Antigone travels to wwii france

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No doubt, the most famous theatrical version of Antigone is the Greek original. Sophocles dramatized Antigone's choice and fate first, but he certainly was not the only playwright to see that Antigone's story is choice material for social and political themes. Sophocles created an Antigone story to emphasize Athenian ideals and cultural needs. His Antigone was incredibly popular during the golden age of Athens, and was reproduced multiple times. This was a play that reinforced the values of Athenian society in the Golden Age of Pericles. Antigone also manages to transcend the immediate context of Athenian life and appeal to modern audiences worldwide. Beyond its direct appeal, many modern playwrights have taken Sophocles's original and adapted or reinterpreted it in order to suit more modern needs. This material is prime for conveying political and social messages, and made quite a revival during the Nazi occupations of World War II. One of the playwrights who took advantage of Sophocles's glorious original was the French playwright, Jean Anouilh. Anouilh wrote in occupied France during World War II, and the themes of many of his plays reflect this controversial and difficult time in history. Anouilh's reinterpretation of Antigone was written in 1942 and produced in 1944. It ran successfully for many months. He transferred the source themes and material into something that could appeal to his war-entrenched audiences. Sophocles and Anouilh present the same story, but emphasize different themes.

Sophocles emphasizes not only the individual will over the will of the state, but more importantly, the old law of the gods over the will of the state. Sophocles focuses strongly on the lesson Creon must learn about respecting

laws that are more important than the laws of man. On the other hand, Anouilh pays no heed to the laws of the gods. In fact, gods and the supernatural are not present in Anouilh's Antigone at all: they are glaringly missing. Instead, Anouilh relates a theme of the absurdity of man's fate in the universe. Anouilh heightens the controversy between the rational laws of the state and the individual will of idealism. Creon is not present to learn a lesson, but to emphasize the strength and importance of this conflict. These thematic differences are apparent throughout the play, but can be seen most clearly in the ways the playwrights use minor characters, in their treatments of the climactic moment of conflict between Creon and Antigone, and in the final moments of each play.

The Minor Characters

In Sophocles's Antigone, the minor characters are, in fact, minor characters. Ismene is used primarily to example Antigone's strength in motivation and independent spirit. Because Ismene refuses to help Antigone in the first place, Antigone denies her the right to claim responsibility after the fact. Antigone is adamant that Ismene remain in her lack of ideals and claim her rightful place as a dutiful citizen under Creon. Antigone will not allow her the honor of dying for principles that she never had. In this way, Ismene simply functions as a foil to Antigone, and as an opportunity for Antigone to express the extent of her convictions.

In the same sense, Haemon is used in a purely functional manner. He is the betrothed of Antigone and is Creon's son. His function is primarily to go to Creon and argue for Antigone out of passion and humanity. He wants his

future wife to live. This scene is necessary to show Creon's absolute refusal to listen to any human arguments in Antigone's favor. He is beyond stubborn and prideful. It takes someone close to him (his son) to truly show the extent of this pride.

Sophocles's messengers and sentries work solely as that, messengers of the action not shown on stage. They sometimes become a sort of confidant to Creon, but for the most part merely exist to relay to Creon what is happening out of his line of sight. Unfortunately for Creon, much happens, both in plot and theme, out of his line of sight. This tends to be the problem of the play. The sentries and messengers hint at these thematic ideas that escape Creon as well, but only hint at them. For the most part, they are simply interested in doing their jobs and then getting out of the way of the wrath of Creon. They are otherwise purely functional characters.

The Chorus is, as in the majority of Greek plays, the voice of the people. It is generally there only to comment on the action and provide an " in" to the themes for the audience. It sometimes attempts to take a middle road, but, as they are meant to be respected old men of Thebes, often take the side of Creon, and can even occasionally be seen as " yes-men". When Creon asks them to help him enforce his proclamation: " you should not side with those who disagree," the Chorus replies, " There is none so foolish as to love his own death" (219-20) . Yet they waver constantly and attempt even to reason with Creon; when the Sentry brings news that someone covered Polyneices's body with dust, they immediately worry: " My lord: I wonder, could this be God's doing?/This is the thought that keeps on haunting me" (279-80). The Chorus is aware of the mistake that Creon may have made, yet does little to

help rectify it. They are simply there to reflect the actions and the themes. In Antigone’s final moments, the chorus serves as her confidant. They attempt to console her: “ Yes, you go to the place where the dead are hidden,/ but you go with distinction and praise” (817-18) and also to chastise her: “ There is a certain reverence for piety./ But for him in authority,/ he cannot see that authority defied;/ it is your own self-willed temper/ that has destroyed you” (872-6). It is not until the final moment of the play when the Chorus gets the last word and comments on what they knew all along, that it is folly to deny the will of the gods and the will of love.

