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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Jeanette Lanning Payne Davis entitled "Antigone, Antigone." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Speech and Theatre.

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ANTIGONE. ANTIGONE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts

by

Jeanette Lanning Payne Davis

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ABSTRACT

Man is truly a marvelous creation. His special gifts include the ability to think and reason as well as the ability to imagine and create. Sophocles and Anouilh, despite the winds of time that separate their literary achievements, are two examples of imaginative, creative literary giants. This thesis is an in-depth study of two tragedies which are both based on an ancient Greek myth and which are both called Antigone.

Chapter I begins with a comparison of the action, time, key themes and patterns which are evident in the two tragedies. Many important passages which illustrate the attitudes and relationship of the major characters are explored. Intricate analysis is presented of the parallelism and lack of parallelism as evidenced in the two plays. This study of each play begins with Antigone's headstrong decision to follow her own conscience as it relates to King Creon's edict, an edict which denies Polyneices the right of burial. The breakdown of the plot ends with the unpleasant, immediate and far-reaching consequences of Antigone's decision which the king must face.

Chapter II deals with the role of Sophocles' Chorus and of Anouilh's Chorus as evidenced in the two dramas. In this section reference is made to the famous Sophoclean Odes. Finally, comparisons are cited which deal with the reaction of Sophocles' Leader of the Chorus and Anouilh's Chorus, to important situational developments. Remarks are quoted which range from their discovery that Antigone has broken the proclaimed law of the land to comments upon the triple tragedy in Thebes.

Chapter III explores still additional contrasts between the plays

which may be pinpointed as a result of researching the divergent religious and philosophical views valued by Sophocles and Anouilh. This investigation into the realm of the personal beliefs held by these writers helps explicate why in Sophocles' Antigone the heroine nobly dies to uphold a spiritual tradition rather than a man-made statute and why in Anouilh's Antigone the iconoclast dies to revenge her idealistic view of life rather than accept a fading compromised "purity."

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"Tragedy is the poetry of man."

--John Gassner

INTRODUCTION

The following paper, "Antigone, Antigone," is designed to illustrate some of the similarities and differences between two widely read plays, both called Antigone, by Sophocles and Anouilh. Although the biographies of both artists are extremely interesting, due to the nature of this paper, I shall omit most of the details concerning their lives, and include in this Introduction only a few observations about the backgrounds of Sophocles and Anouilh.

Sophocles, born in Athens in 495 B.C., lived under the outstanding ruler Pericles and witnessed the rapid growth and expansion associated with the history of Greece during the fifth century B.C. Pericles "fostered self-government, improved the laws . . . and cultivated the various arts."¹ During the Samian War, Sophocles, a civic-minded, creative individual, served as a general under Pericles. In fact, "tradition records that [Antigone's success] led to his election as general."² C. M. Bowra, in Sophoclean Tragedy, goes on to suggest:

We might therefore expect the Athenian people to have elected Sophocles to military office because he had glorified their achievements or celebrated some peculiarly national characteristics. But the Antigone does nothing of the kind. It has no word about Athens, no political propaganda, no contemporary allusions, no appeal to patriotism. It is concerned with what might be called a political issue, but this is seen from an exalted detachment as an incident in his relations between god and man.³

It is most unfortunate that, although Sophocles wrote approximately one hundred twenty plays, only seven are in existence today. The extant plays include the following: "Ajax (7451), Antigone (441), Oedipus the King, Electra, The Trachinian Women, Philoctetes (409), [and] Oedipus at Colonus (produced in 401 after the poet's death by the younger Sophocles)."⁴

Sophocles' Antigone was a favorite play during the life of this famous Greek Tragedian and is a favorite, widely read play today.

Sophocles was nicknamed the "'Attic Bee' . . . [because] it was said, he could extract pure honey from words."⁵ Without doubt, "Sophocles is a supreme artist of language. This is a judgement which few if any would dispute. . . . he writes in a manner which is highly appropriate" ⁶ Furthermore, the "Antigone reflects contemporary political and intellectual language more obviously than any other Sophoclean play."⁷ Cedric Whitman in his book, Sophocles, states that the "Antigone abounds in antithetical devices. The verse has a tight, clean-limbed neatness nowhere else to be found in Sophocles."⁸

The sum total of his plays prove without doubt that he was:

A superb craftsman, as well as a great dramatist . . . [He] gave much thought to the technical improvement of the Attic theater. He added a third actor, increased the number of the chorus from twelve to fifteen, and improved stage scenery, thus bringing greater flexibility to the drama. He abandoned the rule of closely connected tetralogies, making each play stand by itself as an artistic whole, and was also the first to write plays to suit the specific talents of the individual actors.⁹

Sophocles relied on the use of myths to inspire his plot development. In fact, in "all but a very few of the Greek tragedies that we know of, the raw material of the drama is myth" ¹⁰ G. M. Kirkwood, in A Study of Sophoclean Drama, confidently states that Sophocles "as we can tell almost certainly from the titles and from other scraps of information that we have about [his] lost plays, [never] drew on any other source."¹¹

The key to the appeal of the Sophoclean tragedies is easily discovered within the framework of the definition of Sophoclean tragedy itself. "Sophoclean tragedy is an action in which an admirable character

and crucial situation are combined; the situation involves religious and moral issues and entails suffering for the leading figure."¹² Certainly this definition describes what takes place in Sophocles' Antigone. But what of Anouilh and his Antigone, which is, in its own special way, also appealing. This influential French playwright once wrote:

I have no biography, and I am very glad of it. I was born in Bordeaux on the 23 of June, 1910. I came to Paris when I was young and attended the Colbert Primary School and later Chaptal College. A year and a half at the Law Faculty in Paris, then two years in an advertising firm, where I learned to be ingenious and exact, lessons that for me took the place of studies in literature. After my play L'Hermine was produced I decided to live only by writing for the theatre, and a little for films. It was folly, but I did right to make that decision. I have managed never to touch journalism, and in films all I have on my conscience are one or two cheap farces and a few unsigned and now forgotten romantic melodramas. The rest is my life, and for as long as it pleases Heaven for it to be my private business, I shall keep the details to myself.¹³

In abiding by Anouilh's wishes, as quoted above, it seems necessary and proper for the purpose of this paper only to insert a few pertinent remarks about this outstanding writer. First of all, "Jean Anouilh is generally recognized to be one of the leading and most representative playwrights of the generation that began writing shortly before the Second World War."¹⁴ He has produced well over thirty plays, "some of them of considerable value in themselves, all of them interesting for the picture they present of man's condition, and for the dramatic values that they embody."¹⁵

Secondly, it is noteworthy that it was the Antigone, written in 1942 and produced in 1944, that helped bring about Anouilh's popularity as a playwright. This play:

. . . appeared during the German Occupation and served as a rallying point for the disheartened French, who could see their own struggle reflected in the conflict between the uncompromising attitude of Antigone and the expediency of Créon. They identified Antigone with the spirit of freedom, and Créon with the Vichy government, and not

even the threat of air raids could keep them away from the theater. A quarrel soon broke out between those who maintained that Anouilh had shown too much sympathy for Créon's viewpoint and was therefore in sympathy with the Vichy government, and those who asserted that the author was clearly on the side of his heroine. However, it seems doubtful that Anouilh had intended his play to have the political meaning that was found in it. Madame Béatrix Dussane notes that during the entire Occupation Anouilh remained "immersed in his work, declaring that he cared nothing for politics."¹⁶

Concerning the political-non political controversy that Anouilh's play created, Edward Marsh in his book, Jean Anouilh, reminds the critics:

Whatever the political allusions in the play, in most other countries of the world where the emotions of Occupied France were not in any way involved, Anouilh's Antigone has been recognized as a major work. It is, as Gabriel Marcel called it on the occasion of a recent Paris revival, a "witness-play," that sets before the bar of humanity a picture of the whole inevitable degeneration that living in this world must incur.¹⁷

One critic, favorable to Anouilh's writing, states that in

Antigone:

. . . Anouilh seems to have distilled all his own basic themes-- Antigone becomes the symbol of purity of personal conscience, she asks too much of life, she is youthful idealism personified. She will not learn from experience and refuses to give way.¹⁸

In this study, "Antigone, Antigone," it becomes obvious in comparing the two plays that the 1942 version of the myth is a refreshing re-creation of the classical 441 B.C. version. In fact, as Rosamond Gilder in an article "From Far to Near" says, Anouilh's Antigone "is not a direct translation of Sophocles but a rehandling of the legend which was first given dramatic form by Aeschylus in The Seven Against Thebes."¹⁹

In relationship to Sophocles' Antigone, there are many passages found in Anouilh's Antigone which show "considerable alteration and omission of details."²⁰ On the following pages, I shall discuss whenever possible some of the plays' more interesting and important alterations, omissions, and similarities.

CHAPTER I

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE TWO ANTIGONE'S

The action of Sophocles' Antigone takes place at the Thebes royal palace in ancient Greece, destined to have hanging over its splendor the pale ghostly gloom associated with the sting of death. Within and outside the palace walls a conflict would soon arise and shatter the dreamy tranquility of the peaceful early morning. With night would come an unwelcome gift of pathos for the new king, Creon. The specific year is not designated, but the daybreak is a specific daybreak--it "is at daybreak on the morning after the fall of the two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, and the flight of the defeated Argives."²¹

The time of Anouilh's Antigone also begins with early morning in that Antigone gets up when the "whole world was gray . . . a world without color"²² and watches it change from gray to "like a postcard: all pink, and green, and yellow."²³ Yet, as pointed out by Leonard Cabell Pronko in his book, The World of Jean Anouilh:

The beginning of the play makes clear at once that we are neither in ancient Greece, nor in some modern country like that depicted in Eurydice. Instead we find ourselves before "a neutral setting," peopled by characters dressed in simple evening clothes--the most neutral costumes possible. If the cut of the costumes seems too modern and the card-playing of the guards has a note of contemporaneity, Prologue, who advances to the footlights, immediately reminds us that we are within a certain tradition, and that these characters are about to play the story of Antigone.²⁴

Despite Anouilh's neutral, non-modern, non-classical setting, the action, like that of Sophocles, takes place in and around a palace called Thebes. Anouilh's characters in Antigone are called by the same names as the characters (adding or subtracting a few) in the Sophoclean tragedy,

and the new king, Creon, despite all of Anouilh's special, skilled, artistic and individual touches, will also suffer weighty remorse over the loss of three individuals: Antigone, Haemon, and Eurydice.

C. M. Bowra, in an elaborate discussion on the Sophoclean theme, writes that Antigone:

. . . deals with a theme that in its narrowest aspects means little to us, but it raises broader issues which still have such vitality that it has been claimed to deal with matters so universal as the conflict of family and state, of individual and government, of human and divine laws. All these may with some justice be found in it. But the actual play concerns individual destinies. It is only through an understanding of these that we can see what wider conclusions may be drawn. The characters may be examples or symbols or types of human destiny, but they must first be understood as the dramatist presents them.

The Antigone presents a conflict between a man and a woman, between Creon and Antigone, or a precise issue: should the dead traitor Polynices be forbidden burial or not?²⁵

Most scholars would, in all probability, agree that the "one event [in Sophocles' Antigone] we would immediately single out if asked what is the main thing that happens in the play [is] the burial of Polyneices."²⁶ To be certain in "Antigone there are many ideas and events that are related to the key theme of 'burial.' The pivotal incident of the play is the burial of Polyneices. Antigone's punishment for this act is burial alive."²⁷ Concerning the Sophocles' version, Kirkwood suggests that the "theme of burial . . . is intertwined with another important theme of Antigone, that of love. Love for her brother Polyneices lies behind both 'burials' of Antigone."²⁸ In the Anouilh version, however, although the theme has to do with burial and love, Antigone finally admits that she is willing to accept her doom "not for Polyneices . . . [but for] nobody. For myself."²⁹

The quote "For nobody. For myself,"³⁰ is, of course, just one of many examples of why many Frenchmen felt that Anouilh's Antigone did have

a special hidden meaning for them as they lived in the danger of the Occupation period. The New Yorker carried an article, "That Little Oedipus Girl," which seems to re-emphasize such logic, correct or incorrect. The news magazine write-up reads as follows:

Under the stress and indignity of the occupation, M. Anouilh's *Antigone* was able to symbolize for all Frenchmen, France herself rejecting the German "New Order" with its promise of prosperity, of happiness provided the French people would agree to surrender their spiritual independence.³¹

Despite any hidden meaning in Anouilh's play, it is interesting to note that both plays do compare closely in following the unities of "action," "time," and "place." By way of illustration, it is noted that both plays have as their "setting," Thebes. Granted, Anouilh's is a neutral setting, but he does designate the place as Thebes. The "time" in both plays is "unified" in that it begins in the morning and lasts a short time, only until the action can be completed. The "action" in both plays is unified by the major event of burying Polyneices and the consequences suffered as a result of the burial. Three tragedies occur in both plays. Both plays are called Antigone and rightly so in that Antigone is "the most important figure in it; but, so far as composition is concerned, it deals with Creon even more than her. His personality pervades the whole and holds it together after she has left the stage."³²

Despite the similarities as far as the unities are concerned, Anouilh's tragedy does not follow the general outline or pattern characteristic of most Greek tragedies. John Gassner states:

The general pattern of a Greek tragedy consisted of an introductory scene (prologos), an entrance lyric by the chorus (parodos), a dramatic scene (episode), and then a choral ode (stasimon). As a rule, a tragedy has five episodes, separated by choral odes. In the final scene, in which the action is concluded, a messenger may report the catastrophe or a god may be brought on the stage to resolve the complications and throw light on future events. Then, usually, the

chorus delivers its parting lines (concluding the exodos) and leaves the orchestra.³³

The following outline, a rough approximation, sketches the difference between the general pattern Sophocles used and the pattern that Anouilh used in Antigone.*

Pattern Used in
Sophocles' Version

Prologos. In the introductory scene Antigone gives Ismene the opportunity to help bury Polyneices.³⁴

Entrance Lyric. The Chorus sing the parodos and tell about the victory of Thebes and the slain brothers. They suggest that everyone enjoy their good fortune by celebration.³⁵

Episode I. The new king, Creon, introduces himself as one who is concerned about the laws for the good of the city. In this first episode he announces that he has issued an edict forbidding the burial of Polyneices. The Leader of the Chorus questions Creon about the mandate.³⁶

Episode II. The Guard reveals to Creon that the body has been buried and Creon insists that the guilty one be found.³⁷

Choral Ode. The Chorus talk about Nature and the Wonders of Man. The Leader of the Chorus announces that Antigone is being brought in by the Guard.³⁸

Pattern Used in
Anouilh's Version

Introductory Scene. Chorus introduces members of the play.⁴⁹

Episode I. The Nurse is concerned as to why Antigone left the palace and asks Antigone where she went, if she has a lover, etc.⁵⁰

Episode II. Antigone discovers that Ismene does not want to help her bury Polynices.⁵¹

*Throughout this paper footnotes in comparative columns will be numbered consecutively, beginning with references made to Sophocles' Antigone and followed by references made to Anouilh's Antigone.

