

## THE RIGHTS OF THE STRANGER IN A. N. AKWANYA'S *ORIMILI AND SOPHOCLES' KING OEDIPUS*

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### Abstract

Creative writers, from the time of classical literature, have shown marked interest in the adventures of characters that inhabit the world of their literary works. These fictive characters, particularly the heroes among them, have been involved in the quest for identity in the land of their sojourn. However, literary critics have analyzed these works from either sociological or historical or cultural or feminist perspective and so on. This study intends to use a quasi-legal parameter to critically evaluate the extent of citizenship rights granted to two migrant-characters – Orimili and Oedipus – in the fictional settings of *Orimili* and *Oedipus*. The comparative analysis of these two genres, from different creative writers, different cultures and eras will help in the determination of whether their tragic flaws are as a result of the identity crises the tragic heroes go through in their quest for the full realization of their citizenship rights or based on other factors.

### Introduction

Creative writers have shown marked interest in the migration and adventure of fictional characters in the fictive worlds of their literary works. The issue that arises is whether the adventurous characters, who have settled in other places, are to be treated as aliens or immigrants or are they full or naturalized citizens? If they are regarded as aliens or strangers, in that case, they are outsiders in their host communities, but if they are seen as citizens, then they are insiders. And there are rights attached to each of the statuses. The rights of strangers are circumscribed, while those of citizens are not, but each status has obligatory duties attached to it, particularly for the citizens. *Orimili* and *King Oedipus* are works from different genres, with different literary eras, produced within  
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different cultural traditions, and written by two different writers. However, the two writers fulfilled the Aristotelian tradition of poetry by presenting a 'cosmos, a world with physical, moral and human dimensions into which the specific tale or event can be placed and understood' (Echeruo 152). Ogude also agrees with this view when he says that '...all literatures necessarily have a cultural base, a spatial and temporal setting' (11). The universe which Akwanya presents in *Orimili* is one with a changing civilization, where things 'have really changed' and the context has become the 'age of the outsider' (*Orimili* 85). The oldest man in Okocha tells his kinsmen that things are no longer what they used to be for, 'Did not everything, man and beast, rain and wind, follow their own regular cycles? But now everything has been overturned. Only the great river, Orimili, I think, has kept its course – in that it is still flowing southwards as it did in the days of Omee-Ogwali' (80). But even the great river is affected by the vagaries of nature or climatic changes as Oranudu observes further, '... you would have noticed that the flood of the great river itself is not as full or as powerful as it was when I was very young. So our Orimili has changed' (80-81). The world Sophocles created in *King Oedipus* is stable, but it is threatened by criminal and immoral deeds, and the Theban gods, particularly Apollo, jealously guard the moral tone of the society to ensure it does not collapse.

Though the two works belong to different literary genres, they share a certain similarity in their settings – Okocha and Cadmean Thebes – are both traditional societies. Okocha is an agrarian community, where the people are all farmers, and they frown at Orimili's haulage and freight business. Oranudu does not support Orimili's application to the *ozo* peerage because he fails the test of the standard for measuring wealth. In his opinion, 'The good old days were gone, when you knew a man's worth by looking at his barn; and when you would know upon seeing the white thread that one has made it, thanks to the machete and hoe. Now there were people who didn't own a yam tendril, and yet were said to be able to pay for the title; wasn't that remarkable (81)?' Sophocles sets his tragic play in Thebes, and the people are mainly shepherds. But while Thebes is not a colonized entity, Okocha is colonized and the

fact of colonization leaves its marks on the social, economic and cultural life of the characters. Okocha, therefore, and its *ozo* sodality are under the siege of modernity initiated by the 'new social order, which obtains from the people immediate compliance' (Akwanya *Language and Habits of Thought* 38).

Okocha and Thebes have multiplicity of gods, and these gods, together with the diviners play important roles in the lives of the people. The pantheon and the diviners are consulted if there is any misfortune which befalls or is likely to befall the individual or community. For instance, Orimili takes his nickname, 'Orimili', after the great river and one of the greatest deities of Okocha. The significance of this metonymic association should be appreciated as 'most of the people thought that it referred to the supposed vastness of his wealth, namely, that it was inexhaustible, just as the great river did not shrink nor slow down, despite its having been discharging water since time began' (96). Like in Thebes, some of the gods are masculine while some are feminine. Masculine gods in the worlds of the works include Thebe's Apollo and Okocha's Orimili. While Artemis is a goddess in Greek mythology, there are also equivalent ones in Okocha, which are closely tied to the profession of the women. When self-effacing, Okuata tells Orimili that she is taking the children to her family, the narrator reflects the polytheist nature of Okocha in:

Orimili took his turn to inquire as to the way in which his wife has attained this revelation. Had she had an apparition from the goddess of the fire place or from that of freshwater stream? Were this the farming season, he would have enquired also about the goddess of cocoyam and of the cassava (143).

The protagonist's greatest god is Orimili, the owner of the river where he plies his barge. A seer also divines that he 'was the offspring of the god of the river, being a river-spirit as the seer divined, and formerly part of the retinue of the river god. The river was his element' (98). Orimili, therefore, has an intimate relationship with the god that protects him as he ferries goods and people across the river. In the world of *King Oedipus*, the people do not have such an intimate relationship with the gods and goddesses as to impute them of having human beings as their children or

offspring. The pantheon of gods is held in great awe, and their injunctions are carried out to the last letter. King Laius has to throw Oedipus away at birth, when Apollo's minister reveals it will commit unheard of atrocities, when he grows up. Also during the pestilence, Apollo orders:

There is an unclean thing.

Born and nursed on our soil, polluting our soil,

Which must be driven away, not kept to destroy us (11).

Oedipus does everything to find the identity of the polluter of Thebes, and when he turns out to be the one, he never hesitates to go into exile to spare the people the scourge of death.

Apart from the pantheon which forms the integral part of the communities, Okocha people are also animists, unlike the Thebans in *King Oedipus*. They hold sacred the 'soil, the great river, the ancestors and all the gods' (166), and also the giant Ngwu tree, which dwarfs everything is held sacred and worshipped for it is a 'god in its own right, or representative of a god' (131). And like all the other gods, a priest and a couple of old men offer sacrifices 'at its foot in the name of the townspeople' (131).

