.E. They were dedicated to the Olympian gods and were staged on the ancient plains of Olympia. They continued for nearly 12 centuries, until Emperor Theodosius decreed in 393 C.E. that all such “pagan cults” be banned.

In these early Olympic Games, athletes competed in footraces, wrestling matches, boxing, and equestrian events. There were no winter events and only free Greek men were allowed to participate. It’s a good thing they didn’t have TV back then because broadcasters wouldn’t have been able to air those misty filler pieces about the spirit of international cooperation—that didn’t come along until much later. Winners were crowned with wreaths of laurel and returned to their hometowns as heroes.

In 1896, Athens hosted the first modern Olympics. Unlike in the ancient Games, athletes from many different nations were permitted to compete. In fact, the very first Olympic medalist in 1500 years was an American named James Connolly. Women were allowed to join the Games in 1900; the list of participating nations and Olympic events has grown significantly since. The first modern Games included athletes from 14 nations competing in 43 events. The most recent summer Games (Athens 2004) featured athletes from 201 nations competing in 301 events.

ACTIVITY

It’s All Relative

Scholars know that the Greek tragedies we have today represent only a fraction of those that were written and performed in the ancient society. The scripts that have survived lead us to believe that most of the stories told on stage were about a select group of related characters. *Antigone*, another Sophocles play that has survived, describes the life and death of Oedipus’s daughter. Below is a list of extant Greek tragedies. Do some research to discover how the characters of one play are related to those in *Oedipus*.

Agamemnon  Electra
The Libation Bearers  The Bacchae
The Eumenides  Trojan Women

RIDDLE ME THIS

Multiple references are made in *Oedipus Complex* to Oedipus besting the Sphinx and saving Thebes. According to mythology and archaeological findings, the Sphinx was a winged lion with the head of a woman. She positioned herself just outside Thebes and asked all the travelers who passed a riddle. She killed those who answered incorrectly. When Oedipus finally gave the right answer the Sphinx threw herself off a cliff. See if you can figure it out:

What creature goes on 4 legs in the morning, 2 legs at noon, and 3 legs in the evening?
Everything Today Is Thoroughly MODERN

Freud was alive for some of the most profound and rapid change in Western civilization. During his lifetime everything about the way that people lived and thought about the world shifted. Because we live in a time when technology is obsolete 2 years after its creation, it can be hard to imagine how startling these changes were. Not many of the ideas on these next few pages seem particularly groundbreaking now, nor do the inventions seem especially innovative in 2007. But when Freud was born, none of these things existed, and by the time he died they were as widespread as digital devices are today. Ask an older family member about what life was like before new millennium gadgetry. Ask about other changes in society too. What was more revolutionary: ideas or inventions?

"God is Dead"
In 1882, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche made a pronouncement that shocked the world: "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." With this statement, Nietzsche suggested that Christianity was no longer central to public and private life as it had been for centuries preceding generations. He argued that modern people, having lost God as the source of their moral code, would have to create a completely new value system to order their lives and societies. This new sense of moral drift is reflected in the fragmentary nature art and literature of the time and led people to look for answers and guidance in science (and in Freud’s psychoanalytical work).

Factories and Cities
During the Second Industrial Revolution (1871-1914), advances in technology, transportation, and mass production led to the building of factories in concentrated locations all over Europe and North America. These new centers of manufacturing attracted people seeking economic stability from surrounding rural areas. Cities like London, Berlin, Boston, and even Chicago grew exponentially.

Charles Darwin
The Origin of the Species
In 1859, 3 years after Freud’s birth, an English naturalist named Charles Darwin published the findings of his research regarding natural selection among aquatic birds. His book On the Origin of the Species stirred up plenty of controversy by suggesting that animals had evolved to their present states gradually over millions of years. This idea flew in the face of the Judeo-Christian belief in Creationism. Darwin’s ideas were a hot topic of debate in the late 19th Century, but they began to find popular (and scientific) acceptance within 15 years of their publication. Darwin’s work influenced Freud to forego a career in politics and study science instead.