The one minor character who has a deeper function is the blind prophet Teiresias. He is responsible for being the mouthpiece of the gods and of human reason. He reveals that the gods are not pleased with Creon’s actions. Teiresias gives Creon the only real advice he gets in the play: “ All men/ can make mistakes; but, once mistaken,/ a man is no longer stupid nor accursed/ who, having fallen on ill, tries to cure that ill” (1022-5). Unfortunately, Creon is too proud to take heed at first. He makes a fatal delay. Teiresias has to threaten Creon with the prophecy of losing his son before Creon admits that he is “ bewildered” (1096). And even at this, he still cannot make the decision to fix his mistake; the chorus must tell him what to do to remedy the situation that Teiresias prophesied. In this way, Teiresias is Creon’s teacher. He attempts, through supernatural means, to teach Creon his lesson before it is too late. He is the sole figure of hope in the play. His warnings are heeded too late, but his lessons are nonetheless learned.

Creon and Antigone: The Conflict

Creon is often theorized to be the central character of Sophocles's Antigone, even though she is the title character. Antigone is absent for the final third of the play, which centers on the lesson Creon needs to, and eventually does, learn. The final third of the play has little to do with Antigone, and everything to do with Creon coming to terms with his pride, lack of reverence for god and human will, and the consequences of these faults, which leads many critics to believe, " Creon is the sole tragic focus" (Freeman xxxv). Creon must be the tragic hero, as he is the one involved in the working out of the tragic process or flaw (hamartia) and has the recognition of discovery (anagnorisis) (Howarth 18). He is ignorant of his own state and arrogant, which are his flaws. He is the downfall. Even the smaller characters (Haemon, Tiresius, Ismene, Eurydice) see the human picture and the divine purpose before Creon manages to perceive the truth.

On the other hand, Antigone is the epitome of pious righteousness. She is as stubborn as Creon is, but because her stubbornness comes from a sense of human and divine right, she is not faulted for it. Her sense of piety and human dignity, along with her strong familial bonds, requires that she sacrifice herself for the burial rights of her brother. While Creon makes some substantial arguments for his own reasoning, the audience sympathizes and respects Antigone's human will as the example of right living. If Creon is the thematic center of the play, Antigone certainly commands our sympathetic attention throughout the play. She is the emotional focus, even if not the thematic focus.

The point of the conflict here is clear. Creon is arguing for the salvation of his state, while Antigone is arguing for the salvation of a human soul and the

principle of right living. He is creating human laws and commanding the state as best he knows how, while she is following divine law and human instinct, which is in direct opposition to Creon's human laws. Critic A. J. A. Waldock makes the valid point, " Everyone who counts is for Antigone; everyone who counts is against Creon. There is only one inference from this: the value represented by Creon is suspect" (qtd. in Howarth 17). He and his human laws may garner some logical respect from the audience, but will not garner emotional support from the audience. Moreover, when it is revealed that Antigone has broken the law and has buried her brother, Creon does not attempt to save Antigone, he simply punishes her. Creon rejects all attempts at pleading forgiveness for Antigone. She makes her stand against him, and he sentences her to death: end of story.

There is more than just human will at stake in Sophocles's Antigone. The will of the gods also plays a strong role. The gods operate in this play through Antigone. She is the vehicle of not only human empathy, but also of godly dictate and reason. However, their impact has much more to do with Creon than with Antigone (Howarth 17). Creon is the human who is acting contrary to the will of the gods. Creon is the human who must learn that the laws of the gods supercede any human law, and must be heeded. Antigone's human will and instinct are in line with the will of the gods, which puts her in the right, and allows her the strength to sacrifice herself for the ideal. Creon is at odds with the gods, and his punishment of Antigone only makes this situation worse. He must learn his lesson before it is too late.