In the setting of the novel, *Orimili*, and the play, *King Oedipus*, there is the absence of calendrical time. The events narrated in the novel take place during the Second World War, that is, between 1939 and 1945. Orimili intends to remind Osita, who is studying law in Britain, to keep off the war. To him, '...he visualized it as a dispute between two English kings, one of whom, he heard learnt, was called Hitler' (171). Again, the British colonial administrator in Okono has built a colonial defence regiment in Okocha, and is enlisting the 'children of Okocha to fight in a war the causes of which they could not account for' (169-170). Prior to this present war, Oranudu reminds the sodality that the first Europeans flee their homeland to settle in Okocha and elsewhere 'as a result of the first war' (81). This 'first war', presumably, is a reference to the First World War between European nations. Despite the incursion of colonizers in the world of the novel, despite their skeletal presence in Okocha with a trading outpost and a school-church complex, the Okocha people do not mark time with European measurement, but tie it to the significant events or through the counting of market

days or cockcrows. The public holiday the men of Okocha gather at Amanza to relax 'was the great Afor, the townspeople's weekly days of rest which occurred at eight-day intervals, with the minor Afor as a half-way point between the great one and the next' (2). This weekly holiday is for the adults who are farmers; Orimili's children have gone to school 'for the school ran on a different pattern' (2), which is the British model. Besides, during the days Orimili will go to work, there is no precision as to when he starts and when he ends. The reader is simply told that on market days, he starts 'his mornings before cockcrow' (4), and 'he usually returned not long after dark' (4).

In the world of *King Oedipus*, the people do not make use of calendrical time: for some events, they are precise and for some others, they are not. Jocasta is precise about the time the prophecy of Apollo on their baby is made. She recalls vividly to Oedipus, 'As for the child, it was not yet three days old, when he cast it out' (30). She says this in order to persuade Oedipus that he cannot trust the prophecies of the gods, goddesses and the diviners. However, there is no precision when he inquires as to the time of the killing of King Laius in order to know whether he is the killer as blind Teiresias accuses him. Creon only tells him, 'A long time now, longer than I can say' (25). And Jocasta says, 'It became known a little time before your reign began' (31). In the worlds of the two tragic works, therefore, time is an essential category, and the characters can be 'individualized if they are set in a background of particularized time and place' (Hale 470). In the literature of Classical Greece, to which *King Oedipus* belongs, literature is conceived as timeless and unchanging because it 'reflected the basic premise of their civilization in general that nothing happened or could happen whose fundamental meaning was not independent of flux of time' (ibid 471). E.M. Forster(quoted in Hale 47) further argues that portrayal of 'life by time' is the distinct role which the novel has added to literature's more ancient preoccupation with the portrayal of 'life by values'. However, life is not portrayed by time in A.N. Akwanya's *Orimili* because the society described is a preliterate one that has not had the values of modernity ingrained in it.

Having seen the fictional settings of the two tragic works, there is need to examine the nature of the tragic heroes' quest for identity and citizenship, for it is this quest that leads to their tragic end. Ifeoma Onyemelukwe has explained the concept of identity as the 'individual's struggle to define himself, to discover himself, to understand himself, to know himself. The person tries to grapple with such questions: Who am I? What am I? How do people see me? How do I see myself? What do I want to become? How can I connect myself to explorations with opportunities and demands of society' (2004:35-36)? There is no doubt that the formulation of these questions by the tragic heroes, who are described as 'more than man to the extent the situation against which he is matched is more than man, there is also a certain necessity in the action he takes' (*50 Years of the Nigerian Novel* 45). In the two works, the action is propelled by Orimili's and Oedipus's quest to establish their identities in Okocha and Thebes/Corinth respectively. In Orimili's case, he wants particularly to be inducted into Okocha as a naturalized citizen with all the rights that go with it, but Oedipus wants to unravel the mystery of King Laius death and the mystery of his own birth. In other words, the two men's intentions are to establish whether they are strangers or citizens in the land of their sojourn. Even in the primordial societies of *Orimili* and *King Oedipus*, no individual is born without any nationality. In order to properly ground the meaning and essentiality of the men's quests, we must have recourse to extant laws on citizenship. A citizen is described as:

A person who, by either birth or naturalization, is a member of a political community, owing allegiance to the community and being entitled to enjoy all its civil rights and protections; a member of a civil society, entitled to all its privileges (*Black's Law Dictionary* 278).

Under modern international law, the United Nations recognizes the citizenship of the individual. Article 15 (1) of *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states, 'Everyone has a right to a nationality'. It further states in Article 15(2), 'No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change its nationality'. It is obvious that the comity of states recognizes that the fundamental

rights in the declaration will be better and fully enjoyed, if one is a citizen of a country. The *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999* makes provisions for citizenship in its chapter III, sections 25-32. Section 25 (1) provides the criteria for one to acquire Nigerian citizenship by birth. The person should be born in Nigeria before October 1, 1960 and either of his parents or grandparents belongs to a Nigerian indigenous community or a person born in Nigeria after October 1, 1960 but either of his parents or grandparents belongs to an indigenous Nigerian community or the person is born outside Nigeria but either of his parents or grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria. Section 26 (1) provides for citizenship by registration by a foreign woman married to a Nigerian citizen or anyone who has attained the age of majority and is born outside Nigeria, but any of his parents or grandparents is a Nigerian citizen. Section 27 (1) of the apex law provides for citizenship by naturalization. There are stringent conditions which an applicant who wants to be issued with a certificate of naturalized citizenship must fulfill. He must be of full age and capacity; he is a person of good character; he must have domiciled in Nigeria for not less than fifteen years; he has been assimilated by the local community where he intends to reside, he has contributed to the advancement and progress of the country; he has taken the oath of allegiance. Sections 29 and 30 of the constitution provide for the renunciation of citizenship and deprivation of citizenship for naturalized citizens for criminal offences, which the court has tried and sentenced him for not less than a term of three years. The loss of citizenship applies only to registered and naturalized citizens and not those whose acquisition of citizenship status is by birth.

Having seen the definition, acquisition and loss of citizenship, the textual analysis of the creative works show that Orimili's application to the *ozo* peerage is for him to be granted the rights of a naturalized citizen in Okocha, because his lineage has been with the people for four generations, and he has fulfilled other conditions necessary for him to be granted that. Oedipus does not need any registration or application since he is a citizen by birth of Thebes, but ironically seen as a stranger by the people. As the priest recalls, 'It was you, we remember, a newcomer to Cadmus

town/That broke our bondage to the vile Enchantress' (9). And Oedipus also sees himself as a stranger. He addresses the suppliants thus, 'Therefore, as a citizen newly received among you' (15), when he sets out to solve the mystery of the killer of King Laius, which is the cause of the ravaging of Thebes.