Typically the term modernism is used to describe a radical shift away from the past in art, literature, religion, and philosophy. This movement was most powerfully felt between 1890 and 1910 (Freud wrote The Interpretation of Dreams at the height of the modernist period), but the years leading up to and immediately following these two groundbreaking decades also helped shape the world we live in today. Modernists had an intense appreciation for everything new and a deep desire to eliminate old ways of thinking and living.

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THINK ABOUT IT!

What will the popular art of our time look like 100 years from now? What conclusions will people in the future draw from it about us?

ACTIVITY

Different is Good, Right?

What does it feel like when everything is new? Think about a time in your life when EVERYTHING will change. Maybe it is moving out of your parents’ house, going to college, getting a new job, or starting a family of your own. Make a list of all of the exciting things that time will bring. Now make a list of all the frightening things that change entails. Which list is longer? Is it easier to think about the good things or the scary ones? Why do you think that is? Create two artistic representations of yourself in the new situation: one in which everything works out well and one where everything goes wrong. You can draw, paint, or make collages; just make sure your artwork reflects your hopes and your fears.

Secessionism and Art Nouveau

Significant advances were made in science and technology at the turn of the 20th Century, and the art world would not be left behind. Taking Nietzsche’s world-changing work as a guide, artists and writers abandoned the old rules governing their forms. This movement away from more clearly defined schools of aesthetics is generally called Secession or Art Nouveau (“the new art”). The visual artists were less literal in their representations than their predecessors. Poets like T.S. Elliot, Wallace Stevens, and H.D. pioneered a new literary technique called imagism and turned to free verse (poetry without a set structure) to express themselves. The early 20th Century also marked a period of intense collaboration between artists, with musicians, painters, dancers, and poets working together to produce revolutionary work.

The End of the World as They Knew It

Vienna at the Fin de Siècle

The French term Fin de Siècle generally refers to the period at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century. In Europe this was a time of unparalleled growth, prosperity, and fear. People living in this time had experienced the rise of factories and modern cities, the advent of electricity and the internal combustion engine, and the rapid spread of media and information. They understood more than anyone ever had about the way the natural world and the human body work, and they had largely lost the sense that a supernatural force governed life on earth. Life was moving fast and people were beginning to see themselves as capable of more than they had ever imagined. All of this progress led people to worry that they were in fact building the mechanisms of their own destruction (think Y2K or I, Robot, for a contemporary example of this kind of fear). In Vienna the excitement and uncertainty were heightened by the fragile political situation and the influx of immigrants (like Freud and his family) from Eastern Europe.

Of Modern Poetry

Of Modern Poetry

The poem of the mind in the act of finding
What will suffice. It has not always had
To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
Was in the script.

Then the theatre was changed
To something else. Its past was a souvenir.

It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.
It has to face the men of the time and to meet
The women of the time. It has to think about war
And it has to find what will suffice. It has
To construct a new stage. It has to be on that stage
And, like an insatiable actor, slowly and
With meditation, speak words that in the ear,
In the delicatest ear of the mind repeat,
Exactly, that which it wants to hear, at the sound
Of which, an invisible audience listens,
Not to the play, but to itself, expressed
In an emotion as of two people, as of two
Emotions becoming one. . . .

—Wallace Stevens
**New Millennialism: Define Our Time**

**ACTIVITY**

Fill in the chart below with important ideas from the preceding pages. You may also use things you’ve learned in other classes and info that has been in the news. What was happening when Sophocles was writing? What was life like for Freud? Do we, in 2007, have anything in common with the ancient Greeks? What about with the Modernists?

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**THINK ABOUT IT:** Is there any particular artistic, technological, or political movement that will define the early years of the 21st Century the way that Modernism defined the early 1900s? How would you like your time to be remembered in history? The Hip-Hop Age? The Digital Decade? The Post 9/11 Era?
Exploring the Social Issues
Oh... Gross!
Just how freaky was this Freud guy anyway?