Sophocles' Version (continued)

Episode III. The Guard returns with Antigone. Ismene has second thoughts about helping Antigone. Antigone and Ismene are led away by the Guards.³⁹

Choral Ode. The Chorus sing about the woes of the House of Labdacidae.⁴⁰

Episode IV. Creon and Haemon debate. After Haemon leaves there is an interchange of words between Creon and the Leader of the Chorus. Creon goes into the palace.⁴¹

Choral Ode. The Chorus sing about Love.⁴²

Kommos. The Chorus interchange chants with Antigone as she prepares to go to her bridal chamber in Hades. Antigone mourns for all the things she will never have in life. Creon reaffirms that he will not save her and Antigone is led away.⁴³

Choral Ode. The Chorus sing another ode about Danae, fate, etc.⁴⁴

Episode V. The blind Seer predicts that disaster awaits Creon. The Leader of the Chorus suggests that Creon unwall the rocky chamber and Creon agrees.⁴⁵

Choral Ode. The Chorus sing about the glory of the Cadmeian bride, etc.⁴⁶

Anouilh's Version (continued)

Episode III. Antigone tells the Nurse that she dreads what lies ahead, and Antigone makes the Nurse promise that she will never again scold her dog, Puff.⁵²

Episode IV. Antigone tells Haemon that she will never marry him.⁵³

Episode V. Antigone tells Ismene that she has already buried Polynices.⁵⁴

Episode VI. The Guard announces that someone, probably a child, has disobeyed the Edict and buried the body of Polynices.⁵⁵

Ode. Chorus talks about the Nature of Tragedy.⁵⁶

Sophocles' Version (continued)

Messenger Concludes Action. The Messenger reports to the Leader of the Chorus and Eurydice that both Antigone and Haemon are dead.⁴⁷

Exodos. Chorus and Creon interchange words, and the Chorus pass judgement on Creon.⁴⁸

Anouilh's Version (continued)

Episode VII. Antigone is captured by the three Guards.⁵⁷

Episode VIII. Creon is disappointed to learn that Antigone is the guilty one.⁵⁸

Episode IX. Creon tries to save Antigone.⁵⁹

Episode X. Ismene decides she wants to help Antigone.⁶⁰

Chorus Advises Creon. Chorus gives the King suggestions on how to prevent Antigone's death.⁶¹

Episode XI. Haemon is disappointed in his father and tells him that if Antigone dies, he will, too. When Haemon leaves, Chorus tells Creon that his son will go mad.⁶²

Episode XII. Antigone learns her fate and bribes the Guard to write a letter.⁶³

Messenger Arrives. This bearer of ill news reports the death of Haemon and Antigone. Chorus interchanges a brief dialogue with Creon and announces that the Queen is dead.⁶⁴

Episode XIII. Creon tells the Page that he should never grow up and announces that he has work to do.⁶⁵

Concluding Scene. Chorus sums up results of the tragedy.⁶⁶

This outline demonstrates one major point: While Sophocles follows rather closely the acceptable pattern for Greek tragedy, Anouilh

breaks many of the pattern rules. For example, the French playwright uses thirteen episodes instead of five. He overlooks the requirement of having each episode separated by a choral ode. Anouilh's "Chorus" is made up of only one person instead of fifteen. Despite these and other differences, Anouilh does follow the requirement of having a messenger report the catastrophe, and he does allow Chorus to sum up the situation with parting remarks. The outline helps prove that Anouilh does both add and omit many details in his re-creation of the Greek tragedy.

Both Antigone's are princesses, but in the Anouilh version much valuable information is inserted about Antigone's growing-up years--years that helped temper her character with a personal, stubborn, fierce sense of right and wrong--which is not evident in the Sophocles' version. Anouilh's Antigone, as a child, was a "tomboy," not at all a prim little princess who did not want her dainty white hands soiled. Indeed, she once confesses to Ismene, "Wasn't I a miserable little beast when we were small? I used to fling mud at you, and try to put worms down your neck."⁶⁷ As if this were not unladylike enough, she adds, "I remember tying you to a tree and cutting off your hair. Your beautiful hair!"⁶⁸ One would perhaps imagine that a princess would like to sleep late, perhaps until noon, between scented satin sheets, but Antigone preferred the refreshingly lovely scents of nature instead. She was "always the first out of bed because she loved the touch of the cold morning air on her bare skin [and she] was always the last to bed because nothing less than infinite weariness could wean her from the lingering night."⁶⁹ It probably never occurred to her to weep very often because she was "sallow . . . and . . . scrawny,"⁷⁰ but on one occasion she wept "because

there were too many grasses in the meadow, too many creatures in the field, for her to know and touch them all"71 This girl, now a young woman, is a princess, but for her it is not enough. "Haven't I," she exclaims in exasperation, "Haven't I spent my life cursing the fact that I was a girl?"72

Perhaps part of this resentment which Antigone feels concerning some aspects of being a woman results from being drilled since infancy that little girls did have an obligation, a serious code of manners to live up to. In a conversation with Ismene, Antigone reflects how in childhood she was told:

. . . I must not play with the water--cold, black, beautiful flowing water--because I'd spill it on the palace tiles. Or with earth, because earth dirties a little girl's frock. Why didn't I "understand" that nice children don't eat out of every dish at once; or give everything in their pockets to beggars; or run in the wind so fast that they fall down; or ask for a drink when they're perspiring; or want to go swimming when it's either too early or too late, merely because they happen to feel like swimming.73

Despite her resentment concerning some aspects of being a girl, Antigone is, nevertheless, a typical girl in that she experiences emotions that all normal girls do, love. She feels love for Ismene, her Nurse, and Haemon. Antigone loves her sister Ismene and proves the extent of her affection when she refuses to allow Ismene to die with her. Antigone loves her substitute mother, the warm and endearing woman called "Nanny," or often simply Nurse. Antigone enjoys being scolded, fussed over, and cuddled by this wonderful old woman and, in return, Antigone likes to tease her Nurse and "wrap her around her finger" whenever possible. Antigone believes that the Nurse is a protector with powers to ward off the evil spirits. This woman who worries about keeping her Antigone pure until marriage, this Nurse who keeps her "baby"

warm and happy and full of good hot food, this Nurse with "gullies [on her] dear face,"⁷⁴ this Nurse with the cheeks that Antigone used to rub to "make them shine"⁷⁵ is very, very dear to Antigone. The creation of the Nurse character is one way in which Anouilh deviates from Sophocles' Antigone. The classic story has no character called Nurse. It is to the Nurse that Antigone whispers an explanation for her apparent sadness: "Oh, it's just that I'm a little young still for what I have to go through. But nobody but you must know that."⁷⁶ In that "Nanny" shows much more affection for Antigone than she does for Ismene, one can almost imagine that she dies of a broken heart when she learns the unfortunate destiny of her poor Antigone.

The third person that Antigone loves, not with sisterly or mother-substitute love but with romantic love, is Haemon. She and Haemon are engaged sweethearts. Perhaps this normal romantic commitment to Haemon helped soothe some of her verbal and inward resentment concerning the limitations associated with being born a girl. Had Antigone lived today, no doubt she would have been an outspoken, outstanding worker in the Women's Rights Movement. Perhaps it was her straightforwardness and her impulsiveness that attracted Haemon to Antigone, or perhaps it was because she was in her own way beautiful, not "the way other girls are."⁷⁷ At any rate, she says "yes" to Haemon's proposal only to later break his heart with confusion and mystery when she tells him tenderly that they will never share the Earthly bridal bed. It has been established then that Antigone loved her sister, the Nurse, her betrothed Haemon, but when the bare facts are exposed like a skeleton, it becomes obvious that Antigone thinks she loves a brother more. She rejects being a sister to Ismene, a wife to Haemon, and a substitute daughter to her Nurse. The

key to her rejection lies in a startling confession to Ismene: "When you first saw me this morning, I had just come in from burying him."⁷⁸ The pronoun "him" refers to none other than her brother, Polyneices, branded a traitor to Thebes by edict of the king. John Harvey suggests that "Antigone [found] the courage to bury her brother by summoning up the image of him returning triumphantly from a dance and presenting her with a paper flower."⁷⁹

As revealed earlier, very little background information is given about Sophocles' Antigone. It is discovered that she and her sister Ismene are all alone. Like Anouilh's Antigone, Sophocles' Antigone does reject the love of her sister and sweetheart, Haemon, for the love of her brother, Polyneices. Emotionally she feels compelled to bury her brother who has been denied burial. Cedric H. Whitman, in his book Sophocles, describes Sophocles' Antigone as being "Sharp tongued, contemptuous, almost ferocious. . . . at war from the minute the play opens until her death."⁸⁰ In contrast to Anouilh's Antigone, Sophocles' Antigone displays a total lack of sentimentality. If she is quick-tempered and stubborn, it is because she has not yet buried her brother and she realizes that what she must do requires courage. She must do what many men, even though considered courageous, would hesitate to do. In contrast to Ismene:

Antigone begins with unwomanly strength and an air of arrogance but ends as a creature of deep affections and noble courage. Sophocles is not afraid to take risks with her or to make her for the moment remarkably far from Greek ideals of womanhood; so confident is she that she is right, so determined to do her duty, and to despise anyone who does not go the whole way with her. In fact by giving this bold uncompromising part to a woman, Sophocles may well have shocked conventional minds. Even Aristotle distinguishes a woman's courage from a man's, and seems to have said that it was unsuitable for a woman in tragedy to be brave.⁸¹

Here it may be wise to pause and review the conversations in both versions between Antigone and Ismene and point out some distinctly similar advice patterns suggested by both Ismenes. In the Sophocles version we hear the original discussion that takes place between Ismene and Antigone. In the Anouilh version we are not allowed to hear the original discussion but rather we hear two follow-up debates as to "why we should-- why we must not" bury Polyneices. In the Sophoclean version Antigone quizzes her sister, whom she calls "dear," concerning the edict "that our captain hath just published to all Thebes . . ."⁸² and upon discovering that Ismene is innocently unaware of the nature of its harsh content, ironically confides:

. . . good Creon hath set forth for thee and for me,--yes, for me,--and is coming hither to proclaim it clearly to those who know it not; nor counts the matter light, but, whoso disobeys in aught, his doom is death by stoning before all the folk.⁸³

Antigone then goes on to shock her sister with a meaningful statement:

". . . thou wilt soon show whether thou art nobly bred, or the base daughter of a noble line."⁸⁴ Sophocles leaves little doubt that the timid Ismene fits the latter description in that she prefers not to "share the toil and the deed"⁸⁵ of burying Polyneices, the brother destined to suffer torment unless he receives the last rites desired by Hades. The background history of their ill-fated family that Ismene recites proves to be incapable of changing the mind of the increasingly annoyed Antigone. Anouilh's Ismene had all night long to prepare her objections to the plan, but her hours of sleeplessness and worry prove to be of no more benefit than Sophocles' Ismene's spur-of-the-moment decision to refuse help. Anouilh's Ismene uses some very logical arguments, even though they are wasted. She is the eldest sister and declares

with pride:

I thought about it all night. I'm older than you are. I always think things over, and you don't. You are impulsive. You get a notion in your head and you jump up and do the thing straight off. And if it's silly, well, so much the worse for you. Whereas, I think things out.⁸⁶

It is at this time valuable to review the thought-out versus the impulsive reasoning techniques used by both Ismene's. Their arguments, designed to show disapproval of the burial, sound very similar.

Arguments Used by
Sophocles' Ismene

. . . think how we shall perish, more miserably than all the rest, if, in defiance of the law, we brave a king's decree or his powers.⁸⁷

Thou wouldst bury him,--when 'tis forbidden to Thebes?⁸⁸

. . . we were born women, as who should not strive with men; next, that we are ruled of the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in things yet sorer.⁸⁹

Arguments Used by
Anouilh's Ismene

His mob will come running, howling as it runs. A thousand arms will seize our arms. A thousand breaths will breathe into our faces. Like one single pair of eyes, a thousand eyes will stare at us. We'll be driven in a tumbrel throughout their hatred, through the smell of them and their cruel, roaring laughter. We'll be dragged to the scaffold for torture, surrounded by the guards . . . And we'll know that no shrieking and no begging will make them understand that we want to live . . . And we shall suffer, we shall feel pain rising in us until it becomes so unbearable that we know it must stop. But it won't stop . . .⁹¹

Oh, I know it is horrible. And I pity Polynices just as much as you do. But all the same, I sort of see what Uncle Creon means. . . . And the whole city is with him.⁹²

He is stronger than we are, Antigone. He is the king.⁹³ . . . It's all very well for men to believe in ideas and die for them. But you are a girl!⁹⁴

Sophocles' Ismene (continued)

A hopeless quest should not
be made at all.⁹⁰

Anouilh's Ismene (continued)

Listen to me. I'm right oftener
than you are.⁹⁵

Sophocles' Ismene sees no reason why she cannot just ask the "Spirits Infernal" to forgive the incident and let it go at that. Before Antigone leaves, she describes her sister as having a "hot heart for chilling deeds"⁹⁶ and insists that "thine errand is foolish."⁹⁷ In the Anouilh version Ismene calls her sister "mad,"⁹⁸ "impulsive,"⁹⁹ and "wanting your own stubborn way in everything."¹⁰⁰ In neither version of Antigone do the descriptions offered by Ismene offend or shock Antigone. Yet, in both accounts these rather unpleasant descriptions are softened somewhat by the reference made to sisterly love for Antigone. ". . . to thy dear ones thou art truly dear"¹⁰¹ is the phrase used by Sophocles' Ismene. In Anouilh's version, the distraught Ismene appeals, "Antigone, little sister, we all want to make you happy--Haemon, and Nurse, and I, and Puff, whom you love. We love you, we are alive, we need you."¹⁰² Another argument Anouilh's Ismene brings out has to do with perhaps the real reason why she is not so enthusiastic about helping bury the deceased brother:

And you remember what Polynices was like. He was our brother, of course. But he's dead; and he never loved you. He was a bad brother. He was like an enemy in the house. He never thought of you. Why should you think of him? What if his soul does have to wander through endless time without rest or peace. Don't try something that is beyond your strength. You are always defying the world, but you're only a girl, after all. Stay at home tonight. Don't try to do it, I beg you. It's Creon's doing, not ours.¹⁰³

A speech by Anouilh's Creon will echo this same sentiment at a later time. Both Ismene's are terrified of going against the law. Anouilh's Ismene, however, wastes her worry concerning how to successfully solve

the crisis in that in her second encounter with Antigone, the latter announces with bluntness: "You are too late, Ismene. When you first saw me this morning, I had just come in from burying him."¹⁰⁴

Anouilh inserts a romantic touch not evident in Sophocles' version--the farewell scene between Antigone and Haemon. The scene is heavily perfumed with pathos on Antigone's part and when the passion of the scene is spent, she emerges triumphant feeling the "calm after storm."¹⁰⁵ Antigone talks to, embraces, and kisses Haemon between her first and second conversation with Ismene. In that Antigone realizes it will be her last earthly time devoted to Haemon, each moment is a jeweled eternity. During the scene with Haemon a new side of Antigone, the jealous-of-Ismene side, rears its ugly head for an instant--but only until Haemon can convince Antigone that he loves her and not the lovelier, more charming Ismene. The first thing Antigone does at the sight of Haemon is to embrace him and ask his forgiveness for her part played in a lover's quarrel the night before. "You stole that perfume. . . . And the rouge? and the face powder? and the frock?"¹⁰⁶ When Haemon smilingly accuses her, he illustrates that seeing Antigone for an entire evening so elegantly groomed was out of character for her. Antigone admits that she stole everything from Ismene, whom she describes as being "pink and golden . . . like a fruit."¹⁰⁷ She tells him that she dressed as she did because "I wanted you to take me; I wanted to be your wife before"¹⁰⁸ and goes on to tell him, "Oh, my darling . . . forgive me: I'm going to cause you quite a lot of pain. . . . I wanted it also because I shall never, never be able to marry you."¹⁰⁹ Haemon is stunned, but true to the oath he was forced to make to Antigone, he leaves without questioning her statements, "I'm going to cause you quite a lot of pain.