### **Textual Analysis of *Orimili* and *King Oedipus***

Both Orimili and Oedipus are famous men in the fictive settings of each work, who embark on actions that will end tragically for them to unravel their identity or citizenship status. While Orimili does not have fame thrust on him like Oedipus, he makes his money through his freight business. On the other hand, Oedipus is born a noble, the son of king Laius and Queen Jocasta, and had been thrown away by the parents because of the terrible prophecy on his head that he will murder his father, marry his mother and beget his own children through an incestuous relationship with his mother. He is fostered in Cormth by King Polybus and Queen Merope.

Orimili is a wealthy man by all standards of measurement of wealth in Okocha. His four-bedroom bungalow is the first of its kind, and it arouses the envy of his less materially-endowed neighbours. According to the omniscient narrator, 'But there were few such houses in Okocha; Orimili's being the very first one built by a townsman' (4.) He is not only the first person to erect such a modern house in Okocha, but he is the first person to send his child to school, up to a university level. Therefore, he is presented as a model of fatherhood:

As a matter of fact, he knew a great deal more, for there wasn't another parent in Okocha, save Orimili, whose child remained in school from one end of the year to the other, and for several years in succession. Osita never came home on holidays from Europe, which meant to Orimili that he was never on holidays. Because he was unique in having followed closely the career of Okocha's model child, Orimili could lay down the law for the less experienced parents for bringing up their children (23).

Orimili is a very prosperous man, whose wealth, unlike Oedipus's, elicits a 'good deal of envy, and perhaps resentment' (1) from the others. Despite his enormous wealth, he is still regarded as a



stranger in Okocha as his evidence at the trial of one of his workers for profanation of a masquerade is brushed aside as the evidence of an outsider. Therefore, his application to the *ozo* durbar through Ogbuefi Emenogha 'was a better way to gain a clarification as to what he was taken for; whether he was a citizen or a stranger' (42). His quest for the status of a naturalized citizen in Okocha will confer his entire family – dead, living, born and unborn – the advantage of being a 'full member of the community' (97). Though Orimili's quest starts from a personal one, the effects, if granted, will extend to a communal one as Obikeze, the seer divines that Orimili is:

...the reincarnation of the ancient ancestor, who founded and gave the name to that town .... What could such a title have meant to Orimili, notwithstanding that there were traits he held in common with the Ancient One? For instance, their both being wanderers, and their having a known desire to settle and give their offspring an inheritance (177).

On the other hand, Oedipus is a wealthy man, born into a noble family that rejects him, and also nurtured by an aristocratic family. Oedipus starts off with communal quest to identify the murderer of King Laius, which is the cause of the pestilential deaths in Cadmean Thebes. The Priest appeals to him on behalf of the other supplicants thus:

You too have seen our city's afflictions caught  
In a tide of death from which there is no escape  
Death in the fruitful flowering of her soil,  
Death in the pastures; death in the womb of women;

And pestilence, a fiery demon gripping the city,  
Stripping the house of Cadmus, to fatten hell  
With profusion of lamentation (9).

This primary quest of identifying the murderer of the late king takes a secondary position after blind Teiresias accuses him as the one, who has committed the crime. The seer fearlessly indicts him:

That man for whom you have ordered hue and cry  
The killer of Laius – that man is here.

Passing for an alien, a sojourner here among us  
But, as presently shall appear, a Theban born (22).

With circumstantial evidence he gathers about the time and manner of King Laius's death, his communal quest changes to a personal one as he is now determined to solve the mystery of his birth, which has been raised before by a drunk in Corinth. When Jocasta realizes his identity and tries to stop him, he refuses as seen in the following dialogue between them:

Jocasta (**white with terror**) What does it matter

What man he means? It makes no difference now.

Forget what he has told you ... it makes no difference

Oedipus: Nonsense! I must pursue this trail to the end

Till I have unraveled the mystery of my birth.

Jocasta: No! In God's name – if you want to live, this quest

Must not go on. Have I not suffered enough?

Oedipus: There is nothing to fear. Though I be proved slave  
born To the third generation, your honour is not impugned.

Jocasta: Yet do not do it. I implore you, do not do it.

Oedipus: I must. I cannot leave the truth unknown (41).

Though Oedipus is believed to be a stranger in Thebes, when he solves the mystery of the sphinx, he is seen as not 'The equal of gods, but as the first of men' (9). They make him their king and he marries the queen. Now that Thebes is being ravaged by pestilence, they come to him to solve the problem, and he is determined to sacrifice his wealth and position to unravel his true identity, if it will solve the communal problem.

In the worlds of *Orimili* and *King Oedipus*, Akwanya and Sophocles respectively presents the rights, privileges and correlative duties of the characters that inhabit them. In *Orimili*, the reader is told from the very beginning that Orimili is not assimilated as a full citizen, despite the fact he is born in Okocha and his family has been living there up to four generations. The agrarian society of Okocha delineates between citizenship by birth and naturalization and aliens or strangers and the privileges and rights that go with each status. Orimili's application to the *ozo* sodality, which is the highest administrative and judicial body in Okocha, is an application to be given the status of a naturalized citizen and the

privileges that go with it. His qualifications for the peerage includes: he is a wealthy man; he is a man of impeccable character; he is born in Okocha and his lineage has been there for four generations; his wife is from Okocha and he intends his son to marry into Ogbuefi Emenogha's family; his grandfather fights, dies and is buried with Okocha men during a war with Amofia; he has been performing his civic duties to the community. However, his application is rejected, because according to Nweke and his group, which opposed it vehemently, the genealogy of his family is questionable. According to them, '... no one knows from which country Orimili's people have come; except that it is somewhere in the north' (85). In Okocha, there is no law that says the title will or will not be conferred on immigrants, and there is also no precedence, but definitely, the *ozo* title is not for all comers. As one of the aldermen puts it:

... do you not know that Orimili Nwofia is a stranger to this town, and that this is the reason why the debate has dragged on for so long...? Do you know of any place in Igboland where strangers are given the **ozo** title? Everyone of you is afraid of speaking the plain truth, and that is why you are trying to lead the **ozo** society of Okocha into abomination .... Still we should say **no** to him; and I do say **no** to him. Why? Because this society belongs to Okocha, and not to Olu and Igbo! (77)

Despite his impeccable qualifications, he is still seen as a stranger and his application for the status of a naturalized citizen is rejected. However, there are other rights which he enjoys in Okocha, though those rights may be said also to be circumscribed. One, he has the ownership of a piece of land, where he builds his house, but he knows that the land falls short of what he would have had if he is a citizen of Okocha. As Orimili ponders on the land dispute between Ogbuefi Ikedi and Ogbuefi Nwalioba, he feels:

Of course, he had heard of no one being forced to give up portions of his own compound. However, this did not mean that a thing of the sort could not happen; nor did it follow that if it didn't happen to other townsmen, it could not happen to Orimili. The compound, where his house stood, comprised all the land he owned...(16).

