

lb english iop govt in antigone



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

IOP: Government in Antigone Thesis: Antigone, through the ages, is a simple stage for displaying the power of the government in the form of a play. This is accomplished by Characterization, the writing style versus the time period of the playwrights, and through the catharsis of death. These factors of simple entertainment process themselves as being a true symbol of a government's power, or lack thereof. Sophocles v. Anouilh Sophocles' version is typically accepted as for play purposes ONLY, surrendering all political propaganda, and forcing no ties to government.

Anouilh's version is interpreted as a political piece, as it was simply a reproduction of Sophocles play, written in 1943, under Nazi France, it was often interpreted for the sake of siding with the Vichy Government. Creon, in Sophocles' version is strong, the opposite of the Grecian government, in around 500 B. C., which was largely controlled by the military, which Sophocles was a part of. Antigone is portrayed as the heroine, even though she breaks the law, she is regarded as a representation of freedom and personal liberty, the fact of her womanhood strengthens this idea, as it was very controversial for a woman to be free in those times. By this, Antigone's death is extremely ironic, as though she was a woman; the actor was always male in Greek plays, showing that even though Antigone is a representative of freedom, she is really just an empty symbol for something that doesn't exist at the time. Haimon is characterized as being very obedient to his father, and respects his decisions, even though the one he loves will die as a result of these choices. When Haimon finally decides to kill himself for love, he sets off the suicide of his mother, making

Haimon that much more important, fitting himself into the jigsaw puzzle of Creon's emotional downfall.

In Anouilh's version, Creon is portrayed as kind, caring, and as a victim of Antigone, thus marking him as the hero for his gallant attempts of saving someone who ruthlessly defiled his laws. This forces the play into making the Nazi or Vichy Government look kind, caring and terrorized by evil. Creon tries over and over to free Antigone from her own misdoings, but she refuses, as a result of this he is deeply troubled, patronizing the government as divine almost. By this comparison, Creon was cast into the head of the Vichy Government.

Antigone is therefore depicted as the Blind, Arrogant overall villain to the government. Even through Creon's kindness she still is blind to surrendering her cause, which is later revealed to be for not, for even she does not know which brother she buried, leaving her causeless, and still as arrogant and blind as before, thus manifesting herself as the true villain. Even when Creon offers to drop her charges, she refuses to accept his kindness again and again, as she truly wants to die for something she cannot comprehend. She also manages to symbolize the suppression of rights during this period, but in doing this, she asks too much, and refuses anything less.

The fact that she was so opposed to Creon's love is the best representation of Antigone as a common criminal within the Vichy Government. Haimon is extremely argumentative within this version, he shows a stronger disobedience towards his father, playing upon his father's

feelings, and uses the worn-out ??? puppy-dog eyes??? excuse of But I love her! Even though Creon is kind, to rule one must be strong, and if he goes back on his word in front of his son, his heir, how would that be reflected upon his rule Creon, through his wisdom, should??™ve set his son straight, but through the blinding shield of love, Haimon believes he can find happiness in death. By the time set Haimon is portrayed as a wavering high official, whom questions the government??™s decisions by result of his own emotion. Time period versus styleThe time period of the playwrights influences the role of government in Antigone by showing how important a government is to its people versus how unimportant it can be. In Sophocles version, the government is portrayed as omnipotent, and merciless. This represented the militaristic aspect of the Greek government, which is furthered by Sophocles??™ promotion to one of ten generals to lead a military expedition against Samos Island.

Reflecting how deep down the author felt a desire to make his play reflect the militaristic strength of his homeland, lead to Creon??™s merciless decision against Antigone. However, as Creon realizes his family??™s love towards Antigone and Haimon, he retracts his decision, and attempts to free Antigone, showing how fragile the Greek government really was, and how influential the king??™s simple decisions really were. However, in Anouilh??™s version, the government is characterized largely through its leader, which makes it seem strong , yet relaxed and understanding, thus making itself a model for the French people in the time, who surrendered their homeland, knowing they would lose it, and absorbed the Nazi-Regime into their daily lives.

This was equally represented in the sense of Creon's forgiveness towards Antigone, who would not accept it, thus patronizing the government as a victim to society's misdeeds, mirroring France's continuation of daily life after the takeover by the Nazis in 1940. The writing style of Sophocles is reflected as to being a simple play meant to entertain, but all in all showed one intellectual's view of a dying government. Largely through the emotional breakdown of each of the characters, Sophocles conveys that his government is run by emotion, and that to end it, one could simply kill one member of it. In the sense of his military sense, he is subtly mentioning that a militaristic society [like Sparta] would not have these problems, policies which seem to echo the Stalinist attitude of "one death is a tragedy, one million deaths is a statistic."

This clashes with the style of Anouilh, who represented government as being involved in the life of all of its citizens, even an offender, simply to be caring towards their citizen, even when the citizen has done wrong, society will nurture them. However, when the citizen dies, no matter who they were, they are all equal in death, all sleeping, and the rest of society may continue with their lives as if nothing happened. As Josef Stalin once said, "Death is the solution to all [of man's] problems, no man = no problem." Showing that in death, one is finally free, but in life, one must carry on for their country. The catharsis of death is a strong tie between the two stories, as through the death of Creon's family, the true strength of government is revealed. When Creon, in the version by Sophocles, hears of his family's death, he breaks down and cries. This display of overwhelming emotion may have been to entertain the sadistic

Greeks, but under the surface it conveys a metaphor of how weak their government really is, showing how biased he is towards his own family, but he cannot comprehend Antigone's loss.

This does not represent an inner catharsis to the characters, but rather to the audience, who would come to understand that with the display of emotion would bring an allegory for their government, meaning that for the observers of Antigone, no matter how Machiavellian it may sound, emotion does represent weakness. However, in the version by Anouilh, when Creon hears of his family's joint suicide he simply remains normal, he even goes far as even to describe them as "sleeping", referencing them as being peaceful, but also showing an inward peace, an inner catharsis per say, which means, that he, nor his professional life were affected in any major way by this tragedy. In terms of government, this is an ideal system, understanding, caring, yet strong, without bias towards death. Even when it was his own family's turn to die he retained his schedule, as if death was some unimportant board meeting, monotonous, yet necessary, conveying that even though he has suffered an incredible tragedy, he remains dead-set on his true goals, to serve his people. By this unwavering duty to his country, Creon comes to represent the ideal leader of any worldly government. Through the effervescent symbol of government, both Sophocles and Anouilh convey the effects of their government upon their audiences.

Merely separated by time and space, each of these versions provided a window into the minds of the highest governmental insights of their times, yet flying under the radar as a simple, harmless play. This proved the power

of interpretation, and set up the glory of one author, and the isolation of another.