

An Oedipus—The Untold Story
A Ghostly Mythodrama in One Act
a play by Armando Nascimento Rosa



with a Foreword by Susan Rowland and
Essays by Christine Downing and Marvin Carlson

AN OEDIPUS—THE UNTOLD STORY

A Ghostly Mythodrama in One Act

Armando Nascimento Rosa

Translated from the Portuguese by LUIS TOLEDO

Revised and edited by MICHAEL MENDIS

in collaboration with the author

With a Foreword by

SUSAN ROWLAND

and Essays by

CHRISTINE DOWNING *and* MARVIN CARLSON



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Foreword

It is a great honor to be asked to write the foreword to the English edition of Armando Nascimento Rosa's important new play, *An Oedipus—The Untold Story: A Ghostly Mythodrama in One Act*, and to the distinguished companion essays in this volume by Christine Downing and Marvin Carlson. This English version, translated from the original Portuguese by Luis Toledo, will be performed for the first time on stage at "Psyche and Imagination: A Conference of the International Association for Jungian Studies" at the University of Greenwich, UK, in July 2006, directed by Pippa Guard, and with a cast from the university.

During the last hundred years the story of Oedipus has haunted the cultural imagination like no other. When Sigmund Freud developed his famous interpretation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*, the world of 5th-century B.C.E. Athens had reached the height of its veneration in modern times. The early 20th century revered Sophocles' state as the source of civilization and the foundation of Western democracy. Its reputation was brightened by the obvious comparison with its neighbor city of Sparta. The militaristic code of the latter all too easily recalled contemporary totalitarian and fascist regimes.

By the 21st century, however, the society of Sophocles' Oedipus could no longer be simply regarded as a model of civilized values. In the context of successive critical examinations of Western history, 5th-century Athens was guilty of slavery, imperialism, and of offering very few rights to women, who were probably not permitted to attend performances of *Oedipus Tyrannos*. Sparta, by contrast, is revealed as a more complex state in which women had a large measure of determination over their own lives.

As Christine Downing's magnificent scholarly essay demonstrates, Freud evolved, over his career, a more nuanced understanding of the fundamental importance of the Oedipus legend than is often popularly believed. Crucially also, Downing shows us, he, like Sophocles, Seneca,