It is not only Orimili who knows that his land is small, when compared to those of the citizens of Okocha. Nduka who is riled that people are contemptuous of him for selling his family land to redeem his late father's title, thinks if only Orimili has come to humiliate him, he would 'deal him a blow, sharp and stinging: what business had he with patrimonies, having none himself' (122).

Two, Orimili is given the full right of marrying into any family in Okocha, which finds the proposal desirable. Though the omniscient narrator never discloses to the reader where his deceased wife, Ekesi, is from, but he is told that the second wife, Okuata, is from Okocha. At the betrothal of Adoba to Osita who is absent, Udeagu Obinma tells him that Okuata is a great-grandchild of his family. Though Okocha is a dense network of kinship, '...a lot of it managed to miss Orimili in its criss-crossing' (50). Therefore, his desire to see Osita marry Adoba is to cement his friendship with Ogbuefi Emenogha, and to give identity to his family. Osita's marriage to a stranger while studying in Europe renders his effort futile and drives him into a psychopathic disorder because:

Ekwenze Orimili thought that the very circumstances of their existence made it absolutely necessary that his son should carry on in his footsteps. For everything he had ever done in his entire life, down to the marriage he had been arranging for Osita, had been motivated by policy. Had not the objective always been to root his family deeper in Okocha? (185)

In fact, Osita is a much sought-after bachelor in Okocha, and proactive Emenogha calculates the enormous benefits his family will harness from the marriage. To him, Osaemeka 'would have not only an older brother to guide him, but his sister would be helping as well. If Adoba and her husband would do this for his boy, what more could he ask' (38)?

Third, Orimili has his freedom of expression circumscribed as he is not a citizen of Okocha. In the land dispute between the two aldermen, which is discussed at the village square in Amanza, he supports Ogbuefi Nwalioba's resistance to Ikedi's greedy encroachment. His support is only in his thoughts for, 'Needless to say, Orimili recoiled from airing these views, knowing what consternation they would cause among his companions' (17). Again

the abridgement of his right of freedom of expression can be glimpsed from the manner he is called to give evidence at the trial of one of his men for assaulting a masquerade. He is neither allowed to give evidence in public nor his evidence given any weight. His secondary status is glimpsed in this narration:

Two titled men had interviewed Orimili privately, and he had explained to them how the incident had happened. To his surprise, however, the club finally decided that it was not an accident, but sacrilege. Did it mean that Ekwenze Orimili could not be trusted to report accurately what he himself had witnessed? Why wasn't he called to give his evidence before the assembly? For he was sure that if this had happened, the assembly would not be able afterwards to give the verdict against an innocent man. Rather, they had brushed him aside, treated him like an uninitiated, like a woman (42)!

It is after this humiliating treatment that he applies to the society, whose membership can be by initiation or inheritance. An adult can apply to be initiated or a wealthy man can initiate his sons. As Ogbuefi Ananwemadu tells the others, 'I have worn the white thread longer than a great many of you, having been initiated by my father' (79). The second method is through the redemption of one's father's title by the deceased's family. This is exercised by Nduka when his father dies because, 'The one investment Edoko had made, which was still valuable, was his **ozo** title. The right to assume this title belonged to the eldest son, naturally' (64).

Belonging to the society confers some privileges to its members. First, they constitute the highest judicial body in Okocha. Following the people's outrage at the unmasking of a masquerade, 'The **ozo** society later took over the case, and imposed a very heavy fine on the unfortunate man' (42). Nduka sells his patrimony to belong to the society because he wants a 'seat in the highest governing body of this town...' (67). Orimili's reflection on Nduka's new status shows the second advantage as he tells him honestly, '... the title itself which you now hold raises you, despite your youth, to the condition of an elder, and the upholder of the tradition' (122). Third, the membership of the society is an expensive one and it is seen as an investment; therefore, the

'society adjusted their demands so often in order to improve on their individual shares' (67). As an investment, Nduka has no reservation about redeeming the father's title. As he argues, 'Isn't a title in some way like family land, which remains in the family, and which members of the family, if need be, would fight for even if they are not the one actually working it' (69)? Fourth, the membership of the society also confers integrity and respectability on the members. Orimili's evidence at the trial of one of his boatmen is rejected; primarily, he is not a titled man. He wonders at his treatment, 'Did it mean that Ekwenze Orimili could not be trusted to report accurately what he himself had witnessed' (42)? Again the society finds it difficult to reach a decision in the land dispute between two titled men because:

One had to assume that, as a titled man, Ogbuefi Ikedi would not lie; and that was a good reason for the arbitrators to take it that both Nwalioba and Ikedi were speaking the truth. Orimili saw it all now. Wherever they said was the boundary between their two properties, then that was the boundary for both were titled men, and could not lie. Therefore, if their claim failed to coincide, it must be owing to a genuine confusion (17).

Fifth, members of the durbar enjoy a dress code, which distinguishes them from a non-initiate. Not only that they take on the title of 'Ogbuefi', but their paraphernalia of membership are described in minutest detail when Orimili visited Nduka as:

Nduka also placed his chalk-caked feet in such a way as to be easily noticed by the visitor, the chalk being a symbol of his recent induction into fellowship of title-holders. About his ankles were thick white cotton threads – he would wear such threads at all times, even on the farm, to remind him of his status. Behind him stood his father's enormous elephant tusk, beside which was his crimson cap, to which was attached a tall white eagle-feather, and he himself was dressed in flowing white wrappers. He appeared magnificent in the get-up (120).

They also have an unusual way of being greeted. The narrator said that Orimili hails Nduka by his full titles, 'Ogbuefi Nduka, *ogalanya nwata*' (120)! And he advanced towards 'Nduka, arm outstretched,

slapped the side of Nduka's fan three times with the back of his hand, and once with his palm' (120).