. . . I shall never . . . marry you . . ." to prove that he does love her deeply. It is difficult for him to leave on such a mysterious, ominous note, but he does leave and in doing so, goes out of her life forever without even realizing it. Haemon, in all probability, connects Antigone's strange behavior to her approaching marriage and feels that it is normal for a maiden to feel somewhat "jittery" over beginning a new chapter in her life. He is no doubt consoled by believing that on the morrow, gloom's melancholy will be replaced with joyous happiness. If, however, Haemon had been exceptionally alert during his conversation with Antigone, he would have noticed that the tense of the verbs used by his fiance were all wrong. He would have realized that something more serious was wrong with Antigone than just a case of nerves associated with an approaching wedding day. For example, by way of flashback, while Antigone talks to Haemon, she discusses the son they want when they are married and points out that she plans to be a real wife and that she really wants to be his wife, but she uses the wrong tense. More specifically, she says:

You know--the little boy we were going to have when we were married? . . . I'd have protected him against everything in the world . . . Oh, you don't know how I should have held him in my arms and given him my strength. . . . His Mother . . . would have been strong where he was concerned, so much stronger than all those real mothers with their real bosoms, and their aprons round their middle.¹¹⁰

She goes on to say, "And you believe me when I say that you would have had a real wife?"¹¹¹ Obviously, however, in his state of love for her, Haemon is not aware of anything but this, his love for her. At one point, he tells her, "Antigone, darling, I love you exactly as you love me. With all of myself."¹¹² When he leaves as his honor, because of the oath, bids him leave, he is free momentarily from the terrible

knowledge that the next time he holds and kisses Antigone she will be Death's new bride.

Antigone loves Haemon, but Antigone has broken the edict and realizes what frightening events will soon unfold before her sad eyes. No sooner does the innocent-to-the-facts Haemon leave than Ismene enters the room and Antigone, as announced earlier, states that she has already buried Polyneices.

Although Sophocles omits any tender display of emotion between Antigone and Haemon, the reader--justified in reading between the formal language and formal actions characteristic of Sophocles' age--realizes that these two engaged people also love deeply. When Creon makes it quite clear that he does not want Antigone for a daughter-in-law, she cries out, "Haemon, beloved! How thy father wrongs thee!"¹¹³ Another clue to their deeply felt emotional ties is discovered when Antigone later mourns that she will never know the bliss of marriage or the happy moments spent with children. The climax that underscores how deeply Haemon loves his Antigone comes when he is overwhelmed with grief and, upon seeing her hanging by the neck, stabs himself in order to be reunited with her in Death's Lair.

One similarity between Sophocles' version of Antigone and the Anouilh version is that both heroines are actually successful in burying their brother. "I, then, will go to heap the earth above the brother whom I love,"¹¹⁴ promises Antigone of the 441 B.C. classic. She makes good her promise and is caught in much the same manner that Anouilh's Antigone is caught. Neither girl, however, seems to feel that being caught is as serious as letting her brother's body lie rotting day after

day. Anouilh's *Antigone* points out that:

Those who are not buried wander eternally and find no rest. . . . Polynices is home from the hunt. I owe it to him to unlock the house of the dead in which my father and mother are waiting to welcome him. Polynices has earned his rest.¹¹⁵

Sophocles' *Antigone* likewise believes that "Hades desires these rites."¹¹⁶ Eventually it becomes apparent that of the two girls, Sophocles' *Antigone* is much more superstitious when it comes to religious rites. Both *Antigone*'s are successful in not being caught in burying their brother the first time. Both, however, are discovered the second time that they are forced to recover the body. In both versions of the *Antigone*, the guards immediately discover that the bodies have been covered a first time and are mystified as to how such a bold act could have been accomplished. The second time their mystery is solved with the capture of the very obviously "flirting with destiny" *Antigone*. In both versions it is a guard who announces to Creon that someone disobeyed the edict. The Guard in the Anouilh play is called Private Jonas, but in the Sophocles account the guard is given no specific name. The Sophocles Guard is a humorous individual as displayed in his reluctance to be the one to upset the king with news of the unpleasant discovery. In reference to the humor found in the Creon-Guard scene, scholarly studies indicate that:

Attic drama made a sharp distinction between tragedy and comedy. Yet in the severest tragedies, as Horace observes, the art retains traces of its rustic origin--vestigia ruris. . . . the . . . Watchman in the *Antigone* . . . [is] often quoted as [an] example . . . of this.¹¹⁷

The upset Guard admits:

My liege, I will not say that I come breathless from speed, or that I have plied a nimble foot . . . My mind was holding a large discourse with me; "Fool, why goest thou to thy certain doom?" "Wretch, tarrying again? And if Creon hears this from another, must not thou smart for it?"¹¹⁸

He emphasizes that he is not guilty of what he is about to reveal: "I wish to tell thee first about myself--I did not do the deed--I did not see the doer--it were not right that I should come to any harm."¹¹⁹ He relates that when the forbidden edict was disobeyed, all of the guards accused one another. ". . . evil words flew fast and loud among us, guard accusing guard . . . Every man was the culprit, and no one was convicted, but all disclaimed knowledge of the deed."¹²⁰ The guards were so distraught, he admits, that "we were ready to take red-hot iron in our hands; to walk through fire;--to make oath by the gods that we had not done the deed,--that we were not privy to the planning or the doing."¹²¹ After the guards calmed down enough to insert a sprinkling of logic among the chaos, it was decided that the information had to be reported. "So here I stand,--as unwelcome as unwilling, well I wot; for no man delights in the bearer of bad news."¹²² In the Anouilh account no mention is made of the guards accusing one another, which illustrates that perhaps they have more respect for each other's integrity than do the Sophoclean guards. Private Jonas, after a coin is tossed, is selected to tell the King about the discovery. Unlike the Sophoclean guard, he finds the King quickly rather than risk Creon's learning the news from another source. Private Jonas, although not as humorous as the Guard, does bring a smile to the lips of the reader in that he is also very scared. Shaking, he is not at all hesitant to make it known that "I've been seventeen years in the service. Volunteer. Wounded three times. Two mentions. My record's clean. I know my business and I know my place."¹²³ It is worthwhile to notice the differences and similarities found between the Guard's account and Private Jonas' account:

Guard

. . . no stroke of pickaxe was seen there, no earth thrown up by mattock; the ground was hard and dry, unbroken, without track of wheels; the doer was one who had left no trace.¹²⁴

The dead man was veiled from us; not shut within a tomb, but lightly strewn with dust, as by the hand of one who shunned a curse.¹²⁵

And no sign met the eye as though any beast of prey or any dog had come nigh to him, or torn him.¹²⁶

Private Jonas

Maybe we heard a footstep . . . the corporal found a shovel, a kid's shovel no bigger than that, all rusty and everything. Corporal's got the shovel for you. We thought maybe a kid did it.¹²⁷

[The dead man was] Just covered over with a little dirt, that's all. But enough to hide it from the buzzards.¹²⁸

Not a chance, sir [that it could have been a dog, scratching up the earth]. That's kind of what we hoped it was. But the earth was scattered over the body just like the priests tell you you should do it.¹²⁹

When Anouilh's Creon discovers the truth, his reaction is similar to the reaction of Sophocles' Creon.

Reaction of Sophocles' Creon

And what is it that disquiets thee, thus?¹³⁰

. . . clearly thou hast some strange thing to tell . . . Then tell it, wilt thou, and so get thee gone?¹³¹

What sayest thou? What living man hath dared this deed?¹³²

Reaction of Anouilh's Creon

What is the matter with you, man? What are you shaking for?¹³³

Stop chattering and tell me why you are here. If anything has gone wrong, I'll break all three of you.¹³⁴

By God, I'll--¹³⁵

One rather major difference between the classic and recently written tragedy is that during the Creon-Guard scenes, in the Sophoclean version the Leader of the Chorus overhears the conversation and dares to ask: ". . . can this deed, [the burying of Polyneices] perchance, be e'en the work of gods?"¹³⁶ Such a statement is repulsive to Creon.

Filled with wrath, he is dismayed that the Leader of the Chorus should think, much less suggest, that "the gods have care for this corpse."¹³⁷

Chorus in the Anouilh version is completely absent from the Creon-Private Jonas scene, but a young Page is with Creon when he learns the news.

Creon tells the young boy: "Since we can't hope to keep this to ourselves, we shall have to be the first to give out the news. And after that, we shall have to clean up the mess."¹³⁸

Another contrast between the two plays may be found when Sophocles' Creon hints that the babbling Guard is "the seller of thy life for silver."¹³⁹ Anouilh's Creon does not suggest bribery, but it is interesting that a guard will later accept Antigone's gold ring in exchange for writing a letter to Haemon.

Anouilh departs somewhat from the Sophoclean version by allowing Creon to think that perhaps a child is responsible for the burial. With distaste, Creon exclaims:

A kid! I can imagine what he is like, their kid: a baby-faced killer, creeping in the night with a toy shovel under his jacket. Though why shouldn't they have corrupted a real child? Very touching. Very useful to the party, an innocent child. A martyr. A real white-faced baby of fourteen who will spit with contempt at the guards who kill him. A free gift to their cause: the precious, innocent blood of a child on my hands. . . . They must have accomplices in the Guard itself.¹⁴⁰

Despite the above-mentioned differences, in that Sophocles' Creon thinks that his guards might be bribed and in that Anouilh's Creon thinks his guards may have been accomplices in it, one similarity is quite interesting: both kings are suspicious of their men in the guards.

The manner in which both kings threaten the bearers of the ill news makes for an interesting comparison. Both kings are exercising their authoritarian power when they warn the poor men of their possible fate.

Creon's Warning--Sophocles

. . . if ye show me not the doers
of these things, ye shall avow
that dastardly gains work
sorrows.¹⁴¹

Creon's Warning--Anouilh

If another attempt is made to
bury [the body] I shall expect
you to make an arrest and bring
the person straight to me. And
you will keep your mouths shut.
Not one word of this to a human
soul. You are all guilty of
neglect of duty, and you will
be punished; but if the rumor
spreads through Thebes that the
body received burial, you will
be shot--all three of you.¹⁴²

Kirkwood points out that Sophocles uses irony at the expense of Creon. He gives a review of the events leading up to the situation that is rich in irony by stating that:

In Antigone, after Creon's inaugural address to the chorus, the guard enters, and in the following scene Creon inveighs against the burial of Polyneices' body on the assumption that the guards have done the deed, bribed by disaffected citizens of Thebes. From the prologue we know who buried the body; in the present scene there is a play on Creon's ignorance, which is exploited as a means of illustrating his suspicious and tyrannical nature. The situation itself provides the irony, without the reinforcement of ambiguous language.¹⁴³

Anouilh also uses irony at the expense of Creon in that the King does not suspect the truth about who really buried Polyneices.

In both Antigone versions, once the guards realize what will happen to them unless they find the guilty party, one can easily imagine their relief in capturing--even sooner than anticipated--the culprit. Both Antigone's succeed in not only unlocking the "house of the dead"¹⁴⁴ for Polyneices but also for themselves. Both girls are soon forced to face the Thebes king, Creon. A summation of the attitude on the part of both Creon's upon seeing Antigone is as follows:

Creon's Attitude--Sophocles

Thou--thou whose face is bent to
earth--dost thou avow, or disavow,
this deed?¹⁴⁵

Creon's Attitude--Anouilh

And it was you who covered the
body for the first time? In the
night?¹⁴⁸

Creon's Attitude--Sophocles (cont.)

. . . knewest thou that an edict
had forbidden this?¹⁴⁶
. . . so thou didst indeed dare
to transgress that law?¹⁴⁷

Creon's Attitude--Anouilh (cont.)

What were you doing near your
brother's body? You knew what
my orders were.¹⁴⁹

When Sophocles' Creon discovers that Antigone is the guilty one, he immediately becomes a very harsh, cruel man and insults her, even though it is the eve of her marriage to his only remaining son, Haemon. He cuttingly remarks:

This girl was already versed in insolence when she transgressed the laws that had been set forth; and, that done, lo, a second insult,--to vaunt of this, and exult in her deed. [He goes on to state that] Now verily I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her, and bring no penalty. No! be she sister's child, or nearer to me in blood than any that worships Zeus at the altar of our house,--she and her kinsfolk shall not avoid a doom most dire; for indeed I charge what others with a like share in the plotting of this burial.¹⁵⁰

One thing becomes quite clear as Creon continues--he cannot stand to be made a fool of by a woman. He states that "While I live, no woman shall rule me."¹⁵¹ He does not listen to her reasoning that "there is nothing shameful in piety to a brother."¹⁵² He refuses to listen to her insistence that the Thebans share in her views concerning the burial but that they "curb their tongues for thee."¹⁵³ The Leader of the Chorus hears the discussion between Antigone and Creon but makes no attempt to speak on Antigone's behalf. In fact, he comments only that the "maid shows herself passionate child of passionate sire, and knows not how to bend before troubles."¹⁵⁴ Anouilh omits entirely the Chorus from this climactic portion of his play.

The Anouilh version also differs from the Sophocles version in that Sophocles' Creon does not, even for an instant, try to save Antigone but tells her to "Pass . . . to the world of the dead"¹⁵⁵ He

feels no regret that his son will suffer in his decision. His philosophy concerning the deliberate termination of Haemon's happiness is flip-pant: "I like not an evil wife for my son."¹⁵⁶ He then adds, ". . . there are other fields for him to plough."¹⁵⁷ This tyrant-like attitude on the part of Sophocles' Creon differs in marked extent from the attitude held by Anouilh's Creon.

Creon in the Anouilh version questions Antigone, "Did you meet anyone on your way . . .?"¹⁵⁸ He is relieved to discover that she did not and commands her to go to her room and, once there, climb into bed. His explicit instructions are that she is to pretend illness and have the Nurse, with sincerity, confirm the story that she is ill and has been so since yesterday. He plans to get rid of the three guards. Then, with the concern of a perturbed uncle, not a king, he tries to discover why she committed such an act when she knew the prescribed punishment. He tells her: "You are a daughter of law-makers, a daughter of kings, Antigone. You must observe the law."¹⁵⁹ Creon's attitude about kingship is also very different from the attitude that Sophocles' Creon holds. He explains that being a king is not romantic at all but rather a job that has to be worked at if the people are to benefit. He does not want Antigone to have a "cozy tea party with death"¹⁶⁰ and tells her that she must marry Haemon. "Let me assure you that Thebes needs [your child, a sturdy boy] a good deal more than it needs your death."¹⁶¹ Anouilh departs once again from the Sophocles version in that Antigone, "nails . . . broken . . . fingers . . . bleeding . . . arms covered with the welts left by the paws of [the] guards"¹⁶² tries to bury her brother a third time in that Polyneices has been, for the second time, uncovered.

Creon explains to her that allowing the body to rot is strictly

due to politics. He tells her that from a hygienic point of view he would also like to bury Polyneices. He insists that "the people of Thebes have got to have their noses rubbed into it a little longer."¹⁶³ Creon then makes a speech using a ship image. This ship image can be compared to the image found in Creon's inaugural speech. The speeches of each play, quoted in their entirety, are as follows:

Creon's Speech--Sophocles

Sirs, the vessel of our State, after being tossed on wild waves, hath once more been safely steadied by the gods: and ye, out of all the folk, have been called apart by my summons, because I knew, first of all, how true and constant was your reverence for the royal power of Laius; how, again, when Oedipus was ruler of our land, and when he had perished, your steadfast loyalty still upheld in their children. Since, then, his sons have fallen in one day by a twofold doom,--each smitten by the other, each stained with a brother's blood,--I now possess the throne and all its powers, by nearness of kinship to the dead.

