Antigone Study Guide

Antigone by Jean Anouilh

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Introduction

Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* is an adaptation of Sophocles' tragic play of the same title. Written in 1942, when Nazi forces occupied France, the story revolves around the conflict between the idealist Antigone and her rigid uncle, Creon, over the proper burial of Antigone's brother, Polynices. The play was also interpreted to represent the struggle of the French Resistance movement against the forces of the Vichy government during the height of Nazi occupation.

Antigone is one in a series of Anouilh's plays based on Greek mythology. Disillusioned and shocked by the events of World War II, he also wrote *Eurydice* (1942) and *Medee* (first performed in 1937; published 1946), which were also adapted versions of the original Greek classics. These plays explored the role of destiny in people's lives.

Often considered his masterpiece, *Antigone* cemented Anouilh's reputation as a dramatist. The play was an instant success when it was first staged in Paris in 1944.

Author Biography

Born in a small town near Bordeaux, France, in 1910, Jean Anouilh was raised in a middle-class family. As a young man, his family moved to Paris, where Jean attended secondary school and law school. He abandoned law, however, for a brief career in advertising. In 1931 he worked as a secretary to the actor, director, and producer Louis Jouvet. This experience inspired him to begin writing his own plays.

Anouilh served briefly in World War II; by the end of the war, however, he returned to Paris, disillusioned and distraught over the Nazi occupation of France. His work during this period, such as his well-known work, *Antigone*, was a thinly-veiled attack against all French people that collaborated with the Germans.

His work is divided roughly into two categories: his early, dark plays that explore hypocrisy and evil; and the later lighthearted work that incorporates elements of humor or fantasy.

Anouilh's work has not enjoyed wide popularity in the United States. Critics often disparage his plays as overly verbose and too intellectual; however, in his native France, he has been called "the most distinguished playwright in France, the most literate, the most interesting, the most controversial." He died of a heart attack in 1987.

Plot Summary

Prologue

At the play opens, the chorus offers brief introductions to the play's main characters: the beautiful Ismene; her sister Antigone; Antigone's lover and cousin Haemon; and Ismene's uncle and Haemon's father, Creon.

The chorus also chronicles the fight between Antigone's brothers, Eteocles and Polynices *a* momentous battle that occurred before the play' s opening over control of the region of Thebes. After the brothers killed each other, Creon assumed control of the throne. To restore order, he has ordered a grand funeral for one brother, Eteocles. Considered a treasonous rebel for challenging his brother's rule, Polynices is left to rot as a warning to other rebels.

Antigone and Her Nurse

The nurse discovers Antigone sneaking back into the house at four in the morning. When confronted, Antigone merely reveals that she has had a rendezvous. Ismene enters and debates with Antigone the wisdom of going against Creon's edict to bury Polynices. Out of fear, Ismene sides with convention and tries to convince her idealistic, determined sister to give up her quest to bury their brother properly. The penalty of violating Creon's edict will be death.

Ismene does not realize that Antigone has just returned from burying Polynices' corpse the deed is already done. They are interrupted by the arrival of Haemon.

Antigone and Haemon

Antigone apologizes to Haemon for a recent spat, then tells him that she will "never, never be able to marry" him. Shocked, Haemon exits.

Ismene enters and reminds her sister that Polynices "was a bad brother" who "was like an enemy in the house." She insists that this is Creon's affair and not theirs; in this way Ismene frames the central conflict from one between allegiance to the state versus allegiance to family, and it shifts Antigone's motivation from a sense of duty to a sense of self-fulfillment. Antigone announces to Ismene that her warnings are too late: she has already buried Polynices. Antigone exits, and Ismene follows.

Arrest of Antigone

Creon is informed by one of his guards that Polynices' corpse has been ritually buried against his orders. No one saw who did it the only evidence is a child's shovel that was

left behind. Realizing the damage this act of defiance will do to his authority, Creon orders his guards to exhume the corpse and to keep the secret on pain of death.

Chorus Interlude

The chorus explains the concept of tragedy.

Arrest of Antigone

After reburying her brother in broad daylight, Antigone is caught and dragged before Creon. The guards fail to recognize her because they are too busy figuring out ways to avoid blame and gain reward. Their buffoonery offers comic relief to offset the tragedy of Antigone's situation.

Antigone and Creon

Creon is shocked to learn that Antigone was the one who disobeyed him. He tries to convince her to renounce her actions, reminding her of the hollowness of religious ritual and the fact that is within her self-interest to go along with him. Antigone rebuffs him and announces that she is ready to die for her transgressions.

Creon urges her to marry Haemon and enjoy her life, for "Life is nothing more than the happiness you get out of it." When she fails to respond to his entreaties, he becomes morose. When Ismene joins them, Antigone taunts Creon. Creon decides not to execute her outright, but to confine her to a cave for the rest of her life.

Creon explains to the Chorus that "death was her purpose," that' Tolynices was a mere pretext." When Haemon enters, Creon pleads with him to forget Antigone, explaining that he has tried everything and failed to "condemn her to life." Haemon begs his father to stop the guards from dragging her away, but Creon explains that the mob will not be stopped.

Antigone's Death

Antigone dictates a letter to Haemon. She is taken away. A messenger appears to tell of Antigone's death: it seems that as she was being closed in the cave, a man's moan was heard. In a panic, Creon tears the rocks away with his own fingers, only to find Antigone hung by the cord of her robe and Haemon hanging onto her dead body. Creon begs Haemon to rise, but his son strikes at him, then stabs himself.

Epilogue

In mourning for his niece and his son, Creon is informed by the Chorus that his wife Eurydice has just killed herself. Now alone, Creon anticipates his next task, a cabinet meeting at five o'clock. He and the page exit. The Chorus describes a "great melancholy wave of peace" that descends over Thebes, with the exception of the guards, who simply go on playing cards.

Part 1

Part 1 Summary

An introductory stage direction informs the reader that the play's setting has "no geographical or historical implications." Then a character named Prologue introduces the other characters, all of whom are already on stage. He describes some of their basic characteristics as well as their eventual fates.

Antigone is the dark, thin girl who is sitting by herself and wishing that she didn't have to die soon. Her sister Ismene is the happy girl, laughing and chatting with Haemon, Antigone's fun- and sport-loving fiancé. The older man is Creon, Haemon's father, who has just become King of Thebes. He was formerly the chief advisor to King Oedipus and to Oedipus' heirs, Eteocles and Polynices. The old woman winding wool is Antigone's and Ismene's Nurse; the woman who is knitting is Creon's wife. Prologue tells us that Creon's wife will go on knitting until it's her turn to kill herself. The youth alone on the other side of the stage is the Messenger who will bring news of Haemon's death. That's why he isn't talking and laughing with the others; he knows what's coming. Three soldiers sit by themselves, playing cards.

Prologue then tells us some of the background of the play. Following the death of King Oedipus, Eteocles and Polynices had agreed to rule the kingdom of Thebes in alternate years. Eteocles ruled first, but after his year was up and Polynices arrived to begin his term, Eteocles refused to give up the throne. A war broke out which ended with the brothers killing each other. Creon then decreed that Eteocles, who had defended Thebes, would be given an elaborate funeral. He also ordered that Polynices, who rebelled, would be left unburied, and that anyone who tried to bury him would be executed.

Part 1 Analysis

The stage direction suggests that this play's setting should be as neutral as possible. The characters are described with carefully detailed specifics about who they are and what they're about and are portrayed as archetypes, characters whose roles, traits and responsibilities represent truths that exist beyond the boundaries of the actual story we're about to watch. These two elements combine to suggest that the play's story and themes are timeless and can relate to any historic period or culture.

By providing information about the characters and their backgrounds, Prologue is performing the function of ancient Greek society; any citizen of the time would have known this classical story, since it was part of Greek culture. However, there is more background to the story than Prologue actually gives us.

This play is a modern retelling of the final section of the classical Greek story of Oedipus. The first section begins with Laius, King of Thebes, kidnapping and murdering

the young son of his friend Pelops. As punishment, the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi decreed that as long as Laius didn't father any children, the city of Thebes would be safe. If he did have children, the city would be destroyed.

Laius had one son, Oedipus. The Oracle had foretold that Oedipus would one day kill his father and marry his mother. This led Laius to leave baby Oedipus to die in the wilderness. Oedipus was rescued by a farmer and raised to adulthood. One day on the road to Thebes, Oedipus' adoptive father was killed by Laius, who in turn was killed by Oedipus. Laius was regarded as a tyrant in Thebes, so the people regarded Oedipus as a hero and made him their king.

Oedipus married Laius' widow, Jocasta (who was actually his mother). He ruled Thebes and fathered Eteocles, Polynices, Ismene and Antigone. Thebes failed to prosper under Oedipus' rule and when it was discovered that it was because of his crimes (killing his father and having incestuous relations with his mother), Jocasta committed suicide and Oedipus blinded himself. Eteocles and Polynices conspired to kill Oedipus in the hope that the curse on Thebes would be lifted; but before Oedipus died, he cursed them.

The second section of the story tells of Eteocles and Polynices: their battle for the throne, the war fought at the gates of Thebes, Creon's ascent to the throne and his decree concerning the brothers' bodies, as outlined by Prologue.

In the final section, Antigone fights for justice to be done for her dead brother, Polynices. In so doing, she redeems her family and puts an end to the curses that have ruined the lives of her ancestors. The story (and therefore this play) illustrates how courage, integrity and deep faith in what's right can transcend fear, injustice, and even death - a truly timeless theme.

Part 2

Part 2 Summary

Antigone creeps in, carrying her shoes in her hand. She's immediately confronted by her Nurse, who asks her where she had been so early in the morning; the Nurse clearly believes that Antigone had visited a secret sweetheart. Antigone hints that that was the case and lets the Nurse prattle on about how carefully she raised Antigone, how different she is from Ismene, what Haemon is going to say, and what Antigone's mother would have said if she were still alive. At that, Antigone confesses that she wasn't out seeing a secret sweetheart and tells the Nurse that her mother would have been proud of what she was doing. The Nurse weeps with frustration and Antigone comforts her, saying that when the Nurse cries, Antigone feels like a little girl; but she can't be a little girl today.

Ismene comes in, looking for Antigone. Antigone sends the Nurse to get some coffee. Alone with Antigone, Ismene tries to talk her out of her plan, which is to bury Polynices. Antigone refuses, saying it's the way things were meant to be. Ismene talks about what will happen to them when Creon and the citizens of Thebes find out what's been going on: they'll be taken prisoner, tried and convicted, dragged through the streets like common thieves, laughed at and condemned to intense suffering before they're actually released into death. She asks Antigone if she's actually thought of all that.

Antigone says she has; so Ismene asks her if, in fact, she doesn't want to live. Antigone reminds Ismene of all the joys Antigone found in living as a child. When Ismene tries to embrace her, Antigone pushes her away, saying that the time has come to be strong, not soft. Ismene tells Antigone that she has a beautiful life ahead of her, including marriage to Haemon. Antigone says that she'll be talking to Haemon and tells Ismene to go back to bed. Ismene makes her promise to talk more later and then leaves.

Part 2 Analysis

We don't yet know exactly what Antigone was doing, but there's enough information in Antigone's conversations with the Nurse and Ismene for us to understand that Antigone was out visiting Polynices' body. This means that Ismene's imaginings of what will happen to them if the plan is discovered become both a warning and a foreshadowing.

Where this play differs from classical versions of this story is in the characterizations. The clearest examples are Antigone and Ismene, who are vividly portrayed as the plain younger sister and popular older sister, respectively. Their tensions and disagreements are presented within the context of actual lives, making it easier for us to identify with them and their positions. In the source material, Antigone and Ismene are not girls so much as thematic symbols of justice and caution. They represent the same two

extremes here, but because they are also portrayed as human beings, they become less archetypal and more identifiably human.

Antigone's claim that her actions (and eventual death) are "meant to be" echoes the classical belief that everything is fated, or decreed by the gods. The difference between Antigone in this play and Antigone in other versions is that this Antigone has a profound personal belief in justice, which makes her less a plaything of fate than a passionate, conscience-driven human being.

Part 3

Part 3 Summary

The Nurse returns with coffee and toast. Antigone refuses the toast but as she sips the coffee, she asks the Nurse to treat her dog well: to not scold her and to talk to her as if she were a real person. The Nurse agrees to this and then Antigone tells her that if the dog keeps waiting by the door for someone to come in, she should be merciful and have the dog put down. As the Nurse wonders what's wrong, Haemon appears.

Antigone dismisses the Nurse and runs into Haemon's arms, apologizing for the quarrel they had the night before. Haemon smiles and tells her she's already been forgiven. She asks him to hold her and tell her that it's really her that he loves. She compares herself to Ismene and confesses that she truly longs to belong to him. He reassures her that he loves her and that she does belong to him.

Antigone then makes Haemon promise that, when she's finished saying what she has to say, he'll turn and walk away without looking back. Puzzled, he agrees. Antigone then tells him that, because she hadn't been sure that Haemon wanted her and she wanted to make him want her, she had dressed up in Ismene's dress, makeup, jewels and perfume the evening before. She adds that the reason she wanted Haemon to want her was that she wanted him to make love to her; but it didn't happen because Haemon laughed at seeing her dressed up and so they had quarreled.

Antigone finally says that she's telling him all this because she can't marry him. When Haemon is about to speak, Antigone reminds him of his promise and forces him to leave, telling him that it's the only thing he can do to show her that he loves her.

After Haemon leaves, Ismene returns, telling Antigone that she's unable to sleep out of fear that Antigone will go out and bury Polynices in broad daylight. She pleads with Antigone not to go through with the plan, saying that she, the Nurse, Haemon, and the dog all love her and need her. She also reminds Antigone that Polynices was always more of a stranger than a brother to her and that she should forget about him the way he forgot her. She urges Antigone not to "attempt what's beyond your strength" and begs her not to go near Polynices' body. Antigone tells her that it's too late; she's already been there. Antigone then leaves the house, with Ismene running after her.

Part 3 Analysis

Three things are happening simultaneously in the brief scene between the Nurse and Antigone. On one level, Antigone is clearly making plans for the dog to be taken care of after her death. On another level, these preparations again foreshadow what's to happen to Antigone; but on yet a third level, Antigone is also asking the Nurse to understand what's about to happen.

From her conversation with Ismene, it's clear that Antigone sees herself as something of an outsider; her description of her dog waiting by the door represents Antigone herself, always outside. Antigone's request for the Nurse to be compassionate and put the dog down is, therefore, on a symbolic level, a request for the Nurse to be compassionate, to understand why Antigone has to do something - act against Creon's decree, bury her brother, and ultimately die - that makes her even more of an outsider.

