An Abstract of the Thesis
An Avaluation of Sophoclean Tragedy in the Light of Acarya Ksemendra’s Aucitya Siddhanta

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The first chapter, Introduction, describes Aucitya or Propriety. When discussing a work the critics consider its plot, character and style. But the determining factor for all these is ‘Rasa’. If ‘Rasa’, the essence of poetry, is to be properly expressed, each of its elements should be in consonance with it. It is this consonance, this harmony between the part and the whole which is aucitya (decorum) or propriety. Sophocles, one of the three ancient Greek tragedians, wrote about 123 plays during the course of his life, but only seven have survived in a complete form. Oedipus Rex relates to the tale of the mythological Oedipus, who killed his father and married his mother, unknowingly. After blinding himself, he leaves Thebes. In Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus and his daughter Antigone arrive at Colonus, where he dies. In Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus is faced with the choice of allowing her brother Polynices’ body to remain unburied outside the city walls or to bury him and face death. Ajax is the play which focuses on the story of Ajax who is angry when Achilles’ armour has been presented to Ulysses instead of himself. Despite their enmity Ulysses persuades Agamemnon and Menelaus to give Ajax a proper burial. The Women of Trachis dramatizes Deianeira’s accidently killing Heracles. The Electra presents the story how Electra and Orestes avenge their father Agamemnon’s murder by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. The play, Philoctetes, tells the story of an archer Philoctetes who had been abandoned on Lemnos by the Greek fleet while on the way to Troy. After learning that they can not win without Philoctetes’ bow, they send Odysseus and Neoptolemus to retrieve him.
The second chapter is Bhasa Aucitya - Lingual Propriety. Acarya
Ksemendra is of the opinion that the excellence of poetry is to be
determined by the presence or absence of propriety as he says in Aucitya
Vicar Carca -

(Sloka viii)

In Sophoclean tragedy the Pada Aucitya (Phrase propriety) is
visible when Odysseus says in Ajax “A friend today many be a foe
tomorrow” (66).

The third chapter is Vyakarnatmak Aucitya - Grammatical
Propriety. Acarya Ksemendra says -

(Sloka xi)

In a Sophoclean tragedy, it is the placement of verb which is the
power behind the expression, as in Oedipus Rex – “Speak before all, their
plight concerns me now more than my life” (89).

The fourth chapter deals with Sanskriti Aucitya or cultural
propriety. Acarya Ksemendra says –

(Sloka xxvii)

In Oedipus Rex, Jocasta, visits the temple of Apollo to remove
the curse of uncleanness. The fifth chapter is Kavya Pratibha Aucitya or
Propriety of creative genius. Acarya Ksemendra says-

(Sloka xxx)

This is clearly visible in Oedipus Rex, when the blind prophet
Teiresias reveals the truth in a riddle – “The killer you are seeking is
yourself” (46). Thus, the entire propriety of creative genius or Kavyia
Pratibha Aucitya is evident when Sophocles presents the entire tragic
vision in his plays.