

Name:

Date:

Antigone Assignment #3

Due: 12/12

Background for Scene 5, Paean and Exodus:

Most ancient Greek tragedies observed three unities—unity of time (with all action in the play unfolding in one day), unity of place (with all action occurring in one place), and unity of action (with all events an important part of developing or resolving the conflict).

In his *Literary History of Greece*, Robert Flacelière writes, "What was genuinely new in the plays of Sophocles . . . was their greater emphasis on the development of individual character. . . . His characters are no longer simply the playthings of the gods. . . . They act in accord with definite ideas of their own. . . . all of Sophocles' protagonists display . . . unshakable will power. . . ."

Flacelière suggests that Antigone, rather than Creon, is the play's best example of inflexible will power. Do you think Sophocles believes "inflexible will power" to be a tragic flaw or a virtue?

Notice the repetition of a burial in the Exodus. Burials are representative of familial and religious loyalty. By the end of the play, Creon will seek his own burial.

Discussion Questions for Scene 5, Paean and Exodus (Lines 991-1353)

1. Why do you think Creon finally agrees to free Antigone and bury Polynices? What lines give clues to his motives?

2. How would you describe the major conflict in Antigone?

3. Near the bottom of page 61, Creon accepts sole responsibility for what has happened to his family over the course the play. What do you think of this? Is he the only one responsible for these tragedies?

4. "Knowledge truly is by far the most important part / of happiness, but one must neglect nothing / that the gods demand. / Great words of the over-proud / balanced by great falls / taught us knowledge in our old age."

These are the last words of the play. What are your thoughts on these two sentences? Do you agree or disagree with the view presented here?

5. After reading the entire play, do you think Sophocles believes "inflexible will power" to be a tragic flaw or a virtue?