No man can be fully known, in soul and spirit and mind, until he hath been seen versed in rule and law-giving. For if any, being supreme guide of the State, cleaves not to the best counsels, but, through some fear, keeps his lips locked, I hold, and have ever held him most base; and if any makes a friend of more account than his fatherland, that man hath no place in my regard. For I--be Zeus my witness, who sees all things always--would not be silent if I saw ruin, instead of safety, coming to the citizens; nor would I ever deem a country's foe a friend to myself; remembering

Creon's Speech--Anouilh

. . . Somebody had to agree to captain the ship. She had sprung a hundred leaks; she was loaded to the water-line with crime, ignorance, poverty. The wheel was swinging with the wind. The crew refused to work and were looting the cargo. The officers were building a raft, ready to slip overboard and desert the ship. The mast was splitting, the wind was howling, the sails were beginning to rip. Every man-jack on board was about to drown . . . You grab the wheel, you right the ship in the face of a mountain of water. You shout an order, and if one man refuses to obey, you shoot straight into the mob. Into the mob, I say! The beast as nameless as the wave that crashes down upon your deck; as nameless as the whipping wind. The thing that drops when you shoot may be someone who poured you a drink the night before; but it has no name. And you, brace at the wheel, you have no name, either. Nothing has a name--except the ship, and the storm.¹⁶⁵

Creon's Speech--Sophocles (cont.)

this, that our country is the ship
that bears us safe, and that only
while she prospers in our voyage
can we make true friends.¹⁶⁴

Sophocles, a gifted writer, allows his play to glisten brilliantly and frequently with images. Robert Goheen is of the opinion that "images not only give brilliance or emotional color to individual expressions; they also point up the progress of the action and develop meanings essential to the whole."¹⁶⁶ In his detailed study, Coheen discovered that the dominant images in the Antigone are as follows: Military, Sea, Animals, Money and Merchandising, Disease and Cure, and Marriage (with Death).¹⁶⁷ Coheen believes that the:

Six groups of recurrent images, forming patterns or sequences, serve to arouse and establish connections of thought, emotion, and judgment from part to part of the play. They afford developing insights into the nature of the characters and at the same time evoke larger issues within which the significance of the characters' actions is to be viewed.¹⁶⁸

Anouilh in his Antigone, perhaps "because of its roots in classical tragedy,"¹⁶⁹ also makes use of imagery in addition to that above cited illustration. Pronko notes:

The poetry of Anouilh's language lies . . . in a use of imagery which is integrated so closely with the thought of the characters that it is an essential part of it. Antigone is doing more than making a clever metaphor when she tells Créon that his preoccupation with happiness is disgusting: "You're like dogs who lick everything they find." She is intimately identifying the masses who want nothing but an easy happiness with an animal that has no judgement, but instinctively heads for whatever appeals to it at the moment.¹⁷⁰

The use of imagery, then, is important in both Sophocles' Antigone and Anouilh's Antigone.

In both plays the king accuses Antigone of pride. Sophocles' Creon lashes out, "there is no room for pride, when thou art thy neighbor's

slave."¹⁷¹ Anouilh's Creon asks Antigone, "Did you by any chance act on the assumption that a daughter of Oedipus, a daughter of Oedipus' stubborn pride, was above the law?"¹⁷² Still later, Anouilh's Creon calls Antigone "prideful Antigone! Little Oedipus!"¹⁷³

In the Anouilh tragedy Creon is so exasperated in his failure to save her that he grasps her arm. In the Sophoclean version there is no physical contact between the king and Antigone. Anouilh's Antigone deviates from the Greek version in that Creon tells his niece the story of Eteocles and Polyneices, whom he describes as being "two gangsters."¹⁷⁴ He admits that the reason why Polyneices was not buried and Eteocles was, had to do with politics. He explains:

Eteocles . . . was just as rotten as Polynices. That great-hearted son had done his best, too, to procure the assassination of his father. That loyal prince had also offered to sell out Thebes to the highest bidder. Funny, isn't it? Polynices lies rotting in the sun while Eteocles is given a hero's funeral and will be housed in a marble vault. Yet I have absolute proof that everything that Polynices did, Eteocles had plotted to do. They were a pair of blackguards--both engaged in selling out Thebes, and both engaged in selling out each other; and they died like the cheap gangsters they were, over a division of the spoils. But, as I told you . . . I had to make a martyr of one of them . . . they were found clasped in one another's arms . . . Each had been spitted on the other's sword . . . They were mashed to a pulp . . . I had the prettier of the two carcasses brought in, and gave it a State funeral; and I left the other to rot. I don't know which was which¹⁷⁵

The preceding speech echoes much the same sentiment found in Ismene's earlier advice to Antigone--that Polyneices was a bad brother, not at all worth paying the possible price of death. Sophocles' Creon omits in his speech to Antigone any elaborate background information concerning the "whys" and "wherefores" of his action. Indeed, the only time he ever really explains his actions may be found in the edict itself, in which he remarks:

. . . that Eteocles, who hath fallen fighting for our city, in

all renown of arms, shall be entombed, and crowned with every rite that follows the noblest dead to their rest. But for his brother, Polyneices,--who came back from exile, and sought to consume utterly with fire the city of his fathers and the shrines of his father's gods,--sought to taste of kindred blood, and to lead the remnant into slavery;--touching this man, it hath been proclaimed to our people that none shall grace him with sepulture or lament, but leave him unburied, a corpse for birds and dogs to eat, a ghastly sight of shame.

Such the spirit of my dealing; and never, by deed of mine, shall the wicked stand in honour before the just; but whoso hath goodwill to Thebes, he shall be honoured of me, in his life and in his death.¹⁷⁶

It is evident that in the eyes of Sophocles' Creon, Eteocles was good.

Polyneices and only Polyneices was the foe of the King and all Thebes.

Anouilh's Creon, by contrast, did not believe that even Eteocles was a good man.

Only after pleading, "I want to save you"¹⁷⁷ and vowing, "I shall save you yet!"¹⁷⁸ does Anouilh's Creon face up to the disheartening fact that he cannot save Antigone because she does not want to be saved. At one point he almost convinces her to forego her foolishness when he relates to Antigone the shocking truth about her brothers. Had he stopped with this dark tale, perhaps his goal of saving her would have been realized. It is his discussion of happiness--designed to help Antigone become a happy individual--that completely ruins all of his plans. Creon's judgment that "Life is nothing more than the happiness that you get out of it"¹⁷⁹ is unacceptable to Antigone. She asks him:

What are the unimportant little sins that I shall have to commit before I am allowed to sink my teeth into life and tear happiness from it? Tell me: to whom shall I have to lie? Upon whom shall I have to fawn? To whom must I sell myself? Whom do you want me to leave dying, while I turn away my eyes?¹⁸⁰

Throughout the course of her conversation, Antigone uses words to describe Creon, words which stingingly insult the man who presented her with the first doll she ever called her own. Creon tells Antigone that

at one time his mind, like hers, was "filled with thought of self-sacrifice"¹⁸¹ but admits that kingship changed his attitude about many things. Now he is "master under the law. Not above the law."¹⁸² The man who does not "believe all that flummery about religious burial"¹⁸³ and feels that he is a king who has all the power in the world"¹⁸⁴ is described by his niece as being "loathsome,"¹⁸⁵ "frightened,"¹⁸⁶ "one who has a quick tongue,"¹⁸⁷ and a "hollow heart."¹⁸⁸ Antigone tells him that she hates his "filthy hope"¹⁸⁹ and declares that he has not only an "ugly glint in the corner of [his] eyes"¹⁹⁰ but also an "ugly crease at the corner of [his] mouth"¹⁹¹

Anouilh's Antigone is not afraid to speak up to her uncle. Neither, the reader will recall, is Sophocles' Antigone afraid, as evidenced when she tells Creon during their conversation, ". . . if my present deeds are foolish in thy sight, it may be that a foolish judge arraigns my folly."¹⁹² She is not at all hesitant to speak up to the king and let him know that others feel as she feels. Finally, Anouilh's Antigone with hatred tells Creon:

I spit on your happiness! I spit on your idea of life--that life must go on, come what may. You are all like dogs that lick everything they smell. You with your promise of a humdrum happiness--provided a person doesn't ask too much of life.¹⁹³

Concerning what really causes things to turn out so badly when Creon wants them to turn out happily, Fazia suggests that:

There is no communication between the king and his niece. Creon's temperament, so opposed to Antigone's, does not allow him to at first understand her, especially after he reveals how unworthy Polynices was of her concern. For a short time, Antigone, crushed by Creon's logical arguments, sits passively. Then Creon makes his fatal error: he tells Antigone to marry and find her happiness with Haemon. This formula automatically antagonizes the Anouilh heroine. The picture of the petit bonheur of the masses as a life of compromise and mediocrity, contrary to her demands for a perpetual state of happiness, shocks Antigone into reasserting her defiance. She thereupon taunts her uncle¹⁹⁴

Exhausted, Creon tells Antigone to "Scream on, daughter of Oedipus! Scream on, in your father's own voice!"¹⁹⁵ He adds, "If only you could see how ugly you are, shrieking those words!"¹⁹⁶ It is at this point, where Antigone seizes the opportunity to talk about her father, that a comparison can be made between the Anouilh version and the Sophoclean version concerning the fate of Oedipus. Anouilh's Antigone tells Creon:

When he could no longer doubt that he had killed his own father; that he had gone to bed with his own mother. When all hope was gone, stamped out like a beetle. When it was absolutely certain that nothing, nothing, could save him. Then he was at peace . . . he became beautiful.¹⁹⁷

Ismene, in the Sophoclean version, makes reference to the tragic fate of their father when in trying to persuade Antigone to forget about burying Polyneices, she reminds her to:

. . . think . . . how our father perished, amid hate and scorn, when sins bared by his own search had moved him to strike both eyes with self-blinding hand; then the mother wife, two names in one, with twisted noose did despise unto her life . . .¹⁹⁸

Before Anouilh's Creon has the guards drag Antigone away, Ismene arrives and tries to persuade Antigone to let her share the burden of blame. Here, another interesting point can be made between the two plays concerning the attitudes of the two Ismene's. Ismene is portrayed by both writers as a very timid individual. Both Ismene's place reason before emotion. Both Ismene's love their sister, and at first both reject the opportunity to help Antigone with her wild and dangerous plan. Interestingly enough, both girls later have a change of heart. There is a marked similarity between their conversations when they announce they are ready to help Antigone in whatever ways possible.

Ismene's Pleas--Sophocles

I have done the deed,--if she
allows my claim,--and share the
burden of the charge.¹⁹⁹

. . . now that ills beset thee,
I am not ashamed to sail the
sea of trouble at thy side.²⁰⁰

. . . reject me not, but let me
die with thee, and duly honour
the dead.²⁰¹

What life could I endure, with-
out her presence?²⁰²

. . . how can I serve thee,
even now?²⁰³

Ismene's Pleas--Anouilh

Creon! If you kill her, you'll
have to kill me too.²⁰⁴

Oh, forgive me, Antigone. I've
come back. I'll be brave. I'll
go with you now.²⁰⁵

If you die, I don't want to live.
I don't want to be left behind,
alone. . . . I'll do it alone
[bury him] tonight.²⁰⁶

In both accounts, Antigone's reaction to her sister's proposal shows emphatic disapproval. Anouilh's Antigone states to her sister, "You chose life and I chose death."²⁰⁷ Sophocles' Antigone reminds Ismene, "Thy choice was to live; mine to die."²⁰⁸ Anouilh's Creon hears Ismene's request but keeps silent during the conversation between the two sisters. It is obvious that he is certain of her innocence. In the Sophoclean version, however, Creon, upon hearing Ismene plead with her sister, sarcastically remarks that he did not realize that he was "nurturing two pests, to rise against my throne."²⁰⁹ Ismene is told to either "confess"²¹⁰ or "forswear all knowledge of it"²¹¹ He obviously does not choose totally to believe her innocence and tells the servants to guard not only Antigone but also Ismene. He states, "Henceforth they must be women, and not range at large; for verily even the bold seek to fly, when they see Death now closing on their life."²¹² Creon is of the opinion that Ismene "hath newly shown herself foolish, as the other hath been since her life began."²¹³

Sophocles' Creon has a very dim view concerning women. He resents

women in that he seems to fear that, if given the chance, they will prove themselves superior to men, or more specifically, to him. Two statements that he makes reveal very effectively his attitude: "Now verily I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her, and bring no penalty."²¹⁴ "While I live, no woman shall rule me."²¹⁵ From the foregoing discussion, it is easy to see that concerning women and the punishment issue, Sophocles' Creon is much more extreme in his attitude, is much more of a tyrant than Anouilh's Creon.

Sophocles' Ismene asks Creon, ". . . wilt thou slay the betrothed of thine own son?",²¹⁶ but Anouilh's Ismene does not bring up the subject of Haemon. In both accounts when the guards drag away the doomed Antigone, comments are made, in the Anouilh play by the Chorus and in the Sophocles play by the Leader of the Chorus. Anouilh's Chorus tells Creon with sternness, "You must not let Antigone die. We shall carry the scar of her death for centuries."²¹⁷ The Leader of the Chorus simply asks rather meekly, "Wilt thou indeed rob thy son of this maiden? . . . 'Tis determined, it seems, that she shall die."²¹⁸

Chorus and the Leader of the Chorus at this point appear to have different reactions concerning Antigone's plight. Chorus is outspoken against what the king is about to do, but the Leader of the Chorus does not voice any opinions that judge the king. Rather, the Leader of the Chorus may feel that although he does not want to see Antigone die, she is deserving of death in that she has broken the edict.

In both Anouilh's Antigone and Sophocles' Antigone, Creon is confronted by a bewildered, frantic son. In Sophocles' play, at first Haemon tries to be obedient and respectful to his father but finds himself becoming increasingly annoyed with the king's stubborn ways.

Sophocles' Creon begins this episode by asking Haemon, ". . . hearing the fixed doom of thy betrothed, art thou come in rage against thy father? Or have I thy good will, act how I may?"²¹⁹ He makes it immediately clear to his son that he does not want "an evil woman to share thy bed and thy home."²²⁰ Anouilh's Creon opens the episode by advising, "Forget her, my dearest boy . . . I did everything I could to save her . . . The girl doesn't love you. She could have gone on living for you . . . she wanted to die!"²²¹ In the Sophoclean version, Creon can find no kind words to encourage his son, and with sadistic delight reaffirms what Haemon has feared: "I will slay her."²²² It dismays the cruel king to discover that his son is "the woman's champion"²²³ and "a woman's slave."²²⁴ The Leader of the Chorus, listening to the debate between Creon and Haemon, comments in a noncommittal fashion, ". . . on both parts there hath been wise speech."²²⁵ Creon again delights in telling his frantic son, "Thou canst never marry her, on this side of the grave."²²⁶

Anouilh's Creon informs his son: "You will have to resign yourself to a life without Antigone. Sooner or later . . . there comes a day of sorrow in each man's life when he must cease to be a child and take up the burden of manhood."²²⁷ Haemon wants no part of the burden of manhood. This advice to become an adult, hardened to the things unattainable in life, is, however, not nearly as cruel as the shocking thing Sophocles' Creon, with inspiration, suggests that Haemon do. He wishes the son that he loves (?) to watch Antigone die. He orders his servants, "Bring forth that hated thing, that she may die forthwith in his presence--before his eyes"²²⁸ Haemon, however, exits before this order can be executed. Yet, even though Anouilh's Creon is seemingly kinder in dealing with his son, he is as unbending in his decision that Antigone

must die as is Sophocles' Creon. At this point, it is worthwhile to pause and compare the appeals made by Haemon to his father in both Antigone versions.

Haemon's Appeal--Sophocles

. . . though a man be wise, 'tis
no shame for him to learn many
things, and to bend in season.
. . . forego thy wrath; permit
thyself to change.²²⁹

Then she must die, and in death
destroy another.²³⁰

. . . nor shalt thou ever set
eyes more upon my face.²³¹

Haemon's Appeal--Anouilh

You are not yourself. It isn't
true that we have been backed
up against a wall, forced to
surrender. We don't have to
say yes to this terrible thing.
You are still king. You are
still the father I revered.²³²

I will not live without Antig-
one.²³³

I tell you I will not live with-
out Antigone.²³⁴

Both Antigone's, then, are, without doubt, doomed. Yet, both Creon's are, without realizing it, "playing with fire--with Aphrodite."²³⁵ At this point it is interesting to note that Sophocles' Creon decides not to slay Ismene, but he gives a detailed outline of how he will arrange for Antigone to meet her destiny. He plans to take Antigone:

. . . where the path is loneliest, and hide her, living, in a rocky vault, with so much food set forth as piety prescribes, that the city may avoid a public stain. And there, praying to Hades, the only god whom she worships, perchance she will obtain release from death; or else will learn, at last, though late, that it is lost labour to revere the dead.²³⁶

Anouilh's Creon never had any intention of slaying Ismene, but the reader is not quite certain how Anouilh's Antigone will meet her fate until Antigone asks the Guard and he supplies her with the unattractive details. The Guard recites from memory the orders: "In order that our fair city shall not be pol-luted with her sinful blood, she shall be im-mured--immured."²³⁷ He goes on to translate the sentence by adding,

"That means, they shove you in a cave and wall up the cave."²³⁸

Both Antigone's show unhappiness as their time to die approaches. Anouilh's Antigone talks with the Guard, "The last human face that I shall see,"²³⁹ and asks him about not only his children but also his career in the Guard. The Guard finally agrees to write a letter for her before she is led to her tomb. The letter that she dictates is interesting from the standpoint that it records the last thoughts of Antigone and also from the standpoint that it can be compared with a few of the last comments made by Sophocles' Antigone in her famed Kommos or lyrical interchange with the Chorus.