It would be easy enough to completely disregard Freud’s ideas as the ravings of a coked-out pervert. People have been doing that for over 100 years now. Freud’s early work disturbed the people of Vienna so much that instead of debating his theories, they laughed at him or totally ignored him. They called his work immoral and believed it was unworthy of their attention. For the first decade of his career, Freud was a pariah (an outcast) and the butt of polite society’s jokes.

THINK ABOUT IT . . .
Are there any pop culture figures or hot topics that we would rather laugh at than discuss? Try to come up with some examples of modern day pariahs.

ACTIVITY:
Laughter is the Best Evasion

Have you ever laughed at something that made you uncomfortable? It’s a very common reaction, almost as popular as squirming. Why do you think we do this? After you’ve come up with some examples of laughing away awkward moments, try to play out the same scenes without the comic release. You could either write a scene or just improvise with a partner. What does laughing allow us to evade (hide from)? What does it prevent us from seeing?

DID YOU KNOW?
Around the turn of the century, society was governed by very strict rules of decency. It was considered crude to name any body parts in front of ladies—so saying the word “knees” could get you into trouble. Just imagine how they reacted to Freud when he started talking about penis envy!

Of all Freud’s ideas, perhaps the most difficult to consider objectively (without our own emotions coloring our view) is this:

"...the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon [Oedipus]. It is the fate of all of us perhaps, gentlemen, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother... (Oedipus Complex 10)."

It’s easy to see why people (then and now) would have strong reactions to Freud’s idea that human nature includes incestuous desires, but think about what else Freud is saying. The Oedipus complex suggests that our unconscious minds are shaped during childhood by impulses that we did not control and experiences we probably don’t even remember.

Explore your own idea of romantic partnership. In what way, if any, was that shaped by the relationship between your parents? Are there qualities you admire in either one of your parents that you might seek in a partner? Are there qualities you know you would want to avoid? Doesn’t it seem sort of obvious that we might model our relationship expectations—whether positive or negative—on the relationships we witness up close? What other relationship models might influence the way we think about this stuff (movies, songs, books, Brangelina)?

What other aspects of yourself may have been shaped by your childhood? Do you have any fears that you can link to a scary experience from your past? Is there a color or a smell that triggers feelings of happiness or security? At their most basic, least scandalous level Freud’s theories give us a new way to understand ourselves.
A paradox is a statement that seems self-contradictory but that expresses a possible truth. You’ve probably heard the expressions “Ignorance is bliss,” and “Knowledge is power.” But have you ever really thought about what they mean? Are there situations in which it is truly better to remain uninformed? Or is knowledge always better than ignorance? Is it possible to ask too many questions? What about too few?

Curiosity Killed the Cat.

In both of these stories, human curiosity introduces evil into the world and disrupts the peace and quiet of paradise. Is curiosity an intrinsic quality in human beings? Think about how badly you wanted to know the truth about the Tooth Fairy when you were little. When you realized what was going on, were you any better off? In the play, Oedipus says:

... Nothing can stop me now. I must know everything. ... I must discover who I am, know the secret of my birth ... I will not stop until I discover who my parents are.

Is the truth really going to help Oedipus? Wasn’t he happier before he knew his real origins?

The Truth Shall Set You Free.

So knowledge can sometimes get you into trouble, but what’s the alternative? If Oedipus wasn’t so determined to find out the truth of his birth, would the truth ever have come out? What would happen to Thebes in the meantime? If Freud had been less curious about his own reaction to his father’s death, do you think he would have worked so hard to interpret his dreams? And if you still believed in the Tooth Fairy when you had kids of your own, who would put money under their pillows?

I am possessed by an overpowering need to understand something of the riddles of the world.

LIGHT and DARKNESS

As you read the Oedipus Complex script, notice all of the references to light and darkness. Think about all of the different connotations of these words:

- What does it mean to be in the dark about something?
- What does it mean to see the light?
- What does it mean to shed some light on a subject?
- Is one or the other associated with good? With evil?

