Sophocles (496-406 BC)

Oedipus Trilogy:
1. *Oedipus Rex (Oedipus the King)*
2. *Oedipus at Colonus*
3. *Antigone*
The Oedipus Trilogy

Sophocles is more concerned with exploring and developing individual characters in his drama than with expounding a point of view; in general, Sophocles seems to combine an awareness of the tragic consequences of individual mistakes with a belief in the collective ability and dignity of the human race.

For Sophocles, the choice between good and evil is never clear or easy and is sometime impossible. More than any of his contemporaries, Sophocles emphasizes how much lies outside our own control, in the hands of destiny or the gods.

His insistence that we respect and revere the forces that we can not see or understand makes him the most traditionally religious of the tragedians. These ambiguities appear in his best-known play, Oedipus the King, which stood ever since Classical times as a symbol of Greek tragic drama.
The Family of Oedipus

Cadmos - Harmonia

Agave - Echion
Polydoros - Nycteis
Ino - Athamas
Semele - Zeus
Autonoe

Laios - Iocasta

Oedipus - Iocasta

Eteocles
Polyneices
Antigones
Ismene
• The tragic curse on the family of Cadmus
The Delphic Oracle
The Mystery & Illusion of Life

• Why does Oedipus deserve to suffer?
Oedipus & the Sphinx

- Ingres
Oedipus & the Sphinx

- Moreau
Blindness & Insight

- Who is really blind? Tiresias or Oedipus?
The tragedy continues:

- Oedipus cursed on his children
• Seven against Thebes
Conflict of Values: Family vs. State

- Oedipus & Antigone 1
Aristotle’s Definition of Tragedy

• Imitation of an action: *mimesis*
• The action = plot = the downfall of a noble hero
• Complete: beginning, middle, ending
  beginning ➔ *in medias res*
• Different parts: Structure of tragedy
• *Catharsis*: psychological effect of tragedy
Action: searching for the murderer of King Laios in order to purge the plague in Thebes.

- A causal, inevitable sequence of events connected intimately with the personality of the tragic hero.
- Harmartia = tragic flaw
- Hubris = excessive pride

*Reversal of fortune
* Alatheia: unconcealment of the truth