Last Comments of
Sophocles' Antigone

See me, citizens of my father-land . . . looking my last sunlight²⁴⁰

. . . I pass to the rock-closed prison of my strange tomb, ah me unhappy! who have no home on the earth or in the shades, no home with the living or with the dead.²⁴¹

Unwept, unfriended, without marriage-song, I am led forth in my sorrow. . . .²⁴² But I cherish good hope that my coming will be welcomed to my father, and pleasant to thee, my mother, and welcome, brother, to thee. . . .²⁴³

Last Comments of
Anouilh's Antigone

My darling. I wanted to die, and perhaps you will not love me anymore . . . Creon was right, it's terrible; now, beside this man, I no longer know why I am dying. I am afraid . . . Oh, Haemon, our little boy. Only now do I understand how easy it was to live. . . . I no longer know why I am dying. . . . Forgive me, my darling. You would have all been so happy except for Antigone. I love you.²⁴⁴

". . . no bridal bed, no bridal song hath been mine, no joy of marriage, no portion in the nurture of children,"²⁴⁵ laments Sophocles' Antigone, which shows that like Anouilh's Antigone, she mourns at the thought of having to part from Haemon. According to Whitman, "Antigone, now that her fate is settled, can afford to pity herself, to regret her broken betrothal and destroyed youth."²⁴⁶ This author also suggests that:

. . . her impassioned outpouring is not only a lament; it is also a prophecy of her own greatness [in that] she compares herself to Niobe, who seems to have been a particularly significant figure for Sophocles.²⁴⁷

Anouilh's Antigone confesses sadly, "I no longer know why I am dying."²⁴⁸ Sophocles' Antigone must also question why she is dying in that she asks, "And what law of heaven have I transgressed?"²⁴⁹ Sophocles' Antigone welcomes the thought of wishing revenge on her accuser, Creon. She says:

. . . if these things are pleasing to the gods, when I have suffered my doom, I shall come to know my sin; but if the sin is with my judges, I could wish them no fuller measure of evil than they, on their part, mete wrongfully to me.²⁵⁰

It becomes obvious that the sin does not lie with her judges, but with her judge, Creon, and perhaps she intuits that he will suffer for wrongfully sending her to the "eternal prison in the caverned rock."²⁵¹ Both Creon's will, of course, suffer for their evil deed.

One character that Anouilh omits entirely from his play is Teiresias. Teiresias is an aged, blind prophet who causes Sophocles' Creon to experience a change of heart concerning his plan to encase Antigone in a tomb of stone. He makes Creon shudder when he tells him that "thou standest on fate's fine edge."²⁵² It is logical to assume that:

For Teiresias, the blind seer, the sputtering of the altar flames and the shrieking of the birds are signs of heavenly displeasure, of a time out of joint. He senses an unholy crime and hastens to tell his fear.²⁵³

With no mercy, Teiresias frightens Creon by warning him:

. . . thou shall not live through many more courses of the sun's swift chariot ere one begotten of thine own loins shall have been given by thee, a corpse for corpses; because thou hast thrust children of the sunlight to the shades, and ruthlessly lodged a living soul in the grave; but keepest in this world one who belongs to the gods infernal, a corpse unburied, unhonoured, all unhallowed. In such thou hast no part, nor have the gods above, but this is a violence done to them by thee. Therefore the avenging destroyers lie in wait for thee, the Furies of Hades and of the gods, that thou mayest be taken in these same ills.²⁵⁴

Creon, after discussing the prophecy with the Leader of the Chorus, who advises that he free Antigone, decides to send the servants to try to free her. Campbell points out:

. . . [Creon's] resolution has been broken down by the prophecy of Teiresias, a new state of suspense arises, as to what the sequel will be.

Will the maiden be released in time? Will Polynices have due burial? These doubts are solved by the report of the Messenger, and the death of Eurydice is still in reserve. Tragic interest is thus maintained at a high point until the close, where the remorse of Creon is complete.²⁵⁵

The Messenger arrives and announces that Haemon, as well as Antigone, has perished. It seems that as Sophocles' Creon nears the cave, he hears Haemon's voice. Frantic with worry, he commands the servants tear away the stones. The Messenger reports that:

. . . we descried her hanging by the neck, slung by a thread-wrought halter of fine linen: while he was embracing her . . . bewailing the loss of his bride . . . and his father's deeds, and his own ill-starred love.

But his father . . . went in . . . [and cried] "Come forth, my child! I pray thee. . . ." But the boy glared at him . . . spat in his face . . . drew his . . . sword:--as his father rushed forth in flight, he missed his aim;--then . . . wroth with himself, he straightway leaned with all his weight against his sword, and drove it, half its length, into his side; and, while sense lingered, he clasped the maiden to his faint embrace. . . .

Corpse enfolding corpse he lies; he hath won his nuptial rites . . . in the halls of Death²⁵⁶

Concerning the drama in the cave, Kitto feels that when Sophocles' Haemon turns on Creon, "it is a startling outcome but a natural one; it is Aphrodite at work, visiting her anger on the king who thought that his decree was stronger than her power."²⁵⁷ Furthermore, Kitto feels:

. . . when Sophocles' audience [hear] about Haemon's attack on his father, and the sequel, they [see] in it the fulfillment of the veiled prophecy of the fourth ode, in which [we are] reminded of Aphrodite's power.²⁵⁸

Although there is no fourth ode prophecy in Anouilh's Antigone, perhaps Aphrodite was, after all, responsible for Haemon's action.

At this time, it is worthwhile to question why the gods did not save Antigone, why they allowed her, in the Sophocles version, to die.

Whitman makes the fascinating comment that:

Had Teiresias come sooner, or had Creon's change of heart been sufficient to rescue the innocent, we might say that the gods came down from heaven and interfered. But they meant no such thing. They intended neither justice nor a display of power when they refused the sacrifice; they meant only to show how things were.

Choice, action, suffering, and death are the domain of humanity. The gods do not enter it--at least, not in Sophocles. All motive comes from within the actors, and only in the sense of an inward moral standard, which is itself a kind of divinity can any god be called responsible for Antigone's death. It is she who drives the action and wills her death. Similarly, Creon's actions rise exclusively from character, and the character of a tyrant, and in the end he suffers not for a standard, but for a loss. He devises his own punishment, as Antigone devises her own glory.²⁵⁹

Anouilh does not allow the gods to intervene in his story and save Antigone. In both plays, tragedy number one (the death of Antigone) brings about tragedy number two (the death of Haemon), which in turn brings about tragedy number three (the death of Eurydice). In each play the Queen commits suicide; but prior to her death, in the Anouilh version, she never speaks, but rather knits clothing for the people of Thebes to help keep them warm. Eurydice in the Sophoclean version listens to the Messenger's report concerning the tragedies and, after commenting that she is "one who is no stranger to sorrow,"²⁶⁰ retires immediately into the house. Near the end of his play, Sophocles uses a technique called the "silent withdrawal of a character on hearing a report."²⁶¹ Eurydice learns that her son is dead and retires into the house "without a word, good or evil."²⁶² The Messenger enters the house and soon returns to announce that "the queen hath died"²⁶³ Sophocles' wife stabs herself, but not before "she had invoked evil fortunes upon thee, slayer of [her] sons."²⁶⁴

Throughout the Anouilh version, he uses what is known as anachroisms.

The definition of anachronism, according to Handbook to Literature, is:

"False assignment of an event, a person, a scene, language--in fact anything--to a time when that event or thing or person was not in existence."²⁶⁵

One of the play's finest examples of an anachronism occurs when Eurydice, according to Chorus:

. . . went to her room, her lavender scented room with its embroidered doilies and its pictures framed in plush; and there . . . she cut her throat. She is laid out in one of those two old fashioned twin beds, exactly where you went to her one night when she was still a maiden.²⁶⁶

Fazia states, concerning the anachronisms:

For his adaptation of the Antigone story, Anouilh retains the basic outlines of Aeschylus' and Sophocles' versions, but introduces several anachronisms--breakfasts of coffee and buttered tartines, racing cars and nightclubs, guards armed with automatic rifles--which help emphasize certain truths that do not change with time.²⁶⁷

In addition to the above-mentioned illustration of an anachronism, it is perhaps appropriate to pause and list a few other examples of anachronisms found in Anouilh's Antigone.

Creon to Antigone: And later on, . . . they came home wearing evening clothes [and] smoking cigarets . . .²⁶⁸

Antigone to Creon: [Polynices] was so handsome in his evening clothes. He saw me, and said: "Here, this is for you"; and he gave me a big paper flower that he had brought home from his night out.²⁶⁹

Creon to Antigone: [Polynices was a] little beast with just wit enough to drive a car faster and throw more money away than any of his pals.²⁷⁰

In the Anouilh version, as mentioned earlier, the blind prophet character is omitted. Pronko sheds light on its deliberate omission and suggests:

Anouilh's omission of the Teiresias section of the Greek play might be praised on the grounds that it avoids diversity in the play, which is not concerned with any conflict between Créon and the gods, or even between Créon and Teiresias as a representative of the people's opinion. The Créon-Antigone agon is the central experience

of Anouilh's play, and since this is the partial perspective he wishes to emphasize, his tightening of the plot by this omission is to be commended.²⁷¹

The Messenger in the Anouilh version gives a detailed report explaining that Creon "Heard a sudden moaning from the tomb . . . not the voice of Antigone . . . [but Haemon]." ²⁷² As in the Sophoclean version, immediately everyone starts taking away the stones, including Creon.

Once inside the tomb, it is discovered that:

Antigone had hanged herself by the . . . red and golden twisted cord of her robe. . . . Haemon was on his knees, holding her in his arms and moaning, his face buried in her robe. . . . Creon went into the tomb. He tried to raise Haemon to his feet. . . . suddenly he struck him--hard; and he drew his sword. Creon leaped out of range. Haemon went on staring at him . . . The King stood trembling . . . and Haemon went on staring. Then, without a word, he stabbed himself and lay down beside Antigone, embracing her in a great pool of blood.²⁷³

The endings of the plays are very similar, as evidenced through the manner in which the two Antigone's die, the way in which the Haemon's act, and the manner in which the two Queens tragically kill themselves. Both Creon's are brokenhearted although, surprisingly enough, Sophocles' Creon is outwardly more brokenhearted over his misdeeds than Anouilh's Creon.

Lament of
Sophocles' Creon

Upon Seeing Haemon
Slay Himself and
Viewing the Dead
Antigone

Woe for the sins of a
darkened soul, stub-
born sins . . . Woe
is me for the wretched
blindness of my coun-
sels. Alas, my son,
thou hast died in thy
youth, by a timeless
doom, woe is me!--thy
spirit hath fled,--not
by thy folly, but by
mine own!²⁷⁴

Ah, me, I have learned
the bitter lesson!²⁷⁵

Lament of
Anouilh's Creon

I have them laid out
side by side. They
are together at last,
and at peace. Two
lovers on the morrow
of their bridal.
Their work is done.²⁷⁷

	Sophocles' Creon (continued)	Anouilh's Creon (continued)
<u>Upon Hearing About His Wife</u>	Oh, Hades . . . Hast thou, then, no mercy for me? O thou herald of evil, bitter tid- ings, what word dost thou utter? Alas, I was already as dead, and thou hast smitten me anew . . . slaughter heaped on slaughter[.] ²⁷⁶	She, too. They are all asleep. It must be good to sleep. ²⁷⁸

As the Sophocles play ends, Creon is led away, still describing himself as a "rash, foolish man; who have slain thee, ah my son, unwittingly, and thee, too, my wife--unhappy that I am! I know not which way I should bend my gaze, or where I should seek support" ²⁷⁹

In the Anouilh version Creon tells the Page that "work is . . . to be done, and a man can't fold his arms and refuse to do it. They say it's dirty work. But if we didn't do it, who would?" ²⁸⁰ Creon then prepares to go to his Cabinet meeting. Without doubt he will now take his still new kingship duties even more seriously.

In the Anouilh version the Chorus announces that Antigone "has played her part." ²⁸¹ The Chorus also points out that:

. . . those who have survived will now begin quietly to forget the dead: they won't remember who was who or which was which. . . . A great melancholy wave of peace now settles down upon Thebes . . . upon Creon, who can now begin to wait for his own death. ²⁸²

In the Sophocles version the Leader of the Chorus reminds the reader:

Wisdom is the supreme part of happiness; and reverence towards the gods must be inviolate. Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows, and, in old age, teach the chastened to be wise. ²⁸³

Bowra suggests that "Sophocles leaves no doubt what conclusion should be drawn from the Antigone. He closes with a moral on the lips

of the chorus which tells the audience what to think"284 The previously quoted passage on wisdom, according to Bowra:

. . . can refer to no one but Creon, whose lack of wisdom has brought him to misery, who has shown irreverence to the god in refusing burial to Polyneices, has been chastened for his proud words and learned wisdom in his old age. To this lesson the preceding action in which Creon has lost son and wife and happiness has already made its effective contribution. We may be sure that the Chorus speak for the poet. It is as silent about Antigone as it is emphatic about Creon.²⁸⁵

Bowra goes on to say that at the end of the Antigone:

. . . the amends which Creon pays for his work of destruction is right. He deserves what he gets; justice is done and right vindicated. His humiliation is a necessary preliminary to the re-establishment of justice in the world.²⁸⁶

Whitman also makes an interesting comment about Sophocles' Creon when he reminds us:

Whether we find Creon thoroughly hateful or merely pitiable, his plight brings little satisfaction. He is puny. What remains amid this puniness is the ineradicable remembrance of Antigone's supremacy. In a world of hollow men, she is real. In a world of petty, grievous individuals, she, the greatest individual of all, emerges as the pattern of universal unconsolable grief.²⁸⁷

Rosamond Gilder contrasts the Creon of Anouilh with the Creon of Sophocles and points out that while:

. . . his Sophoclean prototype who is moved at last, though too late, by the arguments of the Seer, this Creon ends where he began, convinced against the evidence of the catastrophe that has overtaken his house that he is master of his fate--and of the state.²⁸⁸

Perhaps the writer of this article is correct in that Anouilh's Creon tells the Page not to ever grow up and then, as if erasing all tragic events completely, asks him what is on the agenda for the day. As he prepares to go to his Cabinet meeting, his philosophy that "Kings . . . have other things to do than to surrender themselves to their private feelings"²⁸⁹ is about to be practiced. Sophocles' Creon says, "I know not which way I should bend my gaze, or where I should seek support"290

One does not get the idea that he will go to a Cabinet meeting for a long, long time.

In both plays Antigone played her part. It is disappointing that we do not know whatever happened to the Ismene's. Perhaps the Creon's straightened up and, profiting from their experiences, became good, wise kings. Perhaps with time the Ismene's forgave the kings' past wicked ways or perhaps, instead of growing fonder of them, the Ismene's never--to make it still more of a tragedy--spoke another word to the kings. Perhaps Ismene in the Anouilh version left with the Nurse and Puff and went to another land to forget the triple tragedies in Thebes. Yet, maintaining mystery regarding Ismene seemed necessary to both Sophocles and Anouilh--a mystery answerable neither in 441 B.C. nor in 1942 A.D. Perhaps another writer will solve this unknown puzzle and tell, in still another way, the story of Antigone.