There are certain criteria which must be met before one is inducted into the society. The aspirant must be a full citizen of Okocha, that is citizenship by birth or blood, and not even a naturalized citizen. Therefore, Orimili's application fails because:

In Okocha no one was ever known to have grown out of the secondary status of a naturalized citizen into the privileges of ordinary citizenship. The people must have taken it as part of the privileges of full citizenship to be accounted a social success (1).

Ogbuefi Nweke Nwofia who subtly opposes his application advises the peerage to postpone any debate on it as 'concern has been voiced regarding his background. We cannot discount that, can we (86)?' And Ogbuefi Udeagu Obimma who wants to support Ogbuefi Emenogha's side asks for this clarification, 'Was he in fact a son of Okocha? That was going to be the sticking point. Orimili's background was obscure' (37).

Wealth is one of the criteria for induction into the society; however, the cost of initiation is higher than that for the redemption of the title. If the cost is not very high, 'ozo would soon become everybody's plaything' (64). The family of Edogo is unable to raise money to reclaim his title, though it is only a half of the cost of initiation, so Nduka has to sell the family land in order to do that. Not only the aspirant slaughters bulls to feast the whole community, but he must also make 'cash payments to the wives of the titled men' (66). Even after induction, the members are believed to be prosperous. Like Nwaka of Umummora in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, Ogbuefi Nweke Nwofia is wealthy and eloquent. Ogbuefi Emenogha reflects on his following that attaches to him, 'Was it because of his success, being the master of what was probably the richest barn in Okocha, and of a compound full of sons and wives (39)?

Besides, a man who intends to join the ozo society must also be one who has an impeccable character. The sponsor of Orimili's application, Ogbuefi Emenogha, thinks 'Orimili's resoluteness and

purposefulness altogether rare' (32). Ogbuefi Udozo who also backs the application also defends him at the debate:

On the contrary, it is quite sufficient that we do know the man, and that we are sure that he is worthy of the title. What do you know about him that makes him unworthy? What character blotch? Unless you can spot a handicap of that nature, let's quibble no further, and go and feast with Orimili (75)!

Those blocking Orimili's application know they cannot point out any moral flaw on his part. His great opponent, Nweke Nwofia, at least, recognizes 'Orimili as a public-spirited man' (86). Out of spite, he prefers the title is given to Nduka, who 'auctioned off a piece of their common land, and seems not to have consulted Nzeadi nor any of the family' (124), and does not look 'like one who would be able to pay for a title, or even buy back one for which someone else had already paid' to Orimili, who is 'reliable, and a well-meaning fellow' (167), and there is the prospect that 'we may have to gather together to take shelter under Osita's wings' (167).

In *Oedipus*, however, when Oedipus comes into Thebes, he is ironically regarded as a stranger among the people. His solving the riddle of the dog-faced sphinx, and saving Thebes from her menace, endears him to the people, and they make him their king. Oedipus also sees himself as a stranger in Thebes for he tells them that his father, Polybus, is a Corinthian and his mother, Merope, is a Dorian. Thebes, unlike Okocha, is a more liberal society where one can earn the status of full citizenship easily, if he is useful to society. Oedipus tells the supplicant the condition under which he can solve the new mystery:

If you will obey me, and are willing to put in hand  
The remedy your distress requires. I speak  
As a stranger, except by hearsay, to what has passed.  
And the story that has been told – without this clue  
I should make but little headway in the search.  
Therefore, as a citizen newly received among you  
It is you, Thebans, I make this proclamation! (15)

In Corinth also he is given the rights of a full citizen without any abridgement as in Thebes. He tells the supplicants, 'I rose to a person of pre-eminence' (32) in Corinth. Even though it is within



the knowledge of Corinthians that he is an adopted son of King Polybus and Queen Merope, he is well-assimilated and the people are ready to give him the highest privilege that can be enjoyed by citizens: to crown him their king. Unlike Okocha which runs a republican system, the worlds of Thebes and Corinth run on monarchical systems. When King Polybus dies, a messenger is sent to Oedipus in Thebes, 'Our people – such was the talk – will make him king/Of all *the Isthmus*' (37).

Oedipus as a king is also married to the late king's wife, Queen Jocasta, but the reader is not told whether it is his choice to marry a woman old enough to be his mother, and who ironically is actually his mother, or whether it is a condition precedent for his ascending the throne of Thebes. But the reader is told that the queen is his 'equal partner in rule and honour' (26), and he says that all that 'she can desire is hers by right' (26). As a king, his powers are absolute. He has the power to send a citizen into exile in his declaration to unravel the murderer of King Laius, 'Or if any man's conscience is guilty, let him give himself up/He will suffer the less. His fate will be nothing/ Than banishment. No other harm will touch him' (15). His power also to impose death sentence on other citizens, including a diviner like Teiresias, an aristocrat like Creon, and a commoner like King Laius' former servant, is unfettered, and that is why the men are circumspect in revealing his identity as the murderer of the king. He accuses Creon of treason for plotting to overthrow him with Teiresias, and pronounces his punishment, 'By no means. I would have you dead, not banished' (27).

Oedipus discharges the duties of protection and care, which he owes to Thebans. Before his adoption as a citizen of Thebes and given the throne, he sets them free from the sphinx by deciphering her riddle. As a king, he is ready to sacrifice himself in order to save the people. He stoically rejects Creon's offer to remain in Thebes with, 'No longer let my living presence curse this fatherland of mine, but let me go' (53). It is only a man that is more than other men that can make such sacrifices – renounce his throne, leave his children, reject being crowned a monarch in Corinth, reject a comfortable home to go into exile in the mountains. He scales

through the criteria for the measurement of a good leader, whom Charles Nnolim says:

I personally understand a leader to be that person in a group to whom others look up for initiative in pursuit of group goal and one who must possess the following virtues in abundance: honesty, integrity, hard work, infectious enthusiasm about others and their welfare, strong moral character, humility, self-discipline and patriotism for one cannot be the right leader in a society he does not truly love enough to be willing to die for (2012:2-3).