Unfortunately, Creon does not learn his lesson in time. Teiresias attempts to save him (and in turn, save Antigone, Haemon, and Eurydice), but his

attempt fails. Creon remains stubborn and prideful until Teiresias prophesizes a threat to Creon’s family. Until that moment, no notion of ‘ right’ can get Creon’s attention. Even then, he is still reluctant to give in. Upon being advised to release Antigone, Creon responds, “ That is really your advice? You would have me yield?” (1102). Because he is unwilling to learn or bend, Creon makes his attempt at salvation too late. He learns his lesson, but it is a harsh lesson of loss, rather than a simple salvation through understanding and good will. The Chorus tells him, “ I think you have learned justice – but too late,” and Creon responds, “ Yes, I have learned it to my bitterness” (1270-1). At the end of the play, the wiser Creon is left with no where to go and no one to turn to.

Sophocles has a certain amount of political import to convey in this play. The Athenians greatly valued order and law in society. In this sense, Creon would have garnered a great amount of respect in his attempts to create an ordered and lawful state. However, the true message is found in the fact that, although the audience respects Creon, they side with Antigone. She represents the political and social value that the Athenians focus on. She is right living, human will, and most importantly, divine law. These are the values that Sophocles relates to us in his version of the Antigone myth.

Jean Anouilh and Difference

Jean Anouilh has a very different message in mind. He is not interested in what the gods have to say about life. He is not interested in focusing on Creon’s pride and the dilemma of him learning his lesson. He is also less interested in exploring who is right. For Anouilh, right matters much less

than the significance and the heart of the conflict itself. Anouilh emphasizes the conflict, not Antigone's piety or Creon's hubris or learning. Anouilh takes the Antigone myth, as dramatized by Sophocles, and changes the focus to fit his message and to fit the changing times. He uses a nearly identical story, but expertly changes enough of the matter to truly change the focus and the message of the play.

Anouilh admits to using historical subject matter to create the characters he needs to make his point. He is not afraid to change history or the people who lived it in order to suit his needs. For his play Becket, he admits " I didn't go looking in history books for the real Henry II – nor even Becket. I created the type of king I needed and the ambivalent Becket I needed" (qtd. in Freeman xxiv). In this sense, we can be ready for an Antigone that suits his purposes, rather than one that holds true to Sophocles's depiction. We should be clued in to be on the lookout for what he does differently, and why. Anouilh writes Antigone in a time of classical revival in France. The classics, especially those drawn from mythology, lend themselves well to making indirect commentary on modern society " by means of characters and relationships not tied down to a precise context of time or place" (Howarth 8). Anouilh offers an Antigone where the action of the play is set in ancient Thebes, but where twentieth century life provides the " metaphorical enrichment" (Howarth 12). He makes a few significant changes in the text in order to provide this " metaphorical enrichment."

The Minor Characters

One of the changes Anouilh makes from his source is to change the roles of several of the minor characters. He makes some minor characters much more important, adds important minor characters, and leaves out one significant minor character. For example, in Anouilh's Antigone, Ismene takes on a bit of a stronger role. Her plot line is essentially the same, but her thematic purpose is stronger. In Sophocles's Antigone, Ismene is afraid of breaking Creon's law. She fears for her life and is generally afraid of doing wrong. In Anouilh's version, Ismene is not afraid of consequences. Instead, she understands Creon and the reasoning behind his rule. She sees that he is doing what he needs to do to protect the order of his state. She is depicted as a conformist and one who respects authority (Freeman xiii), but importantly, she argues with Antigone not out of fear, but out of the belief that Creon is right. Anouilh uses this change to help make the focus shift to the conflict.

Haemon is also given a much stronger role in Anouilh's play. Anouilh creates a scene between Antigone and Haemon, which strengthens the audience's understanding of their relationship. We see Antigone as a young bride-to-be, who, for all intents, wishes to be a wife and mother. We see her in a human light, rather than just as a martyr. This scene also completes the triangular relationship of Antigone-Haemon-Creon and makes the conflict of Creon sentencing his son's fiancé to death more significant. This is yet another way Anouilh chooses to shift the emphasis from Creon to the conflict between Antigone and Creon (Howarth 30).

Anouilh also creates new characters. In his version, Antigone has her nurse as a confidant. The nurse allows us to see Antigone in a private or domestic

light (Howarth 23). Their created relationship develops sympathy for the heroine, as we see her as an innocent and idealistic childlike figure. This helps to emphasize Anouilh’s theme of the sorrows and hardships of growing up. One of the reasons Antigone commits a crime with a death sentence attached is because she cannot stand the thought of facing the “ adult” life that does not allow for idealism. Adult life calls for compromise of values and ideals, and Antigone will not live that life. The scenes with the nurse remind us of the fact that she is, in fact, something of a child and not the self-righteous martyr we may regard her as.