Think about your own experiences of being in the dark and of seeing the light. Which did you prefer? Are there any instances where it’s really better not to know the truth?
Oddly enough, the major link between Galati’s two main characters isn’t the complex that Freud named after Oedipus. Their deeper connection is the quest for a better understanding of self; it is a quest that motivates and frustrates them both. It eventually destroys one while bringing the other fame and recognition. Oedipus is quite literally seeking his identity. Freud is searching for something a bit more abstract: a way to unify and explain all of his own emotions and behaviors. Oedipus has known for years what Freud is just figuring out: the key to self-discovery is understanding one’s parentage and childhood. Oedipus finally found himself all in one day (and it was almost too much for him to handle). Freud believed that finding yourself was a process that required a lot of hard work and a substantial amount of time.

**ACTIVITY**

**FREE YOUR MIND**

Sigmund Freud encouraged his patients to use a technique called free association to uncover hidden fears and desires. He explains the technique by comparing thoughts to the sights you pass while riding on a train. Patients were asked to describe each thought without trying to figure out what it meant or whether it was significant.

Try to write one free association journal entry each day for a week. Give yourself a time limit (maybe 10 minutes), but don’t restrict your writing in any other way. Don’t worry about grammar, spelling, or even logic; just write down whatever comes into your mind. At the end of the week, read your writing and see if there’s anything there that surprises you.

**ACTIVITY: WHO WAS I? WHO WILL I BE?**

Take a look at Josh Hoff’s photomontage *Faces of Freud*. Does it do more than document the frequent shifts in fashionable facial hair?

Try making a similar montage of yourself. You may use all photos and create collage documenting your life up to this point, or you could start with existing photos and draw pictures (or clip them from magazines) to represent your future self.

What does your collage say about your childhood? What does it tell you about who you are now and where you’re going in the future? Is there any value in actually being able to see yourself grow and change? How accurate is your memory of your past self?

**THINK ABOUT IT:** What does it mean to “find yourself?” Is it like finding your keys? Where would you start to look?
Responding to the Play
The term *Freudian slip* refers to a verbal mistake that exposes a hidden truth about the speaker’s unconscious. It’s named after Freud because in his book *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, he explained his belief that there are no “innocent” mistakes, that everything we do and say is informed by our own unconscious desires and fears. What do you think?

In Galati’s *Oedipus Complex*, Freud indicates that he prefers to “fight back” against anti-Semitism. How do you think Freud fought back? Have you ever been the victim of discrimination? How did you respond?

We have seen how Sophocles and Freud influenced their societies, but how did society influence them? List some specific ways that each man reflects his own time and place. In what ways has society influenced you? How do you reflect the time and place in which you live?
SCENE 1
1. Who is the first to address the audience? To whom is he speaking?
2. What is different about the feelings of psychoneurotics towards their parents, according to this man?
3. What does he feel confirms this theory?
4. In three sentences, summarize what has happened before the play begins, as related by this character.

SCENE 2
1. Who is Oedipus? Why is he here?
2. Who are the other men in this scene? Why have they come to Oedipus?
3. Who speaks for the people gathered there? Why does Oedipus respect him?
4. Name three symptoms of the plague which is afflicting Thebes.
5. What did Oedipus do to help Thebes in the past that makes the people think he can end the current plague?
6. Why does Oedipus suffer more than the other men of the city?
7. Whom has Oedipus sent to Delphi? Why has he sent the man there?

SCENE 3
1. What is Apollo’s command? What must happen for the city to be saved?
2. Who was Laios? What happened to him?
3. What is the clue to the identity of the murderers? Who holds this information?
4. What kept the people of Thebes from searching for Laios’s murderers?
5. What does Oedipus vow that he will do? What are his reasons for this action?

SCENE 4
1. To whom is the chorus appealing at the top of this scene?
2. What does Freud say has affected him “profoundly?”
3. What, according to Freud, is the most important event in a man’s life?
4. What does the chorus describe in this scene?
5. Why, according to Freud, must the hero of a tragedy suffer?
6. What explanation does Freud give for the effect Oedipus the King has on a modern audience? What does he propose may be the “fate of all of us?” What evidence does he give?