These are qualities which Oedipus has in abundance, which make it possible for him to enjoy the privileges of a monarch. One, he is a very intelligent man, and a knowledge-seeker, and that is why the chorus calls him the 'Greatest of men; held the key to the deepest mysteries' (55). His intelligence aids him to solve the mystery of the sphinx and set the people free; his manner of investigating and unraveling the identity of King Laius's murderer and the mystery of his birth points to the fact that he is a very intelligent. He challenges the blind seer who accuses him with the offence:

What was your vaunted seercraft worth?  
And where were you, when the Dog-faced witch was here?  
Had you any word of deliverance then for our people?  
There was a riddle too deep to common wits;  
A seer should have answered it, but answer came there none  
From you; bird-lore and god-craft all were silent  
Until I came – I, ignorant Oedipus, came –  
And the riddler's mouth, guessing the truth  
By mother-wit, not bird-lore (21).

Oedipus is very intelligent, but he lacks wisdom and does not appreciate when to stop his quest like Jocasta and the servant who witnessed king Laius's murder suggested.

He is also a very courageous man. It is with courage that 'Once he drowned the *she-devil/* The claw-foot Lady/He was our bastion against disaster, our honoured King' (45). Knowing how courageous he is in the past, the people fly to him for solution in the time of pestilential death again. He spares no effort in his resolve to solve

the mystery, as he sends Creon to Apollo, and also sends for the renowned seer, blind Teiresias. His courage can be seen in his fighting with King Laius's entourage and killing all, except one who escapes. The man has to lie that a band of robbers killed five of them, including the king, instead of 'one lone wayfarer' (34).

Apart from Oedipus being intelligent and courageous, he has one quality that probably brings his downfall: his quick temperament. It is this attitude that leads him to kill five men, as he recounts:

The driver's two-pronged goad, struck me on the head  
He paid with interest for his temerity;  
Quick as lightning, the staff in this right hand  
Did its work: he tumbled headlong out of the carriage  
And every man of them there I killed (33).

Moreover, his temperamental and rude manner of addressing Teiresias forces him to call him the murderer of King Laius publicly. His accusation that 'Then hear this: upon your head/Is the ban your lips have uttered – from this day forth/Never to speak to me or any here/You are the accursed polluter of this land' (19) is what leads to the solution of the mysteries of the murder and his birth. He is also too quick to utter a curse and a punishment of exile on whoever murdered the king. His quick temperament is also seen in his accusing Creon and Teiresias of treason, without hearing Creon's defence. Creon reasons with him:

To slur a good man's name  
With baseless slander is one crime – another  
Is rashly to mistake bad men for good  
Cast out an honest friend, and you cast out  
Your life, your dearest treasure (27).

Strong will and unflinching honesty are two qualities which mark Oedipus out from other characters in other literary works. He does not shy away from the punishment he recommends for anyone who has murdered the king. In fact, he exerts more punishment on himself, when he discovers he is the one, who committed the offence, than he would have done to others. He reminds Thebans about his decree:

All men to cast away the offender, the unclean,

Whom the gods have declared accursed, the son of Laius,  
And, having proved myself that branded man,  
Could I want sight to face this people's stare? (51)

It is obvious he imposes more punishment on himself. He chooses to go into self-exile despite Creon and other people's remonstrations to make him stay. But before that, he plucks out his two eyes for 'How could I meet my father beyond the grave/ With seeing eyes; or my unhappy mother/ Against who I have committed such heinous sin' (50). He feels that it is better for him to leave Thebes and go into exile, but not in Corinth where he is nurtured. He renounces the citizenship of both Thebes and Corinth:

And live upon the mountains and die there,  
Cithaeron! Name forever linked with mine –  
On Mount Cithaeron, which my parents choose  
To be my death bed, I will go and die  
Obedient to their desire (53).

It is obvious that the source of conflict in *Orimili* and *Oedipus* is as a result of the tragic heroes' quest for identity and rootedness or citizenship. While in *Orimili*, Orimili's struggle is that of man against man, that is, the rivalry between him and his opponents at the *ozo* peerage and that of Oedipus is man against nature or fate. In Orimili's case, the titled men in the peerage who are jealous of him, his vast wealth, freight business and his house use every intrigue to block his initiation into the club. Ogbuefi Emenogha is aware that some of the people hold 'deep malice' (151) against Orimili. They are resentful of him for he makes 'his profit at their own expense' (4). Okocha people's malice for Orimili's success is loaded in Okwuese Ananwemadu's humiliating questions to Okuata, 'And what is Orimili? You tell me that. Who in this town knows where he comes from, if he comes from *anywhere*' (90)? Nweke Nwofia, the influential orator with a great following in the peerage, cannot brood any competition from Orimili; therefore, he calculates the advantages of his master-stroke that divides the club. The narrator says:

It was even effective for the very reason that the argument could not now be carried on; thus was nipped in the bud the chance of forcing the opponents to admit that they were objecting to

the man, not in the interest of traditions of Okocha, but in their own (175).

Emenogha knows that Nweke Nwofia is 'a ruthless schemer and manipulator' (39), who stops his attempt to ensure that Orimili's application sails through, so that he can whittle down the orator's influence 'in that he was by far a more successful man' (39). Nweke Nwofia and his group use Orimili's genealogy to block his induction for what has he ever desired in the sodality, other than the right to call the shots? It is the same man who frustrates Orimili's application that readily decides that Okocha will give Osita, Orimili's son, the title. It is the same power play that is at work because:

Ogbuefi Nweke Nwofia found a golden opportunity a few years afterwards to reassert his authority. The time was remarkably well-chosen, and the issue sufficiently in the public eye as to seem unlikely to arouse a controversy. News had begun to reach them in Okocha about their son, Osita Nwofia, who was proving himself a significant figure in national politics. This was the issue that Ogbuefi Nweke has seized upon and quickly got the sodality to agree to hold a reception for the young man, give him a feathered crimson cap for his head, which was balding rather early, and a pair of **ozo** threads for his ankles (179).

Orimili's quest for the title is frustrated, but what he does not know is that the society is not what it appears to him as an outsider. The title-holders are not honourable and truthful people. This can be seen in the land dispute between two titled men – Ikedi and Nwalioba – obviously one of them is lying about the boundary of their land. Obikeze, Ogbuefi Edogo's brother's loss of his entire nuclear family to small-pox provides his brother, a titled man, the opportunity to block his remarriage to any woman. Ogbuefi Emenogha calls his maltreatment of his brother an abomination for, 'He had been forced out, had to move his dwelling to the farthest part of the property, where he had been allowed a tiny portion of land on which he built his homestead' (112). Orimili is not also aware that the newest strangers in Okocha have whittled down the powers of the society. As the narrator reveals:

He [Nweke Nwofia] complained about the white men, who since their coming had been doing all sorts of outrageous things, ranging from taxing the people and trying to impose on them what they called a 'Chief – in fact, a tax-collector – to gulping up their land, 'the burial place of our ancestors'. There was no way of knowing how far they meant to go, but there was no doubt at all that they meant to go far indeed. He asked the peers to stop a while and think, and they would find that every so often the white man had introduced something new; and it was always a demand, an encroachment, a new form of oppression (169).