CHAPTER II

CHORAL ELEMENTS OF THE TWO ANTIGONE'S

In Anouilh's tragedy, Chorus, only one person, is much more informed than the members of Sophocles' Chorus. In the opening scene he explains with matter-of-fact melancholy that Antigone will "rise up alone against Creon, her uncle, the King."²⁹¹ He adds that Antigone has no choice but to die because her name is Antigone. When Chorus introduces Ismene and Haemon and Eurydice, he explains that Haemon and Queen Eurydice will also die. In addition to introducing the main characters of the tragedy, Chorus also introduces the brooding Messenger and the could-care-less-one-way-or-the-other card-playing Guards. In the Prologue Chorus reviews for the audience the dark tale about Eteocles and Polyneices. He explains that:

After Oedipus died, it was agreed that the two sons should share his throne, each to reign over Thebes in alternate years. . . . But when Eteocles, the elder son, had reigned a full year, and time had come for him to step down, he refused to yield up the throne to his younger brother. There was civil war. Polynices brought up allies--six foreign princes; and in the course of the war he and his foreigners were defeated, each in front of one of the seven gates of the city. The two brothers fought, and they killed one another in single combat just outside the city walls. Now Creon is King.²⁹²

This detailed background information is not brought out in Sophocles' version although the Chorus, as will be brought out in a later discussion, does mention their fate. In the Anouilh version Chorus announces that Creon has issued an edict which specifies that "Eteocles, with whom he had sided, is to be buried with pomp . . . and that Polynices is to be left to rot."²⁹³ Chorus also adds matter of factly that "any person who attempts to give him religious burial will himself be put to death."²⁹⁴

In the Sophoclean version Creon announces this edict himself.

By reading the dialogue of Anouilh's Chorus, the audience knows immediately that if Antigone is going to die, it must mean that her rising against the King has to do with the solemn edict. One might also at this early time favor Polyneices. Poor Polyneices! It was, after all, his time to reign. Did he not have a right to start a civil war to gain what rightfully belonged to him? Did Eteocles really deserve to be buried with honor if he broke his agreement? These are just a few of the ideas that a reader may find himself thinking after reading the very interesting, if gloomy, introduction by Chorus.

The first time that Sophocles introduces the Chorus in Antigone, they "tell of the defeat of the Argive Army and the triumph of Thebes."²⁹⁵ The Leader of the Chorus mentions Eteocles and Polyneices, "those two of cruel fate, who, born of one sire and one mother, set against each other their twain conquering spears, and are sharers in a common death."²⁹⁶ Because of their victory, they suggest that the people of Thebes "enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars, and visit all the temples of the gods with night-long dance and song; and may Bacchus be our leader, whose dancing shakes the land of Thebes."²⁹⁷ This rather joyous attitude, attributed to victory and the help of Zeus, is in direct contrast to the serious, anxiety-filled Prologue between Antigone and Ismene. It is obvious that "the Theban elders know nothing of Antigone's anger or her determination to flout the edict of the new monarch"²⁹⁸ The Leader of the Chorus notes that:

But lo, the king of the land comes yonder, Creon, son of Menoeceus, our new ruler by the new fortunes that the gods have given; what counsel is he pondering, that he hath proposed this special conference of elders . . . [?]²⁹⁹

The Chorus soon learn that Creon plans to give out the "rules by which I guard this city's greatness"³⁰⁰ and allows them to hear about the edict published. Creon charges the Chorus to "be guardians of the mandate . . . [and] side not with the breakers of these commands."³⁰¹ The Chorus then learn that Eteocles is considered the hero of Thebes while Polyneices is tagged the traitor.

The Leader of Sophocles' Chorus is naive in that he cannot understand why anyone would want to break the king's edict and be punished by death. He states, "No man is so foolish that he is enamoured of death"³⁰² and is correct in that not a man but a woman will face doom as a result of "foolishness." Even if the Leader does not fully agree with the king's edict, he is respectful of Creon's orders. Kirkwood points out that the attitude of the Chorus "to what is going on is always shaped by the responsibilities and special interests of their position."³⁰³ As an Elder of Thebes, the Leader of the Chorus prefers at this time to believe that the king is doing what is necessary for the good of the people.

In the Antigone version by Sophocles, in contrast to the Anouilh version, the Chorus sing lyrical songs. For example, the Sophocles Chorus present in the second ode, "perhaps the most famous lyric in Sophocles."³⁰⁴ Kirkwood goes on to explain that not only is it a famous lyric, but also a "self-sufficient lyric poem, complete and enjoyable in [itself.] If [it] had been transmitted to us alone, we could barely determine that [it] belonged in [the play]"³⁰⁵ In studying the lyrical ode, it becomes obvious that it has philosophical overtones. By way of background, the Guard announces to the king that someone has buried the body of Polyneices. The Leader of the Chorus asks if the deed can be the "work of gods"³⁰⁶ and is told to stop talking "lest thou

be found at once an old man and foolish."³⁰⁷ After the Guard and Creon leave, the Chorus sing the well known Ode on Man. The Chorus state that "Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man" ³⁰⁸ In the lyric, man's abilities, his skills and accomplishments are praised. According to the Chorus, man "snares . . . leads . . . masters . . . tames . . . [and teaches.]" ³⁰⁹ Yet, although man is able to escape "from baffling maladies," ³¹⁰ man cannot escape the conquerer Death. The ode:

. . . closes on an ominous note, casting a shadow of doubt over the whole proud statement of man's greatness and sufficiency: sometimes man's cleverness leads to good, sometimes to ill;

when he [man] observes the laws of the land, and the justice of the gods to which he has sworn, high stands his city; no city has he whom presumption leads to evil ways. May the doer of such deeds never be by my hearth, or share my thoughts. ³¹¹

According to Kirkwood, many critics feel that the "thing . . . that motivates the song [of the Chorus is the] daring of burial" ³¹² Kirkwood goes on to state, however, that the "purpose of the ode is something quite other than to pass moral judgement on the act of burial." ³¹³ He explains that the ("most important contribution of the ode is its introduction of serious and unresolved doubts)" ³¹⁴

The next ode presented in Sophocles' Antigone has "two lyrical systems." ³¹⁵ Kirkwood explains that the first system is "a lament for the house of Labdacus, springing very naturally from the unhappy events of the scene before [when Creon finds Antigone guilty and discovers that Ismene would like to help Antigone]." ³¹⁶ By way of review, the Chorus lament:

I see that from olden time the sorrows in the house of the Labdacidae are heaped upon the sorrows of the dead; and the generation is not freed by generation, but some god strikes them down, and the race hath no deliverance.

For now that hope of which the light had been spread above the last root of the house of Oedipus--that hope, in turn, is brought

low--by the blood-stained dust due to the gods infernal, and by the folly in speech, and frenzy at the heart.³¹⁷

The second lyrical system "is a deeply religious warning against the false hopes and transgressions of mankind."³¹⁸ The warning reads:

For that hope whose wanderings are so wide is to many men a comfort, but to many a false lure of giddy desires, and the disappointment comes on one who knoweth nought till he burn his foot against the hot fire.

For with wisdom hath someone given forth the famous saying, that evil seems good, soon or late, to him whose mind the god draws to mischief; and but for the briefest space doth he fare free of woe.³¹⁹

In a lengthy discussion concerning the second lyrical system, Kirkwood writes:

. . . again the chorus speak with earnestness, but it is hard to settle on the object of their warning. Is it Antigone who is so sternly reproached in the second lyrical system? Nowhere do the chorus directly accuse her of worse faults than stubbornness . . . and lack of wisdom. The sins they are inveighing against her are clearly of a more heinous kind; surely no one (except possibly Creon) would call Antigone's conduct . . . challenging the power of Zeus. But it is just as difficult to suppose that a direct and conscious indictment of Creon is intended, even though the words are "suggestive and ominous," for at this point the chorus are still loyal to him. Again we must conclude that ambiguity is intended. The chorus, having heard the quarrel between Antigone and Creon, are convinced that someone is going against the will of heaven; but in their lyrical musing on the problem they do not point directly at the sinner, because they do not know precisely who the sinner is. Later on, in the final kommos, they will turn on Creon with precision enough. But at this early point in the drama they are expressing only an intuition of evil.³²⁰

Another important ode in Sophocles' Antigone is the Ode to Eros or Love. The Chorus sing this ode after hearing Haemon plead with his father to save Antigone. The short ode has, like the songs that precede, the purpose of maintaining tension. The ode reads:

Love, unconquered in the fight, Love, who makest havoc of wealth, who keepest thy vigil on the soft cheek of a maiden; thou roamest over the sea, and among the homes of dwellers in the wilds; no immortal can escape thee, nor any among men whose life is for a day; and he to whom thou hast come is mad.

The just themselves have their minds warped by thee to wrong, for their ruin: 'tis thou that hast stirred up this present strife of

kinsmen; victorious is the love kindling light from the eyes of the fair bride; it is a power enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws; for there the goddess Aphrodite is working her unconquerable will.³²¹

In the Anouilh version of Antigone there is no Ode on Man, no Lament for the House of Labdacus, and no Ode to Love. Anouilh does insert, however, an interesting Ode on Tragedy immediately after the Creon-Guard scene. The Chorus remarks that "Tragedy is clean, it is restful, it is flawless. It has nothing to do with melodrama" ³²² Chorus contrasts the differences between tragedy and melodrama and emphasizes that in a "tragedy, nothing is in doubt and everyone's destiny is known. That makes for tranquility . . . Tragedy is restful; and the reason is that hope, that foul, deceitful thing, has no part in it. There isn't any hope. . . ." ³²³

In the classic version of Antigone, Sophocles uses two kommoi and "both have great dramatic pertinence; they are the passages in which the Chorus make their judgement on Antigone and Creon in turn" ³²⁴ Although the entire lyrical actor-chorus interchanges are too long to quote for the purpose of this chapter, it is interesting to note that in the kommoi:

The lyrical nature of these two passages does more than signify emotional stress; by making these two passages a distinct pair, it emphasizes their connection; and it emphasizes also the key part played in this drama by the chorus in relation to each of the main figures, a part that has, for a chorus, an unusual degree of independence. ³²⁵

Anouilh's version of Antigone does not boast any lyrical chorus-actor interchanges. Anouilh's Antigone also leaves out the Ode to Danae which the Chorus of Sophocles recite after Antigone has been led away to the Cave of Hades. According to Kirkwood, the ode:

. . . tells of three imprisonments: of Danae, Lycurgus, and Cleopatra. It is a striking poem . . . Each imprisonment seems to

have a different moral atmosphere: Danae's brought her glorious motherhood; Lycurgus' was a dismal punishment for impiety; Cleopatra's was a case of pitiful and undeserved suffering. Which are we to liken to Antigone's case? . . . [In this poem] instead of moral pronouncement we have a poetic elaboration, very moving and vivid, of the single theme of imprisonment, forming a kind of lyrical finale . . . After the stirring kommos and the departure of Antigone there is no place for further dramatic development of this theme. The ode is a transformation of the pathos of the events into lyrical terms that fulfill and give respite from the tragic action. Then the plot is renewed with the Teiresias scene.³²⁶

In the Sophocles version of Antigone, the Leader of the Chorus generally announces the arrival of someone. The example, "But lo, the king of the land comes yonder . . ."³²⁷; "Lo, yonder Ismene comes forth, shedding such tears . . ."³²⁸; "But lo, Haemon, the last of thy sons;-- comes . . ."³²⁹ illustrates the manner in which the Leader of the Chorus often helps make a transition from one scene to another. In the Anouilh version more elaborate stage directions help make the transitions in that the entrances of characters are not announced by Chorus.

In the following chart, which quotes fragmentary dialogues, similarities and differences are readily recognizable between the Sophoclean Chorus and Anouilh's Chorus.

	Sophocles' Version of the Leader of the <u>Chorus or Chorus</u>	Anouilh's Version of the Chorus
<u>Comments Made Upon Learning About Antigone's Deed</u>	The maid shows herself passionate child of passionate sire, and knows not how to bend before troubles. ³³⁰	Antigone has been caught. For the first time in her life, lit- tle Antigone is going to be able to be her- self. ³³⁷
<u>Comments Made to Creon Upon Hearing About Antigone's Plight</u>	Wilt thou indeed rob thy son of this maiden? . . . 'Tis determined, it seems that she shall die. ³³¹	You must not let Antigone die. We shall carry the scar of her death for cen- turies. ³³⁸

Sophocles' Leader of
the Chorus or Chorus
(continued)

Anouilh's Chorus
(continued)

Comments Made
Concerning the
Conversation Between
Haemon and Creon

. . . for on both parts
there hath been wise
speech.³³²

[You must find a way
to save her.] Lock
her up. Say that she
has gone out of her
mind.³³⁹

You can still gain
time, and get her out
of Thebes.³⁴⁰

Creon, the boy will
go mad.³⁴¹

Comments Made Con-
cerning What Will
Happen to Ismene

Dost thou indeed
purpose to slay
both?³³³

Comments Made When
Antigone Is Led Out
of the Palace

. . . [I] can no more
keep back the steaming
tears, when I see
Antigone thus passing
to the bridal chamber
where all are laid to
rest.³³⁴

Comments Made After
Listening to the
Prophet

Son of Menoeceus, it
behooves thee to take
wise counsel . . . Go
thou, and free the
maiden from her rocky
chamber, and make a
tomb for the unburied
dead.³³⁵

Comments Made Upon
Hearing About the
Triple Tragedy

Wisdom is the supreme
part of happiness;
and reverence towards
the gods must be in-
volute. Great words
of prideful men are
ever punished with
great blows, and, in
old age, teach the
chastened to be
wise.³³⁶

All those who were
meant to die have died.
. . . And those who
have survived will
now begin quietly to
forget the dead: they
won't remember who
was who or which was
which. . . . Antigone
is calm tonight . . .
A great melancholy
wave of peace now
settles down upon
Thebes . . . upon Creon,
who can now begin to
wait for his own death.³⁴²

In re-examining the facts brought out in the foregoing discussion, it is quite apparent that Sophocles' Chorus:

. . . call attention to newly arrived persons, ask predictable questions and make purely factual or conventional answers to questions, advise moderation in argument, grief, and action, and offer unexciting comments on most of the long speeches. Their remarks nearly always simply carry on the tone of what has preceded.³⁴³

The role of Chorus in Anouilh's version is not as "active," but, considering Anouilh's overall treatment of the myth, his role in Antigone seems adequate.

CHAPTER III

THOUGHT ELEMENTS IN THE TWO ANTIGONE'S

Leo Aylen pays tribute to Sophocles' unforgettable tragedy Antigone with the following praise: "Of all Sophocles' plays the Antigone is the one which touches our most basic instincts."³⁴⁴ Readers of Sophocles' Antigone continue to find the brave story of a girl who forsakes human law for laws of a higher divine nature appealing in that "More than any other [play] it is about what is natural and unnatural."³⁴⁵ In the course of his discussion on this topic, Aylen makes the engrossing remark:

Anouilh has found the story the best myth for putting over his peculiar view of life, his unusual heroine. The plays appear so similar but are worlds apart. The distance between them is the distance between a knowing individual in white tie and tails talking about drama and a group of citizens singing about man.³⁴⁶

To fully appreciate the implications of the above-quoted criticism, additional similarities and differences between the two plays must be explored. The clues which will help explain in a satisfactory fashion some of the reasons why the "plays appear so similar but are worlds apart,"³⁴⁷ lie submerged in the religious and philosophical ideas held by the religiously oriented Greek and the sophisticated, by comparison, Frenchman. Both dramatists are products of their age and their environment. Consequently, both Sophocles and Anouilh mirror their personal beliefs.