Antigone's desire to be reassured of Haemon's love and to be intimate with him tells us again that she's preparing for her death. This is another example of how layers of humanity are developed within this archetypal character, making her appear more vulnerable to us and causing us to empathize with her situation even more deeply.

Ismene's appearance is the climax of this section of the play. Her pleas are deeply moving but are nonetheless ironic, since we've previously concluded that Antigone has already been to see Polynices' body.

Ismene's description of Antigone as someone who "like(s) to hurl defiance at the whole world" sounds like the description of angry young people in every age, including our own. It's not difficult at this point to imagine a production of this play in which Antigone is portrayed as a Sixties hippie or as a counter-culture Goth of today. So Ismene's words, combined with the play's setting and characterizations, reinforce the idea that that this story is both archetypal and deeply human by reminding us that archetypes exist precisely because human passions, such as Antigone's thirst for justice, are common to every age.

Part 4

Part 4 Summary

Creon appears and agrees to see a guard who is assigned to watch over Polynices' body. The guard, Jonas, is clearly in terror of Creon. He protests that he and the other guards were watching all night and reminds Creon of his good record. Creon quickly loses patience and orders Jonas to get on with what he has to say. Jonas tells him that in the middle of the night, he and the other guards realized that someone had thrown earth on Polynices' body - not buried him, exactly, but covered him up just enough to keep away the vultures. He adds that a small child's shovel was found nearby.

Creon responds by telling Jonas that the guard detail will be doubled, that he and his fellow guards will be punished for their negligence, and that they are to say nothing. Jonas pleads for mercy, saying he's got a wife and children. Creon tells him that if he keeps quiet, he'll live. Jonas runs off as Creon prepares to make public what Jonas has told him.

As Creon leaves, the Chorus enters to comment on the different aspects of tragedy; how it's simple and straightforward, clean and inevitable, and how none of the characters need do anything but surrender to the will of fate. It describes tragedy as restful because there's no hope. The only thing left to do at the end of a tragedy, according to the Chorus, is to shout loudly about what death represents and about what's been learned.

The Chorus departs and Antigone is dragged in by Jonas and two other guards. Calling herself a daughter of Oedipus, Antigone tries to use her rank as princess to get them to let her go. They don't believe her; Jonas points to her dirty hands. As Antigone smiles, Jonas tells the others how and where he found her - clawing dirt onto Polynices' body with her bare hands. The guards wonder if there will be a reward and if there is, what they'll do with the money and if their wives should accompany them when they spend it. Antigone quietly asks to sit down.

Creon enters and orders the guards to release Antigone, demanding that they explain their actions. Jonas describes how he removed the dirt that had been placed on the body in the night and how the heat of the sun was causing the body to smell, making him dizzy. He had turned to get some tobacco and when he turned back, he saw Antigone scrabbling in the dirt and covering the body with it.

Creon asks if this is true and if it was Antigone who had tried to bury the body in the night. She answers yes to both questions and tells Creon that the shovel she used and left by the body was the shovel that Polynices had played with on the beach. Creon dismisses the guards and orders them to keep quiet.

Part 4 Analysis

In the first part of this section we're introduced to Creon, who at this point represents fate or destiny. His judgment does not and will not change; it's inevitable and all-powerful, objective and impassionate. He's immune to protests and struggle and takes action at the end of a long sequence of events. These are all characteristics of fate as perceived and experienced in the classics and, therefore, in this play, which has its dramatic and thematic foundations in both classical theater and classical mythology.

Creon isn't as fully human a character as are Antigone and Ismene - at least not yet. Later in the play, when we see his confrontations with Antigone and his reaction to the death of Haemon, Creon assumes more dimensions of humanity.

The function of the Chorus here is the same as the function of the Chorus in the classics: to stand outside the action, observe it, comment on it and occasionally, to participate in it. In this case the commentary is slightly different in that the Chorus is discussing the nature of tragedy in general as opposed to specific events of the play. This Chorus does, however, offer insight into Antigone's state of mind when it comments that in tragedy, all that's left for the tragic victim of fate to do is to shout. In this way, the atmosphere is prepared for Antigone's final shouts of passionate advocacy for freedom, feeling and life.

The guards' discussion of what they'll do with their reward money illustrates how humanity often regards the kind of tragedy that Chorus just discussed: as a spectacle, as something to watch while drinking beer, as something to celebrate and then forget. The banality of the guards' conversation also represents how life goes on even when someone's world, like Antigone's, is coming to an end.

Part 5

Part 5 Summary

Creon asks Antigone if anyone else knew what she was doing. She lies and tells him no. He then tells her to pretend she was ill and to get the Nurse to pretend the same thing while he ensures the guards' silence. Antigone tells him that there's no point, since she'll just do it again. Creon asks why she's defying his ruling; she tells him that she has to, that Polynices is "entitled to some rest." He accuses her of thinking that, because she's his son's fiancé and Oedipus' daughter, she's above the law. She tells him that, on the contrary, she knew all along that she would be killed.

Creon then explodes into a long speech about how she's just like her father, playing out destiny's designs and overdramatizing everything. He says that things are different now; he's just an ordinary king doing his job and she's just a child who should be home getting ready to mother Haemon's children. Creon tells her that he's still fond of her in spite of everything. Antigone starts to go, but Creon stops her; he can see that she's not going to her room. When he asks her where she's going, she says he knows perfectly well.

Creon falls silent for a moment and then tries to make Antigone understand the seriousness of the situation. When it becomes clear to him that she does indeed understand, he tells her that even if she succeeds in burying Polynices, his body will simply be exhumed. Antigone says that she has to do what she can. Finally Creon states that the ceremony of burial is a meaningless ritual performed for other people. Antigone says that she's doing it for herself because she must. She then asks that, when the time comes to kill her, Creon do it quickly because she "can't be brave forever." He tells her that he wants to save her, and then threatens to torture her, grabbing her arm and twisting it. None of this has any effect; Antigone remains determined.

Creon sits her down and explains why he had to make the ruling he did: because the people of Thebes needed to know that his authority had to be respected. When Antigone tells him she doesn't care and accuses him of actually being afraid to do his duty, he admits that that's the truth. This causes Antigone to refer to herself as a queen because at least she is acting out of integrity. Suddenly angry, Creon shakes her and tells her that somebody has to take charge, comparing himself to a captain who takes charge of a ship that's falling apart in the water, leading his crew to safety. She tells him that she doesn't understand, doesn't want to and doesn't have to.

Creon finally tells Antigone the truth of the situation. He says that both Polynices and Eteocles were little more than selfish, greedy thugs who killed their father in order to inherit his throne. He tells her that, after they killed each other, their bodies were trampled by the horses of the retreating armies, making them unrecognizable. Creon

says that he doesn't know which one received the hero's funeral and which one was left to rot in the sun - and that he doesn't care.

As Antigone prepares to go to her room, Creon tells her to get married quickly and be happy because it's possible that life could be little more than happiness. Antigone challenges him to explain what kind of happiness he means: is it his kind of adult, passionless, dutiful happiness, or her kind of lived, deeply felt, life or death happiness?

Antigone's passionate defiance leads Creon to say that shouting makes her ugly; she responds that his empty happiness makes him and everyone like him ugly. She compares him to her father, Oedipus, and how beautiful and peaceful he was when he accepted both what he'd done and the peaceful destiny of his death. Creon orders her to be silent and covers her mouth. She struggles and tells him to call his guards.

Ismene rushes in, telling Creon that if he kills Antigone, he'll have to kill her too. Antigone rejects her support, telling her it's too late, that she should have come out in the middle of the night to help bury Polynices. When Ismene says she'll go out tomorrow, Antigone tells Creon that if she can convince Ismene, then she can convince the rest of Thebes; she urges him to do his duty and kill her. Creon shouts for the guards, who enter the room and drag Antigone away. Ismene follows, wailing.

Part 5 Analysis

The discovery that Antigone is defying him by trying to bury her brother comes as a severe shock to Creon; but his first reaction is that of a politician desperate to avoid a scandal. When he sees Antigone's determination, however, he realizes that there's no way a scandal can be avoided, so he resorts to badmouthing her family and then bullying her directly.

When none of that works, Creon is suddenly struck by the frightened awareness that she actually means what she says. His attempts to convince her to give up her quest become more and more extreme until finally, he's literally twisting her arm. All of this gives Creon a very human quality; his behavior is similar to that of many authority figures who will do or say anything to cover up the fact that they've made bad decisions. This is another way in which the play's thematic message about the inevitability of injustice is both contemporary and archetypal.

The grisly story about what happened to the bodies of the two brothers has a ring of ambiguity about it, to the point where we're not sure if Creon is telling the truth. It's quite possible that it is true, but we also have to keep in mind that Creon is desperate, not only to save Antigone's life, but to preserve his political position. He's already given us the impression that, like many politicians, he'll do or say whatever it takes to remain in power. There's nothing to suggest that he's still not doing exactly that.

When Creon makes his comment about happiness, he truly thinks he's won; but he hasn't reckoned with Antigone's youthful passion for an emotionally full, exciting life. At the moment when Antigone challenges Creon to defend his self-protective so-called

"happiness," we realize that the play is about more than Antigone's desire for justice for Polynices.

Antigone's quest becomes a manifestation of something deeper, a wild desire for freedom and joy and true power; not the kind of political power that Creon seems desperately to need, but personal power that comes from living a life of integrity and truth. The justice Antigone seeks is a manifestation of that power, making her an archetype not only of youthful defiance but of honor. This moment is the play's dramatic and thematic climax.

Creon's remark about Antigone's shouting refers back to the Chorus' earlier commentary about shouting; we now understand that this moment is the fulfillment of Antigone's role in the Oedipus family destiny. The various family curses are dispelled and although she's still doomed, Antigone has won freedom, both for herself and her ancestors.

Part 6

Part 6 Summary

The Chorus rushes in and tries to convince Creon to let Antigone live. He responds by telling them that he understands that Antigone was born to die this way and that their quarrel over Polynices' body was just an excuse. Just as the Chorus reminds him that she is just a child, Haemon rushes in. Creon embraces him and attempts to persuade him to forget Antigone. Haemon struggles free and tries to talk his father into changing his mind.

Creon tells Haemon that, sooner or later, every man must accept that his childhood is over, and that today is that day for him. Haemon begs Creon to have the courage to be the loving father he knew as a child; Creon responds by telling him to stand up straight and face the world head on. Haemon runs out, screaming for Antigone. The Chorus urges Creon to do something, that Haemon has been "mortally wounded." Creon tells the Chorus that they all have.

Jonas and the other guards rush in with Antigone to tell Creon that a mob of Theban citizens has broken into the palace. Antigone begs Creon to get rid of them so that she can die in peace. Creon goes out with two guards, leaving Antigone alone with Jonas.

When Antigone realizes that Jonas will be the last human face she sees, she asks him about his family and how he became a guard. He chatters about life in the barracks and the rivalries between the officers and the guards. Finally Antigone interrupts him and asks him whether dying hurts. Jonas says that he doesn't know; but when Antigone asks if he knows how she's to be executed, he tells her that she'll be buried alive in an empty cave.

Antigone asks Jonas if he'll deliver a letter for her after she's dead. At first he protests that he'll get in trouble but then reasons that, if the letter is in his handwriting, it won't be as bad. Antigone begins to dictate a letter to Haemon in which she confesses that she's now afraid of dying; but she becomes confused and can't finish it. Just as Jonas asks to whom the letter should be delivered, the other guards burst in. After a moment of amiable silence with Jonas, Antigone calmly leaves with the guards.

Part 6 Analysis

Creon's argument with Haemon is essentially the argument that he never got to make with Antigone: that the young must accept adulthood and everything that it means. Haemon, like Antigone, sees Creon's life as a life without passion and, again like Antigone, he can't imagine living that way. This brief exchange is an ironic counterpoint, or mirror, of the parent/child relationship described by Antigone. Whereas she saw the beauty in her father's death and aspired to it, Haemon sees the empty ugliness of his father's life and utterly rejects it in his own.

In her conversation with Jonas, although Antigone admits to fear, she never suggests that she doubts her decision. This is another example of how Antigone both lives and dies with complete personal integrity, in contrast to Creon, who lives his life according to what is politically and socially expedient. The most interesting thing about this scene is the connection that tentatively develops between Antigone and Jonas. There are hints here that, if she'd had enough time and a different destiny, she might have found a quieter kind of happiness with its own integrity; but as she herself said earlier, this is the way things have to be.

Part 7

Part 7 Summary

The Chorus enters with the announcement that it's all over for Antigone and that soon it will be Creon's turn. Suddenly the Messenger rushes in and describes how, after Antigone was walled up in the cave, cries that were not Antigone's were heard from inside the cave. When Creon frantically had the stones that sealed the cave pulled away, he discovered that Antigone had hanged herself and that Haemon had cut down her body and was holding her. Creon pulled Haemon away from her but Haemon then spat in his father's face, pulled out his sword, and killed himself.

Creon then appears. He tells the Chorus that he buried Antigone and Haemon together like a pair of lovers and says that it's over. The Chorus tells him that it's not over at all; that when his wife heard that Haemon was dead, she went into her bedroom and slit her own throat. Creon says quietly that they're all asleep and that it must be good to sleep. A clock chimes the hour of five and Creon leaves to attend a meeting of his council.

The Chorus explains that peace has finally settled upon Thebes, that the dead are quietly being forgotten and that the living are getting on with their lives - including Creon, who begins to wait for his own death in the empty palace. While the Chorus speaks, the guards appear and begin to play cards. The curtain falls.

Part 7 Analysis

The Messenger is like the Chorus in that his function in this scene - to narrate actions and dramatic moments that are difficult to actually place in front of an audience - is similar to the function of the Chorus in classical plays. We understand from the story that Haemon believed his destiny to be bound with Antigone's - or maybe he just loved her in the same way, and with the same results, as Romeo loved Juliet (and vice versa). His death is somewhat ironic in that it occurs after Antigone has already died, when she's unable to see that he truly does love her in the way she wanted him to love her.

The death of Creon's wife (the woman seen calmly knitting at the start of the play) is something of an anticlimax, a bit of a letdown after all the emotional and dramatic fireworks that have gone before. It nevertheless serves as a powerful reminder to Creon, and to us, of the emptiness that results when a parent destroys the life of his or her own child. In this case it is Haemon's physical life, but the point could be made that the emptiness could result from the destruction of a child's emotional or spiritual life, a death which is far more likely to happen in contemporary society.