Anouilh also replaces the messengers and sentries with a host of guards. These guards have a significantly different role than did the messengers and sentries they replaced. They represent the everyday populous and everyday life. In several instances with the guards, we see Antigone’s death (and her preoccupation with it) being juxtaposed with the everyday and ordinary cares of the guards (Howarth 36). The guards are generally self-absorbed about their pay, their cares, and even where they will eat. Antigone spends her final moments with the guard Jonas. After she tells him he is the last person she will ever see, he spends several minutes obsessing about the differences in pay and status between being a guard and being a sergeant in the regular army. Antigone has to stop him to remind him that she is going to die soon, and his response is “ Of course, people look up more to a guard. He’s a sort of official as well as a soldier…” (55) . She makes several other tries to get him to pay attention, but he never gives her more than a passing or uncaring answer about her impending death. It does not concern him.

Anouilh is interested in showing that Antigone’s martyrdom does not matter to the vast majority of the public.

While Anouilh adds importance to some characters and adds other characters completely, Teiresias is just missing. This is significant to Anouilh’s theme, because Teiresias’s disappearance symbolizes the lack of gods and the supernatural in Anouilh’s Antigone. Anouilh’s stage does not center on man’s lack of power before the gods or in man’s persecution by those gods, but on “ the conflict between the human will and human authority” (Howarth 14). Allowing any of the supernatural element would only hinder this theme. Teiresias is therefore not there to convince Creon that he has done wrong in sentencing Antigone to death. There is no one to save Creon. And, significantly, he does not necessarily need saving.

Anouilh changes the role of the Chorus as well, although, even in its new capacity, it does little to function as a replacement for Teiresias. The Chorus-Prologue of Anouilh’s Antigone is detached from most of the action, and acts as something of an omniscient narrator. The Chorus-Prologue addresses the audience, creating a formal distance between the audience and the action of the play. This stresses the theatricality of the play. The play is self-conscious of being a play; it is metatheatrical and self-referential (Freeman xxxvii). In the first scene, the Prologue introduces the characters and paints them as actors, waiting to assume their roles in the tragic play (Howarth 24). They are shown to be acting out their parts in a predetermined course of action. Anouilh paints a picture of destiny and fatalism. The humans appear to be caught in a “ mechanistic process,” although “ there is no indication as to who winds up the clock mechanism” (Howarth 35). Man has not the power to

resist this process of tragedy. According to the Prologue-Chorus, there is no room for hope or chance. In fact, in Anouilh's Antigone, the characters refer to " lousy hope." The Prologue-Chorus exists to remind us that this tragedy is predetermined, and there is nothing to do but live it out.

Creon and Antigone: The Conflict

Anouilh gives us a version of Antigone that is structurally much more balanced than Sophocles's version. The first third of the play is focused on Antigone and her ideals, while the last third is centered on Creon's reason, order, and the need for life in the state to go on. The confrontation between these two ideals takes up the middle third of the play, giving it an important and significant place in the play. This is certainly the thematic focus.

The first third of the play is devoted to Antigone, her character, and her ideals. She is presented as a rebel, " impulsive and passionate" (Freeman xiii). She does not care that the consequences for her actions and her confrontation with Creon will be death. She " knows her gesture is meaningless in practical terms" (Freeman xv), but she must sacrifice herself for her principles. Critic Ted Freeman developed a controversial theory about Antigone's character and motivation. In her conflict with Creon, he convinces her that one of her arguments is null (the familial bond to her brother). He relays the horrid history of her brothers' lives, and makes the point that she need not hold any allegiance to them. In response to this argument being mute, she almost immediately derives another argument (or excuse) to defy Creon. This leads Creon to believe that, rather than wishing to pursue her ideals, she truly wishes to die. Freeman suggests that she is much the

stereotypical modern ‘ unhappy teen’ who wishes to find a way to deny growing up and facing the disappointments of adult life. In this theory, she is a suicidal adolescent, who contrives reasons to end her life (xxxix-xli). He claims, “ Antigone’s ostensibly noble cause is insincere, an excuse by an emotionally unstable young person to spare herself the looming disappointments of adult life” (xliv). He also argues that, in her letter to Haemon, Antigone almost confesses how “ easy” it would have been to live and that she now is unsure of what she is dying for. Freeman contends, “ in a disturbing moment of inconsistency and perhaps even cowardice that no commentator has picked up, she prevents that truth from being known . . . [and she] perpetrates a sin of omission, a kind of lie, of her own” (xlii).