Sophocles inherited a rich tradition: He was born in a lovely country considered wealthy because its "Poets and philosophers alike looked with an unflinching eye on all that met them, on man and the world, on life and death."³⁴⁸ He was also blessed from the standpoint

that "Ancient Greece is justly regarded as the birthplace of the drama."³⁴⁹ Peter Arnott in his book, An Introduction To The Greek Theatre, is remindful that "Though we speak of 'Greek drama' as though it were the product of the country as a whole, we possess examples of complete plays from one city only, Athens."³⁵⁰ History records the "fashionable Athenian suburb of Colonus"³⁵¹ as the home of Sophocles; therefore, he enjoyed literary advantages from an early age. At this time it is worthwhile to pause and give briefly a simplified account of the developments of drama to the time of Sophocles. One factual source describes drama's development in the following way:

Gods and heroes were regarded as having the community under their protection. At various times in the year it was necessary for the people to placate them by sacrifices and celebrations in their honour. These would fall at the times of greatest importance to the farming community, sowing, harvest and the vintage, around which their whole life revolved and in which success or failure meant life or death. It was natural at these festivals to celebrate the gods and heroes in song³⁵²

Apparently "These songs were delivered by choruses"³⁵³

It then followed that "there came into existence a body of poems highly dramatic in content though not in form"³⁵⁴ Interestingly enough:

To transform the dramatic poem into drama it was necessary for one member of the chorus to take it upon himself to speak the words attributed to the god or hero in the poem. In the taking of this vital step, drama was born.³⁵⁵

Thespis is said to be responsible for suggesting the above-mentioned step, and the "significance of this creation of the first actor cannot be overestimated."³⁵⁶

Then, during the age of Sophocles, drama reached a new high point, thanks to this playwright's own ingenuity. As explained earlier in the Introduction of this paper, he advanced drama by adding a "third actor and scenery"³⁵⁷ Realizing that Tragedy "exercised a . . .

powerful influence"³⁵⁸ on the Greeks because of its "incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions,"³⁵⁹ Sophocles became a well-known tragic poet.

Indeed, Sophocles is accurately described by Matthew Arnold as "the supreme example of a tragic poet 'who saw life steadily and saw it as a whole.'"³⁶⁰ Yet, perhaps Matthew Arnold needed to go one step further and qualify the word whole with the description "religious," in that the way Sophocles views life as a whole cannot be separated from his religion. In turn, Sophocles' religious attitudes cannot be separated from his tragedies. For example, T. B. L. Webster relates that: "We know that Sophocles was regarded as 'one of the most religious men' in Athens"³⁶¹ The actions of brave Antigone support Webster's statement in that this craftsman's religious beliefs shine brightly like stars in Antigone and help light for his heroine the pathway of religious conviction which leads to her death.

Because of Sophocles' cherished religious ideas it was a natural result that:

The familiar religious and moral forces . . . are constantly on the lips of the characters; the will of Zeus, of other gods . . . ; the moral laws guarded by the Erinyes; such divine agencies as prophecies and . . . oracles; and of course such traditional conceptions as Moirai, Themis, Tyche, and Chronos.³⁶²

Scholars soon determine that both "Zeus and Apollo . . . are of supreme importance for the religious thought of Sophocles."³⁶³ For example, concerning the powerful god, Zeus, it is noted by S. H. Butcher in Some Aspects of Greek Genius, that Sophocles like Aeschylus, "attained to the conception of a righteous order of the world under the sovereign rule of Zeus."³⁶⁴ Elaborating on the playwright's trust in Zeus, Webster reveals that for Sophocles, Zeus is "'the steward of things to come',

just as he is the steward of war in Homer. 'The dice of Zeus always falls well.'³⁶⁵ This same author then points out that "Sophocles' noblest and most complete expression of this idea is in the chorus of the Antigone"³⁶⁶ This Chorus questions:

Thy power, O Zeus, what human transgression can restrain? It neither sleep, which ages all, nor the unwearied months of the gods conquer; but a ruler unaged by time, thou dwellest in the flashing light of Olympus.³⁶⁷

This is just one example of many passages in Antigone which contains reference to Zeus. In all, Antigone contains twelve references to Zeus. Yet, according to Greene, in Moirai:

The thought of Sophocles is not to be discovered, any more than his style is to be discovered, merely in separate, detachable passages, in gnomai and set speeches . . . [Rather,] it is ingrained in plot and character and the whole texture of his work.³⁶⁸

As one becomes familiar with the "plot, character, and whole texture" of Sophocles' plays, it is clear that:

Unflinchingly he allows his characters to declare that evil, as well as good, comes from the gods; to refer to divine jealousy; or in momentary despair to revive the old pessimistic sayings that "God makes evil seem good to one whose mind he draws to mischief," or even that "never to have been born is best."³⁶⁹

Furthermore, S. M. Adams notes that concerning the gods, especially "Apollo or Athena or Zeus":

We are not to brush these dieties aside as if they were a mere conventional embellishment. They are not only genuine to Sophocles; they make the several plays, for it is they who in the last analysis control the action.³⁷⁰

According to critic Adams, "Apollo and all the gods are back of the Antigone"³⁷¹ Reinforcing this idea is the statement of still another critic that, in the Antigone, "The gods administer justice in accordance with their laws. . . . they are 'unwritten and sure laws of the gods not for yesterday or to-d y, but eternal'"³⁷²

Because of Sophocles' religious outlook, so deeply ingrained in his philosophical outlook on life, it comes as little surprise that Antigone reflects his religious convictions. Specifically, the play "raises the eternal question of the relation between man's law and God's."³⁷³

By way of a review of Sophocles' religious theme in Antigone:

Antigone is the idealist who readily sacrifices herself to the claims of divine law. Full of tender love for her dead brother to whom his fellow-citizens deny the rites of burial because they regard him as a traitor, she is fanatically inflexible in her opposition to the laws of worldly power which claim her as their victim.³⁷⁴

The gods of course do "administer justice in accordance with their laws."³⁷⁵ Justice is rendered by three deaths and the suffering of Creon.

Greek audiences found the story of Antigone one that never lost its appeal. In fact, Martha Hale Shackford writes in her book, Shakespeare, Sophocles, that interestingly enough, the "Greeks who witnessed its presentation in the open air theatre at Athens knew the story . . ."³⁷⁶

According to Richmond Lattimore, in Story Patterns in Greek Tragedy, their knowledge of the fate of Antigone was a natural one. For example:

As is well known, the stories told in tragedies were not pure fictions invented by the tragic poets. The material was drawn almost exclusively from the legends and myths which, in Homer, Hesiod, and their successors, or in oral tradition, constituted a sort of loose history of the Greek world from the beginnings to the Dorian conquest.³⁷⁷

In the eyes of Aristotle, "the finest tragedies are always on the story of some few houses [such as] Alcmeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, and Telephus"³⁷⁸ Misery is abundant in these tales.

"That the hero must be of great family was believed not only by Aristotle but by most critics and playwrights down to our own day."³⁷⁹ Antigone was a princess, daughter of Oedipus. She came from a royal family, but

one which was doomed because of a curse. Misery, without doubt, is abundant in the tale of Antigone. Concerning Sophocles' motives for building his plots around the framework of doomed families, according to Lionel D. Barnett:

. . . Sophokles has to reckon with the Greek traditions of accursed families. But his tendency is to dwell on the springs of action in the human heart. He does not care to bring God and man forward on the same stage; he prefers to put human action in the foreground, with a background of divinity to explain and justify the dispensations of mortality. His religion is less definite, less concerned to figure bodily the divine forms of Greek scripture, than that of Aischylos. He speaks of August laws born in the firmament, eternal, unbegotten of Heaven or Man. Hence when he is treating the history of the race of Labdakos he recognizes indeed the unhappy fate that broods over the family, but is far more concerned with its manifestations in moral act--be it pride of heart, or sin, or tragic choice of honourable death--than with its being as a mystic superhuman power.³⁸⁰

Since Sophocles allows Antigone to die, it is worthwhile to examine this dramatist's views on immortality. A. E. Haigh writes: "As regards the state of the dead, and life beyond the grave, Sophocles merely reproduces the indistinct conceptions of the popular belief."³⁸¹ For example, "Human beings still retain a kind of existence after death, and possess the same physical features as before."³⁸² According to Haigh:

. . . references to the state beyond the grave are slight and infrequent; Antigone, for example, when going to her death, thinks more of what she is leaving behind her than of any cheerful prospect for the future.³⁸³

Despite his religious outlook, then, "there is nothing in the plays of Sophocles to suggest that he had any deep or permanent conviction on the question of immortality."³⁸⁴ Although Sophocles was undecided about the hereafter, he continued to remain religious despite temptations to depart from his beliefs. For example, according to C. M. Bowra, even when Pericles died and war started again, and Sophocles witnessed the "age of doubt and sophistry . . . His belief in the gods never wavered . . . "³⁸⁵

Moreover, throughout his life Sophocles continued to praise the philosophical beliefs that "Reverence, moderation, and humility are the qualities which . . . avail a man best in the long run."³⁸⁶ Webster implies that the "traditional religion tempered by philosophy, the ideal of doing good, sophrosyne and apragmosyne, the belief in personality and breed, these are the essentials of the thought of Sophocles."³⁸⁷

H. D. Kitto has "made up" an interesting conversation which Sophocles no doubt would approve of, if he had the opportunity to read it. According to Kitto:

He seems to say: "I do not pretend that life is easy or fully comprehensible; I know that it can be cruel. I give you the facts, as I see them. I am not a vendor of patent remedies, but a tragic poet; I am not so simple as to believe that the practice of virtue will ensure happiness. Call no man happy until you can look back on the whole of his life. I do not believe that the gods necessarily reward virtue and wisdom; they did not save Antigone from death. But I do believe that they punish wickedness and folly--or rather that these breed their own punishment. I do believe that our Universe has its laws, and that we know some of them. Even at its best, life is uncertain; but to use what forethought we have, to obey what laws we do know is the best defence against its perils. To neglect them, to follow our own laws, is folly."³⁸⁸

For a tragic poet, in Ancient Greece, Sophocles had a great deal of insight. Much of what Kitto "pretends" he says could be summed up in another, simpler way: "Know thyself"³⁸⁹ Specifically:

"Know thyself" is the answer which the Greek offer to the Sphinx's riddle. How truly does all Greek literature and art respond to the command! When philosophy had as yet scarcely begun to look inward, the poets--Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles--with large and impartial observation had reflected human life.³⁹⁰

In comparison to Sophocles' concept of religious philosophy, how different is the Frenchman's outlook on life! Anouilh's Antigone was produced during the dark days of World War II while the Nazis occupied Paris, France. Wallace Fowlie notes that the "theatres in Paris during those difficult years became the site of a subtle plotting against the

enemy."³⁹¹ In a sense, however, as the Greeks were united by religious outlooks, during their festivals, the French were also united in their desire "to consecrate their threatened tradition."³⁹² During the bleak years which faced France, it is amazing that:

For four years the theatres in Paris were extremely prosperous and produced difficult plays which helped to bind the French together. . . . The trials of each day and the constant surveillance of the enemy performed paradoxically a service to the arts of the theatre. In the 1943-44 season alone, three new plays of exceptional quality were produced: Sodome et Gomorrhe of Giraudoux, Les Mouches of Sartre, and Antigone of Anouilh.³⁹³

Unlike Sophocles, when Anouilh wrote Antigone he was not competing for a prize "under a set of strict rules"³⁹⁴ Furthermore, Anouilh was not involved like Sophocles in presenting a play deeply centered around a religious philosophy. Nor was he trying to present the lesson that "Man learns by suffering [a proverb which] Sophocles deepens the meaning of"³⁹⁵ Yet, if Anouilh did not feel involved religiously, Alba Della Fazio suggests that the "1942 play, Antigone, was a clear indication that Anouilh felt involved politically"³⁹⁶ In other words, "his heroine represents the choice between resistance and collaboration--a painful choice which was to be dramatized once again in Becket (1958)."³⁹⁷ More information pertaining to his political involvement will be cited in a later discussion.

Instead of Anouilh's Antigone being produced "under open sky [to an excited, celebrating audience of] approximately 18,000 persons"³⁹⁸ in Athens, Greece, his play was produced in "Paris, at the Théâtre de l'Atelier on February 4, 1944"³⁹⁹ This theatre was, in fact, "fathered by Jacques Copeau in 1913"⁴⁰⁰ A girl, rather than a male with a "penetrating tenor voice played . . . the leading [role of] Antigone"⁴⁰¹

In an atmosphere which accurately may be described as tense, fearful, uncertain, bitter, and dismal, theatre-goers were first introduced to Antigone. This atmosphere was totally unlike the climactic joyfulness of the religious celebrations dedicated to "sacrifice, symbol, and song."⁴⁰² Because of the ugly inconveniences of war itself, the conditions for producing the play were far from ideal. For example: "In the spring of 1944, when the electricity supply was low, plays were performed by daylight."⁴⁰³ According to one account, at the "Atelier, this meant that the actors in Antigone had to group themselves in a small space around the prompter's box where a beam of light came in through an opened sky light."⁴⁰⁴

Yet, in heroic determined fashion, the dedicated actors and actresses smiled at the hardships, and "the show went on, interrupted for a few days by the liberation, and then playing to audiences no longer oppressed by the problems of occupation."⁴⁰⁵

In Sophocles' time when Antigone was produced, the "audience was tremendous, and critical."⁴⁰⁶ By comparison, in Anouilh's time the audience was greatly diminished but, nevertheless, highly critical of what it viewed. By way of explanation:

When Antigone was first presented in Paris at the Théâtre de l'Atelier on February 4, 1944, a polemic arose concerning the interpretation of the play and the significance of the two main characters. For many, Antigone symbolized the Anti-Nazi Resistance movement; she was a glorious heroine for having said "no" to Creon, the symbol of an external order unjustly imposed. Others labeled the play pro-Nazi; they saw in Creon, who pleads movingly for a compromise that will allow him to continue steering the ship of state, an eloquent champion of the Vichy government's thesis of expediency. For them, Creon was an intelligent organizer, more fascinating than Antigone because whereas she refuses to grow up and learn that not everything in life is rosy, he courageously accepts life in its ugliness. Although Anouilh never publicly took sides in the polemic, his sympathy for Antigone can be inferred from other plays, notably Becket, in which the heroes and heroines clearly take the extremely

conservative position of non-compromise.

In any case, the partisans of *Antigone* triumphed over those of Creon, and the play continued to fire audiences of patriotic Parisians until the Liberation. The popularity of the play during this period exceeded that of any other because of the politically tense atmosphere and the identification between audience and heroine. Postwar productions of *Antigone* lost their impact, and the London and New York productions of the drama met with only moderate success.⁴⁰⁷

Regardless of their views, the divided audience--on the issue concerning what Anouilh was attempting to portray politically--enjoyed exercising their "amateur" abilities as critics. Many, no doubt, deluded themselves into believing that their observations were professionally accurate.

Anouilh, who is described as a "pessimist because he has a burning desire for personal perfection that is unattainable in this world,"⁴⁰⁸ is said to have written "metaphysical [tragedies]" because they treat man's unacceptable place in the universe.⁴⁰⁹ *Antigone* is an example of a metaphysical tragedy.

