Assessment of this WS: Fair
This student seems to have understood and clearly articulated the thesis, method, and conclusions of this article, but we wish he had focused more on content and less on technicalities. For example, he does not state outright what “the Laius hypothesis” and “the revolt hypothesis” are, and he misunderstands the question about how much the article contextualizes the play in the Greek world. This might indicate lack of clarity in the questions.

CLSX 148, Spring 15
Research worksheet #2 (100 points)
DUE: Monday 10/19 by midnight online

Instructions
Please choose one of the articles on this sheet, read it carefully a few times, and download and complete this worksheet to submit via SafeAssign by midnight on 10/19. All the articles are available online at JSTOR (www.jstor.org), freely accessible from any campus computer or through the KU Library’s website.

Goals
In this assignment you are asked to read a scholarly article on a topic of myth of ancient literature relevant to our class, and to summarize and analyze it. The articles are not particularly long, but they are rich with information and critical content. You will have to stretch – some articles include untranslated Greek or Latin, refer to texts we have not read, or use line numbers not analogous to our translations. You can do it!

The goals of this assignment are many, complex, and interrelated. The assignment focuses on reading and responding to the work of others, i.e., joining an intellectual conversation and formulating and supporting an argument and putting the work of others to new uses determined by the interests of the writer. By closely reading an article and analyzing its content and organization, we hope you will gain competence at the following:

interrelating ideas, identifying the limits of the readings, naming, defining, and organizing phenomena (critical terms, parts of an argument, etc.), recognizing an author’s agenda, appreciating the purposeful use of quotations and effective framing of the quoted materials, understanding effective use of footnotes, acknowledging the contingency of myth (i.e., that meaning depends on the author and audience)

These relate to the following course goals as stated on the syllabus:
1) situate Greek and Roman myths in the cultural framework of the people who told them
2) compare these myths to myths from other ancient cultures, and to modern myths
3) recognize several genres of ancient literature (tragedy, epic, hymn) and read them with ease
4) discern among and evaluate competing claims or approaches to myths or to the problems they explore
5) read critical scholarly literature, identifying and assessing the shape and agenda of a scholarly argument and interrelating it to other texts/readings
6) build and articulate your own scholarly argument about an ancient myth or myths
7) understand the cultural and individual contingency of myth

Strategies
Get a good head start on this assignment. You might wish to read through the worksheet questions first, then read the article AT LEAST TWICE before starting to complete the worksheet. Sketch out an outline for the article – it will help. Please do all this enough in advance – a week before the due date – that we can have plenty of time to help you should you need help.
Articles – choose 1


*This one has 2 tough technical paragraphs (one on etymology, one on ancient commentaries), but the sense emerges clearly.


*This one is particularly difficult

Worksheet:

1. Describe: Please list the full bibliographic record for the article/chapter (how would you cite this article in a bibliography). Any standard format will do, but Chicago Manual of Style’s Name-Date method is easy (Author. Date. “Article title.” Journal title: issue number: page numbers.)


2. Describe: What portions or passages of the subject text does it cover? Please be descriptive rather than numerical. (e.g., not “Agamemnon lines 442-3” but rather “the choral ode on Helen”).

   The passages cover the lead up to Oedipus realizing that he himself is the one he’s trying to persecute. Two different murders have happened and Oedipus is trying to figure out the connection between the two and how they adhere to the prophecy. It also covers the position of the Chorus and who they align with and what they believe is the truth behind the murders and the prophecy.
The article centers on the thoughts and beliefs of the chorus and the author attempts to compare and contrast two different interpretive hypotheses for the second stasimon. The author is applying either hypotheses to the text in order to help the reader understand what the chorus is expressing in literal terms. Through applying these hypotheses, the author is able to determine which hypotheses best explains the misconceptions the chorus has within the stasimon.

The author’s response was to apply both hypothesis to the text and to determine which interpretation was the most applicable and revealed the most information based on contextual clues and word interpretations. The author discovered that the revolt-hypothesis was the “most text-immanent and was capable of explaining the entire staismon” (Pg.39), although the thesis isn’t clearly stated, it can be inferred that the author is comparing and contrasting two different hypothesis against strophes to determine the plausibility of the hypothesis.

The article contains section headings for every new point or main idea discussed within the article. It starts out giving a short background of the staismon within the play and then proceeds to divide into smaller headings for the listed order of strophes and antistrophes and finishes off with a well written conclusion. Each section heading usually contains the original Greek text with a translation below it, followed by the author’s interpretation and description.
The first page of the article gives a summary of the staismon within the play. However it doesn’t give any clear map to what the author’s purpose is or the importance of the background knowledge we gain. The author makes it very clear to the reader that it’s important to understand the background of the staismon by going into great detail but it isn’t until page 2 or 3 of the article that the thesis and purpose becomes clear at which time the author gives the reader clear evidence into the purpose of writing the article.