Creon's exit to participate in a meeting and the Chorus' final speech both symbolize a deep irony: that even a life lived with integrity, such as Antigone's, will eventually be forgotten. Even if forgotten, it is important to honor that life, the play suggests, because a life lived with integrity is, in fact, a noble destiny.

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Characters

Antigone

Antigone, the protagonist, is driven by her fate, compelled even before the play begins, to act out her part till the end. Thus she is really two characters: an actress playing a role, and Antigone, the character she plays. This duality, however, disappears as the events of the play proceed, and it is with the thin and unbeautiful girl that the audience identifies. Antigone is a child-woman, too young, too thin for adulthood, yet too hard-headed to be treated as a child. She repeatedly proclaims that she is far too young for an early death, and the other characters frequently remark on her youth or her thinness, a characteristic of an undeveloped woman. Her childlike qualities also appear in her clumsy attempt at rivaling her sister Ismene's beauty and sophistication by wearing makeup and a dress, and in her use of a child's toy shovel to bury her brother. Antigone stands for the idealism of youth, which cannot survive in a corrupt world. Survival in such a world demands compromising one's values. She is a woman in the sense of her firm stand against the world, and in her integrity. Like her father Oedipus, she pursues truth to the end, no matter the consequence. She carries her integrity to the point of breaking off her engagement to Hamon, to save him from pain. Unfortunately, she cannot save him from pain, since he refuses to return to the world of the living as she dictates. Antigone is such a purist that she refuses her sister's assistance in burying their brother, because Ismene expresses a desire to abide by the law. When Ismene later tries to join her in condemnation, having committed no crime at all, Antigone refuses to accept her companionship. Antigone is too much of an idealist to function in the world. Her foil is Creon, a paragon of such compromise. They debate over what Antigone should do with her life-Creon prescribes getting fatter and producing children with Hamon, which Antigone disdains-in the pivotal scene of the play. In fact, Antigone's role is so central to this play that every other character's moral fiber has to be considered in relation to hers, the standard or ideal. Ultimately, she stands for personal integrity as opposed to the expediency of personal compromise, such as those Creon makes in his efforts to maintain the state. Against Creon's compromises, Antigone emphatically states that it is her role to "say no and to die." In her idealistic sacrifice Antigone became a heroic figure in occupied France, providing inspiration to the resistance movement as it fought against the German occupiers.

Choir/Chorus

The Choir includes the Prologue, who initially introduces the characters as players in a play, thus deflating the illusion of theater because the ending is revealed from the first. The Chorus represents the "character" of the playwright, perhaps Jean Anouilh himself. The Prologue explains that Antigone is forced to play her role "till the end." This statement suggests that the characters, just as real persons, cannot escape themselves, even within the made up world of the theater, the world of fantasy and assumed identities. The Chorus appears in the beginning and end of the play, creating a

framework that draws attention to the theatricality of the play. Also, in the middle of the play, the Chorus presents a digression on tragedy, another jolt to those who may succumb to the illusion of reality. In their digression the Chorus defines tragedy as "tranquil," since the end is known and inevitable. Its presence and tone add a sardonic twist to the play's events. When Creon deliberates over what to do with Antigone, and nearly convinces himself that she really wants to die, the Choir calls Creon a fool and reminds him that his niece is only a child. In this role, the choir acts like the traditional Greek chorus, as a group of moralizing elders.

Creon

Tired and careworn with the heavy affairs of state, Creon issues an edict against burying Polynices merely as a way of cementing his authority and restoring public order after the war. He hopes by this edict to discourage dissenters from rallying around the warrior, while giving a proper burial to the brother challenging his authority. He does not dream of encountering dissent from Antigone, essentially a family member and fellow ruler, so when he discovers her guilt, he tries to talk her out of repeating "ce geste absurde" of the ritual burial. Her stubborn piety (to her brother instead of to the state) exasperates him. For himself, Creon has chosen the path of saying "yes" to duty, "yes" to the world, "yes" to being king, and thus "yes" to compromise. He can see no other way to rule. In his attempt to convince Antigone not to persist with her burials, he discredits Polynices' character, stripping away her last vestige of faith in fellow humans. In return, she forces him to face his own lost hope, reminding him of the idealistic boy he had once been, before he began his lifetime of compromise. At the end of the play, Creon must continue, now without the illusion of doing good, now he merely does.

Guard

The guard and his two cohorts, the other guards, fail in their vigilance over the dead body of Polynices, and while their attention wanders, Antigone dusts ritual dirt onto her brother's body, completing a ritual burial in defiance of Creon's law. Creon warns the guards that they will be killed if another oversight occurs. Therefore, when the guard catches Antigone and brings her to Creon, he cares nothing for her, but rather feels relieved at having redeemed himself. He and the other guards look no further than their own skins. The arresting guard is thirty-nine, with two children an average family man. He has seventeen years of service and wants nothing to stand in the way of his promotion, due in June. Thus, it takes some convincing from Antigone to bribe him (with a ring) to write a final letter to Hamon, which he botches so badly that Antigone realizes the futility of any final words. At the end of the play, the guards simply go on playing cards, immune to the tragedy around them, because their eyes are focused only on their own dim lives.

Hamon

Hamon, son of Creon, loves Antigone, though he had dallied with Ismene before asking Antigone to marry him. Yet, it is Antigone he loves, most truly. He is so loyal and trusting that he at first keeps his promise not to speak after her announcement that they will never marry. When he fails to avert his father from fulfilling the law to punish his fiancee, he chooses to be buried with her in her cave, and when he finds she has hung herself, he plunges his sword into his own chest and dies.

Ismene

Ismene is Antigone's very feminine and beautiful sister, the woman with whom Hamon danced a whole evening the night before he suddenly and unexpectedly proposed to Antigone. Ismene is cautious, a rule-follower who counsels Antigone to leave their brother unburied and to leave to men the job of dying for one's ideas. In this, Ismene disgusts her sister. When Ismene finally wants to join with Antigone and begs to be punished alongside her for the burial of their brother, Antigone scornfully refuses her company.

Messenger

The Messenger's role is revealed at the beginning of the play by the Prologue. He will announce the death of Hamon, and the gravity of his message preoccupies him as he awaits the start of the play. At the end, the Messenger tells a chilling tale of Hamon's agonized death, and then departs.

Nurse

Antigone affectionately calls this simple woman her old, "wrinkled apple." The Nurse loves and remains loyal to Antigone throughout her ordeals, demonstrating Antigone's humanity and her place in a traditional family. The Nurse adds comic relief from an otherwise rather dismal play. She concerns herself with Antigone's rest and meals, completely unaware of and unable to understand the intricacies and import of Antigone's defiance. The Nurse serves to emphasize the sacrifices that must be made for the sake of honor.

The Page

The Page is a young assistant to Creon, someone who accepts Creon as king and never questions his decisions, and who mindlessly keeps track of the king's duties. The Page stays with Creon after the deaths of all of his immediate family. Even though he has ostensibly witnessed all of the events of the play, at the end he tells Creon that he

wants to grow up. The Page represents the bureaucratic machine, ever performing the minor duties that keep the regime running, no matter how corrupt, inept, or misguided.

Themes

Myth

Anouilh was not the only French dramatist to revive classical myths during the early twentieth century. Jean Cocteau and Jean Giraudoux (whose influence Anouilh acknowledged) both adapted Greek drama, especially that of Sophocles, to the modern French stage. They created a heightened atmosphere of theatricality, thus leading a departure from dramatic realism that until then had been the only mode of the theater.

For example, Anouilh's Antigone has the intellectual abilities to challenge Creon on a philosophical level. Creon attempts to save his young niece from self-destruction by revealing that her brother Polynices does not deserve her dedication. By painting a dark picture of one whom she had admired, he only succeeds in strengthening her resolve to leave the world behind. Thus, Anouilh shifts the focus away from Sophocles' contest for loyalty between state and religion to question faith in anything.

The actual myth of Antigone is well known; one must look to the places where Anouilh has refitted and embellished the myth to discover the unique nature of his message.

Antigone was first produced in Paris in 1944, when northern France was under the yoke of Nazism while a puppet Vichy government ruled southern France. Anouilh used the Greek myth as an allegory to level criticism at the growing legion of collaborators. Like these traitors, Creon rationalizes that to keep control, he must stand ready to "shoot into the mob" the first time anyone defies his authority.

Throughout the play Antigone is called "little," and she herself admits that she is "a little young for what I have to go through" an obvious allegory for the brave members of the French Resistance, who sought, against impossible odds, to undermine the Nazis through small, everyday acts of sabotage and defiance. Anouilh used Sophocles' myth to bypass the censors and provide inspiration for the French Resistance and its supporters.

Disillusionment

Antigone is comprised of a series of disappointments. Every character is touched by a moment of overwhelming disillusionment: Antigone is crushed to learn the truth about her brothers; Haemon is devastated to realize that true love will not win out after all; Creon recognizes the compromises and personal sacrifices he made to take power, including exiling his own niece.

Style

Theatricalism

Through the words of one of his characters, Anouilh explains his theory of theater: "Naturalness and truth in the theater, my dear, are the most unnatural thing in the world. Don't think that it suffices to find the precise tone of real life.... Life is very pretty, but it has no form. The object of art is precisely to give it one, and through all possible artifices to create something that is truer than truth."

In this way Anouilh rejected dramatic naturalism, which seeks to present a realistic representation of life through sparse staging, lighting, costuming, and props. This style of drama is embodied by the work of Henrik Ibsen.

While the characters may speak and act realistically in Anouilh's play, the story is more concerned with their ideas. In an attempt to scrutinize the modern psyche, playwrights rejected realism and concentrated on the themes of the play staging was meant to underscore those themes. Constant reminders of the theater's artificiality such as the nurse anachronistically bringing the modern breakfast of coffee, toast, and jam to Antigone are meant to disturb the viewer and contribute to themes of disillusionment, disenchantment, and hypocrisy as they are echoed in the set.

Allusions to the theatricality of the story occur regularly, as when Creon hisses to Antigone, "You have cast me for the villain in this little play of yours, and yourself for the heroine." These references to play-acting demystify the theater. However, the subtle references to Antigone's youthful innocence suggest a nostalgia for a more romantic, bygone era.

Chorus

For ancient Greek audiences, the chorus provided necessary background information on the story, interpreted the events of the play, sang philosophical odes, and judged the characters' actions. The Greek chorus evolved from a band of men who sang at religious festivals; this band gradually took on more dramatic function as the theater evolved.

Sophocles was an innovator with this dramatic technique. He increased the number of its members (from twelve to fifteen) and had them voice their opinions on the characters' virtues. Anouilh also provides new uses for the chorus by letting them introduce the characters of the play. In addition, he allows the chorus to meditate on the nature of tragedy.

Historical Context

France during the Occupation

In 1940, France was demoralized by its quick defeat at the hand of Hitler's *panzer* division, surrender to Germany, and German occupation. While Germany ruled the northern half of France, a puppet French government controlled the southern region from Vichy.

Anouilh had served a short term in the French military, then returned to Paris. From there he supported and participated in the French Resistance movement, which consisted of about 200,000 people who manned an underground army. They sabotaged German operations in France and performed espionage in the service of the Allies. First Great Britain and then the United States, under General Eisenhower, supplied and directed them. Underground Resistance forces also assisted in rescuing downed Allied pilots and secretly helped Jews to escape the Nazis.

When the Germans instituted forced labor conscription, the Resistance movement swelled. Rebels resorted to guerrilla tactics to hinder the German forces. Whether or not the actions of the French Resistance significantly deterred the Wehrmacht (German armed forces), its very existence provided a much-needed morale boost for the entire French nation.

In this milieu, *Antigone* proved an invaluable source of communication. Howard Barnes of the New York *Tribune* wrote that "Men of good will, muted to the verge of silence, discovered that a modernization of a Greek tragedy afforded them elliptical communication with their comrades. Sophocles became an honorary member of the French resistance movement. His stern account of a young girl defying a persuasive tyrant must have needled the Wehrmacht no end in its colloquial translation, but the Germans could do nothing about it."

Modern French Theatre

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, European dramatists sought to depict in objective and precise detail the individual in society. Known as realism (depicting life objectively) and naturalism (focusing on the human at the mercy of his social or natural environment), these movements found expression in Henrik Ibsen's work, which were social dramas about everyday people and problems.

In the 1890s, the theater of anti-realism came into being as an outgrowth of and reaction to realism and naturalism. The new movement reached fruition in 1913 in a manifesto by Jacques Copeau entitled "Un essai de renovation dramatique...," which outlined his concept of absolute simplicity and the necessity for an absence of artifice. Instead, the plays emphasized and explored psychological themes.

Taking this legacy a step further, Jean Cocteau, Jean Giraudoux, Armand Salacrou, Paul Claudel, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Jean Anouilh dabbled in dramatic surrealism, where theatrical devices deliberately confute dramatic realism and draw attention to the theater's means of staging a play. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, they experimented with self-reflexive devices and carried forth the theatricalism movement, in drama as well as in the new medium of film, evolving their philosophy to the brink of the *theater of the absurd* of Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, and Jean Genet.

Critical Overview

Although Anouilh's *Antigone* enjoyed initial success, it has not endured through the years as well as Sophocles' version. First produced in Paris in 1944, the play ran for more than five hundred performances to popular and critical acclaim. The political climate of Paris during those years made for a receptive audience.

That successful initial run of *Antigone* established Anouilh's reputation in France. According to Leonard Pronko, it "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 Creon. They identified Antigone with the spirit of Freedom, and Creon with the Vichy government."

Two years later, the play ran on Broadway, but the performance was not well accepted; it closed after only forty-four performances. Critics considered it too intellectual and lacking in emotion.

Walter Kerr of the *Herald Tribune* damned the play with the faint praise, calling it a "reasonably workable play."

Lewis Nichols of the *Times* complained of "unrationalized talk by characters who are not quite living beings," while Howard Barnes of the *Herald Tribune* called it "remote and dramatically inarticulate," although he could see how it succeeded in Vichy France.

Likewise, Louis Kronenberger of the newspaper *PM* maintained that "as an inspirational figure for an occupied Paris she [Antigone] had her value; as a human being she is quite unreal." The pessimism and the wordiness of the play did not appeal to Americans at that time.