Anouilh's philosophical creed which he uses to convey his ideas is, according to Wesley Barnes, labeled "eclectic; he carries, as do the works of Camus and Giraudoux notable existential qualities."⁴¹⁰ In a chapter vividly named "The Modern Dilemma," Barnes explains man's plight which, in turn, perhaps helps explain how Anouilh may have arrived at his gloomy outlook on life. He suggests:

Some small reflection should indicate that the artist and writer of today is caught in a dilemma. Being primarily individualistic, he is caught between two deadly and conflicting essences of man: the materiality inherent in the first premise of naturalism--nature is absolute--and the third premise which says that society is itself a God. He has no freedom in either direction. Because art and literature are not per se essentially rationalistic, he has few weapons with which to fight. He has retreated in desperation to existentialism. Logically, the first response of the artist is to protest and to solve the problem.⁴¹¹

Barnes goes on to assert that "Giraudoux, Anouilh, Salacrou,

Sartre, and Camus have attempted to do so by showing the irrational parts of current society; they have done so by reason, ironically."⁴¹² In this respect Anouilh differs from the Absurdist such as "Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco, Genet, Albee, Pinter, and Simpson [who feel that] the logical approach is fruitless."⁴¹³

According to Davis McElroy, "Kierkegaard, the great prophet of existentialism [once said] 'Life is a dark saying.'"⁴¹⁴ The chilling overtones of this dramatic saying no doubt are cherished by Anouilh, a complex man who "In historic perspective . . . will take his place among the mid-century pessimistic writers who have given vent to their disorientation, feelings of guilt, anguish, dissatisfaction, and disillusionment."⁴¹⁵ It is one thing to acknowledge that "Anouilh's work reflects the same mood that inspired the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel,"⁴¹⁶ but it is another matter to understand what is meant by the mysterious term "existentialism." Only when this term is understood can the reader hope to more fully understand what is meant by the statement that Anouilh's "characters make the same gratuitous decisions as the existentialist heroes."⁴¹⁷

Existentialism is not new despite the fact that since World War II it has become "a philosophical doctrine which has recently become the basis for a literary school"⁴¹⁸ According to McElroy:

. . . the first full-length portrait of man drawn from the existentialistic point of view appeared . . . in the heyday of Queen Victoria's reign . . . The author of this piece was Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian poet and playwright, whose existentialistic play, Peer Gynt, appeared in 1867. At that time, Soren Kierkegaard, the founder of the existentialistic movement, had already been dead for thirty years⁴¹⁹

Today, according to Maurice Natanson in Literature, Philosophy, And The Social Sciences, the "broadest publicity given to existentialism

emphasizes its dramatic categories: fear, dread, anguish, suffering, aloneness, choice, authenticity, and death."⁴²⁰ These words give clues to some of the characteristics of existentialism, but exactly what else does the philosophy involve?

In attempting to answer this question, scholars soon discover that there exist many acceptable, if often confusing, definitions of existentialism. One relatively uncomplicated definition reads:

A somewhat unsystematic system of philosophy in vogue after World War II in France and developed by Jean Paul Sartre on the basis of the teachings of the German philosopher, Heidegger, who in turn owes a great deal to the Dane, Soren Kierkegaard.⁴²¹

According to this same account, the "basic tenet of existentialism seems to be that 'we and things in general exist, and that is all that there is to this absurd business called life.'⁴²² Another source includes the statement that "Sartre claims that the fundamental truth of existentialism is in Descartes' formula, 'I think; therefore, I exist.'⁴²³ Furthermore, the "existential philosophy is concerned with the personal 'commitment' of this unique existing individual in the 'human situation.'⁴²⁴ A perhaps more enlightening explanation is as follows:

The central doctrine is that man is what he makes of himself: he is not predestined by a God, or by society, or by biology. He has a free will, and the responsibility which goes with it. If he refuses to choose or lets outside forces determine him, he is contemptible. Hence the literary works of existentialism insist on actions--including acts of will--as the determining things. (Aristotle said in his Poetics that character is revealed wherever a choice has to be made.) The existentialists stress the basic elements in man, including the irrationality of the unconscious and subconscious act. They consider life as dynamic, in a constant state of flux--a human life is not an abstraction, but a series of consecutive moments. And they always insist on the concrete instead of the abstract, on existence itself rather than the idea of existence. Since existentialism is a point of view about life rather than about literature, it has no particular style or literary form associated with it; hence it is really a philosophical school which has conditioned some highly effective literary works rather than a literary school.⁴²⁵

In the above-cited statement, reference is made to the "free will" as it applies to the existentialist philosophy. One critic, John Harvey, believes that Anouilh does not allow "free will" in his plays. His theory concerning the lack of "free will" reads as follows:

As for existentialist drama, it would seem that Anouilh's tragedy lies at the furthestmost pole from it; for what possibility do Anouilh's heroes have freely to decide what they are or to form themselves through their acts? Even Leonard Pronko, after noting several parallels between Anouilh's and existentialist theatre, admitted that in Anouilh the notion of roles was inherently deterministic. He could describe the freedom enjoyed by the playwright's tragic heroes only as illusory or, at best, confused.⁴²⁶

Another critic says of Anouilh that this playwright is:

. . . not a philosophical, but highly instinctive writer. [Yet he] does reflect some of the philosophical ideas current in France at the time of his writing; but his philosophy expresses itself more in terms of mood and temperament than in ideas.⁴²⁷

Assuming, however, that Anouilh's philosophy is "oriented" more existentially than in the direction of any other popular literary philosophy, it is of interest to note that, copying the popular trend of many other modern existentialists, he has found investigating and re-making Greek dramas worthwhile and in soothing compatibility with his philosophical inclinations. Anouilh's interest in Greek myths supports Peter Arnott's theory that:

In the modern French drama Greece has come into its own. The fashionable philosophy of Existentialism which influences many French writers insists on the futility of human existence. Happiness is illusion; there are no ideals, no ultimate purpose. These playwrights found the Greek conception of an oppressive Fate thwarting individual intentions a perfect medium for their thoughts. Greek myths, and particularly Greek plays, have been rewritten with an existentialist slant.⁴²⁸

Arnott adds, however, that "where the Greeks were restrained and dignified, the French dramatists are preoccupied with the the sordid."⁴²⁹ He explains this view by noting that "Sophocles' Antigone shows the

conflict between superhuman and human."⁴³⁰ He adds with a tone of admiration that Antigone's "tragedy is that she thinks larger than the other characters in the play; she sees what is right and must be done, while her opponents are bogged down in their narrow prejudices."⁴³¹ According to Arnott, although "Antigone finally dies, the victory is hers."⁴³²

Then, with objective boldness, this critic is uncomplimentary to Anouilh's efforts to re-create the Greek myth, in observing that:

Anouilh's Antigone is on a lower plane. Antigone's defiance of Creon is dictated not so much by concern for her brother's soul as by lack of concern for her own. Even when it is revealed that . . . her brothers' bodies are unidentifiable, so that it is a matter of luck which is buried and which left to rot, she is still determined to die though her reasons are pointless. Anouilh uses the outward forms of Sophocles' play--a limited number of characters with the traditional Messenger, and a suave chorus in the person of one speaker--to express a far inferior message.⁴³³

Aylen has an intriguing summation which also reflects some of the more obvious differences between the two dramas:

The action of Antigone is that of the Sophocles play, though there is no forgetting of Antigone herself. The end comes much more quickly after she has gone, and there is no Teiresias. Créon is central. Sophocles' Antigone is inarticulate, but there is no doubt that her action is in keeping with the will of heaven, because of the treatment of the body, the impact of the chorus, especially in the ode on man, and the words of Teiresias. Without these, the effect of the play is different. Antigone in Anouilh's play just resists, "absurdly". This is why the play was more of a success in Occupied France. After the Liberation Mme. Dussane said, "It was now necessary to sympathize with Antigone by an intellectual effort, whereas formerly one had been in a conspiracy with it." War and Anouilh are both great simplifiers. Now there is a danger that we shall see this as another play about an Anouilh hero who wants to die. Créon is right when he says that Polynices was only a pretext.⁴³⁴

A further basis of comparison of the two tragedies should also be considered. In the Introduction to Antigone, as found in the Haskell M. Block and Robert G. Shedd edition of Masters of Modern Drama, the editors write:

On the surface, the modern heroine rebels for the same reasons as her ancient forebear: out of a sense of injustice over violation of a sacred law. As in the Greek drama, this conflict opposes the intransigent individual to the tyranny of the state. Yet, in the course of Anouilh's play, the grounds of tension shift from political values to philosophical values; the central issue is the meaning of life itself and the impossibility of maintaining one's purity in a world that demands and imposes compromise.⁴³⁵

This summation is in order because it emphasizes "purity," which is basic in Anouilh's philosophy. Harvey suggests that the play is "the tragedy of a girl who comes to realize that she aspires to a purity which denies life itself."⁴³⁶

Purity, for Anouilh, applies to perfection. If man were pure, then perhaps he would find an acceptable place in the universe. One critic notes that this "nostalgia for individual purity marks even his cruellest scenes with poetry and speaks to our innermost selves."⁴³⁷ According to one explanation as to why the reader's innermost self is moved, "We have all known those moments of disgust and despair when visions have flashed upon us of pure love, and sublime feelings, which will never come again."⁴³⁸ What destroys the state of purity? "... society corrupts any individual."⁴³⁹ Furthermore, "Pride, selfishness, hatred, violence, mistrust, revenge--all of these monsters of poisoned feeling rise from our basic purity when it is, as it must be [because of society], thwarted and overridden."⁴⁴⁰ It follows then, according to this loss-of-purity concept, that "at times death appears preferable to going on living burdened forever with such an overwhelming sense of loss and inadequacy"⁴⁴¹

In Anouilh's Antigone, "Antigone becomes the symbol of purity of personal conscience, she asks too much of life, she is youthful idealism personified."⁴⁴² Aylen makes the interesting observation that "it is

almost true to say that [Anouilh] never has an old hero; at any rate they are all 'spiritual adolescents' as Marsh describes them."⁴⁴³ Aylen systemizes Anouilh's heroes in the following fashion:

They are existentialist in the way in which existentialism is an extension of Romantic self-centeredness. They are contemptuous of life, especially of any intellectual activity, since intellectual activity inevitably involves compromise. They all say "no" to life, and this word becomes a mark of their nature. Humanity is divided into "yes" and "no" sayers. To say "no" is to perform an "absurd" act, and in Anouilh the existentialist absurd act is much the same as Gide's "acute gratuit". Antigone says "no" to Creon⁴⁴⁴

Pronko believes that the youthful heroine Antigone is an idealist who "represents the universe of childhood--the kingdom of the ideal judged through subjectively chosen values."⁴⁴⁵ Because of her personal convictions and ideals, according to Pronko, Antigone wants happiness "to be as beautiful as when I was a child--or else I'd rather die."⁴⁴⁶ This critic of Anouilh adds as an afterthought: "Such is the heroic attitude, the refusal of 'filthy hope,' and the search for the purity represented by the lost paradise of childhood."⁴⁴⁷

Antigone "cannot accept Creon as her true authority"⁴⁴⁸ She therefore falls into the category of the "no" sayers. The "no" which Antigone gives Creon when he vainly tries to save her from death shows that indeed she "feels that she belongs existentially to the group of offended, disinherited and downtrodden creatures who simply cannot be spared in the atmosphere of general justice."⁴⁴⁹ More specifically, in accordance with Anouilh's philosophy, Antigone is a play "which places the heroic individual in the center of the stage as she faces reality and says 'no' to it."⁴⁵⁰ Pronko in Jean Anouilh explores in still more depth Antigone's "no" decision, using both psychological and philosophical overtones. He ascertains:

The central struggle is no longer between the protagonist's past and his aspirations. It has shifted to something more universal: the inner world versus the entire outer world, which is the only one recognized by society. The revolt against the past is only part of a larger revolt, . . . for Antigone creates herself only in the present.⁴⁵¹

Pronko maintains, further, that Antigone's:

. . . revolt is gratuitous; without direction; unmotivated in terms of a past. Her action arises only from a deep-felt necessity to become what she believes to be her truest self. The substance of the conflict lies not in Antigone's opposition of god and family ties to Créon's support of the public welfare and of government, but in the opposition of Antigone, as a symbol of the idealist to Créon who, while also following certain ideals, is dedicated to a realistic solution of life's dilemmas. . . . Antigone . . . is committed to no public value--only to herself and her own ideals. Selfish though this may be, she remains free to follow her ideal.⁴⁵²

Unlike Sophocles' Antigone, Anouilh's Antigone, totally rejects any compromise of idealism and "acts not for her brother or for anyone else, but for herself"⁴⁵³ She welcomes death not on terms of human versus divine law as evident in Sophocles' masterpiece. Only through death can Antigone "assert her freedom"⁴⁵⁴

One critic suggests that Anouilh "knows that [Antigone's] death is gratuitous and absurd and finally despairingly feared since he has taken out of the tragedy the religious implications so strong in Sophocles."⁴⁵⁵ Helmut Hatzfeld expresses his criticism that Anouilh:

. . . with his Pièces noires . . . eg. La Sauvage (1934), Eurydice (1942), Antigone (1942), Roméo et Jeannette (1946), Médée (1949), at first glance seems to bring [his] whole theatre into the service of the absolute as opposed to the vulgar search for an impossible earthly happiness. In good classical tradition his defense of the absolute always is bound to end in struggle and death. But Anouilh's absolute is nothing else but an individual revolt against social corruption in which the hero loses his tragic dignity by not being convinced of the higher value for which he dies. This is particularly true of the heroine in Antigone⁴⁵⁶

In his Antigone, then, Anouilh has "the story of mankind's doomed purity in its hopeless struggle against the corruption of life itself."⁴⁵⁷

Yet, many readers no doubt share the opinion that although "Antigone dies for no principle, we cannot help feeling that her death has value as an act."⁴⁵⁸

Anouilh will, because of his effectiveness as a playwright, go down in history as one of the outstanding playwrights of the century. His "tragedies of sensitive people crushed by insensitive surroundings [are unforgettable]."⁴⁵⁹ The rebellious theme of Anouilh's Antigone; that is, the "purity of the individual in . . . conflict . . ."⁴⁶⁰ and "Death [as] the only pure solution . . .,"⁴⁶¹ is hauntingly unforgettable. Yet, Arnott makes a statement worth considering:

While this sort of writing is theatrically effective, its lasting value is dubious. Can we really use ancient drama-forms to present modern philosophies? Is it not rather a case of pouring new wine into old bottles?⁴⁶²

To repeat, because Anouilh's Antigone "cannot accept men as they are . . . she is driven to die by her total incapacity to tolerate the demands of life."⁴⁶³ Indeed, "the Antigone of Sophocles, but for different reasons . . . could say: ' . . . There is no punishment [c]an rob me of my honourable death."⁴⁶⁴

The two plays from a religious and philosophical standpoint are "worlds apart." Yet, it must be remembered that the two plays, each in its own special way, illuminate exactly what the dramatists intended their creations to illuminate. These illuminations, despite their religious and philosophical differences, mirror the unifying bond, success, for both dramatists.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, effort has been made to illustrate some of the more important similarities and contrasts between Sophocles' Antigone and Anouilh's Antigone. That Anouilh was influenced by Sophocles and was inspired to write his own play dealing with the Theban saga, there can be little doubt. Pronko observes:

Into the mold of the Antigone of Sophocles, unified by certain omissions, Anouilh has poured a drama whose breadth of appeal is enhanced by a variety of themes and by the neutrality of setting and characters--two characteristics shared by the ancient and the modern theaters. Although lacking the multiplicity of perspectives that Sophocles' play had for the people of his day, Anouilh's Antigone is still broad in its appeal and a richly suggestive treatment of myth for audiences of our age.

If Anouilh's Antigone comes closer to the universality of the Greeks than do most other modern re-creations of myths, it is not only because of the inherent expressiveness of the myth and the author's ability to see below the rationalized surface of the story.⁴⁶⁵

Little more need be added for the purpose of this paper except that it is the hope of this writer that a more thorough understanding of the two plays has been gained as a result of this study. Indeed, both plays are filled with challenging complexities, but more than this they have a rare distinctiveness. Both plays are distinctive because they sing, with special beauty, of two playwrights' literary triumphs. Both dramatists are "artistic brothers" and, in the quality of their contributions to dramatic literature, are separated, in a word, only by time. Through a comparative study of these two writers, the distant past and the recent past are, for a little while, merged.

FOOTNOTES

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¹⁹Rosamond Gilder, "From Far to Near," Theatre Arts, XXX (April, 1946), 196.

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³⁹Ibid., pp. 200-08.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 208-09.

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⁴²Ibid., pp. 215-16.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 216-20.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 220-21.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 221-26.

- ⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 226-27.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 227-30.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 233-34.
- ⁴⁹Block and Shedd, op. cit., pp. 781-82.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 782-83.
- ⁵¹Ibid., pp. 783-85.
- ⁵²Ibid., pp. 785-86.
- ⁵³Ibid., pp. 786-87.
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