This is not necessarily true. Antigone is still given a motivated and pure character. Anouilh wishes to make the conflict between Antigone and Creon ambiguous and confusing. If Antigone was simply depicted as a suicidal adolescent, her arguments could never be taken seriously. This theory goes against the main themes of the play. Antigone is disillusioned about growing up, but not because growing up is disappointing, but because, in this world, growing up requires one to give up their ideals. Antigone is not willing to live in a world without principle and ideal. Her noble cause is to attempt to martyr herself for the world she wishes existed. In her letter to Haemon, she states how “ easy” it would have been to live. She does not question whether her decision was right or not. “ Easy” is not the same as “ good”. And then, she removes the “ uncertainty clause” and replaces it with “ I’m sorry”. She dies in her convictions. Antigone is not an unhappy teenager, but an

idealistic young woman who is unwilling to compromise her principles, even when the results are not quite what she wanted.

Creon's character is quite different in Anouilh's Antigone, as well. He is not the harsh absolutist that Sophocles presents. This Creon is a realist, not a villain. He sees the explicit need to control the chaos and possible anarchy in his state (Freeman xv). It was a dirty job, but someone had to do it. His harsh rule is justified. In fact, his rule is not even so harsh. Anouilh's Creon would rather hide the issue with Antigone than actually enforce his rule. Rather than the villainous autocrat that Sophocles creates, Anouilh's Creon is " human and sensitive," someone who garners great respect, if not sympathy (Freeman xli). He wishes to save Antigone, not punish her with death. He spends a third of the play arguing with Antigone, not about the punishment, but about whether she can see that she was wrong. He wants her to go on with her life and leave this be. But he finds that he is unable to understand her or to save her from herself (Howarth 38).

Once the die has been cast, every challenge to Creon is met with stern defense of his actions. The Chorus challenges him directly, and he maintains his right. Haemon challenges him, and he again maintains his right. Anouilh's Creon never wavers in his insistence in the right order of the state.

The conflict between these two characters takes up one third of the play, a much more prominent position than in Sophocles's version. This illustrates the shift in focus from the individuals and their lessons, to the actual conflict (Freeman xliv). This conflict pits the experienced realist against the youthful idealist. There is no absolute right or wrong here. It is a debate between two

rights. As an effort to persuade Antigone to give in, Creon tells her how horrible her brothers had been, and that she should feel no familial (or any other) tie to them. This crushes Antigone, and Creon almost succeeds in persuading her to “ comply, survive, [and] marry Haemon,” but then Creon goes on to mention the word “ happiness” (Freeman xvi). With this, all of Antigone’s previous convictions about right living return. She “ explodes in a tirade of contempt for all who accept that this conception of happiness can compensate for the dwindling of the fierce ideals” (Freeman xlv). This conflict is between the value of reason and the value of ideals. Who can choose between them?

The Final Moments

Now that the tragedy is over, Creon must continue on with his work. There is no rest for the weary. Because Creon opted for life, even though it is the life lacking in ideals, he must continue on in his responsibilities. It seems that he feels little remorse or loss, and so we feel very little for him. Freeman states, “ Creon is stricken at the death of his son and wife, but cannot be held responsible for these catastrophes” (xli). Howarth asserts that, because Teiresias is not there to be the mouthpiece of the Gods, Creon “ remains unrepentant to the end” (45). At the end of Sophocles’s Antigone, Creon is left with a lesson to learn. He and his pride are responsible for the tragedy, and through this tragedy, he obtains wisdom. In Anouilh’s Antigone, no such lesson is learned. Creon is not responsible. He simply took care of the business at hand. He recognizes that it was a nasty business, but he states, “ You can’t just fold your arms and do nothing. They say it’s dirty work. But if

you don't do it, who will?" (60). He is exonerated from his guilt by way of responsibility and necessity.

Finally, the Chorus makes the last statement, which is very different from the Chorus of Sophocles, who gives the audience lasting wisdom. Here, the chorus tells us:

Everyone who had to die is dead: those who believed in one thing, those who believed in the opposite . . . even those who didn't believe in anything, but were caught up in the story without knowing what was going on. All dead: quite stiff, quite useless, quite rotten. And those who are still alive are quietly beginning to forget them and get their names mixed up. It's over. . . . A great, sad peace descends on Thebes, and on the empty palace where Creon will begin to wait for death. Only the guards are left. All that has happened is a matter of indifference to them. None of their business. They go on with their game of cards. (60-1)

Anouilh offers no catharsis. Creon is simply left to carry on, as the guards are left to forget what never mattered to them anyway.