Subsequent productions of the play have proved no more successful. Critics agree that much of the play's appeal is found in its allegorical significance to the French people. As such, although Anouilh is a respected playwright worldwide, his most enthusiastic audiences continue to be French. It is in his native country that the play endures and still is celebrated as a relevant work for the contemporary theater.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
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- Critical Essay #5
- Critical Essay #6

Critical Essay #1

Hamilton is an English teacher at Gary Academy, an innovative private school in Gary, North Carolina. In this essay, she explores the device of storytelling in Antigone *as it is used as a medium for communicating social roles*.

Storytelling is a device of narrative drama used to move the plot along, announcing action that takes place offstage, skipping over time, and revealing intrigues. Anouilh makes efficient use of storytelling from the very start, when his chorus-narrator relates the story of Oedipus and his sons, whose deaths brought Creon to the throne. In this case storytelling informs the audience, allowing the action of the play to jump in at the moment of Antigone's act of defiance against Creon's law.

He also uses storytelling as prophecy and warning, inspiration, and persuading. In these cases, storytelling serves to remind the characters and the audience of social roles and the social consequences of ways of enacting those roles. This has been the function of storytelling since its age-old inception, a purpose that predates literature, but that lives on in stories told today, orally around the office coffee machine, or written in the newspapers, in the work of Nobel prize-winning authors, and in every form of human drama.

For Anouilh, however, stories may assign roles, but they fail to reassure that these roles matter. His play about Antigone demonstrates the ruinous delusion of storytelling.

Although storytelling in *Antigone* begins with a simple aim to inform, it quickly takes on more complex purposes and becomes a tool for persuasion. For example, Ismene relates to Antigone how it will feel to be hounded by the mob after they get caught burying their brother, with "a thousand arms" seizing their arms and "a thousand breaths" breathing in their faces.

Ismene's vivid story resembles the mood of the story Antigone tells when trying to convince the nurse to care for her dog in her absence, painting a pathetic picture of the dog moaning and pining for her missing owner. These "horror" stories are designed to alarm and convince their listeners. They exaggerate the future as a way of avoiding it. However, because the Nurse does not fully comprehend why Antigone tells her the story, the full potential of the warning is lost.

Antigone informs her loved ones the Nurse and Haemon that she will leave them, without telling them why. Instead, she relates wistful stories of a future that she herself will destroy. To Haemon she describes the child they might have had, the mother she might have been; she uses the past subjunctive, as though this choice had already passed them by, even though their marriage is set for the future. Her narrative of the traditional family, loving mother with her child, presents a story that will never come to fruition.

When she tells Haemon her story, she does not arrange a surrogate as she did for her dog, but simply destroys the vision forever by immediately announcing she can never marry him. Thus her story can only haunt him as her true intentions are revealed.

The family narrative usually serves as a model for human behavior, assigning roles and behavior patterns to parents and children, so that they can conform their actions to society's structure and expectations. Ismene accepts this, and so she understands Creon's desire to set a good example for his people; she accepts the ban against Polynices as a necessary measure to keep peace in Thebes.

For her part, Antigone objects to Ismene's type of "understanding," which entails accepting Creon's narrative as truth. The sisters disagree over which stories to follow. Antigone, as Ismene chides her, wants her "own stubborn way in everything." Ismene prefers to accept her fate and leave heroics to men, because "It's all very well for men to believe in ideas and die for them. But you are a girl!"

The female narrative only requires a woman to be beautiful, to marry, and to bear children. Creon tells Antigone "You're going to marry Haemon; and I want you to fatten up a bit so that you can give him a sturdy boy." Creon never questioned that Antigone would follow the prescribed life story or script for a woman in fact, he gave Antigone her first doll, a toy given to young girls to act out and envision their futures.

In a way, Antigone opposes these expectations even more than she opposes the desecration of her brother's corpse. Creon resents her rebelliousness. "What sort of game are you playing?" he demands. As a ruler who has had to roll up his sleeves and attend to the ship of state, which was "loaded to the water line with crime, ignorance, poverty," Creon objects to anyone deviating from their predetermined roles.

As the leader of Thebes, he tells her, "You shout an order, and if one man refuses to obey, you shoot straight into the mob." He advocates complete obedience, and "no matter how many may fall by the wayside, there are always those few left that go on bringing their young into the world, traveling the same road with the same obstinate will, unchanged from those who went before." His perspective appalls Antigone and the audience.

Creon is also a victim of his stories. Besides the rigid expectations and roles he has imposed on himself and his city, he sometimes imagines false stories and then acts on them in error. Creon assumes that a child has buried Polynices, and his imagination takes over as it fills in the gaps of a story that is wrong from the start.

Creon sees "a baby-faced killer," a "martyr," corrupted by his enemies, "leaders of the mob, stinking of garlic." His fantasy blinds him to his real enemy and exacerbates his paranoia, leading him to overreact when he does find the culprit.

Yet when Creon finds the real culprit Antigone she turns out to be intractable and dismissive. He complains to her that "You have cast me for the villain in this little play of yours, and yourself the heroine." He admits that he will have to play his part "through to

the end" as well as she, because he of all the characters understands the governing power of stories.

A thirst for story infects every major character in *Antigone*. Stories constitute life scripts, life plans, and to follow a plan gives one reassurance and a sense of purpose in life. Creon clings to his script of city-savior, a story that envisions him as martyr to his lost ideals and to the survival of the city.

Occupation with one's script leaves little time to worry about deep questions; one has to "sweat and roll up your sleeves and plunge both hands into life up to the elbows." Creon's way is to ignore his mind and give his body over to life. He wants a story to quiet his mind so that his body may work.

Antigone's way is to question the purpose of that body: she wants it to have an honorable role, informed by the mind. Her act of burying Polynice' s body disrupts Creon's complacency, and he finds it necessary to silence her to shut her up away from the public in a remote cave.

For Antigone thirst for story equates to faith; when Creon strips away her false perceptions of Polynices's honor, she mourns the loss of her faith. "Would it have been better to let you die a victim to that obscene story?" Creon asks. "It might have been. I had my faith," she answers, despondent.

Creon accuses her of having her father's desire for glory in death. Oedipus could not control his passions, which prompt him to sleep with his mother and kill his father. It was the story that destroyed him, rather than the acts themselves, which were committed without thought and would have gone unheeded had the story not come to light.

His own story both punished and fascinated Oedipus. Creon relates that he "drank in the dark story that the gods had destined him first to live and then to hear." Somehow the narrative grasp of his shameful story, at least for the moment of the telling, overrode the horror of killing his own father and dishonoring his mother.

Stories can wind their subjects into a web from which they cannot escape. Once Antigone's story of reprisal against the king gets out, the story holds her in its clutches and no other stories can help her. Haemon and the chorus suggest alternative stories to tell the angry mob, such as telling them that Antigone is mad, or that the law is changed, but the king cannot make an exception of his niece without losing his authority. The story is bigger than his office.

"The story is all over Thebes," he says. The story sways the mob, who will see that the story gets enacted till the end they must have closure. Not to close the story would open the door for chaos: without a script, there is no structure. Even though the chorus proclaims that "We shall carry the scar of her death for centuries," the story must unroll to its conclusion.

Antigone's problem is that for her unlike Creon and the mob story does not satisfy. Once stripped of the illusion that her brother's honor existed and that she could honor it, she lost her hope in stories. Then she only wanted death the end to all stories.

Creon finds her lack of faith abhorrent. "Death was her purpose, whether she knew it or not," Creon proclaims. "Polynices was a mere pretext. When she found she had to give up that pretext, she found another one that life and happiness were tawdry things and not worth possessing. She was bent upon only one thing: to reject life and to die." Creon, though he tries, can offer nothing to appease her.

The play exposes the meaninglessness, the paucity of stories. The guards have remained apathetic, not caring for a moment whether Antigone succeeded in her mission or avoided her death, for "none of this matters to them." "They go on playing cards," a game that simply repeats, in endless variations, a series of meaningless steps, just as their lives repeat, in endless minor variations, the lives of all citizens.

Antigone asserts that neither the lives nor the stories of kings and heroines, nor of the guards who protect them hold any meaning. Anouilh is a dramatist whose story exposes the malignancy of story, because hope is a "whore" that offers delusion for consolation.

Stripping away illusion, then, is an act of heroism, exposing that we are all, as Creon finally realizes when Haemon kills himself, "wounded to death," and that stories can only obstruct this truth. All that remains is "a fellow-feeling" among the characters, a sense of camaraderie that we are not, at least, alone, and that the heroism of an Antigone is still possible.

Source: Carole Hamilton for *Drama for Students*, Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

In this essay, Calin examines the differences in point of view between Antigone and her enemy Creon.

"Le Charme D'Antigone, dans la piece d'Anouilh, c'est le charme de'enfance.... On ne comprendrait rien a cette fille maigre et brulante, si 1'on ne convenait d'abord qu'elle est une petite fille." This statement is to be found in one of the most recent studies on Jean Anouilh. Pol Vandromme is not the first to have pointed out how Anouilh emphasizes the protagonist's childlike purity and idealism, qualities absent from the world of adult society. Anouilh invented the role of the Nurse *(la nourrice)',* her appearance in the first scene introduces us to the fact that Antigone has only recently crossed the threshold of adulthood. They speak together of the pranks the young girl played as a child, her fear of the bogey-man and of creatures in the night, her helplessness in the presence of others; the nurse gives orders and tries to direct Antigone's life. Creon too reminds her how only a little while ago he would have punished her with " ... du pain sec et une pair de gifles". For him, as for Nurse, she is *la petite Antigone;* he reminds her that her first doll was a present from him "il n'y pas si longtemps." In Sophocles' *Antigone* we do not know with what instrument Polynices is buried; Anouilh tells us that his heroine uses a child's toy shovel ("une petite pelle d'enfant toute vieille"), Polynice's shovel with which she and her brother used to build sand castles on the beach when they were children. And when Antigone commits suicide, hanging herself by the cord of her robe, the messenger says that these strands "lui faisaient comme un collier d'enfant." In life and in death Antigone remains true to the intransigent vision of youth; she commits the decisive act of rebellion and pays for it as a child.

As a child, Antigone exudes spontaneity and naturalness, and feels close to nature; around her the author constructs a pattern of animal imagery. *La petite Antigone* is assimilated to benevolent small animals. She had loved all the little creatures and wished to possess them all: "Qui pleurait deja toute petite, en pensant qu'il y avail tant de petites betes, ... et qu'on ne pouvait pas tous les prendre?" Nurse calls her *mon pigeon, ma petite colombe, ma mesange, ma tourterelle*. Antigone begs the older woman to take care of her pet dog, to let her into the house and speak to her as one would a person. After her first attempt to bury Polynice is discovered, Creon asks the guards if they are not mistaken, if in fact instead of a person seeking to bury the corpse it was only "une bete en grattant?" The guards are not mistaken, as we well know, but Creon has unconsciously discovered a sort of metaphorical truth, for, once Antigone has lost her shovel, she is obliged to crawl on all fours and scrape the earth with her nails, like a small animal. Creon then is quite correct in picturing Antigone as a little bird, a sparrow, or as a small trapped animal ("un petit gibierpris").

As a child, the princess played pranks on Ismene by covering her with dirt and tying her to a tree. At the age of nineteen she still loves to walk in her garden and in the fields alone at night, far from men's eyes. She runs barefoot in the dewy grass, the wind blowing in her hair; when tired, she drops to the earth to rest and bathes in a cool stream. She chooses the tactical moment to bury Polynice (covering his body with

earth): just before the break of day, when she will be hidden by darkness and predawn mists. The young girl finds joy in three of the four traditional universal elements or categories (as reinterpreted by Bachelard): water, air, and earth; her most lyrical outbursts are reserved for the exaltation of Nature. Her hair in the wind, her feet in water, and earth on her dress, Antigone flies like a bird, spiritualized, free from the gross material cares of society. She participates in the eternal feminine embodied by Earth and Water. She is vitally alive, participating in the splendor of the universe, even and especially when the Others are asleep, i.e., dead to the world: "Qui se levait la premiere, le matin, rien que pour sentir 1'air froid sur sa peau nue? Qui se couchait la derniere seulement quand elle n'en pouvait plus de fatigue, pour vivre encoure un pen de lanuit?".

Her enemy Creon looks upon the universe with different eyes. Only once does he evoke Nature with the intensity usual to Antigone: his great speech on the ship of state. Instead of Antigone's refreshing stream and dew, we find mountains of waves sinking the ship; instead of her gentle, stimulating wind, we find a tempest which snaps the masts. Drinking water, so readily available to the young girl, in Creon's world has been seized by the officers for their own selfish ends. There is no earth on which man can rest. Creon ridicules his niece's thirst for pride, assimilating what he considers to be spiritual hybris to her freely admitted natural desires: "Quel breuvage, hein, les mots qui vous condamnent? Et comme on les boit goulument quand on s'appelle Oedipe, ou Antigone," and she retorts that she will force him to drink her words, whether he will or no. Nurse, who in spite of her love for Antigone, remains a member of Creon's adult world, wishes the girl to wash her feet and cleanse away the dirt before going to bed, and objects to her mistress's dog entering the palace for similar reasons. Nor do the guards on sentry duty relish the chill, darkness, and mist of the night or the sun and wind of the day. For these people Nature is hostile to man, a negative force destroying all that society holds dear, or an obtrusive quality outside their routine, which can give rise to acts of folly.

In opposition to these blind, anarchical forces, Creon relies upon the every-day world of men in society. The Prologue introduces him as one who "joue au jeu difficile de conduire les hommes." He sees the kingship not as an adventure or game but as a trade, a job to do, a piece of work. To do the job, he takes off his jacket, rolls up his shirt-sleeves, stands with hands in pockets and feet firmly planted on the ground. He says: "il faut suer et retrousser ses manches, empoigner la vie a pleines mains et s'en mettre jusqu'aux coudes".

Creon believes in a calm, ordered, restful world. Long ago he loved music, richly bound books, and whiling away his time in antique shops. He still pictures happiness in terms of a good book, a child at your feet, a tool in your hand, a bench in front of the house. Hemon, too, speaking of his childhood in Creon's home, evokes the memory of books, bread, a lamp in the evening, and the *odeur defendue* of his father's study. Like Nurse and the soldiers, Creon abhors filth: he despises the stench of Polynice's rotting corpse brought by the sea-wind and would willingly close his window and shut it out. Yet for all his disgust with some aspects of nature, or perhaps because of it, it is Creon, not Antigone, who evokes in concrete imagery the physical reality of death. Uncle, niece,

and a guard all allude to the punishment prepared for Antigone, execution by immuring, as they say, in a *trou*. But it is Creon and his men who evoke Polynice's corpse in terms of rotten meat putrifying and decomposing in the sun, its vile odor penetrating every nook and cranny. As the guard says, "c'etait comme un coup de massue. J'avais beau ecarquiller les yeux, ca tremblait comme de la gelatine, je voyais plus." Creon views life and death with equal lucidity; he cuts through the haze of sentimental idealism surrounding sacrifice, religion, and personal freedom. He paints death in frightening tones specifically in order to frighten Antigone and dissuade her from an act which will result in her destruction. Yet the images of death (rot and decomposition) and those of domestic tranquillity (bench, book, warm bread) have one thing in common: they are figures of softness and repose, of harmony and security, which form a striking contrast to the imagination pattern of expansion and energy the power of the will we find inherent in Antigone.