Orimili is not also aware that the club is a house that is divided within itself. The rivalry within the members and the intrigues to stop his application split it. He does not realize that his position and his son's education are superior to the *ozo* title. Emenogha wonders why he reduces himself to beg for the title when sending his son abroad to read law is worth more 'than a hundred titles' (38). Also Nzeadi is riled at his elder brother's foolishness and wonders, 'how can one exchange a piece of land for a feather for one's cap' (71)? But his quest is understandable as he is seeking the status of a naturalized citizenship for his family. Though it is scuttled by his rivals, it serves as a precedent on which his son is inducted into the peerage. Because the struggle is between him and his rivals, his defeat is a temporary one. Osita's triumph is also Orimili's own for that 'was the first time in Okocha that someone was given the *ozo* title as a symbolic act, without his having to pay a fee and go through a scrutiny by the elders' (179). At his reception and induction, he is delighted that what he has desired with all his soul and is denied has finally been achieved by his son. What 'unspeakable relief it had brought to his tortured mind, that justice was, after all, deep down in the order of things' (80).

In *King Oedipus*, the tragic hero's struggle is against fate or nature. In this type of conflict, according to Albert Camus, the 'central character fights against an invisible force, inexplicable in its justice' (quoted in Chinyere Nwahunanya 168). Nwahunanya further explains that the 'limit imposed by the gods on man is sometimes referred to as fate or destiny. Man's actions and his capabilities,

according to this world-view, are predestined since he cannot do more than his assigned lot, and in fact, if he tries to exceed his bounds he meets a bad end' (168). It seems that in the conflict of man against man, the tragic hero may triumph, but in that of man against nature or fate, he is fatally doomed. In Wilber's argument:

The conflict of man against nature, therefore, cannot involve the kind of victorious resolution of both the conflicts of man against man and man against himself. It is really a triumph of the human spirit against fate, or any other element he cannot hope to conquer, and the respectful understanding of power within its own limitations (85).

From birth, Oedipus is destined to kill his father, marry his mother. Jocasta reminds him of an earlier prophecy by Apollo's minister to King Laius in trying to persuade him to disregard the prophecies of the gods and the seers. The minister tells Laius, 'That he should die by the hands of his own child/ His child and mine' (30). In order to forestall the realization of this dreadful prophecy:

As for the child,

It was not yet three days old, when he cast it out

By other hands not his with riveted ankles

To perish on the empty mountain-side (30).

To Laius and Jocasta, their servant carries out their instruction and the child is dead and forgotten. However, the fate which the gods reserve for him must be fulfilled for the servant takes pity on him and gives him to a Corinthian shepherd. The child is adopted by King Polybus and Queen Merope, whom he believes are his parents until a drunk tells him otherwise. His foster parents hide his true identity from him and he goes to Pytho, another oracle in Corinth. Instead of being told of his identity, Oedipus receives a prophecy 'Of horror and misery: how I must marry my mother/ And become the parent of a misbegotten brood/An offence to all mankind and kill my father' (32-33). He takes steps in order not to kill Polybus and marry Merope, whom he believes are his biological parents. Without telling them, he goes into self-exile, and it is on his way that he fulfills the prophecies of Apollo to Laius and Pytho's to him. He murders Laius, his biological father, with the members of his entourage, solves the mystery of the sphinx, marries Queen Jocasta,

his biological mother without knowing, and through incest gets four children with her.

It is obvious that Laius and Oedipus spare nothing to avert the realization of the fate, but every step they take, move them closer to its fulfillment. Are they to be blamed for the realization of Oedipus's fate or the gods? For how can mortal man explain how a servant disobeys Laius's royal order? How can one explain Oedipus fleeing Corinth without telling his foster parents about Pytho's prophecy? How can one explain Laius and Oedipus meeting at the cross-roads, and through a minor quarrel, Oedipus is able to overrun his entire entourage and slaughter them, except one of them that escapes? How can one explain that it is only Oedipus who is able to solve the mystery of the monstrous sphinx in Thebes? How can one explain that Queen Jocasta readily agrees to marry a man old enough to be her own son? It is clear from all this that Oedipus is fated to commit the abominations and there is nothing he can do to avert this. He also sees himself as destined to do them and says, 'Hated of gods, no man so damned' (50), and he specifically blames 'Apollo, friends, Apollo/Has laid this agony upon me' (49). And when Creon tries to persuade him not to go into exile until the will of the gods are divined, he vehemently refuses and says, 'No god will speak for me' (55). He now wants to take his destiny into his hands and not trust any gods, since they are the ones that have destroyed him. It is the gods' prophecies that divest him of citizenship rights, both in Corinth and in Thebes. The Theban chorus believes, 'Pride breeds the tyrant; swollen with ill-found booty/.... Shall he escape his doomed pride's punishment' (35)? It is, therefore, submitted that pride is not the primary tragic flaw that brings Oedipus down, but his relentless quest to find who he is. He does not shy away from knowing his true identity, as he vows, 'However vile! However base it be/ I must unlock the secret of my birth' (41). Weak-willed men would have allowed things to be as Jocasta suggested, but not Oedipus, who says, 'My 'good' has been my *bugbear* long enough' (41).

The consequence of the tragic fall of the tragic heroes in *Orimili* and *King Oedipus* is not death. In other words, both Orimili and Oedipus do not commit suicide like Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's



*Things Fall Apart*. Orimili suffers paranoid schizophrenia, which Sigmund Freud argues is a disorder where the individual retreats from unbearable stress and conflict (1935). Orimili's quest for the *ozo* title is a quest for power, influence and citizenship, so he sees his failure as disastrous for him and his lineage. He has always entertained the fear of the consequences of his rejection. The narrator says:

He expected that the society would meet in a matter of weeks to consider his applications. His anxiety should end then. He hoped that this would not be succeeded by a consciousness of defeat, which he feared would be ten times worse than the anxiety. No, the thought of a defeat could not be borne; not now that he had begun to see the title as something to give meaning to his entire life and pursuits (105).