Politics

It seems that the inspiration for Antigone came from the resistance fighter, Paul Collette, who, in August 1942, fired into a crowd of collaborationist leaders at a rally in Versailles. Although it would seem that this would lead to a Resistance-Sympathetic reading of the play, political interpretation proved controversial. Both sides (collaborationist and resistance) claimed the allegiance of Anouilh's Antigone. The French resistance fighters claimed that

Antigone was the “ incarnation of the spirit of resistance to tyranny” (Freeman xlvi), while the Germans and collaborators saw the play quite differently. According to Alain Laubreaux, a collaborationist critic, Antigone’s spirit for purity was to be admired, but her resistance to authority could only lead to “ chaos, disorder and suicide” (qtd. in Freeman xlvii). A fellow collaborationist critic, Charles Mere, found nothing admirable in Antigone. She was a “ degenerate, unintelligent madwoman whose revolt produces only anarchy, disaster and death” (qtd. in Freeman xlvii). These critics believe Creon is the true hero of the play. He is the just ruler who “ sacrifices everything that is dear to him for the sake of his country” (qtd. in Freeman xlvii). These opposing views are possible, because, instead of focusing on who was right, Anouilh chooses to focus on the confrontation between realism and idealism, without truly committing to one side or the other. Each character (representing each ideal) is presented with enough sympathy and concept of “ rightness” that it is difficult to tell who is actually “ right”. Albert Camus wrote about Anouilh’s Antigone, “ Antigone is right, but Creon is not wrong” (qtd. in Freeman xiv). We sympathize with Antigone, but we also know Creon’s argument has value. The play takes a “ morally neutral stance” (Freeman xlvi). This play is focused on the clash between the “ individual and the values of the state,” (Howarth 15) however the resolution of this conflict remains rather ambiguous. Intellectually, we may side with Creon and the values of the state, while emotionally and sympathetically, we may side with Antigone and individual human values. As E. F. Watling claims, this is the “ exhilarating contest between two passionately held principles of right” (qtd. in Howarth 16).

Lasting effects

While the political atmosphere of the time seems to figure prominently in Anouilh’s Antigone, critic W. D. Howarth wonders if that was truly his intent. Howarth sees a much broader scope in the themes of this play. Audiences that have little or no recollection of occupied France still appreciate the themes of this play. Young audiences, especially Neo-Romanticists, can still emotionally identify with the heroine. And, according to Howarth, “ no doubt many of us, whose emotional sympathies were roused by Antigone when we were more or less of an age with the heroine herself, now find Creon more persuasive than we did,” although he maintains that it is unlikely that many will ever be won over by Creon’s logic (58). We must see the political import of the play, but then “ put the emphasis where Anouilh” puts it, not on Creon’s conscience, not on Antigone’s sacrifice, not on the Gods’ will, but on the conflict and dramatic tension between “ devotion to duty and the sublime call to sacrifice oneself for an ideal” (Howarth 58). In such terms, it is impossible to read this play simply in the context of World War II turmoil. Like Sophocles’s version, it is much more human focused and transcends the immediate context of a political agenda. We see an “ absurd universe” where is reflected “ the anguish of twentieth-century man at the cruel absurdity of our existence in a godless world” as we watch two characters whose only possible outcomes are death and loss (Howarth 60).

Sophocles was the first to adapt the Antigone legend into theater, but was certainly not the last. It can be argued that the most prominent of the reinterpretations is Jean Anouilh’s adaptation of the Sophocles original. He adapts Sophocles’s Antigone to create his own unique and specific social and

political commentary. With the same basic story as the backdrop, Anouilh creates a play about the hardships of adult responsible living and the conflicting virtues of duty and obedience and idealism, rather than focusing on the role of the gods and the determination of right living as Sophocles does. Both plays were immensely popular in their time, showing that, in their times, they were both incredibly topical. Amazingly, both plays still appeal to wide ranges of modern audiences, as well, illustrating that the myriad of themes brought out in each play transcend the topical contexts of the plays. This could be because both plays contain important lessons for modern humans to glean. And finally, while being marvelously similar in story, both plays create entirely different social themes for us to discuss over coffee after the show.