The two protagonists of Anouilh's drama do not exist in a vacuum. They relate to the other characters and participate in a scene of direct confrontation. Each protagonist undermines the other's position, parodies and satirizes the other's point of view. Thus Anouilh points out the weaknesses as well as the strength in Antigone and Creon, the ambiguities inherent in their psychology and respective world-views.

Practicality and Degradation: Creon would have us think of him as the captain of a vessel, struggling alone, defending his crew against the onslaught of a hostile storm. As such, he is an idealist, as heroic as Antigone. Creon also prides himself on having a command of practical affairs in the real world. Thus he explains the motives governing his decision to insult Polynice's corpse, the aspects of *Realpolitik* which compelled his decision: he wishes to make his niece aware of the sordid reality behind the facade of political life, the inner workings of the theater or palace: "Car c'est cela que je veux que tu saches, les coulisses de ce drameoutubrulesdejouerunrole, la cuisine." But Antigone applies Creon's metaphor concretely and extends it by accusing him of being a cook in his kitchen: "Tu 1'as bien dit tout a 1'heure, Creon, la cuisine. Vous avez des tetes de cuisiniers! ... Tu m'ordonnes, cuisinier? . . . Allons vite, cuisinier!" There is a fundamental contradiction between the image of the captain defending his crew against a tempest and the cook in his kitchen, the sordid reality of the palace or theater. Antigone recognizes that Creon is lowering himself to the level of the masses for whom both he and she have such utter contempt ("Vous avez des tetes de cuisiners ..."). Thus is he assimilated to those around him who share his views and help implement them. The self-proclaimed captain of the ship of state has no illusions about the pathetic brutes whom he wishes to protect. And in this respect Antigone shares his point of view (a fact more than a trifle embarrassing to those left-wing intellectuals who invoke her as spokesman for their own attitudes on class struggle, *engagement*, the Resistance, etc.). She hates the guards who smell of garlic and red wine, can't stomach being touched by their dirty hands; they are the cooks who surround Creon. She begs him to keep her away from the masses whose faces and voices she wishes to avoid. She prefers never to tell Hemon of her suffering, lest the others know of it too: "II vaut mieux que jamais personne ne sache. C'est comme s'ils devaient me voir nue et me toucher quand je serai morte." These are the people of whom Ismene speaks to frighten her sister and persuade her to obey Creon: the thousands and thousands of people in the city, with

their thousand arms and thousand faces, who will spit in her face and destroy her with their odor and laughter; and the guards with their stupid faces, thick hands, and ox-like stare, who will conduct her to torture and death. The mob and the palace guards are indistinguishable; both follow Creon blindly. It is appropriate for Antigone, child of nature and enemy of society, to fear the people; Creon's contempt is less justifiable in terms of his character and the philosophical position he defends.

Nature and Animals: Antigone, for all we have said above, fears certain aspects of nature insects in the night and compares her bourgeois enemies to the dogs who caress whatever and whoever lies on their path. Creon, too, speaks of the hostile crowd howling about the palace. Antigone is called not only a turtledove and a sparrow but also a rat caught in a trap, a little hyena scratching at her brother's grave. She does not want the scraps people toss to good dogs; she recognizes that although animals enjoy the company of their kind, she is a human being and must die alone: "Des betes se serraient 1'une centre 1'autre pour se faire chaud. Je suis toute seule." When Creon, in an unaccustomed turn of phrase, invokes the laws of nature to convince his niece to accept society's laws and live ("Les betes, elles au moins, sont bonnes et simples et dures"), she treats him and his image with contempt: "Quel reve, hein? pour un roi: des betes!" Antigone assimilates to nature yet cannot be a part of it; she partakes of mankind yet is repelled by all that men are and have created.

Light and Darkness: One might imagine that a child of nature relishes the light of day in all its glory. But no, Antigone prefers the grey of night and compares the reds, yellows, and greens of dawn to a cheap, man-made postal card. At night she succeeds in burying her brother undetected; at high noon she is perceived and captured. And she will be executed in the full light of the sun. Is not the sun (which also causes Polynice' s corpse to stink) an eternal masculine principle of justice, Creon's ally, an emanation of him? Yet is not the sun also the source of life?

Beauty and Ugliness: Our protagonist, a child of nature, is herself physically unattractive. Anouilh spares no pains to tell us she is swarthy *(noiraude)*, thin, pale, flat-chested, and badly groomed *(mal peignee)*. Comparing herself to Ismene, Antigone admits her sister's superiority ("Je suis noire et maigre, Ismene est rose et doree comme un fruit"), is even proud of Ismene's beauty. Yet she recoils from ugliness in others: the mob, her guard, Creon. Antigone attacks Creon by assimilating the presumed ugliness of his deeds to his physical appearance: his wrinkles and fat belly: "J_^a vie t' a seulement ajoute tous ces petits plis sur le visage et cette graisse autour de toi." She may be homely in the flesh, Antigone admits, but Creon's men are morally repulsive, even the most handsome, they all have something ugly at the corner of their eyes and mouths. Men who are afraid are ugly, she say. And for all her homeliness, it is Antigone whom young men stare at on the street, whose hand Hemon seeks in marriage. Something emanates from her. She is beautiful, not like the others, but differently: "Pas belle comme nous, mais autrement", says Ismene.

Society and Solitude: Antigone stands alone against the world. She was sitting by herself in a corner when Hemon asked her to marry him; as the play begins she sits apart from the others, thinking. She buries her brother alone, spurning Ismene's help.

Yet she does cherish individual human beings, Hemon for example, and wishes Nurse to love her dog like a human, the way she herself does. She seeks a rapport with her guard, her last *visage d'homme*. In the end Antigone will have achieved a greater communion with mankind than Creon is capable of. The king has the power to snuff out her life, but Hemon her beloved and Creon's wife die with her. Hemon is also alone and can receive no consolation from Creon's world. The king, on the other hand, has lost his son, his wife, and his niece; his only remaining friend, the page-boy (like Antigone, a child), does not understand him. Deprived of his dead loved ones, this apostle of man's commitment to society and life is condemned to live in solitude among men who do not comprehend.

Anachronisms: Scholars have pointed out that Anouilh's conscious introduction of anachronisms into this as well as other plays creates an aura of universality, making the play valid for our century, creates distance between the characters and their public, establishing a tone of irony, and serves to upset the audience, to give it a sense of broken illusion and manipulated convention. Still another function of anachronism is to create ambiguities, to help undermine the protagonists' points of view and our self-identification with them as "people." Creon tells the story of Polynice' s civil war in terms of a twentieth-century youth rebelling against his father, a hoodlum, *ajeune voyou* who frequents low dives and drives fast cars. His description of the funeral rites Antigone seeks for her brother is viewed from the same perspective: ' Tu as vu ces pauvres tetes d' employes fatigues ecourtant les gestes, avalant les mots, baclant ce mort pour en prendre un autre avant le repas de midi?" Creon humiliates his niece and lowers her in the public's esteem by dissipating whatever idealism and purity may adhere to the ancient myth (grandeur of distance, the hallowed tradition of Greek literature), by assimilating her myth to the sordid scandals, so common and mundane, of the public press in our own century. Yet the sword of anachronism cuts both ways. When Creon's guards employ a military slang of the 1940s and their pre-occupations are centered on the *bistro* and whorehouse, we are made to sympathize with Antigone's rebellion. The world is coarse and vulgar; Creon does degrade himself by consorting with such people. The very pettiness of everyday life justifies to some extent Antigone's rebellion. Her fondest souvenir is a paper flower Polynice had brought back from one of his evenings on the town. For the modern reader and for Creon, it is only a pitiful anachronism, equally inappropriate in the world of Sophoclean tragedy and in a situation requiring carefully thought-out political decision-making: a cheap bit of fluff which could move only a schoolgirl, an artificial imitation of nature at best. Yet her flower is still less ugly and ignoble than the rotting corpse, drunken guards, and stench of the kitchen that made up Creon's world.

From Anouilh's use of imagery we learn that Antigone and Creon are not two perfect, admirable, triumphant embodiments of opposing philosophies of life. True, Antigone incarnates the virtues of wild nature, Creon those of domestic society. But Antigone is made only too aware of the fact that she can never be a little furry creature in the woods. Nature is often cruel, and in any case the Theban princess is a human being condemned to live and die among her own kind. Creon too finds his ideal world of the hearth degraded and he himself corrupted by the people he lowers himself to save. Antigone and Creon are heroic and vulnerable, majestic and inconsistent, eloquent and

irrational at the same time. We cannot accept the notion, dear to some critics, that Anouilh is on Antigone's side, that she embodies his own socio-political views. Instead, Anouilh's great innovation in treating the Antigone myth is to ennoble the character of Creon, to make him co-equal with Antigone. In the French play we have two protagonists, both worthy of admiration, both suffering from weakness. Anouilh presents both points of view and allows us to choose between them; rather, he presents the human condition in all its sordidness and poetry, the poetry of two gifted people each at grips with the other, with his own self, with society, and with the natural world. We are shown the human predicament, and we behold it with wonder.

Source: William Calin, "Patterns of Imagery in Anouilh's *Antigone*," in *French Review*, Vol. 41, 1967, pp. 76-83.

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay, Nazareth discusses the Truth in tragedy and compares Anouilh's Antigone *to Sophocles's* Antigone.

"When Jean Anouilh turns historian we can take it that truth will be revealed in the light of the emotions lightly, wittily revealed, in brilliant flashes. But truth is no less true because it comes as a jest in a jeweled sentence." (Caryl Brahmns, in a review of Beckett's *Plays and Players*, August, 1961.)

"With Anouilh now firmly entrenched as purveyor of fancy goods to the entertainment hunters, it is hard to credit that, not so long ago, he was classed as a rebel... [Anouilh was] never a major writer, or even a serious thinker... *Antigone* will not stand up to scrutiny; [its] factitious and sentimental skating round subjects, in which the real issue is always carefully avoided, is revealed. Anouilh has not only cut history down to size, but larded it with humour of the cheapest kind." (Tom Milne, in a review *of Beckett* in *Encore*, October, 1961.)

When there is such controversy about a contemporary dramatist, it is fruitful to make a detailed examination of at least one of his plays, in Mr Lewis Galantiere's translations. "*Antigone* will not stand up to scrutiny": Let us therefore scrutinize *Antigone*.

Some critics say *that Antigone* is a tragedy. For instance, T. R. Henn begins his analysis *of Antigone* by saying "A critic has said, I think with justice, that M. Anouilh 'alone among modern playwrights is able to wear the tragic mask with ease.'" Note, too, Raymond Williams's analysis *of Antigone*.

However, if we accept the play as a tragedy, we find that we are unable to explain several parts of Anouilh's play. For instance, towards the end of the play, when Antigone is about to be sealed up in a cave, she talks to the guard. The guard then starts talking about himself and the things that concern him:

If you're a guard, everyone knows you're something special; they know you're an old N.C.O. Take pay for instance. When you're a guard you get your pay, and on top of that you get six months' extra pay, to make sure you don't lose anything by not being a sergeant any more ...

And so on. Antigone is not interested, of course, and interrupts him with, "Listen ... I'm going to die soon." But he is not interested in her *fate* and continues talking about himself. Surely, when the guard talks so much about himself, the tragic mood of the play is destroyed.

Even more striking is Anouilh's use of the chorus. Anouilh's chorus is one man, who leans casually on the proscenium arch while talking directly to the audience. The play opens with the words,

Well, here we are. These people are about to act out for you the story of Antigone.

He points to Antigone and says,

That little creature sitting by herself, staring straight ahead, seeing nothing, is Antigone. She is thinking. She is thinking that the instant I finish telling you who's who and what's what in this play, she will burst forth as the tense, sallow, willful girl whose family would never take her seriously and who is about to rise up alone against Creon, her uncle, the king.

But that is not all. The chorus (in the French version it is the Prologue) goes on to say

Another thing that she is thinking is this: she is going to die. Antigone is young. She would much rather live than die. But there is no help for it. When your name is Antigone, there is only one part you can play; and she will have to play hers to the end.

This, surely, is an untragic way to begin a tragedy! The chorus insists on explaining to the audience *the fact that they are watching a play* and explaining at such length that the tragic mood is destroyed.

Later, after Creon discovers that his law has been defied and Polynices has been buried, the chorus says,

The spring is wound up tight. It will uncoil of itself. That is what is so convenient in tragedy... Tragedy is clean, it is restful, it is flawless.

In fact, the chorus goes on to make a long speech on what tragedy is.

Many critics take the speeches of the chorus at their face value. Henn quotes part of the chorus's definition at the beginning of Chapter VI of *The Harvest of Tragedy* and accepts it as a genuine definition. Raymond Williams says:

The convention, both of commentary on the various characters in turn, and of establishment of the play and the characters as action and parts which begin "now that the curtain has risen," *is very impressive*. By the end of Prologue's speech the audience has been firmly introduced to *the conventional nature of the play*, and also to each of the characters ... It is very simple, and *completely convincing.* It gains an immediate dramatic concentration, and the conditions of intensity; it also provides the major resource which the naturalistic drama has lacked, that of commentary. (The italics are mine.)

We notice that Williams takes the speeches at their face value and thinks they are convincing. The fallacy of Williams's comments is obvious when we ask ourselves the obvious question: does naturalistic drama need commentary? What about Chekhov's drama?

Other critics also take these speeches at their face value, but conclude that they are not convincing. The play, these critics say, is pseudo-tragedy, it is sentimental and

pretentious. The chorus is defining tragedy so that the audience will be deceived into thinking it is experiencing a great tragedy. Further, Anouilh does not have the courage of his convictions. He wants to write a tragedy, but he is afraid that the audience will accuse him of sentimentality; and so he also laughs with the audience at the play. In other words, he does not take the play seriously; he is intellectually dishonest. This is symptomatic of the vulgarity and lack of culture of the masses. Conditioned by mass-produced television, films, pop songs and advertising, the masses can only accept pseudo-tragedy. They have to be told that they are experiencing a great tragedy, because they are incapable of experiencing true tragedy.