SCENE 5
1. Name two of the gods the chorus appeals to in this scene, and for what they ask each of them.
2. The chorus repeatedly asks for something specific to happen to the murder – for what do they ask?
3. For whom is Oedipus searching? What will happen to the man when he is found?
4. Name four things Oedipus commands his people to deny the man for whom he searches.
5. Oedipus says he will fight for Laios as he would fight for whom?
6. What curse does Oedipus place on those who will not obey?
7. Who does Freud, acting as chorus leader, tell Oedipus must show the identity of the killer?
8. What does Teiresias see?

SCENE 6
1. What happened to Freud’s father in Vienna? How did Freud feel about it?
2. For what did Freud hate his father in that moment?
3. What does Freud say he finds in himself?
4. What has Freud begun to do? Where is this leading him? Where is “something” hiding?
SCENE 7
1. What does only Teiresias know? What physical disability does he have?
2. What skills does Oedipus ask Teiresias to use?
3. According to Teiresias, when is wisdom a curse?
4. Why will Teiresias not tell Oedipus what he sees? What does he say the truth will do?
5. Of what does Oedipus accuse Teiresias? With what accusation does Teiresias respond?
6. In what do Oedipus and those he love “wallow,” according to Teiresias?
7. What does Oedipus suggest Kreon has been plotting since Oedipus came to Thebes? What does Oedipus assume about Teiresias in regard to Kreon?
8. How does Teiresias respond? Who does he say is his true master?
9. What curse does Teiresias say will whip Oedipus forever?
10. What does Teiresias tell Oedipus is his mother and father? What will it do to him?
11. What does Teiresias predict will happen to Oedipus? Name at least three of his predictions.

SCENE 8
1. What is Freud’s recurring dream? What is he requested to do? What is he too late to do?
2. Name the three things Freud says “to close your eyes” is.
3. Why did Freud have to be the greatest doctor in Austria?
4. What does Freud say his recurring dream may represent?
5. What reason does the chorus give for why Oedipus cannot be evil?

SCENE 9
1. Why has Kreon returned?
2. What does Oedipus say Kreon has been plotting? Of what else does he accuse Kreon?
3. What power does Kreon share with Oedipus? Why?
4. What does Kreon really want? What does he enjoy now, without dangers?
5. Kreon tells Oedipus to do what to confirm or deny Teiresias’s story? What will he do if the oracle says he has plotted against the king?
6. What does Oedipus want from Kreon by the end of the scene?

SCENE 10
1. What does Jocasta want Kreon and Oedipus to do?
2. With whom does the chorus most empathize in this scene? What do they want to happen?
3. What does Oedipus tell the chorus they are asking for in regards to him?
4. What does Jocasta need to know? How does the chorus respond to her request?

SCENE 11
1. How does Jocasta feel about Teiresias’s revelation about Oedipus? What example does she give to support her point of view?
2. What memory does Oedipus have while Jocasta tells her story?
3. For what details does he ask Jocasta? How does he respond when he receives them?
4. Who is the only witness to Laios’s murder?
5. What story from his past does Oedipus relate to Jocasta? Summarize it in three sentences.
6. What revelation does Oedipus make to Jocasta at the end of his story?
7. What is the only hope Oedipus says he has?
8. What does Jocasta tell Oedipus is her only wish?

SCENE 12
1. What does the chorus say about the laws – who created them?
2. Of what did Freud suspect his father for many years? Why was it impossible?
3. What shift does Freud make in his seduction theory?
4. What does the chorus pray that Apollo will do to tyrants? The chorus asks Apollo to do what to or for them?
5. Where would Freud's nurse take him? What did he later learn about her?
6. What do we see Jocasta do, according to the stage directions, at the end of this scene?