The argument within this article follows in order of ancient text as well as compare and contrast. The author discusses the strophes and antistrophes in textual order and dissects the text into explanations and interpretations that would make sense to the reader. While doing this, the author also compares and contrasts how the two hypothesis apply to each strophe and in what ways the different hypothesis affect the interpretations as a whole.

The author gives all sections within the article equal attention, no one section overpowers the other as far as textual evidence, author explanation or background summary. Each strophe and antistrophe contain the same three things. Ancient text, modern translation and author interpretation. This allows the reader to get rounded knowledge on all parts of the staismon instead of focusing on one particular point. The author does summarize his findings all within the conclusion at the end and it’s there that the article makes the most sense.

The article starts of rather broadly and tapers down by applying the author’s hypothesis and proof as the article goes along. The general summary of the staismon leads into detailed analyzation and application of both hypothesis to the text as well as general descriptions of what’s happening in the text. As the article goes along the information becomes much more detailed and specific and funnels down into a conclusion that determines the position of the chorus and the comparison between both hypothesis.

5. Describe: How does the author position the argument within the world of ideas? The author positions his argument by using contextual evidence as well as clear understanding of the ancient Greek language and its translations to convey his ideas. The author supports his thesis with clear and well-founded research that shows a depth of knowledge and many explanations to support his reasoning.

5a. Describe: What are the footnotes like – are they mini-essays, or just citations, or both? Please give an example.

The footnotes within this article contain both citations and mini-essays. It generally depends on page to page basis and how much background knowledge the reader needs to understand the context of that particular page. An example of this would be page 29 of the article, the author cites a verse from the text in ancient Greek and then translates it in the footnotes, and there are also footnotes that simply cite where the author obtained the evidence from.
5b. Does the author offer solutions, or questions? Put differently, does the author present the thesis as the, or the only, or the right idea? Or is it presented as a possible solution among many? Find some phrases that support your observation, and give page numbers. (Some indicators of the latter approach are words such as “tension” and “ambiguity”).

I think the author offers solutions to the question in more than just a singular way. The author applies his thesis to the text and draws multiple conclusions out of what he interpreted. An example of this would be on page 33 of the article, the author states that after applying both hypothesis to the text neither have proved to be falsified and that both can be applied logically to the text. This gives the reader the choice of which hypothesis the reader would like to follow and apply.

5c. Is the author respectful toward other ideas or dismissive of them? Find an example.

After applying both ideas towards the text, the author becomes dismissive of the Laius-Hypothesis in the conclusion. In page 39 the author clearly states that “the Laius-Hypothesis is proved unable to explain all of the allusions in the staismon….while the Revolt-Hypothesis is capable of explaining the entire staismon.” The author gives both hypothesis equal evaluation throughout the beginning and middle of the article but at the conclusion the author clearly agrees with the Revolt-Hypothesis and becomes dismissive of the Laius-Hypothesis.

6. Analyze: How does the author see this text operating in the world? Is it a text that can be best understood in the context of Greek civilization, or does its meaning transcend that context? Explain.

The meaning of this text is specific to the context of Greek Civilization and anyone interested in a more detailed knowledge of the Play Oedipus. Since this text refers to and contains many references to Ancient Greek civilization the only applicable use would be for research. The whole point of the article was to compare two contrasting hypothesis and how it affects the interpretation of the text.
7. Describe: What conclusions does the author draw? Where does the author suggest as go next with this question? Where do you think this approach/argument might take us?

The author comes to the conclusion that the revolt hypothesis allows the reader to completely understand the text while the Lauis Hypothesis does not. The author also is able to come to a conclusion about which hypothesis most logically applies to his research and by extension understand more about the Chorus and the reason for its thinking. This approach might takes us in a direction where we dig further into the reasons behind the chorus’s firm faith in Oedipus and its search for the renewal in belief of god.

8. Analyze: How “portable” is the argument or method to other aspects of your study of Greek and Roman mythology? What questions or thoughts does this article raise for you about other texts or myths?

This text allowed me to get a deeper understanding of the story of Oedipus the king and find more contextual evidence of the variation of interpretations that Greek myths have. Multiple hypothesis can have a significant effect on the understanding of a myth and raises the question of how other interpretations of other famous Greek myths can vary how the story changes. I also wonder what exactly the authors of these myths were saying when they wrote it, there are many interpretations of stories and I wonder what the original stories behind the myths were and how they differ from the ones we read today.