But we must stop to ask ourselves this question: does Anouilh want us to take the speeches of the chorus at their face value? If he were doing so, would he overplay his hand, *or*, if he were attempting aesthetic sleight-of-hand, would he insist that the audience watch the hand he was going to deceive them with? Would he let the chorus say, "In a tragedy, nothing is in doubt and everyone's destiny is known. That makes for tranquility"? Isn't it the natural tendency for the audience to *react against* tragedy because of speeches like this?

If we take the speeches at their face value, we shall be misunderstanding the play. J. L. Styan's comment in his analysis of *Colombe* is relevant and illuminating. He says,

Because of the play-within-the-play, we are doubly the skeptical audience we were: we simply do not respond sentimentally to the sentiment with which the words are spoken. To believe that the author intended us to would contradict the total meaning of this play, not to mention others.

The speeches of the chorus are a sardonic comment on what tragedy (i.e. a tragic play) is. Anouilh is telling us through the chorus what is *wrong* with tragedy. Tragedy is clean, restful and flawless; *therefore it is not true to life*. It ignores certain issues in life which, according to Anouilh, it should not. Therefore his play cannot be interpreted as a tragedy in the same sense in which we usually understand the term "tragedy." The fact that the chorus is anti-tragic and tells us what is wrong with tragedy is an indication that Anouilh's *Antigone* is "played against" a tragedy. To be specific, Anouilh's *Antigone* is "played against" *Sophocles's Antigone*.

The framework of both plays is the same. Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, decides to defy the edict of her uncle King Creon and to bury the body of her brother Polynices. She asks her sister Ismene for help, but Ismene refuses to help her. So Antigone buries Polynices herself. She is brought before Creon, who decides to have her killed even though she is engaged to his son Haemon. After Antigone's death, Haemon commits suicide. When his mother, Eurydice, hears about his death, she also commits suicide.

However, what lies within this framework is different in the two plays. The differences are apparent very early in the plays. When Sophocles's Ismene refuses to bury Polynices, she says:

We must remember that we are women, and women are not meant to fight with men. Our rulers are stronger than ourselves, and we must obey them in this, and in things more bitter still... And so I shall obey those in power, since I am forced to do so, and can only ask the dead to pardon me, since there is no wisdom in going too far.

We feel that Ismene is perhaps weak, but that is all we feel. Now let us look at what Anouilh's Ismene says:

He [Creon] is stronger than we are. He is the king. And the whole city is with him... His mob will come running, howling at us as it runs. A thousand arms will seize our arms. A thousand breaths will breathe into our faces. Like one pair of single eyes, a thousand eyes will stare at us. We'll be driven in a timbrel through their hatred, through the smell of them and their cruel, roaring laughter. We'll be dragged to the scaffold for torture, surrounded by guards with their idiot faces all bloated, their animal hands clean washed for the sacrifice, their beefy eyes squinting as they stare at us. And we'll know that no shrieking and no begging will make them understand that we want to live, for they are like slaves who do exactly as they've been told, without caring about right and wrong. 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; it will go on rising and rising, like a screaming voice. Oh, I can't, I can't, Antigone.

The difference between these two speeches is striking. Anouilh's Ismene says the same thing as Sophocles's Ismene, but takes it a stage further. In the second case (Anouilh's), we are presented with a powerful, shocking and realistic picture of the horrible fate that Ismene thinks awaits her and Antigone if they break Creon's law. It is a horrifying picture. Ismene is only human, and we realize most forcefully why Anouilh's Ismene refuses to bury Polynices, as we did not in the case of Sophocles's Ismene.

Creon has passed the edict that Polynices is not to be buried; anybody who defies this edict does so on pain of death. Sophocles's Creon has done this because he thinks it is for the good of the state. After Antigone has defied the edict and buried Polynices, there is a brief exchange between her and Creon. She says that she could not bring herself through fear of one man and one man's pride to disobey the laws of the gods. Creon's pride is hurt because he is unsure of himself. He decides to kill Antigone because "she will be the man, not I, if she wins this victory and goes unpunished." He refuses to listen to the advice of his son, saying finally, "I *am* the state." He even refuses to listen to Teiresias and accuses him of corruption; Teiresias, with whose help he has ruled the state. Too late does he realize his blindness. After the deaths of Antigone, Haemon and Eurydice, he says

Ah me! the guilt is mine, I know it. I blame no other.

When Anouilh's Antigone is brought before Creon, she insists that Creon kill her. But Anouilh' s Creon wants to save Antigone. He does not believe in "all that flummery about religious burial." He asks Antigone,

Do you really believe that a so-called shade of your brother is condemned to wander forever homeless if a little earth is not flung on his corpse to the accompaniment of some priestly abracadabra?

Until Kitto's interpretation of Sophocles' s *Antigone* in *Form and Meaning in Drama* (1956), it was believed that Sophocles' s Antigone had to bury her brother because the soul of a dead person was condemned to wander forever homeless if the body was left unburied. Anouilh's *Antigone* was written long before Kitto published his interpretation. It does not matter to Creon which body is buried and which is unburied; in fact, he does not even know whether the body is that of Polynices or Eteocles. Antigone cannot understand him; he then reveals his position clearly. He had to agree to be the ruler of the state, or the state would have collapsed. Sophocles's Creon says:

My friends, the gods have brought our ship of state safely to port after wild tossing on the stormy seas.

Anouilh's Creon also talks of the state as a ship; but he carries the image much further:

There had to be one man who said yes. 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 ship 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 and only because the only thing they thought of was their own skins and their cheap little day to day traffic. Was this a time, do you think, for playing with words like yes and no?

Once more we see in stark terms why Anouilh's Creon had to do what he did. We realize clearly the real, factual difficulties in the path of the ruler of the state, which we did not in the case of Sophocles's Creon. Further, Anouilh's Antigone had last seen Polynices when she was twelve years old, and therefore she did not really know him. Creon tells her that both Eteocles and Polynices were "rotten." Both men tried to assassinate their father. Had Antigone considered all this when she decided to bury Polynices?

Anouilh has raised far more factual issues than Sophocles by just taking everything a stage further, and by including "irrelevancies." Everything that Anouilh says could have really happened, but Sophocles does not even touch upon many of these issues.

At this stage I should like to quote extensively from Aldous Huxley's essay *Tragedy and the Whole Truth* (1932), because it is vital to our understanding of Anouilh's play. I do not agree with Huxley's ideas and comments in this essay; I am quoting from it extensively because I suggest that the kind of aesthetic and critical consciousness Huxley reveals in this essay is like Anouilh's creative consciousness, and it will therefore help us understand Anouilh's approach in *Antigone* (The fact that Huxley has long been accepted as a serious writer in France is an indication that his creative consciousness is congenial to the French.)

Huxley distinguishes between two forms of literary art, Tragedy and Wholly-Truthful Literature, and says that the two are incompatible. He gives an example from the *Odyssey*. Six of the best and bravest of Odysseus' s companions are lifted out of the ship by Scylla. The survivors could only look on while Scylla "at the mouth of her cave devoured them, still screaming, still stretching out their hands [at Odysseus] in the fearful struggle." Odysseus adds that it was the most fearful and lamentable sight he had ever seen in all his "explorings of the passes of the sea."

Later, the danger passed, Odysseus and his men went ashore for the night, and, on the Sicilian beach, prepared their supper prepared it, says Homer, "expertly." The Twelfth Book of the *Odyssey* concludes with these words: "When they had satisfied their thirst and hunger, they thought of their dear companions and wept, and in the midst of their tears sleep came gently upon them!"

Homer's... is the whole Truth. Consider how almost any other of the great poets would have concluded the story of Scylla's attack on the passing ship. Six men, remember, have been taken and devoured before the eyes of their friends. In any other poem but the *Odyssey*, what would the survivors have done? They would, of course, have wept, even as Homer made them weep. But would they previously have cooked their supper, and cooked it, what's more, in a masterly fashion? Would they previously have drunk and eaten to satiety? And after weeping, or actually while weeping would they have dropped quietly off to sleep? No, they most certainly would not have done any of these things. They would simply have wept, lamenting their own misfortune and the horrible fate of their companions, and the canto would have ended tragically on their tears.

Homer, however, preferred to tell the Whole Truth. He knew that even the most cruelly bereaved must eat; that hunger is stronger than sorrow and that its satisfaction takes precedence even of tears. He knew that experts continue to act expertly and to find satisfaction in their accomplishment, even when friends have just been eaten, even when the accomplishment is only cooking the supper. He knew that, when the belly is full (and only when the belly is full), men can afford to grieve, and that sorrow after supper is almost a luxury. And finally he knew that, even as hunger takes precedence of grief, so fatigue, supervening, cuts short its career and drowns it in a sleep all the sweeter for bringing forgetfulness of bereavement. In a word, Homer refused to treat the theme tragically. He preferred to tell the Whole Truth.

Huxley goes on to say,

To make a tragedy the artist must isolate a single element out of the totality of human experience and use that exclusively as his material. Tragedy is something separated from the Whole Truth, distilled from it, so to speak, as an essence is distilled from the living flower. Tragedy is chemically pure. Hence its power to act quickly and intensely on our feelings.

Compare this to Anouilh's

The spring is wound up tight. It will uncoil of itself. That is what is so convenient in tragedy... Tragedy is clean, it is restful, it is flawless.

Huxley says,

Wholly-Truthful art overflows the limits of tragedy and shows us, if only by hints and implications, what happened before the tragic story began, what will happen after it is over, what is happening simultaneously elsewhere (and "elsewhere" includes all those parts of the minds and bodies of the protagonists not immediately engaged in the tragic struggle). Tragedy is an arbitrarily isolated eddy on the surface of a vast river that flows majestically, irresistibly, around, beneath, and to either side of it. Wholly-Truthful art contrives to imply the existence of the entire river as well as the eddy. It is quite different from tragedy, even though it may contain, among other constituents, all the elements from which tragedy is made.

Writers who create Wholly-Truthful art shirk almost nothing. Among other things are the irrelevancies which, in actual life, always temper the situations and characters "that writers of tragedy insist on keeping chemically pure." These irrelevancies would destroy Tragedy.

Consequently, Wholly-Truthful art produces in us an effect quite different from that produced by tragedy. Our mood when we have read a Wholly-Truthful book is never one of heroic exultation; it is one of resignation, one of acceptance... But I believe that its effects are more lasting. The exultations that follow the reading or hearing of a tragedy are in the nature of temporary inebriations. Our being cannot long hold the pattern imposed by tragedy.

Compare all this to the chorus's sardonic and ironic comments:

It [tragedy] has nothing to do with melodrama... Death in a melodrama is really horrible because it is never inevitable. The dear old father might so easily have been saved; the honest young man might so easily have brought in the police five minutes earlier.

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. You're trapped. The whole sky has fallen on you, and all you can do about it is shout. Don't mistake me: I said "shout": I did not say groan, whimper, complain. That is vulgar; it's practical.

The two accounts are remarkably similar, especially if one substitutes "Wholly-Truthful art" for "melodrama."

Huxley gives another example. He says,

Shakespeare's ironies and cynicisms serve to deepen his tragic world, but not to widen it. If they had widened it, as the Homeric irrelevancies widened out the universe of the *Odyssey* why, then, the world of Shakespearean tragedy would automatically have ceased to exist. For example, a scene showing the bereaved Macduff eating his supper,

growing melancholy, over the whisky, with thoughts of his murdered wife and children, and then, with lashes still wet, dropping off to sleep, would be true enough to life; but it would not be true to tragic art. The introduction of such a scene would change the whole quality of the play; treated in this Odyssean style, *Macbeth* would cease to be a tragedy.

We certainly cannot agree with what Huxley says about our reaction to tragedy. But, as I said earlier, it is his kind of consciousness in this essay that is important, because it is similar to Anouilh's creative consciousness. His distinction between "Tragedy" and "the Whole Truth" *as art forms* is therefore particularly useful to us. He suggests that there is in some writers a consciousness of simple, everyday, commonplace things, which seem on the surface to be irrelevant, but which do, in fact, temper a particular situation. This consciousness leads these writers to create "Wholly-Truthful Art" and not "Tragedy"; this distinction, from the critics' point of view, is only one of *art forms*, because the creative consciousness involved is different. Lionel Trilling tells us in *The Modem Element in Modern Literature,* "It is a commonplace of modern literary thought that the tragic mode is not available even to the gravest and noblest of our writers." I suggest that this is due to the twentieth-century consciousness of "realism" (note also Eric Bentley). A consciousness of "realism" means a consciousness of the "irrelevant" things that are really relevant. Hence one cay say that the dominant mode of writing in the twentieth century is "Wholly-Truthful Art" (or "realism").

It is important at this stage to distinguish between "realism" in drama, as the *form* of a play, and realism as the *effect* (or content) of a play. Anouilh's *Antigone* is realistic in effect, but not in form.

Let us return to a comparison of the two plays (Anouilh's and Sophocles's). Antigone has buried her brother, knowing that her punishment will be death. Anouilh's Antigone, however, seems at first guilty of the fourth temptation of Archbishop Thomas in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. Accepting the fact that she will be killed, she seems to look forward with relish to her death. She seems to enjoy the idea of being executed. Creon does not want to kill her but she insists. She had an ideal when she buried Polynices. But Creon tries to destroy her ideal by telling her, among other things, that both her brothers had been evil. For a moment, Antigone seems destroyed. Up to this point, our sympathy lies with Creon. But then Antigone decides that she will die for the ideal she had. In the eyes of Creon, her sacrifice is completely unjustified. Creon accepts life for what it is, and decides to "make the best of a bad job." But Antigone refuses to compromise with life she chooses instead to die. We may compare Antigone's action here to the advice Zooey gives Franny in J. D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey* (Heinemann, 1962) she acts from a purity of motive. It does not matter that the facts do not fit her ideal; she refuses to let the ideal be destroyed. She says, in a very powerful speech,

I spit on your idea of happiness! I spit on your idea of life that life must go on, come what may. You are like the dogs that lick everything they smell. You with your promise of a humdrum happiness provided a person doesn't ask too much of life. I want everything of life, I do; and I want it now! I want it total, complete, otherwise I reject it! I will *not* be moderate. I will *not* be satisfied with the little bit of cake you offer me if I promise to be a

good little girl. I want to be sure of everything this very day; sure that everything will be as beautiful as when I was a little girl. If not, I want to die!