SCENE 13
1. Who arrives from Corinth? What has he come to tell Oedipus?
2. How did King Polybus die? Why is this important to Oedipus?
3. What advice does Jocasta give Oedipus about how to live his life? What does she say about his dreams?
4. According to Oedipus, "nothing on earth is sweeter to a man's eyes" than what?
5. What further news does the messenger bring about Oedipus's parents? What role did this man play in Oedipus's past?
6. Where was Oedipus left alone to die? What had been done to his feet? Why is this significant to the plot of the play?
7. What does the name "Oedipus" mean?
8. What does Jocasta want Oedipus to stop doing? Does Oedipus comply with her wishes?
9. What is the only thing Jocasta says she can call Oedipus?

SCENE 14
1. What must Oedipus know? What must he discover?
2. Which gods does the chorus suggest could be Oedipus's father? Who do they propose could be his mother?

SCENE 15
1. Who arrives with Oedipus's men?
2. Why won't the shepherd answer Oedipus's questions? How does he describe the words?
3. What does the shepherd ultimately reveal to Oedipus? Why did the shepherd take the action he did?
4. How does Oedipus respond?

SCENE 16
1. How does the chorus receive the news of Oedipus's birth parents? What doesn't last according to them?
2. What did Freud begin to study upon the death of his father?
3. Whom did Freud remember in his dream titled "Bad Treatment?" In what did she "instruct" young Freud?
4. What happened on the train ride from Leipzig to Vienna when Freud was a young boy?
5. What does he come to realize – which two roles is he playing?
6. By what "overpowering need" is Freud possessed?

SCENE 17
1. What news does the servant bring to the chorus? What has happened to Oedipus and Jocasta?
2. What, specifically, did Oedipus do to himself?

SCENE 18
1. Whom does Oedipus call 'friend?"
2. How does Oedipus explain his actions?
3. Why can words not express the shame, according to Oedipus? What should words never do?

SCENE 19
1. What does Oedipus ask Kreon to do? How does Kreon respond to the request?
2. Who is brought out of the palace to Oedipus?
3. Does Oedipus have power any longer?

SCENE 20
1. With what thoughts or advice does the chorus leave us?
Mary Ann Thebus played Nat in the recent Goodman Theatre production of David Lindsay-Abaire’s Rabbit Hole directed by Steve Scott. Scott Bradley designed the set for the play. The letters on this page were written by students who attended one of our student matinees.

Dear Mary Ann Thebus,

Hi, my name is Cecily Noble and I go to Sullivan High School. On April 11, we had the pleasure to see Rabbit Hole... What really caught my attention was the theme of the play about parents losing their kids to car accidents. I have known so many people who lost their kids that way. So I really related to the story and it helped me understand what they went through, but also how we can never really understand because it’s different for everyone.

You were one of my favorite actresses. You gave the play so much enthusiasm and every time you spoke I knew you would say something funny. To me, it’s always good to see someone older act because you have so much more experience than younger actress... My grandmother is just like the character you played, Nat. She always loved talking about the Kennedys and the curse. She said exactly what you said that they were just dumb and rich. I really miss her and you helped me bring back those memories of her. You are really special and I would like to see another play with you in it... 

Sincerely,
Cecily Noble

To Scott Bradley,

How is it going? My name is Ricky Lopez. I attend Noble Street Charter High School. I am a junior. Over the past 2 months our class has discussed everything about the play Rabbit Hole. Our class has gone to 3 plays prior to seeing Rabbit Hole. Our class read the entire play before seeing it. We were definitely prepared for watching this play.

The set was completely amazing. The set for this play was definitely more attractive than the set in the 2 other plays we saw. I was impressed with the color and the realism. The house the family lived in is so much liket he house I live in. Overall, I was impressed with the accuracy of the set design. The refrigerator was even attractive!

While watching the play, I was interested in the color. Whose idea was it for so much color to be involved? Why were there never any pictures of Danny? ... Is set design what you wanted to do all your life? If so, what inspired you? Do you have any other interests? If you were not a designer, what would you be doing?

Sincerely,
Ricky Lopez

LETTER-WRITING TIPS:

- Be sure to choose on specific artist to write to. Use your program to double-check names and spelling.
- Think about your favorite scene in the play and explain why it was your favorite.
- Ask questions!
- Proofread your letter before you send it.