It is not only the rejection of his application that causes his psychopathological disorder. There are also other tragic events. His haulage business, which is the source of his vast wealth, collapses '...owing to the completion of the new road along which one went over land to Okono. It was as if his entire world was suddenly collapsing all around him...' (181). These two misfortunes are the remote causes of his disorder. Research findings by psychologists call these stressful life events, which must have happened within two or three weeks of the outbreak of the individual's schizophrenia. They are contributory factors to the disorder (Day, et al 1987).

The immediate cause of Orimili's disorder is Osita's marriage to a stranger while he is studying overseas. Orimili has always regarded Osita as an only son, and uses the metaphor of 'someone who had a palm nut roasting in the fire – a single nut – would not suffer it to burn in the fire, nor somehow to get lost' (165)! It is common knowledge in Okocha 'that if any harm were to happen to Osita, Orimili himself would cease to be' (157)? He tells Emenogha that his son's marriage, he recalls precisely, is the moment 'he ceased to be Orimili' (181). When Onyenwe reads Osita's letter to him that he is engaged to marry in a month's time, he cannot bear the shock of the sad news; he develops the symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia as 'Orimili made not the slightest move. He sat, eyes

glazed, and looking straight before him' (182). Onyenwe also notices the change in him, and 'he was suddenly frightened because of what appeared like derangement in the man's eyes' (183).

Akwanya superbly delineates the other symptoms of this disorder which Ekwenze Orilimi manifests. Carson and his team have suggested that schizophrenics are incapable of controlling the internal and external stimuli because of defects in attitudinal mechanism. They further argue that there is overwhelming and choking tumble of thoughts and images, which produce distractions (1988). Ronald Smith explains that the disorder is also characterized by delusions and hallucinations as a result of the impulsive and unchecked activities of the id (1993). The omniscient narrator gives the minutest details of the symptoms of Orimili's paranoid schizophrenia thus:

Quickly, he relapsed into the former state in which he saw nothing, and heard nothing, and everything was at a standstill .... There was the road, the fence, the kola-nut tree .... He observed that the tree seemed to have doubled itself. Quite strange! He didn't check to see if the fence also doubled itself, or if the doorposts also doubled. He tried to hold the slightly shifting double image in his gaze, and found the exercise tricky, quite fascinating. Orimili noticed that the unsteadiness of the double image seemed to follow a pattern of movement. There were two trunks which seemed to move apart, rather gently, until they came to what must be the farthest extent they could go apart, then they began moving back inwards, as though they were going to merge into a single trunk. As they seemed to merge, Orimili saw the outer edges of the trunks again moving apart... perhaps the fence might be seen through the gap between them. Maintaining this careful watch so assiduously, he had given himself a headache. No, it wasn't a headache at all. It was a wire knotted in his skull from behind. He felt it forcing its way, in a zig-zag movement, towards the top of his head. It seemed then to stop at that point, unable to go any further; at the same time, something commenced tugging at the wire from behind him. It must have knotted itself into the crown of his

head because it failed to slide back when it was pulled from behind (*Orimili* 183-184).

At the personal level, Orimili suffers his schizophrenia, and at the communal level, the rejection of Orimili's application fragments the peerage, for 'in invoking his name at the club. Ogbuefi Nweke did bring about the bursting open of the worn-eaten under-belly of the **ozo** sodality, cleaving asunder the leadership of Okocha' (178). Though Orimili's disorder is a permanent one, which will haunt 'him during the rest of his life, following him as though it were a personal fiend' (185), he is overjoyed at Osita's induction into the peerage. In his life time, he has witnessed what he had set out to achieve in his application: 'his quest for the **ozo** had been like trying to give the old tradition a certain twist, trying in fact to lay down a new law...!' (177) By Osita's initiation, full citizenship rights have been granted to his entire lineage. Orimili can no longer be terrified that 'if he were to die and going down to the land of the ancestors find no welcome among the ancestors of Okocha? If they asked him what he sought there; and which of the lines of the sons of Okocha he thought he belonged to'? (149) These fears are now unfounded; he has rewritten the law and tradition of Okocha and set up a precedence for the granting of citizenship status to other immigrants in Okocha. After all, as he queries himself during the crises, 'Do they [Okocha people] know where they themselves are from' (144).

In *King Oedipus*, the consequences of Oedipus's fall are enormous and irreversible. When Jocasta realizes Oedipus's identity and tries desperately to stop him from continuing with his inquiry into the mystery of his birth, she goes into her room and commits suicide. As the king discovers the Oedipal crimes, he rejects death as a way out, and before he goes into exile, which he has decreed for the killer of King Laius, he imposes the maximum punishment on himself. The attendant tells Thebans:

Her dress [Jocasta's] was pinned  
With golden brooches, which the king snatched out  
And thrust, from full arm's length, into his eyes  
Eyes that should see no longer his shame, his guilt  
No longer see those they should never have seen

Nor see those he had longed to see  
Henceforth seeing nothing but night (47).

He goes into exile blind as Teiresias foretold, and his children are left orphans. His tragic fall and that of his family, particularly, expresses what Akporobaro calls an 'existentialist truth of the emptiness and transitoriness of human life' (2012: 17). This is also borne out in the Theban chorus's lamentation as Oedipus goes into exile, 'Behold, what a full tide of misfortune swept over his head/ Then learn that mortal man must always look to his ending/His happiness down to the grave in peace' (53).

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the two tragic characters in the two tragic literary works are heroes, who are more than other men. And as men who are more than other men, they embark on a quest – to unravel their identities in the fictive worlds of their migration, a quest that may make or mar them. In *Orimili*, Orimili's application to be granted the status of a naturalized citizenship with the privileges attached to it is foiled by the intrigues of his antagonists: Nweke Nwofia and Ugonabo. The crises as a result of his quest for rootedness results in his paranoid disorder, but he triumphs at the end, as his son is later inducted into the prestigious durbar. By the son's title, Okocha community has finally accepted Ekwenze Orimili's family – both born and unborn – as citizens of Okocha. In Oedipus's case, the knowledge he gains from solving the mysteries of King Laius's death and his birth is ruinous to him and his entire family. Unlike Orimili's family that accepts the citizenship status thrust on it by the community, Oedipus rejects the citizenship of Thebes and Corinth. He decides stoically to accept the fate which the gods and his late parents – king Laius and Queen Jocasta – have mapped out for him. He goes into exile on Mount Cithaeron after blinding himself.

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