In this speech, our sympathy lies wholly with Antigone.

It is clear, then, that Anouilh's play explores problems that have not been raised explicitly in Sophocles's play. One should not therefore conclude that Anouilh's play is independent of Sophocles's, and that we ought not to identify the two. Huxley tells us:

In recent times literature has become more and more acutely conscious of the whole Truth of the great oceans of irrelevant things, events and thoughts stretching endlessly away in every direction from whatever island point (a character, a story) the author may choose to contemplate.

The "island point" in Anouilh's *Antigone* is Sophocles' s *Antigone*. Anouilh's *Antigone* follows Sophocles's *Antigone* up to a stage and then explores certain problems which are realistic, "true-to-life," and which are not improbable in Sophocles's play. But when we see Sophocles' s *Antigone* these questions do not strike us. What were the personal problems facing Ismene in her decision not to help Antigone? What would really happen if she did help Antigone? Further, when Antigone decides to bury Polynices, does she consider first whether or not he has been good? Does she think of the problems Creon has to deal with as a ruler? What if Creon had refused to be king; would anyone else have agreed to be king? What would happen to the state if Creon did not face up to his responsibilities as king? Again, when Antigone buries Polynices, is there any personal ideal she wants to live up to? Is Creon's reaction after the three deaths merely a temporary emotional reaction; will he change his mind in his calmer moments and say that he was not really to blame? By using Sophocles's play as a frame of reference, Anouilh solves a major problem the artist of to-day is said to face. This is lack of "contact" between audience and artist, lack of common values. As Stephen Spender tells us,

The thing written establishes communication between writer and reader... The message has to be conveyed at several levels. These might be compared to the wires of a cable ... One wire is the background of objects experienced in life and having established associations which are common to writer and reader.

By assuming knowledge of a myth or a play that the audience knows, the dramatist creates the common "background of objects." Further, Henn tells us that the twentieth-century revival of interest in Greek myth or fable is partly due to the psychological recognition of the archetypes. The fables thus acquire a new validity in themselves, and can be re-clothed effectively on what is basically the same skeleton. But this is only a partial explanation.

If such a re-clothing takes place, with a partial re-articulation of the bones, a new field is opened for the exercise of wit, the perception of metaphysical similarities or discordances, and endless over-and-under-tones of irony. Out of such parallelisms, close or remote, the dramatist can invite his audience to find "meaning" which is usually

a synthesis of factors which are, to a great extent, set in opposition or paradox ... He can provide a critical edge, at various planes, by explicit comparisons between the two ages; the past whose bones he has discovered, the present whose breath is upon them.

One should mention at this stage that Anouilh' s Creon contrasts with Sophocles's Creon in one particular aspect, to create a positive by which we are to judge him. Anouilh's Creon does not believe in "all that flummery about religious burial." But Sophocles's Creon does. This makes us realize how much Anouilh's Creon has lost spiritually. He has no ideals. There is no greatness in his soul; his soul is filled with commonness, as of dust.

Another commonplace of modern literary criticism is that the modern audience is complacent. (Obviously, this must be qualified; there is greater critical activity now than ever before.) Anouilh deals with this problem in the same way as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot do in their poetry. He constantly changes the focus in his play, thereby upsetting the mood of the audience and preventing it from getting complacent. He jerks the audience back to awareness. At the same time, this change of focus is used, as in the case of Pound and Mr. Eliot, to make the play all-embracing of various complexities. In Aldous Huxley's *The Genius and the Goddess*, John Rivers says,

The trouble with fiction is that it makes too much sense... Fiction has unity, fiction has style. Facts possess neither. In the raw, existence is always one damned thing after another, and each of the damned things is simultaneously Thurber and Michelangelo, simultaneously Mickey Spillane and Thomas a Kempis.

By a constant change of focus, by selecting a contraposition from which we are to view his object, Anouilh can include "simultaneously Thurber and Michelangelo, simultaneously Mickey Spillane and Thomas a Kempis."

I suggest that Anouilh is one of the pioneers of what has been called the Theatre of the Absurd. The dramatists of this theatre regard their audience as complacent, apathetic, asleep. With taunts and shock effects, by breaking the continuity of a traditional form of drama, the dramatists hope to jerk the audiences into awareness, consciousness, understanding. Anouilh's *Antigone* has been misunderstood because of the preconceptions some critics have had about drama. For instance, note Montgomery Belgion's criticism of Shaw:

Realism may be all right, and a stage convention may be all right. But these characters are neither one nor the other. They are pseudo-realistic.

Again, note C. E. Vaughan on Ibsen:

How far is the scheme of Ibsen's drama, the design as apart from the execution of it, compatible with the highest ends at which tragedy can aim? Are not his details overloaded, his themes depressing, his characters too persistently lacking in the nobler, the more heroic qualities without which our sympathies remain cold?

The criticism often brought against Jonson and Wilde is that their characters are two-dimensional or are counters, and people are not like that. By such conceptions, Anouilh's play must seem false and irresponsible. His method of changing the focus and breaking the continuity is looked upon as irresponsible clowning. (It is interesting to note that this criticism is also leveled against Byron.)

But, as Styan points out, drama is the historic creation of a sequence of suggestions which create impressions in the minds of the audience. The sequence of impressions operates to create in the minds of the audience the total *effect* of the play. (To "minds," we must also add in the case of most plays "hearts and souls.") We are not to judge a play by the *methods* the dramatists use; we are to judge it by its *total effect*. (Of course, we are to see how the impressions are created, and whether or not they link together to form the total effect of the play.) We are to see how genuine the total effect is. If in its *total effect* the play presents a distorted view of life, or it distorts psychology, or it offers facile solutions, or it muddies fundamental issues, we reject the play. Yeats tells us that Richard II "is typical, not because he ever existed, but because he made us know something in our minds we had never known of had he never been imagined."

Let us see how Anouilh creates his impressions in *Antigone*. His method is essentially fivefold. First of all, he reacts against the fact "fact" to Anouilh but not to us that Tragedy does not present the whole Truth. Through his chorus, he passes sardonic comments on the smooth way tragedy works in order to destroy the idea that tragedy is true-to-life and that his play is a tragedy. Secondly, he brings in several "irrelevancies" which make his play realistic, but untragic. Several examples of this have been quoted earlier in this essay. Another example is when Antigone wants to write a letter to Haemon just before her death. The guard at first refuses. But, by bribing him, she gets him to agree to copy out a letter she will dictate. We then have the following scene:

Antigone Write now. "my darling ..."

Guard (writes as he mutters) The boy friend, eh?

Antigone "My darling. I wanted to die, and perhaps you will not love me any more..."

Guard (mutters as he writes) "... will not love me anymore."

Antigone "Creon was right. It is terrible to die." Guard (repeats as he writes): "... terrible to die."

Antigone "And I don't even know what I am dying for. I am afraid..."

Guard (looks at her) Wait a minute! How fast do you think I can write?

This method of "echo" or repetition can be used by different dramatists in different ways. It can be used to make a scene more tragic. It can be used to fill the audience with a chilling sense of foreboding, as Webster uses it in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Anouilh, by means of a disinterested guard, uses it to destroy the tragic mood that would have

existed if this play were a tragedy though it does not destroy the pathos of Antigone's plight.

Thirdly, Anouilh presents Antigone in modest, human terms. For example, Antigone's answer to Ismene's "Don't make fun of me" is

I'm not, Ismene, truly. This particular morning, seeing how beautiful you are makes everything easier for me. Wasn't I a miserable little beast when we were small? I used to fling mud at you, and put worms down your neck. I remember tying you to a tree and cutting off your hair. Your beautiful hair! How easy it must be never to be unreasonable with all that smooth silken hair so beautifully round your head.

Notice, too, Anouilh's use of the nurse. Not knowing that Antigone has been out to bury Polynices, the nurse concludes that she has been out to meet a lover:

And we'll hear what he [Creon] has to say when he finds out that you go wandering alone o'nights. Not to mention Haemon. For the girl's engaged! Going to be married! Going to be married, and she hops out of bed at four in the morning to meet somebody else in a field. Do you know what I ought to do to you? Take you over my knee the way I used to when you were little.

The scenes that remind us of Antigone's childhood not only "humanize" Antigone, they also contract the happy innocence of Antigone's youth with the world she now has to face.

Fourthly, as I mentioned earlier, the play raises problems untouched by Sophocles. This is done partly by a discussion between Antigone and Creon. At this stage, *Antigone* becomes a play of ideas. Bentley tells us that the play of ideas is a modern evolution of drama. Of course, "play of ideas" is a vague term. In one sense, Bentley says, there are ideas in all words and therefore in all drama. Tragedy has always suggested ideas concerning the significance of human life but in most tragedies, "the characters fight, the ideas lie still and unmolested. In a drama of ideas, on the other hand, the ideas are questioned, and it is by questioning and it could only be by the questioning that the ideas becom[e] dramatic." The discussion between Antigone and Creon is moving because it is not a "detached" discussion of abstract concepts.

Finally, we must not forget the "modern language and dress." For instance, the scene between Antigone and the guard, mentioned earlier, when the guard is talking about his pay: "they know you're an old N.C.O. Take pay for instance." Much earlier, the chorus tells us,

There was a ball one night. Ismene wore a new evening frock. She was radiant. Haemon danced every dance with her.

We come now to an important point Anouilh's negativeness. Anouilh's *Antigone* is not negative, to my mind, because of its historical context. Geoffrey Brereton tells us about *Antigone* "First produced during the German occupation, it has an obvious topical message." "An obvious topical message" is perhaps putting it too crudely; but we can

see how the clash between Antigone and Creon could be an intensely true-to-life experience when it was first produced. The setting of the play was really the situation in France. But we find Anouilh offers the same "positive" in other plays; and, in a different context, we cannot accept this positive. Earlier, I compared Anouilh and Salinger. A comparison between them also shows us the difference between their positives. The norm offered in *Zooey* is, to put it a little bluntly, that one should act out of a purity of motive, even if various elements in life are "impure." But this is important one should *live* with this purity. Anouilh, on the other hand, suggests in other plays that because life is impure, one should reject it; the longer one lives, the more soiled one becomes. (Of course, this does not apply to comedies like *Ring Round the Moon*.) We find finally that we have to condemn Anouilh for the very negativeness which he accuses Samuel Becket of.

To return to *Antigone* Anouilh's *Antigone* is to my mind, a good play. Although it is not the same type of play as Sophocles's *Antigone*, there can be little doubt that Sophocles's play is a much greater play than Anouilh's. Anouilh explores many problems that Sophocles leaves untouched; but Sophocles leaves them untouched because they are irrelevant to his tragic conception and his tragic theme. The theme and one form of Sophocles's *Antigone* are different from that of Anouilh's. As Kitto tells us, Greek plays are "constructive." The simplicity of the form of Sophocles's play is for the sake of concentration.

Since Anouilh uses Sophocles's play as a frame of reference, it follows that his play would not exist if Sophocles's play did not exist. Therefore, in a sense, Anouilh's *Antigone* is not a finished work of art. Further, while *Antigone* is a good play, it seems pernicious that its form should be adopted for other plays. Let us see why. It jerks the audience back to consciousness by breaking the continuity of a conventional form. Styan tells us,

No dramatist can work outside a channel of convention, since only this permits continuity of attention. Even when it is his object to break this continuity, he must begin by moving along one of these channels. It must be an already flowing train of feeling he interrupts if after the break he is to secure that exciting renewal of attention.

The stress is on the fact that the dramatist must interrupt an *already flowing train of feeling*. How long can the interruptions continue before the train of feeling, in a sense, ceases to flow? A few plays of this sort jerk the audience back to consciousness. But many plays like this can unsettle the audience so much that the audience may not be able to accept a convention of drama anymore. Then what will such plays feed on? How long can dramatists continue breaking the continuity before all continuity in drama is broken?

Thus Anouilh's *Antigone* is a paradox: it is a good play which ultimately undermines the whole dramatic idiom.

Source: Peter Nazareth, "Anouilh's *Antigone*: An Interpretation," in *English Studies in Africa*, 1963, Vol. 6, pp. 51-69.

Critical Essay #4

In this review of a 1956 revival of Anouilh's play, Clurman examines the political nature of Antigone *while offering a mixed appraisal of the work*.

I never read a French review of Anouilh's *Antigone* but report has it that when it was done in Paris during the Occupation it was considered a covert piece of propaganda urging defiance of the Nazi government. Yet the Nazi authorities permitted its production. It seems to have meant different things to different people.

In the hush of its present revival by a new theatre organization Mazda Productions I believe I discern how this case of mistaken identity could occur. Anouilh's *Antigone* defies Creon not because her moral sense has been outraged, but because, having been informed that her brother was a despicable thug by the very reasonable politician Anouilh has made Creon, she sees that life isn't worth living at all. All is corruption: life dulls, coarsens, depraves men's initial goodness, and those who go on living become mere "cooks," compromisers content to come to terms with the shabby routine of ordinary existence. And the police shall inherit the earth. It is better to die pure.

This is a perverse romanticism typical of much French writing since 1937, the key to Anouilh's ideology, whether he writes in the pink vein of *Thieves' Ball* or in the black one of *Eurydice*. *The Lark* is a quasi-ironic illustration of the exceptional (saintly) person who redeems the mess that most Frenchmen make.

On a higher level (in Camus' work let us say) the thought may be summed up as follows: life is nonsense, let us revolt against its absurdity and then make some sense of it. It is a desperate manner of thinking and though beguiling theatre patterns may be made of it in the acidly sentimental way of which Anouilh has taken full advantage, I distrust it. Its appeal is to a basic weakness in us. Anouilh's Antigone is an anti-heroic heroine; in a word, an hysteric.

I think it an error for the ambitious organization on 57th Street to have chosen *Antigone* as its first bill, but I am glad have the organization, and look forward to seeing it produce better work in more suitable plays.

Source: Harold Clurman. Review of *Antigone* in the *Nation*, Vol. 182, no. 16, April 21, 1956, pp. 347 -48

Critical Essay #5

In the following excerpt, Heiney examines a number of Anouilh's plays, assessing the playwright's facility with the tragedy genre.

Jean Anouilh (b. 1910) is often considered the leading French dramatist of the postwar generation, even though his reputation is only a dozen or so years old. It was under the peculiar conditions of the Occupation that his drama first attracted widespread public attention; *Antigone* (1942) was interpreted, as it was probably intended, as a thinly-veiled allegory of France under the Vichy regime. In America, where his work has been available since 1945, he is still relatively little known. *Antigone* is occasionally played in this country; *Ring Around the Moon*. Christopher Fry's adaptation of *I'Invitation au chateau*, has attracted some attention, and an adaptation *ofEurydice* has been presented to Broadway audiences under the title *A Legend of Lovers.* But the leitmotif of Anouilh's work is not widely understood; he is typically treated as a theatrical *prestidigitateur* with the expected "French" charm but with little content. This is the sort of misconception with respect to French drama that Anglo-Saxon critics have nourished even since the heyday of the Vieux Colombier. Anouilh is a psychological dramatist, although not in the modern pseudo-scientific sense; he is also the chief contemporary exponent of tragedy in the drama. Most of his tragedies are based on classic themes; they are simultaneously a modern expression of the Aristotelean tragic principle and a sensitive approach to the portrayal of psychological processes.

To Anouilh humanity is made up of two kinds of people: the anonymous mass of normal and rational nonentities who accept the banality of daily existence, and the heroes. The first group is motivated chiefly by a desire for happiness, not the ecstasy of the saint but the *petit bonheur* of the unambitious. This is the race which populates the earth and performs the daily drudgery which is the price of human existence; which "eats its sausage, makes its babies, pushes its tools, counts its sous, year in and year out, in spite of epidemics and wars, right up to life's end; living people, everyday people, people you don't imagine dead."

The second group rejects this banality. Where the ordinary man realizes the imperfection of the human lot but nevertheless grasps at the petty happiness that is offered him, the hero has the courage to say "no." It is this second race which supplies the world with saints, martyrs, Caesars, artists, assassins, prophets, and above all with tragic heroes; for the man who refuses to say "yes" to life thereby condemns himself to a tragic end. These are "those you imagine stretched out, pale, a red hole in the forehead, a moment triumphant with a guard of honor, or between two gendarmes.. . ."It is not that the hero deliberately chooses this path; he is condemned to it by the nature of his personality. He can no more escape tragedy than the ordinary man can escape banality. The ordinary man and the hero belong to different species, and they are condemned to perpetual misunderstanding, suspicion, and enmity; human existence is an eternal struggle between heroism and happiness. Out of this antithesis Anouilh fashions his dramatic conflict. It is significant that he includes all his Greek plays in the

two collections he entitles "pieces noires"; to him classic mythology is indissolubly linked with tragedy and death....

Antigone (1942) treats the same basic theme, but utilizes a different technique. Like most other modern Antigone plays, it is based on Sophocles; the period and decor remain that of classic Greece. But there is an anachronistic, modern element which serves to give the action an aura of timelessness. The drama is played in modern dress; Creon wears evening clothes, and the palace guards wear battle-jackets and carry automatic rifles. Such incidental anachronisms aside, the plot roughly follows Sophocles. To Antigone the burial of Polynices is less a religious ritual than a symbolic act she must perform in order to retain her own integrity. Creon, an intelligent and reasonable Machiavellian, tries to convince her that her project is both destructive and meaningless; one by one he refutes her reasons for wanting to throw her handful of dirt over the corpse of her brother. He forces her to admit that Polynices was almost a stranger to her in her childhood; he proves incontrovertibly that Polynices was a ne'er-do-well and profligate who wasted his money on debauchery and treated his father Oedipus without respect. To clinch his argument he confesses he is by no means sure the corpse rotting on the outskirts of the city is Polynices at all. Moreover he, Creon, has no particular opinions about the virtues of the two brothers, and is not impressed by the superstition that unburied souls are condemned to wander eternally in the nether regions. He believes in any case in letting sleeping dogs lie. He is merely trying conscientiously and doggedly (as was, it might be remarked, Marshal Petain) to rule Thebes to the best of his ability, and he wants to keep philosophical considerations out of the technical process of government. "Thebes has a right now to a prince without a history," he remarks. "Me, I'm just Creon, thank God. I've got both feet on the ground, my hands in my pockets, and since I am king I am determined, less ambition than your father, to employ myself simply to make the world order a little less absurd, if possible. There's nothing adventurous about it, it's an everyday job, and not always fun, like all jobs. But since I've been put here to do it, I'll do it. And if tomorrow some mangy messenger should come out of the mountains to announce that he isn't quite sure of my pedigree, I would simply beg him to turn around and go back where he came from. I wouldn't have any desire to go and peer at your aunt in the face or to set myself comparing dates. Kings have other things to worry about than their personal tragedies, my dear girl."

Antigone replies that for Creon this position is eminently rational and just; it is, in fact, the only position he can logically maintain. He has said "yes" to life, and in doing so he has brought upon himself a whole chain of consequences which force him to act as he does. As for herself "I haven't said yes. What do you think that is to me, your politics, your necessity, your miserable stories? I can still say no to everything I don't like, and I'm the only judge. And you, with your crown and your guards and your panoply, you can only put me to death, because you have said yes." Her choice made, Antigone goes to her death and drags Hemon after her because she refuses to tell a useful lie as the price of happiness. As Creon tells Hemon toward the end of the play, Antigone was born to die; even though she herself did not realize it, Polynices was only a pretext....

The essence of tragedy as it was understood by the ancients was that a noble hero came to his downfall through an inherent fault in his character; usually this flaw consisted of an excessive fervor or self-confidence. When the classic tragedy demonstrates that *hybris* brings its inevitable *nemesis,* it is merely reiterating that the Dionysian personality carries within itself the seeds of its own catastrophe. This is precisely the nature of the catastrophe which arrives to the heroes of Jean Anouilh: fanatic idealists who will accept no compromise, they come to destruction because they are born into a world in which compromise is the price of existence. Most of the other tragic heroes of modern drama are not tragic in this sense; they are destroyed only because they could not achieve their ends. Anouilh passes beyond this modern pseudo-tragedy to arrive at the essence of the tragic situation, and his technique proves itself in the unmistakable emotion *katharsis* the spectator feels at his plays.

Anouilh himself distinguishes between true tragedy and catastrophic melodrama in a curious passage he inserts into the middle of Antigone. While Creon muses over the mysterious burial of Polynices, the chorus comes forward and analyses the situation with a remarkable scholarly detachment. "It's nice, the tragedy. It's calm, restful. In the melodrama, with those traitors, those desperate villains, that persecuted innocence, those avengers, those Saint Bernards, those glimmers of hope, it's horrible to die, almost by accident as it were. You might have escaped, the good young man might have arrived in time with the gendarmes. In the tragedy you can relax. In the first place, you're at home after all, everyone's innocent! It isn't that there is someone who kills and someone who is killed. It's just a question of arrangement. And then, most of all, the tragedy is calm because you know there's no hope, no dirty hope; you're caught, you're caught after all like a rat, it's all on your shoulders, and all you can do is cry out not groan, no, not complain to bawl at the top of your voice what you have to say."

Tragedy should speak to us, as it spoke to the Greeks, as a living and contemporary human drama; the action should appear to involve persons like ourselves who are seen in predicaments we can understand. If this feeling of timelessness is not present, if we feel we are viewing a "historical" drama, we cannot believe the tragedy is our tragedy, and the drama degenerates into mere spectacle. Anouilh's dramas, written in modern vernacular and filled with the objects and figures of our own daily life, achieve a universality in time which would be impossible in a mere sterile imitation of the external apparatus of classicism.

Source: Donald Heiney. "Jean Anouilh: The Revival of Tragedy" in *College English*, Vol. 16, no. 6, March, 1955, pp. 331-35.

Critical Essay #6

Noted drama critic Krutch assesses a 1946 Broadway production of Anouilh's Antigone, *examining the parallels between the story and the German occupation of Paris, France, during the play's initial run.*

Antigone is adapted from the adaptation made by Jean Anouilh, played in Paris during the occupation, and more or less put over on the German censors. Though acted in modern costume, the scene was left in ancient Greece, and little essential change was made in either the action or even the motives. In Sophocles's original the conflict is already that between the individual and the state, or, more precisely, between the laws decreed by a supreme secular authority and those of God and of nature. To transform it into a fable for the times, little more than a mere modernization of the terminology was necessary. Make Creon a rationalizing fascist dictator who justifies himself by arguing the need for an established order in the turbulent Greek states, make it clear that Antigone's insistence upon burying her brother springs from her conviction that necessity, the tyrant's plea, is never superior to the claims of fundamental human decency, and you get a play which the Germans could not and obviously did not fail to recognize as a discussion of the current situation.

Lewis Galantiere's obviously skillful version it is not called a translation is acted by Katharine Cornell and Cedric Hardwicke in modern dress upon a stage bare except for its draperies and in one continuous act, which runs for a bit over an hour and a half. Horace Braham, serving as narrator-commentator, is the chorus compressed into one person, the dramaturgical method is Greek, not modern, and, indeed, even the order of the incidents follows fairly closely that of the Sophocles original; so that what one gets is something perhaps even closer to the Greek in form than it is in thought.

On the whole most of the reviewers seem not to have been very greatly pleased, and *Antigone* got a rather poor press. I find myself agreeing with many of the specific strictures made, but I seem to have been more interested and more moved by the whole than those of my colleagues whose reviews I have read. It is true, I think, that to make the guards neither like Greeks nor like S. S. men but like simple-minded American tough guys is probably a mistake. I agree that though Miss Cornell's performance is excellent specially and as usual with her, pictorially excellent acting honors probably go to Hardwicke, whose portrait of the icily reasonable dictator is a genuinely memorable one. Moreover, even at the risk of seeming pedantic, I might add that the modern playwright actually outdoes the Greek in decorum, since though of course Sophocles permits no deaths upon the stage he does have the body of Haemon brought in, and I wonder, difficult as such things are to manage properly, if some such presentation of the bodies might not have added the final scene which the play as it now stands does need. But all these are relatively minor matters. I found none of the play, except perhaps some of the very earliest scenes, uninteresting, and I found the interview between Creon and Antigone, which takes up perhaps a third to a half of the entire running time, both absorbing and moving. One of the boldest of the author's modifications of his text, that in which he makes Creon confess that he is using the dead brother merely as a

politically useful scapegoat, seems to me very effective, and Antigone's retort at the climax of the debate is conclusive and tremendous. Creon has launched into a characteristic rhapsody in praise of vitality and the will to live. "Ah," interrupts Antigone, "if men were only animals, what a king you would be!"

Since the German censors could not have failed to recognize that the play was intended as a commentary upon the current situation one wonders why they permitted it at all. One wonders also if they would have permitted a revival of Shaw's "St. Joan," in which the same problem is discussed and in which, though the very presence of Jeanne d'Arc might have been thought intolerable, the claims of the central authority really come off rather better than they do in the American version of *Antigone.* Obviously the Germans decided that they were willing to risk their case on the effectiveness of Creon's presentation of it, and a note in the present program helps make it understandable that they should have done so. The play as we now have it is not quite the play that was performed in Paris during the occupation. No Frenchman, Mr. Galantiere assures us, could have come away feeling that Creon' s argument was stronger than Antigone's, but, so he implies, a German might have felt otherwise, and in the American version Antigone's case has been somewhat built up, "not by taking anything away from M. Anouilh's Creon, but by adding something to his Antigone, his chorus, and his Haemon." Since a part of the interest in this American production is documentary and historical, I am not sure that Mr. Galantiere would not have been wiser to give us the argument precisely as it was given in the French version.

Source: Joseph Wood Krutch. Review of *Antigone* in *the Nation*, Vol. 162, no. 9, March 2, 1946, p. 269.

Adaptations

A recording of Jean Anouilh reading *Antigone* was produced by *La Voix de l'Auteur*. There is also a tape of a 1965 Cleveland Touring Company production of the play.

Topics for Further Study

How do the characters of Ismene, Creon, and the Page serve as foils for Antigone?

How do the changes that Anouilh has made to the basic plot of Sophocles's Antigone *affect* its meaning and impact? Write an essay detailing the changes and why you think he made them. Which version is more appealing to you and why?

Identify lines or events in the play that correspond to events in France between 1940-1944, the period when the play was written and produced.

Do you agree with the Chorus's assessment of tragedy as "tranquil"? Is this a tragedy without hope? Support your answer with evidence from the play.

Compare and Contrast

Ancient Greece: In the ancient Greece of legendary Thebes, the king has absolute power. Rulers are in constant danger from assassination attempts and coups.

1940s: France is invaded by Nazi Germany; a puppet government is set up to rule over the French people. A Resistance movement forms to undermine the Nazis and their collaborators.

Today: France is a stable democracy.

Ancient Greece: Women hold inferior positions in society, remaining in separate quarters in the household. They are expected to follow their father's or husband's rules, and to be spoken of as little as possible. By the latter half of the fifth century, around the time that Sophocles wrote *Antigone*, women are enjoying a period of emancipation and can exercise greater autonomy.

1940s: Women enter the workplace in great numbers because of the need for labor and the demands of World War II. Although ninety percent of the military and the Resistance fighters are men, women support the war effort and the fight for French freedom through their work.

Today: Great strides have been made in the struggle for gender equality in business; in many countries, women's roles are still very limited.

What Do I Read Next?

The classic film *Casablanca* (1942), starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, also concerns making personal sacrifices on behalf of the French Resistance.

Anouilh's *L'Alouette (The Lark*, 1953) focuses on the life of Joan of Arc.

Mark Twain wrote a novel about *Joan of Arc* (1896) after spending twelve years researching her life and times.

Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1946) explores the predicament of a faithless man who commits a senseless murder and contemplates the absurdity of modern existence.

Further Study

Chiari, Joseph. *The Contemporary French Theatre: The Flight from Naturalism*, Gordian Press, 1970, 242 p.

Traces the development of theatricalism in French theater.

Delia Fazia, Alba Marie. *Jean Anouilh*, Twayne Publishers, 1969, 154 p.

A comprehensive study of Anouilh's life and work, with analysis of the major plays.

Harvey, John Edmond. *Anouilh: A Study in Theatrics*, Yale University Press, 1964, 191 p.

A study of the theatricalism of Anouilh's plays, with discussions of his staging and characterization.

Lenski, B. A. *Jean Anouilh: Stages in Rebellion*, Humanities Press, 1975, 104 p.

Analyzes the theme of rebellion in Anouilh's works.

Mclntyre, H. G. *The Theatre of Jean Anouilh*, Harrap, 1981, 165 p.

Examines theatrical elements of Anouilh's plays.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in DfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by DfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

DfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Drama for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Drama for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from DfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from DfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Drama for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Drama for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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